

Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

INDEX

Chapter II



Dr. Martin Luther 1535

CHAPTER 2

Then fourteen years after, I went up again to Jerusalem

PAUL taught that the Gentiles were justified by faith only, without the works of the law. This doctrine when he had published abroad among the Gentiles, he cometh to Antioch, and declareth to the disciples what he had done. Then they which had been trained up in the old customs of the law, rose against Paul with great indignation, for that he preached to the Gentiles liberty from the bondage of the law. Whereupon followed great dissension, which afterwards stirred up new troubles. Paul and Barnabas stood strongly to the truth, and testified, saying: Wheresoever we preached among the Gentiles, the Holy Ghost came and fell upon those which heard the Word; and this was done throughout all the churches of the Gentiles.

But we preached not circumcision, neither did we require the keeping of the law, but we preached only faith in Jesus Christ; and at this preaching of faith, God gave to the hearers the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, therefore, doth approve the faith of the Gentiles, without the law and circumcision; for if the preaching of the Gospel, and faith of the Gentiles in Christ, had not pleased him, he had not come down in a visible shape upon the uncircumcised which heard the Word. Seeing then by the only hearing of faith he came down upon them, it is certain that the Holy Ghost by this sign hath approved the faith of the Gentiles; for it doth not appear that this was ever done before at the preaching of the law.

Then the Jews and many of the Pharisees which did believe, and notwithstanding bare yet a great zeal to the law, earnestly striving to maintain the glory thereof, set themselves fiercely against Paul (who alarmed that the Gentiles were justified by faith only, without the works of the law), contending that the law ought to be kept, and that the Gentiles ought to be circumcised; for otherwise they could not be saved, And no marvel; for the very name of the law of God is holy and dreadful. The heathen man, which never knew any thing of the law of God, if he hear any man say: This doctrine is the law of God, he is moved therewith. How then could it be but the Jews must needs be moved, and vehemently contend for the maintenance of the law of God, which even from their infancy had been nusled and trained up therein?

We see at this day, how obstinate the Papists be in defending their traditions and doctrines of devils; wherefore, it was much less to be marveled that the Jews did so vehemently and zealously strive for the maintenance of their law, which they had received from God. Custom is of such force, that whereas nature is of itself inclined to the observation of the law, by long continuance it so confirmeth nature, that now it becometh a double nature. Therefore, it was not possible for the Jews which were newly converted to Christ, suddenly to forsake the law; who, though they had received the faith of Christ, thought it necessary

notwithstanding to observe the law. And with this their weakness God did bear for a time, until the doctrine of the Gospel might be plainly discerned from the law. So he bare with the infirmity of Israel in the time of king Ahab, when the people halted between two religions. He bare also with our weakness whilst we were under the blindness of the Pope. For he is long-suffering, and full of mercy. But we must not abuse this goodness and patience of the Lord, nor continue still in our weakness and error, since the truth is now revealed by the clear light of the Gospel.

Moreover, they that stood against Paul, affirming that the Gentiles ought to be circumcised, had to lay for themselves, first the law and custom of the country, then the example of the Apostles, and last of all, the example of Paul himself, who had circumcised Timothy. Wherefore, if Paul in his defense said that he did not this of necessity, but for Christian love and liberty, lest they which were weak in faith should be offended, which of them would comprehend or believe him? Hereunto all the people would answer: Since it is evident that thou hast circumcised Timothy, thou mayest say what thou wilt; notwithstanding thou hast done it. For this is a matter far passing all man's capacity, and therefore they could not understand it.

Moreover, no defense can serve when a man hath lost the favor of the people, and is fallen into such deadly hatred and contempt. Paul therefore seeing this contention and these clamors daily to increase more and more, and being also warned by revelation from God, after fourteen years (besides those wherein he had preached in Damascus and Arabia) goeth up again to Jerusalem, to confer his Gospel with the other Apostles; yet not for his own cause, but for the people's sake.

Now, this contention touching the observation of the law, exercised Paul a long time after, and wrought him much trouble; but I do not think that this is the contention which Luke speaketh of in the fifteenth of the Acts, which happened, as it appeareth, by and by after the beginning of the Gospel; but this history which Paul here mentioneth, seemeth to be done long after, when Paul had now almost eighteen years preached the Gospel.

With barnabas, and took with me titus

He joineth unto himself two witnesses, Barnabas and Titus. Barnabas was Paul's companion in preaching to the Gentiles freedom from the servitude of the law. He was also a witness of all those things which Paul did, and had seen the Holy Ghost given unto the Gentiles, which were uncircumcised and free from Moses's law, by the only preaching of faith in Jesus Christ. And he alone stuck to Paul in this point, that it was not necessary that the Gentiles should be burdened with the law, but that it was enough for them to believe in Christ. Wherefore, by his own experience he testifieth with Paul against the Jews, that the Gentiles were made

the children of God and saved by faith alone in Jesus Christ, without the law of circumcision.

Titus was not only a Christian, but also the chief overseer in Crete; for unto him Paul had committed the charge of governing the churches there (Titus 1); and this Titus was a Gentile.

And I went up by revelation

For unless Paul had been admonished by revelation, he had not gone up to Jerusalem: but because God warned him by a special revelation, and commanded him to go up, therefore he went. And this he did to bridle, or at least to appease, the Jews that believed and yet obstinately contended about the keeping of the law, to the end that the truth of the Gospel might the more be advanced and confirmed.

And I communicated with them touching the gospel

You hear then, that at length after eighteen years he went up to Jerusalem, and conferred with the Apostles touching his Gospel.

Which I preach among the gentiles

For among the Jews he suffered the law and circumcision for a time, as the other Apostles did: 'I am made all things unto all men,' saith he (Corinthians 9:22); yet ever holding the true doctrine of the Gospel, which he preferred above the law, circumcision, the Apostles, yea and an angel from heaven. For thus saith he unto the Jews: 'Through this Christ, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.' And he addeth very plainly: 'and from all things, from the which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses, by him every one that believeth is justified' (Acts 13:38 f.). For this cause he teacheth and defendeth the doctrine of the Gospel so diligently every where, and never suffereth it to come in danger.

Notwithstanding, he did not suddenly break out at the first but had regard unto the weak. And because the weak should not be offended, there is no doubt but he spake to the Jews after this manner: If that unprofitable service of Moses' law, which nothing availeth to righteousness, do so highly please you, ye may keep it still for me, so that the Gentiles which are not bound to this law, be not charged therewithal.

Paul therefore confesseth, that he conferred the Gospel with the Apostles.

But (saith he) they profited me or taught me nothing: but I rather for the defense of the liberty, of the Gospel, in the presence of the Apostles, did constantly resist those which would needs force the observation of the law upon the Gentiles, and so did overcome them. Wherefore your false apostles lie, in

saying that I circumcised Timothy, that I shaved my head in Cenchrea, and that I went up to Jerusalem, at the commandment of the Apostles. Nay rather, I glory that in going up to Jerusalem by the revelation of God, and not at the commandment of the Apostles, and there conferring my Gospel with them, I brought to pass the contrary, that is to say, obtained that the Apostles did approve me, and not those which were against me.

Now, the question whereupon the Apostles conferred together in this assembly, was this: whether the keeping the law were necessary to justification or no. To this Paul answered: I have preached unto the Gentiles, according to my Gospel which I received from God, faith in Christ, and not the law, and at this preaching of faith, they received the Holy Ghost; and hereof Barnabas shall bear me witness. Wherefore I conclude, that the Gentiles ought not to be burdened with the law, nor to be circumcised. Notwithstanding, I give no restraint to the Jews herein: who if they will needs keep the law and be circumcised, I am not against it, so that they do it with freedom of conscience. And thus have I taught and lived among the Jews, 'being made a Jew unto the Jews;' holding ever the truth of my Gospel notwithstanding.

But particularly with them that were the chiefest

That is to say, I did not only confer with the brethren, but with those that were the chiefest among them.

Lest by any means I should run, or had run in vain

Not that Paul doubted, that he ran or had run in vain, forasmuch as he had now preached the Gospel eighteen years, (for it followeth incontinent in the text, that he had continued firm and constant all this while, and had prevailed); but for that many did think that Paul had therefore preached the Gospel so many years in vain, because he had set the Gentiles at liberty from the observation of the law. Moreover, this opinion daily more and more increased, that the law was necessary to justification. Wherefore, in going up to Jerusalem by revelation, he meant so to remedy this evil, that by this comerence all men might plainly see his Gospel to be in no point contrary to the doctrine of the other Apostles, to the end that by this means he might stop the mouths of the adversaries, which would else have said that he ran or had run in vain. Note here by the way, the virtue of man's own righteousness, or the righteousness of the law, to be such that they which teach it, do run and live in vain.

But neither yet Titus which was with me, though he were a Grecian, was compelled to be circumcised

This word 'was compelled' sufficiently declareth what the conference and conclusion was: to wit, that the Gentiles should not be constrained to be circumcised, but that circumcision should be permitted to the Jews for a time: not

as necessary to righteousness, but for the reverence to the fathers: and for charity's sake towards the weak, lest they should be offended, until they were grown up more strong in faith. For it might have seemed a very strange and unseemly thing, upon a sudden to forsake the law and traditions of the fathers, which had been given to this people from God with so great glory.

Paul then did not reject circumcision as a damnable thing, neither did he by word or deed enforce the Jews to forsake it. For in 1 Corinthians 7:18 he saith: 'If any man be called being circumcised, let him not add uncircumcision.' But he rejected circumcision as a thing not necessary to righteousness, seeing the fathers themselves were not justified thereby, but it was unto them as a sign only, or a seal of righteousness (Romans 4:11), whereby they testified and exercised their faith. Notwithstanding, the believing Jews which were yet weak and bare a zeal to the law, hearing that circumcision was not necessary to righteousness, could understand this no otherwise, but that it was altogether unprofitable and damnable. And this fond opinion of the weak Jews the false apostles did increase, to the end that, the hearts of the people being stirred up against Paul by this occasion, they might thoroughly discredit his doctrine. So we at this day do not reject fasting and other good exercises as damnable things; but we teach that by these exercises we do not obtain remission of sins. When the people hear this, by and by they judge us to speak against good works.

And this opinion the Papists do confirm and increase by their preachings and writings. But they lie, and do us great wrong. For many years past, there was never any that taught more sound and godly doctrine as touching good works, than we do at this day.

Paul therefore did not so condemn circumcision, as though it were sin to receive it or keep it: for the Jews would have been highly offended: but it was decided in this conference and council, that it was not necessary to justification, and therefore not to be forced upon the Gentiles. So this moderation was found, that for the reverence of the fathers, and charity towards the weak in faith, the Jews should keep the law and circumcision still for a time; notwithstanding they should not thereby seek to be Justified. And moreover, that the Gentiles should not be burdened therewith, both because it would have been to them a very strange thing, and also a burden intolerable (Acts 15:10). Briefly, that none should be constrained to be circumcised, or any restrained from circumcision. Jerome and Augustine do sharply contend concerning this place of Paul.

This word 'was compelled' maketh for the defense of Augustine. Jerome understood not the matter. For it is not here in dispute, what Peter or Paul did in the matter of circumcising or not circumcising, as Jerome thinketh.

Wherefore he marvelleth how Paul durst reprehend in Peter that which he himself, did; for (saith he) Paul circumcised Timothy, and lived as a Gentile with the Gentiles and as a Jew with the Jews, etc. He thinketh it to be no serious matter that is here in dispute. Therefore he concludeth that neither had sinned; but he feigneth that both had dissembled with an official falsehood, But in truth, all these their disputings were and are serious and concerning matters of very great weight. Therefore they did nothing by dissimulation.

Now this was the principal question: Whether the law be necessary to justification or no? Concerning this especial theme, whereon hangeth the whole sum of Christian doctrine, Paul and Peter do here contend. Paul was too grave a man to assail and rebuke Peter thus freely in the presence of the whole church of Antioch for the sake of a trifling matter. He assaileth him for the sake of the chief article of Christian doctrine. For when the Jews were absent, Peter ate with the Gentiles, but when they came, he withdrew himself, etc. There Paul reprehendeth him because by his dissimulation he compelled the Gentiles to do as the Jews. The whole force lieth in the word, 'thou compellest.' This Jerome seeth not.

Paul therefore compelled none that would be circumcised, to remain uncircumcised, so that he knew circumcision not to be necessary to justification. This constraint would Paul take away. Therefore he suffered the Jews to keep the law, so that they did it with a free conscience. For he had ever taught, as well the Jews as the Gentiles, that in conscience they ought to be free from the law and circumcision; like as all the patriarchs and all the faithful in the Old Testament were free in conscience and justified by faith, and not by the law or circumcision. And indeed, Paul might have suffered Titus to be circumcised; but because he saw that they would compel him thereunto, he would not. For if they had prevailed therein, by and by they would have gathered that it had been necessary to justification, and so through this sufferance, they would have triumphed against Paul. So also we leave every man free to put on or put off a cowl, to enter or to leave a monastery, to eat flesh or herbs; only, let him do these things freely and without offense of conscience, to please a brother or as an example of charity; and let him know that all of these things avail nothing in the matter of satisfying for sins and obtaining grace, etc. But as in Paul's time the false apostles would not leave circumcision and the observation of the law indifferent, but required the same as necessary to salvation, so at this day our adversaries do obstinately contend that men's traditions cannot be omitted without peril of salvation: and thus of an example of charity, they make an example of faith, when notwithstanding there is but one example of faith, which is to believe in Jesus Christ. And this, as it is alone necessary to salvation, so doth it also indifferently pertain to all men. Notwithstanding the adversaries would rather worship the devil ten times instead of God, than they would suffer this. Therefore they are daily hardened more and more, and seek to establish their impieties and blasphemies against God, defending the same by force and tyranny, and will not agree or consent unto us in any point. But what then? Let us go on boldly in the name of the Lord of Hosts, setting forth the glory of Jesus

Christ and fighting valiantly against the kingdom of Antichrist by the Word and by prayer, that the name of God alone may be sanctified, that his kingdom may come, and that his will may be done (Matthew 6:9 f.).

And that this may speedily come to pass, we desire even from the bottom of our hearts, and say, Amen, Amen.

This triumph of Paul therefore was very glorious: namely, that Titus who was a Gentile, although he were in the midst of the Apostles and all the faithful, where this question was so vehemently debated, was yet not constrained to be circumcised. This victory Paul carrieth away, and saith that in this conference it was decided by the consent of all the Apostles, the whole Church also approving the same, that Titus should not be circumcised. This is a strong argument, and maketh very much against the false apostles. And with this argument, 'Neither was Titus corn-peeled to be circumcised,' Paul was able to repress and mightily to convince all his adversaries. As if he should say: Why do these counterfeit apostles so falsely report of me, saying that I am compelled to keep circumcision by the commandment of the Apostles, seeing I have the witness of all the faithful in Jerusalem, and moreover of the Apostles themselves, that by my pursuit and travail the contrary was there determined? And I did not only there prevail that Titus should not be circumcised, but the Apostles also did approve and ratify the same. Your counterfeit apostles therefore do lie deadly, which slander me under the name of the Apostles, and thereby deceive you; for I have the Apostles and all the faithful, not against me, but with me; and this I prove by the example of Titus.

Notwithstanding, Paul, as I have often said, did not condemn circumcision as an unprofitable thing, neither constrained he any man thereunto. For it is neither sin nor righteousness to be circumcised or uncircumcised, as it is neither sin nor righteousness to eat or drink. For whether thou eat or eat not, thou art neither better nor worse (1 Corinthians 8:8). But if any man should add thereto either sin or righteousness, and say: If thou eat thou sinnest, if thou abstain thou art righteous (or the contrary), he should show himself both foolish and wicked. Therefore to join ceremonies with sin or righteousness, is great impiety: as the Pope doth, who in his form of excommunication threateneth to all those that do not obey the law of the Bishop of Rome, the peril of their souls, and so maketh all his laws necessary to salvation. Wherefore the devil himself speaketh in the person Of the Pope and in all such decrees of the Pope. For if salvation consisteth in keeping of the Pope's laws, what need have we of Christ to be our justifier and Savior?

Because of the false brethren that crept in, who came in privily to espy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage. To whom we gave not place by subjection for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you

Here Paul sheweth the cause why he went up to Jerusalem, and there conferred his Gospel with the other Apostles, and why he would not circumcise Titus: not that he might be the more certain, or confirmed in the Gospel by the Apostles, for he nothing doubted thereof: but that the truth of the Gospel might continue in the churches of the Galatians, and in all the churches of the Gentiles. We see then. that the business of Paul was no light matter.

Now, where he speaketh of the truth of the Gospel, he sheweth that there be two gospels, a true and a false gospel. Indeed, the Gospel of itself is one, simple, true, and sincere: but by the malice of Satan's ministers it is corrupt and defaced. Therefore where he saith: 'the truth of the Gospel,' he would have us to understand also the contrary. As if he would say: The false apostles do also preach a faith and a gospel, but they are both false; therefore have I set myself so constantly against them. And in that I would not give place unto them, this have I brought to pass, that the truth of the Gospel continueth with you. So the Pope and the fantastical spirits do brag at this day, that they teach the Gospel and faith in Christ. True it is: but with such fruit as the false apostles once did, whom Paul calleth before in the first chapter, troublers of the churches and subverters of the Gospel of Christ. On the other side, he saith that he teacheth the truth of the Gospel As if he should say: Those things which the false apostles teach, brag they never so much that they teach the truth, are nothing else but stark lies. So all heretics pretend the name of God, of Christ, of the Church, etc. Also they pretend that they will not teach errors or lies, but most certain truth and the purest Gospel of Christ.

Now the truth of the Gospel is, that our righteousness cometh by faith alone, without the works of the law. The corruption or falsehood of the Gospel is, that we are justified by faith, but not without the works of the law. With this condition annexed, the false apostles preached the Gospel.

Even so do our sophisters and Papists at this day. For they say that we must believe in Christ, and that faith is the foundation of our salvation: but it justifieth not, except it be furnished with charity. This is not the truth of the Gospel, but falsehood and dissimulation. But the true Gospel indeed is, that works of charity are not the ornament or perfection of faith: but that faith of itself is God's gift and God's work in our hearts, which therefore justifieth us, because it apprehendeth Christ our redeemer. Man's reason hath the law for his object, thus thinking with itself: This I have done, this I have not done. But faith being in her own proper office, hath no other object but Jesus Christ the Son of God, delivered to death for the sins of the whole world It looketh not to charity; it saith not What have I done?

What have I offended? What have I deserved? But [it saith]: What hath Christ done? What hath he deserved? Here the truth of the Gospel answereth thee: He hath redeemed thee from sin, from tile devil, and from eternal death.

Faith therefore acknowledgeth that in this one person, Jesus Christ, it hath forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He that turneth his eyes away from this object, hath no true faith, but a fantasy and a vain opinion, and turneth his eyes from the promise to the law, which terrifieth and driveth to desperation.

Wherefore those things which the popish schoolmen have taught concerning the justifying faith being furnished with charity, are nothing else but mere dreams. For that faith which apprehendeth Christ the Son of God, and is furnished with him, is the same faith that justifieth, and not the faith which includeth charity. For faith, if it is to be sure and steadfast, must lay hold upon nothing else but Christ alone, and in the conflict and terrors of conscience it hath nothing else to lean unto, but this precious pearl Christ Jesus. Wherefore he that apprehendeth Christ by faith, although he be never so much terrified with the law, and oppressed with the weight of his sins, yet may he be bold to glory that he is righteous. How, or by what means? Even by that precious jewel Christ Jesus, which he possesseth by faith. This our adversaries understand not, and therefore they cast away this precious pearl Christ, and in his place they set charity, which they say is their precious jewel. Now, when they cannot tell what faith is, it is impossible that they should have faith; much less can they teach it unto others. And as for that which they will seem to have, it is nothing else but natural reason, an opinion, a very dream, and no faith.

This I say, to the end ye may perceive and note that by these words, 'the truth of the Gospel,' Paul vehemently reproveth the contrary. For thereby he reprehendeth the false apostles, because they had taught a false gospel, requiring circumcision and the observation of the law as necessary to salvation. Moreover, they went about by wonderful craft and subtilty to entrap Paul; for they watched him narrowly, to see whether he would circumcise Titus or no; also, whether he durst withstand them in the presence of the Apostles: and for this cause he reprehendeth them bitterly. 'They went about,' saith he, 'to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.' Wherefore the false apostles armed themselves on every side, that they might convince and confound him before the whole congregation. Besides this, they went about to abuse the authority of the Apostles, in whose presence they accused him, saying 'Paul hath brought Titus, being uncircumcised, into the company of all the faithful; he denieth and condemneth the law in your presence, which are Apostles. If he dare be so bold to attempt this here and before you, what will not he attempt in your absence among the Gentiles?'

Wherefore when he perceived that he was so craftily assailed, he strongly withstood the false apostles, saying: We did not suffer our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus to come in danger, although the false brethren sought by all means to snare us and put us to much trouble; but we overcame them even by the judgment of the Apostles themselves, and we would not yield unto them, no not one hour (for, no doubt, their drift was to have caused Paul to surcease from this liberty at least for a time), since we saw that they required the observation of

the law as necessary to salvation. But if they had alleged nothing else but charitable bearing with the brethren, no doubt but Paul would have given them place. But it was another thing that they sought: to wit, that they might bring Paul, and all that stuck to his doctrine, into bondage. Therefore he would not yield unto them, no, not the space of one moment.

In like manner do we also offer to the Papists all that is to be offered, yea and more than we ought. Only we except the liberty of conscience which we have in Christ Jesus. For we will not be compelled or suffer our consciences to be bound to any work, so that by doing this thing or that, we should be righteous, or leaving the same undone we should be damned.

We are contented to eat the same meats that they eat, we will keep their feasts and fasting days, so they will suffer us to do the same with a free conscience, and leave these threatening words, wherewith they have terrified and brought under their subjection the whole world, saying: We command, we charge, we charge again, we excommunicate, etc. But this liberty we cannot obtain; like as Paul also could not in his time. Therefore we do as he did. For when he saw that he could not obtain this liberty, he would not give place to the false apostles even the space of one hour.

Wherefore, like as our adversaries will not leave this free unto us, that only faith in Christ justifieth: so on the other side, neither will we nor can we give place unto them, that faith furnished with charity justifieth. Here we will and we ought also to be rebellious and obstinate against them, for else we should lose the truth of the Gospel: we should lose our liberty which we have, not in the emperor, not in the kings and princes, not in the Pope, not in the world, not in flesh, blood, reason etc., but which we have in Christ Jesus. We should lose faith in Christ, which, as before I have said, apprehendeth nothing else but that precious jewel Christ Jesus. This faith, whereby we are regenerate, justified, and engrafted into Christ, if our adversaries will leave unto us sound and uncorrupt, we offer unto them that we will do all things, so that they be not contrary to this faith. But because we cannot obtain this at their hands, we again for our part will not yield unto them one hair's breadth. For the matter which we have in hand is weighty and of great importance, even touching the death of the Son of God: who by the will and commandment of the Father was made flesh, was crucified, and died for the sins of the world. If faith here give place, then is this death, resurrection etc. of the Son of God in vain: then is it but a fable that Christ is the Savior of the world: then is God found a liar, because he hath not performed that he promised. Our stoutness therefore in this matter is godly and holy; for by it we seek to preserve our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, and thereby to retain the truth of the Gospel; which if we lose, then do we also lose God, Christ, all the promises, faith, righteousness, and everlasting life.

But here will some man say: The law is divine and holy. Let the law have his glory; but yet no law, be it never so divine and holy, ought to teach me that I am

justified and shall live through it. I grant, it may teach me that I ought to love God and my neighbor; also to live in chastity, soberness, patience, etc.; but it ought not to shew me how I should be delivered from sin, the devil, death and hell. Here I must take counsel of the Gospel, I must hearken to the Gospel, which teacheth me, not what I ought to do (for that is the proper office of the Law), but what Jesus Christ the Son of God hath done for me: to wit, that he suffered and died to deliver me from sin and death. The Gospel willeth me to receive this, and to believe it. And this is the truth of the Gospel. It is also the principal article of all Christian doctrine, wherein the knowledge of all godliness consisteth. Most necessary it is therefore, that we should know this article well, teach it unto others, and beat it into their heads continually. For as it is very tender, so it is soon hurt. This Paul had well tried, and of this have all the godly also good experience.

To conclude, Paul would not circumcise Titus, and (as he saith) for no other cause, but for that certain false brethren were crept in, to espy out their liberty, and would have constrained Paul to circumcise Titus. Paul seeing this constraint and necessity, would give no place, no, not for one hour, but strongly resisted them; and therefore he saith: 'Neither Titus which was with me, being a Gentile, was compelled to be circumcised' etc. (Galatians 2:3). If they had required this in the way of brotherly charity, doubtless he would not have denied it. But seeing they would have done it as a necessary thing, and that by compulsion, to the evil example of others, to the overthrowing of the Gospel, and to bring men's consciences into bondage, therefore he set himself mightily against them, and prevailed so, that Titus was not circumcised.

It may seem but a small matter to be circumcised, or not circumcised. But when a man hath an affiance in keeping of it, or else is in fear for not keeping of it, here God is denied, Christ is rejected, the grace and all the promises of God are refused. But if .circumcision be kept without this addition, there is no danger. If the Pope would in this sort require of us the keeping of his traditions, as bare ceremonies, it should not be so grievous unto us to keep them. For what labor were it to wear a cowl, or to go about with a shaven crown, seeing we otherwise use ceremonies? But to add there: to this great evil, that in this trifle, nay, this thing of naught, there lieth either life or death everlasting, it is devilish and blasphemous.

In this matter, whosoever thou art that keepest silence, be thou anathema.

I will eat, drink, wear the cowl, and do whatsoever the Pope desireth, only so that he will suffer all these things to be free. But seeing he will exact them as necessary to salvation, binding consciences to them and placing the service of God in them, here we must by all means resist. It doeth no hurt to carve wood, stone, a statue, but to set it up for the service of God, and to attribute divinity to the wood, stone, or statue, this is to worship an idol in the place of God.

Therefore we must diligently consider what matter Paul hath in hand, lest we speak foolishly as Jerome doth, who supposed the question and disputation to be about the things themselves.

In this he erred. For the question is not whether wood is wood, or stone is stone, but it concerneth the addition, that is to say, the use of the things: to wit, whether this wood is God, whether divinity dwelleth in this stone.

Here we answer that wood is wood, etc. So 'circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing,' saith Paul (1 Corinthians 7:19), but to place righteousness, the fear of God, the confidence of salvation, the fear of death, in these things, it is to attribute divinity to ceremonies. Therefore not an hair's breadth must we yield to our adversaries, as Paul yielded not to the false apostles; for neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, nor tonsure, nor cowl pertaineth unto righteousness, but grace only and alone. This is 'the truth of the Gospel.'

But of them which seemed to be somewhat (what they were in times past) it is no matter. To me) etc.

His speech is elliptical, for there are wanting the words: 'I received nothing.' But it is a light fault in the Holy Ghost speaking in Paul if he offendeth somewhat against the grammar. He speaketh with great fervency, and he that is fervent cannot so exactly in speaking observe grammatical rules and rhetorical precepts.

Now this is a vehement and a stout Confutation. For he giveth not to the true Apostles themselves any glorious title; but as it were abasing their dignity, he saith: 'Which seemed to be somewhat,' that is, which were in authority, upon whom the determination of all matters depended.

Notwithstanding, the authority of the Apostles was indeed very great in all the churches, and Paul also did not seek any whir to diminish their authority. But he thus contemptuously answereth the false apostles, which set the authority and dignity of the Apostles against Paul in all the churches, that thereby they might weaken his authority, and bring his whole ministry into suspicion. This Paul might not suffer. To the end, therefore, that the truth of the Gospel and liberty of conscience in Christ might continue among the Galatians, and in all the churches of the Gentiles, he answereth stoutly to the false apostles, that he passed not how great the Apostles were, or what they had been in times past; and whereas they alleged the authority of the name of the Apostles against him, it touched him nothing at all. He confesseth that the Apostles are indeed somewhat, and their authority is to be revered: notwithstanding, his Gospel and ministry ought not to be overthrown for the name or title of any, how great soever he be, whether an Apostle, or an angel from heaven.

And this was one of the greatest arguments that the false apostles used against Paul. The Apostles, said they, were familiarly conversant with Christ for the space of three years. They heard and Saw all his preachings and miracles. Moreover, they themselves preached and wrought miracles while Christ was yet living in the world: whom Paul never saw in the flesh, and as touching his conversion, it was long after the glorification of Christ.

Wherefore they should now consider which of these they ought more to believe: Paul which was but one and alone, and also but a disciple, yea and one of the last of all; or the chiefest and most excellent Apostles, which long before Paul were sent and confirmed by Christ himself. To this Paul answereth: What of all this? This argument concludeth nothing. Let the Apostles be never so great, yea let them be angels from heaven, it is no matter to me. The controversy is not here concerning the excellency of the Apostles, but concerning the Word of God and the truth of the Gospel.

This ought to be kept pure and uncorrupt; this ought to be preferred above all things. Therefore how great Peter and the other Apostles have been, what great miracles they have wrought, it is no matter to me. This is it that I only seek, even that the truth of the Gospel may continue among you.

This seemeth to be but a slender answer of Paul, when of purpose he so condemneth the authority of the Apostles, which the false apostles alleged against him, and giveth no other solution to their mighty argument than this: It is no matter to me. Notwithstanding, he addeth a reason of the confutation:

God accepteth no man's person

This place he allegeth out of Moses, who useth the same, not once but many times: 'Thou shalt not accept in judgment the person of the rich man or of the poor' (Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:17). And this is a principle of divinity: 'God is no acceptor of persons' (Deuteronomy 10:17; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Romans 2:11; Acts 10:34; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25). With the which saying he stoppeth the mouths of the false apostles. As though he would say: Ye set those against me which seem to be somewhat; but God careth not for such things. He regardeth not the office of an Apostle, or Bishop, or Prince. It is not the dignity or authority of men that he looketh upon. And in token hereof, he suffered Judas, one of the chiefest Apostles, and Saul one of the greatest kings, yea and the first of all, to fall away and to be damned.

Ishmael also and Esau he refused, being both first-born. So shall you find throughout all the whole Scripture, that God oftentimes, rejected those which in outward shew were very good and holy men. And in these examples God seemeth sometimes to be cruel; but it was most necessary that such fearful examples should be shewn, and also be written. For this vice is naturally grafted in us, that we highly esteem the persons and dignity of men, and more regard the

same than the Word of God. Contrariwise God will have us to fix our eyes, and to rest wholly upon the Word itself; he will not have us to reverence and adore the apostleship in the persons of Peter and Paul, but Christ speaking in them, and the Word which they bring and preach unto us.

This the natural man cannot see: but the spiritual man only discerneth the person from the Word, the veil of God from God himself. Now this veil of God is every creature. Moreover, God here in this life dealeth not with us face to face, but veiled and shadowed from us; that is, as Paul saith in another place: 'We see him now through a glass darkly: but then face to face' life (1 Corinthians 13:12). Therefore we cannot be without veils in this life. But here wisdom is required, which can discern the veil from God himself; and this wisdom the world hath not. The covetous man, hearing that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4), eateth the bread, but he seeth not God in the bread; for he beholdeth the veil only [and outward shew]. So he doth with gold and other creatures, trusting to them so long as he hath them: but when they leave him, he despaireth. And thus he honoreth not the Creator, but the creatures, not God, but his own belly.

This I speak, lest any man should think that Paul utterly condemneth these [outward] veils or persons. For he saith not, that there ought to be no person, but that there is no respect of persons with God. There must be persons and outward veils; God hath given them, and they are his good creatures; but we must not worship them. All the matter as in the using of things, and not in the things themselves, as before I have said. There is no fault in circumcision or uncircumcision ('for circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing'), but in the use thereof. To worship circumcision and put righteousness in it, and unrighteousness in uncircumcision, that use is damnable, and ought to be taken away: which being removed, both circumcision and uncircumcision are good things.

So the prince, the magistrate, the preacher, the school-master, the scholar, the father, the mother, the children, the master, the servant, are persons and [outward] veils, which God will have us to acknowledge, love, and reverence as his creatures, which also must needs be had in this life; but he will not have us to worship them, that is, so to reverence them that we trust unto them and forget him. And to the end that we should not too much magnify the [outward] persons, or put any trust in them, God leaveth in them offenses and sins, yea great and foul sins, to teach us what difference there is between the person and God himself. David, that good king, because he should not seem to be a person upon whom men should trust, fell into horrible sins, adultery and murder. Peter, that excellent Apostle, denied Christ. These and such-like examples, whereof the Scripture is full, ought to warn us, that we repose not our trust in the person [and outward veil], nor think that when we have the person we have all things; as it is in popery, where they judge all things according to the outward veil, and therefore all popery is nothing else but a mere respecting of persons. God hath

given his creatures to our use, and to do us service, and not as idols, that we should do service unto them. Let us then use bread, wine, apparel, possessions, gold, silver, and all other creatures. But let us not trust or glory in them; for we must trust and glory in God alone. He only is to be loved, he only is to be feared and honored.

Paul calleth here the apostleship or office of the Apostles (which wrought, many and great miracles, taught and converted many to the faith, and were also familiar with Christ) the person of man.

Briefly, this word 'person' comprehendeth the whole outward conversation of the Apostles, which was holy, and their authority, which was great.

Notwithstanding, saith he, God esteemeth not these things; not that he esteemeth them not at all, but in the matter of justification he regardeth them not, be they never so great and so glorious. For we must diligently mark this distinction, that in matters of divinity we must speak far otherwise than in matters of policy. In matters of policy, as I have said, God will have us to honor and reverence these outward veils or persons as his instruments by whom he governeth and preserveth the world. But when the question is as touching religion, conscience, the fear of God, faith, and the service of God, we must not fear these outward persons, we must put no trust in them, look for no comfort from them, or hope deliverance by them, either corporally or spiritually. For this cause God will have no respect of persons in judgment; for judgment is a divine thing. Wherefore I ought neither to fear the judge, nor trust in the judge; but my fear and trust ought to be in God alone, who is the true Judge. The civil judge or magistrate, I ought indeed to reverence for God's cause, whose minister he is: but my conscience may not stay or trust upon his justice and equity, or be feared through his unjust dealing or tyranny, whereby I might fall into any offense against God, in lying, in bearing false witness, in denying the truth, etc. Otherwise I will reverence and honor the magistrate with all my heart.

So I would also honor the Pope and love his person, if he would leave my conscience free, and not compel me to sin against God. But he will so be feared and adored, as cannot be done without offense to the majesty of God. Here since we must needs lose the one, let us lose the person and stick to God. We could be content to suffer the dominion of the Pope, but because he abuseth the same so tyrannously against us, and would compel us to deny and blaspheme God, and him only to acknowledge as our lord and master, clogging our consciences, and spoiling us of fear and trust which we should have in God, therefore we are compelled by the commandment of God to resist the Pope; for it is written: 'We must rather obey God than men' (Acts 5:29). Therefore, without offense of conscience, which is our singular comfort, we contemn the authority of the Pope. Muntzer and other mad heads desired the destruction of the Pope, but they sought to accomplish this with arms, not with the Word; and so they withstood him for the sake of his person, and not for God's sake. We for our part would

gladly shew favor to Behemoth and his scales, with all the persons and dignities which they have, if they would but leave us Christ. But because we cannot obtain this of them, we contemn their persons' and say boldly with Paul: 'God respecteth no man's person.' There is a certain vehemency therefore to be noted in the word 'God.' For in the cause of religion and the Word of God, there must be no respect of persons. But out of religion, and in matters of policy, we must have regard to the person: for otherwise there must needs follow confusion and an end of all reverence and order, In this world God will have an order, a reverence, and a difference of persons. For else the child, the scholar, the servant, the subject would say: I am a Christian as well as my father, my school-master, my master, my prince; why then should I reverence him?

Before God, then, mere is no respect of persons, neither of Grecian nor of Jew, but all are one in Christ; although not so before the world.

Thus Paul confuteth the argument of the false apostles as touching the authority of the Apostles, and saith that it is nothing to the purpose. For the question is not here concerning the respect of persons, but there is a far weightier matter in hand, that is to say, a divine matter concerning God and his Word, and whether this Word ought to be preferred before the apostleship or no. Whereunto Paul answereth: So that the truth of the Gospel may continue, so that the Word of God and the righteousness of faith may be kept pure and uncorrupt, let the apostleship go, let an angel from heaven, let Peter, let Paul altogether perish.

Nevertheless they that seemed to be the chief, did communicate nothing with me

As though he would say I did not so confer with the Apostles, that they taught me any thing. For what should they teach me, since Christ by his revelation had before sufficiently taught me all things, and since I have now preached the Gospel the space of eighteen years among the Gentries, and Christ hath wrought so many miracles by me, whereby he hath confirmed my doctrine? Wherefore it was but a conference, and no disputation.

Wherein I learned nothing, neither did I recant, nor yet defend my cause, but only declared what things I had done' to wit, that I had preached to the Gentiles faith only in Christ, without the law, and that by this preaching of faith the Holy Ghost came down upon the Gentiles, which immediately spoke with divers tongues. Which thing when the Apostles heard, they witnessed that I had taught the truth; wherefore the false apostles do me great wrong, which pervert and turn all these things clean contrary. Now this pride of Paul, whereby he saith that the other Apostles communicated nothing unto him, is not a fault, but most

necessary; for had he yielded here, the truth of the Gospel had perished. But if Paul would give no place to the false apostles, which set the authority of the true Apostles against him, much less ought we to give place to our adversaries, which have nothing else to brag of but the authority of their idol the Pope. I know that the godly ought to be humble, but against the Pope I will and I ought to be proud with an holy pride, and say: Thou Pope, I will not be subject unto thee; I will not take thee for my master, for I am sure that my doctrine is true and godly. But the Pope will not hear this doctrine; nay, he would force me to obey his laws and his decrees, and if I will not, he will by and by excommunicate and condemn me as a heretic and deserter of the Church. Such pride therefore against the Pope is most necessary. And if we should not be thus stout and proud, and in the Holy Ghost utterly condemn both him with all his doctrine, and the devil, the father of lies, speaking in him, we should never be able to defend this article of the righteousness of faith. We do not then contemn the authority of the Pope because we would bear rule over him, neither would we go about to exalt ourselves above all sovereign power, since it is evident that we teach all men to humble and submit themselves to the higher powers ordained of God; but this is it that we only seek, that the glory of God may be maintained, and the righteousness of faith may be kept pure and sound.

Wherefore, if the Pope will grant unto us, that God alone by his mere grace through Christ doth justify sinners, we will not only carry him in our hands, but will also kiss his feet. But since we cannot obtain this, we again in God are proud against him above measure, and will give no place, no, not one hair's breadth, to all the angels in heaven, not to Peter, not to Paul, not to an hundred emperors, nor to a thousand popes, nor to the whole world. Be it far from us that we should here humble ourselves, since they would take from us our glory, even God himself that hath created us and given us all things, and Jesus Christ who hath redeemed us with his blood. Let this be then the conclusion of all together, that we will suffer our goods to be taken away, our name, our life, and all that we have; but the Gospel, our faith, Jesus Christ, we will never suffer to be wrested from us. And cursed be that humility which here abaseth and submitteth itself. Nay rather let every Christian man here be proud and spare not, except he will deny Christ.

Wherefore, God assisting me, my forehead shall be more hard than all men's foreheads. Here I take upon me this rifle, according to the proverb: cedo nulli, I give place to none. Yea, I am glad even with all my heart, in this point to seem rebellious and obstinate. And here I confess that I am and ever will be stout and stern, and will not one inch give place to any creature. Charity giveth place, for it 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (1 Corinthians 13:7), but faith giveth no place, yea it can suffer nothing, according to this ancient verse: Non patitur ludum fama, fides, oculus; that is, Man's good name, his faith, and his eye, will not be dallied withal. Wherefore, a Christian, as touching his faith, can never be too proud nor too stout, neither must he relent or give place, no, not the breadth of one hair: for faith maketh a

man here like unto God (2 Peter 1:4): but God suffereth nothing, he giveth place to none, for he is immutable; so is faith immutable, and therefore may suffer nothing, give place to no man. But as touching charity, let a Christian man yield and suffer all things, for therein he is but a man.

But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter (for he that was mighty by Peter in the apostleship of the circumcision, was also mighty by me towards the gentiles)

With these words Paul mightily confuteth the false apostles, for here he challengeth to himself the same authority which the false apostles attributed to the true Apostles; and he useth here a figure which is called an inversion, returning their argument against themselves. The false apostles, saith he, do allege against me the authority of the great Apostles, to maintain their cause; but I, contrariwise, do allege the same against them for my defense, for the Apostles are on my side. Wherefore, O my Galatians, believe not these counterfeit apostles, which brag so much of the authority of the Apostles against me. For the Apostles, when they saw the Gospel of the uncircumcision to be committed to me, and knew of the grace that to me was given, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, approving my ministry and giving thanks unto God for the gifts which I had received. Thus he returneth the argument of the false apostles upon themselves. And in these words there is an ardent vehemency, and more contained in matter, than in words is able to be expressed. Wherefore also it cometh to pass that Paul, forgetting the grammar, hath confounded the construction.

Now when he saith: 'which were reputed to be pillars,' this was no empty shew, but they were in very truth held to be pillars. For the Apostles were revered and honored throughout the whole Church, and with them was the authority to approve and publish the doctrine of the truth, and to condemn the contrary. This is a very notable text, wherein Paul saith that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto him, and of the circumcision unto Peter, when notwithstanding, Paul almost everywhere preached to the Jews in their synagogues, and Peter likewise to the Gentiles. There are examples and testimonies of both in the Acts. Peter converted the Centurion with his family, which was a Gentile (Acts 10:1 ff.). He wrote also to the Gentiles, as his first Epistle testifieth. Paul, preaching Christ among the Gentiles, entereth notwithstanding into the synagogues of the Jews, and there preacheth the Gospel (Acts 9:20; etc.). And our Savior Christ, in Matthew and Mark, commandeth his Apostles to go throughout the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). Paul likewise saith: 'the Gospel preached to every creature which is under heaven' (Colossians 1:23). Why then doth he call himself the Apostle of the Gentiles, and Peter with the other, the Apostles of the circumcision?

Paul hath respect unto this, that the other Apostles remained specially in Judea and Jerusalem, until God called them .unto other places. Thus stood the matter then for the time, that while the political state of the Jews continued, the Apostles still remained in Judaea; but when the destruction of Jerusalem approached, they were dispersed throughout the whole world.

But Paul, as it is written in the Acts (13:2), by a singular vocation was chosen to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, and being sent out of Judaea, he traveled through the countries of the Gentiles. Now were the Jews dispersed almost throughout the whole world, and dwelt here and there in cities and other places among the Gentiles. Paul coming thither, was wont to go into the synagogues of the Jews, and by this occasion he first brought unto them, as the children of the kingdom, this glad tidings, that the promises made unto the fathers were accomplished by Jesus Christ. When they would not hear this, he turned to the Gentiles, as Luke witnesseth, Acts 13:46, where he bringeth in Paul thus boldly speaking against the Jews: 'It was necessary that we should first preach the word of God unto you; but seeing ye reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles;' and Acts 28:28: 'Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they shall hear it.' Wherefore, Paul was sent specially unto the Gentiles.

But because he was a debtor unto all, and became all things unto all men, therefore occasion being offered, he went into the synagogues of the Jews, where not only the Jews, but also the Gentiles, heard him preaching Christ.

Otherwhiles, he preached publicly in the market-place, in houses, and by the rivers' sides. He was specially then the Apostle of the Gentiles, as Peter was of the Jews; who, notwithstanding, preached Christ to the Gentiles also when occasion was offered.

And here he calleth uncircumcision the Gentiles, and circumcision the Jews, by a figure named synecdoche, which under a part comprehendeth the whole; which figure is commonly used in the Scripture: the Gospel then of the uncircumcision, is that which was appointed to be sent unto the Gentiles. This Gospel, saith he, was committed unto him, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; for as Peter preached the Gospel among the Jews, so did he among the Gentiles. Here it is to be noted, that the Hebrews take the genitive construction variously, now actively, now passively ; which oftentimes obscureth the sense. Examples are to be found everywhere in Paul and in the whole Scripture; as for example this phrase, 'the glory of God,' which is not a little obscure, since it can be interpreted both actively and passively.

Actively, the glory of God is that glory which God hath in himself; passively, it is that wherewith we glory in God. Likewise fides Christi, or 'the faith of Christ,' etc. We for the most part interpret such phrases passively, thus: the faith of

Christ is that wherewith Christ is believed. In like manner, 'the Gospel of God' is taken actively, as that which God alone giveth and sendeth into the world, but 'the Gospel of the circumcision and of the uncircumcision' is taken passively, as that which is sent to the Gentiles and the Jews and is received of them. Now Paul meaneth nothing else but that the Gospel of the uncircumcision, that is to say, the Gospel which was to be sent to the Gentiles, had been committed unto him, like as the Gospel of the circumcision had been committed unto Peter.

This he often repeateth, that Peter, James, and John, which seemed to be the pillars of the church, taught him nothing, nor committed unto him the office of preaching the Gospel, as having authority and rule over him.

But they themselves, saith he, did see that the Gospel was committed unto me, but not by Peter; for as I did not receive or learn the Gospel of man, so did I receive no commandment by man to preach the same, but both the knowledge and the commandment to preach it among the Gentiles, I received immediately from Christ; like as the charge was given of God unto Peter to preach the same among the Jews.

This place witnesseth very plainly that the Apostles had like calling, like charge, and all one Gospel. Peter preached no other Gospel than the rest of the Apostles did, neither did he appoint to others their charge and office; but there was an equality among them all, for they were all taught and called of God, that is, both their vocation and charge was wholly and immediately from God. There was none, therefore, greater than other, none that had any prerogative above other. And therefore, when the Pope vaunteth that Peter was the chief of the Apostles, that thereby he might confirm and establish his primacy, it is an impudent lie.

For he that was mighty by Peter etc.

This is a confutation of another argument of the false apostles. Why do the false apostles boast, saith he, that the Gospel of Peter was mighty, that he converted many, that he wrought many and great miracles, raised up the dead, and with his shadow healed the sick? (Acts 5:15). I grant all these things to be true: but Peter received this power from heaven. God gave a virtue to his word, so that many did believe him, and great miracles were wrought by him. The same power had I also; which I received not of Peter, but the same God and the same Spirit which was mighty in Peter, was mighty in me also. I had the same grace; I taught many; I wrought many miracles, and through my shadow also I healed the sick. And this Luke testifieth in these words: 'And God wrought no small miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick napkins and handkerchiefs, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them' (Acts 19:11 f.). Read more hereof in Acts 13,16,20,28.

To conclude, Paul will be counted in no point inferior to the rest of the Apostles; and herein he glorieth with a godly and a holy pride. Necessity constrained him stoutly to withstand Peter, and the burning zeal he had for the glory of God moved him so to do. Certain profane spirits, as Julian and Porphyrius, not considering this, thought it to be but a carnal pride that caused Paul thus to do; such as at this day we see in the Pope and his bishops. But Paul had not here his own business in hand, but a matter of faith. Now, as concerning faith we ought to be invincible, and more hard, if it might be, than the adamant stone; but as touching charity, we ought to be soft, and more flexible than the reed or leaf that is shaken with the wind, and ready to yield to every thing. Therefore the controversy was not here touching the glory of Paul, but the glory of God, the Word of God, the true worship of God, true religion, and the righteousness of faith, to the end that these things might still remain pure and uncorrupt.

And when they knew of the grace that was given unto me, James and cephas and John (which were counted to be pillars) gave to me and to barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should preach unto the gentiles, and they unto the circumcision

That is to say, when they heard that I had received my calling and charge from God, to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles, and that God had wrought so many miracles by me; moreover, that so great a number of the Gentiles were come to the knowledge of Christ through my ministry, and that the Gentiles had received the Holy Ghost, without the law and circumcision, by the only hearing of faith; they glorified God for this grace which was given unto me.

He calleth grace here, whatsoever he had received of God: to wit, that of a persecutor and waster of the Church he was made an Apostle, was taught by Jesus Christ, and enriched with spiritual gifts. And here withal he sheweth, that Peter gave testimony unto him that he was a true Apostle, sent and taught not by himself, nor by the other Apostles, but by God alone; and so he not only humbly acknowledged the ministry and authority of Paul, and the gifts of the Spirit which were in him, as heavenly things, but also approved and confirmed the same, and yet not as a superior and ruler, but as a brother and witness. James and John did likewise the same. Wherefore he concludeth that they which are esteemed for the chief pillars among the Apostles, are wholly with him, and not against him.

The right hands of fellowship

As if they should have said: We, O Paul, in preaching the Gospel, do agree with thee in all things; therefore in doctrine we are companions, and have fellowship together therein; that is to say, we have all one doctrine, for we preach one Gospel, one baptism, one Christ, and one faith. Wherefore we can teach or enjoin thee nothing, since there is one mutual consent betwixt us in all things. For we do not teach any other or more excellent things than thou dost; but the same

gift which we have, we see to be in thee also, saving that to thee is committed the Gospel. of the uncircumcision, as the Gospel of the circumcision is unto us. But we conclude here, that neither uncircumcision nor circumcision ought to hinder our society and fellowship, since it is but one Gospel which we both preach. This place admonisheth us that there is but one and the same Gospel for both Gentiles and Jews, monks and laymen, young and old, men and women, etc. There is no respect of persons, but for all men the Word and doctrine is one and the same. Whosoever heareth and believeth it, is saved, no matter whether he be uncircumcised or circumcised.

Hitherto Paul hath proved by manifest witness, not only from God, but also from man, that is to say, the Apostles, that he had truly and faithfully preached the Gospel. Therefore he sheweth that whatsoever the false apostles said to diminish his authority, is but feigned and forged matter, and that the testimony of the Apostles maketh for him, and not for the false apostles. But for that he is alone and without witness, therefore he addeth an oath, and calleth God to record that the things which he hath spoken are true.

Warning only that we should remember. The poor, which thing also I was diligent to do.

After the preaching of the Gospel, the office and charge of a true and faithful pastor is, to be mindful of the poor. For where the Church is, there must needs be poor; who for the most part are the only true disciples of the Gospel, as Christ saith: 'The poor have the glad tidings of the Gospel preached unto them' (Matthew 11:5) For the world and the devil do persecute the Church, and bring many to poverty, who are afterwards forsaken and despised of the world. Moreover, the world not only offendeth herein, but also is careless for the preservation of the Gospel, true religion, and the true service of God, there is none that will now take any care for the maintenance of the ministers of the Church, and erecting of schools; but for the erecting and establishing of false worship, superstition and idolatry, no cost was spared, but every man was ready to give most liberally and largely. And hereof came so many monasteries, so many cathedral churches, so many bishoprics in the Pope's church, where all impiety reigned, With so great revenues provided for their sustentation; whereas now a whole city thinketh much to support one or two poor ministers and preachers of the Gospel, which before, while the Pope and all impiety reigned, did sustain sundry monasteries of monks, friars, nuns, and whole swarms of massing priests etc. To be brief, true religion is ever in need, and Christ complaineth that he is hungry, thirsty, harborless, naked, and sick (Matthew 25:35). Contrariwise, false religion and impiety flourisheth and aboundeth With all worldly wealth and prosperity.

Wherefore a true and faithful pastor must have a care of the poor also: and this care Paul here confesseth that he had.

And when Peter was come to Antiochia, I withstood him to his face: for he was to be blamed

Paul goeth on still in his confutation, saying that he not only hath for his defense the testimony of Peter and the other Apostles Which were at Jerusalem, but also that he withstood Peter in the presence of the whole church of Antioch. He sheweth here a matter not done in a corner, but in the face of the whole church. And this is a marvellous history, which hath given occasion of false accusation to many, as Porphyrius, Celsus, Julian and other, which charge Paul with pride, because he assailed the chief of the Apostles, and that in the face of the whole church; whereby (say they) he exceeded the bounds of Christian modesty and humility. But it is no marvel that they thus think and speak who perceive not the point of this disputation of Paul. For, as I before have said, he hath here no trifling matter in hand, but the chiefest article of all Christian doctrine. The utility and majesty whereof whoso rightly esteemeth, to him all other things shall seem but vile and nothing worth. For what is Peter? What is Paul? What is an angel from heaven? What are all other creatures to the article of justification? Which if we know, then are we in the clear light: but if we be ignorant thereof, then are we in most miserable darkness. Wherefore, if ye see this article impugned, or defaced, fear not to resist either Peter or an angel from heaven. For it cannot be sufficiently extolled. But Porphyrius and the others, beholding the great dignity of Peter, do admire his person and forget the majesty of this article. Paul doeth the contrary: he doth not sharply inveigh against Peter, but handleth him with reverence enough; but because he seeth the majesty of this article of justification to be in danger for the dignity of Peter, he taketh no account of his dignity, that he may keep the same pure and uncorrupt. For it is written: 'He that loveth father or mother, or his own life more than me, is not worthy of me' (Matthew 10:37).

Wherefore we are not ashamed, for the defense of the truth, to be counted and called of the hypocrites, proud and obstinate, and such as will be only wise, will hear none, will give place to none. Here we must needs be obstinate and inflexible. For the cause why we offend man, that is to say, tread down the majesty of the person or of the world, is so great, that the sins which the world judgeth to be most heinous, are counted singular virtues before God. In that we love our parents, honor the magistrates, shew reverence to Peter and other ministers of the Word, we do well. But here we have in hand the cause neither of Peter, nor parents, nor magistrate, nor of the world, nor of any other creature, but of God himself.

Here if I give no place to my parents, to the magistrate, or an angel from heaven, I do well. For what is the creature in respect of the Creator? Yea, what are all creatures, being compared unto him? Even as one drop of water in respect of the whole sea. Why then should I so highly esteem Peter, which is but a little drop, and set God aside, which is the whole sea?

Let the drop therefore give place to the sea, and let Peter give place unto God. This I say to the end that ye should diligently weigh and consider the matter whereof Paul intreateth: for he intreateth of the Word of God, which can never be magnified enough. Augustine hath better weighed this matter than Jerome, who hath respect unto the dignity and authority of Peter, and reasoneth thus: Peter was the chief Apostle, therefore it was not meet that he should be reprov'd of Paul; and if Paul reprov'd him, he did but dissemble therein. Thus unto Paul he attributeth dissimulation, alleging that he feigned Peter to be reprov'd to the end that he might promote his own apostleship and defend his Gentiles: but Peter he excuseth every way, and attributeth unto him the truth. This is a most untoward inversion of the text, which plainly declareth that Peter was reprov'd and had strayed from the truth; also that other Jews had dissembled with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by them into that dissimulation. These plain words Jerome seeth not, for he sticketh only to this: Peter was an Apostle, therefore he was unreprou'able and could not sin. To this sentence Augustine answereth, saying: It is not to be borne that there should be dissimulation in Paul, seeing he confirmeth with an oath that he speaketh the truth.

Wherefore Jerome and Erasmus do injury to Paul, when they interpret these words: 'to his face' to mean: 'on the face of it,' that is, not from the heart, but in outward shew only; alleging that Paul resisted Peter, not sincerely, but with a necessary dissimulation, lest the Gentiles should be offended if he altogether kept silence. But 'to his face' signifieth 'in his sight'; for he resisted Peter openly and not in a corner, Peter himself being present and the whole church standing by.

And where he saith 'to his face,' this clause maketh specially against the venomous vipers and apostles of Satan, which slander those that are absent, and in their presence dare not once open their mouth; as the false apostles did, whom also here he toucheth by the way, which durst not speak evil of him in his presence, but in his absence slandered him most spitefully. So did not I (saith he) speak evil of Peter, but frankly and openly I withstood him, not of any colorable pretense, ambition, or other carnal affection, or disease of the mind, but because he was to be blamed and sharply removed.

Here let other men debate whether an Apostle may sin or no: this say I, that we ought not to make Peter's fault less than it was indeed. The prophets themselves have sometimes erred and been deceived. Nathan of his own spirit said unto David, that he should build the house of the Lord (2 Samuel 7:3). But this prophecy was by and by after corrected by a revelation from God, that it should not be David, because he was a man of war and had shed much blood, but his son Solomon, that should build up the house of the Lord. So did the Apostles err also: for they imagined that the kingdom of Christ should be carnal and worldly, as we may see in the first of the Acts, when they asked of Christ, saying: 'Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts 1:6); and Peter, although he heard this commandment of Christ: 'Go into the whole world,'

etc. (Mark 16:15), had not gone unto Cornelius, if he had not been admonished by a vision (Acts 10:9 ff.) And in this matter he did not only err, but also committed a great sin, and if Paul had not resisted him, all the Gentiles which did believe, had been constrained to receive circumcision and to keep the law. The believing Jews also had been confirmed in their opinion: to wit, that the observation of these things were necessary to salvation; and by this means they had received again the law instead of the Gospel, Moses instead of Christ. And of all this great enormity and horrible sin, Peter by his dissimulation had been the only occasion. Therefore we may not attribute to the saints such perfection as though they could not sin.

Luke witnesseth that there was such great dissension between Paul and Barnabas (which were put apart together for the ministry of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and had traveled through many regions and preached unto them the Gospel) that the one departed from the other. Here we must needs say, that there was a fault either in Paul or Barnabas. And doubtless it could not be, but that the discord was exceeding great which separated these two, being joined together in such a holy fellowship, as the text witnesseth. Such examples are written for our consolation. For it is a great comfort unto us, when we hear that even the saints, which have the Spirit of God, do sin. Which comfort they would take from us which say that the saints cannot sin.

Samson, David, and many other excellent men, full of the Holy Ghost, fell into great sins; Job and Jeremiah curse the day of their nativity (Job 3:3 ff.; Jeremiah 20:14); Elijah and Jonah are weary of their life, and desire death (1 Kings 19:4; Jonah 4:8). Such errors and offenses of the saints, the Scripture setteth forth to the comfort of those that are afflicted and oppressed with desperation, and to the terror of the proud. No man hath so grievously fallen at any time, but he may rise again. And on the other side, no man taketh so fast footing, but he may fall. If Peter fell, I may likewise fall. If he rose again, I may also rise again. And such examples as these are, the weakhearted, and tender consciences ought to make much of, that they may the better understand what they pray for when they say: 'Forgive us our trespasses,' and: 'I believe the forgiveness of sins.' We have the self-same spirit of grace and prayer which the Apostles and all the saints had, neither had they any prerogative above us.

We have the same gifts which they had, the same Christ, Baptism, Word, forgiveness of sins; all which they had no less need of than we have, and by the same are sanctified and saved as we be. And this I say against the monstrous commendations and praises wherewith the foolish sophisters and monks have adorned the saints, and have said that the Church is in such wise holy as being altogether without sin. indeed the Church is holy, as our faith confesseth: 'I believe a holy church,' etc.; and yet notwithstanding it hath sin. Therefore also it believeth the remission of sins, and prayeth: 'Forgive us our debts' (Matthew 6:12). Wherefore the Church is not said to be holy formally, as the wall is said to be white from the whiteness inhering. That inherent holiness is not enough, but

Christ is its perfect and entire holiness; and where that which inhereth is not enough, Christ is enough.

For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the gentiles

The Gentiles which were converted to the faith did eat meats forbidden by the law, and Peter being conversant with the Gentiles which were converted, did eat with them, and drunk wine also which was forbidden, knowing that herein he did well, and therefore boldly transgressed the law with the Gentiles. Paul confesseth that he also did the like, when he saith, that he became as a Jew to the Jews, and to them that were without law, as though he were without law: that is to say, with the Gentiles he did eat and drink like a Gentile, and kept no law at all; with the Jews, according to the law, he abstained from all things forbidden in the law; for he labored to serve and please all men, that he might gain all (1 Corinthians 9:19 ff.).

Wherefore Peter in eating and drinking with the Gentiles stoned not, but did well, and knew that it was lawful for him so to do. For he shewed by this transgression that the law was not necessary to righteousness, and also delivered the Gentiles from the observation of the law. For if it were lawful for Peter in one thing to break, the law, it was lawful for him to break it in all things. And Paul doth not here reprove Peter for his transgression, but for his dissimulation, as followeth.

But when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision

Here then ye see Peter's offense, as Paul plainly setteth it forth. Paul accuseth him not of malice or ignorance, but of dissimulation and infirmity, in that he abstained from meats forbidden in the law, fearing lest the Jews which came from James should be offended thereby, and had more respect to the Jews than to the Gentiles. Hereby he gave occasion, as much as in him was, to overthrow Christian liberty and the truth of the Gospel. For in that he did withdraw and utterly separate himself, abstaining from meats forbidden in the law (which notwithstanding he had eaten of before), he ministered a scruple of conscience to the faithful, thus to gather upon his example: Peter abstaineth from meats forbidden in the law; therefore he that eateth meats forbidden in the law, sinneth and transgresseth the law; but he that abstaineth is righteous and keepeth the law, for else would not Peter have withdrawn himself; but because he hath done so, and of purpose refuseth those meats which before he did eat, it is a sure argument that such as eat against the law do sin, and such as abstain from meats which the law forbiddeth, do keep the law, and are justified thereby.

Here note (as Jerome doth not), that the end of this act of Peter is reprov'd of Paul, and not the act itself; for the act in itself was not evil. To eat and drink, or not to eat or drink, is nothing; but the end, that is 'if thou eat, thou sinnest; if thou

abstain, thou art righteous,' is evil. So circumcision of itself is good, but this end is evil: 'if thou be not circumcised after the law of Moses, thou canst not be saved.' Also to eat meats prohibited in the law, is not evil but this shrinking and dissimulation of Peter is evil. For it might be said: Peter abstaineth from meats forbidden in the law; wherefore if thou dost not likewise abstain, thou canst not be saved. This Paul might in no wise dissemble; for the truth of the Gospel was here in danger. To the end therefore that this truth might continue sound and uncorrupt, he resisted Peter to his face.

And here we must make a distinction. For meats may be refused two manner of ways. First, for Christian charity's sake. And herein there is no danger: for to bear with the infirmity of my brother, is good. So Paul himself both bid and taught. Secondly, by abstaining from them to obtain righteousness and salvation, and for not abstaining, to sin and to be damned. Here accused be charity with all the service and works of charity whatsoever. For thus to refrain from meats, is to deny Christ, to tread his blood under our feet, to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and to despise God and all holy things. Wherefore, if we must lose the one, let us rather lose man our friend and brother, than God our Father. For if we lose God our Father, man our friend and brother cannot continue.

Jerome, not seeing this, understood neither this place nor the whole Epistle besides. He thinketh this to be but a feigned reprehension of Paul, and therefore he excuseth Peter's fall, saying that it was done by ignorance. But Peter offended not through ignorance, but through dissimulation, and thereby had established the necessity of the law, had constrained both Gentiles and Jews to revolt from the truth of the Gospel, had given them great occasion to forsake Christ, to deny grace, to return to the Jewish religion, and to bear all the burdens of the law, if Paul had not reproved him, and by that means revoked the Gentiles and Jews which were offended through this example of Peter, to the liberty which is in Christ Jesus, and to the truth of the Gospel. Wherefore if a man would here set forth and amplify Peter's offense, it should appear to be very great, and yet was it not done by malice or ignorance, but by occasion and fear only.

Thus we see what ruins may come by one man's fall and offense, if it be not well seen to and corrected in time. Wherefore, we may not trifle with this article of justification; neither is it without good cause that we do so often and so diligently put you in mind thereof.

And it is much to be marveled that Peter, being such an excellent Apostle, should thus do: who before, in the Council of Jerusalem, stood in a manner alone in defense of this article, and prevailed therein, namely, that righteousness cometh by faith without the law. He that before did so constantly defend the truth and liberty of the Gospel, now by his fall in abstaining from meats forbidden in the law, is not only the cause of great offense, but also offendeth against his own decree. 'Wherefore let him which thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall' (1 Corinthians 10:12).

No man would think what danger there is in traditions and ceremonies: which notwithstanding we cannot want. What is more necessary in the world than the law and the works thereof? Yet there is great danger lest by the same, men be brought to the denial of Christ. For of the law cometh oftentimes a trust and affiance in works, and where that is, there can be no trust in Christ. Christ therefore is soon denied and soon lost, as we may see in Peter; who knew this article of justification better than we do, and yet how easily should he have given occasion of such an horrible ruin, if Paul had not withstood him, that all the Gentiles should thereby have fallen away from the preaching of Paul, and by this means should have lost the Gospel and Christ himself? And this should have been done under a holy pretense. For they might have said: Paul, hitherto thou hast taught us that we must be justified by grace without the law; thou seest now that Peter doth the contrary: for he abstaineth from meats forbidden in the law, and hereby he teacheth us that we cannot be saved except we receive circumcision and observe the law, etc.

And the other jews dissembled likewise with him insomuch that barnabas was brought into their dissimulation also

Here you may plainly see, that Paul chargeth Peter with dissimulation. (Contrariwise, St. Jerome chargeth Paul.) If Peter dissembled, then did he certainly know what was the truth, and what was not. He that dissembleth, sinneth not of ignorance, but deceiveth by a color which he knoweth himself to be false. 'And other,' saith he, 'dissembled likewise with Peter, insomuch that Barnabas also (who was Paul's companion, and had now a long time preached among the Gentiles faith in Christ without the law, together with Paul) was brought into their dissimulation.' Ye have here then Peter's offense plainly described to be mere dissimulation, which afterwards had been an occasion of the ruin of the Gospel then newly received, if Paul had not resisted him.

And this is a wonderful matter, that God preserved the Church, being yet but young, and the Gospel itself, by one only person. Paul alone standeth to the truth; for he had lost Barnabas his companion, and Peter was against him. So sometimes one man is able to do more in a council than the whole council besides. Which things the Papists themselves do witness. And for example they allege Paphnutius, who withstood the whole council of Nicaea (which was the best of all that were after the council of the Apostles at Jerusalem), and prevailed against it.

This I say, to the end that we should diligently learn the article of justification, and make a plain difference between the law and the Gospel, and that in this matter we should do nothing by dissimulation, nor give place to any man, if we will retain the truth of the Gospel, and faith sound and uncorrupt which, as I have said, are soon hurt. Wherefore in this case, away with reason, that enemy to faith, which in temptations of sin and death, leaneth not to the righteousness of

faith, or Christian righteousness (for thereof it is utterly ignorant), but to her own righteousness, or at the least, to the righteousness of the law. Now, as soon as the law and reason join together, faith loseth her virginity; for nothing fighteth more strongly against faith than the law and reason. And these two enemies cannot be conquered, but with great labor and difficulty; which we must conquer notwithstanding, if we will be saved.

Wherefore, when thy conscience is terrified with the law, and wrestleth with the judgment of God, ask counsel neither of reason nor of the law, but rest only upon grace and the word of consolation, and so stand herein, as if thou hadst never heard anything of the law, ascending up into the darkness, where neither the law nor reason do shine, but only the dim light of faith, which assureth us that we are saved by Christ alone without any law.

Thus the Gospel leadeth us beyond and above the light of the law and reason, into the deep secrets of faith, where the law and reason have nothing to do. Notwithstanding we must hearken also unto the law, but in place and time. Moses, while he was in the mountain where he talked with God face to face, had no law, made no law, ministered no law. But when he was come down from the mountain, he was a law-giver, and governed the people by the law. So the conscience must be free from the law, but the body must be obedient to the law.

Hereby it appeareth that Paul reproveth Peter for no light matter, but for the chiefest article of all Christian doctrine, which by Peter's dissimulation was in great danger. For Barnabas and the other Jews dissembled together with him, which did all offend, not through ignorance or malice, but for fear of the Jews; whereby their hearts were so blinded, that they did not see their sin. And certainly it is much to be marveled, that such excellent men as Peter, Barnabas, and other, should so suddenly and so lightly fall, especially in that thing which they knew to be well done, and had also before taught unto others. It is a perilous thing therefore (as Dr. Staupitius often admonished us), to trust to our own strength, be we never as holy, never so well learned, and although we think ourselves never so sure of that we know; for in that whereof we think ourselves most sure, we may err and fall, and bring ourselves and others into great danger. Let us therefore diligently, and with all humility, exercise ourselves in the study of the holy Scriptures, and let us heartily pray that we never lose the truth of the Gospel.

Thus we see then, that we are nothing with all our gifts, be they never so great, except God assist us. When he leaveth us to ourselves, our wisdom and knowledge is nothing. Except he sustain us continually, not even the highest learning, no, not divinity her very self, availeth anything at all.

For in the hour of temptation it may suddenly come to pass, that by the subtilty of the devil, all the comfortable places of the Scripture shall be taken out of our sight, and such places only as contain threatenings, shall be set before our

eyes, which shall oppress us and utterly confound us. Let us learn therefore, that if God withdraw his hand, we may soon be overthrown; and let no man glory of his own righteousness, wisdom, and other gifts, but let him humble himself and pray with the Apostles, 'Lord, increase our faith! (Luke 17:5).

But when I saw that they went not the right way to the truth of the gospel

This is a wonderful example of such excellent men and pillars of the churches. There is none but Paul that hath his eyes open, and seeth the offense of Peter, of Barnabas and the other Jews which dissembled with Peter. On the other side, they do not see their own offense; nay, they rather think that they do well in bearing charitably with the infirmity of the weak Jews. Wherefore it was very necessary that Paul should reprove their offense, and not dissemble it, and therefore he accuseth Peter, Barnabas and other, that they went not the right way to the truth of the Gospel; that is to say, they swerved from the truth of the Gospel. It is a great matter that Peter should be accused of Paul as one that was fallen from the truth of the Gospel. He could not be more grievously reprehended. Yet he suffered it patiently; and no doubt but he gladly acknowledged his offense.

I said before, that many have the Gospel, but not the truth of the Gospel.

So Paul saith here, that Peter, Barnabas, and other of the Jews, went not the right way to the truth of the Gospel: that is to say, they had the Gospel, but they walked not uprightly according to the Gospel. For albeit they preached the Gospel, yet through their dissimulation (which could not stand with the truth of the Gospel) they established the law: but the establishing of the law is the abolishing of the Gospel.

Whoso then can rightly judge between the law and the Gospel, let him thank God, and know that he is a right divine. In the time of temptation I confess that I myself do not know how to do it as I ought. Now the way to discern the one from the other, is to place the Gospel in heaven, and the law on the earth; to call the righteousness of the Gospel heavenly and divine, and the righteousness of the law earthly and human, and to put as great difference between the righteousness of the Gospel and of the law, as God hath made between heaven and earth, between light and darkness, between day and night. Let the one be as the light and the day; and the other as the darkness and the night. And would to God we could further separate the one from the other. Wherefore, if the question be concerning the matter of faith or conscience, let us utterly exclude the law, and leave it on the earth; but, if we have to do with works, then let us light the lantern of works and of the righteousness of the law. So let the sun and the inestimable light of the Gospel and grace shine in the day, and the lantern of the law in the night. Wherefore, if thy conscience be terrified with the sense and feeling of sin, think thus with thyself: Thou art now remaining upon earth; there let the ass labor

and travail; there let him serve and carry the burden that is laid upon him; that is to say, let the body with his members be subject to the law. But when thou mounted up into heaven, then leave the ass with his burden on the earth; for the conscience hath nothing to do with the law or works, or with the earthly righteousness. So doth the ass remain in the valley, but the conscience ascendeth with Isaac into the mountain, knowing nothing at all of the law or the works thereof, but only looking to the remission of sins and pure righteousness offered and freely given unto us in Christ.

Contrariwise in civil policy, obedience to the law must be severely required. There nothing must be known as concerning the Gospel, conscience, grace, remission of sins, heavenly righteousness, or Christ himself, but Moses only with the law and the works thereof. If we mark well this distinction, neither the one nor the other shall pass his bounds, but the law shall abide without heaven; that is, without the heart and conscience: and contrariwise, the liberty of the Gospel shall abide without the earth; that is to say, without the body and members thereof. Now therefore, as soon as the law and sin come into heaven (that is, into the conscience), let them by and by be cast out. For the conscience, being feared with the terror of the wrath and judgment of God, ought to know nothing of the law and sin, but of Christ only. And on the other side, when grace and liberty come into the earth (that is, into the body), then say:

Thou oughtest not to dwell in the dregs and dunghill of this corporal life, but thou belongest unto heaven, etc.

This distinction of the law and the Gospel, Peter confounded through his dissimulation, and thereby persuaded the believing Jews, that they must be justified by the Gospel and the law together. This might not Paul suffer, and therefore he reproveth Peter; not to put him to any reproach, but to the end that he might again establish a plain difference between these two; namely, that the Gospel justifieth in heaven, and the law on earth. But the Pope hath not only mixed the law with the Gospel, but also of the Gospel hath made mere laws, yea and such as are ceremonial only. He hath also confounded and mixed political and ecclesiastical matters together; which is a devilish and hellish confusion.

This place, touching the difference between the law and the Gospel, is very necessary to be known, for it containeth the sum of all Christian doctrine.

Wherefore let all that would love and fear God, diligently learn to discern the one from the other, not only in words, but in deed and in practice; that is to say, in heart and conscience. For as touching the words, the distinction is easy: but in time of temptation thou shalt find the Gospel but as a stranger and a rare guest in thy conscience; but the law, contrariwise, thou shalt find a familiar and a continual dweller within thee; for reason hath the knowledge of the law naturally. Wherefore when thy conscience is terrified with sin, which the law revealeth and increaseth, then say thou:

There is a time to die and a time to live; there is a time to hear the law, and a time to despise the law; there is a time to hear the Gospel, and there is a time to be ignorant of the Gospel. Let the law now depart, and let the Gospel come; for there is now no time to hear the law, but the Gospel. But thou hast done no good: nay, thou hast done wickedly, and hast grievously sinned. I grant; notwithstanding I have the remission of sins through Christ, for whose sake all my sins are forgiven me. But out of the conflict of conscience, when external duties must be done, then, whether thou be a minister of the Word, a magistrate, a husband, a teacher, a scholar, etc., there is no time to hearken to the Gospel, but thou must hear the law and follow thy vocation.

I said unto Peter openly: if thou, being a Jew livest as the Gentiles and not as the Jews, why constrainest thou the Gentiles to do like the Jews?

That is to wit, thou art a Jew, and therefore thou art bound to live like a Jew; that is, to abstain from meats forbidden in the law. Notwithstanding thou livest like a Gentile; that is to say, thou freely doest contrary to the law, and transgressest the law. For, as a Gentile which is free from the law, thou eatest common and unclean meats, and therein thou doest well. But in that thou, being afraid at the presence of the brethren converted from the Jewish religion, abstainest from meats forbidden in the law, and keepest the law, thou compellest the Gentiles to do as the Jews; that is, thou constrainest them of necessity to observe the law. For in that thou abstainest from profane meats, thou givest occasion to the Gentiles thus to think Peter abstaineth from those meats which the Gentiles use to eat, which also he himself before did eat; therefore we ought likewise to avoid the same, and to live after the manner of the Jews; otherwise we cannot be justified or saved. We see then that Paul reproveth not ignorance in Peter (for he knew that he might freely eat with the Gentiles all manner of meats), but dissimulation, whereby he compelleth the Gentiles to live like the Jews.

Here I say again, that to live as the Jew, is not evil of itself; for it is a thing indifferent, either to eat swine's flesh, or any other meats. But so to play the Jew, that for conscience sake thou abstainest from certain meats, this is to deny Christ, and to overthrow the Gospel. Therefore when Paul saw that Peter's act tended to this end, he withstood him, and said: Thou knowest that the keeping of the law is not necessary to righteousness, but that we are justified only through faith in Christ, and therefore thou keepest not the law, but transgressest the law, and eatest all manner of meats.

Notwithstanding, by thy example thou constrainest the Gentiles to forsake Christ and to return to the law. For thou givest them occasion thus to think: Faith only is not sufficient to righteousness, but the law and works are also required; and this Peter teacheth us by his example: therefore the observation of the law must needs be joined with faith in Christ, if we will be justified. Wherefore, Peter

by his example is not only prejudicial to the purity of doctrine, but also to the truth of faith and Christian righteousness.

For the Gentiles received this thereof, that the keeping of the law was necessary to righteousness; which error in case it be admitted, then doth Christ profit us nothing at all.

Hereby it plainly appeareth to what end this discord between Paul and Peter tendeth. Paul doth nothing by dissimulation, but dealeth sincerely, and goeth plainly to work; but Peter dissembleth, as the text plainly saith, and his dissimulation Paul reproveth. Wherefore, in Paul there is no dissimulation, but pure and Christian severity and holy pride, which had been a fault if Peter had committed but some light sin, and had not sinned against the principal article of Christian doctrine. But because the truth of the Gospel suffereth by the fault of Peter, Paul neither will nor can leave off his defense of it; and to the end that it may be kept sound and uncorrupt, he hath no care of Peter, and Barnabas and all the rest are nothing to him.

Wherefore Porphyrius and Julian do wrong unto Paul, when they allege that he of mere arrogance did reprehend Peter. Nay, even reason itself, if it do but perceive the end of the matter which Paul hath in hand, is forced to confess that it is better that Peter should be set aside, than that the majesty of God should give place and faith be put in danger. For that is the issue which is here in debate: either Peter must be severely rebuked, or Christ removed utterly away. Here it is better that Peter should perish and depart into hell, if need be, than that Christ should be lost. To this sentence ought Porphyrius and all other to assent; and no man can deny but that Paul in this case did well and godly. If it had been a disputation about some indifferent matter (as in comparison of it, that discord between Paul and Barnabas, Acts 15:39, is plainly but a vain thing and a jest), then might Paul have yielded. But in this the greatest of causes, he must give no place at all. Let every Christian therefore be proud after the example of Paul. Charity beareth all things, believeth and hopeth all things, but faith ruleth, commandeth, triumpheth, and doeth all things, giving place unto none; for all things ought to be subject and give place unto faith – all peoples and nations, kings and Judges of the earth, as it is said in Psalm 2:10 f. : ‘grow therefore be wise, O ye kings; be instructed O ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, etc. Else shall ye perish from the way.’ Therefore the effects, offices and virtues of charity and of faith are plainly contrary the one to the other.

Therefore the whole force lieth in this clause: ‘Thou compellest the Gentiles to do as the Jews,’ that is to say, thou compellest them to fall from grace and faith to the law and works, and to deny Christ, as though he had sinned and died in vain, etc. This word: ‘Thou compellest,’ containeth all those perils and sins, which Paul urgeth and amplifieth throughout all this Epistle. For if that compulsion or necessity be admitted, then is faith abolished; and where faith

perisheth, all the promises of God are made void, all the gifts of the Holy Ghost trodden under foot, and all men must of necessity simply perish and be damned.

Many properties of this kind doth Paul attribute to the righteousness of the law throughout this whole Epistle.

Since then it is so dangerous a thing to have to do with the law, and that this fall was so sudden and so great, as it had been from heaven above even down into hell, let every Christian diligently learn to discern between the law and the Gospel. Let him suffer the law to rule over the body and the members thereof, but not over the conscience. For that queen and spouse may not be defiled with the law, but must be kept without spot for her only husband Christ, as Paul saith (2 Corinthians 11:2): 'I have espoused you to one husband, etc.' Let the conscience have her bride-chamber, not in the low valley, but in the high mountain: in the which let Christ lie and there rule and reign, who doth not terrify and afflict sinners, but comforteth them, pardoneth their sins, and sayeth them Wherefore let the afflicted conscience think upon nothing, know nothing, set nothing against the judgment of God, but the word of Christ, which is the word of grace, of remission of sins, of salvation and everlasting life. But this to perform indeed, is a hard matter For man's reason and nature cannot steadfastly cleave unto Christ, but oftentimes it is carried away with the cogitations of the law and sin, and so always seeketh to be at liberty after the flesh, but according to conscience a servant and slave.

We which are jews by nature, and not sinners of the gentiles

That is to say, we are born unto the righteousness of the law, to Moses, and to circumcision, and even in our birth we bring the law with us. We have the righteousness of the law not by choice, as the Gentiles, but by nature, as Paul before saith of himself in the first chapter: 'being zealous of the traditions of the fathers etc. Wherefore, if we be compared with the Gentiles, we are no sinners; we are not without the law and without works, like unto the Gentiles: but we are Jews born, we are born righteous, and brought up in righteousness. Our righteousness beginneth even with our birth; for the Jewish religion is natural unto us. For God commanded Abraham to circumcise every man-child the eighth day (Genesis 17:10 ff.). This law of circumcision, received from the fathers, Moses afterwards confirmed. It is a great matter therefore, that we are Jews by nature.

Notwithstanding, although we have this prerogative, that we are righteous by nature, born to the law and the works thereof, and are not sinners as the Gentiles, yet are we not therefore righteous before God. Even though thou shewest me there, re a man most excellent, that is a Jew by birth, and from his birth hath kept the law most perfectly, yet is he not therefore righteous before God. We are indeed circumcised, but we are not justified thereby. For circumcision is a 'seal of righteousness' (Romans 4:11); and children circumcised

in the faith of Abraham are not saved for their circumcision, but for their faith. Be we never so much Jews born, and never so holy, and able to glory against the Gentiles that we have the justification of the law, the true worship of God, the promises, the fathers, (which is great glory indeed), yet are we not therefore righteous before God, neither have any advantage over the Gentiles.

Hereby it is evident, that Paul speaketh not here of ceremonies, saying that after the revelation of Christ they are deadly, as Origen and Jerome do affirm, but of a far weightier matter, namely, of the nativity of the Jews, whom he denieth to be righteous although they be born holy, be circumcised, keep the law, have the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the fathers, the true worship, God, Christ, the promises, live in them and glory in the same – as they say: ‘We are the seed of Abraham,’ and: ‘We have one father, which is God’ (John 8:33,41); and in the Epistle to the Romans (2:17): ‘Behold thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law,’ etc. Wherefore, although Peter, Paul, and the other Apostles were the children of God, righteous according to the law, and very Apostles of Christ, yet they were not therefore pronounced righteous before God. For although thou hast all these together – the law, the works and the righteousness thereof, circumcision, the adoption, the covenants, the promises, the apostleship, etc. – yet Christian righteousness cometh not thereby: for none of all these is faith in Christ, which only (as followeth in the text) justifieth, and not the law. Not that the law is evil or damnable; for the law, circumcision and such-like, are not therefore condemned because they justify not: but Paul therefore taketh from them the office of justification, because the false apostles contended that by them, without faith, and only by the work wrought, men are justified and saved. This was not to be suffered of Paul; for without faith all things are deadly. The law, circumcision, the adoption, the Temple, the worship of God, the promises, yea God and Christ himself, without faith, profit nothing. Paul therefore speaketh generally against all things which are contrary to faith, and not against ceremonies only.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the laws but by the faith of Jesus Christ

This word, ‘the work of the law,’ reacheth far and comprehendeth much. This I say because of the secure and idle sophisters and monks, which do obscure such words in Paul, yea they obscure and corrupt his whole argument concerning justification, with their foolish and wicked glosses which even they themselves do not understand. Take thou the work of the law therefore generally for that which is contrary to grace. Whatsoever is not grace, is the law, whether it be judicial, ceremonial, or the Ten Commandments. Wherefore if thou couldest do the work of the law according to this commandment: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,’ etc. (not to say here that no man yet ever did or could do so), yet thou shouldest not be justified before God; for a man is not justified by the works of the law. But hereof we will speak more largely hereafter.

The work of the law then, according to Paul, signifieth the work of the whole law, whether it be judicial, ceremonial, or moral, Now, if the work of the moral law do not justify, much less doth circumcision justify, which is a work of the ceremonial law. Wherefore, when Paul saith (as he oftentimes doth) that a man is not justified by the law, or by the works of the law (which are both one) he speaketh generally of the whole law, setting the righteousness of faith against the righteousness of the whole law, or all that can be done, whether by divine power or by man's own strength, according to the law. For by the righteousness of the law, saith he, a man is not pronounced righteous before God but the righteousness of faith God imputeth freely through grace, for Christ's sake.

The law, no doubt, is holy, righteous and good, and consequently the works of the law are holy, righteous and good: yet notwithstanding a man is not justified thereby before God. We must therefore reject the opinion of Jerome and others, which dream that Paul here speaketh not of the works of the moral law, but of the ceremonial law, although they are forced to admit that the ceremonial law also was good and holy. For assuredly circumcision and other laws concerning the rites of the Temple were righteous and holy; for they were no less commanded and ordained of God than the moral laws. But here they say: But after Christ the laws of ceremonies were deadly. This they invent out of their own head. Neither doth Paul speak here of the Gentiles, unto whom the ceremonies are deadly, but of the Jews, unto whom they were good; yea, and Paul himself did keep them. Therefore even at that time, when the laws of ceremonies were holy and just and good, they could not justify.

Paul therefore speaketh not of a part of the law only (which also is good and holy), but of the whole law, saying that a work done according to the whole law justifieth not. Neither speaketh he of sin against the law, or a work of the flesh, but of the work of the law, that is, a work done according to the law. Therefore, to do no murder, not to commit adultery, etc., whether it be done according to nature, or the strength of man, or free-will, or according to the gift and power of God, yet it justifieth not.

Now the works of the law may be done either before justification or after.

Before justification, many good men even amongst the pagans, as Xenophon, Aristides, Fabius, Cicero, Pomponius Atticus and others, performed the deeds of the law and did notable works. Cicero suffered death valiantly in a good and just cause. Pomponius was a constant man, and loved truth, for he never made a lie himself, nor could suffer the same in any other. Now, constancy and truth are noble virtues and excellent works of the law, and yet were they not justified thereby. After justification, Peter, Paul, and all other Christians have done and do the works of the law, yet are they not justified thereby. 'I know not myself guilty in any thing (saith Paul) and yet am I not thereby justified' (1 Corinthians 4:4). We see then that he speaketh not of any part of the law, and not of sins against the law, but of the whole law and all the works thereof.

The Divinity of the Popish Sophisters, commonly called the Schoolmen. Wherefore the wicked and pernicious opinion of the Papists is utterly to be condemned, which attribute the merit of grace and remission of sins to the work wrought. For they say that a good work before grace, is able to obtain grace of congruence [which they call meritum de congruo because it is meet that God should reward such a work]. But when grace is obtained, the work following deserveth everlasting life of due debt and worthiness which they call meritum de condigno]. As for example if a man being in deadly sin, without grace, do a good work of his own good natural inclination – that is, if he say or hear a mass, or give alms and such like – this man of congruence deserveth grace. When he hath thus obtained grace, he doth now a work which of worthiness deserveth everlasting life.

For the first, God is no debtor; but because he is just and good, it behooveth him to approve such a good work, though it be done in deadly sin, and to give grace for such a service. But when grace is obtained, God is become a debtor, and is constrained of right and duty to give eternal life.

For now it is not only a work of free will, done according to the substance, but also done in grace which maketh a man acceptable unto God, that is to say, an charity. This is the divinity of the Antichristian kingdom; which here I recite, to the end that the disputation of Paul may be the better understood (for two contrary things being set together, may be the better known); and moreover, that all men may see how far from the truth these blind guides and leaders of the blind (Matthew 23:18) have wandered, and how by this wicked and blasphemous doctrine they have not only darkened the Gospel, but have taken it clean away, and buried Christ utterly. For if I being in deadly sin, can do any little work which is not only acceptable in God's sight of itself, and according to the substance, but also is able to deserve grace of congruence, and when I have received grace, I may do works according to grace, that is to say, according to charity, and get of right and duty eternal life; what need have I now of the grace of God, forgiveness of sins, of the promise, and of the death and victory of Christ?

. Christ is now to me unprofitable, and his benefit of none effect; for I have free will and power to do good works, whereby I deserve grace of congruence, and afterwards by the worthiness of my work, eternal life

Such monstrous and horrible blasphemies should have been set forth to the Turks and Jews, and not to the Church of Christ. And hereby it plainly appeareth, that the Pope with his bishops, doctors, monks, and all his religious rabble, had no knowledge or regard of holy matters, and that they were not careful for the health of the silly and miserable scattered flock.

For if they had seen, but as it were through a cloud, what Paul calleth sin, and what he calleth grace, they would never have compelled the people to

believe such abominations and execrable lies. By deadly sin they understood only the external work committed against the law, as murder, adultery, theft, and such like. They could not see that ignorance, hatred, and contempt of God in the heart, ingratitude, murmuring against God, and resisting the will of God, are also deadly sin, and that the flesh cannot think, speak, or do, anything but that which is devilish and altogether against God. If they had seen these mischiefs fast rooted in the nature of man, they would never have devised such impudent and execrable dreams touching the desert of congruence and worthiness.

Wherefore we must properly and plainly define what a wicked man or deadly sinner is. He is such a holy and bloody hypocrite as Paul was when he went to Damascus, to persecute Jesus of Nazareth, to abolish the doctrine of the Gospel, to murder the faithful, and utterly to overthrow the Church of Christ. And who will not say, but that these were horrible sins against God? Yet could not Paul see them. For he was so blinded with a perverse zeal of God, that he thought these abominations to be perfect righteousness and most acceptable service unto God: and shall we say that such as defend these horrible sins to be perfect righteousness, do deserve grace?

Wherefore with Paul, we utterly deny the merit of congruence and worthiness, and affirm that these speculations are nothing else but mere deceits of Satan, which were never done in deed, nor notified by any examples. For God never gave to any man grace and everlasting life for the merit of congruence or worthiness. These disputations therefore of the schoolmen touching the merit of congruence and worthiness, are nothing else but vain toys and dreams of idle brains. Yet hereupon is the whole Papacy grounded. For there is no religious person, but he hath this imagination I am able by the observation of my holy order to deserve grace of congruence, and by the works which I do after that I have received this grace, I am able to heap up such treasure of merit, as shall not only be sufficient for me to obtain eternal life, but also. too give or sell unto others.

Thus have all the religious orders taught, and thus have they lived. And to defend this horrible blasphemy against Christ, the Papists do at this day attempt against us what they can; and there is not one of them all, but the more holy hypocrite and meritmonger he is, the most cruel and deadly enemy he is to the Gospel of Christ.

THE TRUE WAY TO CHRISTIANITY

Now, the true way to Christianity is this, that a man do first acknowledge himself by the law, to be a sinner, and that it is impossible for him to do any good work. For the law saith: Thou art an evil tree, and therefore all that thou thinkest, speakest, or doest, is against God. Thou canst not therefore deserve grace by thy works which if thou go about to do, thou doublest thy offense; for since thou art an evil tree, thou canst not but bring forth evil fruits, that is to say, sins. 'For

whatsoever is not of faith, is sin' (Romans 14:23). Wherefore he that would deserve grace by works going before faith, goeth about to please God with sins, which is nothing else but to heap sin upon sin, to mock God, and to provoke his wrath.

When a man is thus taught and instructed by the law, then is he terrified and humbled, then he seeth indeed the greatness of his sin, and cannot find in himself one spark of the love of God: therefore he justifieth God in his Word, and confesseth that he is guilty of death and eternal damnation. The first part then of Christianity is the preaching of repentance, and the knowledge of ourselves.

The second part is: if thou wilt be saved, thou mayest not seek salvation by works; for God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. He was crucified and died for thee, and bare thy sins in his own body. Here is no congruence or work done before grace, but wrath, sin, terror and death. Wherefore the law doth nothing else but utter sin, terrify and humble, and by this means prepareth us to justification, and driveth us to Christ. For God hath revealed unto us by his Word, that he will be unto us a merciful father, and without our deserts (seeing we can deserve nothing) will freely give unto us remission of sins, righteousness and life everlasting, for Christ his Son's sake. For God giveth his gifts freely unto all men, and that is the praise and glory of his divinity. But the justiciaries and merit-mongers will not receive grace and everlasting life of him freely, but will deserve the same by their own works. For this cause they would utterly take from him the glory of his divinity. To the end therefore that he may maintain and defend the same, he is constrained to send his law before, which as a lightning and thundering from heaven, may bruise and break those hard rocks.

This briefly is our doctrine as touching Christian righteousness, contrary to the abominations and blasphemies of the schoolmen concerning the merit of congruence and worthiness, or works before grace and after grace.

Which monstrous dreams were devised by such as were never exercised with any temptations, never had any true feeling of sin, or of the terror of death, and therefore they know not what they say, or what they teach.

Moreover, they can shew no example of any work done either before or after grace that could justify before God. Wherefore they are nothing else but vain toys and foolish fables, whereby the Papists deceive both themselves and other. For Paul here plainly affirmeth, that no man is justified by the works of the law either going before grace (whereof he speaketh in this place) or coming after grace. You see then that Christian righteousness is not such an essential quality engrafted in the nature of man, as the schoolmen do imagine, when they say:

THE DIVINITY OF THE SCHOOLMEN

When a man doth any good work, God accepteth it, and for that work he poureth into him charity, which they call charity infused. This charity, say they, is a quality remaining in the heart, and this they call formal righteousness (which manner of speaking it is expedient for you to know), and they can abide nothing less than to heart hat this quality forming and adorning the soul, as whiteness doth the wall, should not be counted righteousness. They can climb no higher than to this cogitation of man's reason, that man is righteous by his own formal righteousness, which is grace making him acceptable unto God, that is to say, charity. So to this quality cleaving unto the soul, that is to wit, charity (which is a work after the law, for the law saith: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,' etc.), they attribute formal righteousness [that is to say, true Christian righteousness], and they say that this righteousness is worthy of everlasting life, and he that hath it is formally righteous; and moreover he is effectually or actually righteous, because he now doth good works, whereunto everlasting life is due. This is the opinion of the Popish schoolmen, yea, even of the best of them all.

Some others there be which are not so good, as Scotus and Occam, which said, that for the obtaining of the grace of God, this charity infused or given of God, is not necessary; but that a man even by his own natural strength, may procure this charity above all things. For so reasoneth Scotus If a man may love a creature, a young man a maiden, a covetous man money, which are the less good, he may also love God, which is the greater good. If he have a love of the creature through his natural strength, much more hath he a love of the Creator. With this argument were all the sophisters convicted, and none of them all was able to refute it.

Notwithstanding thus they reply:

The Scripture compelleth us to confess (say they) that God, besides that natural love and charity which is engrafted in us (wherewith alone he is not contented), requireth also charity which he himself giveth. And hereby they accuse God as a tyrant and a cruel exactor, who is not content that we keep and fulfill his law, but above the law (which we ourselves are well able to fulfill), requireth also that we should accomplish it with other circumstance and furniture, as apparel to the same. As if a mistress should not be contented that her cook had dressed her meat excellently well, but should chide her for that she did not prepare the same, being decked with precious apparel, and adorned with a crown of gold. Now what a mistress were this, who when her cook had done all that she was bound to do, and also exactly performed the same, would moreover require that she should wear such ornaments as she could not have? Even so, what a one should God be, if he should require his law to be fulfilled of us (which notwithstanding by our own natural strength we observe and fulfill) with such furniture as we cannot have?

But here lest they should seem to avouch contrary things, they make a distinction, and say that the law is fulfilled two manner of ways: first according to

the substance of the deed, and secondly, according to the mind of the commander. According to the substance of the deed, say they, we may fulfill all things which the law commandeth, but not according to the mind of the commander, which is, that God is not contented that thou hast done and fulfilled all things which are commanded in the law (although he hath no more to require of thee), but he further requireth, that thou shouldst fulfill the law in charity not that charity which thou hast by nature, but that which is above nature and heavenly, which he himself giveth. And what is this else but to make of God a tyrant and a tormentor, which requireth that of us which we are not able to perform? And it is in a manner as much as if they should say, that the fault is not in us if we be damned, but in God, which with this circumstance requireth his law to be accomplished of us.

These things I do the more diligently repeat, that you may see how far they have strayed from the true sense of the Scripture, which have said that by our own natural strength we may love God above all things, or at least, by the work wrought we may deserve grace and everlasting life. And because God is not content that we fulfill the law according to the substance of the deed, but will have us also to fulfill the same according to the mind of the commander, therefore the Scripture further compelleth us to have a quality above nature poured into us from above; and that is charity, which they call formal righteousness, adorning and beautifying faith, being also the cause that faith justifieth us. So faith is the body and the shell: charity the life, the kernel, the form and furniture. These are the monstrous dreams of the schoolmen.

But we, in the stead of this charity do place faith, and whereas they say that faith is the bare outline, and charity the lively colouring and filling up of the same, we say contrariwise that faith Jesus Christ, who is the form which adorneth and furnisheth faith, as the color adorneth and beautifieth the wall. Christian faith therefore is not an idle quality or empty husk in the heart, which may be in deadly sin until charity come and quicken it: but if it be true faith, it is a sure trust and confidence of the heart, and a firm consent whereby Christ is apprehended: so that Christ is the object of faith, yea rather he is not the object, but, as it were, in the faith itself Christ is present. Faith therefore is a certain obscure knowledge, or rather darkness which seeth nothing, and yet Christ apprehended by faith sitteth in this darkness like as God in Sinai and in the Temple sat in the midst of darkness (Exodus 19:9, 20:21: 1 Kings 8:10,12). Wherefore our formal righteousness is not charity furnishing and beautifying faith, but it is faith itself, which is, as it were, a certain cloud in our hearts: that is to say, a steadfast trust and affiance in the thing which we see not, which is Christ: who although he be not seen at all, yet he is present.

Faith therefore justifieth, because it apprehendeth and possesseth this treasure, even Christ present. But the manner of this presence cannot be comprehended of us, because it is in darkness, as I have said. Wherefore, where assured trust and affiance of the heart is, there Christ is present, yea even in the

cloud and obscurity of faith. And this is the true formal righteousness, whereby a man is justified, and not by charity, as the popish schoolmen do affirm.

To conclude, like as the schoolmen say that charity furnisheth and adorneth faith, so do we say that it is Christ which furnisheth and adorneth faith, or which is the form and perfection of faith. Wherefore Christ apprehended by faith, and dwelling in the heart, is the true Christian righteousness, for the which God counteth us righteous and giveth us eternal life. Here is no work of the law, no charity, but a far other manner of righteousness, and a certain new world beyond and above the law. For Christ or faith is not the law nor the work of the law. But concerning this matter, which the schoolmen neither taught nor understood, we intend to speak more largely hereafter. Now it shall be enough that we have shewed, that Paul speaketh not here of the ceremonial law only, but of the whole law. I have plainly declared already, how great is the error of the schooldivines, which have taught that a man thus obtaineth remission of sins and justification, namely, if by works going before, which they call merits of congruence, he deserve grace, which to them is a quality that cleaveth to the will, being given by God over and above that love which we have by our natural powers. When a man hath received this grace (say they), he is formally righteous and truly a Christian. This, I say, is an ungodly and pestilent opinion, for it maketh not a Christian, but a Turk, a Jew, an Anabaptist, a fantastical head, etc. For what man is there that would not be able by his own strength without grace to do a good work and in this way merit grace, etc.? After this manner have these dreamers made of faith an empty quality in the soul, which alone and without charity availeth nothing at all, but when charity is added thereto, it is effective and justifieth. And the works that do follow (say they) have power to merit eternal life of worthiness, since God for the sake of the charity which he hath infused into man's will, doth accept the work following unto eternal life. For thus say they that God accepteth a good work unto eternal life, but an evil work he non-accepteth unto condemnation and eternal punishment. They have heard somewhat in a dream concerning acceptation, and then they have attributed this relation unto works. All these things are false and blasphemous against Christ. Howbeit not all speak so well, but some, as we have said, have taught that we are able of our own natural strength to love God above all things. It is profitable to know these things, to the end that the argument of Paul may be made the more clear.

THE TRUE RULE OF CHRISTIANITY

Contrary to these vain trifles and doting dreams (as we have also noted before) we teach faith, and give a true rule of Christianity in this sort: first, that a man must be taught by the law to know himself, that so he may learn to say with the prophet: 'All have sinned and have need of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23); also, 'There is not one righteous, no not one: not one that understandeth, not one that seeketh after God: all have gone astray' (Romans 3:10 ff.; Psalm 14:1 ff.; 53:1 ff.); also: 'Against thee only have I sinned' (Psalm 51:4). Thus we by a contrary way do drive men from the merit of congruence and worthiness. Now,

when a man is humbled by the law, and brought to the knowledge of himself, then followeth true repentance (for true repentance beginneth at the fear and judgment of God), and he seeth himself to be so great a sinner that he can find no means how he may be delivered from his sin by his own strength, endeavor and works. Then he perceiveth well what Paul meaneth when he saith that man is the servant and bond-slave of sin (Romans 7:14); also that God hath shut up all under sin (Romans 11:52; Galatians 3:22) and that the whole world is guilty before God (Romans 3:19). Then he seeth that all the divinity of the schoolmen touching the merit of congruence and worthiness, is nothing else but mere foolishness, and that by this means the whole Papacy falleth.

Here now he beginneth to sigh, and saith in this wise: Who then can give succor? For he being thus terrified with the law, utterly despaireth of his own strength: he looketh about, and sigheth for the help of a mediator and Savior. Here then cometh in good time the healthful word of the Gospel, and saith: 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee' (Matthew 9:2). Believe in Christ Jesus crucified for thy sins, etc. If thou feel thy sins and the burden thereof, look not upon them in thyself, but remember that they are translated and laid upon Christ, whose stripes have made thee whole (Isaiah 53:5).

This is the beginning of health and salvation. By this means we are delivered from sin, justified and made inheritors of everlasting life; not for our own works and deserts, but for our faith, whereby we lay hold upon Christ. Wherefore we also do acknowledge a quality and a formal righteousness in the heart: not charity (as the sophisters do) but faith; and yet so notwithstanding, that the heart must behold and apprehend nothing but Christ the Savior. And here it is necessary that you know the true definition of Christ. The schoolmen being utterly ignorant hereof, have made Christ a judge and a tormentor, devising this fond fancy concerning the merit of congruence and worthiness.

But Christ, according to his true definition, is no lawgiver, but a forgiver of sins and a Savior. This doth faith apprehend and undoubtedly believe, that he hath wrought works and merits of congruence and worthiness abundantly. For he might have satisfied for all the sins of the world by one only drop of his blood; but now he hath shed it plentifully, and hath satisfied abundantly. 'By his own blood hath he entered into the holy place once for all, and obtained eternal redemption' (Hebrews 9:12); and 'We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a reconciliation unto us, through faith in his blood' (Romans 3:24 f.). Wherefore it is a great matter, by faith, to lay hold upon Christ bearing the sins of the world. And this faith alone is counted for righteousness (Romans 3-4).

Here is to be noted, that these three things, faith, Christ, acceptation, or imputation, must be joined together. Faith taketh hold of Christ, and hath him present, and holdeth him inclosed, as the ring doth the precious stone.

And whosoever shall be found having this confidence in Christ apprehended in the heart, him will God account for righteous. This is the mean, and this is the merit whereby we attain the remission of sins and righteousness. Because thou believest in me, saith the Lord, and thy faith layeth hold upon Christ, whom I have freely given unto thee that he might be thy mediator and high priest, therefore be thou justified and righteous.

Wherefore God doth accept or account us as righteous, only for our faith in Christ.

And this acceptation, or imputation, is very necessary: first, because we are not yet perfectly righteous, but while we remain in this life, sin dwelleth still in our flesh; and this remnant of sin God purgeth in us. Moreover, we are sometimes left of the Holy Ghost, and fall into sins, as did Peter, David, and other holy men. Notwithstanding we have always recourse to this article: that our sins are covered, and that God will not lay them to our charge (Romans iv.). Not that sin is not in us (as the sophisters have taught, saying, that we must be always working well until we feel that there is no sin remaining in us): yea, sin is indeed always in us, and the godly do feel it, but it is covered, and is not imputed unto us of God for Christ's sake; whom because we do apprehend by faith, all our sins are now no sins.

But where Christ and faith be not, there is no remission or covering of sins, but mere imputation of sins and condemnation. Thus will God glorify his Son, and will be glorified himself in us through him.

When we have thus taught faith in Christ, then do we teach also good works. Because thou hast laid hold upon Christ by faith, through whom thou art made righteous, begin now to work well. Love God and thy neighbor, call upon God, give thanks unto him, praise him, confess him. Do good to thy neighbor and serve him: fulfill thine office. These are good works indeed, which flow out of this faith and this cheerfulness conceived in the heart, for that we have remission of sins freely by Christ.

Now what cross or affliction soever do afterwards ensue, they are easily borne, and cheerfully suffered. For the yoke that Christ layeth upon us, is sweet, and his burden is light (Matthew 11:30). When sin is pardoned, and the conscience delivered from the burden and sting of sin, then may a Christian bear all things easily: because he feeleth all things within sweet and comfortable, therefore he doeth and suffereth all things willingly. But when a man walketh in his own righteousness, whatsoever he doeth is grievous and tedious unto him, because he doeth it unwillingly.

We therefore do make this definition of a Christian, that a Christian is not he which hath no sin, or feeleth no sin, but he to whom God imputeth not his sin because of his faith in Christ. This doctrine bringeth strong consolation to afflicted

consciences in serious and inward terrors. It is not without good cause, therefore, that we do so often repeat and beat into your minds the forgiveness of sins, and imputation of righteousness for Christ's sake: also that a Christian hath nothing to do with the law and sin, especially in the time of temptation. For inasmuch as he is a Christian, he is above the law and sin. For he hath Christ the Lord of the law present and inclosed in his heart (as we have said) even as a ring hath a jewel or precious stone inclosed in it. Therefore when the law accuseth and sin terrifieth him, he looketh upon Christ, and when he hath apprehended him by faith, he hath present with him the conqueror of the law, sin, death and the devil: who reigneth and ruleth over them, so that they cannot hurt him.

Wherefore a Christian man, if ye define him rightly, is free from all laws, and is not subject unto any creature, either within or without: inasmuch as he is a Christian, I say, and not inasmuch as he is a man or a woman, that is to say, inasmuch as he hath his conscience adorned and beautified and enriched with this faith, with this great and inestimable treasure, or, as Paul saith, 'this unspeakable gift' (2 Corinthians 9:15), which cannot be magnified and praised enough, for it maketh us the children and heirs of God. And by this means a Christian is greater than the whole world. For he hath such a gift, such a treasure in his heart, that although it seemeth to be but little, yet notwithstanding the smallness thereof, is .greater than heaven and earth, because Christ, which is this gift, is greater.

While this doctrine, pacifying and quieting the conscience, remaineth pure and uncorrupt, Christians are made judges over all kinds of doctrine, and are lords over the laws of the whole world. Then can they certainly judge that the Turk with his Alcoran is damned, because he goeth not the right way, that is, he acknowledgeth not himself to be a miserable and damnable sinner, nor apprehendeth Christ by faith, for whose sake he might be assured that his sins are pardoned. In like manner they boldly pronounce sentence against the Pope, that he is condemned with all his kingdom, because he so walketh and so teacheth (with all his religious rabble of sophisters and schoolmen), that by the merit of congruence we must come to grace, and that afterward by the merit of worthiness we are received into heaven. Here saith the Christian: this is not the right way to justify us, neither doth this way lead to heaven. For I cannot, saith he, by my works going before grace, deserve grace of congruence, nor by my works following grace, obtain eternal life of worthiness: but to him that believeth in Christ, sin is pardoned and righteousness imputed. This trust and this confidence maketh him the child of God and heir of his kingdom; for in hope he possesseth already everlasting life, assured unto him by promise. Through faith in Christ therefore all things are given unto us, grace, peace, forgiveness of sins, salvation and everlasting life, and not for the merit of congruence and worthiness.

Wherefore this doctrine of the schoolmen, with their ceremonies, masses, and infinite foundations of the papistical kingdom, are most abominable blasphemies against God, sacrileges and plain denials of Christ, as Peter hath

foretold in these words: 'There shall be,' saith he, 'false teachers among you, which shall privily bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that hath bought them,' etc. (2 Peter 2:1). As though he would say: The Lord hath redeemed and bought us with his blood, that he might justify and save us; this is the way of righteousness and salvation. But there shall come false teachers, which denying the Lord, shall blaspheme the way of truth, of righteousness and salvation; they shall find out new ways of falsehood and destruction, and many shall follow their damnable ways.

Peter throughout this whole chapter most lively painteth out the Papacy, which neglecting and despising the Gospel and faith in Christ, hath taught the works and traditions of men: as the merit of congruence and worthiness, the difference of days, meats and persons, vows, invocation of saints, pilgrimages, purgatory, and such like. In these fantastical opinions the Papists are so misled, that it is impossible for them to understand one syllable of the Gospel, of faith, or of Christ.

And this the thing itself doth well declare. For they take that privilege unto themselves which belongeth unto Christ alone. He only delivereth from sins, he only giveth righteousness and everlasting life; and they most impudently and wickedly do vaunt that we are able to obtain these things apart from Christ by the merits of congruence and worthiness. This, saith Peter and the other Apostles, is to bring in damnable heresies and sects of perdition. For by these means they deny Christ, tread his blood under their feet, blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and despise the grace of God. Wherefore no man can sufficiently conceive how horrible the idolatry of the Papists is.

As inestimable as the gift is which is offered unto us by Christ, even so and no less abominable are these profanations of the Papists. Wherefore they ought not to be lightly esteemed or forgotten, but diligently weighed and considered. And this maketh very much also for the amplifying of the grace of God and the benefit of Christ, as by the contrary. For the more we know the profanation of the papistical Mass, so much the more we abhor and detest the same, and embrace the true use of the Mass, which the Pope hath taken away, and hath made merchandise thereof, that being bought for money, it might profit others. For he saith that the massing priest, an apostate denying Christ and blaspheming the Holy Ghost, standing at the altar, doth a good work, not only for himself, but also for others, both quick and dead, and for the whole Church, and that only by the work wrought, and by no other means.

Wherefore even by this we may plainly see the inestimable patience of God, in that he hath not long ago destroyed the whole Papacy, and consumed it with fire and brimstone, as he did Sodom and Gomorrah. But now these jolly fellows go about, not only to cover, but highly to advance their impiety and filthiness. This we may in no case dissemble, We must therefore with all diligence set forth the article of justification, that as a most clear sun, it may bring to light the

darkness of their hypocrisy, and discover their filthiness and shame. For this cause we do so often repeat and so earnestly set forth the righteousness of faith, that the adversaries may be confounded and this article established and confirmed in our hearts.

And this is a most necessary thing: for if we once lose this sun, we fall again into our former darkness. And most horrible it is, that the Pope should ever be able to bring this to pass in the Church, that Christ should be denied, trodden under foot, spit upon, blasphemed, yea and that even by the Gospel and sacraments; which he hath so darkened, and turned into such an horrible abuse, that he hath made them to serve him against Christ, for the establishing and confirming of his detestable abominations. O deep darkness! O horrible wrath of God!

Even we, I say, have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified etc.

This is the true mean of becoming a Christian, even to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law. Here we must stand, not upon the wicked gloss of the schoolmen, which say, that faith then justifieth, when charity and good works are joined withal. With this pestilent gloss the sophisters have darkened and corrupted this and other like sentences in Paul, wherein he manifestly attributeth justification to faith only in Christ. But when a man heareth that he ought to believe in Christ, and yet notwithstanding faith justifieth not except it be formed and furnished with charity, by and by he falleth from faith, and thus he thinketh:

If faith without charity justifieth not, then is faith in vain and unprofitable, and charity alone justifieth; for except faith be formed and beautified with charity, it is nothing.

And to confirm this pernicious and pestilent gloss, the adversaries do allege this place, 1 Corinthians 13:1 f.: 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, etc., and have no love, I am nothing.' And this place is their brazen wall. But they are men without understanding, and therefore they can see or understand nothing in Paul; and by this false interpretation, they have not only perverted the words of Paul, but have also denied Christ, and buried all his benefits. Wherefore we must avoid this gloss as a most deadly and devilish poison, and conclude with Paul, that we are justified, not by faith furnished with charity, but by faith only and alone. We must not attribute the power of justifying to that form [sc. charity] which maketh a man acceptable unto God, but we must attribute it to faith, which apprehendeth and possesseth in the heart Christ the Savior himself. This faith justifieth without and before charity.

We grant that we must teach also good works and charity, but it must be done in time and place, that is to say, when the question is concerning works, and toucheth not this article of justification. But here the question is, by what

means we are justified and attain eternal life. To this we answer with Paul, that by faith only in Christ we are pronounced righteous, and not by the works of the law or charity not because we reject good works, as our adversaries accuse us, but for that we will not suffer ourselves to be turned aside from the principal point of this present matter as Satan most desireth. Wherefore since we are now in the matter of justification, we reject and condemn all good works' for this place will admit no disputation of good works. In this matter therefore we do generally cut off all laws and all the works of the law.

But the law is good, just, and holy. True, it is. But when we are disputing of justification, there is no time or place to speak of the law; but the question is, what Christ is, and what benefit he hath brought unto us.

Christ is not the law, he is not my work, or the work of the law, he is not my charity, he is not my chastity, obedience, or poverty, but he is the Lord of life and death, a mediator and a Savior of sinners, a redeemer of those that are under the law. In him we are by faith, and he in us. This bridegroom must be alone with the bride in his secret chamber, all the servants and family being put apart. But afterwards, when he openeth the door and cometh forth, then let the servants and handmaidens return, to fulfill their ministry. There let charity do her office, and let good works be done.

We must learn therefore to discern all laws, yea even the law of God, and all works, from the promise of the Gospel and from faith, that we may define Christ rightly. For Christ is no law, and therefore he is no exactor of the law and works, but he is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29). This doth faith alone lay hold of, and not charity, which notwithstanding, as a certain thankfulness, must follow faith.

Wherefore victory over sin and death, salvation and everlasting life, come not by the law, nor by the works of the law, nor yet by the power of freewill, but by the Lord Jesus Christ only and alone. Therefore faith alone apprehending this justifieth, as appeareth by a sufficient division and induction: The victory over sin and death cometh by Jesus Christ only and alone: therefore it cometh not by the works of the law, nor yet by our will, etc. Here we will gladly suffer ourselves to be called 'solarians' by our adversaries, which understand nothing of this disputation of Paul.

That we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law

Paul speaketh not here of the ceremonial law only, as before we have said, but of the whole law. For the ceremonial law was as well the law of God as the moral law was. As for example, circumcision, the institution of the priesthood, the service and ceremonies of the Temple, were as well commanded of God, as the Ten Commandments. Moreover, when Abraham was commanded to offer up his son Isaac in sacrifice, it was a law. This work of Abraham pleased God no less

than other works of the ceremonial law did, and yet was he not justified by this work, but by faith; for the Scripture saith: 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness' (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3).

But since the revealing of Christ, say they, the ceremonial law killeth and bringeth death. Yea, so doth the law of the Ten Commandments also, without faith in Christ. Moreover, there may no law be suffered to reign in the conscience, but only the law of the spirit of life, whereby we are made free in Christ from the law of the letter and of death, from the works thereof, and from all sins: not because the law is evil, but for that it is not able to justify us; for it hath a plain contrary effect and working. It is an high and an excellent matter to be at peace with God, and therefore in this case, we have need of a far other mediator than Moses or the law, than our own will, yea even than that grace which they call the love of God. Here we ourselves must be nothing at all, but only receive the treasure which is Christ, apprehended in our hearts by faith, although we feel ourselves to be never so full of sin. These words therefore of the Apostle 'That we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law,' are very effectual, and not in vain or unprofitable, as the schoolmen think, and therefore they pass them over so lightly.

Hitherto ye have heard the words of Paul which he spake unto Peter; wherein he hath briefly comprised the principal article of all Christian doctrine, which maketh true Christians indeed. Now he turneth to the Galatians, to whom he writeth, and thus he concludeth: Since it is so, that we are justified by faith in Christ, then by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Because by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified

'Non omnis caro' is a Hebraism which offendeth against the grammar. So Genesis 4:5: 'That not every one that findeth him should smite him.'

The Greeks and Latins speak not so. 'Not every one' signifieth 'no one' and 'not all flesh' signifieth 'no flesh.' But 'not all flesh' in Latin seemeth to say 'some flesh.' Howbeit the Holy Ghost keepeth not this strictness of the grammar.

Now 'flesh,' in Paul, doth not signify (as the schoolmen dream) manifest and gross sins; for those he useth to call by their proper names, as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and such like (Galatians 5:19 ff.): but by flesh, Paul meaneth here, as Christ doth in the third chapter of John: 'That which is born of the flesh, is flesh' (John 3:6). Flesh therefore signifieth the whole nature of man, with reason and all other powers whatsoever do belong to man. This flesh, saith he, is not justified by works, no not even of the law. He saith not: Flesh is not justified by works contrary to the law, as are murder, adultery, drunkenness, and such like, but by works done according to the law, which are good. Flesh therefore, according to Paul, signifieth all the righteousness, wisdom, devotion, religion, understanding and will, that is possible to be in a natural man. Now if a

Jew is not justified by works done according to the law of God, much less shall a monk be justified by his order, a priest by the mass and canonical hours, a philosopher by his wisdom, a divine by his divinity, a Turk by the Alcoran.

Briefly, though a man be never so wise and righteous according to reason and the law of God, yet with all his righteousness, works, merits, devotion and religion, he is not justified.

This the Papists do not believe, but being blind and obstinate, they defend their abominations against their own conscience, and continue still in this their blasphemy, having in their mouths these execrable words: He that doth this good work or that, deserveth forgiveness of his sins; whosoever entereth into this or that holy order, and keepeth his rule, to him we assuredly promise everlasting life. It cannot be uttered what an horrible blasphemy it is to attribute that to the doctrines of devils, to the decrees and ordinances of men, to the wicked traditions of the Pope, to the works and merits of monks and friars, which Paul the Apostle of Christ taketh from the law of God and the works thereof. For if no flesh be justified by the works of the law of God, much less shall it be justified by the rule of Benedict, Francis, or Augustine, in which there is not one jot of true faith in Christ: but this only they teach, that whosoever keepeth these things hath life everlasting.

Wherefore I have much and often marveled, that these sects of perdition reigning so many years in so great darkness and errors, the Church could endure and continue as it hath done. Some there were whom God called purely by the text of the Gospel (which notwithstanding remained in the pulpit) and by Baptism. These walked in simplicity and humbleness of heart, thinking the monks and friars and such only as were anointed of the bishops, to be religious and holy, and themselves to be profane and secular, and not worthy to be compared unto them. Wherefore they finding in themselves no good works to set against the wrath and judgment of God, did fly to the death and passion of Christ, and were saved in this simplicity.

Horrible and unspeakable is the wrath of God, in that he hath so long time punished the contempt of the Gospel and Christ in the Papists, and also their ingratitude, in giving them over unto a reprobate mind (Romans 1:24. ff.), insomuch that they blaspheming and denying Christ altogether as touching his office, instead of the Gospel, received the execrable rules, ordinances and traditions of men, which they devoutly adored and honored, yea and preferred the same far above the Word of God, until at length they were forbidden to marry, and were bound to that incestuous single life; wherein they were outwardly polluted and defiled with all kinds of horrible wickedness, as adultery, whoredom, uncleanness, sodomy, and such other abominations. This was the fruit of that filthy single life.

So God, punishing sin with sin, inwardly gave them over unto a reprobate mind, and outwardly suffered them to fall into such horrible crimes, and that justly, because they blasphemed the only Son of God, in whom the Father would be glorified, and whom he delivered to death, that all which believe in him might be saved by him, and not by their own rules and orders. 'Him that honoreth me,' saith he, 'I will honor' (1 Samuel 2:30). Now, God is honored in his Son (John 5:23). Whoso then believeth that the Son is our mediator and savior, he honoreth the Father, and him again doth God honor, that is to say, adorneth him with his gifts, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, the Holy Ghost, and everlasting life.

Contrariwise, 'They that despise me,' saith he, 'shall be despised' (Samuel 2:30; Matthew 10:33).

There is then a general conclusion: 'By the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified.' This do thou amplify and run through all states and conditions of life thus: Ergo no monk shall be justified by his order, no nun by her chastity, no citizen by his probity, no prince by his beneficence, etc. The law of God is greater than the whole world, for it comprehendeth all men, and the works of the law do far excel even the most glorious will-works of all the merit-mongers; and yet Paul saith that neither the law nor the works of the law do justify. Therefore we conclude with Paul, that faith only justifieth. This proposition he goeth about to confirm in this manner:

If then while we seek to be justified in Christ, we ourselves are found sinners, is Christ therefore the minister of sin? God forbid

These are not Latin phrases, but Hebrew and theological. If this be true, saith he, that we are justified by Christ, then is it impossible that we should be sinners, or should be justified by the law. On the contrary, if this be not true, but that we must be justified by the law and the works of the law, it is then impossible that we should be justified by Christ. One of these two must needs be false. Either we are not justified by Christ, or we are not justified by the law. But the truth is that we are justified by Christ; therefore we are not justified by the law. He reasoneth therefore after this manner: 'If then while we seek to be made righteous by Christ,' etc. That is: If we seek to be justified by faith in Christ, and so being justified are yet found sinners, having need of the law to justify us being sinners: if we have need, I say, of the observation of the law to justify us, so that they which are righteous in Christ are not righteous, but yet have need of the law to justify them: or if he that is justified by Christ must yet further be justified by the law, then Christ is nothing else but a lawgiver and a minister of sin.

Therefore he that is justified and holy in Christ, is not justified or holy, but hath yet need of the righteousness and holiness of the law.

But we are indeed justified and made righteous in Christ; for the truth of the Gospel teacheth us, that a man is not justified in the law, but in Christ.

Now, if they which are justified in Christ are yet found sinners, that is do yet still belong to the law, and are under the law (as the false apostles teach), then are they not yet justified. For the law accuseth them, and sheweth them to be yet sinners, and requireth of them the works of the law, as necessary to their justification. Therefore they that are justified in Christ, are not justified; and so it followeth, that Christ is not a justifier, but a minister of sin.

With these words he vehemently chargeth the false apostles and all meritmongers, that they pervert all together: for they make of the law grace, and of grace the law, of Moses Christ, and of Christ Moses. For they teach that besides Christ and all the righteousness of Christ, the observation of the law is necessary to justification. And thus we see that by their intolerable perverseness, they make the law Christ for by this means they attribute that to the law, which properly belongeth unto Christ. If thou do the works of the law, say they, thou shalt be justified; but if thou do them not, thou shalt not be justified, although thou do believe in Christ never so much. Now if it be so, that Christ justifieth not, but is the minister of sin (as it needs must follow by their doctrine), then is Christ the law for we have nothing else of him (seeing he teacheth that we are sinners) than that we have by the law. So Christ being the teacher of sin, sendeth us to the law and to Moses, as to our justifier.

It cannot be therefore, but that the Papists and all such as are ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, or have not the true knowledge thereof, must needs make of Christ Moses and the law, and of the law Christ. For thus they teach: It is true (say they) that faith in Christ justifieth, but withal we must needs keep the commandments of God. For it is written: 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' (Matthew 19:17). Here even at the first dash, Christ is denied and faith abolished, because that is attributed to the commandments of God, or to the law, which belongeth to Christ alone. For Christ, according to his true definition, is a justifier and a redeemer from sins. If I attribute this to the law, then is the law my justifier, delivering me from my sins, because I do the works thereof: and so now the law is Christ, and Christ utterly loseth his name, his office and glory, and is nothing else but a minister of the law, reproving, terrifying, presenting and sending the sinner to another that may justify him: which is the proper office of the law.

But the proper office of Christ is, after the law hath pronounced a man to be guilty, to raise him up again, and to loose him from his sins, if he believe the Gospel. 'For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to everyone that believeth' (Romans 10:4); he is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29). But the Papists and the Anabaptists, because they understand not this doctrine, do turn all clean contrary, making of Christ Moses, and of Moses Christ. And this is indeed (although they will say otherwise) their principal proposition: that Christ is Moses. Moreover, they deride us, because we do so diligently teach and so earnestly require faith. Ha, ha, (say they), faith, faith wait

thou the time until thou come to heaven by faith. Nay, thou must strive to do greater and weightier matters. Thou must fulfill the law of God, according to that saying: 'Do this, and thou shalt live (Luke 10:28). Thou must suffer many things, shed thy blood, leave thy house, wife, children, imitate the example of Christ. Faith, which ye so highly extol, doth nothing else but make men careless, idle and negligent. Thus are they become nothing else but ministers of the law, and law-workers, calling back the people from Christ to Moses, from baptism, faith, the promises of Christ, to the law and works, turning grace into the law, and the law into grace.

Who would ever believe that these things could so easily be confounded and mingled together? There is no man so unsensible, which doth not perceive this distinction of the law and grace to be most plain and manifest.

For the very nature and signification of the words maketh this distinction and difference. For who understandeth not that these words, law and grace, do differ in name and signification? Wherefore it is a monstrous thing, that this distinction being so plain, the adversaries should be so devilish and perverse, as to mingle together the law and grace, and to transform Christ into Moses. Therefore I oftentimes say, that this doctrine of faith is very plain, and that every man may easily understand this distinction of the law and grace, as touching the words; but as touching the use and practice, it is very hard.

The Pope and his school-doctors do plainly confess, that the law and grace are diverse and distinct things, and yet when they come to the use and practice thereof, they teach clean contrary. Faith in Christ, say they, whether it be gotten by the strength, operation and qualities of nature, or whether it be faith infused and poured into us of God, yet is it but a dead faith, if charity be not joined therewith. Where is now the distinction and difference of the law and grace? Indeed, they do distinguish them in name, but in effect they call grace charity. Thus do all they which so straitly require the observation of the law, and attribute justification to the law and works. Wherefore whosoever doth not perfectly understand the article of justification must needs confound and mingle the law and grace together.

Let every godly man therefore diligently learn above all things, to put a difference between the law and grace in deed and in practice: not in words only, as the Pope and the fantastical spirits do; who as touching the words, do confess that they are two distinct things; but in very deed (as I have said), they confound and mingle them together, for they will not grant that faith justifieth without works. If this be true, then Christ profiteth me nothing. For though my faith be never so perfect, yet after their opinion, if this faith be without charity, I am not justified; and although I have never so much charity, yet I love not enough. And thus Christ apprehended by faith is not a justifier, grace profiteth nothing, neither can faith be true faith without charity (or as the Anabaptists say: without the cross,

passion and shedding of blood). But if charity, works and the cross are present, then the faith is true faith and justifieth.

With this doctrine the fantastical sects do darken and deface the benefit of Christ again at this day: they take away from him the glory of a justifier, and make him a minister of sin. They have learnt nothing from us but to repeat the words: the matter itself they understand not. They would have it appear that they also teach the Gospel and the faith of Christ purely, as we do, but when it cometh to the use and practice, they are teachers of the law, in all things like to the false apostles themselves. For even as they throughout all the churches did require circumcision and the observation of the law besides faith in Christ, insomuch that without circumcision and keeping of the law, they denied the justification of faith (for 'Except ye be circumcised,' said they, 'after the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved' (Acts 15:10)): even so, at this day, these straight exactors of the law, besides the righteousness of faith, do require the keeping of the commandments of God, according to that saying: 'Do this and thou shalt live' (Luke 10:28); also, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' (Matthew 19:17). Wherefore there is not one among them, be he never so wise, that understandeth the difference between the law and grace; for by their very use and practice and the testimony of facts they are convicted.

But we put a difference, and say, that we do not here dispute whether we ought to do good works: whether the law be good, holy and just, and whether it ought to be kept or no; for this is another manner of question, But our question is concerning justification, and whether the law do justify or no. This the adversaries will not hear: they will not answer to this question, nor make any distinction as we do; but only cry out, that good works ought to be done, that the law ought to be observed. We know that well enough. But because these are divers distinct matters, we will not suffer them to be mingled together. That good works ought to be done, we will hereafter declare when time shall serve. But since we are now in the matter of justification, we set aside here all good works, for which the adversaries do so earnestly strive, ascribing unto them wholly the office of justifying which is to take from Christ his glory and to ascribe the same unto works.

Wherefore this is a strong argument, which I have oftentimes used to my great comfort: 'If then while we seek to be made righteous by Christ,' etc.

As though Paul should say: If we being justified by Christ, are counted yet as not justified and righteous, but as sinners which are yet to be justified by the law, then may we not seek justification in Christ, but in the law. But if justification cometh by the law, then cometh it not by grace. Now if justification cometh not by grace but by the law, what hath Christ done and wrought by his passion, by his preaching, by his victory which he hath obtained over the law, sin and death, and by sending the Holy Ghost? We must conclude therefore, that either we are justified by Christ, or else that we are made sinners, culpable and guilty through

him. But if the law do justify, then can it not be avoided, but it must needs follow, that we are made sinners through Christ, and so Christ is a minister of sin. The case standing thus, let us then set down this proposition: Every one that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ is a sinner, and is guilty of eternal death, and if he fly not unto the law, doing the works thereof, he shall not be saved.

The holy Scripture, especially the New Testament, maketh often mention of faith in Christ, and highly advanceth the same: which saith that whosoever believeth in him is saved, perisheth not, is not judged, is not confounded, hath eternal life, etc. (John 3:16, etc.). But contrariwise they say, he that believeth in him is condemned, etc., because he hath faith without works, which doth condemn. Thus do they pervert all things, making of Christ simply a destroyer, and of Moses a Savior. And is not this an horrible blasphemy, so to teach, that by doing the works of the law thou shalt be made worthy of eternal life; but by believing in Christ thou shalt be made guilty of eternal death; that the law being kept and accomplished saveth, and faith in Christ condemneth?

The selfsame words, I grant, the adversaries do not use but in very deed such is their doctrine. For faith infused, say they, which properly they call faith in Christ, doth not make us free from sin, but that faith which is furnished with charity. Hereof it followeth that faith in Christ, without the law and works, saveth us not. This is plainly to affirm, that Christ leaveth us in our sins and in the wrath of God, and maketh us guilty of eternal death. On the other side, if thou keep the law and do the works thereof, then faith justifieth thee, because it hath works, without the which faith availeth nothing. Therefore works justify, and not faith. For that which causeth anything to be so, is itself more so, and if it be works that cause faith to justify, then works do justify more than faith. O horrible impiety!

What pernicious and cursed doctrine is this?

Paul therefore groundeth his argument upon an impossibility and a sufficient division. If we being justified in Christ, are yet found sinners, and cannot be justified but by another mean than Christ, that is to wit, by the law, then cannot Christ justify us, but he only accuseth and condemneth us: and so consequently it followeth, that Christ died in vain, and these with other like phrases are false: 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world' (John 1:29); also: 'He that believeth in the Son, hath everlasting life' (John 3:36). Yea the whole Scripture is false, which beareth witness that Christ is the justifier and savior of the world. For if we be found sinners after that we be justified by Christ, it followeth of necessity that they which fulfill the law without Christ are justified. If this be true, then are we either Turks, or Jews, or Tartarians, professing the name and word of Christ in outward show, but in deed and verity utterly denying Christ and his Word. But Paul will have faith to be 'unfeigned' (1 Timothy 1:5). It is a great error and impiety therefore to affirm that faith infused, except it be adorned with works of charity, justifieth not. But if the adversaries will needs defend this doctrine, why do they not then reject faith in Christ altogether:

especially seeing they make nothing else of it but a vain quality in the soul, which without charity availeth nothing? Why do they not call a spade a spade? That is: why do they not say in plain words, that works do justify and not faith? Yea, why do they not generally deny, not only Paul, but also the whole Gospel (as in very deed they do), which attributeth righteousness to faith alone and not to works?

For if faith and works together do justify then is the disputation of Paul altogether false, which plainly pronounceth, that a man is not justified by the deeds of the law, but by faith alone in Jesus Christ.

Is Christ therefore the minister of sin?

This is a kind of speech used of the Hebrews, which Paul in Corinthians 3 (7 ff.) doth also use where he most divinely and plainly speaketh of these two ministries: to wit, of the letter and the spirit, of the law and grace, or of death and life. And he saith that Moses hath the ministry of the law, which he calleth the ministry of sin, of wrath, death and condemnation. For Paul is wont to give reproachful names unto the law of God, and amongst the Apostles he only useth this manner of speech: the other do not so speak. And very necessary it is, that such as are studious of the holy Scripture should understand this manner of speech used of the Apostle.

Now a minister of sin is nothing else but a lawgiver, or a schoolmaster of the law, which teacheth good works and charity, and that a man must suffer the cross and afflictions, and follow the example of Christ and of the saints. He that teacheth and requireth this, is a minister of the law, of sin, of wrath and of death: for by this doctrine he doeth nothing else but terrify and afflict men's consciences, and shut them under sin. For it is impossible for the nature of man to accomplish the law yea, in those that are justified and have the Holy Ghost, the law of the members fighteth against the law of the mind (Romans 7:23). What will it not then do in the wicked which have not the Holy Ghost? Wherefore he that teacheth that righteousness cometh by the law, doth not understand what he saith or what he affirmeth, and much less doth he keep the law, but rather he deceiveth himself and others, and layeth upon them such a burden as they are not able to bear, requiring and teaching impossible things, and at the last he bringeth himself and his disciples unto desperation.

The proper use and end therefore of the law is, to accuse and condemn as guilty such as live in security, that they may see themselves to be in danger of sin, wrath, and death eternal, that so they may be terrified and brought even to the brink of desperation, trembling and quaking at the falling of a leaf: and in that they are such, they are under the law. For the law requireth perfect obedience unto God, and condemneth all those that do not accomplish the same. Now, it is certain that there is no man living which is able to perform this obedience; which notwithstanding God straitly requireth of us: the law therefore justifieth not, but condemneth, according to that saying: 'Cursed is he that abideth not in all things

written in this law,' etc. (Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10). Therefore he that teacheth the law is the minister of sin.

Wherefore it is not without good cause, that Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 calleth the ministry of the law the ministry of sin: for the law accuseth consciences and sheweth sin, which without the law is dead. Now the knowledge of sin (I speak not here of that speculative knowledge of hypocrites, but of a true knowledge, by which we see the wrath of God against sin, and feel a true taste of death) terrifieth the heart, driveth down to desperation, killeth and destroyeth (Romans 7:11). Wherefore these schoolmasters of the law and works, are called in the Scriptures oppressors and tyrants. For as the taskmasters in Egypt did oppress the children of Israel with corporal servitude, so do these lawgivers and taskmasters drive men into spiritual and most miserable bondage of soul, and at length bring them to desperation and utter destruction. These do neither know themselves nor feel the force of the law; neither is it possible for them to have quietness and peace of conscience in great and inward terrors, and in the agony of death, yea though they have observed the law, loved their neighbours, done many good works, and suffered great afflictions: for the law always terrifieth and accuseth, saying: Thou never didst accomplish all that is commanded in the law; but accursed is he that hath not done all things contained therein, etc. Wherefore these terrors remain still in the conscience and increase more and more; and if such schoolmasters of the law be not raised up by faith and the righteousness of Christ, they are driven down headlong to desperation. Of this thing there is a notable example in the 'Lives of the Fathers' concerning a certain eremite who, shortly before he died, stood sad and motionless for three days with his eyes fixed on the heavens. Being asked why he did so, he answered that he feared death. When his disciples sought to comfort him, saying that he had no cause to fear death, since he had lived a most holy life, he replied: 'Holily have I lived indeed, and kept the commandments of God: but the judgments of God are far other than those of men.' This man, when he perceived death at hand, although he had lived blamelessly and had kept the law of God, was yet not able to have a quiet mind, because it came into his thought that God judgeth far otherwise than men. And so he lost confidence in all his good works and merits, and unless he was raised up by the promise of Christ, he must have despaired. So the law can do nothing else but strip us bare and make us culpable, and then there is no counsel or help, but all is lost. Here the life and martyrdoms of all the saints are not able to help us.

This also was notably figured when the law was given, as we may see in the 19th and 20th of Exodus. Moses brought the people out of the tents to meet with the Lord, that they might hear him speak unto them out of the dark cloud. Then the people being astonished and trembling for fear, fled back (which a little before had promised to do all that God had commanded) and, standing aloof off, said unto Moses: 'Who can abide to see the fire, and to hear the thunders and noise of the trumpet? Talk thou with us, and we will hear thee: but let not God talk with us, lest we die.' So the proper office of the law is to lead us out of our

tents and tabernacles, that is to say, from the quietness and security wherein we dwell, and from trusting in ourselves, and to bring us before the presence of God, to reveal his wrath unto us, and to set before us our sins. Here the conscience feeleth that it hath not satisfied the law, neither is it able to satisfy it, nor to bear the wrath of God, which the law revealeth when it bringeth us forth after this manner before the presence of God, that is to say, when it feareth us, accuseth us, and setteth before us our sins. Here it is impossible that we should be able to stand; and therefore being thoroughly afraid, we fly, and we cry out with the children of Israel: 'We shall die, we shall die: let not the Lord speak unto us, but speak thou unto us,' etc.

He then which teacheth that faith in Christ justifieth not without the observation of the law, maketh Christ a minister of sin, that is to say, a schoolmaster of the law, which teacheth the selfsame doctrine that Moses did. By this means Christ is no Savior, no giver of grace, but a cruel tyrant, who requireth impossible things (as Moses did), which no man is able to perform. See how all the meritmongers do take Christ to be but a new lawgiver, and the Gospel to be nothing else but a certain book which containeth new laws concerning works, as the Turks dream of their Alcoran. But as touching laws there is enough in Moses. The Gospel then is a preaching of Christ, which forgiveth sins, giveth grace, justifieth and saveth sinners. Now whereas there are commandments found in the Gospel, they are not the Gospel, but expositions of the law, and matters depending upon the Gospel.

To conclude, if the law be the ministry of sin, then it is also the ministry of wrath and of death. For as the law revealeth sin, so doth it terrify a man, it showeth unto him the wrath of God, and striketh into him a terror of death.

For this the conscience by and by gathereth Thou hast not kept the commandments of God, therefore is God offended and angry with thee.

And it thinketh this to be an infallible consequence: I have sinned, therefore I must die. And so it followeth, that the ministry of sin is the ministry of wrath and death. For after that sin is revealed, by and by ensueth the wrath of God, death, and damnation. For thus reasoneth the conscience: Thou hast sinned, therefore God is angry with thee: if he be angry with thee, he will destroy thee and condemn thee for ever. And hereof it cometh, that many which are not able to bear the judgment and wrath of God, which the law setteth before their eyes, do kill, hang, or drown themselves.

God forbid

As though he would say: Christ is not the minister of sin, but the giver of righteousness and eternal life. Wherefore Paul separateth Christ far from Moses. Let Moses then tarry on the earth; let him be the schoolmaster of the letter, and exactor of the law; let him torment and crucify sinners. But the believers, saith

Paul, have another schoolmaster in their conscience: not Moses, but Christ, which hath abolished the law and sin, hath overcome the wrath of God, and destroyed death. He biddeth us that labor and are oppressed with all manner of calamities, to come unto him. Therefore when we fly unto him, Moses with his law vanisheth away, so that his sepulcher can nowhere be seen (Deuteronomy 34:6), and sin and death can hurt us no more. For Christ our instructor is Lord over the law, sin, and death, so that they which believe in him are delivered from the same. It is therefore the proper office of Christ to deliver from sin and death; and this Paul teacheth and repeateth everywhere.

We are condemned and killed by the law, but by Christ we are justified and restored to life. The law astonisheth us, and driveth us from God; but Christ reconcileth us to God, and maketh for us an entrance, that we may boldly come unto him. For he is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. Now, if the sin of the world be taken away, then is it taken away from me also, which do believe in him. If sin be taken away, then is the wrath of God, death and damnation taken away also. And in the place of sin succeedeth righteousness; in the place of wrath, reconciliation and grace; in the place of death, life; and in the place of damnation, salvation. Let us learn to practice this distinction, not in words only, but in life and lively experience and feeling. For where Christ is, there must needs be joy of heart and peace of conscience: for Christ is our reconciliation, righteousness, peace, life and salvation. Briefly, whatsoever the poor afflicted conscience desireth, it findeth in Christ abundantly. Now Paul goeth about to amplify this argument, and to persuade as followeth.

For if I build again the things that I have destroyed, I make myself a trespasser.

As if he should say: I have not preached to this end, that I might build again those things which I once destroyed. For if I should so do, I should not only labor in vain, but should make myself also a transgressor, and overthrow all together, as the false apostles do that is to say, off, race and of Christ I should again make the law and Moses; and contrariwise of the law and Moses I should make grace and Christ. Now, by the ministry of the Gospel I have abolished sin, heaviness of heart, wrath and death. For thus have I taught: Thy conscience, O man, is subject to the law, sin and death; from which thou canst not be delivered either by men or angels. But now cometh the Gospel, and preacheth unto thee remission of sins by Jesus Christ, who hath abolished the law, and hath destroyed sin and death; believe in him, and so shalt thou be delivered from the curse of the law, and from the tyranny of sin and death; thou shalt be righteous and have eternal life.

Behold how I have destroyed the law, by the preaching of the Gospel, to the end that it should not reign in thy conscience any more. For when the new guest Christ Jesus cometh into the new house, there to dwell alone, Moses the old inhabiter must give place unto him, and depart some whither else. Also where Christ the new guest is come to dwell, there can the law, sin, wrath, and death

have no place; but there now dwelleth mere grace, righteousness, joy, life, mere filial trust in the Father, now pacified and reconciled unto us, gracious, longsuffering, and full of mercy, for his Son Christ's sake. Should I then, driving out Christ, and destroying his kingdom, which I have planted through the preaching of the Gospel, now build up again the law, and set up the kingdom of Moses? Indeed this should I do, if I should teach circumcision and the observation of the law to be necessary to salvation, as the false apostles do; and by this means, in the stead of righteousness and life, I should restore again sin and death. For the law doth nothing else but utter sin, procure God's wrath, kill and destroy.

What are the Papists (I pray you), yea the best of them all, but destroyers of the kingdom of Christ, and builders up of the kingdom of the devil and of sin, of wrath and eternal death? Yea, they destroy the Church, which is God's building, not by the law of Moses, as did the false apostles, but by men's traditions and doctrines of devils. And even so, the fantastical heads which are at this day, and shall come after us, do destroy and shall destroy those things which we have built; do build, and shall build up again those things which we have destroyed.

But we by the grace of Christ holding the article of justification, do assuredly know that we are justified by faith only in Christ. Therefore we do not mingle the law and grace, faith and works together; but we separate them far asunder. And this distinction or difference between the law and grace, let every seeker after godliness mark diligently, and let him suffer the same to take place, not in letters and syllables, but in practice and experience; so that when he heareth that good works ought to be done, and that the example of Christ is to be followed, he may be able to judge rightly and say: Well, all these things will I gladly do. What then followeth? Thou shalt then be saved and obtain everlasting life? Nay, not so. I grant indeed, that I ought to do good works, patiently to suffer troubles and afflictions, and to shed my blood also, if need be, for Christ's cause: but yet am I not justified, neither do I obtain salvation thereby.

We must not therefore draw good works into the article of justification, as the monks have done, which say that not only good works, but also the punishments and torments which malefactors suffer for their wicked deeds, do deserve everlasting life. For thus they comfort them when they are brought to the gallows, or place of execution: Thou must suffer willingly and patiently this shameful death; which if thou do, thou shalt deserve remission of thy sins and everlasting life. What an horrible thing is this, that a wretched thief, a murderer, a robber, should be so miserably seduced in that extreme anguish and distress, that even at the very point of death, when he is now ready to be hanged, or to have his head cut off, he should be deprived of the Gospel and glad tidings of Christ, which only is able to bring comfort and salvation, and should be commanded to hope for pardon and remission of his sins, if he willingly and patiently endure that opprobrious death which he suffereth for his mischievous deeds? What is this else but to heap upon him which is already most miserably afflicted, extreme

perdition and destruction, and through a false confidence in his own death, to show him the ready way to hell?

Hereby these hypocrites do plainly declare, that they neither teach nor understand one letter or syllable concerning grace, the Gospel, or Christ.

They retain only in outward show the name of the Gospel and of Christ, that they may beguile the hearts of the people. Notwithstanding they denying and rejecting Christ indeed, do attribute more to the traditions of men, than to the Gospel of Christ. Which thing to be true, so many kinds of worships, so many religious orders, so many ceremonies, and so many willworks do plainly witness: all which things were instituted as available to deserve grace, righteousness and everlasting life. In their confessions they made no mention of faith or the merit of Christ, but they taught and set forth the satisfactions and merits of men, as it may plainly appear in this form of absolution (I speak nothing here of other matters) which the monks used among themselves, yea and such as would be counted more devout and more religious than others: which I think good here to set down, that our posterity may see how great and how horrible the kingdom of the Pope as.

THE FORM OF A MONKISH ABSOLUTION

'God forgive thee my brother. The merit of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of blessed Saint Mary, always a virgin, and of all the saints: the merit of thine order, the straitness of thy religion, the humility of thy confession, the contrition of thy heart, the good works which thou hast done and shalt do for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, be unto thee available for the remission of thy sins, the increase of merit and grace, and the reward of everlasting life. Amen.'

Ye hear the merit of Christ mentioned in these words: but if ye weigh them well, ye shall perceive that Christ is there altogether unprofitable, and that the glory and name of a justifier and Savior is quite taken from him, and given to monkish works. Is not this to take the name of God in vain? Is not this to confess Christ in words, and in very deed to deny his power and blaspheme his name? I myself also was once entangled with this error: I thought Christ to be a judge (although I confessed with my mouth, that he suffered and died for man's redemption) and ought to be pacified by the observation of my rule and order. Therefore when I prayed or said Mass, I used to add this in the end' 'O Lord Jesus, I come unto thee, and I pray thee that these burdens and this straitness of my rule and religion may be a full recompense for all my sins.' But now I give thanks unto God the Father of all mercies, which hath called me out of darkness unto the light of his glorious Gospel, and hath given unto me plentiful knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whose sake I count all things (as Paul doth, Philippians 3:8 f.) to be but loss, yea I esteem them but as dung, that I may gain Christ, and that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness out of the rule of Augustine, but that righteousness which cometh by faith in Christ; unto

whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be praise and glory world without end. Amen.

We conclude therefore with Paul, that we are justified by faith only in Christ, without law and works. Now after that a man is once justified, and possesseth Christ by faith, and knoweth that he is his righteousness and life, doubtless he will not be idle, but as a good tree he will bring forth good fruits. For the believing man hath the Holy Ghost, and where the Holy Ghost dwelleth, he will not suffer a man to be idle, but stirreth him up to all exercises of piety and godliness, to the love of God, to the patient suffering of afflictions, to prayer, to thanksgiving, to the exercise of charity towards all men. Wherefore we also say that faith without works is vain and nothing worth.

This the papists and fantastical spirits do thus understand: that faith without works justifieth not, or that faith, be it never so true and sincere, if it have not works, is of no avail. That is false; but faith without works, that is to say, a fantastical cogitation and mere vanity and dream of the heart, is false faith and justifieth not.

Hitherto we have handled the first argument, wherein Paul contendeth that either we cannot be justified by the law, or else that Christ must needs be the minister of sin. But this is impossible: wherefore we conclude, that justification cometh not by the law. Of this place we have largely intreated, as it is well worthy, and yet can at not be taught and beaten into men's heads sufficiently.

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God

These are marvelous words, and unknown kinds of speech which man's reason can in no wise understand. And although they be but few, yet are they uttered with great zeal and vehemency of spirit, and as it were in great displeasure. As if he should say: Why do ye boast so much of the law, whereof in this case I will be ignorant? But if ye will needs have the law I also have my law. Wherefore, as though he were moved through indignation of the Holy Ghost, he calleth grace itself the law, giving a new name to the effect and working of grace, in contempt of the law of Moses and the false apostles, which contended that the law was necessary to justification: and so he setteth the law against the law. And this is a sweet kind of speech, and till of consolation, when in the Scriptures, and specially in Paul, law is set against the law, sin against sin, death against death, captivity against captivity, hell against hell, the altar against the altar, the lamb against the lamb, the passover against the passover.

In Romans 8:3 it is said: 'For sin he condemned sin in Psalm 68:18, Ephesians 4:8: 'He hath led captivity captive'; in Hosea 13:14: 'O death I will be thy death: O hell I will be thy destruction!' So he saith here, that through the law he is dead to the law. As if he said: the law of Moses accuseth and condemneth me; but against that accusing and condemning law, I have another law, which is

grace and liberty: This law accuseth the accusing law, and condemneth the condemning law. So death killeth death: but this killing death is life itself. But it is called the death of death, by a vehement indignation of spirit against death. So righteousness taketh the name of sin, because it condemneth sin, and this condemning of sin is true righteousness.

And here Paul seemeth to be an heretic, yea of all heretics the greatest; and his heresy is strange and monstrous. For he saith that he being dead to the law, liveth to God. The false apostles taught this doctrine: Except thou live to the law, thou livest not to God; that is to say, unless thou live after the law, thou art dead before God. But Paul saith quite contrary: Except thou be dead to the law, thou canst not live to God. The doctrine of our adversaries at this day, is like to the doctrine of the false apostles of that time. If thou wilt live to God, say they, live \backslash the law, or after the law.

But contrariwise we say: If thou wilt live to God, thou must utterly die to the law. Man's reason and wisdom understandeth not this doctrine; therefore it teacheth always the contrary, that is If thou wilt live unto God, thou must keep the law; for it is written, 'Do this and thou shalt live.' And this is a special principle amongst all the divines' He that liveth after the law, liveth unto God. Paul saith plainly the contrary: that is, we cannot live unto God, unless we be dead to the law. Wherefore we must mount up to this heavenly altitude, that we may be assured that we are far above the law, yea, that we are utterly dead unto the law. Now, if we be dead unto the law, then hath the law no power over us, like as it hath no power over Christ, who hath delivered us from the same, that through him we might live unto God. All these things tend to this end, to prove that we are not justified by the law, but by faith only in Jesus Christ.

And here Paul speaketh not of the ceremonial law; for he sacrificed in the Temple, circumcised Timothy, shaved his head at Cenchrea. These things had he not done, if he had been dead to the ceremonial law, but he speaketh of the whole law. Therefore the whole law, whether it be ceremonial or moral, to a Christian is utterly abrogate, for he is dead unto it. Not that the law is utterly taken away nay, it remaineth, liveth, and reigneth still in the wicked. But a godly man is dead unto the law like as he is dead unto sin, the devil, death, and hell which notwithstanding do still remain, and the world with all the wicked shall still abide in them.

Wherefore when the sophister understandeth that the ceremonial law only is abolished, understand thou, that Paul and every Christian is dead to the whole law, and yet the law remaineth still.

As for example: Christ rising from death is free from the grave, and yet the grave remaineth still Peter is delivered from the prison, the sick of the palsy from his bed, the young man from his coffin, the maiden from her couch, and yet the prison, the bed, the coffin, the couch do remain still. Even so, the law is

abolished when I am not subject unto it, the law is dead when I am dead unto it, and yet remaineth still. But because I by another law am dead unto it, therefore it is dead also unto me: as the grave of Christ, the prison of Peter, the couch of the maiden, etc. do still remain; and yet Christ by his resurrection is dead unto the grave, Peter by his deliverance is freed from the prison, and the maid through life is delivered from the couch.

Wherefore these words: 'I am dead to the law,' are very effectual. For he saith not 'I am free from the law for a time, or: I am lord over the law; but simply 'I am dead to the law,' that is to say, I have nothing to do with the law. Paul could have uttered nothing more effectual against the justification of the law, than to say: 'I am dead to the law,' that is, I care nothing at all for the law; therefore I am not justified by it.

Now, to die to the law, is, not to be bound to the law, but to be free from the law and not to know it. Therefore let him that will live to God, endeavor that he may be found without the law, and let him come out of the grave with Christ. The soldiers were astonished when Christ was risen out of the grave; and they also which saw the maiden raised up from death to life, were amazed. So man's reason and wisdom is astonished and becometh foolish, when it heareth that we are not justified except we be dead to the law for it is not able to reach into this mystery. But we know that when by faith we apprehend Christ himself in our conscience, we enter into a certain new law, which swalloweth up the old law that held us captive. As the grave in which Christ lay dead, after that he was risen again was void and empty, and Christ vanished away; so when I believe in Christ, I rise again with him, and die to my grave, that is to say, the law which held me captive: so that now the law is void, and I am escaped out of my prison and grave, that is to say, the law. Wherefore the law hath no right to accuse me, or to hold me any longer, for I am risen again.

It is necessary that men's consciences be diligently instructed, that they may understand the difference between the righteousness of the law and of grace. The righteousness of grace, or the liberty of conscience, doth in no wise pertain to the flesh. For the flesh may not be at liberty, but must remain in the grave, the prison, the couch: it must be in subjection to the law, and exercised by the Egyptians. But the Christian conscience must be dead to the law, that is to say, free from the law, and must have nothing at all to do with it. It is good to know this; for it helpeth very much to the comforting of poor afflicted consciences. Wherefore, when you see a man terrified and cast down with the sense and feeling of his sin, say unto him:

Brother, thou dost not rightly distinguish; thou placest the law in thy conscience, which should be placed in the flesh. Awake, arise up, and remember that thou must believe in Christ the conqueror of the law and sin. With this faith thou shalt mount up above and beyond the law, into that heaven of grace where

is no law nor sin. And albeit the law and sins do still remain, yet they pertain nothing to thee; for thou art dead to the law and sins.

These things are easily said: but blessed is he which knoweth how to lay sure hold on them in distress of conscience, that is, which can say when sin overweighteth him, and the law accuseth and terrifieth him: What is this to me, O law, that thou accusest me, and sayest that I have committed many sins? Indeed I grant that I have committed many sins, yea and yet still do commit sins daily without number. This toucheth me nothing: I am now deaf and cannot hear thee. Therefore thou talkest to me in vain, for I am dead unto thee. But if thou wilt needs dispute with me as touching my sins, get thee to my flesh and members my servants: teach them, exercise and crucify them, but trouble not me, not Conscience, I say, which am a lady and a queen, and have nothing to do with thee: for I am dead to thee, and now I live to Christ, with whom I am under another law, to wit the law of grace, which ruleth over sin and the law. By what means? By faith in Christ, as Paul declareth hereafter.

But this seemeth a strange and wonderful definition, that to live to the law is to die to God; and to die to the law, is to live to God. These two propositions are clean contrary to reason, and therefore no crafty sophister or law-worker can understand them. But learn thou the true understanding thereof. He that liveth to the law, that is, seeketh to be justified by the works of the law, is and remaineth a sinner: therefore he is dead and condemned. For the law cannot justify and save him, but accuseth, terrifieth, and killeth him. Therefore to live unto the law is to die unto God and contrariwise, to die to the law is to live unto God. Wherefore if thou wilt live unto God, thou must die to the law: but if thou wilt live to the law, thou shalt die to God. Now, to live unto God, is to be justified by grace or by faith for Christ's sake, without the law and works.

This is then the proper and true definition of a Christian: that he 'as the child of grace and remission of sins, which is under no law, but is above the law, sin, death and hell. And even as Christ is free from the grave, and Peter from the prison, so is a Christian free from the law. And such a respect there is between the justified conscience and the law, as is between Christ raised up from the grave, and the grave; and as is between Peter delivered from the prison, and the prison. And like as Christ by his death and resurrection is dead to the grave, so that it hath now no power over him, nor is able any longer to hold him, but the stone being rolled away, the seals broken, and the keepers astonished, he riseth again, and goeth away without any let; and as Peter by his deliverance is dead to the prison, and goeth whither he will; even so the conscience by grace is delivered from the law. 'So is every one that is born of the Spirit' (John 3:8). But the flesh knoweth not from whence this cometh, nor whither it goeth, for it cannot judge but after the law. But on the contrary, the Spirit saith: Let the law accuse me, let sin and death terrify me never so much, yet I do not therefore despair; for I have a law against the law, sin against sin, and death against death.

Therefore when I feel the remorse and sting of conscience for sin, I behold that brazen serpent Christ hanging upon the Cross. There I find another sin against my sin which accuseth and devoureth me. Now, this other sin (namely in the flesh of Christ) which taketh away the sin of the whole world, is almighty, it condemneth and swalloweth up my sin. So my sin, that it should not accuse and condemn me, is condemned by sin, that is, by Christ crucified: 'who is made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him' (1 Corinthians 5:21). In like manner I find death in my flesh, which afflicteth and killeth me: but I have in me a contrary death, which is the death of my death; and this death crucifieth and swalloweth up my death.

These things be not done by the law or works, but by Christ crucified; upon whose shoulders lie all the evils and miseries of mankind, the law, sin, death, the devil and hell: and all these do die in him, for by his death he hath killed them. But we must receive this benefit of Christ with a sure faith. For like as neither the law nor any work thereof is offered unto us, but Christ alone: so nothing is required of us but faith alone, whereby we apprehend Christ, and believe that our sins and our death are condemned and abolished in the sin and death of Christ.

Thus have we always most certain and sure arguments which necessarily conclude that justification cometh by faith alone. For how should the law and works avail to justification, seeing that Paul is so earnest both against the law and works, and saith plainly that we must be dead to the law, if we will live to God. But if we be dead to the law, and the law be dead to us, then hath it nothing to do with us. How then should it avail anything at all to our justification? Wherefore we must needs say, that we be pronounced righteous by grace alone, or by faith alone in Christ, without the law and works.

This the blind sophisters do not understand, and therefore they dream that faith justifieth not, except it do the works of charity. By this means faith which believeth in Christ, becometh unprofitable and of none effect; for the virtue of justifying is taken from it, except it be furnished with charity. But now let us set apart the law and charity until another time, and let us rest upon the principal point of this present matter; which is this, that Jesus Christ the Son of God died upon the cross, did bear in his body my sin, the law, death, the devil and hell. These invincible enemies and tyrants do oppress, vex and trouble me, and therefore I am careful how I may be delivered out of their hands, justified and saved. Here I find neither law, work, nor charity, which is able to deliver me from their tyranny. There is none but Christ only and alone, which taketh away the law, killeth my sin, destroyeth my death in his body, and by this means spoileth hell, judgeth and crucifieth the devil, and throweth him down into hell. To be brief, all the enemies which did before torment and oppress me, Christ Jesus hath brought to nought: he hath spoiled them and made a show of them openly, triumphing by himself over them (Colossians 2:15), in such sort, that they now rule and reign no more over me, but are constrained to serve me.

By this we may plainly see, that there is nothing here for us to do only it belongeth unto us, to hear that these things have been wrought and done in this sort, and by sure and confident faith to apprehend the same. And this is the true formed [and furnished] faith indeed. Now, when I have thus apprehended Christ by faith, and through him am dead to the law, justified from sin, delivered from death, the devil and hell, then I do good works, I love God, I give thanks to him, I exercise charity towards my neighbor.

But this charity or works following, do neither form nor adorn my faith, but my faith formeth and adorneth charity. This is our divinity; which seemeth strange and marvellous, or rather foolish, to carnal reason: to wit, that I am not only blind and deaf to the law, yea delivered and freed from the law, but also wholly dead unto the same.

This sentence of Paul: 'through the law I am dead to the law,' is full of consolation. Which if it may enter into a man in due season, and take sure hold in his heart with good understanding, it may so work, that it will make him able to stand against all dangers of death, and all terrors of conscience and sin, although they assail him, accuse him, and would drive him to desperation never so much. True it is, that every man is tempted: if not in his life, yet at his death. There, when the law accuseth him and sheweth unto him his sins, his conscience by and by saith: Thou hast sinned. If then thou take good hold of that which Paul here teacheth, thou wilt answer: I grant I have sinned. Then will God punish thee. Nay, he will not do so.

Why, doth not the law of God so say? I have nothing to do with that law.

Why so? Because I have another law which striketh this law dumb, that is to say, liberty. What liberty is that? The liberty of Christ, for by Christ I am utterly freed from the law. Therefore that law which is and remaineth a law to the wicked, is to me liberty, and bindeth that law which would condemn me; and by this means that law which would bind me and hold me captive, is now fast bound itself, and holden captive by grace and liberty, which is now my law; which saith to that accusing law: Thou shalt not hold this man bound and captive, or make him guilty, for he is mine; but I will hold thee captive, and bind thy hands that thou shalt not hurt him, for he liveth now unto Christ, and is dead unto thee.

This to do, is to dash out the teeth of the law, to wrest his sting and all his weapons from him, and to spoil him of all his force. And yet the same law notwithstanding continueth and remaineth still to the wicked and unbelievers: and to us also that be weak, so far forth as we lack faith, it continueth yet still in its force; here it hath its edge and teeth. But if I do believe in Christ, although sin drive me never so much to despair, yet staying upon this liberty which I have in Christ, I confess that I have sinned: but my sin which is a condemned sin, is in Christ which is a condemning sin. Now this condemning sin is stronger than that which is condemned: for it is justifying grace, righteousness, life and salvation.

Thus when I feel the terror of death, I say Thou hast nothing to do with me, O death; for I have another death which killeth thee my death, and that death which killeth is stronger than that which is killed.

Thus a faithful man by faith only in Christ, may raise up himself, and conceive such sure and sound consolation, that he shall not need to fear the devil, sin, death, or any evils. And although the devil set upon him with all might and main, and go about with all the terrors of the world to oppress him, yet he conceiveth good hope even in the midst thereof, and thus he saith: Sir Devil, I fear not thy threatenings and terrors, for there is one whose name is Jesus Christ, in whom I believe; he hath abolished the law, condemned sin, vanquished death, and destroyed hell; and he is thy tormentor, O Satan, for he hath bound thee and holdeth thee captive, to the end that thou shouldest no more hurt me, or any that believeth in him.

This faith the devil cannot overcome, but is overcome of it. 'For this (saith St. John) is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcometh the world, but he which believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' (1 John 5:4 f.).

Paul therefore, through a vehement zeal and indignation of spirit, calleth grace itself the law, which notwithstanding is an exceeding and inestimable liberty of grace which we have in Christ Jesus. Moreover he giveth this opprobrious name unto the law for our consolation, to let us understand that there is now a new name given unto it, for that it is not now alive any more, but dead and condemned. And here (which is a pleasant sight to behold) he bringeth forth the law, and setteth it before us as a thief and a robber which is already condemned and adjudged to death. For he describeth it as it were a prisoner having both hands and feet fast bound, and all his power taken away, so that it cannot exercise his tyranny, that is to say, it cannot accuse and condemn any more; and with this most pleasant sight, he maketh it contemptible to the conscience; so at now he which believeth in Christ, dare boldly and with a certain holy pride triumph over the law after this manner: I am a sinner; if thou canst do anything against me, O law, now do thy worst. So far off is it then, that the law is now terrible unto him which doth believe.

Since Christ is risen from death, why should he now fear the grave? Since Peter is delivered from the prison, why should he now fear it? When the maiden was at the point of death, then might she indeed fear the bed: but now being raised up, why should she fear it? In like manner, why should a Christian which verily possesseth Christ by faith, fear the law? True it is, that he feeleth the terrors of the law, but he is not overcome of them; but staying upon the liberty which he hath in Christ, he saith: I hear thee murmuring, O law, that thou wouldest accuse me and condemn me; but this troubleth me nothing at all; thou

art to me as the empty grave was unto Christ; for I see that thou art fast bound hand and foot; and this hath my law done. What law is that? Liberty, which is called the law, not because it bindeth me, but because it bindeth my law. The law of the Ten Commandments did bind me. But against that law I have another law, even the law of grace; which notwithstanding is to me no law, neither doth it bind me, but setteth me at liberty. And this is a law against that accusing and condemning law; which law it so bindeth, that it hath no power to bind me any more. So against my death which bindeth me, I have another death, that is to say, life, which quickeneth me in Christ; and this death looseth and freeth me from the bonds of my death, and with the same bonds bindeth my death. So death which bound me is now fast bound; which killed me, is now killed itself by death – that is to say, by very life itself.

Thus Christ, with most sweet names, is called my law, my sin, my death, against the law, against sin, against death: whereas in very deed he is nothing else but mere liberty, righteousness, life and everlasting salvation.

And for this cause he is made the law of the law, the sin of sin, the death of death, that he might redeem from the curse of the law, justify me and quicken me. So then, while Christ is the law, he is also liberty, while he is sin, he is righteousness, and while he is death, he is life. For in that he suffered the law to accuse him, sin to condemn him, and death to devour him, he abolished the law, he condemned sin, he destroyed death, he justified and saved me. So is Christ the poison of the law, sin and death, and the remedy for the obtaining of liberty, righteousness and everlasting life.

This manner of speech which Paul here useth, and is proper unto him alone, is very pleasant and full of consolation. Likewise in the seventh chapter to the Romans, he setteth the law of the spirit against the law of the members. And because this is a strange and marvellous manner of speaking, therefore it entereth more easily into the mind and sticketh faster in the memory. Moreover, when he saith: 'I through the law am dead to the law,' it soundeth more sweetly than if he should say: I through liberty am dead to the law. For he setteth before us, as it were, a certain picture, as if the law were fighting against the law. As though he should say: O law, if thou carat accuse me, terrify me, and bind me, I will set above and against thee another law, that is to say, another tyrant and tormentor, which shall accuse thee, bind thee and oppress thee. Indeed thou art my tormentor, but I have another tormentor, even Christ, which shall torment thee to death; and when thou art thus bound, tormented and suppressed, then am I at liberty. Likewise if the devil scourge me, I have a stronger devil, which shall in turn scourge him and overcome him. So then grace is a law, not to me, for it bindeth me not, but to my law; which this law so bindeth, that it cannot hurt me any more.

Thus Paul goeth about to draw us wholly from the beholding of the law, sin, death, and all other evils, and to bring us unto Christ, that there we might behold this joyful conflict: to wit, the law fighting against the law, that it may be to me liberty; sin against sin, that it may be to me righteousness; death against death, that I may obtain life; Christ fighting against the devil, that I may be the child of God; and destroying hell, that I may enjoy the kingdom of heaven.

That I might live unto God

That is to say, that I might be alive in the sight of God. Ye see then that there is no life unless ye be without the law, yea unless ye be utterly dead unto the law, I mean in conscience. Notwithstanding, in the mean season (as I have often said) so long as the body liveth, the flesh must be exercised with laws, and vexed with exactions and penalties of laws. But the inward man, not subject to the law, but delivered and freed from it, is a lively, just and holy person, not of himself or in his own substance, but in Christ, because he believeth in him, as followeth.

I am crucified with Christ

This he addeth, to declare that the law is a devourer of the law. Not only, saith he, I am dead to the law through the law, that I may live to God, but also I am crucified with Christ. But Christ is Lord over the law, because he is crucified and dead unto the law: therefore am I also lord over the law; for I likewise am crucified and dead unto the law, forasmuch as I am crucified and dead with Christ. By what means? By grace and faith. When through this faith I am crucified and dead unto the law, then the law loseth all its power which it had over me, even as it hath lost all its power which it had over Christ. Wherefore, even as Christ himself was crucified to the law, sin, death and the devil, so that they have no further power over him; even so I through faith being now crucified with Christ in spirit, am crucified and dead to the law, sin, death and the devil, so that they have no further power over me, but are now crucified and dead unto me.

Paul speaketh not here of crucifying by imitation or example, (for to follow the example of Christ, is also to be crucified with him), which crucifying belongeth to the flesh. Whereof Peter speaketh (1 Peter 2:21): 'Christ suffered for you,' saith he, 'leaving unto you an example that ye should follow his steps.' But he speaketh here of that high crucifying, whereby sin, the devil and death are crucified in Christ, and not in me. Here Christ doth all himself alone. But I believing in Christ, am by faith crucified also with Christ, so that all these things are crucified and dead also unto me.

Nevertheless I live

I speak not so, saith he, of my death and crucifying, as though I now lived not yea I live, for I am quickened by his death and crucifying through the which I die; that is, forasmuch as by grace and faith I am delivered from the law, sin and

death, I now live indeed. Wherefore that crucifying and that death whereby I am crucified and dead to the law, sin, death and all evils, is to me resurrection and life. For Christ crucifieth the devil, he killeth death, condemneth sin, and bindeth the law: and I believing this, am delivered from the law, etc. The law therefore is bound, dead and crucified unto me, and I again am bound, dead, and crucified unto it. Wherefore even by this death and crucifying, that is to say, by this grace or liberty, I now live.

Here (as before I have said) we must observe Paul's manner of speaking.

He saith that we are dead and crucified to the law, whereas in very deed the law itself is dead and crucified unto us. But this manner of speech he useth here of purpose, that it may be the more sweet and comfortable unto us. For the law (which notwithstanding continueth, liveth and reigneth in the whole world, which also accuseth and condemneth all men) is crucified and dead unto those only which believe in Christ therefore to them alone belongeth this glory, that they are dead to the law, sin, etc.

Yet now not I

That is to say, not in mine own person, nor in mine own substance. Here he plainly sheweth by what means he liveth; and he teacheth what true Christian righteousness is, namely, that righteousness whereby Christ liveth in us, and not that which is in our person. Therefore when we speak of Christian righteousness, we must utterly reject the person. For if I hold to the person, or speak thereof, then there is made of the person, whether I will or no, a worker subject to the law. But here must Christ and my conscience become one body, so that nothing remain in my sight but Christ crucified and raised from the dead. But if I behold myself only and set Christ aside, I am gone. For by and by I fall into this cogitation: Christ is in heaven, and thou art on the earth; how shalt thou now come unto him?

Forsooth I will live holily, and do that which the law requireth, so shall I enter into life. Here returning to myself, and considering what I am, and what I ought to be, and what I am bound to do, I lose the sight of Christ, who alone is my righteousness and life. Who being lost, there is no counsel nor succor now remaining, but certain desperation and destruction must needs follow.

And this is a common evil among men. For such is our misery, that when temptation or death cometh, by and by setting Christ aside, we consider our own life past, and what we have done. Here, except we be raised up again by faith, we must needs perish. Wherefore we must learn in such conflicts and terrors of conscience (forgetting ourselves and setting the law, our life past, and all our works apart, which drive us to the consideration of ourselves only) to turn our eyes wholly to the brazen serpent Jesus Christ crucified, and assuredly believe that he is our righteousness and life, nor fearing the threatenings and terrors of

the law, sin, death, the wrath and judgment of God. For Christ, on whom our eyes are fixed, in whom we live, who also liveth in us, is Lord and conqueror of the law, sin, death and all evils: in whom most certain and sure consolation is set forth unto us, and victory given.

Nevertheless I live, yet not I now, but Christ liveth in me

Where he saith, 'Nevertheless I live,' he speaketh it, as it were in his own person. Therefore he by and by correcteth himself, saying: 'Yet not I now.'

That is to say, I live not now in my own person, 'but Christ liveth in me.'

Indeed the person liveth, but not in himself, nor for anything that is in him. But who is that 'I' of whom he saith, 'Yet not I'? This 'I' is he which hath the law, and is bound to do the works thereof; who also is a certain person separate from Christ. This person Paul rejecteth; for 'I' as a person separate from Christ belongeth to death and hell. Therefore he saith: 'Now not I, but Christ liveth in me,' Christ is my form [my furniture and perfection] adorning and beautifying my faith, as the color or the clear light do garnish and beautify the wall. (Thus are we constrained grossly to set forth this matter. For we cannot spiritually conceive, that Christ is so nearly joined and united unto us, as the light or whiteness are unto the wall.) Christ therefore, saith he, thus joined and united unto me and abiding in me, liveth this life in me which now I live; yea Christ himself is this life which now I live. Therefore Christ and I in this behalf are both one.

Now Christ living in me abolisheth the law, condemneth sin and destroyeth death; for it cannot be, but at his presence all these must needs vanish away. For Christ is everlasting peace, consolation, righteousness and life; and to these the terror of the law, heaviness of mind, sin, hell and death, must needs give place. So Christ living and abiding in me, taketh away and swalloweth up all evils which vex and afflict me. This union or conjunction, then, is the cause that I am delivered from the terror of the law and sin, am taken out of myself, and translated into Christ and his kingdom, which is a kingdom of grace, righteousness, peace, joy, life, salvation, and eternal glory. Whilst I thus abide and dwell in him, what evil is there that can hurt me?

In the mean season the old man abideth without, and is subject to the law: but as concerning justification, Christ and I must be entirely conjoined and united together, so that he may live in me and I in him. And this is a wonderful manner of speech. Now because Christ liveth in me, therefore whatsoever of grace, righteousness, life, peace and salvation is in me, it is all his, and yet notwithstanding the same is mine also, by that inseparable union and conjunction which is through faith; by the which Christ and I are made as it were one body in spirit. Forasmuch then as Christ liveth in me, it followeth that as there must needs be present with him, grace, righteousness, life and eternal salvation; so the law, sin, and death must needs be absent: yea the law must be crucified,

swallowed up and abolished of the law, sin of sin, death of death, the devil of the devil. Thus Paul goeth about to draw us wholly away from ourselves, from the law and works, and to transplant us into Christ and the faith of Christ; so that in the matter of justification we should think upon nothing else but grace, separating the same far from the law and works, which in this matter ought to have no place.

Paul hath his peculiar phrase or kind of speech, which is not after the manner of men, but divine and heavenly, nor used of the Evangelists or of the rest of the Apostles, saving only of John, who is also wont sometimes so to speak. And if Paul had not first used this phrase, and set forth the same unto us in plain words, the very saints themselves durst not have used it. For it seemeth a very strange and monstrous manner of speaking thus to say: I live, I live not; I am dead, I am not dead; I am a sinner, I am not a sinner; I have the law, I have not the law. Which phrase is sweet and comfortable to all those that believe in Christ. For in that they behold themselves, they have both the law and sin; but in that they look unto Christ, they are dead to the law, and have no sin. If therefore in the matter of justification thou separate the person of Christ from thy person, then art thou in the law, thou abidest in it, and livest in thyself and not in Christ, and so thou are condemned of the law, and dead before God. For thou hast that faith which (as the sophisters dream) is furnished with charity. Thus I speak for example's sake. For there was never anyone found that was saved by this faith. And therefore what things soever the popish sophisters have written touching this faith, are nothing else but vain toys and mere deceits of Satan. But let us grant that such there be as have this faith: yet are they not therefore righteous. For they have but an historical faith concerning Christ, which the devil also and all the wicked have.

Faith therefore must be purely taught: namely, that by faith thou art so entirely and nearly joined unto Christ, that he and thou are made as it were one person; so that thou mayst boldly say: I am now one with Christ, that is to say, Christ's righteousness, victory and life are mine. And again, Christ may say: I am that sinner, that is, his sins, death etc. are mine, because he is united and joined unto me, and I unto him. For by faith we are so joined together, that we are become one flesh and one bone, as Ephesians 5:30: 'We are the members of Christ's body, of his flesh and of his bones.' So that this faith doth couple Christ and me more near together, than the husband is coupled to his wife. This faith therefore is not an idle quality, but the excellency thereof is such, that it utterly confoundeth these foolish dreams of the sophisters touching their formed faith and charity, their merits, works, and worthiness. These things I would gladly set forth more fully, if by any means I could.

Hitherto we have declared this to be the first argument of Paul, that either Christ must needs be the minister of sin, or else the law doth not justify.

When he had finished this argument, he set forth himself for an example, saying that he was dead unto that old law by a certain new law. Now he

answereth two objections which might have been made against him. His first answer is against the cavillations of the proud, and the offense of the weak. For when remission of sins is freely preached, then do the malicious by and by slander this preaching, as Romans 3:8: 'Let us do evil, that good may come.' For these fellows, as soon as they hear that we are not justified by the law, forthwith do maliciously conclude and say: Why then, let us reject the law. Again, if grace do there abound, say they, where sin doth abound, let us then abound in sin, that we may be justified, and that grace may the more abound. These are the malicious and proud spirits which spitefully and wittingly slander the Scriptures and sayings of the holy Ghost, even as they slandered Paul whilst the Apostles lived, to their own confusion and condemnation, as it is said, 2 Peter 3:16.

Moreover, the weak, which are not malicious, are offended when they hear that the law and good works are not to be done as necessary to justification. These must be helped, and must be instructed how good works do not justify how they ought to be done, how not to be done.

These ought to be done, not as the cause, but as the fruits of righteousness: and when we are made righteous, we ought to do them; but not contrariwise, to the end that when we are unrighteous, we may be made righteous. The tree maketh the apple, but not the apple the tree.

He said before 'I am dead' etc. Here the presumptuous and malicious might soon take occasion to cavil after this manner: What sayest thou Paul? Art thou dead? How then dost thou speak? How dost thou write?

The weak also might soon be offended, and say unto him: What art thou Paul? Do we not see that thou art living, and dost such things as pertain to this life? To this he answereth: 'I live indeed, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' There is then a double life. The first is mine, which is natural or animal; the second is the life of another, that is to say, the life of Christ in me. As touching my natural life I am dead, and now I live another life. I live not now as Paul, but Paul is dead. Who is it then that liveth? The Christian. Paul therefore, as he liveth in himself, is wholly dead through the law; but as he liveth in Christ, or rather as Christ liveth in him, he liveth by another life; for Christ speaketh in him, worketh in him, and exerciseth all the operations of life in him. This cometh not now of the life of Paul, but of the life of the Christian. Therefore thou malicious spirit, where I say that I am dead, now slander my words no more. And thou that art weak, be not offended, but distinguish and divide this matter rightly. For, as I said, there are two lives: to wit, my natural life, and the life of another. By mine own life I live not: for if I did, the law would have dominion over me, and hold me in captivity. To the end therefore that it should not hold me in captivity and bondage, I am dead to it by another law and this death purchaseth unto me the life of another, even the life of Christ; which life is not mine by nature, but is given unto me by Christ through faith.

Secondly, this objection might also have been made against Paul: What sayest thou Paul? Dost thou not live by thine own life, or in thine own flesh, but in Christ? We see thy flesh, but we see not Christ. Wouldst thou then delude us by thine enchantments, that we should not see thee present in flesh, living as thou didst before, having the five senses and doing all things in corporal life as others do? He answereth:

And that which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the son of God

As if he should say: True it is that I live in the flesh, but this life, whatsoever it is, I esteem as no life; for in very deed it is no true life, but a shadow of life, under the which another liveth, that is to say, Christ, who is my true life indeed: which life thou seest not, but only hearest, as 'thou hearest the sound of the wind but knowest not whence it cometh or whither it goeth' (John 3:8). Even so thou seest me speaking, eating, laboring, sleeping, and doing other things, and yet thou seest not my life.

For this time of life which I now live, I live indeed in the flesh, but not of the flesh, or according to the flesh, but in faith, of faith, and according to faith. Paul then denieth not that he liveth in the flesh, because he doth all things that belong to a natural man. He useth also carnal things, as meat, drink, apparel, and such like, which without doubt is to live in the flesh; but he saith that this is not his life: and although he useth carnal things, yet he liveth not through them, as the world liveth through the flesh and after the flesh: for it neither knoweth nor hopeth for any life besides this.

Therefore, saith he, this life which I now live in the flesh, whatsoever it is, I live in the faith of the Son of God. For this word which I now corporally speak, is the word not of the flesh, but of the Holy Ghost, and of Christ.

This sight which goeth in or cometh out at mine eyes, proceedeth not of the flesh, that is to say, it is not governed of the flesh, but of the Holy Ghost. So my hearing cometh not of the flesh, although it be in the flesh, but it is in and of the Holy Ghost. A Christian speaketh none other but chaste, sober, and holy things, which pertain unto Christ, to the glory of God and the profit of his neighbor. These things come not of the flesh, neither are done according to the flesh, and yet are they in the flesh. For I cannot teach, write, pray, or give thanks, but with those instruments of the flesh, which are necessary to the accomplishing of these works: and yet notwithstanding these works proceed not of the flesh, but are given by God from above. In like manner I behold a woman, but with a chaste eye, not lusting after her. This beholding cometh not of the flesh, although it be in the flesh, because the eyes are the carnal instruments of this sight; but the chasteness of this sight cometh from heaven.

Thus a Christian useth the world and all creatures, so that there is no difference between him and the infidel. For in their apparel, in their feeding, in

their hearing, seeing, speaking, gestures, countenances and outward appearance they are like, as Paul saith also of Christ: 'In outward appearance he was found as a man' (Philippians 2:7). Yet notwithstanding there is great difference. For I live in the flesh, I grant, but I live not of myself; but that which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God. This which I now speak, springeth out of another fountain than that which thou heardest of me before. Paul before his conversion spake with the same voice and tongue wherewith he spake afterwards; but his voice and his tongue were then blasphemous, and therefore he could speak nothing else but blasphemies and abominations against Christ and his Church. After he was converted he had the same flesh, the same voice and tongue which he had before, and nothing was changed: but his voice and his tongue then uttered no blasphemies, but spiritual and heavenly words, to wit, thanksgiving and the praise of God: which came of faith and the Holy Ghost. So then I live in the flesh, but not of the flesh or after the flesh, but in the faith of the Son of God.

Hereby we may plainly see whence this other and spiritual life cometh which the natural man doth in no wise perceive, for he knoweth not what manner of life this is. He heareth the sound of the wind, but whence it cometh, or whither it goeth he knoweth not. He heareth the voice of the spiritual man, he knoweth his face, his manners, and his gestures; but he seeth not whence those words, which are not now wicked and blasphemous as before, but holy and godly, or whence those motions and actions do come. For this life is in the heart by faith, where the flesh is killed, and Christ reigneth with his Holy Spirit, who now seeth, heareth, speaketh, worketh, suffereth, and doth all other things in him, although the flesh do resist. To conclude, this life is not of the flesh, although it be in the flesh; but of Christ the Son of God, whom the Christian possesseth by faith.

Who loved me, and gave himself for me

Here have ye the true manner of justification set before your eyes, and a perfect example of the assurance of faith. He that can with a firm and constant faith say these words with Paul: 'I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,' is happy indeed. And with these words Paul taketh away the whole righteousness of the law and works, as afterwards we will declare. We must therefore diligently weigh and consider these words: 'The Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me.' It was not I then that first loved the Son of God, and delivered myself for him; as the sophisters dream that they love the Son of God, and deliver themselves for him. For they teach that a man, *ex puris naturalibus*, that is, of his own pure natural strength, is able to do meritorious works before grace, and love God and Christ above all things. These fellows prevent the love of God and Christ; for they do that is in them, say they; that is, they become monks, they do not only fulfill the commandments, but also they observe the counsels, they do the works of supererogation, and sell their superfluous merits to laymen, and so, as they dream, they give themselves for Christ, and thereby save both themselves and others, turning the words of Paul:

'Which loved me' etc., clean contrary, and saying: We have loved Christ and given ourselves for him. Thus while the wicked, being puffed up with the wisdom of the flesh, imagine that they do what in them lieth, they love God, they deliver themselves for Christ: what do they else but abolish the Gospel, deride, deny, and blaspheme Christ, yea, spit upon him and tread him under foot? They confess in words that he is a justifier and a savior: yet in very deed they take from him the power both to justify and save, and give the same to their own will-works, their ceremonies and devotions. This is to live in their own righteousness and works and not in the faith of the Son of God.

'To do what in him lieth.'

Wherefore this is not the true way to attain justification, that thou shouldst begin to do that, which in thee lieth: as the sophisters and school doctors do teach, which affirm that if a man do what in him lieth, God will infallibly give unto him his grace. Which proposition is an article of faith with them.

And to shew that they understand no whit of the doctrine of Paul and the Gospel, they say that this clause: 'do what in him lieth,' ought not to be straitly urged, but it sufficeth if it be taken as a physical point, and not as a mathematical and indivisible, which cannot exist. That is to say, it is enough if we do those things which may be approved by the judgment of any good man: for then grace shall surely follow, not indeed by reason of the merit of congruence in itself, but by reason of the infallibility of God, who is so good and just, that he must needs give grace as a recompense for good works, etc. And hereof cometh this verse: – Ultra posse viri non vult Deus ulla requiri.

That is, God will no more require of man, Than of himself perform he can.

Indeed this is a good saying if it be used rightly, and in place convenient that is, in the government of commonweals or families, or in things natural. As for example: if I being in the kingdom of reason, do govern a family, build a house, or execute the office of a magistrate, doing as much as I am able, or that which in me lieth, therein I am excused. For this kingdom hath its bounds and limits: to the which also these sayings ('to do what in us lieth,' or 'to do as much as we are able') do properly pertain. But the sophisters apply these sayings to the spiritual kingdom, wherein a man can do nothing else but sin: for he is 'sold under sin' (Romans 7:14). But in external things (such I mean as pertain to civil and household government) man is not a servant, but a lord of these corporal affairs. Wherefore the sophisters have done wickedly in applying these sentences to the Church, which properly pertain to the government of commonweals and families.

For the kingdom of man's reason and the spiritual kingdom must be separate far asunder.

Moreover, they say that nature is corrupt, but the qualities of nature notwithstanding are sound and uncorrupt, which also they attribute even unto devils. Upon this ground they reason after this manner: if the natural qualities of man be sound and uncorrupt, then is his understanding pure and his will good axed uncorrupt, and so consequently all the qualities of nature are perfect in him. To know these things, it is necessary for you, that the purity of the doctrine of faith may be preserved. Where they say then that the natural qualities of man are sound and uncorrupt, I do grant this. But if thereof they do infer that a man is able of himself to fulfill the law, to love God, etc., then I deny the consequence; and here I make a distinction between the natural and the spiritual qualities, and I say that the spiritual qualities are not sound, but corrupt, yet are utterly quenched through sin both in man and devil, so that there is in them nothing else but corrupt understanding and a will continually striving against the will of God, which thinketh nothing else but that which is against God. Notwithstanding I grant that the natural qualities are uncorrupt. But what qualities are they? That a man drowned in ungodliness, and a bondslave of Satan, hath will, reason, free choice, and power notwithstanding to build a house, to execute the office of a magistrate, to guide a ship, and to do such other things as are subject unto man, according to Gen 1. For these things are not taken from him: generation, civil government, household management, are not done away, but they are confirmed by these sayings; which the sophisters have falsely applied to the spiritual qualities. They took them, no doubt, from the Fathers, but because they did not well understand than, they wrested them to things spiritual, and thus mingled and confounded things civil and ecclesiastical. Our part therefore is to restore these things to their purity, and to remove these scandals from the Church. We do not then deny but that these sentences are true in the corporal kingdom: but if ye bring them into the spiritual kingdom and the presence of God, I utterly deny them; for there, as I said, we are clean overwhelmed and drowned in sins.

Whatsoever is in our will is evil; whatsoever is in our understanding is error. Wherefore in matters pertaining to God, man hath nothing but darkness, errors, malice, and perverseness both of will and understanding.

How then shall he work well, fulfill the law, love God, etc.?

Wherefore Paul saith here that Christ first began and not we. 'He, even he (saith Paul) loved me and gave himself for me.' As if he said: He found in me no good will or right understanding; but this good Lord had mercy upon me. He saw me to be nothing else but wicked, going astray, contemning God, and flying from him more and more; yea rebelling against God, taken, led, and carried away captive of the devil. Thus of his mere mercy preventing my reason, my will, and my understanding, he loved me, and so loved me, that he gave himself for me, to the end that I might be freed from the law, sin, the devil, and death.

Again, these words: 'The Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me,' are mighty thunderings and lightnings from heaven against the righteousness of

the law and the doctrine of works. So great and so horrible wickedness, error, darkness and ignorance was in my will and understanding, that it was impossible for me to be ransomed by any other means than by such an inestimable price. Why do we then vaunt of the integrity and soundness of nature, of the rule of reason, of freewill, and of doing what in us lieth? Why do I offer, to pacify the wrath of God (who as Moses saith, 'is a consuming fire,' Deuteronomy 4:24), this my rotten stubble and straw, yea horrible sins, and claim of him to reward me with grace and everlasting life for them, since here I learn such wickedness to lie lurking in my nature, that the whole world and all creatures thereto were not able to countervail the indignation of God, but that the very Son of God himself must needs be delivered for the same?

But let us consider well this price, and let us behold this captive delivered (as Paul saith) 'for me,' the Son of God I mean, and we shall see him without all comparison to exceed and excel all creatures. What wilt thou do when thou hearest the Apostle say that such an inestimable price was given for thy sins? Wilt thou bring thy cowl, thy shaven crown, thy chastity, thy obedience, thy poverty? What shall all these do? Yea, what shall the law of Moses avail, and the works of the law? What shall all the works of all men, and all the sufferings of the martyrs profit thee? What is the obedience of all the holy angels in comparison of the Son of God delivered, and that most shamefully, even to the death of the Cross, so that there was no drop of his most precious blood, but it was shed, and that for thy sins? If thou didst but rightly consider this price, thou shouldst hold as accursed all these ceremonies, vows, works, and merits before grace and after, and throw them all down to hell. For it is an intolerable and horrible blasphemy to imagine that there is any work whereby thou shouldst presume to pacify God, since thou seest that there is nothing which is able to pacify him but this inestimable price, even the death and blood of the Son of God, one drop whereof is more precious than the whole world.

For me

Who is this 'me'? Even I wretched and damnable sinner, so dearly beloved of the Son of God, that he gave himself for me. If I then through works or merits of congruence and worthiness could have loved the Son of God, and so come unto him, what needed he to deliver himself for me? Hereby it appeareth how coldly the Papists handled, yea how they utterly neglected the holy Scriptures, and the doctrine of faith. For if they had considered but only these words, that it behoved the Son of God to be given for me, it had been impossible that any order or sect should have sprung up amongst them. For faith would by and by have answered: Why dost thou choose this kind of life, this religious order, this work? Dost thou this to please God, or to be justified thereby? Dost thou not hear, O thou wretch, that the Son of God shed his blood for thee? This true faith in Christ would easily have withstood all manner of sects.

Wherefore I say (as I have oftentimes said) that there is no remedy against sects, or power to resist them, but this only article of Christian righteousness. If we lose this article, it is impossible for us to withstand any errors or sects; as we may see at this day in the fantastical spirits, the Anabaptists and the Sacramentarians: who being fallen away from this article of justification, will never cease to fall, err, and seduce others until they come to the fullness of all iniquity. There is no doubt, but they will raise up innumerable sects, and still devise new works. But what are all these things (though they have never so goodly a shew of holiness), if ye compare them to the death and blood of the Son of God, who gave himself for me? Consider well, I pray you, who this Son of God is, how glorious he is, how mighty he is. What is heaven and earth in comparison of him? Let all the Papists and all the authors of sects, yea thought the whole world take their part, be thrown down into hell, with all their righteousness, works and merits, rather than the truth of the Gospel should be blemished, and the glory of Christ perish. What mean they then to brag so much of works and merits? If I being a wretch and a damned sinner could be redeemed by any other price, what needed the Son of God. to be given for me? But because there was no other price either in heaven or in earth, but Christ the Son of God, therefore it was most necessary that he should be delivered for me. Moreover, this he did of inestimable love; for Paul saith 'which loved me.'

Wherefore these words: 'which loved me' etc., are full of faith. And he that can utter this little word 'me,' and apply it unto himself with a true and a constant faith as Paul did, shall be a good disputer with Paul against the law. For he delivered neither sheep, ox, gold, nor silver, but even God himself entirely and wholly, 'for me,' even for 'me,' I say, a miserable and wretched sinner. Now therefore, in that the Son of God was thus delivered to death for me, I take comfort and apply this unto myself. And this manner of applying is the very true force and power of faith. He that worketh speaketh not thus: 'Christ loved me,' etc.

These words (which are the pure preaching of grace and Christian righteousness indeed) Paul setteth against the righteousness of the law. As if he said: be it so that the law is a heavenly doctrine, and hath also his glory; yet notwithstanding it loved not me, nor gave itself for me; yea, it accuseth me, terrifieth me, and driveth me to desperation. But I have now another which hath delivered me from the terrors of the law, sin, and death, and hath brought me into liberty, the righteousness of God, and eternal life.

Who is called the Son of God, which loveth me and giveth himself for me; to whom be praise and glory for ever.

Faith therefore, as I have said, embraceth and wrappeth in itself Christ Jesus the Son of God, delivered to-death for us, as Paul here teacheth, who being apprehended by faith, giveth unto us righteousness and life. For Christ is the Son of God, which of mere love gave himself for our redemption. And with these

words Paul setteth out most lively the priesthood and offices of Christ: which are, to pacify God, to make intercession for sinners, to offer up himself a sacrifice for their sins, to redeem, to instruct, and to comfort them, etc. Let us learn therefore to give a true definition of Christ, not as the school-divines and meritmongers do, which make him a new lawgiver, who abolishing the old law hath established a new. To these Christ is nothing else but an exactor and a tyrant. But let us define him as Paul here doth: namely, that he is the Son of God, who not for our desert or any righteousness of ours, but of his own free mercy and love, offered up himself a sacrifice for us sinners, that he might sanctify us for ever.

Christ then is no Moses, no exactor, no giver of laws, but a giver of grace, a Savior, and one that is full of mercy: briefly, he is nothing else but infinite mercy and goodness, freely given and bountifully giving unto us. And thus shall you paint out Christ in his right colors. If you suffer him any otherwise to be painted out unto you, when temptation and trouble cometh you shall soon be overthrown. Now, as it is the greatest knowledge and cunning that Christians can have, thus to define Christ; so of all things it is the hardest. For I myself even in this great light of the Gospel, wherein I have been so long exercised, have much ado to hold this definition of Christ which Paul here giveth so deeply hath the doctrine and pestilent opinion that Christ is a lawgiver, entered even as it were oil into my bones.

Ye young men therefore are in this case much more happy than we that are old. For ye are not infected with these pernicious errors, wherein I have been so nusled and so drowned even from my youth, that at the very hearing of the name of Christ my heart hath trembled and quaked for fear: for I was persuaded that he was a severe judge. Wherefore it is to me a double travail and trouble to correct and reform this evil: first to forget, to condemn, and to resist this old grounded error, that Christ is a lawgiver and a judge; for it always returneth and plucketh me back: then to plant in my heart a new and a true persuasion of Christ that he is a justifier and a Savior. Ye (I say) that are young, may learn with much less difficulty to know Christ purely and sincerely, if ye will. Wherefore if any man feel himself oppressed with heaviness and anguish of heart, he must not impute it unto Christ, although it come under the name of Christ, but unto the devil, who oftentimes cometh under the color of Christ, and transformeth himself into an angel of light.

Let us learn therefore to put a difference between Christ and a lawgiver, not only in word but also in deed and in practice; that when the devil shall come under the shadow of Christ, and shall go about to trouble us under his name, we may know him not to be Christ, but a very fiend indeed. For Christ when he cometh, is nothing else but joy and sweetness to a trembling and broken heart, as here Paul witnesseth, who setteth him out with this most sweet and comfortable title when he saith: 'Which loved ME, and gave himself for me.' Christ therefore in very deed is a lover of those which are in trouble or anguish, in sin and death, and such a lover as gave himself for us: who is also our High

Priest, that is to say, a mediator between God and us miserable and wretched sinners. What could be said, I pray you, more sweet and comfortable than this? Now, if these things be true (as they are indeed most true, or else the Gospel must be nothing but a fable), then are we not justified by the righteousness of the law: but much less by our own righteousness.

Read therefore with great vehemency these words 'ME' and 'FOR ME,' and so inwardly practice with thyself that thou with a sure faith mayst conceive and print this 'ME' in thy heart, and apply it unto thyself, not doubting but that thou art of the number of those to whom this 'ME' belongeth: also that Christ hath not only loved Peter and Paul and given himself for them, but that the same grace also which is comprehended in this 'ME,' as well pertaineth and cometh unto us, as unto them. For as we cannot deny but that we are all sinners, and are constrained to say that through the sin of Adam we are all lost, were made the enemies of God, subject to the wrath and judgment of God, and guilty of eternal death (for this do all terrified hearts feel and confess, and more indeed than they should do); so can we not deny but that Christ died for our sins, that he might make us righteous, For he died not to justify the righteous, but the unrighteous, and to make them the friends and children of God, and inheritors of all heavenly gifts. Therefore, when I feel and confess myself to be a sinner through Adam's transgression, why should I not say that I am made righteous through the righteousness of Christ, especially when I hear that he loved me, and gave himself for me? This did Paul most steadfastly believe, and therefore he speaketh these words with so great vehemency and full assurance. Which may he grant unto us, in some part at the least, who hath loved us, and given himself for us. Amen.

I do not abrogate or reject the grace of God

Now he prepareth a way to the second argument of this Epistle. And here ye must diligently consider, that to seek to be justified by the works of the law, is to reject the grace of God. But, I pray you, what can be more execrable or horrible, than to reject the grace of God, and to refuse to be justified by faith in Christ? It is enough and too much already that we are ungodly and transgressors of all the commandments of God; and yet we commit moreover the very sin of sins, in that we do so confidently refuse the grace of God and remission of sins offered unto us by Christ. This blasphemy is more horrible than can be expressed. There is no sin which Paul and the other Apostles did so much detest, as the contempt of grace and denial of Christ; and yet there is no sin more common. Hereof it cometh, that Paul above the rest, doth so sharply inveigh against Antichrist, for that he taketh away grace and denieth the benefit of Christ our High Priest, who offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins. Now, thus to deny Christ, what is it else but to spit in his face, to tread him under foot, to set himself in his place, and to say; I will justify thee and I will save thee? By what means? By masses, pilgrimages, pardons, merits and such like. We see then how proudly Anti-Christ hath lift himself against and above God, and set himself in the place of Christ,

rejected the grace of God, and denied the faith. For this is his doctrine: Faith availeth nothing (saith he) unless it be joined with works. And by this false and detestable doctrine he hath defaced, darkened, and utterly buried the benefit of Christ, and in the stead of the grace of Christ and his kingdom, he hath established the doctrine of works and the kingdom of ceremonies, and hath confirmed the same with mere trifles and doting dreams, and by this means he hath wrested the whole world out of Christ's hands (who alone ought to reign in the conscience), and hath thrown it down headlong into hell.

Hereby we may easily understand what it is to reject and refuse the grace of God, even to seek to be justified by the law. Now who hath ever heard that a man by keeping of the law, rejecteth grace? Do we then sin in keeping of the law? No forsooth. But we despise grace when we observe the law to this end, that we may be justified through it. The law is good, holy, and profitable, and yet it justifieth not. He then that keepeth the law to be justified thereby, rejecteth grace, denieth Christ, despiseth his sacrifice, and will not be saved by this inestimable price, but will satisfy for his sins through the righteousness of the law, or deserve grace by his own righteousness. And this man blasphemeth and despiseth the grace of God.

Now, what an horrible thing is it to say that any man should be so devilish as to despise the grace and mercy of God! And yet notwithstanding all the world doth so: albeit it cannot abide that any man should so judge of it, but will seem to do high service and honor unto God. Now followeth the second argument.

For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain

Here again I admonish you, that Paul speaketh not of the ceremonial law only, as the sophisters do continually dream. This error did Origen and Jerome first set forth, which taught most perniciously in this matter, and all the school-doctors did follow them; and at this day Erasmus doth approve and confirm their error. But the godly ought utterly to reject the doting dreams of these men, which do so corrupt Paul with their foolish glosses; for they speak of a thing whereof they never had any knowledge or experience. As if, forsooth, the ceremonies also were not good and holy! For without doubt, the ordination of the priesthood, circumcision, the sacrifices, the worship and sense of God, and such like holy works, were all ceremonies. Therefore he speaketh of the whole law.

These words of Paul ought diligently to be weighed and considered in this wise. Is it true that Christ suffered death or not? Again, did he suffer in vain or not? Here we are constrained to answer, except we be stark mad, that he suffered in very deed, and that he suffered not in vain, nor for himself, but for us. If then he suffered not in vain, it followeth of necessity that righteousness cometh not by the law.

Take now therefore both laws, the ceremonial law and the moral, or the Ten Commandments, and imagine that thou art come so far by the merit of congruence, that the Spirit is given unto thee, and that thou hast charity, (although this were something monstrous, and is nowhere to be found in the nature of things); but imagine, I say, that by doing what in thee lieth, thou obtainest grace, art righteous, possessest the Spirit.

Whence cometh all this? Of the merit of congruence? Then hast thou no need of Christ, but for thee he is unprofitable and hath died in vain.

Then do thou take even the law of the Ten Commandments itself, wherein is commanded the highest worship and service of God (that is to say: the fear of God, faith in God, the love of God, and the love of our neighbor), and shew me any man that hath been justified thereby; yet it remaineth true notwithstanding, that Christ died in vain. For he that is justified by the law of the Ten Commandments, hath power in himself to obtain righteousness, since by putting no impediment and by doing what in him lieth, he infallibly deserveth grace and the Holy Ghost is poured into him, so that he is able to love God and his neighbor. This being granted, it must needs follow that Christ died in vain. For what need of Christ which loveth him and giveth himself for him, hath he that without Christ is able by the merit of congruence to obtain grace, and then to work well and deserve eternal life by the went of worthiness, or at the least to be justified by his keeping of the law? Then let Christ be taken away with all his benefits, for he is utterly unprofitable, But why was he born? Why was he crucified? Why did he suffer? Why was he made my High Priest, loving me and giving 'himself an inestimable sacrifice for me? In vain, no doubt, and to no purpose at all, if righteousness cometh by no other means than the sophisters teach: for then I find righteousness in the law or in myself, apart from grace and Christ.

Is this horrible blasphemy, to be suffered or dissembled, that the Divine Majesty, not sparing his own dear Son, but delivering him up to death for us all, should not do all these things seriously and in good earnest, but as it were in sport? Before I would admit this blasphemy, I would not only that the holiness of all the Papists and meritmongers, but also of all the saints and holy angels should be thrown into the bottom of hell, and condemned with the devil. Mine eyes shall behold nothing else but Christ the Son of God. He ought to be such a treasure unto me, that all other things should be but dung in comparison of him. He ought to be such a light unto me, that when I have apprehended him by faith, I should not know whether there be any law, any sin, any righteousness, or any unrighteousness in the world. For what are all things which are in heaven and earth in comparison of the Son of God, Jesus Christ my Lord, who loved me and gave himself for me?

Wherefore, to reject the grace of God is an horrible sin, and commonly reigning throughout the world; whereof all merit-mongers are guilty. For while

they seek to be justified by the merit of congruence, or by their own works and sufferings, or by the law, they reject the grace of God and Christ, as I have said. And of all these abominations the Pope hath been the only author. For he hath not only defaced and trodden under his feet the Gospel of Christ, but hath also replenished the world with his cursed traditions. And hereof, among other enormities, his bulls and pardons are a sufficient witness; whereby he absolveth, not such as believe, but such as are Contrite, make confession to a priest, and reach out their helping hand [to the maintenance of his pomp and traditions]: which is as much as to say that Christ died for naught, and that grace is empty and vain. Wherefore the abominations and blasphemies of the Pope's kingdom are beyond measure; and yet even now in this great light of the truth, the blind and obstinate sophisters do continue still in their wicked opinions and doting dreams, saying that the qualities of nature do remain sound and uncorrupt, and that men are able to prepare themselves to grace by their own good deeds and merits. And so far off is it that they will acknowledge their impiety and error, that they do yet still obstinately defend the same even against their own conscience.

But we do constantly affirm with Paul (for we will not reject the grace of God) that either Christ died in vain, or else the law justifieth not. But Christ died not in vain: therefore the law justifieth not. Christ the Son Of God, of his own free grace and mercy hath justified us: therefore the law could not justify us; for if it could, then had Christ done unwisely in that he gave himself for our sins, that we thereby might be justified. We conclude therefore, that we are justified neither by our own works and merits before grace or after, nor by our cross and afflictions, nor yet by the law, but by faith Only in Christ.

Now if my salvation was so costly and dear a price unto Christ, that he was constrained to die for my sins, then all my works, with all the righteousness of the law, are but vile and nothing worth in comparison of this inestimable price. For how can I build that for a farthing, Which cost many thousand talents of gold? Now the law (to speak noticing of other matters which are of much less value) with all the works and righteousness thereof, is but as a farthing if ye compare it unto Christ: who by his death and resurrection hath vanquished my death, and hath purchased unto me righteousness and everlasting life. Should I then despise and reject this incomparable price, and by the law or by the works of congruence and worthiness (vile dross and dung, for so Paul calleth them, if they be compared unto Christ) seek that righteousness which Christ freely and of mere love hath given unto me already, and hath cost him so great a price, that he was constrained to give himself and even his own heart-blood for me? This, as I have said, the whole world doth, and especially such as will be counted more holy and religious than others. Whereby they plainly witness that Christ died in vain, although with their mouths they confess the contrary never so much: which is most horribly to blaspheme the Son of God, to spit in his face, to tread him under foot, to count the blood of the Testament as an unholy thing, etc.

Paul here disputing of righteousness, hath no civil matter in hand, that is, he speaketh not of civil righteousness (which God notwithstanding alloweth and requireth, and giveth rewards thereunto accordingly; which also reason is able in some part to perform), but he intreateth here of the righteousness that availeth before God, whereby we are delivered from the law, sin, death and all evils, and made partakers of grace, righteousness and life, and finally, are now become lords of heaven and earth and of all other creatures. This righteousness neither man's law, neither the law of God is able to perform.

The law is given besides and above reason, to be a light and a help to man, and to shew him what he ought to do, and what to leave undone.

Notwithstanding man, with all his strength and reason, yea with this great light also and heavenly benefit (the law I mean) cannot be justified. Now if that which is the most excellent thing in the world (the law I say, which as a bright shining sun is joined to the dim lamp and earthly light of man's reason to lighten and direct it) is not able to justify, what can reason do, I pray you, without the law? What? Doubtless nothing else but that which the Pope with his dreaming sophisters and his whole synagogue hath done, who with their own traditions have darkened the light even of the First Commandment. Wherefore there is not one of them that is able rightly to understand any one syllable of the law, but every man walketh in mere darkness of man's reason. And this error is much more pernicious and deadly, than that which proceedeth of the doctrine of works and the law.

These words therefore are very effectual and full of power when he saith: 'If righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain.' He speaketh here nothing of man's strength, reason or wisdom, be it never so great (for the greater it is, the sooner it deceiveth a man), but he saith plainly without all condition: 'If by the law,' etc. Wherefore reason lightened, aided and directed by the law, yea even by the law of God, is so unable to attain righteousness, that it draweth a man from righteousness, and rejecteth Christ. Set thou therefore the death of Christ alone against all laws, and determine with Paul to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2), that no light may shine beside him. Then shalt thou be learned indeed, righteous and holy, and shalt receive the Holy Ghost, which shall preserve thee in the purity of the Word and faith: but set Christ aside, and all things are but vain.

Here again we see what a goodly commendation Paul giveth to the righteousness of the law, or man's own righteousness, namely, that it is a condemning and rejecting of the grace of God, and an abolishing of the death of Christ. Paul is no great rhetorician, and yet see what matter he ministereth to him that listeth to play the rhetorician. What eloquence is able sufficiently to set forth these words: 'to reject grace,' 'the grace of God'; also, 'that Christ died in vain'? The horribleness whereof is such that all the eloquence in the world is not able to express it. It is a small matter to say, that any man died in vain: but to say that

Christ died in vain, is to take him quite away. Whoso listeth to play the rhetorician, hath here matter enough to dilate and amplify at large, what a horrible and blasphemous doctrine it is to set up the righteousness of the law and works, For what can be more blasphemous and horrible, than to make the death of Christ unprofitable? And what do I else, if I keep the law to this end, that I may be justified thereby? Now to make the death of Christ unprofitable, is to make his resurrection, his victory, his glory, his kingdom, heaven, earth, God himself, the majesty of God, and briefly all things else, unprofitable and of none effect.

This thundering and lightning from heaven against the righteousness of the law and man's own righteousness, should make us abhor it. And here with this thunderclap falleth down all the orders of monks and friars, with all such religion and righteousness as consisteth either in the keeping of the law or in the following of a self-appointed rule. For who will not detest his own vows, his cowl, his shaven crown, all men's traditions, yea the very law of Moses also, if he hear that for these things he rejecteth the grace of God, and maketh the death of Christ unprofitable. The world hearing this, doth not believe that it is true. It thinketh that such horrible wickedness cannot enter into any man's heart, that he should reject the grace of God and esteem the death of Christ as a thing of naught. And yet this sin commonly reigneth. For whosoever seeketh righteousness apart from faith in Christ, whether by works, by satisfactions, or afflictions, or by the law, rejecteth the grace of God and despiseth the death of Christ, whatsoever he protesteth with his mouth to the contrary.