

Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians Chapter v



Dr. Martin Luther 1535

CHAPTER 5

PAUL now drawing towards the end of his Epistle, disputeth very vehemently in defense of the doctrine of faith and Christian liberty, against the false apostles, the enemies and destroyers of the same; against whom he casteth out very thundering words to beat them down and utterly to vanquish them. And therewithal he exhorteth the Galatians to fly their pernicious doctrine as a dangerous poison. In his exhortation he intermingleth threatenings and promises, trying every way that he may keep them in that liberty which Christ hath purchased for them saying:

Stand fast therefore in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free

That is to say: be ye steadfast. So Peter saith (1 Peter 5:8): 'Be sober and watch, for your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, being steadfast in the faith.'

Be ye not careless (saith he) but steadfast and constant. Lie not down and sleep, but stand up. As if he would say: It standeth you in hand to be watchful and constant, that ye may keep and hold fast that liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. They that are secure and negligent, cannot keep this liberty. For Satan most deadly hateth the light of the Gospel, that is to say, the doctrine of grace, liberty, consolation, and life.

Therefore when he seeth that it beginneth once to appear, forthwith he fighteth against it with all might and main, stirring up storms and tempests [to hinder the course thereof, and] utterly to overthrow it. Wherefore Paul warneth the faithful not to sleep, not to be negligent; but constantly and valiantly to resist Satan, that he spoil them not of that liberty which Christ hath purchased for them, etc.

Every word hath here a certain vehemency. 'Stand', saith he; as if he should say: Here have ye need of great diligence and vigilancy. 'In that liberty.' In what liberty? Not in that wherewith the Emperor hath made us free, but in that wherewith Christ hath made us free. The Emperor hath given, or rather was compelled to give, to the bishop of Rome a free city, and other lands; also immunities, privileges and prerogatives, etc. This is also a liberty, but it is a civil liberty, whereby the Pope with all his clergy is exempt from public charges. Moreover, there is a fleshly, or rather a devilish liberty, whereby the devil chiefly reigneth throughout the whole world. For they that enjoy this liberty, obey neither God nor laws, but do what they list. This liberty, the people seek and embrace at this day; and so do the Sectaries, which will be at liberty in their opinions and in all their doings, to the end they may teach and do whatsoever they dream to be right, without reprehension, These stand in that liberty wherein the devil hath made them free. But we speak not here of this liberty, albeit the whole world

seeketh no other liberty. Neither do we speak of the civil liberty, but of a far other manner of liberty, which the devil hateth and resisteth with all his power.

This is that liberty whereby Christ hath made us free, not from an earthly bondage, from the Babylonical captivity, or from the tyranny of the Turks, but from God's everlasting wrath. And where is this done? In the conscience. There resteth our liberty, and goeth no farther. For Christ hath made us free, not civilly, nor carnally, but divinely; that is to say, we are made free in such sort, that our conscience is now free and quiet, not fearing the Wrath to come. This is that true and inestimable liberty; to the excellency and majesty whereof, if we compare the other (the civil and the carnal), they are but as one drop of water in respect of the whole sea. For who is able to express what a thing it is, when a man is assured in his heart that God neither is nor will be angry with him, but will be for ever a merciful and a loving father unto him for Christ's sake? This is indeed a marvelous and incomprehensible liberty, to have the most high and sovereign Majesty so favorable unto us, that he doth not only defend, maintain and succor us in this life, but also as touching our bodies will so deliver us, that our bodies, which are sown in corruption, in dishonor and infirmity, shall rise again in incorruption, in glory and power (Corinthians 15:42 ff.). Wherefore, this is an inestimable liberty, that we are made free from the wrath of God forever; and is greater than heaven and earth and all other creatures.

Of this liberty there followeth another, whereby through Christ we are made free from the law, sin, death, the power of the devil, hell, etc. For, as the wrath of God cannot terrify us, for that Christ hath delivered us from the same, so the law, sin, etc., cannot accuse and condemn us. And although the law accuse us, and sin terrify us, yet they cannot drive us to desperation. For faith, which overcometh the world, by and by saith: These things belong not unto me; for Christ hath made me free, and delivered me from them all. Likewise death, which is the most mighty and most dreadful thing in all the world, is utterly vanquished in the conscience by this liberty of the Spirit. Wherefore the majesty of this Christian liberty is highly to be esteemed, and diligently considered. It is an easy matter for a man to speak these words: 'Freedom from the wrath of God, sin, death, etc.'; but in the time of temptation, in the agony of conscience, in practice to apply them to himself, and to feel the excellency of this liberty and the fruit thereof, it is a harder matter than can be expressed.

Therefore our conscience must be instructed and prepared beforehand, that when we feel the accusation of the law, the terrors of sin, the horror of death, and the wrath of God, we may remove these heavy sights and fearful fantasies out of our minds, and set in the place thereof the freedom purchased by Christ, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life, and the everlasting mercy of God. And albeit the feeling of the contrary be very strong, yet let us assure ourselves that it shall not long endure, according to that saying of the prophet: 'In a moment of wrath I hid my face from thee for a season; but with everlasting mercy I have compassion on thee' (Isaiah 54:8). But this is very hard to do. Wherefore, that

liberty which Christ hath purchased for us, is not so soon believed as it is named. If it could be apprehended with a sure and steadfast faith, then no rage or terror of the world, of the law, sin, death, or the devil, could be so great, but by and by it should be swallowed up as a little drop of water is swallowed of the main sea. And certainly this Christian liberty swalloweth up at once, and taketh quite away the whole heap of evils, the law, sin, death, God's wrath, and briefly the serpent himself, with his head [and whole power], and in the stead thereof it placeth righteousness, peace, everlasting life, etc.

But blessed is he that understandeth and believeth.

Let us learn, therefore, to magnify this our liberty, which no emperor, no prophet or patriarch, no nor any angel from heaven hath obtained for us, but Jesus Christ the Son of God, by whom all things were created both in heaven and earth. Which liberty he hath purchased with no other price than with his own blood, to deliver us, not from any bodily or temporal servitude, but from a spiritual and everlasting bondage under most cruel and invincible tyrants, to wit, the law, sin, death, and the devil, and so to reconcile us unto God his Father. Now since these enemies are overcome, and we reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, it is certain that we are righteous before God, and that whatsoever we do, pleaseth him. And although there be certain remnants of sin yet still in us, they are not laid to our charge, but pardoned for Christ's sake.

Paul used words of great force and vehemency, which ought to be diligently weighed. 'Stand (saith he) in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.' This liberty then is not given unto us by the law, or for our righteousness, but freely for Christ's sake: which thing Paul here witnesseth and plainly declareth throughout his whole Epistle. Christ also, in the eighth of John, saith: 'If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' He only is set betwixt us and the evils which trouble and afflict us: he overcometh them and taketh them away, so that they can no more oppress us nor condemn us. In the stead of sin and death, he giveth unto us righteousness and everlasting life; and by this means he changeth the bondage and terrors of the law into liberty of conscience and consolation of the Gospel, which saith: 'Be of good comfort, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee' (Matthew 9:2). Whosoever then believeth in Christ, he hath this liberty.

Reason cannot perceive the excellency of this matter; which, when a man considereth in spirit, he shall see that it is inestimable. For who is able to conceive in his mind how great and unspeakable a gift it is to have the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and everlasting life, in the stead of the law, sin, death, and the wrath of God, and to have God himself favorable and merciful forever? The Papists and the hypocrites, that seek the righteousness of the law, or their own righteousness, do glory that they likewise have remission of sins, righteousness, the favor of God, etc.

For they vaunt that they also have this liberty, and they promise the same unto others; but in very deed they are the servants of corruption, and in the time of temptation all their confidence vanisheth away even in a moment.

For they trust unto the works and satisfactions of men, and not to the Word of God, nor unto Christ. Wherefore it is impossible for the justiciaries, [which seek to win heaven, life, and salvation by works and merits,] to know what the liberty [and deliverance] from sin is.

Contrariwise, our liberty hath for her foundation Christ himself, who is our overlasting high priest, sitting at the right hand of God and making intercession for us. Wherefore the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life, and liberty, which we have through him, is sure, certain, and perpetual, so that we believe the same. Wherefore, if we cleave unto Christ with a steadfast faith, and stand fast in that liberty wherewith he hath made us free, we shall obtain those inestimable gifts; but if we be careless and negligent, we shall lose them. It is not without cause that Paul biddeth us watch and stand fast; for he knew that the devil seeketh nothing more than to spoil us of this liberty which cost Christ so great a price, and to entangle us again by his ministers in the yoke of bondage, as followeth.

And be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage

Paul hath spoken most effectually and profoundly as concerning grace and Christian liberty, and with high and mighty words hath exhorted the Galatians to continue in the same; for it is easily lost. Therefore he biddeth them stand fast, lest that, through negligence or security, they fall back again from grace and faith to the law and works. Now because reason (which far preferreth the righteousness of the law before the righteousness of faith) perceiveth no danger herein, therefore with a certain indignation he inveigheth against the law of God, and with great contempt he calleth it a yoke, yea a yoke of bondage. So Peter calleth it also (Acts 15): 'Why tempt ye God, to lay a yoke on the disciples' necks,' etc. And thus he turneth all things to the contrary. For the false apostles did abase the promise, and magnified the law and the works thereof in this wise: If ye will be made free (say they) from sin and death, and obtain righteousness and life, then fulfill the law, be circumcised, observe days, months, times, and years, offer sacrifices, and do such other like things; then shall this obedience of the law justify and save you. But Paul saith the contrary.

They (saith he) that teach the law after this sort, do not set men's consciences at liberty, but snare and entangle them with a yoke, yea and that with a yoke of bondage.

He speaketh therefore of the law very basely and contemptuously, and calleth it a hard bondage and a servile yoke. And this he doth not without great cause. For this pernicious opinion of the law, that it justifieth [and maketh men

righteous before God], is deeply rooted in man's reason, and all mankind is so wrapped in it, that it can hardly get out. And Paul seemeth here to compare those that seek righteousness by the law, unto oxen that be tied to the yoke, to the end he might take from it the glory [of justifying and] of righteousness. For, like as oxen drawing in the yoke with great toil, receive nothing thereby but forage and pasture, and when they be able to draw the yoke no more, are appointed to the slaughter; even so, they that seek righteousness by the law, are captives and oppressed with the yoke of bondage, that is to say, with the law; and when they have tired themselves a long time in the works of the law with great and grievous toil, in the end this is their reward, that they are miserable and perpetual servants. And whereof? Even of sin, death, God's wrath, the devil, etc.

Wherefore there is no greater or harder bondage, than the bondage of the law. It is not without cause then, that Paul calleth it the yoke of bondage.

For as we have often said before, the law doth but reveal, increase, and aggravate sin, accuse, terrify, condemn, and gender wrath, and finally it driveth [poor] consciences into desperation, which is the most miserable and most grievous bondage that can be. (Romans 3., Romans 4., Romans 7.).

He useth therefore very vehement words. For he would gladly persuade them that they should not suffer this intolerable burden to be laid upon their shoulders by the false apostles, or be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. As if he should say: We stand not here upon a matter of small importance, but either of everlasting liberty, or everlasting bondage. For like as freedom from God's wrath and all evils is not temporal or carnal, but everlasting; even so the bondage of sin, death, the devil, etc. (wherewith all they be oppressed which will be made righteous and saved by the law) as not corporal and such as continueth for a time, but everlasting. For such workers [of the law] as go about to perform and accomplish all things precisely and exactly (for of such Paul speaketh) can never find quietness and peace of conscience. In this life they always doubt of the goodwill of God towards them, they are always in fear of death, the wrath and judgment of God; and after this life they shall be punished for their unbelief with everlasting damnation.

Therefore the doers of the law [and such as stand altogether upon the righteousness and works thereof] are rightly called (according to the proverb) the devil's martyrs, which take more pains, and punish themselves more in purchasing hell, than the martyrs of Christ do in obtaining heaven. For they are tormented two manner of ways: first, they miserably afflict themselves whilst they live here, by doing of many hard and great works, and all in vain; and afterwards, when they die, they reap for a recompense eternal damnation. Thus are they most miserable martyrs, both in this life and in the life to come, and their bondage is everlasting. Contrariwise, the godly have troubles in the world, but in Christ they have peace, because they believe that he hath overcome the world (John 16:33). Wherefore we must stand fast in that freedom which Christ hath

purchased for us by his death, and we must take good heed that we be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage; as it happeneth at this day to the fantastical spirits, who falling away from faith and from this freedom, have procured unto themselves here a temporal bondage, and in the world to come shall be oppressed with an everlasting bondage. As for the Papists, the most part of them are become at this day plain epicures. Therefore, while they may, they use the liberty of the flesh, singing this careless song: Ede, bibe, lude, post mortera nulls voluptas; that is, 'Eat, drink, and make good cheer, for after this life there is no pleasure.' But they are the very bond-slaves of the devil, by whom they are holden captives at his will and pleasure; therefore they shall feel this everlasting bondage in hell. Hitherto Paul's exhortation hath been vehement and earnest, but that which followeth doth far pass it.

Behold, I paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing

Paul here wonderfully stirred up with zeal and fervency of spirit, thundereth against the law and circumcision: and these burning words proceeding of great indignation, the Holy Ghost wresteth from him, when he saith: 'Behold, I Paul' etc., I (I say) who know that I have not received the Gospel by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and have commission and authority from above, to publish and to preach the same unto you, do tell you this new but undoubted truth, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing at all. This is a very hard sentence, whereby Paul declareth, that to be circumcised, is as much as to make Christ utterly unprofitable: not in himself, but in respect of the Galatians, who, being deceived by the subtlety of the false apostles, believed that besides faith in Christ, it was needful for the faithful to be circumcised, without the which they could not obtain salvation.

This place is as it were a touch-stone, whereby we may most certainly and freely judge of all doctrines, works, religions and ceremonies of all men.

Whosoever teach that there is anything necessary to salvation (whether they be Papists, Turks, Jews, or Sectaries) besides faith in Christ, or shall devise any work or religion, or observe any rule, tradition, or ceremony whatsoever, with this opinion that by such things they shall obtain forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and everlasting life; they hear in this place the sentence of the Holy Ghost pronounced against them by the Apostle, that Christ profiteth them nothing at all. Seeing Paul durst give this sentence against the law and circumcision, which were ordained of God himself, what durst he not do against the chaff and dross of men's traditions?

Wherefore, this place is a terrible thunderbolt against all the kingdom of the Pope. For all of them, priests, monks, hermits, etc. (I speak of the best of them), have reposed their trust and confidence in their own works, righteousness, vows and merits, and not in Christ, whom they most wickedly and blasphemously

imagine to be an angry judge, an accuser and condemner; and therefore here they hear their judgment, that Christ profiteth them nothing. For if they can put away sins, and deserve forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, through their own righteousness and straitness of life, then to what purpose was Christ born? What profit have they by his passion and blood-shedding, by his resurrection, victory over sin, death and the devil, seeing they are able to overcome these monsters by their own strength? And what tongue can express [or what heart can conceive] how horrible a thing it is to make Christ unprofitable?

Therefore the Apostle uttereth these words with great displeasure and indignation: 'If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing;' that is to say, no profit shall redound unto you of all his benefits, but he hath bestowed them all upon you in vain.

Hereby it appeareth sufficiently, that nothing under the sun is more hurtful than the doctrine of men's traditions and works, for they utterly abolish and overthrow at once the truth of the Gospel, faith, the true worshipping of God, and Christ himself, in whom the Father hath ordained all things. 'In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;' 'In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily' (Colossians 2:3,9). Wherefore, all they that are either authors or maintainers of the doctrine of works, are oppressors of the Gospel, make the death and victory of Christ unprofitable, blemish and deface his Sacraments, and utterly take away the true use thereof, and briefly, they are blasphemers, enemies and deniers of God, and of all his promises and benefits. Whoso is not moved with these words of Paul (which calleth the law a yoke of bondage, and saith that they which affirm the keeping of circumcision to be necessary to salvation, make Christ unprofitable), and cannot be driven from the law and circumcision (not to speak of men's traditions), nor yet from the confidence which he hath in his own righteousness and works, nor be stirred up to seek that liberty which is in Christ, his heart is harder than stone and iron.

This is therefore a most certain and clear sentence, that Christ is unprofitable, that is to say, he is born, crucified and risen again in vain to him that is circumcised, that is, which putteth his trust in circumcision. For (as I have said before) Paul speaketh not here of the work of circumcision in itself (which hurteth not him that hath no affiance or opinion of righteousness in it), but of the use of the work, that is to say, of the confidence and righteousness that is annexed to the work. For we must understand Paul according to the matter whereof he intreateth, or according to the argument which he hath in hand, which is, that men be not justified by the law, by works, by circumcision, or such-like. He saith not that works of themselves are nothing; but the confidence and righteousness of works are nothing; for that maketh Christ unprofitable. Therefore whoso receiveth circumcision, with this opinion that it is necessary to justification, to him Christ availeth nothing.

Let us bear this well in mind in our private temptations, when the devil accuseth and terrifieth our conscience to drive it to desperation. For he is the father of lying, and the enemy of Christian liberty; therefore he tormenteth us every moment with false fears, that when our conscience hath lost this Christian liberty, it should always be in dread, feeling itself accused and terrified. When (I say) that great dragon, that old serpent the devil (who deceiveth the whole world, and accuseth our brethren in the presence of God day and night, Revelation 12) cometh and layeth unto thy charge, that thou hast not only done no good, but hast also transgressed the law of God, say unto him: Thou troublest me with the remembrance of my sins past; thou putteth me also in mind that I have done no good; but this is nothing to me: for if either I trusted in mine own good deeds, or distrusted because I have done none, Christ should both ways profit me nothing at all. Therefore, whether thou lay my sins before me, or my good works, I pass not: but removing both far out of my sight, I only rest in that liberty wherein Christ hath made me free. I know him to be profitable unto me, therefore I will not make him unprofitable: which I should do, if either I should presume to purchase myself favor and everlasting life by my good deeds, or should despair of my salvation because of my sins.

Wherefore let us learn with all diligence to separate Christ far from all works, as well good as evil; from all laws both of God and man, and from all troubled consciences: for with all these Christ hath nothing to do. He hath to do, I grant, with afflicted consciences: howbeit not to afflict them more, but to raise them up, and in their affliction to comfort them.

Therefore if Christ appear in the likeness of an angry judge or lawgiver, that requireth a strait account of our life .past: then let us assure ourselves that it is not Christ, but a raging fiend. For the Scripture painteth out Christ to be our reconciler, our advocate and our comforter. Such a one he is and ever shall be: he cannot be unlike himself.

Therefore whensoever the devil transforming himself into the likeness of Christ, disputeth with us after this manner: This thou oughtest, being admonished by my word, to have done, and hast not done it; and this thou oughtest not to have done, and hast done it; know thou therefore that I will take vengeance on thee, etc.: let this nothing at all move us, but by and by let us think with ourselves: Christ speaketh not to poor afflicted and despairing consciences after this manner; he addeth not affliction to the afflicted; he breaketh not the bruised reed, neither quenqueth he the smoking flax (Matthew 12:20). Indeed to the hard-hearted he speaketh sharply: but such as are terrified and afflicted, he most lovingly and comfortably allureth unto him, saying: 'Come unto me all ye that travail and be heavy laden, and I will refresh you' (Matthew 11:28); 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners' etc. (9:13); "Be of good comfort my son, thy sins are forgiven thee' (9:2); 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world' (John 16:33); 'The son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost' (Luke 19:10). We must take good heed therefore lest that we, being deceived with the

wonderful sleights and infinite subtleties of Satan, do receive an accuser and condemner in the stead of a comforter and savior: and so under the visor of a false Christ, that is to say, of the devil, we lose the true Christ and make him unprofitable unto us. Thus much have we said as touching private and particular temptations, and how we should use ourselves therein.

For I testify again unto every man which is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law

The first inconvenience is indeed very great, where Paul saith, that Christ profiteth them nothing which are circumcised: and this that followeth is nothing less, where he saith, that they which are circumcised, are debtors to keep the whole law. He speaketh these words with such earnestness and vehemency of spirit, that he confirmeth them with an oath: 'I testify,' that is to say, I swear by all that is sacred. But these words may be expounded two ways, negatively and affirmatively. Negatively, after this manner: I testify unto every man which is circumcised, that he is a debtor to keep the whole law, that is to say, that he performeth no piece of the law; yea that in the very work of circumcision he is not circumcised, and even in the fulfilling of the law he fulfilleth it not, but transgresseth it. And this seemeth to me to be the simple and true meaning of Paul in this place.

Afterwards in the sixth chapter he expoundeth himself saying: 'They themselves which are circumcised, keep not the law.' So he saith also before in the third chapter: 'Whosoever are of the works of the law, are under the curse.' As if he said: Although ye be circumcised, yet are ye not righteous and free from the law; but by this deed ye are rather made debtors and bond-servants of the law; and the more ye go about to satisfy the law, and to be set free from it, the more ye entangle and snare yourselves in the yoke thereof, so that it hath more power to accuse and condemn you. This is to go backward like the crab and to wash away filth with filth.

And this which I say by occasion of Paul's words, I have learned by experience in the monastery, both in myself and others. I have seen many which have painfully travailed, and upon mere conscience have done as much as was possible for them to do, in fasting, in prayer, in wearing of hair, in punishing and tormenting their bodies with sundry exercises (whereby at length they must needs have utterly consumed them, yea although they had been made of iron), and all to this end that they might obtain quietness and peace of conscience: notwithstanding, the more they travailed, the more they were stricken down with fear, and especially when the hour of death approached, they were so fearful that I have seen many murderers [and other malefactors] condemned to death, dying more courageously than they did, which notwithstanding had lived very holily.

Therefore it is most true, that they which do the law, do it not. For the more men go about to satisfy the law, the more they transgress it. Even so we say and

judge of men's traditions. The more a man striveth to pacify his conscience thereby, the more he troubleth and tormenteth it. When I was a monk, I endeavored as much as was possible to live after the strait rule of mine Order: I was wont to shrive myself with great devotion, and to reckon up all my sins (yet being always very contrite before), and I returned to confession very often, and thoroughly performed the penance that was enjoined unto me: yet for all this my conscience could never be fully certified, but was always in doubt, and said: This or that thou hast not done rightly; thou wast not contrite [and sorrowful] enough; this sin thou didst omit in thy confession, etc. Therefore the more I went about to help my weak, wavering and afflicted conscience by men's traditions, the more weak and doubtful and the more afflicted I was. And thus, the more I observed men's traditions, the more I transgressed them, and in seeking after righteousness by mine Order, I could never attain unto it: for it is impossible (as Paul saith) that the conscience should be pacified by the works of the law, and much more by men's traditions, without the promise and glad tidings concerning Christ.

Wherefore they that seek to be justified and quickened by the law, are much further off from righteousness and life, than the publicans, sinners, and harlots. For these cannot trust to their own works, seeing they be such that they cannot hope to obtain grace and forgiveness of sins thereby. For if righteousness and works done according to the law do not justify, how can sins justify which are committed contrary to the law? Therefore in this point they are in far better case than the justiciaries: for they have no affiance in their own works, which greatly hindereth true faith in Christ, if it do not utterly take it away. Contrariwise, the justiciaries, which abstain outwardly from sins, and live holily and without blame in the sight of the world, cannot be without the opinion of their own righteousness, with which [the true] faith in Christ cannot stand: and for this cause they be more miserable than the publicans and harlots, who offer not their good works to God in his displeasure, that for the same he may recompense them with everlasting life (as the justiciaries do), for they have none to offer; but desire that their sins may be pardoned for Christ's sake. He therefore that doeth the law with this opinion, that he will be justified thereby, is a debtor to do the whole law, that is to say, he doeth not one letter of the law. For the law is not given to the end that it may justify, but that it may reveal sin, terrify, accuse and condemn. Wherefore the more a man seeketh by the law and works to help his conscience, the more he rendereth it uncertain and confused. Let the monks be asked (which earnestly labor to obtain peace of conscience by their traditions), whether they can assuredly affirm that their kind of life pleaseth God, and that they are in favor with God because of it. If they will confess the truth, they will answer: Albeit that I live blamelessly and give all diligence to keep mine Order, yet I cannot assuredly say whether this my obedience pleaseth God or no.

In the Lives of the Fathers we read of Arsenius (of whom I made mention afore). Although he had lived a long time in the highest holiness and abstinence, yet when he felt that death was not far off, he began to grieve and fear

exceedingly. Being asked why he feared death, seeing he had lived holily all his days and had served God without ceasing, he answered that he had indeed lived blamelessly according to the judgment of men, but the judgments of God were other than those of men. So he by the holiness and austerity of his life had attained unto nothing else but the fear and horror of death. If he was saved, he must have cast away all his own righteousness and rested on the only mercy of God, saying: I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Lord, which suffered, was crucified, and died for my sins, etc.

The other exposition is affirmative. He that is circumcised, if also a debtor to do the whole law. For he that receiveth Moses in one point, must of necessity receive him in all. He that os necessity observeth one part of the law, hath a duty to observe all other parts thereof. And it helpeth nothing to say, that circumcision is necessary, and not the rest of Moses' laws. For by the same reason that thou art bound to keep circumcision, thou art also bound to keep the whole law. Now to be bound to keep the whole law is nothing else but to show, in effect, that Christ is not yet come. If this be true, then are we bound to keep all the Jewish ceremonies and laws touching meats, places, and times; and Christ must be looked for as yet to come, that he may abolish the Jewish kingdom and priesthood, and set up a new kingdom throughout the whole world. But the whole Scripture witnesseth, and the sequel thereof plainly declareth, that Christ is already come, that by his death he hath redeemed the human race, that he hath abolished the law, and that he hath fulfilled all things which all the prophets have foretold of him. Therefore the law being abolished and taken away, he hath given unto us grace and truth. It is not then the law nor the works thereof, but it is faith in the Christ which hath come, that maketh a man righteous.

Some would bind us at this day to certain of Moses' laws that like them best, as the false apostles would have done at that time. But this is in no wise to be suffered. For if we give Moses leave to rule over us in anything, we are bound to obey him in all things. Wherefore we will not be burdened with any law of Moses. We grant that he is to be read amongst us, and to be heard as a prophet and a witness-bearer of Christ; and moreover, that out of him we may take good examples of good laws and holy life. But we will not suffer him in any wise to have dominion over our conscience.

In this case let him be dead and buried, and let no man know where his grave is (Deuteronomy 34:6).

The former exposition, that is to say, the negative, seemeth to me to be more apt and more spiritual: notwithstanding both are good, and both do condemn the righteousness of the law. The first is; that we are so far from obtaining righteousness by the law, that the more we go about to accomplish the law, the more we transgress the law. The second is, that he which will perform any piece of the law, is bound to keep the whole law.

And to conclude, that Christ profiteth them nothing at all which will be justified by the law.

Hereby it appeareth that Paul meaneth nothing else, but that the law is a plain denial of Christ. Now it is a wonderful thing that Paul dare affirm, that the law of Moses, which was given by God to the people of Israel, is a denial of Christ. Why then did God give it? Before the coming of Christ, and before his manifestation in the flesh, the law was necessary. 'For the law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.' But now that Christ is revealed, inasmuch as we believe in him, we are no longer under the schoolmaster. Hereof we have spoken largely enough before, at the end of the third chapter. Whoso teacheth then that the law is necessary to righteousness, teacheth a plain denial of Christ and of all his benefits, he maketh God a liar, yea he maketh the law also a liar: for the law itself beareth witness of Christ and of the promises made as concerning Christ, and hath foretold that he should be a king of grace, and not of the law.

Ye are abolished (or separated) from Christ, whosoever are justified by the law, and ye are fallen from grace

Here Paul expoundeth himself, and showeth that he speaketh not simply of the law, nor of the works of circumcision, but of the confidence and opinion that men have to be justified thereby. As if he would say: I do not utterly condemn the law or circumcision (for it is lawful for me to drink, to eat, and to keep company with the Jews, according to the law: it is lawful for me to circumcise Timothy); but to seek to be justified by the law, as if Christ were not yet come, or, being now present, he alone were not able to justify, this is it which I condemn: for this is to be separated from Christ.

Therefore he saith: 'Ye are abolished,' that is, ye are utterly void of Christ, Christ is not in you, he worketh not in you any more: ye are not partakers of the knowledge, the spirit, the fellowship, the favor, the liberty, the life, or the doings of Christ, but ye are utterly separate from him, so that he hath no more to do with you, nor ye with him.

These words of Paul are diligently to be noted, that to seek to be justified by the law, is nothing else but to be separated from Christ, and to make him utterly unprofitable. What can be spoken more mightily against the law? What can be set up against this thunderbolt? Wherefore it is impossible that Christ and the law should dwell together in one heart; for either the law or Christ must give place. But if thou think that Christ and trust in the law can dwell together, then be thou sure that Christ dwelleth not in thy heart, but the devil in the likeness of Christ, accusing and terrifying thee, and straitly exacting of thee the law and the works thereof unto righteousness. For the true Christ (as I have said before) neither calleth thee to a reckoning for thy sins, nor biddeth thee to trust to thine own good works. And the true knowledge of Christ, or faith, disputeth not whether

thou hast done good works to righteousness, or evil works to condemnation; but simply concludeth after this sort: if thou have done good works, thou art not therefore justified; or if thou have done evil works, thou art not therefore condemned. I neither take from good works their praise, nor commend evil works. But in the matter of justification, I say, we must look how we may hold Christ, lest if we seek to be justified by the law, we make him unprofitable unto us. For it is Christ alone that justifieth me, both against my evil deeds, and without my good deeds. If I have this persuasion of Christ, I lay hold of the true Christ. But if I think that he exacteth the law and works of me to salvation, then he becometh unprofitable unto me, and I am utterly separated from him.

These are dreadful sentences and threatenings against the righteousness of the law, and man's own righteousness. Moreover, they are also most certain principles which confirm the article of justification. This is then the final conclusion: Either thou must forego Christ, or the righteousness of the law. If thou retain Christ, thou art righteous before God: but if thou stick to the law, Christ availeth thee nothing; thou art bound to keep the whole law, and thou hast now sentence already pronounced against thee: 'Cursed is every one that fulfilleth not' etc. (Deuteronomy 27:26). As we have said of the law, so we say also of men's traditions: Either the Pope with his religious rout must reject all those things wherein hitherto he hath put his trust, or else Christ shall be unprofitable to them. And hereby we may plainly see how pernicious and pestilent the popish doctrine hath been. For it hath led men clean away from Christ, and made him altogether unprofitable. God complaineth in the twenty-third of Jeremiah, that the prophets prophesied lies and the dreams of their own hearts, to the end that his people should forget his name, etc. Therefore, like as the false prophets, leaving the right interpretation of the law, and the true doctrine concerning the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, preached their own dreams, to the end that the people should forget their God; even so, the Papists having darkened and defaced the Gospel concerning Christ, so that they made it of none effect, taught and set forth nothing else but the doctrine of works, whereby they drew the whole world away from Christ. Whoso earnestly considereth this matter cannot but fear and tremble.

Ye are fallen from grace

That is to say, ye are no longer in the kingdom of grace. For like as he that is in a ship, on which side soever he falleth into the sea, is drowned, even so he which is fallen away from grace must needs perish. He therefore that will be justified by the law, hath made shipwreck and hath cast himself into the danger of eternal death. And what can be more mad and wicked than that a man should wish to retain the law of Moses, and thereby to lose the grace and favor of God: which if thou do, thou canst not but heap up to thyself wrath and all evils? Now, if they fall from grace which will be justified by the moral law, whither shall they fall, I pray you, which will be justified by their own traditions and vows? Even to the bottom

of hell. No forsooth: they fly up into heaven; for so they themselves have taught us.

Whosoever live (say they) according to the rule of St. Francis, [Dominic, Benedict,] or such other, the peace and mercy of God is upon them; and again: All they that observe and keep chastity, obedience, etc. shall have everlasting life. But put thou these vain and wicked trifles behind thee, and hearken what Paul teacheth thee here, and what Christ teacheth, saying: 'He that believeth in the Son of God hath everlasting life: but he that believeth not in the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him' (John 3:36); and again: 'He that believeth not is judged already' (John 3:18).

Now, like as the doctrine of the Papists (to note this by the way) concerning men's traditions, works, vows, merits, etc. was most common in the world; so was it thought to be the best and most certain of all other: whereby the devil hath both set up and established his kingdom most mightily. Therefore when we at this day do impugn and vanquish this doctrine by the power of God's word, as chaff is driven away by the wind, it is no marvel that Satan rageth so cruelly against us, raiseth up slanders and offenses everywhere, and setteth the whole world in our tops. Will some man then say, it had been better to have held our peace, for then had none of these evils been stirred up? But we ought more to esteem the favor of God, whose glory we set forth, than to care for the fury of the world which persecuteth us. For what is the Pope and the whole world in comparison of God, whom assuredly we ought to magnify and to prefer before all creatures? Moreover the ungodly enlarge upon the tumults and the offenses which Satan raiseth up to destroy, or at the least to deface, our doctrine. Contrarariwise, we do amplify the inestimable profit and fruit of this doctrine, which we hold to be far above all uproars, sects and offenses. Indeed we are weak, and bear an heavenly treasure in earthen vessels; but although the vessels be never so brittle, yet is the treasure inestimable (2 Corinthians 4:7.).

These words, 'ye are fallen from grace,' must not be coldly or slenderly considered; for they are weighty and of great importance. He that falleth from grace, utterly loseth the atonement, the forgiveness of sins, the righteousness, liberty and life, that Jesus Christ hath merited for us by his death and resurrection; and instead thereof he purchaseth to himself the wrath and judgment of God, sin, death, the bondage of the devil and everlasting damnation. And this place strongly confirmeth and fortifieth our doctrine concerning faith or the article of justification, and marvelously comforteth us again the cruel rage of the Papists, that persecute and condemn us as heretics, because we teach this article. Indeed this place ought to fear the enemies of faith and grace, that is to say, all that seek righteousness by works, from persecuting and blaspheming the word of grace, life and everlasting salvation. But they be so hard-hearted and obstinate, that seeing they see not and hearing they hear not (Matthew 13:13) [and when they read] this dreadful sentence of the Apostle pronounced against

them [they understand it not]. Let us leave them therefore unto themselves; for they are blind, and leaders of the blind (Matthew 15:14).

For we through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness

Paul here knitteth up the matter with a notable conclusion, saying: Ye will be justified by the law, by circumcision and by works; but we seek not to be justified by this means, lest Christ should be made unprofitable unto us, and we become debtors to perform the whole law, and so finally fall away from grace; but we wait through the Spirit by faith for the hope of righteousness. Every word is here diligently to be noted, for they are pithy and full of power. He doth not only say as he is wont: 'We are justified by faith,' or 'through the Spirit by faith,' but moreover he addeth: 'we wait for the hope of righteousness,' including hope also, that he may comprehend the whole matter of faith. When he saith 'we through the Spirit by faith,' there is an opposition to be noted in the word ' Spirit' as if he said: We seek not to be justified by the flesh, but by the Spirit; and so by the Spirit that it be not a fantastical spirit and one that is his own master, as the heretics do vaunt of the spirit; but our Spirit is of faith.

Concerning the Spirit and faith he hath spoken largely before; but here he not only saith : 'We are justified through the Spirit by faith,' but he addeth: 'we wait for the hope of righteousness,' which is a new addition.

Hope, after the manner of the Scripture, is taken two ways, namely, for the thing that is hoped for, and for the affection of him that hopeth. For the thing that is hoped for, it is taken in the first chapter of the Colossians: 'For the hope's sake which is laid up for you in heaven,' that is to say, the thing which ye hope for. For the affection of him that hopeth, it is taken in the eighth to the Romans: 'For we are saved by hope,' etc. So hope in this place also may be taken two ways, and so it yieldeth a double sense. The first is: We wait through the Spirit by faith for the hope of righteousness, that is to say, the righteousness hoped for, which shall certainly be revealed in the time appointed. The second: We wait through the Spirit by faith for righteousness with hope and desire; that is to say, we are righteous, howbeit our righteousness is not yet revealed, but hangeth yet in hope (Romans 8:24). For as long as we live here, sin remaineth in our flesh; there is also a law in our flesh and members, rebelling against the law of our mind, and leading us captives unto the service of sin (Romans 7:13). Now when these affections of the flesh do rage and reign, and we on the other side do through the Spirit wrestle against the same, then is there a place for hope. Indeed we have begun to be justified through faith: whereby also we have received the first fruits of the Spirit, and the mortification of the flesh is also begun in us; but we be not yet perfectly righteous. It remaineth then that we be perfectly justified, and this is it which we hope for. So our righteousness is not yet in actual possession, but lieth under hope. This is a sweet and a sound consolation, whereby afflicted and troubled consciences, feeling their sin, and terrified with every fiery dart of the devil, may be marvelously comforted. For the feeling of sin, the wrath of God,

death, hell, and all other terrors, is wonderful strong in the conflict of conscience; as I myself being taught by experience do know. Then counsel must be given to the tempted in this wise: Brother, thou desirest to have a sensible feeling of thy justification; that is, thou wouldst have such a feeling of righteousness, as thou hast of sin: but that will not be.

But thy righteousness ought to surmount the feeling of sin, and hope that thou art righteous before God. That is to say, thy righteousness standeth not upon thine own feeling, but upon thy hoping that it shall be revealed in due time. Wherefore, thou must not judge according to the feeling of sin which troubleth and terrifieth thee, but according to the promise and doctrine of faith, whereby Christ is promised unto thee, who is thy perfect and everlasting righteousness. Thus my hope, consisting in the inward affection, is stirred up by faith in the midst of all terrors and feeling of sin, to hope that I am righteous. Moreover, if hope be here taken for the thing which is hoped for, it is thus to be understood, that that which a man now seeth not, he hopeth in time shall be made perfect and clearly revealed.

Either sense may stand; but the first, touching the affection of hoping, bringeth more plentiful consolation. For my righteousness is not yet perfect, it cannot yet be felt: yet I do not despair; for faith showeth unto me Christ in whom I trust, and when I have laid hold of him by faith, I wrestle against the fiery darts of the devil, and I take a good heart through hope against the feeling of sin, assuring myself that I have a perfect righteousness prepared for me in heaven. So both these sayings are true: that am righteous already by that righteousness which is begun in me, and also that I am raised up in the same hope against sin, and wait for the full consummation of perfect righteousness in heaven. These things are not rightly understood, but when they be put in practice.

WHAT DIFFERENCE THERE IS BETWEEN FAITH AND HOPE

Here riseth a question, what difference there is between faith and hope.

The sophisters and schoolmen have labored very much in this matter, but they could never show any certainty. Yea to us which travail in the holy Scriptures with much diligence, and also with more fullness of spirit and understanding (be it spoken without any brag) it is hard to find any difference. For there is so great affinity between faith and hope, that the one cannot be separate from the other. Notwithstanding there is a difference between them, which is gathered of their several offices, diversity of working, and of their ends.

First, they differ in respect of their subject [that is, of the ground wherein they rest]: for faith resteth in the understanding, and hope resteth in the will. But

in very deed they cannot be separated, the one having respect to the other, as the two cherubims of the mercy-seat (Exodus 25:20).

Secondly , they differ in respect of their office [that is, of their working]. For faith telleth what is to be done, it teacheth, prescribeth and directeth, and it is a knowledge. Hope is an exhortation which stirreth up the mind that it may be strong, bold and courageous; that it may suffer and endure in adversity, and in the midst thereof wait for better things.

Thirdly , they differ as touching their object [that is, the special matter whereunto they look]. For faith hath for her object the truth, teaching us to cleave surely thereto, and looketh upon the word and promise of the thing that is promised. Hope hath for her object the goodness of God, and looketh upon the thing which is promised in the Word, that is, upon such matters as faith teacheth us to be hoped for.

Fourthly , they differ in order: for faith is the beginning of life before all tribulation (Hebrews 11.), but hope cometh afterwards, proceeding of tribulation (Romans 5.).

Fifthly , they differ by the diversity of working: for faith is a teacher and a judge, fighting against errors and heresies, judging spirits and doctrines; but hope is as it were the general or captain of the field, fighting against tribulation, the cross, impatency, heaviness of spirit, weakness, desperation and blasphemy, and it waiteth for good things even in the midst of all evils.

Therefore when I am instructed by faith in the Word of God, and lay hold of Christ, believing in him with my whole heart (the which cannot be done without the will), then am I righteous by this knowledge, by and by cometh the devil, the father of lies, and laboreth to extinguish my faith by wiles and subtleties; that is to say, by lies, errors and heresies. Moreover, because he is a murderer, he goeth about also to oppress it by violence.

Here hope wrestling, layeth hold on the thing revealed by faith, and overcometh the devil that warreth against faith; and after this victory followeth peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. So that in very deed, faith and hope can scarcely be discerned the one from the other, and yet is there a certain difference between them. And that is may be the better perceived, I will set out the matter by a similitude.

In civil government, prudence and fortitude do differ, and yet these two virtues are so joined together, that they cannot easily be severed. Now, fortitude is a constancy of mind, which is not discouraged in adversity, but endureth valiantly, and waiteth for better things. But if fortitude be not guided by prudence, it is but temerity and rashness. On the other side, if fortitude be not joined with prudence, that prudence is but vain and unprofitable. Therefore like as in policy,

prudence is but vain without fortitude, even so in divinity, faith without hope is nothing: for hope endureth adversity and is constant therein, and in the end overcometh all evils. And on the other side, like as fortitude without prudence is rashness, even so hope without faith is a presumption in spirit, and a tempting of God; for it hath no knowledge of Christ and of the truth which faith teacheth, and therefore it is but a blind rashness and arrogancy. Wherefore a godly man before all things must have a right understanding instructed by faith, according to the which the mind may be guided in afflictions, that it may hope for those good things which faith hath revealed and taught. Faith is the dialectic, which conceiveth the idea of whatsoever is to be believed. Hope is the rhetoric, which amplifieth, urgeth, persuadeth, and exhorteth to constancy, to the end that .faith should not .fail in time of temptation, but should keep hold of the Word and firmly cleave unto it.

Now, as dialectic and rhetoric are distinct arts, which notwithstanding have such an affinity the one with the other, that they cannot be separate (for without dialectic the rhetorician can teach nothing certain, and without rhetoric the dialectician moveth not his hearers, but he that joineth the two both teacheth and persuadeth) ; even so faith and hope are distinct affections, for faith is not hope, nor hope faith, and yet because of the great affinity which they have the one with the other, they cannot be separated. Therefore, as dialectic and rhetoric lend their aid the one to the other, so also do faith and hope. There is therefore such a distinction between faith and hope in divinity, as between the understanding and the will in philosophy, prudence and fortitude in policy, dialectic and rhetoric in discourse.

To be short, faith is conceived by teaching; for thereby the mind is instructed what the truth is. Hope is conceived by exhortation; for by exhortation hope is stirred up in afflictions, which confirmeth him that is already justified by faith, that he be not overcome by adversities, but that he may be able more strongly to resist them. Notwithstanding if the spark of faith should not give light to the will, it could not be persuaded to lay hold upon hope. We have faith then, whereby we are taught, we understand and know the heavenly wisdom, apprehend Christ, and continue in his grace. But as soon as we lay hold upon Christ by faith and confess him, forthwith our enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil, rise up against us, hating and persecuting us most cruelly both in body and spirit. Wherefore we thus believing and justified through the Spirit by faith do wait for the hope of our righteousness. And we wait through patience; for we see and feel the flat contrary. For the world with his prince the devil assaileth us mightily both within and without. Moreover, sin yet still remaineth in us, which driveth us into heaviness. Notwithstanding we give not over for all this, but raise up our mind strongly through faith, which lighteneth, teacheth and guideth the same. And thus we abide firm and constant, and overcome all adversities through him which hath loved us, until our righteousness which we believe and wait for be revealed.

By faith therefore we began, by hope we continue, and by revelation we shall obtain the whole. In the meantime whilst we live here, because we believe, we teach the Word and publish the knowledge of Christ unto others. Thus doing we suffer persecution (according to this text: 'I believed, and therefore did I speak, and I was sore troubled' (Psalm 116:10), with patience, being strengthened and encouraged through hope; whereunto the Scripture exhorteth us with most sweet and comfortable promises taught and revealed unto us by faith. And thus doth hope spring up and increase in us, Romans 15:4: 'That through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope.'

Paul therefore, not without cause joineth patience in tribulation, and hope together, in the fifth and eight to the Romans, and in other places also, for by them hope is stirred up. But faith (as also I showed before) goeth before hope; for it is the beginning of life, and beginneth before all tribulation: for it learneth Christ, and apprehendeth him, without the cross.

Notwithstanding, the knowledge of Christ cannot be long without the cross, without troubles and conflicts. In this case the mind must be stirred up to a fortitude of Spirit (for hope is nothing else but a spiritual fortitude, as faith is nothing else but a spiritual prudence) which consisteth in suffering, according to this saying:

That through patience,' etc. (Romans 15:4). These three things then do abide [in the faithful]; Faith, which teacheth the truth, and defendeth from errors; Hope, which endureth and over-cometh all adversities, as well bodily as ghostly; and Charity, which worketh all good things as it followeth in the text. And so is a man entire and perfect in this life, as well within as without, until the righteousness be revealed which he waiteth for; and this shall be a perfect and everlasting righteousness.

Moreover, this place containeth both a singular doctrine and consolation.

As touching the doctrine, it showeth that we are made righteous, not by works, sacrifices or all the ceremonies of Moses's law, much less by the works and traditions of men, but by Christ alone. Whatsoever is in us besides him, whether it be law, work, suffering, or understanding, will, etc., it is flesh and not spirit. Whatsoever then the world counteth to be good and holy without Christ, is nothing else but sin, error, and flesh. Wherefore circumcision and the observation of the law; also the works, religions, and vows of the monks, and of all such as trust in their own righteousness, are [altogether] carnal. But we (saith Paul) are far above all these things in the Spirit: for we possess Christ by faith, and in the midst of our afflictions through hope we wait for that righteousness which we possess already by faith.

The comfort is this: that in serious conflicts and terrors, wherein the feeling of sin, heaviness of spirit, desperation and such-like, is very strong (for they enter

deeply into the heart and mightily assail it), thou must not follow thine own feeling. For if thou do, thou wilt say: I feel the horrible terrors of the law and the tyranny of sin, not only rebelling against me, but also subduing and leading me captive, and I feel no comfort or righteousness at all. Therefore I am a sinner and not righteous. If I be a sinner, then am I guilty of everlasting death. But against this feeling thou must wrestle, and say: Although I feel myself utterly overwhelmed and swallowed up with sin, and my heart telleth me that God is offended and angry with me, yet in very deed it is not true, but that mine own sense and feeling so judgeth.

The Word of God (which in these terrors I ought to follow, and not mine own sense) teacheth a far other thing: namely, that 'God is near unto them that are of a troubled heart, and saveth them that are of an humble spirit' (Psalm 34:18); also 'He despiseth not an humble and contrite heart' (Psalm 51:17). Moreover, Paul showeth here, that they which are justified through the Spirit by faith, do not yet feel the hope of righteousness, but wait still for it.

Wherefore when the law accuseth and sin terrifieth thee, and thou feelest nothing but the wrath and judgment of God, despair not for all that, but take unto thee the armor of God, the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, and the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:16 ff.), and try how good and how valiant a warrior thou art. Lay hold of Christ by faith, who is the Lord of the law and sin, and of all things else which accompany them. Believing in him thou art justified: which thing reason and the feeling of thine own heart when thou art tempted, do not tell thee, but the Word of God.

Moreover, in the midst of these conflicts and terrors which often return and exercise thee, wait thou patiently through hope for righteousness, which thou hast now by faith, although it be yet but begun and imperfect, until it be revealed perfect and eternal in the time appointed.

But thou wilt say: I feel not myself to have any righteousness, or at the least, I feel it but very little. Thou must not feel, but believe that thou hast righteousness. And except thou believe that thou art righteous, thou dost great injury unto Christ, who hath cleansed thee by the washing of water through the Word; who also died upon the cross, condemned sin and killed death, that through him thou mightest obtain righteousness and everlasting life. These things thou canst not deny (except thou wilt openly show thyself to be wicked and blasphemous against God, and utterly to despise God and all his promises, Christ and all his benefits), and so consequently thou canst not deny but that thou art righteous.

Let us learn, therefore, in great and horrible terrors, when our conscience feeleth nothing but sin, and judgeth that God is angry with us, and that Christ hath turned his face from us, not to follow the sense and feeling of our own heart, but to stick to the Word of God, which saith that God is not angry, but looketh to

the afflicted, and to such as are troubled in spirit and tremble at his Word; and that Christ turneth not himself away from such as labor and are heavy laden, but refresheth and comforteth them, etc.

This place therefore teacheth plainly, that the law and works bring us unto no righteousness or comfort at all: but this doth the Holy Ghost in the faith of Christ, who raiseth up hope in terrors and tribulations, which endureth and overcometh all adversities. Very few there be that know how weak and feeble faith and hope are under the cross, and in the conflict. For it seemeth they are but a smoking flax, which is ready by and by to be put out with a vehement wind. But the faithful, who believe in the midst of these assaults and terrors, hoping against hope, that is to say, fighting through faith in the promise as touching Christ, against the feeling of sin and of the wrath of God, do afterwards find by experience, that the spark of faith, being very little (as it appeareth to [natural] reason, for reason can scarcely feel it) is as an elemental fire which filleth the whole heaven, and swalloweth up all our sins and all our terrors.

There is nothing more dear or precious in all the world, to the true children of God, than this doctrine. For they that understand this doctrine, do know that whereof all the world is ignorant, namely, hat sin, death and all other miseries, afflictions and calamities, as well corporal as spiritual, do turn to the benefit and profit of the elect. Moreover, they know that God is then most dear unto them, when he seemeth to be farthest off, and that he is then a most merciful and loving Savior, when he seemeth to be most angry, to afflict and to destroy. Also they know that they have an everlasting righteousness, which they wait for through hope, as a certain and sure possession laid up for them in heaven, even when they feel the horrible terrors of sin and death; moreover, that they are then lords of all things, when they are most destitute of all things, according to that saying: 'Having nothing, and yet possessing all things' (2 Corinthians 6:10).

This, saith the Scripture, is to conceive comfort through hope. But this cunning is not learned without great and often temptations.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, neither uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love

This place the schoolmen do wrest unto their own opinion, whereby they teach that we are justified by charity or works. For they say that faith, even though it be infused from above (and of faith gotten by our own industry I speak not here), justifieth not, except it be formed by charity. For they call charity 'grace making acceptable,' that is, justifying (to use our word, or rather Paul's word); and then they say that charity is gotten by our merit of congruence, etc. And moreover, they affirm that even faith infused can stand together with mortal sin. Thus entirely do they take justification away from faith and attribute it (by this means) unto charity alone. And this they will have to be demonstrated by Paul in this

place: 'Faith which worketh by love,' as if Paul would say: Lo, faith justifieth not, yea it is nothing, except working charity be added unto it, which formeth faith.

But these are all monsters, fabricated by idle heads. For who will bear to be taught that faith, which is the gift of God through the Holy Ghost infused into our hearts, can stand together with mortal sin? If they spake of faith gotten by our own industry, or historical faith and a natural opinion conceived out of history, they might be borne; yea concerning an historical faith they should speak truly. But when they think thus of infused faith, they do plainly confess that they are utterly devoid of all right understanding of faith. Moreover, they read this place of Paul through colored glass (as the saying is), and pervert the text after their own dreams. For Paul saith not: Faith which justifieth by love, or: Faith which maketh acceptable by love. Such a text they do invent, and forcibly thrust it into this place. Much less doth Paul say: Charity maketh acceptable. He saith not so, but he saith: 'Faith which worketh by love.'

He saith that works are done by faith through love, and not that a man is justified by love. But who is so rude a grammarian that he understandeth not from the very words, that it is one thing to be justified and another to work? For the words of Paul are clear and plain: 'Faith WORKETH by love.' Wherefore it is manifest fraud when they set aside the plain meaning of Paul and interpret 'to work' as 'to be justified' and 'works' as 'righteousness'; for even in moral philosophy they are constrained to confess that works are not righteousness, but works are done from righteousness.

Moreover, Paul maketh not faith here unformed, and as it were a rude chaos, whereunto it pertaineth neither to be nor to do anything: but he attributeth the working itself unto faith, and not unto charity; not dreaming that faith is some rude and unformed quality, but asserting that it is an efficacious and working quiddity, and as it were a substance or (as they say) substantial form. For he saith not: Charity is efficacious, but:

Faith is efficacious, and not: Charity worketh, but: Faith worketh. But charity he maketh as it were the instrument of faith, through which faith worketh: and who doth not know that an instrument hath its force, motion and action, not of itself, but of the workman, operator, or agent? For who would say: The axe giveth the power and motion of cutting to the carpenter? The ship giveth the power and motion of navigating to the sailor? Or, to adduce the example of Isaiah, who will say: The saw draweth the carpenter, or the rod lifteth up the hand? (Isaiah 10:15). There is but little difference when they say that charity is the form of faith, or that it imparteth force and motion unto faith, or that it justifieth. But seeing Paul attributeth not even works unto charity, how should he attribute justification unto it? It is therefore certain that great injury is done, not only unto Paul, but unto faith and charity themselves also, when this place is wrested against faith on behalf of charity.

But so it happeneth to the careless readers and such as bring their own cogitations to the reading of holy Scripture, whereas they ought to come bringing nothing, but seeking to carry away thoughts from the Scriptures; and moreover, they ought diligently to consider the words, comparing those going before with those following after, and endeavor to grasp the complete sense of each place, not picking out words and phrases to suit their own dreams. For Paul goeth not about here to declare what faith is, or what it availeth before God; he disputeth not, I say, of justification (for this hath he done largely before), but as it were gathering up his argument, he briefly showeth what the Christian life itself is, saying: 'In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything, but faith working through love.' That is to say, faith which is not feigned nor hypocritical, but true and lively. That is that faith which exerciseth and requireth good works through love. It is as much to say as: He that will be a true Christian indeed, or one of Christ's kingdom, must be a true believer. Now he believeth not truly, if works of charity follow not his faith. So on both hands, as well on the right hand as on the left, he shutteth hypocrites out of Christ's kingdom. On the left hand he shutteth out the Jews, and all such as will work their own salvation, saying: 'In Christ neither circumcision,' that is to say, no works, no worshipping, no kind of life in the world, but faith alone without any trust in works [or merits] availeth [before God]. On the right hand he shutteth out all slothful and idle persons, which say: If faith justify without works, then let us work nothing, but let us only believe and do what we list. Not so, ye enemies of grace, saith Paul. It is true that only faith justifieth, but I speak here of faith, which, after it hath justified, is not idle, but occupied and exercised in working through love.

Paul therefore in this place setteth forth the whole life of a Christian man, namely, that inwardly it consisteth in faith towards God, and outwardly in charity and good works towards our neighbor. So that a man is a perfect Christian inwardly through faith before God, who hath no need of our works, and outwardly before men, whom our faith profiteth nothing, but our charity or our works. Therefore, when we have heard or understood of this form of Christian life, to wit, that it is faith and charity (as I have said), it is not yet declared what faith or what charity is; for this is another question. For as touching faith, or the inward nature, force and use of faith, he hath spoken before, where he showed that it is our righteousness, or rather our justification before God. Here he joineth it with charity and works, that is to say, he speaketh of the external office thereof, which is to stir us up to do good works, or to bring forth in us [the fruits of] charity to [the profit of] our neighbor. Wherefore, seeing this place speaketh of the whole life of Christians, no man of good sense can understand it as concerning justification before God: for that were bad dialectic, or the fallacy of composition and division, whereby that is taken of the part, which is said of the whole. For dialectic cannot suffer (as rhetoric doth) the figures of synecdoche and hyperbole, seeing it is the mistress of teaching, defining, dividing, and concluding, as exactly as these things can be done. For what manner of dialectic 'were this: Man is body and soul, neither can he be without body and soul; therefore the body understandeth, the soul alone doth not understand? It is the same dialectic as this: The Christian

life is faith and love, or faith working through love; therefore love justifieth, and not faith alone.

But let man's dreams depart. This also we learn out of this place, namely, how horrible is the darkness in those Egyptians which despise not only faith, but also love, in Christianity; and in its stead they weary themselves with will-works, tonsures, vestments, meats and infinite other vain outward shows, by the which they will seem to be Christians. But Paul here standing with great freedom, declareth openly and plainly: That which maketh a Christian is faith working through love. He saith not: A Christian is made by a cowl, by fasting, vestments, ceremonies; but by true faith towards God, which loveth his neighbor and doeth good.

Whether any be a servant, master, king, priest, man, woman, clad in purple or clad in rags, eating flesh or eating fish: none of all these things, yea none at all, maketh a Christian, but only faith and love. All else is falsehood and mere idolatry. And yet nothing is more despised than this very faith and charity among those who will be most Christians and a holier church than the Church of God itself. Once again they admire and boast of their own shows and shams of will-works, under cover of which they promote their horrible idolatries, impieties, avarice, uncleanness, hatreds, murders, and the whole kingdom of hell. Such power hath the vehemence of hypocrisy and superstition in all ages from the beginning even to the end of the world.

Ye did run well: who did let you that ye did not obey the truth?

These are plain words. Paul affirmeth that he teacheth them the truth and the selfsame thing that he taught them before, and that they ran well so long as they obeyed the truth, that is, they believed and lived rightly: but now they did not so, since they were misled by the false apostles.

Moreover, he useth here a new kind of speech in calling the Christian life a course or a race. For among the Hebrews, to run or to walk signifieth as much as to live or to be conversant. The teachers do run when they teach purely, and the hearers or learners do run when they receive the Word with joy, and when the fruits of the Spirit do follow. Which thing was done as long as Paul was present, as he witnessed before in the third and fourth chapters. And here he saith: 'Ye did run well,' that is to say, all things went forward well and happily among you, ye lived very well, ye went on the right way to everlasting life, which the Word of God promised you, etc.

These words, 'Ye did run well,' contain in them a singular comfort. This temptation oftentimes exerciseth the godly, that their life seemeth unto them to be rather a certain slow creeping than a running. But if they abide in sound doctrine, and walk in the Spirit, let this nothing trouble them, that their doings seem to go slowly forward, or rather creep. God judgeth far otherwise. For that

which seemeth unto us to be very slow and scarcely to creep, runneth swiftly in God's sight. Again, that which is to us nothing else but sorrow, mourning, and death, is before God, joy, mirth, and true happiness. Therefore Christ saith: 'Blessed are ye that mourn and weep, for ye shall receive comfort' (Matthew 5:4), 'ye shall laugh,' etc. (Luke 6:21). All things shall turn to the best to them which believe in the Son of God, be it sorrow, or be it death itself. Therefore they be true runners indeed, and whatsoever they do, it runneth well and goeth happily forward by the furtherance of Christ's spirit, which cannot skill of slow proceedings.

Who did let you that you did not obey the truth?

They are hindered in this course which fall away from faith and grace to the law and works; as it happened to the Galatians being misled and seduced by the false apostles, whom covertly he reprehendeth with these words: 'Who did let you that you did not obey the truth?' In like manner he said before in the third chapter: 'Who hath bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?' And here Paul showeth by the way, that men are so strongly bewitched with false doctrine that they embrace lies and heresies in the stead of the truth and spiritual doctrine. And on the other side, they say and swear that the sound doctrine which before they loved, is erroneous; and that their error is sound doctrine, maintaining and defending the same with all their power. Even so the false apostles brought the Galatians (which ran well at the beginning) into this opinion, to believe that they erred and went very slowly forward when Paul was their teacher. But afterwards, they being seduced by the false apostles, and falling clean away from the truth, were so strongly bewitched with their false persuasion, that they thought themselves to be in a happy state, and that they ran very well.

The same happeneth at this day to such as are seduced by the sectaries and fantastical spirits. Therefore I am wont to say, that falling in doctrine cometh not of man, but of the devil, and is most perilous, to wit, even from the high heaven to the bottom of hell. For they that continue in error, are so far off from acknowledging their sin, that they maintain the same to be high righteousness. Wherefore it is impossible for them to obtain pardon.

It is not the persuasion of him that calleth you

This is a great consolation and a singular doctrine, whereby Paul showeth how the false persuasion of such as are deceived by wicked teachers, may be rooted out of their hearts. The false apostles were jolly fellows, and in outward appearance far passing Paul both in learning and godliness. The Galatians, being deceived with this goodly show, supposed that when they heard them, they heard Christ himself, and therefore they judged their persuasion to be of Christ. Contrariwise, Paul showeth that this persuasion and doctrine was not of Christ, who had called them in grace, but of the devil; and by this means he won many of them from this false persuasion.

Likewise we at this day revoke many from error that were seduced, when we show that their opinions are fantastical, wicked, and full of blasphemies.

Again, this consolation pertaineth to all those that are afflicted, which through temptation conceive a false opinion of Christ. For the devil is a marvelous persuader, and knoweth how to amplify the least sin, yea a very trifle, in such sort, that he which is tempted shall think it to be a most heinous and horrible crime, and worthy of eternal damnation. Here the troubled conscience must be comforted and raised up in such sort as Paul raised up the Galatians, to wit, that this cogitation or persuasion cometh not of Christ, forasmuch as it fighteth against the word of the Gospel, which painteth out Christ, not as an accuser, a cruel exactor, etc., but as a meek, humble-hearted and merciful Savior and comforter.

But if Satan (who is a cunning workman, and will leave no way unassayed) overthrow this, and lay against thee the word and example of Christ in this wise: True it is that Christ is meek, gentle and merciful, but to those which are holy and righteous: contrariwise, to the sinners he threateneth wrath and destruction (Luke 13): also he pronounceth that the unbelievers are damned already (John 3): moreover, Christ wrought many good works: he suffered also many evils, and commandeth us to follow his example: but thy life is neither according to Christ's word, nor his example: for thou art a sinner, and there is no faith in thee: yea, thou hast done no good at all, and therefore those sentences which set forth Christ as a severe judge, do belong to thee, and not those comfortable sentences which show him to be a loving and a merciful Savior, etc. Here let him that is tempted comfort himself after this manner:

The Scripture setteth out Christ unto us two manner of ways: first, as a gift. If I take hold of him in this sort, I can want nothing. For 'in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Colossians 2:3). He, with all that is in him, 'is made unto me of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption' (1 Corinthians 1:30). Therefore, although I have committed both many and grievous sins, yet notwithstanding, if I believe in him, they shall all be swallowed up by his righteousness. Secondly, the Scripture setteth him forth as an example to be followed. Notwithstanding, I will not suffer this Christ (I mean, as he is an example) to be set before me, but only in the time of joy and gladness when I am out of temptation (where I can scarcely follow the thousandth part of his example), that I may have him as a mirror to behold and view how much is yet wanting in me, that I become not secure and careless. But in the time of tribulation I will not hear nor admit Christ, but as a gift, who dying for my sins, hath bestowed upon me his righteousness, and hath done and accomplished that for me, which was wanting in my life: 'For he is the end and fulfilling of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth' (Romans 10:4).

It is good to know these things, not only to the end that every one of us may have a sure and a certain remedy in the time of temptation, whereby we may eschew that venom of desperation, wherewith Satan thinketh to poison us; but also to the end we may be able to resist the furious sectaries and schismatics of our time. For the Anabaptists count nothing more glorious in their whole doctrine, than that they so severely urge the example of Christ and the cross; especially seeing the sentences are manifest wherein Christ commendeth the cross to his disciples. We must learn therefore how we may withstand this Satan, transforming himself into the likeness of an angel. Which we shall do if we make a difference between Christ set forth unto us sometimes as a gift, and sometimes as an example. The preaching of him both ways hath his convenient time, which if it be not observed, the preaching of salvation may be turned into poison.

Christ therefore must be set forth unto those which are already cast down and bruised through the heavy burden and weight of their sins, as a Savior and a gift, and not as an Example and a law-giver. But to those that are secure and obstinate, he must be set forth as an example; also the hard sentences of the Scripture, and the horrible examples of the wrath of God must be laid before them, as of the drowning of the whole world, of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and such other like, that they may repent. Let every Christian therefore when he is terrified and afflicted, learn to cast away the false persuasion which (by Satan's whispering) he hath conceived of Christ, and let him say: O cursed Satan, why dost thou now dispute with me of doing and working, seeing I am terrified and afflicted for my sins already? Nay rather, seeing I now labor and am heavy laden, I will not hearken to thee which art an accuser and a destroyer, but to Christ the Savior of mankind, which saith, that he came into the world to save sinners, to comfort such as are in terror, anguish, and desperation, and to preach deliverance to the captives, etc. This is the true Christ, and there is none other but he. I can seek examples of holy life in Abraham, Isaiah, John Baptist, Paul, and other saints: but they cannot forgive my sins, they cannot deliver me from the power of the devil and from death, they cannot save me and give me everlasting life. For these things belong to Christ alone, whom God the Father hath sealed, therefore I will not hear thee, nor acknowledge thee for my teacher, O Satan, but Christ, of whom the Father hath said: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him.'

Let us learn in this wise to comfort ourselves through faith in temptation, and in the persuasion of false doctrine: else the devil will either seduce us by his ministers, or kill us with his fiery darts.

A little leaven doth leaven the whole lump

Jerome and they which have followed him, do censure Paul, alleging that he oftentimes wrested the sayings of holy Scripture unto another sense.

Wherefore they say that those things are made to be of force in Paul, which in their own places are of no force. But they accuse the Apostle unjustly; for right well and wisely doth he now make general sentences particular, now particular sentences general: as afore in the third chapter, he taketh this general sentence: 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree,' and maketh it particular, applying it most fitly to Christ; and this particular sentence: 'A little leaven,' etc, he taketh generally, applying it unto doctrine (as in this place, where he entreateth of justification), and unto life and evil manners (as in 1 Corinthians 5).

This whole Epistle sufficiently witnesseth how Paul was grieved with the fall of the Galatians, and how often he beat into their heads (sometimes chiding and sometimes entreating them) the exceeding great and horrible enormities that should ensue upon this their fall, unless they repented. This fatherly and apostolical care and admonition of Paul moved some of them nothing at all: for many of them acknowledged Paul no more for their teacher, but preferred the false apostles far above him: of whom they thought themselves to have received the true doctrine, and not of Paul.

Moreover, the false apostles no doubt slandered Paul among the Galatians, saying that he was an obstinate and a contentious fellow, which for a light matter would break the unity of the churches, and for no other cause but that he alone would be counted wise and magnified of them. Through this false accusation they made Paul very odious unto many.

Some other which had not yet utterly forsaken his doctrine, thought that there was no danger in dissenting a little from him in the doctrine of justification and faith. Wherefore, when they heard that Paul made so heinous a matter of that which seemed unto them to be but light and of small importance, they marveled, and thus they thought with themselves:

Be it so that we have swerved something from the doctrine of Paul, and that there hath been some fault in us; yet that being but a small matter, he ought to wink thereat, or at least not so vehemently to amplify it, lest by the occasion thereof of the concord of the churches should be broken.

Whereunto he answereth with this proverbial sentence: 'A little leaven leaveneth [or maketh sour] the whole lump [of dough].' And this is a caveat or an admonition which Paul standeth much upon. And we also ought greatly to esteem the same at this day. For the Sacramentarians, which deny the corporal presence of Christ in the Supper, object against us in like manner that we are contentious, obstinate, and intractable in defending our doctrine, seeing that for the single article concerning the sacrament we do break Christian charity and rend the concord of the churches. We ought not (say they) to set such great store by this little point of doctrine, which is obscure and insufficiently expounded by the Apostles, that for its sake alone we have no respect unto the whole sum of Christian doctrine or unto the general concord of all the churches: especially

seeing they agree with us concerning the other articles, which are more necessary and of greater moment. With this very plausible argument they not only bring us into disrepute among their own people, but they also lead astray many good men, which judge that we dissent from them of mere obstinacy or some private affection. But these are the crafty fetches of the devil, whereby he goeth about utterly to overthrow not only that article, but all Christian doctrine. To this we answer therefore with Paul, that 'a little leaven maketh sour the whole lump.'

In philosophy, a small fault in the beginning, is a great [and a foul] fault in the end. So in divinity, one little error overthroweth the whole doctrine.

Wherefore we must separate life and doctrine far asunder. The doctrine is not ours, but God's whose ministers only we are called; therefore we may not change or diminish one tittle thereof. The life is ours: therefore, as touching that, we are ready to do, to suffer, to forgive, etc. whatsoever our adversaries shall require of us, so that faith and doctrine may remain sound and uncorrupt; of the which we say always with Paul: 'A little leaven leaveneth,' etc. In this matter we cannot yield even an hair's breadth. For the doctrine is like a mathematical point, which cannot be divided; that is, it can suffer neither addition nor subtraction. Contrariwise, the life, which is like a physical point, can always be divided, always yield somewhat.

A small mote in the eye hurteth the eye. Hence the Germans say of remedies for the eyes: 'Nothing is good for the eyes.' And our Savior Christ saith; 'The light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is single, then is thy whole body light; but if thine eye be evil, then thy body is dark;' again 'If thy body shall have no part dark, then shall all be light' (Luke 11:34,36). By this allegory Christ signifieth that the eye, that is to say, the doctrine ought to be most simple, clear, and sincere, having in it no darkness, no cloud, etc. And James in his Epistle saith: 'He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all;' which saying he had not of his own spirit, but doubtless had heard it of the fathers. The doctrine ought therefore to be as it were a golden circle, round and whole, wherein there is no breach; for where there is the very least breach, the circle is no longer complete. What profit is it to the Jews, that they believe in one God, even the Creator of all things, or that they believe all the articles and accept the whole Scripture, when they deny Christ? 'He therefore that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all.' This place therefore maketh very much for us against these cavillers which say, that we break charity to the great hurt and damage of the churches.

But we protest that we desire nothing more than to be at unity with all men: so that they cleave unto the doctrine of faith entire and uncorrupt. If we cannot obtain this, in vain do they require charity of us.

Accursed be that charity which is preserved through the loss of the doctrine of faith, to the which all things ought to give place, be it charity, an Apostle, or an

angel from heaven, etc. Therefore, when they make this matter of so little account, they do sufficiently witness what store they set by the Word of God. Which if they did believe to be the Word of God, they would not so trifle with it, but would hold it in high honor, and without any disputing or doubting would put their faith in it, knowing that one word of God is all and all are one. Likewise they would know that one article [of doctrine] is all and all are one, so that if one is set aside, then by little and little all are lost: for they are joined the one to the other, and are bound up together as it were by one common bond. Let us suffer them therefore to extol charity and concord as much as they list: but on the other side, let us magnify the majesty of the Word and faith.

Charity may be neglected in time and place without any danger: but so cannot the Word and faith be. Charity suffereth all things, giveth place to all men. Contrariwise, faith suffereth nothing, giveth place to no man.

Charity in giving place, in believing, in giving and forgiving, is oftentimes deceived, and yet notwithstanding being so deceived, it suffereth no loss which is to be called true loss indeed, that is to say, it loseth not Christ: therefore it is not offended, but continueth still constant in well doing, yea even towards the unthankful and unworthy. Contrariwise, in the matter of faith and salvation, when men teach lies and errors under the color of the truth, and seduce many, here hath charity no place: for here we lose not any benefit bestowed upon the unthankful, but we lose the Word, faith, Christ, and everlasting life. Wherefore if thou deniest God in one article, thou hast denied him in all; for God is not divided into many articles, but is all in each several one, and one in them all together. Therefore let us always answer the Sacramentarians, which accuse us of neglecting charity, with this proverb of Paul: 'A little leaven,' etc.; also: Play not with a name, faith, or the eye. These things have I spoken at length to confirm our people and to teach others, who perchance are offended by our constancy, not thinking that we have sure and weighty reasons for it. Let it not move us therefore that they urge so much the keeping of charity and concord; for whoso loveth not God and his Word, it is no matter what or how much he loveth.

Paul therefore by this sentence admonisheth as well teachers as hearers, to take heed that they esteem not the doctrine of faith as a light matter, wherewith they may dally at their pleasure. It is a bright sunbeam coming down from heaven, which lighteneth, directeth, and guideth us. Now, like as the world with all his wisdom and power is not able to stop or turn away the beams of the sun coming down from heaven unto the earth: even so can there be nothing added to the doctrine of faith, or taken from it; for that is an utter defacing and overthrowing of the whole.

I have trust in you through the lord

As if he would say: I have taught, admonished, and reprov'd you enough, so that ye would hearken unto me. Notwithstanding I hope well of you in the Lord. Here

riseth a question, whether Paul doth well when he saith he hath a good hope or trust in the Galatians, seeing the holy Scripture forbiddeth any trust to be put in men. Both faith and charity have their trust and belief, but after divers sorts by reason of the diversity of their objects.

Faith trusteth in God, and therefore it cannot be deceived: charity believeth man, and therefore it is often deceived. Now, this faith that springeth of charity is so necessary to this present life, that without it life cannot continue in the world. For if one man should not believe and trust another, what life should we live upon earth? The true Christians do sooner believe and give credit through charity, than the children of this world do. For faith towards men is a fruit of the Spirit, or of Christian faith in the godly.

Hereupon Paul had a trust in the Galatians, yea, though they were fallen from his doctrine: but yet in the Lord. As if he should say: I have a trust in you so far forth as the Lord is in you, and ye in him; that is to say, so far forth as ye abide in the truth. From which if you fall away, seduced by the ministers of Satan, I will not trust unto you any more. Thus it is lawful for the godly to trust and believe men.

That ye will be none otherwise minded

To wit, concerning doctrine and faith, than I have taught you, and ye have learned of me: that is to say, I have a good hope of you, that ye will not receive any other doctrine which shall be contrary to mine.

But he that troubleth you shall bear his condemnation, whosoever he be

By this sentence Paul, as it were a judge sitting upon the judgment-seat, condemneth the false apostles, calling them by a very odious name, troublers of the Galatians: whom they esteemed to be very godly men, and far better teachers than Paul. And withal he goeth about to terrify the Galatians with this horrible sentence, whereby he so boldly condemneth the false apostles, to the end that they should fly their false doctrine as a most dangerous plague. As if he should say: What mean ye to give ear to those pestilent fellows, which teach you not, but only trouble you? The doctrine that they deliver unto you is nothing else but a troubling of consciences.

Wherefore, how great soever they be, they shall bear their condemnation.

Now, a man may understand by these words: 'Whosoever he be,' that the false apostles in outward appearance were very good and holy men. And peradventure there was amongst them some notable disciple of the Apostles, of great name and authority. For it is not without cause that he useth such vehement and pithy words. He speaketh after the same manner also in the first chapter, saying: 'If we or an angel from heaven preach unto you otherwise than

we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.' And it is not to be doubted, but that many were offended with this vehemency of the Apostle, thinking thus with themselves: Wherefore doth Paul break charity? Why is he so obstinate in so small a matter? Why doth he so rashly pronounce sentence of eternal damnation against those that are ministers of Christ as well as he? He passeth nothing of all this; but proceedeth on still, and boldly curseth and condemneth all those that pervert the doctrine of faith, be they never so highly esteemed, seem they never so holy and learned. In like manner we at this day do hold for excommunicate and condemned, all such as say that the article of the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is uncertain, or do violence to the words of Christ at the Supper.

We do most straitly insist, that all the articles of Christian doctrine, as well small as great (although none is small unto us), must be held pure and certain. And this is most necessary: for the doctrine is our one true light, which lighteneth and guideth us and showeth us the way to heaven; and it is such that if it be overthrown in one part, it must needs be overthrown altogether. When this is done, charity can nothing help us. We can be saved without charity and concord towards the Sacramentarians, but not without pure doctrine and faith. Otherwise, gladly will we keep charity and concord towards them which with us have a godly opinion of all the articles of Christian doctrine; yea moreover, as much as in us lieth, we will have peace with our enemies and pray for them; which through ignorance do blaspheme our doctrine and persecute us: but not so with them that knowingly and against conscience do hurt any article of Christian doctrine.

And Paul here teacheth us by his own example to be thus obstinate, when he declareth that the false apostles and their disciples should assuredly bear their condemnation for a matter which appeared to them (since both were persuaded that the doctrine which they taught and believed was true and godly) to be not only very small, but also very unequal.

Wherefore (as I give often warning) we must diligently discern between doctrine and life. Doctrine is heaven, life is earth. In life is sin, error, uncleanness and misery, mingled with vinegar, as the proverb saith. There let charity wink, forbear, be beguiled, believe, hope, and suffer all things: there let forgiveness of sins prevail as much as may be, so that sin and error be not defended and maintained. But in doctrine like as there is no error, so it hath no need of pardon. Wherefore there is no comparison between doctrine and life. One little point of doctrine is of more value than heaven and earth: and therefore we cannot abide to have the least jot thereof to be corrupted. But we can very well wink at the offenses and errors of life. For we also do daily err in life and conversation, yea all the saints err: and this do they earnestly confess in the Lord's Prayer, and in the articles of our faith. But our doctrine, by the grace of God, is pure: we have all the articles of our faith grounded upon the holy Scripture. Those the devil would gladly corrupt and overthrow. Therefore he assaileth us so craftily with this goodly argument, that we ought not to break charity and the unity of the churches.

And brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the slander of the cross abolished

Paul laboring by all means possible to call the Galatians back again, reasoneth now by his own example. I have procured to myself (saith he) the hatred and persecution of the priests, the elders of the people and my whole nation, because I take away righteousness from circumcision: which if I would attribute unto it, the Jews would not only cease to persecute me, but also would love and highly commend me. But now, because I preach the gospel of Christ and the righteousness of faith, abolishing the law and circumcision, therefore I suffer persecution. Contrariwise the false apostles, to avoid the cross and this deadly hatred of the Jewish nation, do preach circumcision; and by this means they obtain and retain the favor of the Jews; as he saith in the sixth chapter following: 'They compel you to be circumcised,' etc. Moreover, they would gladly bring to pass, that there should be no dissension, but peace and concord between the Gentiles and the Jews. But that is impossible to be done without the loss of the doctrine of faith, which is the doctrine of the cross and full of offenses. Wherefore when he saith: 'If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the slander of the cross abolished,' he meaneth that it were a great absurdity and inconveniency, if the offense of the cross should cease. After the same manner he speaketh in 1 Corinthians 1: 'Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.' As if he said: I would not that the offense and cross of Christ should be abolished.

Here may some man say: the Christians then are mad men, to cast themselves into danger of their own accord; for what do they else by preaching and confessing the truth, but procure unto themselves the hatred and enmity of the whole world and raise offenses? This, saith Paul, doth nothing at all offend or trouble me, but maketh me more bold, and causeth me to hope well of the happy success and increase of the Church, which flourisheth and groweth under the cross: for it behoveth that Christ the head and spouse of the Church, should reign in the midst of all his enemies (Psalm 110:2). On the contrary part, when the cross is abolished, and the rage of tyrants and heretics ceaseth on the one side, and all things are in peace, the devil keeping the entry of the house, this is a sure token that the pure doctrine of God's word is taken away.

Bernard considering this thing, saith that the Church is then in best state, when Satan assaileth it on every side, as well by subtle sleights as by violence; and contrariwise, that it is then in worst case when it is most at ease; and he allegeth very well and to the purpose that sentence of Hezekiah in his song: 'Behold in peace I had bitter grief' (Isaiah 38:17), applying it to the Church living in ease and quietness. Wherefore Paul taketh it for a most certain sign that it is not the Gospel, if it be preached in peace. Contrariwise, the world taketh it for a most certain sign that the Gospel is heretical and seditious doctrine, because it

seeth great uproars, tumults, offenses and sects, and such-like, to follow the preaching thereof.

Thus God [sometimes] showeth himself in the similitude of the devil, and the devil likewise showeth himself in the likeness of God: and God will be known under the similitude of the devil, and will have the devil known under the likeness of God.

The cross immediately followeth the doctrine of the Word, according to that saying: 'I believed, and therefore have I spoken; and I was sore troubled' (Psalm 116.). Now the cross of Christians is persecution with reproach and ignominy, and without any compassion, and therefore it is very offensive. First they suffer as the vilest criminals in the world; and so did the prophet Isaiah foreshow even of Christ himself: 'He was reputed amongst the wicked' (Isaiah 53.). Moreover, murderers and thieves have their punishments qualified, and men have compassion on them. Here is no offense or slander joined with the punishment. Contrariwise, like as the world judgeth the Christians to be the most pestilent and pernicious people, so doth it think that no torments are sufficient to punish them for their heinous offenses. Neither is it moved with any compassion towards them, but putteth them to the most opprobrious and shameful kinds of death that can be. And it thinketh that it gaineth thereby a double commodity. For first, it imagineth that it doth high service unto God in killing of them; secondly, that the common peace and tranquility is restored and established by taking away such noisome plagues. Therefore the death and cross of the faithful is full of offenses. But let not this reproachful dealing (saith Paul) and the continuance of Christ's cross and offense thereof move you, but rather let it confirm you. For as long as the cross endureth, it shall go well with the Christian cause. In like manner Christ also comforteth his disciples in the fifth of Matthew: 'Blessed are ye (saith he) when men revile you and persecute you, and shall falsely say all manner of evil against you for my name's sake. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' The Church cannot suffer this rejoicing to be wrested from her. Wherefore I would not wish to be at concord with the Pope, the bishops, the princes, and the sectaries [unless they would consent unto our doctrine]: for such concord were a certain token that we had lost the true doctrine. To be short, as long as the Church teacheth the Gospel purely, it must suffer persecution. For the Gospel setteth forth the mercy and glory of God: it discloseth the malice and sleights of the devil, painteth him out in his right colors, and plucketh from him the [counterfeit] visor of God's majesty, whereby he deceiveth the whole world; that is to say, it showeth that all worshippings, religious orders invented by men, and traditions concerning single life, meats and such other things, whereby men think to deserve forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, are wicked things and doctrines of devils. There is nothing then that more stirreth up the devil, than the preaching of the Gospel. For that plucketh from him the [dissembled] visor of God, and bewrayeth him to be as he is indeed, that is to say, the devil, and not God. Wherefore it cannot be but that as long as the Gospel flourisheth, the cross and the offense thereof must

needs follow it, or else truly the devil is not rightly touched, but slenderly tickled. But if he be rightly hit indeed, he resteth not, and beginneth horribly to rage and to raise up troubles everywhere.

If Christians then will hold the Word of life, let them not be afraid or offended when they see that the devil is broken loose and rageth everywhere, that all the world is in an uproar, that tyrants exercise their cruelty, and heresies spring up; but let them assure themselves that these are signs, not of terror, but of joy, as Christ himself expoundeth them, saying: 'Rejoice and be glad,' etc. God forbid therefore that the offense of the cross should be taken away. Which thing should come to pass, if we should preach that which the prince of this world and his members would gladly hear, that is to say, the righteousness of works.

Then should we have a gentle devil, a favorable world, a gracious Pope, and merciful princes. But because we set forth the benefits and glory of Christ, they persecute and spoil us both of our goods and lives.

Would to God they were cut off that do disquiet you

Is this the part of an Apostle, not only to denounce the false apostles to be troublers of the Church, to condemn them, and to deliver them to Satan, but also to wish that they might be utterly rooted out and perish? And what is this else but plain cursing? Paul (as I suppose) alludeth here to circumcision, as if he would say: They compel you to cut off the foreskin of your flesh; but I would that they themselves might be utterly cut off by the root.

Here riseth a question, whether it be lawful for Christians to curse? Why not? Howbeit not always, nor for every cause. But when the matter is come to this point, that God's word must be evil spoken of, and his doctrine blasphemed, and so consequently God himself, then must we turn this sentence and say: Blessed be God and his Word, and whatsoever is without God and his Word, accursed be it; yea, though it be an Apostle or an angel from heaven. So he said before in the first chapter: 'Although we or an angel from heaven preach otherwise unto you, than that which we have preached, let him be accursed.'

Hereby it may appear how great a matter Paul made of a little leaven, which for the same durst curse the false apostles, who in outward appearance were men of great authority and holiness. Let not us therefore make little account of the leaven of doctrine: for although it be never so little, yet if it be neglected, it will be the cause that by little and little the truth and salvation shall be lost, and God himself be denied. For when the Word is corrupted, and God denied and blasphemed (which must needs follow if the Word be corrupted), there remaineth no hope of salvation.

But for our parts, if we be cursed, railed upon and slain, there is yet One that can raise us up again, and deliver us from the curse, death, and hell.

Wherefore let us learn to advance and extol the majesty and authority of God's word. For it is no small trifle (as brain sick heads surmise at this day); but every tittle thereof is greater than heaven and earth. Wherefore, in this respect we have no regard of Christian charity or concord, but we sit as it were on the judgment-seat, that is to say, we curse and condemn all men which in the least point do deface or corrupt the majesty of God's word: for 'a little leaven maketh sour the whole lump.' But if they leave us God's word entire and sound, we are not only ready to keep charity and peace with them; but also we offer ourselves to be their servants, and to do for them whatsoever we are able: if not, let them perish and be cast down into hell; and not only they, but even the whole world also, so that God [and his pure Word] do remain. For, as long as he remaineth, life, salvation, and the faithful shall also remain.

Paul therefore doth well in cursing those troublers of the Galatians, and in pronouncing sentence against them, to wit, that they are accursed with all that they teach and do, and in wishing that they might be cut off, especially that they might be rooted out of the Church of God, that is, that God should not govern nor prosper their doctrine nor their doings. And this cursing proceedeth from the Holy Ghost. As Peter also in the eighth of the Acts curseth Simon the sorcerer: 'Thy money and thou perish together.'

And the holy Scripture oftentimes useth cursing against such troublers of men's consciences, and chiefly in the Psalms, as: 'Let death come upon them; let them go quick into the pit of corruption' (Psalm 5:15); also: 'Let sinners be turned down into hell, and all they that forget God' (Psalm 9:17).

Hitherto Paul hath fortified the place of justification with strong and mighty arguments. Moreover, to the end he might omit nothing, here and there he hath intermingled chidings, praisings, exhortations, threatenings, and such like. In the end he addeth also his own example, namely, that he suffereth persecution for this doctrine, thereby admonishing all the faithful, not to be offended nor dismayed when they shall see such uproars, sects and offenses raised up in the time of the Gospel, but rather to rejoice and be glad. For the more the world rageth against the Gospel, the more the Gospel prospereth and goeth happily forwards.

This consolation ought at this day to encourage us: for it is certain that the world hateth and persecuteth us for none other cause, but for that we profess the truth of the Gospel. It doth not accuse us for theft, murder, whoredom, and such-like; but it detesteth and abhorreth us only because we teach Christ faithfully and purely, and give not over the defense of the truth. Therefore we may be out of all doubt, that this our doctrine is holy and of God, because the world hateth it so bitterly; for otherwise there is no doctrine so wicked, so foolish, and pernicious, which the world doth not gladly admit, embrace, and defend: and moreover it reverently entertaineth, cherisheth and flattereth the professors thereof, and doth

all that may be done for them. Only the true doctrine of godliness, life and salvation, and the ministers thereof, it utterly abhorreth, and worketh all the spite that may be devised against them. It is an evident token therefore, that the world is so cruelly bent against us for no other thing, but because it hateth the Word. Wherefore, when our adversaries charge us, that there riseth nothing of this doctrine but wars, seditions, offenses, sects, and other such infinite enormities, let us answer: Blessed be the day wherein we may see these things. But the whole world is in an uproar. And well done: for if the world were not so troubled; if the devil did not rage and stir up such broils, we should not have the pure doctrine [of the Gospel], which cannot be preached but these broils and turmoils must needs follow. Therefore that which ye count to be a great evil, we take to be a special happiness.

THE DOCTRINE OF GOOD WORKS

Now follow exhortations and precepts of life and good works. For it is the custom of the Apostles, after they have taught faith and instructed men's consciences, to add precepts of good works, whereby they exhort the faithful to exercise the duties of charity one towards another. And reason itself, after a sort, teacheth and understandeth this part of doctrine: but as touching the doctrine of faith, it knoweth nothing at all. To the end therefore that it might appear that Christian doctrine doth not destroy good works, or fight against civil ordinances, the Apostle also exhorteth us to exercise ourselves in good works and in an honest outward conversation, and to keep charity and concord one with another. The world cannot therefore justly accuse the Christians that they destroy good works, that they are troublers of the public peace, civil honesty, etc. For they teach good works and all other virtues better than all the philosophers and magistrates of the world, because they adjoin faith in their doings.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not your liberty as an occasion unto the flesh, but by love serve one another

As if he would say: Ye have now obtained liberty through Christ, that is to say, ye be far above all laws as touching conscience and before God: ye be blessed and saved, Christ is your life. Therefore although the law, sin and death trouble and terrify you, yet can they not hurt you nor drive you to despair. And this is your excellent and inestimable liberty. Now standeth it you in hand to take good heed, that ye use not that liberty as an occasion to the flesh.

This evil is common and the most pernicious of all others that Satan stirreth up in the doctrine of faith, namely, that in very many he turneth this liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free, into the liberty of the flesh. Of this, Jude also

complaineth in his Epistle: 'There are crept in certain wicked men (saith he) which turn the grace of our God into wantonness' (Jude 4).

For the flesh is utterly ignorant of the doctrine of grace, that is to say, it knoweth not that we are made righteous, not by works, but by faith only, and that the law hath no authority over us. Therefore, when it heareth the doctrine of faith, it abuseth and turneth it into wantonness, and by and by thus it gathereth: If we be without law, let us then live as we list, let us do no good, let us give nothing to the needy, and let us not suffer any evil, for there is no law to constrain us or bind us so to do.

Wherefore there is danger on either side; albeit the one is more tolerable than the other. If grace or faith be not preached, no man can be saved; for it is faith alone that justifieth and saveth. One the other side, if faith be preached (as of necessity it must be) the more part of men understand the doctrine of faith carnally, and draw the liberty of the spirit into the liberty of the flesh. This may we see in all kinds of life, as well of the high as the low. All boast themselves to be professors of the Gospel, and all brag of Christian liberty, and yet serving their own lusts they give themselves to covetousness, pleasures, pride, envy, and such other vices. No man doth his duty faithfully, no man charitably serveth the necessity of his brother.

The grief hereof maketh me sometimes so impatient, that many times I wish such swine which tread precious pearls under their feet, were yet still remaining under the tyranny of the Pope; for it is impossible that this people of Gomorrah should be governed by the Gospel of peace.

Moreover, even we which teach the Word, do not do our duty with so great zeal and diligence in the light of the Gospel, as we did before in the darkness of ignorance. For the more certain we be of the freedom purchased unto us by Christ, so much the more cold and negligent we be in handling the Word, in prayer, in well-doing, and in suffering adversities.

And if Satan did not vex us inwardly with spiritual temptations, and outwardly with the persecutions of our adversaries, and moreover with the contempt and ingratitude of our own fellows, we should become utterly careless, negligent, and untoward to all good works: and so in time we should lose the knowledge and faith of Christ, forsake the ministry of the Word, and seek an easier kind of life for the flesh. Which thing many of our men begin to do, for that they travailing in the ministry of the Word, cannot only not live of their labor, but also are most miserably entreated even of those whom they delivered from the servile bondage of the Pope by the preaching of the Gospel. These men forsaking poor and offensive Christ, entangle themselves with the affairs of this present life, serving their own bellies and not Christ: but with what fruit, that shall they find by experience in time to come.

Forasmuch then as we know that the devil layeth wait most of all for us that have the Word (for the rest he holdeth in captivity and slavery at his pleasure), and laboreth with might and main to take from us the liberty of the Spirit, or at leastwise to turn the same into the liberty of the flesh; we teach and exhort our brethren with singular care and diligence by the example of Paul, that they think not this liberty of the Spirit, purchased by the death of Christ, to be given unto them, that they should make it an occasion of carnal liberty, or (as Peter saith, 1 Peter 2:16) should use the same as a cloke for their wickedness; but that they should serve one another through love.

To the end therefore that Christians should not abuse this liberty, as I have said, the Apostle layeth a [yoke and] bondage upon their flesh by the law of mutual love. Wherefore let the godly remember, that in conscience before God, they be free from the curse of the law, from sin and from death, for Christ's sake: but as touching the body they are servants, and must serve one another through charity, according to this commandment of Paul. Let every man therefore endeavor to do his duty diligently in his calling, and to help his neighbor to the uttermost of his power. This is it which Paul here requireth of us: 'Serve ye one another through love.'

Which works do not set the Christians at liberty, but shut them under bondage, as touching the flesh.

Moreover this doctrine concerning mutual love, which we must maintain and exercise one towards another, cannot be beaten into the heads of carnal men, nor sink into their hearts. The Christians do gladly receive and obey this doctrine. Others, as soon as liberty is preached, by and by do thus infer: If I be free, then may I do what I list; this thing is mine own, why then should I not sell it for as much as I may get? Moreover, seeing we obtain not salvation by our good works, why should we give anything to the poor? etc. Thus do they most carelessly shake off the yoke and bondage of the flesh, and turn the liberty of the spirit into wantonness and fleshly liberty. But we will tell such careless contemners (although they believe us not, but laugh us to scorn) that if they use their bodies and their goods after their own lust (as indeed they do, for they neither help the poor, nor lend to the needy, but beguile their brethren in bargaining, snatching and scraping unto themselves by hook or by crook whatsoever they can get), we tell them (I say) that they be not free, brag they never so much of their liberty, but have lost Christ and Christian liberty, are become bondslaves of the devil, and are seven times worse under the name of Christian liberty, than they were before under the tyranny of the Pope. For the devil which was driven out of them, hath taken unto him seven other fiends worse than himself, and is returned into them again: therefore the end of these men is worse than the beginning (Matthew 12:43 ff.).

As touching us, we have a commandment of God to preach the Gospel, which offereth to all men liberty from the law, sin, death and God's wrath, freely

for Christ's sake, if they believe. It is not in our power to conceal or revoke this liberty now published by the Gospel: for Christ hath given it unto us freely, and purchased it by his death. Neither can we constrain those swine which run headlong into all licentiousness and dissoluteness of the flesh, to help other men with their bodies or goods. Therefore we do what we can, that is to say, we diligently admonish them that they ought so to do. If we nothing prevail by these admonitions, we commit the matter to God, and he will recompense these scorers with just punishment in his good time. In the meanwhile this is our comfort, that as touching the godly our labor is not lost, of whom many no doubt by our ministry are delivered out of the bondage of the devil, and translated into the liberty of the Spirit.

These (which notwithstanding are but few) which acknowledge the glory of this liberty of the Spirit, and on the other side are ready through charity to serve other men, and know themselves to be debtors to their brethren touching the flesh, do more rejoice us than the innumerable multitude of those that abuse this liberty are able to discourage us.

Paul useth here very apt and plain words, when he saith: 'Brethren, ye are called into liberty.' And because no man should dream that he speaketh of the liberty of the flesh, he expoundeth himself what manner of liberty he meaneth, saying; 'only use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but serve ye one another through love.' Wherefore let every Christian know, that as touching the conscience, Christ hath made him lord over the law, sin, and death, so that they have no power over him. Contrariwise, let him also know that this outward bondage is laid upon his body, that he should serve his neighbor through love. They that understand Christian liberty otherwise, enjoy the commodities of the Gospel to their own destruction, and are worse idolaters under the name of Christ, than they were before under the Pope. Now Paul goeth about to declare out of the Ten Commandments, what it is to serve one another through love.

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, which is this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself

Paul, after that he hath once laid the foundation of Christian doctrine, is wont to build gold, silver, and precious stones upon it. Now there is no other foundation, as he himself saith to the Corinthians, than Jesus Christ, or the righteousness of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Upon this foundation he buildeth now good works, yea good works indeed: all which he comprehendeth in one precept: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' As if he should say, when I say that ye must serve one another through love, I mean the same thing that the law saith in another place: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' (Leviticus 19:18). And this is truly to interpret the Scripture and God's commandments. The opinion of the schoolmen concerning this word 'love' is utterly cold and vain; for they say that to love is nothing but to wish someone well, or that love is a quality inhering in the mind, whereby a man elicith that motion of the heart, or that act, which is called

benevolence. That is altogether naked, barren and mathematical charity, which is not (so to speak) incarnate, neither proceedeth to work. But Paul saith that charity ought to be a servant, and except it be in the office of a servant, it is not charity.

Now, in giving precepts of love, he covertly toucheth by the way the false teachers: against whom he setteth himself mightily, that he may defend and establish his doctrine of good works against them. As if he said: O ye Galatians, I have hitherto taught you the true and spiritual life, and now also I will teach you what be good works indeed. And this will I do to the end ye may know that the vain and foolish works of ceremonies which the false apostles do only urge, are far inferior to the works of charity. For such is the foolishness and madness of all wicked teachers and fantastical spirits, that not only they leave the true foundation and pure doctrine; but also continuing always in their superstitions, they never attain to truly good works. Therefore (as Paul saith) they build nothing but wood, hay and stubble upon the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:12). So the false apostles, which were the most earnest defenders of works, did not teach or require the works of charity, as that Christians should love one another, they they should be ready to help their neighbors in all necessities, not only with their goods, but also with their body, that is to say, with tongue, hand, heart, and with their whole strength: but only they required that circumcision should be kept, that days, months, years, and times should be observed; and other good works they could teach none. For after they had destroyed the foundation, which is Christ, and darkened the doctrine of faith, it was impossible that there should remain any true use, exercise, or opinion of good works. Take away the tree, and the fruit must needs perish. In like manner the Sectaries at this day, being bewitched in the doctrine of good works, must needs teach fantastical and superstitious kinds of works.

They have taken away Christ, cut down the tree, overturned the foundation; and therefore they build upon sand (Matthew 7:26) and can set up nothing but wood, hay, stubble. They make a goodly show of love, humility, etc., but verily they love, as John saith (1 John 3:18), 'not in deed and truth, but only in word and with the tongue,' etc. They also make a show of great holiness, whereby they so deceive men that they judge their works to be very splendid and well-pleasing to God. But if thou behold these works in the light of the Word, thou wilt find them to be mere trifles and things of naught, pertaining only unto places, times, apparel, respect of persons, etc. Wherefore it is no less needful for godly teachers to urge the doctrine of good works, than the doctrine of faith.

For Satan hateth them both and bitterly assaileth them. Notwithstanding faith must first be planted; for without faith it is impossible to understand what a good work is, or what pleaseth God.

And hereby we may see how Satan hateth the true doctrine of good works.

For albeit that all men have a certain natural knowledge implanted in their minds (Romans 2:14), whereby they naturally perceive that they ought to do unto others as they would have others to do unto them (and this and other such opinions, which we call the natural law, are the foundation of human right and of all good works); yet notwithstanding man's reason is so corrupt and blind through the malice of the devil, that it understandeth not this knowledge wherewith it is born; or else, being admonished by the Word of God, it understandeth it, and yet (such is the power of Satan) knowingly neglecteth and contemneth it. Moreover, there cometh to pass also this evil, that the devil afflicteth all justiciaries and heretics with such madness, that neglecting the true doctrine of good works they teach only certain childish ceremonies or monstrous works invented by themselves. These things reason, when it is ignorant of faith, magnifieth and wondrously delighteth in them.

So in the Papacy men did perform with great pleasure, diligence and zeal, and at great cost, those foolish and worthless works which God neither commandeth nor requireth. The same zeal for things of no worth we perceive at this day in the sectaries and their disciples, and specially in the Anabaptists. But in our churches, where the true doctrine of good works is most diligently taught, it is a wonder to relate what indolence and listlessness do reign. The more we exhort and stir up men to work well, to exercise charity one toward another, to cast away care for their bellies, etc., the more sluggish and unready they become to all exercises of godliness. Therefore, Satan bitterly hateth not only the doctrine of faith, but also of good works, so that on the one hand he preventeth our people from learning it, or if they know it, from practicing it indeed, while on the other hand the hypocrites and heretics utterly neglect it, and in the stead thereof they teach foolish ceremonies or certain ridiculous and fantastical works, whereby carnal men are bewitched. For the world is not ruled by the Gospel and faith, but by the law and circumcision.

The Apostle therefore earnestly exhorteth the Christians to exercise themselves in good works, after that they have heard and received the pure doctrine of faith. For the remnants of sin do yet still remain even in those that be justified: which, as they are contrary to faith and hinder it, so do they hinder us from doing good works. Moreover, man's reason and the flesh, which in the saints themselves resisteth the Spirit, and in the wicked doth mightily reign, is naturally delighted with pharisaical superstition: that is to say, it taketh more pleasure in measuring God by her own imaginations than by his Word, and doth the works that she herself hath chosen, with far greater zeal than those which God hath commanded.

Wherefore it is necessary that the godly preachers should as diligently teach and urge love unfeigned, or the true [doctrine of] good works as the true [doctrine of] faith. Let no man think therefore that he thoroughly knoweth this commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

Indeed it is very short and easy as touching the words: but show me the teachers and hearers, that in teaching, learning, and living, do exercise and accomplish it rightly. Therefore these words: 'Serve ye one another through love,' and these also: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' are full of spirit, and none of the faithful do sufficiently consider, urge and exercise the same. And (which is wonderful) the faithful have this temptation, that if they omit never so light a matter which they ought to do, by and by their conscience is wounded; but they are not so troubled if they neglect [the duties of] charity (as daily they do) or bear not a sincere and brotherly love and affection towards their neighbor. For they do not so much regard the commandment of charity, as their own superstitions, from the which they be not altogether free during this life.

Paul therefore reprehendeth the Galatians in these words: 'For the whole law is fulfilled in one word,' etc. As if he said: Ye are drowned in your superstitions and ceremonies concerning places and times, which profit neither yourselves, nor others: and in the meanwhile ye neglect charity which ye ought only to have kept. What madness is this? So saith Jerome:

We wear and consume our bodies with watching, fasting, labor, etc., but we neglect charity, which is the only lady and mistress of works. And this may be well seen in the monks, who straitly observe the traditions concerning their ceremonies, fasting, [watching,] apparel, and suchlike. In this case if they omit anything, be it never so little, they sin deadly.

But when they do not only neglect charity, but also hate one another to the death, they sin not, nor offend God at all.

Therefore by this commandment Paul not only teacheth good works, but also condemneth fantastical and superstitious works. He not only buildeth gold, silver, and precious stones upon the foundation, but also throweth down the wood, and burneth up the hay and stubble. God indeed did well in giving many ceremonies to the Jews; for he would thereby signify that man's mind is naturally superstitious, caring nothing for charity, but being taken up with ceremonies and delighting in carnal righteousness.

Notwithstanding in the meantime God witnessed also by examples in the Old Testament how much he did always esteem of charity: whereunto he would have the very law itself, and the ceremonies thereof to give place. At such time as David and they that were with him were hungry, and had not what to eat, they did eat the holy show-bread, which by the law the laypeople might not eat, but only the priests (1 Samuel 21:6). Christ's disciples brake the sabbath (as said the Jews) in healing the sick on the sabbath day (Matthew 12:1 ff., 10 ff.). All these things show that charity or love ought to be preferred before all laws and ceremonies, and that God requireth nothing so much at our hands as love towards our neighbor. The same thing Christ also witnesseth, when he saith: 'And the second is like unto this' (Matthew 22:39).

For all the law is fulfilled in one word

As if he said: Why do ye burden yourselves with the law? Why do ye so toil and turmoil yourselves about the ceremonies of the law, about meats, days, places, and such other things: as how ye ought to eat, drink, keep your feasts, sacrifice, etc.? Leave off these follies, and hearken what I say:

All the law is fully comprehended in this one saying: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' God delighteth not in the observation of the ceremonies of the law, neither hath he any need of them. The only thing that he requireth at your hands is this, that ye believe in Christ whom he hath sent: in whom ye are made perfect, and have all things. But if unto faith, which is the most acceptable service of God, ye will also add laws, then assure yourselves that all laws are comprehended in this short commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Endeavor yourselves to keep this commandment, which being kept, ye have fulfilled all laws.

Paul is a very good expounder of God's commandments: for he draweth all Moses into a brief sum, showing that nothing else is contained in all his laws (which are in a manner infinite) but this short sentence: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' [Natural] reason is offended with this baseness and shortness of words; for it is soon said: 'Believe in Christ,' and again: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' Therefore it despiseth both the doctrine of faith and true good works. Notwithstanding, this base and short word of faith, 'Believe in Christ,' is the power of God to the faithful, whereby they overcome sin, death, the devil, etc., whereby also they attain salvation [and eternal life]. Thus to serve one another through love, that is, to instruct him that goeth astray, to comfort him that is afflicted, to raise up him that is weak, to help thy neighbor by all means possible, to bear with his infirmities, to endure troubles, labors, ingratitude and contempt in the Church and in civil life, to obey the magistrate, to give due honor to thy parents, to be patient at home with a froward wife and an unruly family, etc.: these (I say) are works which reason judgeth to be of no importance. But indeed they are such works, that the whole world is not able to comprehend the excellency and worthiness thereof (for it doth not measure works or any other thing by the Word of God, but by the judgment of impious, blind, and foolish reason); yea, it knoweth not the value of any one of the least good works that can be, which are true good works indeed.

Therefore, when men dream that they know well enough the commandment of charity, they are utterly deceived. Indeed they have it written in their heart; for they naturally judge that a man ought to do unto another, as he would another should do unto him. But it followeth not therefore that they understand it; for if they did, they would also perform it indeed, and would prefer [love and] charity before all works. They would not so highly esteem their own superstitious toys, as to go with an heavy countenance, hanging down the head, to live unmarried,

to live with bread and water, to dwell in the wilderness, to be poorly apparelled, etc. These monstrous and superstitious works, which they have devised and chosen unto themselves, God neither commanding nor approving the same, they esteem to be so holy and so excellent, that they surmount and darken charity, which is, as it were, the sun of all good works. So great and incomprehensible is the blindness of man's reason, that it is unable, not only to judge rightly of the doctrine of faith, but also of external conversation and works. Wherefore we must fight strongly, as well against the opinions of our own heart (to the which we are naturally more inclined in the matter of salvation than to the Word of God), as also against the counterfeit visor and holy show of our own will-works: that so we may learn to magnify the works which every man doth in his vocation, although they seem outwardly never so base and contemptible, if they have the warrant of God's word: and, contrariwise, to despise those works which reason chooseth without the commandment of God, seem they never so excellent and holy.

Of this commandment I have largely entreated in another place, and therefore I will now but lightly over-run it. Indeed this is briefly spoken: 'Love thy neighbor as thyself;' but yet very aptly and to the purpose. No man can give a more certain, a better or a nearer example than a man's own self. Neither can there be any nobler and profounder disposition than charity, nor any more excellent object than the neighbor. Wherefore the example, the disposition and the object are all most excellent.

Therefore, if thou wouldest know how thy neighbor ought to be loved, and wouldest have a plain example thereof, consider well how thou lovest thyself. If thou shouldest be in necessity or danger, thou wouldest be glad to have the love, and to be helped with the counsel, the goods and the strength of all men, and of all creatures. Wherefore thou hast no need of any book to instruct and to admonish thee how thou oughtest to love thy neighbor; for thou hast an excellent book of all laws, even in thy heart.

Thou needest no schoolmaster in this matter: ask counsel only of thine own heart, and that shall teach thee sufficiently that thou oughtest to love thy neighbor as thyself. Moreover, love or charity is an excellent virtue, which not only maketh a man willing and ready to serve his neighbor with tongue, with hand, with money and worldly goods; but with his body and even with his life also. And thus to do, it is not provoked by good deserts or anything else, neither is it hindered through evil deserts or ingratitude, etc. The mother doth therefore nourish and cherish her child, because she loveth it. To conclude, no living creature, towards which thou oughtest to exercise charity, is nobler than thy neighbor. He is no devil, no lion, bear, wolf, no stock or stone, etc., but a creature most like to thyself; and there is none that liveth on earth that is more pleasant, more lovable, useful, friendly, comforting, and necessary, than thy neighbor who is naturally created for civility and society. Therefore nothing in the whole world can be held more worthy of love than our neighbor. But the devil hath a wondrous art, whereby he is able, not only to obscure this most noble object and remove it out of man's mind, but also

to persuade his heart of the contrary opinion, so that he judgeth his neighbor to be worthy of bitter hatred, and not of love. And this the devil can easily accomplish, if he do but whisper: Lo, this man hath such a fault, he hath reprehended thee, done thee an injury, etc. Then this most lovable object seemeth to be vile, so that he is no more a neighbor to be loved, but an enemy worthy of hatred. On this wise Satan is wonderfully able to change the disposition of loving in our hearts, so that instead of lovers of our neighbors we are made detractors, haters and persecutors, so that of that precept ('Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself') nothing remaineth but bare and empty letters and syllables.

Now, my neighbor is every man, specially which hath need of my help, as Christ expoundeth it in the tenth chapter of Luke. Who, although he hath done me some wrong, or hurt me by any manner of way: yet notwithstanding he hath not put off the nature of man, or ceased to be flesh and blood, and the creature of God most like unto myself: briefly, he ceaseth not to be my neighbor. As long then as the nature of man remaineth in him, so long also remaineth the commandment of love, which requireth at my hand, that I should not despise mine own flesh, nor render evil for evil; but overcome evil with good, or else shall love never be as Paul describeth it in 1 Corinthians 13. A diseased member is not cut off, but cared for and cured. And upon less honorable members (saith Paul) we should bestow more abundant honor. But so corrupted and blinded is nature by the devil's poison, that the children of this world, even though they know a man to be endued with many excellent gifts and virtues, yet if they discover but one spot or blemish in him, they have regard unto that only, and forget all his gifts and graces. Thou wilt find also many crabbed and uncivil jesters, which call not by their proper name those towards whom they are ill-disposed, but use some opprobrious title, as the man in Terence did, saying: 'Slant-eyes,' 'hook-nose,' 'cabbage-ear,' and suchlike.

To be brief, the world is the kingdom of the devil, which securely despiseth faith and charity and all the words and works of God.

Paul therefore commendeth charity to the Galatians, and to all the faithful (for they only love indeed), and exhorteth them that through charity one of them should serve another. As if he would say: Ye need not to burden yourselves with circumcision, and with the ceremonies of Moses' law; but before all things continue in the doctrine of faith which ye have received of me. Afterwards, if ye will do good works, and how ye shall fulfill all laws: 'Serve ye one another through love.' Ye shall not lack them to whom ye may do good, for the world is full of such as need the help of others. This is a perfect and a sound doctrine of faith and love: and also the shortest and the longest divinity. The shortest as touching the words and sentences: but as touching the use and practice it is more large, more long, more profound, and more high than all the world.

If ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another

By these words Paul witnesseth, that if the foundation, that is to say, if faith in Christ be overthrown by wicked teachers, no peace or concord can remain in the Church, either in doctrine or life: but there must needs be divers opinions and dissensions from time to time both in doctrine and life. And when once the concord of the Church is broken, there is no measure nor end of that evil; for the authors of schisms, dissenting among themselves, do teach, one that this work, another that another work is necessary to righteousness. Each approveth his own opinion and superstition, and reprehendeth that of another. Whereby it cometh to pass that one biteth and devoureth another; that is to say, one judgeth and condemneth another, until at length they be consumed. Hereof not only the Scripture, but also the examples of all times bear witness. After that Africa was perverted by the Manichees, by and by followed the Donatists, who also disagreeing among themselves, were divided into three sundry sects. In our time there departed from us first the Sacramentarians, then the Anabaptists, and neither of them agreeth with the other. One sect bringeth forth another, and one condemneth another. When unity ceaseth, according to the mathematicians, the number progresseth to infinity.

Thus, when the unity of the spirit is broken, it is impossible that there should be any concord either in doctrine or life, but daily new errors must needs spring up without measure and without end. This we see also in the Papacy, where the doctrine of faith being cast aside, it was impossible that concord of spirit should remain, and in the stead thereof there arose through the doctrine of works innumerable sects of monks, which being at variance with one another, did measure their holiness by the straitness of their orders and the difficulty of their superstitious works which they had themselves devised. And so one would be counted holier than another. 'Moreover, not only was there dissension between the monks of diverse professions, but also between those of the same order. As a potter envieth a potter, so the Minorite did envy the Minorite, etc. And to conclude, there were as many opinions in one monastery as there were monks. So long, therefore did they cherish among themselves rivalries, contentions, wrangling, virulence, biting and devouring, until (according to this saying of Paul) they are now being consumed, etc.

But they which hold the doctrine of faith, and love one another according to this precept of Paul, censure not the life and works one of another, but each approveth the other's manner of life and his duty which he doth in his vocation. No godly man thinketh the office of a magistrate to be better in the sight of God than the office of a subject; for he knoweth that both are ordained of God and have the commandment of God. He distinguisheth not between the office or work of a father and of a son, a schoolmaster and a scholar, a master and a servant, etc.; but he confidently declareth that both are pleasing to God, if they be fulfilled in faith and obedience towards God. In the sight of the world, no doubt, these kinds of life and their duties are unequal; but this external inequality nothing hindereth the unity of the Spirit, whereby all think and believe the same

concerning Christ, namely, that through him alone we obtain remission of sins and righteousness. Moreover, in respect of external conversation and duty, one judgeth not another, nor censureth his works, neither praiseth he his own though they be far more excellent, but with one mouth and spirit they confess that they have one and the same Savior Christ, with whom there is no respect of persons or of works, etc. (Romans 2:11). This it is impossible for them to do which neglect the doctrine of faith and love, and teach superstitious works. The monk granteth not that the works of the layman, which he doeth in his vocation, are as good and acceptable unto God as his own. The nun far preferreth her own kind of life and works before the life and works of a matron that hath an husband: for she judgeth that hers are able to deserve grace and everlasting life, as the matron's are not able. And hereof it cometh that these people, accursed as the greed for gold, have vehemently contended and persuaded the whole world, that their state of life and works are far greater and holier than those of the laity. And did they not still at this day hold and defend this opinion of the holiness of their works, they should not long retain their honor and riches. No monk, therefore, nor any other justiciary, will be persuaded that the works of a common Christian, a husband, wife, manservant, maid-servant, etc., which are done in faith and obedience towards God, are better and more acceptable to God than those superstitious and monstrous works which they themselves have chosen. For when Christ the chief corner-stone is removed, the seekers of salvation by works cannot otherwise judge, than that they alone which do such great and splendid works, are acceptable to God. So at this day the Anabaptists dream that they, which are poor, suffer hunger and cold, and wear mean apparel, etc., are saints, but those are not saints which have possessions, etc. Therefore it is impossible for the justiciaries and authors of sects to keep peace with such as assent not to their own opinion, but they bite and devour them, etc.

Paul therefore teacheth that such occasions of discord are to be avoided, and he showeth how they may be avoided. This (saith he) is the way to unity and concord: Let every man do his duty in that kind of life which God hath called him unto; let him not lift up himself above others, nor find fault at other men's works, and commend his own, but let everyone serve another through love. This is a true and simple doctrine touching good works. This do not they teach which have made shipwreck of the faith (1 Timothy 1:19) and have conceived fantastical opinions concerning faith and life or good works; but disagreeing among themselves as touching the doctrine of faith and works, they bite and devour, that is to say, they accuse and condemn one another, as Paul here saith of the Galatians: 'If ye bite and devour one another,' etc. As if he would say: Do not accuse and condemn one another for circumcision, for observing of holy days or other ceremonies, but rather give yourselves to serve and help one another through charity: or else if ye continue in biting and devouring one another, take heed that ye be not consumed, that is to say, that ye perish not utterly, yea and that bodily (which commonly happeneth, especially to the authors of sects, as it did to Arius and others, and to certain also in our time). For he that hath laid his foundation on the sand, and buildeth wood, hay, stubble, and such-like, must

needs fall and be consumed; for all those things are ordained for the fire. I need not say, that after such bitings and devouring, the ruin and destruction, not of cities, but of whole countries and kingdoms are wont to follow. Now the Apostle showeth what it is to serve one another through love.

It is a hard and a dangerous matter to teach that we are made righteous by faith without works, and yet to require works withal. Here except the ministers of Christ be faithful and wise disposers of the mysteries of God, rightly dividing the Word of truth, faith and works are by and by confounded. Both these doctrines, as well of faith as of works, must be diligently taught and urged; and yet so that both may remain within their bounds. Otherwise, if they teach works only (as they do in the Pope's kingdom) then is faith lost. If faith only be taught, then carnal men by and by dream that works be not needful.

The Apostle began a little before to exhort men to do good works, and to teach that the whole law was fulfilled in one word, namely: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Here will some man say: Paul throughout his whole Epistle taketh away righteousness from the law, for he saith: 'By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified' (Galatians 2:16), also: 'As many as are under the works of the law are under the curse' (Galatians 3:10). But now when he saith that the whole law is fulfilled in one word, he seemeth to have forgotten the matter whereof he hath entreated in all this Epistle, and to be of a quite contrary opinion: to wit, that they which do the works of charity, fulfill the law and be righteous. To this objection he answereth after this manner:

But I say, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh

As if he should have said: I have not forgotten my former discourse concerning faith, neither do I now revoke the same in that I exhort you to mutual love, saying that the whole law is fulfilled through love, but I am still of the same mind and opinion that I was before. To the end therefore that ye may rightly understand me, I add this moreover: 'Walk in the Spirit' etc.

A CONFUTATION OF THE ARGUMENT OF THE SCHOOLMEN: LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW; THEREFORE THE LAW JUSTIFIETH

Although Paul speaketh here expressly and plainly enough, yet hath he little prevailed: for the schoolmen not understanding this place of Paul, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' have gathered out of it after this manner: If love be the fulfilling of the law, it followeth then that love is righteousness: therefore if we love, we be righteous. These profound clerks do argue from the word to the work, from doctrine or precepts to life, after this sort:

The law hath commanded love, therefore the work of love followeth out of hand. But this is a foolish consequence, to draw an argument from precepts, and to ground the conclusion upon works. True it is that we ought to fulfill the law, and to be justified through the fulfilling thereof: but sin hindereth us. Indeed the law prescribeth and commandeth that we should love God with all our heart, etc., and that we should love our neighbor as ourselves; but it followeth not: This is written, therefore it is done; the law commandeth love, therefore we love. There is not one man to be found upon the whole earth, which so loveth God and his neighbor as the law requireth. But in the life to come, where we shall be thoroughly cleansed from all vices and sins, and shall be made as pure and as clear as the sun, we shall love perfectly and shall be righteous through perfect love. But in this life that purity is hindered by the flesh; for as long as we live, sin remaineth in our flesh; by reason whereof, the corrupt love of ourselves is so mighty that it far surmounteth the love of God and of our neighbor. In the meantime notwithstanding, that we may be righteous in this life also, we have Christ the mercy-seat and throne of grace, and because we believe in him, sin is not imputed unto us. Faith therefore is our righteousness in this life. But in the life to come, when we shall be thoroughly cleansed and delivered from all sins and concupiscences, we shall have no more need of faith and hope, but we shall then love perfectly.

It is a great error therefore to attribute justification [or righteousness] to love, which is nothing; or if it be anything, yet it is not so great that it can pacify God: for love even in the faithful (as I have said) in imperfect and impure. But no unclean thing shall enter into the kingdom of God (Ephesians 5:5). Notwithstanding in the meanwhile this trust and confidence sustaineth us, that Christ, who alone committed no sin, and in whose mouth was never found any guile, doth overshadow us with his righteousness (1 Peter 2:22). We being covered with this cloud, and shrouded under this shadow, this heaven of remission of sins and throne of grace, do begin to love and to fulfill the law. Yet for this fulfilling we are not justified nor accepted of God whilst we live here. But when Christ hath delivered up the kingdom to God his Father, and abolished all principality etc., and God shall be all in all; then shall faith and hope cease, and love shall be perfect and everlasting (1 Corinthians 13.). This thing the popish schoolmen understand not, and therefore when they hear that love is the sum of the whole law, by and by they infer: Ergo, the law justifieth.

Or contrariwise, when they read in Paul that faith maketh a man righteous: yea, say they, faith formed and furnished with charity. But that is not the meaning of Paul, as I have largely declared before.

If we were pure from all sin, and were inflamed with perfect love both towards God and our neighbor, then should we indeed be righteous and holy through love, and God could require no more of us. This is not done in this present life, but is deferred until the life to come. Indeed we receive here the gift and first fruits of the Spirit, so that we begin to love, howbeit very slenderly. But, if

we loved God truly and perfectly as the law of God requireth, which saith: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' etc., then should we be as well contented with poverty as with wealth, with pain as with pleasure, and with death as with life; yea, he that could love God truly and perfectly, should not long continue in this life, but should straightway be swallowed up by this charity.

But now man's nature is so corrupt and drowned in sin, that it cannot have any right sense or cogitation of God. It loveth not God, but hateth him deadly. Wherefore as John saith: 'We loved not God, but he loved us, and sent his Son to be a reconciliation for our sins' (1 John 4:10). And as Paul saith before in the second chapter: 'Christ hath loved me and given himself for me;' and in the fourth chapter: 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law.' We being redeemed and justified by this Son, begin to love: according to that saying of Paul in the eighth to the Romans: 'That which was impossible to the law etc., God sending his own Son etc., condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us;' that is, might begin to be fulfilled. They are mere dreams therefore which the sophisters have taught concerning the fulfilling of the law.

Wherefore Paul showeth by these words: 'Walk in the spirit,' how he would have that sentence to be understood, where he said: 'Serve ye one another through love,' and again: 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' etc. As if he should say: When I bid you love one another, this is it that I require of you, that you walk in the Spirit. For I know that ye shall not fulfill the law: because sin dwelleth in you as long as ye live, therefore it is impossible that ye should fulfill the law. Notwithstanding, in the meanwhile endeavor yourselves diligently to walk in the Spirit, that is, wrestle in Spirit against the flesh, and follow spiritual motions, etc.

It appeareth then that he hath not forgotten the matter of justification. For when he biddeth them to walk in the Spirit, he plainly denieth that works do justify. As if he would say: When I speak of the fulfilling of the law, I mean not that ye are justified by the law; but this I mean, that there be two contrary captains in you, the Spirit and the Flesh. God hath stirred up in your body a strife and a battle: for the Spirit wrestleth against the Flesh, and the Flesh against the Spirit. Here I require nothing else of you, but that ye follow the Spirit as your captain and guide, and that ye resist that captain the Flesh: for that is all that ye be able to do. Obey the Spirit and fight against the flesh. Therefore when I teach you to observe the law, and exhort you to love one another, think not that I go about to revoke that which I have taught concerning the doctrine of faith, and that I now attribute justification to the law or to charity: but my meaning is that ye should walk in the Spirit, and that ye should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Paul useth very fit works and to the purpose. As if he would say: We come not yet to the fulfilling of the law; therefore we must walk in the Spirit and be exercised therein, that we may think, say, and do those things which are of the Spirit, and resist those things which are of the flesh. Therefore he addeth:

And ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh

As if he would say: The desires or lusts of the flesh be not yet dead in us, but spring up again and fight against the spirit. The flesh of no faithful man is so good, which being offended would not bite and devour, or at the least omit somewhat of that commandment of love. Yet even at the first brunt he cannot refrain himself, but is angry with his neighbor, desireth to be revenged, and hateth him as an enemy, or at the least loveth him not so much as he should do, and as this commandment requireth. And this happeneth even to the faithful. Therefore the Apostle hath given this rule for the faithful that they should serve one another through love, that they should bear the burdens and infirmities one of another, and that they should forgive one another. And without this bearing and forbearing through love, it is impossible that peace and concord should continue among Christians. For it cannot be, but that thou must needs often offend, and be offended; thou seest many things in me which offend thee, and I again see many things in thee which mislike me. Here if one bear not with another through love, there shall be no end of dissension, discord, envy, hatred and malice.

Wherefore Paul would have us to walk in the Spirit, lest we fulfill the lust of the flesh. As if he should say: Although ye be moved with wrath and displeasure against your brother, offending you or doing anything heinously against you, yet notwithstanding resist and repress these [violent] motions through the Spirit; bear with his weakness, and love him according to that commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' For thy brother doth not therefore cease to be thy neighbor, because he slippeth, or offendeth thee: but then hath he most need that thou shouldst exercise and show thy charity towards him. And this commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' requireth the selfsame thing: to wit, that thou shouldst not obey the flesh; which when it is offended, hateth, biteth, and devoureth. But wrestle against it in spirit, and continue through the same in the love of thy neighbor, although thou find nothing in him worthy of love.

The schoolmen take the concupiscence of the flesh for carnal lust. Indeed it is true that even the godly, especially the younger sort, are tempted with fleshly lust. Yea they also that be married (so corrupt and pestilent is the flesh) are not without such carnal lust. Here let everyone (I speak now to the godly being married, both man and wife) diligently examine himself, and no doubt, many shall find this in themselves, that the beauty or manners of another man's wife pleaseth him better than of his own, and so contrariwise his own lawful wife he loatheth or misliketh, and loveth her which is unlawful. And this commonly is wont to happen, not in marriage only, but in all other matters. Men set light by that which they have, and are in love with that which they have not. As the poet saith: Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata, that is: Of things most forbidden we always are fain:

And things most denied we seek to obtain.

I do not deny therefore but that the concupiscence of the flesh comprehendeth carnal lust, but not that only. For concupiscence comprehendeth all other corrupt affections, wherewith the very faithful are infected, some more, some less: as pride, hatred, covetousness, impatency, and such-like. Yea, Paul rehearseth afterwards among the works of the flesh, not only these gross vices, but also idolatry, heresies, and such other.

It is plain therefore that he speaketh of the whole concupiscence of the flesh, and of the whole dominion of sin, which striveth even in the godly who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, against the dominion of the Spirit. He speaketh therefore not only of carnal lust, pride, covetousness, etc. but also of incredulity, distrust, despair, hatred, and contempt of God, idolatry, heresies and such other, when he saith: 'And ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.' As if he should say: I write unto you that you should love one another. This ye do not, neither can ye do it because of the flesh, which is infected and corrupted with concupiscence, and doth not only stir up sin in you, but also is sin itself. For if ye had perfect charity, no heaviness, no adversity could be so great, which should be able to hurt and hinder that charity; for it would be spread throughout the whole body. There should be no wife, were she never so hard favored, whom her husband would not love entirely, loathing all other women, though they were never so fair and beautiful. But this is not done, therefore it is impossible for you to be made righteous through love.

Wherefore think me not to revoke and unsay that which I have taught concerning faith; for faith and hope must continue, that by the one we may be justified, and by the other we may be raised up in adversities, and endure unto the end. Moreover, we serve one another through charity, because faith is not idle: but charity is weak and little. Therefore when I bid you walk in the Spirit, I do sufficiently declare that ye are not justified through charity.

And when I exhort you to walk in the Spirit, that ye obey not the flesh, or fulfill not the concupiscence of the flesh, I do not require of you that ye should utterly put off the flesh or kill it, but that ye should bridle and subdue it. For God will have mankind to endure even to the last day. And this cannot be done without parents, which do beget and bring up children.

These means continuing, it must needs be that flesh also must continue, and consequently sin, for flesh is not without sin. Therefore in respect of the flesh we are sinners; but in respect of the Spirit, we are righteous: and so we are partly sinners and partly righteous. Notwithstanding our righteousness is much more plentiful than our sin, because the holiness and righteousness of Christ our mediator doth far exceed the sin of the whole world; and the forgiveness of sins which we have through him is so great, so large, and so infinite, that it easily

swalloweth up all sins, if so be that we walk according to the Spirit, etc. Here it is to be noted, that Paul writeth these things not only unto hermits and monks, which lead a single life, but unto all Christians. This I say to the end that we should not err with the Papists, which dreamed that this commandment belongeth only to their clergymen, and that the Apostle hereby exhorteth them to live chastely by subduing the flesh with watching, fasting, labor, etc. and then they should not fulfill the concupiscence of the flesh, that is to say, carnal lust. As though the whole concupiscence of the flesh were overcome when this fleshly lust is subdued: which notwithstanding they were never able to suppress and keep under with any yoke that they could lay upon the flesh. Which thing Jerome (I say nothing of others) who was a marvelous lover and defender of chastity, doth plainly confess. 'O (saith he) how often have I thought myself to be in the midst of the vain delights and pleasures of Rome, even when I was in the wild wilderness, which being burnt up with the heat of the sun, yieldeth an ugly habitation to the monks?' etc. Again: 'I, who for fear of hell had condemned myself to such a prison, thought myself oftentimes to be dancing among young women, when I had no other company but scorpions and wild beasts. My face was pale with fasting, but my mind was inflamed with desires in my cold body, and although my flesh was half dead already, yet the flames of fleshly lust boiled within me,' etc.

If Jerome felt in himself such flames of fleshly lust, who lived in the barren wilderness with bread and water, what do our holy belly-gods the clergymen feel, think ye, who so stuff and stretch out themselves with all kinds of dainty fare, that it is a marvel their bellies burst not? Wherefore these things are written, not to hermits and monks (as the Papists dream) nor to sinners in the world only; but to the universal Church of Christ and to all the faithful: whom Paul exhorteth to walk in the Spirit, that they fulfill not the lust of the flesh; that is to say, not only to bridle the gross motions of the flesh, as carnal lust, wrath, impatience, and such-like; but also the spiritual motions, as doubting, blasphemy, idolatry, contempt and hatred of God, etc.

Paul (as I have said) doth not require of the godly, that they should utterly put off or destroy the flesh; but that they should so bridle it, that it might be subject to the Spirit. In the thirteenth to the Romans, he biddeth us 'cherish the flesh.' For as we may not be cruel to other men's bodies, nor vex them with unreasonable labor; even so we may not be cruel to our own bodies. Wherefore, according to Paul's precept, we must cherish our flesh, that it may be able to endure the labors both of the mind and of the body: but yet only for necessity's sake, and 'not to nourish the lust thereof.' Therefore if the flesh begin to wax wanton, repress it and bridle it by the Spirit. If it will not be, marry a wife, 'for it is better to marry than to burn.' Thus doing thou walkest in the Spirit: that is, thou followest God's word and doest his will. But (as I have said) this commandment to walk in the Spirit, etc., belongeth not only to hermits and monks, but to all Christians, even though they feel no carnal desire. So the prince fulfilleth not the concupiscence of the flesh, when he diligently doeth his duty and governeth his

subjects well, punishing the guilty and defending the innocent. Here the flesh and the devil resist, and tempt him, provoking him to make unrighteous war, to obey his own covetousness, etc.; and except he follow the leading of the Spirit and obey the good and holy admonitions of the Word of God concerning his office, then he fulfilleth the lust of the flesh, etc. So let every man in his calling walk in the Spirit, and he shalt not fulfill either his carnal lust or any other of the works of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh

When Paul saith that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, he admonisheth us that we shall feel the concupiscence of the flesh, that is to say, not only carnal lust, but also pride, wrath, heaviness, impatience, incredulity, and such-like. Notwithstanding he would have us so to feel them, that we consent not unto them, nor accomplish them: that is, that we neither think, speak, nor do those things which the flesh provoketh us unto. As, if it move us to anger, yet we should be angry in such wise as we are taught in the fourth Psalm, that we sin not. As if Paul would thus say: I know that the flesh will provoke you unto wrath, envy, doubting, incredulity, and suchlike: but resist it by the Spirit, that ye sin not. But if ye forsake the guiding of the Spirit, and follow the flesh, ye shall fulfill the lust of the flesh, and ye shall die, as Paul saith in the eighth to the Romans. So this saying of the Apostle is to be understood, not of fleshly lusts only, but of the whole kingdom of sin.

And these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would

These two captains or leaders (saith he), the flesh and the spirit, are one against another in your body, so that ye cannot do what ye would. And this place witnesseth plainly that Paul writeth these things to the saints, that is, to the Church believing in Christ, baptized, justified, renewed, and having full forgiveness of sins. Yet notwithstanding he saith that she hath flesh rebelling against the spirit. After the same manner he speaketh of himself in the seventh to the Romans: 'I (saith he) am carnal and sold under sin;' and again: 'I see another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind,' etc.; also: 'O wretched man that I am,' etc.

Here, not only the schoolmen, but also some of the old fathers are much troubled, seeking how they may excuse Paul. For it seemeth unto them absurd and unseemly to say, that that elect vessel of Christ should have sin.

But we credit Paul's own words, wherein he plainly confesseth that he is sold under sin, that he is led captive of sin, that he hath a law in his members rebelling against him, and that in the flesh he serveth the law of sin. Here again they answer, that the Apostle speaketh in the person of the ungodly. But the ungodly do not complain of the rebellion of their flesh, of any battle or conflict, or

of the captivity and bondage of sin: for sin mightily reigneth in them. This is therefore the very complaint of Paul and of all the saints. Wherefore they have done very wickedly which have excused Paul and other saints to have no sin. For by this persuasion (which proceedeth of ignorance of the doctrine of faith) they have robbed the Church of a singular consolation: they have abolished the forgiveness of sins, and made Christ of none effect. Wherefore when Paul saith: 'I see another law in my members,' etc., he denieth not that he hath flesh, and the vices of the flesh in him. It is likely therefore that he felt sometimes the motions of carnal lust. But yet (I have no doubt) these motions were well suppressed in him by the great and grievous [afflictions and] temptations both of mind and body, wherewith he was in a manner continually exercised and vexed, as his epistles do declare; or if he at any time being merry and strong, felt the lust of the flesh, wrath, impatency, and such-like, yet he resisted them by the Spirit, and suffered not those motions to bear rule in him. Therefore let us in no wise suffer such comfortable places (whereby Paul describeth the battle of the flesh against the spirit in his own body) to be corrupted with such foolish glosses. The school-men, the monks, and such other, never felt any spiritual temptations, and therefore they fought only for the repressing and overcoming of fleshly lust and lechery, and being proud of that victory which they never yet obtained, they thought themselves far better and more holy than married men. I will not say, that under this holy pretense they nourished and maintained all kinds of horrible sins, as dissension, pride, hatred, disdain, and despising of their neighbors, trust in their own righteousness, presumption, contempt of godliness and of the Word of God, infidelity, blasphemy, and such-like. Against these sins they never fought, may rather they took them to be no sins at all: they put righteousness in the keeping of their foolish and wicked vows, and unrighteousness in the neglecting and contemning of the same.

But this must be our ground and anchor-hold, that Christ is our only perfect righteousness. If we have nothing whereunto we may trust, yet these three things (as Paul saith) faith, hope and love do remain. Therefore we must always believe and always hope; we must always take hold of Christ as the head and fountain of our righteousness. He that believeth in him shall not be ashamed. Moreover, we must labor to be outwardly righteous also: that is to say, not to consent to the flesh, which always enticeth us to some evil; but to resist it by the spirit. We must not be overcome with impatency for the unthankfulness and contempt of the people, which abuseth the Christian liberty; but through the Spirit we must overcome this and all other temptations. Look then how much we strive against the flesh by the spirit, so much are we outwardly righteous. Albeit this righteousness doth not commend us before God.

Let no man therefore despair if he feel the flesh oftentimes to stir up new battles against the spirit, or if he cannot by and by subdue the flesh, and make it obedient unto the spirit. I also do wish myself to have a more valiant and constant heart, which might be able, not only boldly to condemn the threatenings of tyrants, the heresies, offenses and tumults which the fantastical spirits stir up;

but also might by and by shake off the vexations and anguish of spirit, and briefly, might not fear the sharpness of death, but receive and embrace it as a most friendly guest. But I find another law in my members, rebelling against the law of my mind, etc. Some other do wrestle with inferior temptations, as poverty, reproach, impatency and such-like.

Let no man marvel therefore or be dismayed, when he feeleth in his body this battle of the flesh against the spirit: but let him pluck up his heart and comfort himself with these words of Paul: 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit,' etc., and: 'These are contrary one to another, so that ye do not those things that ye would.' For by these sentences he comforteth them that be tempted. As if he should say: It is impossible for you to follow the guiding of the Spirit in all things without any feeling or hindrance of the flesh; nay, the flesh will resist: and so resist and hinder you that ye cannot do those things that gladly ye would. Here, it shall be enough if ye resist the flesh and fulfill not the lust thereof: that is to say, if ye follow the spirit and not the flesh, which easily is overthrown by impatency, coveteth to revenge, biteth, grudgeth, hateth God, is angry with him, despaireth, etc.

Therefore when a man feeleth this battle of the flesh, let him not be discouraged therewith, but let him resist in the Spirit, and say: I am a sinner, and I feel sin in me, for I have not yet put off the flesh, in which sin dwelleth so long as it liveth; but I will obey the spirit and not the flesh: that is, I will by faith and hope lay hold upon Christ, and by his word I will raise up myself, and being so raised up, I will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

It is very profitable for the godly to know this, and to bear it well in mind; for it wonderfully comforteth them when they are tempted. When I was a monk I thought by and by that I was utterly cast away, if at any time I felt the concupiscence of the flesh: that is to say, if I felt any evil motion, fleshly lust, wrath, hatred, or envy against any brother. I assayed many ways, I went to confession daily, etc., but it profited me not; for the concupiscence of my flesh did always return, so that I could not rest, but was continually vexed with these thoughts: This or that sin thou hast committed; thou art infected with envy, with impatency, and such other sins; therefore thou art entered into this holy order in vain, and all thy good works are unprofitable. If then I had rightly understood these sentences of Paul: 'The flesh lusteth contrary to the spirit, and the spirit contrary to the flesh,' etc. and 'these two are one against another, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would do,' I should not have so miserably tormented myself, but should have thought and said to myself, as now commonly I do:

Martin, thou shalt not utterly be without sin, for thou hast yet flesh; thou shalt therefore feel the battle thereof, according to that saying of Paul: 'The flesh resisteth the spirit.' Despair not therefore, but resist it strongly, and fulfill not the lust thereof. Thus doing thou art not under the law.

I remember that Staupitius was wont to say: 'I have vowed unto God above a thousand times, that I would become a better man; but I never performed that which I vowed. Hereafter I will make no such vow: for I have now learned by experience, that I am not able to perform it. Unless therefore God be favorable and merciful unto me for Christ's sake, and grant unto me a blessed and a happy hour when I shall depart out of this miserable life, I shall not be able with all my vows and all my good deeds, to stand before him.' This was not only a true, but also a godly and a holy desperation: and this must they all confess both with mouth and heart, which will be saved. For the godly trust not to their own righteousness, but say with David: 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall none that liveth be justified' (Psalm 143:2), and: 'If thou O Lord shouldst straightly mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand?' (Psalm 130:3). They look unto Christ their reconciler, who gave his life for their sins. Moreover, they know that the remnant of sin which is in their flesh, is not laid to their charge, but freely pardoned. Notwithstanding in the meanwhile they fight in the Spirit against the flesh, lest they should fulfill the lust thereof. And although they feel the flesh to rage and rebel against the spirit, and themselves also do fall sometimes into sin through infirmity, yet are they not discouraged, nor think therefore that their state and kind of life, and the works which are done according to their calling, displease God: but they raise up themselves by faith.

The faithful therefore receive great consolation by this doctrine of Paul, in that they know themselves to have partly the flesh, and partly the spirit, but yet so notwithstanding that the spirit ruleth and the flesh is subdued, that righteousness reigneth and sin serveth. He that knoweth not this doctrine, and thinketh that the faithful ought to be without all fault, and yet seeth the contrary in himself, must needs at the length be swallowed up by the spirit of heaviness, and fall into desperation. But whoso knoweth this doctrine well and useth it rightly, to him the things that are evil turn unto good. For when the flesh provoketh him to sin, by occasion thereof he is stirred up and forced to seek forgiveness of sins by Christ, and to embrace the righteousness of faith, which else he would not so greatly esteem, nor seek for the same with so great desire. Therefore it profiteth us very much to feel sometimes the wickedness of our nature and corruption of our flesh, that even by this means we may be waked and stirred up to faith and to call upon Christ. And by this occasion a Christian becometh a mighty workman and a wonderful creator, which of heaviness can make joy, of terror comfort, of sin righteousness, and of death life, when he by this means repressing and bridling the flesh, maketh it subject to the Spirit.

Wherefore let not them which feel the concupiscence of the flesh, despair of their salvation. Let them feel it and all the force thereof, so that they consent not to it. Let the passions of lust, wrath and such other vices shake them, so that they do not overthrow them. Let sin assail them, so that they do not accomplish it. Yea the more godly a man is, the more doth he feel that battle. And hereof come those lamentable complaints of the saints in the Psalms and in all the holy

Scripture. Of this battle the hermits, the monks, and the schoolmen, and all that seek righteousness and salvation by works, know nothing at all.

But here may some man say, that it is a dangerous matter to teach that a man is not condemned, if by and by he overcome not the motions and passions of the flesh which he feeleth. For when this doctrine is taught amongst the common people, it maketh them careless, negligent and slothful. This is it which I said a little before, that if we teach faith, then carnal men neglect and reject works: if works be required, then is faith and consolation of conscience lost. Here no man can be compelled, neither can there be any certain rule prescribed. But let every man diligently try himself to what passion of the flesh he is most subject, and when he findeth that, let him not be careless, nor flatter himself: but let him watch and wrestle in Spirit against it, that if he cannot altogether bridle it, yet at the least he do not fulfill the lust thereof.

This battle of the flesh against the spirit, all the saints have had and felt: and the selfsame do we also feel and prove. He that searcheth his own conscience, if he be not an hypocrite, shall well perceive that to be true in himself which Paul here saith: that the flesh lusteth against the spirit. All the faithful therefore do feel and confess that their flesh resisteth against the spirit, and that these two are so contrary the one to the other in themselves, that, do what they can, they are not able to perform that which they would do. Therefore the flesh hindereth us that we cannot keep the commandments of God, that we cannot love our neighbors as ourselves, much less can we love God with all our heart, etc. Therefore it is impossible for us to become righteous by the works of the law. Indeed there is a good will in us, and so must there be (for it is the Spirit itself which resisteth the flesh), which would gladly do good, fulfill the law, love God and his neighbor, and such-like, but the flesh obeyeth not this good will, but resisteth it: and yet God imputeth not unto us this sin, for he is merciful to those that believe, for Christ's sake.

But it followeth not therefore that thou shouldest make a light matter of sin, because God doth not impute it. True it is that he doth not impute it: but to whom, and for what cause? Not to them that are hard-hearted and secure, but to such as repent and lay hold by faith upon Christ the mercyseat, for whose sake, as all their sins are forgiven them, even so the remnants of sin which are in them, be not imputed unto them. They make not their sin less than it is, but amplify it and set it out as it is indeed; for they know that it cannot be put away by satisfactions, works, or righteousness, but only by the death of Christ. And yet notwithstanding, the greatness and enormity of their sin doth not cause them to despair, but they assure themselves that the same shall not be imputed unto them [or laid unto their charge], for Christ's sake.

This I say, lest any man should think that after faith is received, there is little account to be made of sin. Sin is truly sin, whether a man commit it before he hath received the knowledge of Christ or after. And God always hateth sin: yea

all sin is damnable as touching the fact itself. But in that it is not damnable to him that believeth, it cometh of Christ the reconciler, who by his death hath expiated sin. But to him that believeth not in Christ, not only all his sins are damnable, but even his good works also are sin; according to that saying: 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin' (Romans 14:23). Therefore the error of the schoolmen is most pernicious, which do distinguish sins according to the fact, and not according to the person. He that believeth hath as great sin as the unbeliever. But to him that believeth, it is forgiven and not imputed: to the unbeliever it is not pardoned but imputed. To the believer it is venial: to the unbeliever it is mortal [and damnable]: not for any difference of sins, or because the sin of the believer is less, and the sin of the unbeliever greater: but for the difference of the persons. For the believer assureth himself by faith that his sin is forgiven him, forasmuch as Christ hath given himself for it. Therefore although he have sin in him and daily sinneth, yet he continueth godly: but contrariwise, the unbeliever continueth wicked. And this is the true wisdom and consolation of the godly, that although they have and commit sins, yet they know that for Christ's sake they are not imputed unto them.

This I say for the comfort of the godly. For they only feel indeed that they have and do commit sins, that is to say, they feel they do not love God so fervently as they should do; that they do not trust him so heartily as they would, but rather they oftentimes doubt whether God have a care of them or no; they are impatient, and are angry with God in adversity. Hereof (as I have said) proceed the sorrowful complaints of the saints in the Scriptures, and especially in the Psalms. And Paul himself complaineth that he is 'sold under sin' (Romans 7:14); and here he saith that the flesh resisteth and rebelleth against the spirit. But because they mortify the deeds of the flesh by the spirit (as he saith in another place; and also in the end of this chapter: 'They crucify the flesh with the desires and lusts thereof'), therefore these sins do not hurt them nor condemn them. But if they obey the flesh in fulfilling the lusts thereof, then do they lose faith and the Holy Ghost. And if they do not abhor their sin and return unto Christ (who hath given the keys to his Church, to receive and raise up those that be fallen, that so they may recover faith and the Holy Ghost), they die in their sins.

Wherefore we speak not of them which dream that they have faith, and yet continue still in their sins. These men have their judgment already: They that live after the flesh shall die (Romans 8:13), also: 'The works of the flesh are manifest, which are, adultery, fornication, etc., whereof I tell you before, as also I have told you that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'

Hereby we may see who be very saints indeed. They be not stocks and stones (as the monks and schoolmen dream) so that they are never moved with anything, never feel any lust or desires of the flesh: but, as Paul saith, their flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and therefore they have sin and can sin.

And the thirty-second Psalm witnesseth, that the saints do confess their unrighteousness, and pray that the wickedness of their sin may be forgiven,

where it saith: 'I said, I will confess against myself my wickedness unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall everyone that is godly, make his prayer unto thee,' etc. Moreover the whole Church, which indeed is holy, prayeth that her sins may be forgiven her, and believeth the forgiveness of sins. And in the 143 Psalm, David prayeth: 'O Lord enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall none that liveth be justified.' And in Psalm 130: 'If thou, O Lord, shouldest straitly mark iniquities, Lord who shall stand? But with thee is mercy,' etc.

Thus do the chiefest saints [and children of God] speak and pray: as David, Paul, etc. All the faithful therefore do speak and pray the same thing, and with the same spirit. The popish sophisters read not the Scriptures, or if they read them they have a veil before their eyes: and therefore as they cannot judge rightly of anything, so can they not judge rightly either of sin or of holiness.

If ye be led by the spirit ye are not under the law

Paul cannot forget his doctrine of faith, but still repeateth it and beateth it into their heads; yea even when he treateth of good works. Here some man may object: How can it be that we should not be under the law? And yet thou notwithstanding, O Paul, teachest us that we have flesh which lusteth against the spirit, and fighteth against us, tormenteth and bringeth us into bondage. And indeed we feel sin, and cannot be delivered from the feeling thereof, though we would never so fain. And what is this else but to be under the law? But saith he: Let this nothing trouble you; only do your endeavor that ye may be led by the Spirit, that is to say, show yourselves willing to follow and obey that will which resisteth the flesh, and doth not accomplish the lusts thereof (for this is to be led and to be drawn by the Spirit); then are ye not under the law. So Paul speaketh of himself (Romans 7): 'In my mind I serve the law of God;' that is to say, in the Spirit I am not subject to any sin: but yet in my flesh I serve the law of sin.

The faithful then are not under the law, that is to say, in Spirit: for the law cannot accuse them, nor pronounce sentence of death against them, although they feel sin, and confess themselves to be sinners: for the power and strength of the law is taken from it by Christ, 'who was made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law' (Galatians 4:4). Therefore the law cannot accuse that for sin in the faithful, which is sin indeed and committed against the law.

So great then is the power of the dominion of the Spirit, that the law cannot accuse the godly, though they commit that which is sin indeed. For Christ is our righteousness, whom we apprehend by faith: he is without all sin, and therefore the law cannot accuse him. As long as we cleave fast unto him, we are led by the Spirit, and are free from the law. And so the Apostle, even when he teacheth good works, forgetteth not his doctrine concerning justification; but always showeth that it is impossible for us to be justified by works. For the remnants of

sin cleave fast in our flesh, and therefore so long as our flesh liveth, it ceaseth not to lust contrary to the Spirit. Notwithstanding there cometh no danger unto us thereby, because we be free from the law, so that we walk in the Spirit.

And with these words: 'If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law,' thou mayest greatly comfort thyself and others that be grievously tempted.

For it oftentimes cometh to pass, that a man is so vehemently assailed with wrath, hatred, impatiency, carnal desire, heaviness of spirit, or some other lust of the flesh, that he cannot shake them off, though he would never so fain. What should he do in this case? Should he despair? No, [God forbid]; but let him say thus with himself: Thy flesh fighteth and rageth against the Spirit. Let it rage as long as it listeth: only see thou that in any case thou consent not to it, to fulfill the lust thereof, but walk wisely and follow the leading of the Spirit. In so doing thou art free from the law. It accuseth and terrifieth thee (I grant) but altogether in vain. In this conflict therefore of the flesh against the Spirit, there is nothing better, than to have the Word of God before thine eyes, and therein to seek the comfort of the Spirit.

And let not him that suffereth this temptation, be dismayed, in that the devil can so aggravate sin, that during the conflict he thinketh himself to be utterly overthrown, and feeleth nothing else but the wrath of God and desperation. Here in any wise let him not follow his own feeling [and the judgment of reason], but let him take sure hold of this saying of Paul: 'If ye be led by the Spirit,' that is to wit, if ye raise up and comfort yourselves through faith in Christ, 'ye be not under the law.' So shall he have a strong buckler wherewith he may beat back all the fiery darts which the wicked fiend assaileth him withal. How much soever then the flesh doth boil and rage, yet cannot her motions and rages hurt and condemn him, forasmuch as he, following the guiding of the Spirit, doth not consent unto the flesh, nor fulfill the lusts thereof. Therefore when the motions of the flesh do rage, the only remedy is to take to us the sword of the Spirit, that is to say, the Word of salvation (which is, that God would not the death of a sinner, but that he convert and live), and to fight against them: which if we do, let us not doubt but we shall obtain the victory, although so long as the battle endureth, we feel the plain contrary. But set the Word out of sight, and there is no counsel nor help remaining. Of this that I say, I myself have good experience. I have suffered many and various passions, and the same also very vehement and great. But so soon as I have laid hold of any place of Scripture, and stayed myself upon it as upon my chief anchor-hold, straightways my temptations did vanish away: which without the Word it had been impossible for me to endure any little space, and much less to overcome them.

The sum or effect therefore of all that which Paul hath taught in this disputation or discourse concerning the conflict or battle between the flesh and the spirit, is this: that the saints or believers cannot perform that which the Spirit desireth. For the spirit would gladly be altogether pure, but the flesh being joined

unto the spirit, will not suffer that. Notwithstanding they be saved by the remission of sins, which is in Christ Jesus. Moreover, because they walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit, they be not under the law, that is to say, the law cannot accuse and terrify them: yea, although it go about never so much so to do, yet shall it never be able to drive them to desperation.

Moreover the works of the flesh be manifest, which are, etc.

This place is not unlike to this sentence of Christ: 'By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns; or figs of brambles? So every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit,' etc. (Matthew 7:16). Paul teacheth the very same thing which Christ taught, that is to say, that works and fruits do sufficiently testify whether the trees be good or evil: whether men follow the guiding of the flesh or of the Spirit. As if he should say: Lest some of you might say for himself, that he understandeth me not now when I treat of the battle between the flesh and the Spirit, I will set before your eyes first the works of the flesh, whereof many are known even to the ungodly; and then also the fruit of the Spirit.

And this doth Paul because there were many hypocrites amongst the Galatians (as there are also at this day among us), which outwardly pretended to be godly men, and boasted much of the Spirit, and as touching the words they understood very well the doctrine of godliness: but they walked not according to the Spirit, but according to the flesh, and performed the works thereof. Whereby Paul manifestly convinceth them to be no such [holy] men indeed as they boasted themselves to be. And lest they should despise this his admonition, he pronounceth against them this dreadful sentence, that they should not be inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, to the end that being thus admonished, they might amend. Every age, even in the faithful hath his peculiar temptations: as fleshly lusts assail a man most of all in his youth, in his middle-age ambition and vainglory, and in his old-age covetousness. There was never yet (as I have said already) any of the saints whom the flesh hath not often in his lifetime provoked to impatience, anger, etc. Paul therefore speaking here of the saints, saith that the flesh lusteth in them against the Spirit, etc. Therefore they shall never be without the desires and battle of the flesh: notwithstanding they do not hurt them. But of this matter we must thus judge, that it is one thing to be provoked of the flesh, and yet not willingly to yield to the lusts and desires thereof, but to walk after the leading of the Spirit, and to resist the flesh: and another thing to assent unto the flesh, and without all fear or remorse to perform and fulfill the works thereof, and to continue therein, and yet notwithstanding to counterfeit holiness and to brag of the Spirit etc. The first he comforteth, when he saith that they be led by the Spirit and be not under the law. The other he threateneth with everlasting destruction.

Notwithstanding sometimes it happeneth that the saints also do fall and perform the desires of the flesh: as David fell horribly into adultery. Also he was

the cause of the slaughter of many men, when he caused Uriah to be slain in the forefront of the battle: and thereby also he gave occasion to the enemies to glory and triumph over the people of God, to worship their idol, and to blaspheme the God of Israel. Peter also fell most grievously and horribly when he denied Christ. But although these sins were great and heinous, yet were they not committed upon any contempt of God or of a willful and obstinate mind, but through infirmity and weakness. Again, when they were admonished, they did not obstinately continue in their sins, but repented. Such he willeth afterwards in the sixth chapter to be received, instructed, and restored, saying: 'If a man be fallen by occasion' etc. To those therefore which sin and fall through infirmity, pardon is not denied, so that they rise again and continue not in their sin: for of all things continuance in sin is the worst. But if they repent not, but still obstinately continue in their wickedness and perform the desires of the flesh, it is a certain token that there is deceit in their spirit.

No man therefore shall be without [lusts and] desires so long as he liveth in the flesh, and therefore no man shall be free from temptations.

Notwithstanding some are tempted one way and some another, according to the difference of the persons. One man is assailed with more vehement and grievous motions, as with bitterness and anguish of spirit, blasphemy, distrust, and desperation: another with more gross temptations, as with fleshly lusts, wrath, envy, hatred and such-like. But in this case Paul requireth us that we walk in the Spirit, and resist the flesh. But whoso obeyeth the flesh, and continueth without fear or remorse in accomplishing the desires and lusts thereof, let him know that he pertaineth not unto Christ; and although he brag of the name of a Christian never so much, yet doth he but deceive himself. For they which are of Christ, do crucify their flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.

WHO BE RIGHTLY CALLED SAINTS, AND BE SO INDEED

This place (as I have also forewarned you by the way) containeth in it a singular consolation: for it teacheth us that the saints live not without concupiscence and temptations of the flesh, nor yet without sins. It warneth us therefore to take heed that we do not as some did, of whom Gerson writeth, which labored to attain [to such perfection], that they might be without all feeling of temptations or sins: that is to say, very stocks and stones. The like imagination the monks and schoolmen had of their saints, as though they had been very senseless blocks and without all affections. Assuredly Mary felt great grief and sorrow of heart when she missed her son (Luke 2). David in the Psalms complaineth that he is almost swallowed up with excessive sorrow for the greatness of his temptations and sins. Paul also complaineth that he hath battles without, and terrors within (2 Corinthians 7:5), and that in his flesh he serveth the law of sin. He saith that he is careful for all the churches (Corinthians 11:28), and that God showed great

mercy towards him, in that he delivered Epaphroditus being at the point of death, to life again, lest he should have had sorrow upon sorrow (Philippians 2:27). Therefore the saints of the Papists are like to the Stoics, who imagined such wise men, as in the world were never yet to be found. And by this foolish and wicked persuasion, which proceedeth from the ignorance of this doctrine of Paul, the schoolmen brought both themselves and others without number into [horrible] desperation.

When I was a monk I did oftentimes most heartily wish, that I might once be so happy, as to see the conversation and life of some saint or holy man.

But in the meantime I imagined such a saint as lived in the wilderness abstaining from meat and drink, and living only with roots of herbs and cold water: and this opinion of those monstrous saints, I had learned not only out of the books of the sophisters [and schoolmen], but also out of the books of the Fathers. For thus writeth St. Jerome in a certain place: 'As touching meats and drinks I say nothing, forasmuch as it is excess, that even such as are weak and feeble should use cold water, or eat any sodden thing,' etc. But now in the light of the Gospel we plainly see who they are whom Christ and his Apostles call saints: not they which live a single life, or [straitly observe days, meats, apparel, and such other things], or in outward appearance do other great and monstrous works (as we read of many in the Lives of the Fathers); but they which being called by the sound of the Gospel and baptized, do believe that they be sanctified and cleansed by the death and blood of Christ. So Paul everywhere, writing to the Christians, calleth them holy, the children and heirs of God, etc.

Whosoever then do believe in Christ, whether they be men or women, bond or free, etc., are all saints: not by their own works, but by the works of God, which they receive by faith: as his Word, his Sacraments, the passion of Christ, his death, resurrection, victory, and the sending of the Holy Ghost. To conclude, they are saints through [such a holiness as they freely receive, not through such a holiness as they themselves have gotten by their own industry, good works and merits: that is to say,] a passive, not an active holiness.

So the ministers of the Word, the magistrates of commonweals, parents, children, masters, servants, etc. are true saints, if first and before all things they assure themselves that Christ is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: secondly, if everyone do his duty in his vocation according to the rule of God's word, and obey not the flesh, but repress the lusts and desires thereof by the Spirit. Now, whereas all be not of like strength [to resist temptations], but many infirmities and offenses are seen in the most part of men: this nothing hindereth their holiness, so that their sins proceed not of an obstinate willfulness, but only of frailty and infirmity. For (as I have said before) the godly do feel the desires and lusts of the flesh, but they resist them to the end that they accomplish them not. Also if they at any time unadvisedly fall into sin, yet notwithstanding they obtain forgiveness thereof, if by faith in Christ they be raised

up again: who would not that we should drive away, but seek out [and bring home] the [straying and] lost sheep, etc. Therefore God forbid that I should straightway judge those which are weak in faith and manners, to be profane or unholy, if I see that they love and reverence the Word of God, to come to the Supper of the Lord, etc. For these God hath received and counteth them righteous through the remission of sins: to him they stand or fall, etc. (Romans 14:4).

After this manner Paul speaketh everywhere concerning the saints. And with great rejoicing I give thanks to God, for that he hath abundantly and above measure granted that unto me, which I so earnestly desired of him when I was a monk: for he hath given unto me the grace to see not one but many saints, yea an infinite number of true saints; not such as the sophisters have devised, but such as Christ himself and his Apostles do describe; of the which number I also, by the grace of God, am one. For I am baptized, and I do believe that Christ my Lord by his death hath redeemed and delivered me from all my sins, and hath given to me eternal righteousness and holiness. And let him be holden accursed, whosoever shall not give this honor unto Christ, to believe that by his death, his Word, his Sacraments, etc., he is justified and sanctified.

Wherefore rejecting this foolish and wicked opinion concerning the name of saints (which once we thought to pertain only to the saints which are in heaven, and in earth to the hermits and monks which did certain great and strange works): let us now learn by the holy Scriptures, that all they which faithfully believe in Christ are saints. The world hath in great admiration the holiness of Benedict, Gregory, Bernard, Francis, and suchlike, because it heareth that they have done certain rare and (in outward appearance) excellent works. Doubtless Hilary, Cyril, Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine and others were saints also, which lived not so strait and severe a life as they did, but were conversant amongst men, and did eat common meats, drank wine, and used cleanly and comely apparel, so that in a manner there was no difference between them and other honest men as touching the common custom, and the use of things necessary for this life; and yet are they to be preferred far above the other. These men taught the [doctrine and] faith of Christ sincerely and purely, without any superstition: they resisted heretics, they purged the Church from innumerable errors: their company and familiarity was comfortable to many, and specially to those which were afflicted and heavy-hearted, whom they raised up and comforted by the Word of God. For they did not withdraw themselves from the company of men, but they executed their offices even where most resort of people was. Contrariwise, the other not only taught many things contrary to faith, but also were themselves the authors and first inventors of many superstitions, errors, [abominable ceremonies] and wicked worshippings. Therefore except at the hour of death they laid hold of Christ, and reposed their whole trust in his death and victory, their strait and painful life availed them nothing at all.

These things sufficiently declare who be the true saints indeed, and which is to be called a holy life: not the life of those which lurk in caves and dens, which make their bodies lean with fasting, which wear hair, and do other like things with this persuasion and trust, that they shall have singular reward in heaven above all other Christians; but of those which be baptized and believe in Christ, which put off the old man with his works, but not at once: for concupiscence remaineth in them so long as they live: the feeling whereof doth hurt them nothing at all, if they suffer it not to reign in them, but subdue it to the Spirit.

This doctrine bringeth great consolation to godly minds, that when they feel these darts of the flesh, wherewith Satan assaileth the spirit, they should not despair: as it happened to many in the Papacy, which thought that they ought to feel no concupiscence of the flesh; whereas notwithstanding Jerome, Gregory, Benedict, Bernard, and others (whom the monks set before them as a perfect example of chastity and of all Christian virtues) could never come so far as to feel no concupiscence [or lust] of the flesh. Yea, they felt it, and that very strongly. Which thing they acknowledge and plainly confess in divers places of their books. Therefore God did not only not impute unto them these light faults, but even those pernicious errors which some of them brought into the Church. Gregory was the author of the private mass, than which there never was any greater abomination in the Church of the Yew Testament. Others devised monkery, wicked worshippings and voluntary religions. Cyprian contended that they which had been baptized of heretics should be rebaptized.

Therefore we rightly confess in the articles of our belief, that we believe [there is] a Holy Church. For it is invisible, dwelling in Spirit in a place that none can attain unto, and therefore her holiness cannot be seen: for God doth so hide her and cover her with infirmities, with sins, with errors, with divers forms of the cross and offenses, that according to the judgment of reason it is nowhere to be seen. They that are ignorant of this, when they see the infirmities and sins of those which are baptized, which have the Word and believe it, are by and by offended, and judge them not to pertain to the Church. And in the meanwhile they dream that the hermits and monks [and such other shavelings] are the Church; which honor God only with their lips, and worship Him in vain, because they follow not the Word of God, but the doctrines and commandments of men, and teach others to do the same. And because they do certain superstitious and monstrous works, which [carnal] reason magnifieth and highly esteemeth, therefore they judge them to be saints and to be the Church; and in so doing they change and turn this article of faith clean contrary: 'I believe [that there is] a holy Church' etc., and in the stead of this word 'I believe,' they put in 'I see.' These kinds of righteousness and holiness of man's own devising, are nothing else but spiritual sorceries wherewith the eyes and minds of men are blinded and led from the knowledge of true holiness.

But thus teach we, that the Church hath no spot nor wrinkle, but is holy, and yet through faith only in Christ Jesus: again, that she is holy in life [and

conversation] by abstaining from the lusts of the flesh, and by exercise of spiritual fruits; but yet not in such sort that she is delivered from all evil desires, or purged from all wicked opinions and errors. For the Church always confesseth her sins, and prayeth that her faults may be pardoned (Matthew 6:12); also she believeth the forgiveness of sins. The saints therefore do sin, fall, and also err: but yet through ignorance. For they would not willingly deny Christ, forsake the Gospel, revoke their Baptism, etc., therefore they have remission of sins. And if through ignorance they err also in doctrine, yet is this pardoned; for in the end they acknowledge their error, and rest only upon the truth and the grace of God offered in Christ, as Jerome, Gregory, Bernard, and others did. Let Christians then endeavor to avoid the works of the flesh; but the desires [or lusts of the flesh] they cannot avoid.

It is very profitable therefore for the godly to feel the uncleanness of their flesh, lest they should be puffed up with some vain and wicked opinion of the righteousness of [their own] works, as though they were accepted before God for the same. The monks being puffed up with this opinion of righteousness, thought themselves to be so holy because of their holy kind of life, that they sold their righteousness and holiness to others, although they were convinced by the testimony of their own hearts, that they were unclean. So pernicious and pestilent a poison it is for a man to trust in his own righteousness, and to think himself to be clean. But the godly, because they feel the uncleanness of their own hearts, therefore they cannot trust to their own righteousness. This feeling so maketh them to stoop, and so humbleth them, that they cannot trust to their own good works, but are constrained to fly unto Christ their mercy-seat and only succor, who hath not a corrupt and sinful but a most pure and holy flesh, which he hath given for the life of the world. In him they find a sound and perfect righteousness. Thus they continue in humility; not counterfeit and monkish, but true and unfeigned, because of the uncleanness which yet remaineth in their flesh: for the which if God would straitly judge them, they should be found guilty of eternal death. But because they lift not up themselves proudly against God, but with a broken and contrite heart humbly acknowledging their sins, and resting wholly upon the benefit of the mediator Christ, they come forth into the presence of God, and pray that for his sake their sins may be forgiven them; God spreadeth over them an infinite heaven of grace, and doth not impute unto them their sins for Christ's sake.

This I say, to the end that we may take heed of the pernicious errors of the sophisters touching the holiness of life, wherein our minds are so wrapped, that without great difficulty we could not wind ourselves out of them.

Wherefore, do you endeavor with diligence, that ye may discern and rightly judge between true righteousness and holiness, and that which is hypocritical: then shall ye behold the kingdom of Christ with other eyes than [carnal] reason doth, that is, with spiritual eyes, and certainly judge those to be true saints indeed which are baptized and believe in Christ, and afterwards in the same faith

whereby they are justified, and their sins both past and present are forgiven, do abstain from the desires of the flesh. But from these desires they are not thoroughly cleansed; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit. Notwithstanding these uncleannesses do still remain in them to this end, that they may be humbled, and being so humbled, they may feel the sweetness of the grace and benefit of Christ. So these unclean remnants of sin do nothing at all hinder, but greatly further the godly; for the more they feel their infirmities and sins, so much the more they fly unto Christ the throne of grace, and more heartily crave his aid and succor: to wit, that he will adorn them with his righteousness, that he will increase their faith, that he will endue them with his Spirit, by whose [gracious leading and] guiding they may overcome the lusts of the flesh, that they may not rule and reign over them, but may be subject unto them. Thus true Christians do continually wrestle with sin, and yet notwithstanding in wrestling they are not overcome, but obtain the victory.

This have I said, that ye may understand, not by men's dreams, but by the Word of God, who be true saints indeed. We see then how greatly Christian doctrine helpeth to the raising up and comforting of [weak] consciences; which treateth not of cowls, shavings, rosaries, and such-like toys, but of high and weighty matters, as how we may overcome the flesh, sin, death, and the devil. This doctrine, as it is unknown to the justiciaries [and such as trust in their own works,] so is it impossible for them to instruct or bring into the right way one [poor] conscience wandering and going astray; or to pacify and comfort the same when it is in heaviness, terror, or desperation.

The works of the flesh are manifest, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, etc.

Paul doth not recite all the works of the flesh, but useth a certain number for a number uncertain. First, he reckoneth up the kinds of lusts, as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, etc. Now, not only carnal lust is a work of the flesh, as the Papists dreamed, who called marriage also a work of the flesh (so chaste and holy are these men), whereof God himself is the author, which also they themselves reckoned among their sacraments: but he numbereth also amongst the works of the flesh (as I have said before) idolatry, witchcraft, and such other, which hereafter follow. Wherefore, this place alone doth sufficiently show what Paul meaneth by the flesh. These words are so well known that they need no interpretation. But he that desireth to know the meaning of each several word, may read if he will the old commentary which I published in 1519.

There I showed, as well as I was able, the nature and force of each word in the whole catalogue of the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit.

It hath now been chiefly our purpose in expounding the Epistle to the Galatians, to explain as clearly as we could the article of justification.

Idolatry

All the highest religions, the holiness and most fervent devotions of those which do reject Christ the Mediator, and worship God without his Word and commandment, are [nothing else but plain] idolatry. As in popery it was counted a most spiritual act, when the monks being shut up in their cells did muse and meditate of God and his works, and when they being inflamed with most earnest devotions, kneeled down, prayed, and were so ravished with the contemplations of heavenly things, that they wept for joy.

There was no thinking of women or of any other creature, but only of God the Creator, and of his wonderful works; and yet this most spiritual work (as reason esteemeth it) is, according to Paul, a work of the flesh.

Wherefore all such religion whereby God is worshipped without his Word and commandment, is idolatry. And the more holy and spiritual it seemeth to be in outward show, so much the more dangerous and pernicious it is.

For it turneth men away from faith in Christ, and causeth them to trust to their own strength, works and righteousness. And such is the religion of the Anabaptists at this day: albeit they daily more and more betray themselves to be possessed with the devil, and to be seditious and bloody men.

Therefore the fasting, the wearing of hair, holy actions, strait rule, and whole life of the Carthusians [or Charterhouse monks], whose order notwithstanding is of all other the straitest and sharpest, be very works of the flesh, yea plain idolatry. For they imagine themselves to be saints, and to be saved, not by Christ (whom they fear as a severe and cruel judge), but by observing of their rule [and order]. Indeed they think of God, of Christ, and of heavenly things, but after their own reason, and not after the Word of God: to wit, that their apparel, their manner of living, and their whole conversation is holy and pleaseth Christ: whom not only they hope to pacify by this straitness of life, but also to be rewarded of him for their good deeds and righteousness. Therefore their most spiritual thoughts (as they dream of them) are not only most fleshly, but also most wicked: for they would wipe away their sins, and obtain grace and everlasting life by the trust and affiance they have in their own righteousness, rejecting and despising the Word, faith, and Christ. All the worshippings and services of God therefore, and all religions without Christ are idolatry and idolservice.

In Christ alone the Father is well pleased: whoso heareth him and doth that which he hath commanded, the same is beloved because of the Beloved. He commandeth us to believe his Word, and to be baptized, etc., and not to devise any new worshipping or service of God.

I have said before that the works of the flesh be manifest: as adultery, fornication, and such-like be manifestly known to all men. But idolatry hath such

a goodly show, and is so spiritual, that it is known but to very few, that is, to them only which believe in Christ, [to be the work of the flesh].

For the monk when he liveth chastely, fasteth, prayeth, or saith mass, is so far from thinking himself to be an idolater, or that he fulfilleth any work of the flesh, that he is assuredly persuaded that he is led and governed by the Spirit, that he walketh according to the Spirit, that he thinketh, speaketh, and doth nothing else but mere spiritual things, and that he doth such service unto God as is most acceptable unto him. No man can at this day persuade the Papists that their private mass is a great blasphemy against God, and idolatry, yea and that so horrible, as never was any in the Church since the Apostles' time. For they are blind and obstinate, and therefore they judge so perversely of God and God's matters, thinking idolatry to be the true service of God, and contrariwise, faith to be idolatry, etc. But we which believe in Christ and know his mind, are able to judge and to discern all things, and cannot truly and before God be judged of any man (1 Corinthians 2:15).

Hereby it is plain that Paul calleth flesh whatsoever is in man, comprehending all the three powers of the soul, that is, the will that lusteth, the will that is inclined to anger, and the understanding. The works of the will that lusteth, are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and suchlike.

The works of the will inclined to wrath, are quarrellings, contentions, murder, and such other. The works of understanding or reason, are errors, false religions, superstitions, idolatry, heresies, that is to say, sects, and such-like. It is very necessary for us to know these things: for this word 'flesh' was so darkened in the whole kingdom of the Pope, that they have taken the work of the flesh to be nothing else but the accomplishing of fleshly lust or the act of lechery: wherefore it was not possible for them to understand Paul. But here we may plainly see that Paul reckoneth idolatry and heresy amongst the works of the flesh, which two (as before we have said) reason esteemeth to be most high and excellent virtues, wisdom, religion, holiness, and righteousness. Paul (Colossians 2:18) calleth it the religion of angels. But although it seem to be never so holy and spiritual, yet it is nothing else but a work of the flesh, an abomination and idolatry against the Gospel, against faith, and against the true service of God. This do the faithful see, for they have spiritual eyes: but the justiciaries judge the contrary. For a monk cannot be persuaded that his vows are works of the flesh. So the Turk believeth nothing less than that his observation of the Alcoran, his washings, and other ceremonies which he observeth, be works of the flesh.

Witchcraft

Of witchcraft I have spoken before in the third chapter. This vice was very common in these our days before the light and truth of the Gospel was revealed. When I was a child, there were many witches [and sorcerers] which bewitched both cattle and men, but specially children, and did great harm also to the crops

by tempests and hailstorms which they caused by their enchantments. But now in the light of the Gospel these things be not so commonly heard of, for the Gospel thrusteth the devil out of his seat with all his illusions. But now he bewitcheth men much more horribly, namely, with spiritual sorcery and witchcraft.

Paul reckoneth witchcraft among the works of the flesh, which notwithstanding, as all men know, is not a work of fleshly lust or lechery, but a kind of idolatry. For witchcraft covenanteth with the devils: superstition or idolatry covenanteth with God, albeit not with the true God, but with a counterfeit God. Wherefore idolatry is indeed a spiritual witchcraft. For as witches do enchant cattle and men: so idolaters, that is to say, all justiciaries [or justifiers of themselves], go about to bewitch God and to make him such a one as they do imagine. Now they imagine him to such a one as will justify them, not of his mere grace [and mercy] and through faith in Christ, but in respect of their will-worshippings and works of their own choosing, and in recompense thereof will give them righteousness and life everlasting. But whilst they go about to bewitch God, they bewitch themselves. For if they continue in this wicked opinion which they conceive of God, they shall die in their idolatry and be damned.

Most of the works of the flesh are well known, therefore they shall not need any further declaration.

Sects

By the name of sects Paul meaneth here, not those divisions or contentions which rise sometimes in the government of households or of commonweals for worldly and earthly matters; but those which rise in the Church about doctrine, faith, and works. Heresies, that is to say, sects, have always been in the Church, as we have said before in diverse places.

Notwithstanding the Pope is an arch-heretic and the head of all heretics; for he hath filled the world as it were with a huge flood of infinite sects [and errors]. No one sort of monk could agree with another; for they measured their holiness by the straightness of their orders. Hereof it cometh that the Carthusian will needs be counted holier than the Franciscan, and so likewise the rest. Wherefore there is no unity of the Spirit, nor concord of minds, but great discord in the papistical church. There is no conformity in their doctrine, faith, religion, or serving of God, but all things are most diverse. Contrariwise, amongst the Christians, the Word, faith, worship, religion, Sacraments, Christ, God, heart soul, mind, and will are all one and common to all; and as touching outward conversation, the diversity of states, [degrees] and conditions of life hindereth this spiritual concord [and unity] nothing at all, as before I have said. And they which have this unity of the Spirit, can certainly judge of all sects, which otherwise no man understandeth: as indeed no divine in the Papacy understood, that Paul in this place condemneth all the worshippings, religions, continency, and all the honest conversation and holy life in outward appearance, of all the

Papists, Sectaries [and schismatics]: but they all thought that he speaketh of the gross idolatry and heresies of the Gentiles and Turks which manifestly blaspheme the name of Christ, etc.

Drunkenness, gluttony

Paul doth not say that to eat and drink be works of the flesh, but to be drunken and to surfeit, which of all other vices are most common at this day. Whoso are given to this more than beastly [dissoluteness and] excess, let them know that they are not spiritual, how much soever they boast themselves so to be, but they follow the flesh and perform the works thereof. Therefore is this horrible sentence pronounced against them, that they shall not be inheritors of the kingdom of God. Paul would therefore that Christians should fly drunkenness and surfeiting, living soberly and moderately without all excess, lest by pampering the flesh they should be provoked to wantonness: as indeed after surfeiting and belly-cheer, the flesh is wont to wax wanton, and to be inflamed with outrageous lust. But it is not sufficient only to restrain this outrageous wantonness and lust of the flesh which followeth drunkenness and surfeiting; but also the flesh when it is most sober and in his best temperance, must be subdued and repressed, lest it fulfill his lusts and desires. For it oftentimes cometh to pass that even they which are most sober, are tempted most of all; as Jerome writeth of himself: 'My face (saith he) was pale with fasting, and my mind was inflamed with [fleshly] desires in my cold body, and although my flesh was half dead already, yet the flames of carnal lusts boiled within me.' Hereof I myself also had experience when I was a monk. The heat therefore of carnal lust is not quenched by fasting only, but we must be aided also by the Spirit, that is, by meditation of God's Word, faith, and prayer. Indeed fasting represseth the gross assaults of fleshly lust; but the desires of the flesh are overcome by no abstinence from meat and drink, but only by the earnest meditation of the Word of God and invocation of Christ.

And such-like

For it is impossible to reckon up all the works of the flesh.

Whereof

I tell you, as I have also told you before, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God

This is a very hard and a terrible saying, but yet very necessary against false Christians and careless hypocrites, which brag of the Gospel, of faith and of the Spirit, and yet in all security they perform the works of the flesh. But chiefly the heretics, being puffed up with opinions of spiritual matters (as they dream) are possessed of the devil, and altogether carnal: therefore they perform and fulfill the desires of the flesh, even with all the powers of the soul. Therefore most necessary it was that so horrible and terrible a sentence should be pronounced by the Apostle against such careless contemners and obstinate hypocrites (namely, that all they which do such works of the flesh as Paul hath recited, shall

not inherit the kingdom of God), that yet some of them being terrified by this severe sentence, may begin to fight against the works of the flesh by the Spirit, that they accomplish not the same.

But the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, sweetness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness [or meekness], temperance

The Apostle saith not, the works of the Spirit, as he said the works of the flesh, but he adorneth these Christian virtues with a more honorable name, calling them the fruits of the Spirit. For they bring with them most excellent fruits and commodities: for they that have them give glory to God, and with the same do allure and provoke others to embrace the doctrine and faith of Christ.

Love

It had been enough to have said 'love', and no more; for love extendeth itself unto all the fruits of the Spirit. And in 1 Corinthians 13 Paul attributeth to love all the fruits which are done in the Spirit, when he saith: 'Love is patient, courteous,' etc. Notwithstanding he would set it here by itself amongst the rest of the fruits of the Spirit, and in the first place, thereby to admonish the Christians that before all things they should love one another, giving honor one to another through love, and every man esteeming better of another than of himself, because they have Christ and the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, and because of the Word, Baptism, and other gifts of God which Christians have.

Joy

This is the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride, that is to say, sweet cogitations of Christ, wholesome exhortations, pleasant songs or psalms, praises and thanksgiving, whereby the godly do instruct, stir up and refresh one another. Therefore God loveth not heaviness [and doubtfulness] of spirit: he hateth uncomfortable doctrine, heavy and sorrowful cogitations, and loveth cheerful hearts. For therefore hath he sent his Son, not to oppress us with heaviness and sorrow, but to cheer up our souls in him. For this cause the Prophets, the Apostles, and Christ himself do exhort us, yea they command us to rejoice and be glad. Zechariah 9:9: 'Rejoice thou daughter of Zion, be joyful thou daughter of Jerusalem, for behold thy king cometh to thee,' And in the Psalms it is often said 'Be joyful in the Lord.' Paul saith: 'Rejoice in the Lord always,' etc. And Christ saith: 'Rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' Where this joy of the Spirit is, there the heart inwardly rejoiceth through faith in Christ, with full assurance that he is our Savior and our Bishop, and outwardly it expresseth this joy with words and gestures. Also the faithful rejoice when they see that the Gospel spreadeth abroad, that many be won to the faith, and that the kingdom of Christ is enlarged.

Peace

Both towards God and men, that Christians may be peaceable and quiet; not contentious, nor hating one another, but one bearing another's burden through long-suffering or perseverance; without the which, peace cannot continue, and therefore Paul putteth it next after peace.

Long-suffering or perseverance.

Whereby a man doth not only bear adversities, injuries, reproaches, and such-like, but also with patience waiteth for the amendment of those which have done him any wrong. When the devil cannot by force overcome those which are tempted, then seeketh he to overcome them by long continuance.

For he knoweth that we be earthen vessels, which cannot long endure and hold out many knocks and violent strokes; therefore with long continuance [of temptations] he overcometh many. To vanquish these his continual assaults we must use long-suffering, which patiently looketh not only for the amendment of those which do us wrong, but also for the end of those temptations, which the devil raiseth up against us.

Gentleness

Which is, when a man is gentle and tractable in his conversation and in his whole life. For Christians must not be sharp and bitter, but gentle, mild, courteous and fair spoken, and such as make others to delight in their company: which can wink at other men's faults, or at least expound them to the best: which will be well contented to yield and give place to others, contented to bear with those which are froward and intractable, as the very heathen said: 'Thou must know the manners of thy friend, but thou must not hate them.' Such a one was [our Savior] Christ, as everywhere is to be seen in the Gospel. It is said of Peter, that he wept so often as he remembered the sweet mildness of Christ, which he used in his daily conversation. It is an excellent virtue and most necessary in every kind of life.

Goodness

Which is, when a man willingly helpeth others in their necessity by giving, lending, and such other means.

Faith

When Paul here reckoneth faith amongst the fruits of the Spirit, it is manifest that he speaketh not of faith in Christ, but of the fidelity or sincerity [of one man towards another]. Hereupon he saith in Corinthians 13 that charity 'believeth all things.' Therefore he that hath this faith is not suspicious, but of a sincere and single heart; and although he be deceived, and findeth himself to be mocked, yet

such is his mildness, that he letteth it pass: briefly, he giveth credit to all men, but he putteth not his trust in any man. On the contrary, where this virtue is lacking, there men are suspicious, froward, wayward, dogged: they give place to nobody, give credit to nobody: they can suffer nothing. Whatsoever is well said or done by other, they cavil and slander it, and whoso will not laud and magnify them, is hateful unto them. Therefore it is impossible for them to keep charity, friendship, concord, and peace with men. But if these virtues be taken away, what is this life, but biting and devouring one of another?

Faith therefore in this place is, when one man giveth credit to another in things pertaining to this present life. For what manner of life should we lead in this world, if one man should not credit another?

Meekness

Which is, when a man is not lightly moved or provoked to anger. There be infinite occasions in this life which provoke men to anger, but the godly overcome them by meekness.

Temperance

This is a sobriety or modesty in the whole life of man, which [virtue] Paul setteth against the works of flesh. He would therefore that Christians should live soberly and chastely, that they should be no adulterers, no fornicators, no wantons: and if they cannot live chastely, he would have them to marry: also that they should not be contentious or quarrellers, that they should not be given to drunkenness or surfeiting, but that they should abstain from all these things. Chastity or continency containeth all these. Jerome expoundeth it of virginity only, as though they that be married could not be chaste; or as though the Apostle did write these things only to virgins. In the first and second chapter to Titus, he warneth all bishops, young women, and married folks, both man and wife, to be chaste and pure.

Against such there is no law

Indeed there is a law, but not against such; as he saith also in another place: 'The law is not given to the righteous man' (1 Timothy 1:9). For the righteous liveth in such wise, that he hath no need of any law to admonish or to constrain him; but without constraint of the law, he willingly doth those things which the law requireth. Therefore the law cannot accuse and condemn those that believe in Christ. Indeed the law accuseth and terrifieth their consciences: but Christ apprehended by faith, vanquisheth it with all its terrors and threatenings. To them therefore the law is utterly abolished, and hath no right to accuse them: for they do that of their own accord, which the law requireth. They have received the Holy Ghost by faith, who will not suffer them to be idle. Although the flesh resist, yet do they walk after the Spirit. So a Christian accomplisheth the law inwardly by

faith (for Christ is the perfection of the law unto righteousness, to all that do believe), outwardly by works and by remission of sins. But those which perform the works and desires of the flesh, the law doth accuse and condemn both civilly and spiritually.

For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.

This whole place concerning works, showeth that the true believers are no hypocrites. Therefore let no man deceive himself; for whosoever, saith he, pertain unto Christ, have crucified the flesh with all the vices and lusts thereof. For the saints, inasmuch as they have not yet utterly put off the corrupt [and sinful] flesh, are inclined to sin, and do neither fear nor love God so perfectly as they ought to do. Also they be provoked to anger, to envy, to impatience, to carnal lust, and such-like motions, which notwithstanding they accomplish not; for (as Paul here saith) they crucify the flesh with all the passions and vices thereof. Which thing they do, not only when they repress the wantonness of the flesh with fasting and other exercises, but also (as Paul said before) when they walk according to the Spirit: that is, when they being admonished by the threatenings of God, whereby he showeth that he will severely punish sin, are afraid to commit sin; also when they being armed with the Word of God, with faith and with prayer, do not obey the lusts of the flesh.

When they resist the flesh after this manner, they nail it to the cross with the affections and desires thereof, so that although the flesh be yet alive, yet can it not perform that which it would do, forasmuch as it is bound both hand and foot, and fast nailed to the cross. The faithful then so long as they live here do crucify the flesh; that is to say, they feel the lusts thereof, but they obey them not. For they being furnished with the armor of God, that is, with faith, hope, and the sword of the Spirit, do resist the flesh; and with these spiritual nails they fasten the same unto the cross, so that it is constrained to be subject to the Spirit. Afterwards when they die, they put it off wholly: and when they shall rise again from death to life, they shall have a pure and uncorrupt flesh without all affections and lusts.

If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit

The Apostle reckoned before amongst the works of the flesh heresy and envy, and pronounced sentence against those which are envious, and which are authors of sects, that they should not inherit the kingdom of God. And now, as if he had forgotten that which he said a little before, he again reproveth those which provoke and envy one another. Why doth he so?

Was it not sufficient to have done it once? Indeed he doth it of purpose: for he taketh occasion here to inveigh against that execrable vice of vainglory, which was the cause of the troubles that were in all the churches of Galatia, and hath

been always most pernicious and hurtful to the whole Church of Christ. Therefore in his Epistle to Titus, he would not that a proud man should be ordained a bishop. For pride (as Augustine truly saith) is the mother of all heresies, or rather the head-spring of all sin and confusion: which thing all histories as well holy as profane do witness.

Now, vainglory or arrogancy hath always been a common poison in the world, which the very heathen poets and historiographers have always vehemently reprov'd. There is no village wherein there is not some one or other to be found, that would be counted wiser, and be more esteemed than all the rest. But they are chiefly infected with this disease, which stand upon their reputation for learning and wisdom. In this case no man will yield to another, according to this saying: Ye shall not lightly find a man that will yield unto others the praise of wit and skill. For it is a goodly thing to see men point at one, and say: This is he. But this vice is not so hurtful in private persons, no nor in any kind of magistrate, as it is in them that have any charge in the Church. Albeit in civil government (specially if it be in great personages) it is not only a cause of troubles and ruins of commonweals, but also the troubles and alterations of kingdoms and empires: which thing the histories both of the Scripture and profane writers do witness.

But when this poison creepeth into the Church or Spiritual kingdom, it cannot be expressed how hurtful it is. For there is no contention as touching learning, wit, beauty, riches, kingdoms empires and such-like; but as touching salvation or damnation, eternal life or eternal death. Therefore Paul earnestly exhorteth the ministers of the Word to fly this vice, saying: 'If we live in the Spirit,' etc. As if he should say: If it be true that we live by the Spirit, let us also proceed orderly and walk in the Spirit. For where the Spirit is, it reneweth men and worketh in them new motions: that is to say, whereas they were before vainglorious, wrathful and envious, etc., it maketh them now humble, gentle, and patient, etc. Such men seek not their own glory, but the glory of God: they do not provoke one another, or envy one another, but give place one to another, and in giving honor prevent one another. Contrariwise, they that be desirous of glory, and envy one another, may boast that they have the Spirit and live after the Spirit; but they deceive themselves, they follow the flesh and do the works thereof, and they have their judgment already, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, as nothing is more dangerous to the Church than this execrable vice, so is there nothing more common: for when God sendeth forth laborers into his harvest, by and by Satan raiseth up his ministers also, who will in no wise be counted inferior to those that are rightly called. Here straitway riseth dissension. The wicked will not yield one hair's breadth to the godly; for they dream that they far pass them in wit, in learning, in godliness, in spirit and other virtues. Much less ought the godly to yield to the wicked, lest the doctrine of faith come in danger. Moreover, such is the nature of the ministers of Satan, that they can make a goodly show that they are very charitable, humble, lovers of concord, and

are endued with other fruits of the Spirit; also they protest that they seek nothing else but the glory of God and the salvation of men's souls: and yet are they full of vain glory, doing all things for none other end but to get praise and estimation among men. To be short, they think that godliness is gain, and that the ministry of the Word is delivered unto them that they may get fame and estimation thereby. Wherefore they cannot but be authors of dissensions and sects.

Forasmuch then as the vain glory of the false apostles was the cause that the churches of Galatia were troubled and forsook Paul, therefore in this chapter specially his purpose was to suppress that execrable vice: yea this mischief gave the Apostle occasion to write this whole Epistle. And if he had not so done, all his travail bestowed in preaching of the Gospel among the Galatians had been spent in vain. For in his absence the false apostles, which were men in outward show of great authority, reigned in Galatia; who besides that they would seem to seek the glory of Christ and the salvation of the Galatians, pretended also that they had been conversant with the Apostles, and that they followed their footsteps, saying that Paul had not seen Christ in the flesh, nor had been conversant with the rest of the Apostles; and therefore they made no account of him, but rejected his doctrine, and boasted their own to be true and sincere. Thus they troubled the Galatians, and raised sects among them, so that they provoked and envied one another: which was a sure token, that neither the teachers nor hearers lived and walked after the Spirit, but followed the flesh and fulfilled the works thereof; and so consequently lost the true doctrine, faith, Christ, and all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and were now become worse than the heathen.

Notwithstanding he doth not only inveigh against the false apostles, which is his time troubled the churches of Galatia; but also he foresaw in spirit, that there should be an infinite number of such even to the world's end, which being infected with this pernicious vice should thrust themselves uncalled into the Church, boasting of the Spirit and heavenly doctrine, and under this pretense should quite overthrow the true doctrine and faith.

Many such have we also seen in these our days, who, not being called, have thrust themselves into the kingdom of the Spirit, that is to say, into the ministry of the Word; and by this hypocrisy they have purchased unto themselves fame and estimation, that they were great teachers of the Gospel, and such as lived in the Spirit, and walked according to the same. But when by their fair speaking they had won the minds of the people, they turned by and by from the right way and began to teach some new thing, whereby they might make a name for themselves as the first that had pointed out the errors in the Church, put away and corrected the abuses, overthrown the papacy and discovered some fine new doctrine, and therefore as men that had good right to hold the primacy among the evangelical doctors. But because their glory consisted in men's mouths and not in God therefore it could not be firm and stable; but, according to Paul's prophecy, it turned to their own confusion, and their end was destruction. For 'the

wicked shall not stand in judgment, but shall be taken away like chaff, and scattered abroad with the wind,' (Psalm 1:4 f.).

The same judgment remaineth for all such as in preaching the Gospel seek their own things and not the things of Jesus Christ. For the Gospel is not delivered unto us that we should thereby seek our own praise and glory, or that the people should honor and magnify us which are the ministers thereof: but to the end that the benefit and glory of Christ might be preached and published, and that the Father might be glorified in his mercy offered unto us in Christ his Son, whom he delivered for us all, and with him hath given us all things. Wherefore the Gospel is a doctrine wherein we ought to seek nothing less than our own glory. It setteth forth unto us heavenly and eternal things; which are not our own, which we have neither done nor deserved; but it offereth the same unto us, I say, which are unworthy, and that through the mere goodness [and grace] of God. Why should we then seek praise and glory thereby? He therefore that seeketh his own glory in the Gospel, speaketh of himself: and he that speaketh of himself is a liar, and there is unrighteousness in him. Contrariwise he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him (John 7:18).

Paul therefore giveth earnest charge to all the ministers of the Word, saying 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit,' that is to say: let us abide in the doctrine of truth which hath been taught unto us, in brotherly love and spiritual concord; and let us preach Christ and the glory of God in simplicity of heart, and let us confess that we have received all things of him: let us not think more of ourselves than of others; let us raise up no sects. For this is not to walk rightly, but rather to range out of the way, and to set up a new and perverse way of walking.

Hereby we may understand that God, of His special grace, maketh the teachers of the Gospel subject to the cross and to all kinds of afflictions, for the salvation of themselves and of the people; for otherwise they could by no means suppress and beat down this beast which is called vainglory.

For if no persecution, no cross or reproach followed the doctrine of the Gospel, but only praise, reputation and glory amongst men, then would all the professors thereof be infected and perish through the poison of vainglory. Jerome saith, that he had seen many which could suffer great inconveniences in their body and goods, but none that could despise their own praises. For it is [almost] impossible for a man not to be puffed up, when he heareth anything spoken in the praise of his own virtues. Paul, notwithstanding that he had the spirit of Christ, saith that there was given unto him the messenger of Satan to buffet him, because he should not be exalted out of measure through the greatness of his revelations. Therefore Augustine saith very well: If a minister of the Word be praised, he is in danger: if a brother despise or dispraise him, he is also in danger. He that heareth me preach the Word, ought to honor me for the

Word's sake; if he honoreth me, he doeth well, but if I am proud thereof, I am in danger. Contrariwise if he despise me, I am out of danger; but so is not he.

Wherefore we must by all means honor our 'good' (Romans 14:16), that is, the ministry of the Word, the Sacraments, etc. We must also reverence one another, according to that saying: 'giving honor one to another,' etc. (Romans 12:10). But wheresoever this is done, by and by the flesh is tickled with these praises and waxeth proud. For there is none (no not among the godly) which would not rather be praised than dispraised, except perhaps some be so well established in this behalf, that he will be moved neither with praises nor reproaches; as that woman said of David (2 Samuel 14.): 'My lord the king is like an angel of God, which will neither be moved with blessing nor cursing.' Likewise Paul saith: 'By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report,' etc. (Corinthians 6:8). Such men as be neither puffed up with praise, nor thrown down with dispraise, but endeavor simply to set forth the benefit and glory of Christ, and to seek the salvation of souls, do walk orderly. Contrariwise, they which wax proud in hearing of their own praises, not seeking the glory of Christ but their own, also they which being moved with reproaches and slanders, do forsake the ministry of the Word, walk not orderly.

Wherefore let everyone that boasteth of the Spirit, see that he remain in order. If thou be praised, know that it is not thou that is praised, but Christ to whom all praise is due. For in that thou teachest the Word purely and livest godly, these are not thine own gifts, but the gifts of God: therefore thou art not praised, but God in thee. When thou dost acknowledge this, thou wilt walk orderly, and not be puffed up with vainglory ('For what hast thou that thou hast not received?': 1 Corinthians 4:7), but wilt confess that thou hast received the same of God, and wilt not be moved with injuries, reproaches or persecution to forsake thy calling.

God therefore of his special grace at this day, covereth our glory with infamy, reproach, mortal hatred, cruel persecution, railing and cursing of the whole world; also with the contempt and ingratitude even of those among whom we live, as well the common sort, as also the citizens, gentlemen, and noblemen (whose enmity, hatred and persecution against the Gospel, like as it is privy and inward, so is it more dangerous than the cruel and outrageous dealings of our open enemies), that we should not wax proud of the gifts of God in us. This mill-stone must be hanged about our neck, that we be not infected with that pestilent poison of vainglory.

Some there be of our side which love and reverence us for the ministry of the Word: but where there is one that reverenceth us, there be on the other side an hundred that hate and persecute us. These spiteful dealings therefore, and these persecutions of our enemies, this great contempt and ingratitude, this cruel and privy hatred of them among whom we live, are such pleasant sights and

make us so merry, that we easily forget vainglory. Wherefore, rejoicing in the Lord who is our glory, we remain in order.

Though we far surpass other in spiritual gifts, we acknowledge these to be the gifts of God, and not our own, given for the edifying of the Body of Christ; therefore we be not proud of them. For we know that more is required of them to whom much is committed, than of them which have received but little. Moreover, we know that there is no respect of persons before God. Therefore a poor artificer faithfully using the gift which God hath given him, pleaseth God no less than a preacher of the Word; for he serveth God in the same faith and with the same spirit. Wherefore we ought no less to regard the meanest Christians, than they regard us. And by this means shall we continue free from the poison of vainglory, and walk in the Spirit.

Contrariwise, the fantastical spirits which seek their own glory, the favor of men, the peace of the world, the ease of the flesh, and not the glory of Christ, nor yet the health of men's souls (although they protest that they seek nothing else) cannot choose but discover themselves in commending their own doctrine and industry, and dispraising other men's, and all to get them a name and praise. No man, say they, knew this before me: I first saw and taught this, etc. Therefore they are all vainglorious spirits, that is, they do not rejoice and glory in the Lord; but then do they glory, then are they stout and hardy, when they are magnified of the people, whose hearts they win by wonderful sleights and subtleties; for in their words, gestures, and writings, they can counterfeit and dissemble all things. But when they are not praised and commended of the people, then be they the most fearful men in the world; for they hate and shun the cross of Christ and persecution. On the contrary, when they are praised and magnified, as I said, none are so stout, no Hector or Achilles so bold and hardy as they.

Such a sly and crafty beast therefore is the flesh, that for none other cause it forsaketh his function, corrupteth true doctrine, and breaketh the concord of the Church, than only upon this cursed vainglory. Therefore it is not without cause that Paul so sharply inveigheth against it both here and in other places, as before in the fourth chapter: 'They are (saith he) jealous over you amiss; yea they would exclude you from me, that ye should altogether love them;' that is to say, they would discredit me, that they themselves might be famous. They seek not Christ's glory and your salvation, but their own glory, my reproach and your bondage.

Let us not be desirous of vainglory

Which is to glory, not in God and in the truth (as I have said) but in 'lies,' in the opinion, liking and estimation of the people. Here is no right foundation of true glory, but a false foundation, and therefore impossible long to stand. He that praiseth a man as he is a man, is a liar; for there is nothing praiseworthy in him, but all things are worthy of condemnation.

Therefore, as touching our person, this is our glory, that all men have sinned and are guilty of everlasting death before God. But the case is otherwise when our ministry is praised. Wherefore we must not only wish, but also to the uttermost of our power endeavor, that men may magnify it and have it in due reverence; for this shall turn to their salvation. Paul warneth the Romans that they offend no man, to the end (saith he) 'that our commodity be not evil spoken of' (Romans 14:16); and in another place: 'that our ministry be not reprehended' (2 Corinthians 6:3).

Therefore, when our ministry is praised, we be not praised for our own person's sake, but (as the Psalm saith) we are praised in God and in His holy name (Psalm 89:17).

Provoking one another, and envying one another

Here he describeth the effect and fruit of vainglory. He that teacheth any error, or is an author of any new doctrine, cannot but provoke others; and when they do not approve and receive his doctrine, by and by he beginneth to hate them most bitterly. We see at this day with what deadly hatred the Sectaries are inflamed against us, because we will not give place to them, and approve their errors. We did not first provoke them, nor spread abroad any wicked opinion in the world: but, rebuking certain abuses in the Church, and faithfully teaching the article of justification, have walked in good order. But they, forsaking this article, have taught many things contrary to the Word of God, concerning the Sacraments, original sin, the spoken Word, etc. Here, because we would not lose the truth of the Gospel, we have set ourselves against them, and have condemned their errors: which thing because they could not abide, they did not only provoke us first without cause, but also do still most spitefully hate us, and that upon no other occasion but only upon vainglory; for they would gladly deface us, that they alone might rule and reign: for they imagine that it is a great glory to profess the Gospel, whereas indeed there is no greater ignominy in the sight of the world.