

# Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

INDEX

## Chapter III



Dr. Martin Luther 1535

## CHAPTER 3

### *O foolish galatians!*

PAUL here sheweth his apostolical care and burning zeal which he beareth to the Church; so that in disputing and confuting, he intermingleth sometimes gentle exhortation, and sometimes he sharply reproveth, according to his own rule given to Timothy. 'Preach,' saith he, 'the word: be instant in season and out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort' (Timothy 4:2). Here the simple reader may haply be deceived if he be not circumspect, to think that Paul in teaching keepeth no order at all. And indeed after the manner of the rhetoricians he observeth none: but as concerning the spirit he useth a goodly order.

Now after that he hath sufficiently proved, and with two strong arguments confirmed this article, that Christian righteousness cometh not by keeping of the law, but by faith in Christ, and withal hath confuted the doctrine of the false apostles; in the midst of this discourse he turneth his talk to the Galatians, and reproveth them, saying: 'O ye foolish Galatians,' etc. As if he should say: Alas, from whence are ye fallen, O ye miserable Galatians? I have most carefully and diligently taught you the truth of the Gospel, and ye also have received the same of me with fervent zeal and great diligence.

*How then cometh it to pass, that ye are so suddenly fallen away from it? 'Who hath bewitched you?'*

He reproveth the Galatians very sharply, as it seemeth, when he calleth them fools, bewitched, and disobedient to the truth. Now whether he did this of zeal or compassion, I will not here contend: both may be true. A carnal man would interpret this to be a reviling., rather than a godly reprehension. Did Paul then give an evil example, or was he spiteful against the churches of Galatia, because he called them foolish and bewitched? No, not so. For with a Christian zeal it is lawful for an Apostle, a pastor, or preacher, sharply to reprove the people committed to his charge: and such reprovings are both fatherly and godly. So parents, of a fatherly and motherly affection, do sharply reprove and rebuke their children: which they would not bear if another should do it. The schoolmaster sometimes is angry with his scholar, he rebuketh him and beateth him: all which he taketh in good part, and would not bear it at the hands of his equal. The magistrate likewise is angry: he reproveth and punisheth such as are under his charge. And this discipline is not only good, but also very necessary: without the which nothing can be well done. Wherefore, unless the magistrate, the minister, the father and mother be angry, and use to reprove or rebuke when the case requireth, he is unprofitable, and never shall discharge his office rightly.

Wherefore sharp chidings and bitter words are as necessary in every kind of life, as any other virtue else. Yet notwithstanding, this anger must be so tempered, that it proceed not of any envy or malice, but only of a fatherly

affection and Christian zeal; that is to say, it ought not to be childish or woman-like, seeking revenge; but only for the correcting of the fault; as the father correcteth not his child with desire to revenge, but only that the child thereby may be the better. And these kinds of anger are good, and are called in the Scripture zeals or jealousies. For in chastising my brother, my child, my scholar or subject in this sort, I seek not his destruction, but his profit and welfare.

It may be then that Paul here rebuketh the Galatians, either of a very zeal (not to destroy them, but by this means to reduce them into the way again, and to amend them) or else of pity and compassion, as it were by way of complaint, for that it grieveth him that they should be so miserably seduced. As if he should say: I am sorry and ashamed to hear of this your miserable case, your wretched doings, etc. In like manner do we also reprehend the miserable: not that we tread them down, or upbraid them with their misery, but as having compassion on them, and seeking their amendment. This I say, lest any man should cavil, that Paul railed upon the churches, contrary to the rule of the Gospel.

In like manner Christ rebuketh the Pharisees, calling them serpents, the generation of vipers, the children of the devil (Matthew 23:33 etc). But these are the rebukings of the Holy Ghost. They are fatherly and motherly, and as the chidings of a faithful friend; as it is said also in the Proverbs: 'better are the wounds of a friend, than the kisses of an enemy' (Proverbs 27:6). Thus one and the self-same rebuke, if it come out of the mouth of a father, may be a great benefit; but if it proceed out of the mouth of our equal or enemy, it is a spiteful reproach. When two men do one thing, in the one it is commendable, and in the other it is reprov'd. But when Christ and Paul do reprove, it is done with singular virtue and commendation; but when a private man shall do the like, it is in him a great vice. Therefore one and the self-same word in the mouth of Paul is a benefit; but in the mouth of another it is a reproach.

There is a certain vehemency to be noted in this word 'Galatians.' For he calleth them not brethren, as elsewhere he is wont to do; but he calleth them by the name which was proper to their country. And it seemeth that it was the natural vice of that nation to be foolish; like as it was the fault of the Cretans to be liars. As if he should say: As ye are called, even so are ye indeed, and so ye continue; that is to say, foolish Galatians; and so you shew yourselves to be even now in the business of the Gospel (wherein notwithstanding ye ought to have been most wise) yet ye continue still in your own nature, and are no changelings. In like manner we also distinguish nations by their vices. For each nation hath its own peculiar vices: the Germans are ever ready for revolution, the Italians are arrogant, etc. Thus Paul by way of correction, putteth the Galatians in mind of their own nature.

Moreover we are here admonished, that according to the flesh, there are yet natural vices remaining in the churches, and in Christians. Grace maketh not such a change in the godly, that forthwith they become altogether new creatures,

and perfect in all things; but there remain yet certain dregs of their old and natural corruption. As if a man that is naturally inclined to anger, be converted to Christ, although he be mollified by grace (the Holy Ghost so framing his heart, that he is now become more meek and gentle), yet this natural vice is not utterly quenched in his flesh.

Likewise, such as are by nature hard, although they be converted to the faith, yet notwithstanding they do not utterly put off this hardness, but a remnant of it cleaveth in them still. Hereof it cometh, that the holy Scriptures and the Gospels, which do contain all one truth, of diverse spirits are diversely handled. One in teaching is mild and gentle; another more rough and rigorous. Thus the Spirit of God, being poured into diverse vessels, doth not quench at once the vices of nature; but during the whole of this life he purgeth that sin which is rooted, not only in the Galatians, but also in all men of all nations.

Albeit then, that the Galatians were lightened and did believe, and had now received the Holy Ghost by the preaching of faith, notwithstanding this remnant of vice, this tinder of foolishness, which did easily catch the flame of false doctrine, remained in them still. Wherefore let no man trust so much in himself, as to think that when he hath received grace, he is thoroughly purged from his old vices. Indeed many things are purged in us, and principally the head of the serpent; that is to say, infidelity and ignorance of God is cut off and bruised, but the scaly body and the remnants of sin remain still in us. Let no man therefore presume so much of himself, that when he hath once received faith, he can by and by be thoroughly changed into a new man: nay, he shall keep somewhat of his old vices still cleaving unto him, though he be never so good a Christian.

For we are not yet dead, but we still live in the flesh; which, because it is not yet pure, continually lusteth against the spirit (Galatians 5:17). 'I am carnal,' saith Paul, 'sold under sin,' and 'I see another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind' (Romans 7:14,23). Wherefore the natural vices that were in us before we received faith, do still remain in us after that we have received faith: saving that now they are subdued to the spirit, which hath the upper hand to keep them under, that they rule not; and yet not without great conflict. This glory is due to Christ alone, and this title he alone beareth, that he is pure and without blemish: 'who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth' (1 Peter 2:22).

*Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?*

Here have ye another commendation of this goodly righteousness of the law, and of our own righteousness, namely, that it maketh us to contemn the truth: it bewitcheth us in such sort, that we do not believe nor obey the truth, but rebel against it.

OF THE BODILY AND SPIRITUAL WITCHCRAFT

Paul calleth the Galatians foolish and bewitched, comparing them to children, to whom witchcraft doth much harm. As though he should say: It happeneth to you as it doth to children, whom witches, sorcerers, and enchanters are wont to charm by their enchantments, and by the illusion of the devil. Afterwards, in the fifth chapter, he rehearseth sorcery among the works of the flesh, which is a kind of witchcraft; whereby he plainly testifieth, that indeed such witchcraft and sorcery there is, and that it may be done. Moreover, it cannot be denied but that the devil liveth, yea, and reigneth throughout the whole world. Witchcraft and sorcery therefore are the works of the devil; whereby he doth not only hurt men, but also by the permission of God, he sometimes destroyeth them. Furthermore, we are all subject to the devil both in body and goods; and we be strangers in this world, whereof he is the prince and God. Therefore the bread which we eat, the drink which we drink, the garments which we wear, yea the air and whatsoever we live by in the flesh, is under his dominion. Therefore he is able by his witches to do harm to children, causing them heart-pains, blindness, etc., and even utterly to do away with a child and put himself in its cradle instead. I have heard tell of such a child in Saxony, which did suck the milk of five women and yet could not be sated. And examples of this sort are many.

Now witchcraft is nothing else but a machination and illusion of the devil, who is able (it is said) to make whole again a member of the body, either in a child or a grown man, that he hath corrupted with his wiles. But this he doth in such wise that he restoreth an eye or other member that seemeth to have suffered injury, but in very deed hath suffered none. For he so deluded the senses of them that he hath bewitched, and of others which do behold them, that they do not judge it to be an illusion, but a true lesion. But since in due time he removeth the lesion, it is plain that it was no true lesion, but an illusion; for a true lesion cannot be healed or restored.

A notable example of this thing is to be found in the Lives of the Fathers, passing the Metamorphoses of the poets. There came to St. Macarius in the desert where he dwelt, the parents of a certain virgin which did believe their daughter to have been turned into a cow, for they could perceive no form but that of a cow. Bringing her to St. Macarius, therefore, they besought him to offer prayer for her, that her human form might be restored. But Macarius when he heard this, said: I see no cow, but a virgin. For he had spiritual eyes, and therefore Satan was not able to delude him with his tricks, as he had deluded the parents and the daughter: whose eyes the evil spirit had so deceived that they would have sworn that what passed before their bewitched sight took place in very deed. But when St. Macarius prayed for the girl, asking not that she might recover the human form which she had never lost, but that God would take away this illusion of the devil from her, then the eyes both of the parents and of the daughter were opened, and they perceived that what they had thought to be seriously done, was but a sport and jest of the devil.



Such is Satan's cunning and power to delude our senses. And no marvel, seeing a change of sense and color may be brought about through glass.

Most easily therefore doth he make sport of men with his wiles, so that they imagine themselves to see things which in truth they see not, or to hear a voice, thunder, a flute or a trumpet, which in truth they hear not.

So the soldiers of Julius Caesar thought that they heard the sound of a pipe or trumpet: whereof Suetonius maketh mention in his Life of Caesar. One of uncommon size and shape (saith he), seated hard by, suddenly appeared playing on a pipe: unto whom there ran not only shepherds, but also many soldiers from their stations, together with some trumpeters, to hearken unto him. Whereupon he snatched a trumpet from one of them and sprang with it towards the river, where he sounded a mighty alarm and then made for the farther bank, etc. Satan then is well able to affect all the senses, so that a man would swear he did see, hear, touch, a thing which notwithstanding he doth not see, etc.

But he doth not only bewitch men after this gross manner, but also after a more subtle sort and much more dangerous; wherein he is a marvellous cunning workman. And hereof it cometh that Paul applieth the bewitching of the senses to the bewitching of the spirit. For by this spiritual witchcraft that old serpent bewitcheth not men's senses, but their minds with false and wicked opinions: which opinions, they that are so bewitched do take to be true and godly. Now, that he is able to do this, he sheweth plainly enough at this day in the fantastical heads, the Anabaptists and the spirits that do blaspheme the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ: whose minds he hath so bewitched with his sport, that they do embrace lies, errors and horrible darkness as the most certain truth and the clearest light. Neither will they suffer themselves to be drawn away from these dreams of theirs by any admonitions or passages of Scripture, since they are most firmly persuaded that they alone are wise and have a right judgment in holy things, while all others are blind. They therefore do the very same as the parents of the girl, which being taken with Satan's wiles, were so persuaded, that they would have sworn that their daughter was not a woman, but a cow, and there was nothing that they were less able to believe, than that this was a trick and illusion of the devil. For they had with them the testimony of all their senses: their eyes saw the form of a cow, their ears heard the voice of a cow, etc.; and against common sense, they thought, it was not meet to fight.

But that we ought to fight against common sense in the case of bodily witchcraft, this example of Macarius sheweth; and much more ought we to do the same in the case of spiritual witchcraft. For here the devil doeth from within, what there he doeth from without: there he deceiveth with shapes and colors in the senses, here with plausible opinions in matters of doctrine, whereby (as I have said) he so bewitcheth the hearts of men that they would swear that their vain and wicked dreams were the most certain truth. After this manner he hath in our

time bewitched Munzer, Zwingli and others, by whom he hath bewitched yet others innumerable.

Briefly, so great is the malice of this sorcerer the devil, and his desire to hurt, that not only he deceiveth those secure and proud spirits with his enchantments, but even those also which have a right understanding of the Word of God and the Christian religion: yea, as touching myself, to say the truth, he sometimes assaileth me so mightily, and oppresseth me with such heavy cogitations, that he utterly shadoweth my Savior Christ from me, and in a manner taketh him clean out of my sight. To be brief, there is none of us all which is not oftentimes bewitched by false persuasions: that is to say, which doth not fear, trust, or rejoice where he ought not, or doth not sometimes think otherwise of God, of Christ, of faith, of his vocation, etc. than he should do.

Let us therefore learn to know the subtle sleights of this sorcerer, lest if he find us sleeping in security, he deceive us by his enchantments. True it is, that by his sorcery he can do no hurt to our ministry: yet is he with us in spirit. Day and night he rangeth about, seeking how he may devour every one of us alone, and unless he find us sober and armed with spiritual weapons, that is to say, with the Word of God and faith, he will devour us.

This is the cause that he oftentimes stirreth up new battles against us. And indeed it is very profitable for us that he thus assaileth us, and by his subtle trains exerciseth us; for by this means he confirmeth our doctrine, he stirreth up and increaseth faith in us. Indeed we have been many times cast down, and yet still are cast down in this conflict, but we perish not: for Christ hath always triumphed, and doth triumph through us. Wherefore we hope assuredly, that we shall also hereafter by Jesus Christ obtain the victory against the devil. And this hope bringeth unto us sure consolation, so that in the midst of our temptations we take courage and say: Behold, Satan hath heretofore tempted us, and by his false illusions hath provoked us to infidelity, to the contempt of God, despair, etc. yet hath he not prevailed, nor shall he prevail hereafter. Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4). Christ is stronger, who hath and doth overcome that strong one in us, and shall overcome him for ever (Luke 11:21 f.). Notwithstanding the devil sometimes overcometh us in the flesh, that we may have experience of the power of a stronger against that strong one, and may say with Paul, 'When I am weak, then am I strong' (Corinthians 12:10).

Let no man think therefore that the Galatians only were bewitched of the devil: but let every man think that he himself might have been, and yet may be bewitched by him. There is none of us so strong that he is able to resist him, and specially if he attempt to do it by his own strength. Job was an upright and a just man, fearing God, and there was none like unto him upon the earth (Job 1:8), but what power had he against the devil, when God withdrew his hand? Did not this holy man horribly fall? Therefore this enchanter was not only mighty in the Galatians, but he goeth about continually to deceive, if not all men, yet as many

as he can, with his illusions and false persuasions: 'For he is a liar, and the father of lies' (John 8:44). And by this his craft he bewitcheth at this day, as I have said, the fantastical spirits. In these he reigneth and maketh them more hard and unyielding than any anvil. They will not suffer themselves to be taught, they will hear no reason, nor admit the Scripture, but they seek only how with false invented glosses out of their own head, they may elude the places of Scripture that are brought against them, and defend their own dreams which they import into the Scripture: which is a manifest sign that they are taken with the devil's sorcery.

### *Who hath bewitched you?*

Here Paul excuseth the Galatians, and layeth the fault upon the false apostles. As though he should say, I see that ye are not fallen through wilfulness or malice; but the devil hath sent the enchanting false apostles amongst you, my children, and they do so bewitch you with their doctrine of the law, that now ye think otherwise of Christ than ye did afore when ye heard the Gospel preached by me. But we labor both by preaching and writing unto you, to uncharm that sorcery wherewith the false apostles have bewitched you, and to set at liberty those which are snared therewith. So we also at this day do labor by the Word of God against those fantastical opinions of the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, that we may set at liberty those that are entangled therewith, and reduce them to the pure doctrine of faith, and there hold them. And this our labor is not altogether in vain; for we have called back many whom they have bewitched, and have delivered them out of their snares: the which had never been done by their own strength, had they not been admonished by us and recalled by the Word of God.

For even as it is impossible that a man should deliver himself from the bewitching of his senses (as the parents could see no form but of a cow before the prayer of Macarius), so it is impossible that those who are bewitched in spirit should deliver themselves by their own strength, unless they are delivered by those whose minds are not ensnared by this sorcery.

For such is the efficacy of Satan's deceit in them that are deluded thereby, that they would boast and swear that they did possess the most certain truth: so far are they from confessing that they err. And although we labor never so much to convince some, and especially the chief authors of sects, by the Scriptures, yet is our labor in vain; for they straightway bring forth their glosses wherewith they evade the Scriptures.

Wherefore they are nothing amended by our admonitions, but are much more hardened and more obstinate than they were before. And surely I could never have believed, but that I have good experience thereof at this day, that the power of the devil is so great, that he is able to make falsehood so like the truth. Moreover (which is yet much more horrible) when he goeth about to overwhelm sorrowful consciences with over-much heaviness, he can so cunningly and so



lively change himself into the likeness of Christ, that it is impossible for the poor tempted and afflicted soul to perceive it: whereby many simple and ignorant persons are deceived and driven down to desperation, and some also destroy themselves; for they are so bewitched of the devil, that they believe this to be a most certain truth, that they are tempted and accused, not of the devil but of Christ himself.

Such a thing happened in the year of our Lord 1527 to that miserable man Dr. Kraus of Halle, which said: 'I have denied Christ, and therefore he standeth now before his Father and accuseth me.' He being blinded with the illusion of the devil, had so strongly conceived in his mind this imagination, that by no exhortation, no consolation, no promises of God, he could be brought from it; whereupon he despaired and so miserably destroyed himself. This was a mere lie, a bewitching of the devil, and a fantastical definition of a strange Christ, whom the Scripture knoweth not.

For the Scripture setteth forth Christ, not as a judge, a tempter, an accuser; but a reconciler, a mediator, a comforter, a savior, and a throne of grace.

But the poor man, deluded by the devil, could not then see this; and therefore, against all Scripture, he thinketh this to be an undoubted truth: 'Christ accuseth thee before his Father; he standeth not for thee, but against thee; therefore thou art damned.' And this temptation is not of man, but of the devil, which that enchanter most strongly imprinteth in the heart of the tempted. But unto us which are led and taught by another Spirit, it is a cursed lie, and a bewitching of the devil. But unto those that are thus bewitched, it is so certain a truth that none can be more certain.

Seeing then that the devil, that deviser of a thousand wiles, is able so to print in our hearts so manifest and shameful a lie, that we would swear a thousand times it were an undoubted truth, we must not be proud, but walk in fear and humility, calling upon Christ our Lord, that we be not led into temptation. Worldly and secure men, which having heard the Gospel once or twice preached, do by and by imagine that they have received abundance of the Spirit, fall at length in like manner, because they fear not God, they are not thankful unto him, but persuade themselves that they are able, not only to hold and defend the doctrine of true religion, but also to stand against the devil in any assault or conflict, be it never so great. Such are meet instruments for the devil to bewitch and to throw down to desperation.

On the other side, say not thou: I am perfect, I cannot fall; but humble thyself, and fear, lest if thou stand to-day, to-morrow thou be overthrown.

I myself, although I be a doctor of divinity, and have now preached Christ, and fought against the devil in his false teachers a great while, by mine own experience have found how hard a matter this is. For I cannot shake off Satan as

I desire, neither can I so apprehend Christ as the Scripture setteth him forth; but oftentimes the devil setteth before mine eyes a false Christ.

But thanks be to God who keepeth us in the Word, in faith and in prayer, that we may walk before him in humility and fear, and not presume of our own wisdom, righteousness and strength, but trust in the power of Christ, who is strong when we are weak, and by us weak and feeble creatures continually overcome and triumpheth: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

This bewitching then, and this sorcery, is nothing else but a plain illusion of the devil, printing in the heart a false opinion of Christ and against Christ; and he that is deluded with this opinion, is bewitched. They therefore that have this persuasion, that they are justified by the works of the law, or the traditions of men, are bewitched; for this persuasion is clean contrary to faith and to Christ. Paul useth this word 'bewitching' in contempt of the false apostles, which so vehemently urged the doctrine of the law and works. As if he should say: What a devilish bewitching is this? For as the senses are perverted by bodily witchcraft, so are the minds of men also deluded by this spiritual witchcraft.

### *That ye should not obey the truth*

The Galatians at the first did gladly hear and obey the truth. Therefore when he saith, 'Who hath bewitched you?' he sheweth that they being bewitched by the false apostles, were now fallen away from the truth, which before they did obey. But this seemeth yet a more bitter and vehement kind of speech, when he saith that they do not believe the truth.

For he signifieth by these words that they are bewitched, and that he would deliver them from this witchery, and yet they will not acknowledge nor receive this benefit. For it is certain that he did not reduce all the Galatians from the errors of the false apostles unto the truth, but that many of them remained yet still bewitched. Therefore he useth these sharp and vehement words, 'Who hath bewitched you?' etc., as if he would say: Ye are so deluded and bewitched that now ye cannot obey the truth; I fear lest many of you are utterly lost, and so fallen away, that ye will never return again to the truth. Here you have another goodly commendation of the righteousness of the law, or man's own righteousness, that it so bewitcheth men that they are not able to obey the truth. The Apostles and the Fathers of the primitive Church often made mention of this matter, as 1 John 5:6: 'There is a sin unto death, for the which prayer shall not be made; ' also Hebrews 6:4 ff.: 'It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift..., if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance,' etc. At first sight these words sound as though some Novatus had spoken them. But the Apostles were compelled thus to speak on account of the heretics (although they did not thereby deny to the fallen a return through penitence to the communion of the faithful, as the Novarians did). And we also at this day ought thus to speak on account of the

authors and masters of errors and sects, and say that such men never return to the truth. There are some indeed that return, but these are they which have been bound with a lighter spell. Not so the leaders and authors of the sorcery, which ought to retain that title which Paul here giveth them, namely, that they will not hear nor endure the truth, but rather are careful how they may resist the truth, and how they may avoid the arguments and the Scriptures adduced against them. For they are taken captive and are fully persuaded that they have the most certain truth and the purest understanding of the Scripture. He that is in such persuasion, heareth not and much less giveth place to others. So I myself will in no wise hearken to aught that is contrary to my doctrine; for I am certain and persuaded through the Spirit of Christ, that my teaching concerning Christian righteousness is true and certain.

### *Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was evidently set forth*

It was bitterly spoken where he said before, that they were so bewitched that they could not obey the truth; but it is more bitterly said, when he addeth, that Christ was so lively described before them, that they might handle him with their hands, and yet they would not obey the truth. Thus he convinceth them even by their own experience. As though he would say:

Ye are so bewitched and deluded with the perverse opinions of the false apostles, that now ye will not obey the truth. And whereas I have with great travail and diligence set forth Christ crucified plainly before your eyes, yet doth this profit you nothing at all.

In these words he hath respect to the former arguments, whereby he proved, that to those that will be justified by the law, Christ is but the minister of sin, that such do reject the grace of God, and that to them Christ died in vain. Which arguments he had before more vehemently prosecuted and more largely amplified in their presence, even as if a painter had portrayed Christ Jesus crucified before their eyes. Now being absent, he putteth them in mind of the same things, saying: 'to whom Jesus Christ was described in your sight'. As if he said: There is no painter that with his colors can so lively set out Christ unto you, as I have painted him out by my preaching; and yet notwithstanding ye still remain most miserably bewitched.

### *Crucified among you*

What did I then paint out? Even Christ himself. How was that done? In this sort, that he was crucified among you. He useth here very rough and sharp words. Before, he said that they seeking righteousness by the law, rejected the grace of God, and that to them Christ died in vain. Now he addeth moreover, that they do even crucify Christ, who before lived and reigned in them. As if he should say: Ye have now not only rejected the grace of Gods not only to you Christ died in vain, but also he is most shamefully crucified among you. After the same manner

speaketh the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'Crucifying to themselves again the Son of God, and making a mock of him, etc.' (Hebrews 6:6).

If a man did but hear the name of a monk, of his shaven crown, of his cowl, of his rule, it should make him afraid (how much soever the Papists do adore these abominations, and brag that they are perfect religion and holiness, as I and others did judge of them before God revealed his Gospel unto us: for we were brought up in the traditions of men, which darkened Christ and made him utterly unprofitable unto us), when he heareth Paul say, that even they which seek to be justified by the law of God, be not only deniers and murderers of Christ, but also they do most wickedly crucify him again. Now, if they be crucifiers of Christ which seek to be justified by the righteousness of the law of God, and the works thereof, what are they, I pray you, which seek salvation and eternal life by the dregs and filth of man's righteousness and by the doctrines of devils?

But who could ever believe or think that it was so horrible and so abominable a sin to be made a religious man (for so they call them) namely to be made amassing priest, a monk, a friar, a nun? Doubtless no man. Yea they themselves say moreover, that monkery is a new baptism. Can there be any thing more horrible than that the kingdom of the Papists is the kingdom of such as spitefully spit in the face of Christ the Son of God, and crucify him again? For indeed they crucify him afresh (who was once crucified and rose again) both in themselves, in the Church, and in the hearts of the faithful; for with their spiteful reproaches, rebukes, slanders and injuries, they spit upon him, and with their wicked opinions they wound him and thrust him through, so that in them he dieth most miserably: and in the stead of him they set up a glorious witchcraft, whereby men are so miserably, charmed and deluded, that they cannot know Christ to be their justifier, their reconciler and savior, but a minister of sin, their accuser, their judge and their destroyer, which must be pacified no otherwise than by our works and merits.

And out of this opinion did afterwards spring the most pestilent and pernicious doctrine that is in the whole papacy, which is this: If thou wilt serve God, and merit forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, and also help others that they may attain to salvation, then enter thou into a monastery, vow obedience, chastity, poverty, etc. The monks and friars, being taken and puffed up with this opinion of holiness, bragged that they only were in the life and state of perfection, and that other Christians led but a common life, for they did no undue works, or more than they were bound to do; that is, they did not vow and keep chastity, poverty, obedience, etc., but they were only baptized, and kept the Ten Commandments: but as for themselves, besides that which was common as well to them as to other Christians, they kept also the works of supererogation and the counsels of Christ; wherefore they hoped to have merits and a place in heaven among the principal saints, far above the common sort of Christians.

This was undoubtedly a monstrous illusion of the devil, whereby he hath bewitched almost the whole world. And every man, the more holy he would seem to be, the more he was snared with that witchery, that is to say, with the pestilent persuasion of his own righteousness. And this was the cause that we could not know that Jesus Christ was our mediator and savior, but we thought that he was a severe judge, which should be pacified by our works: which was nothing else but most horribly to blaspheme Christ, and as Paul said before, to reject the grace of God, to make the death of Christ of none effect, and not only to kill him, but also most shamefully to crucify him again. And this is the right meaning of that which Christ allegeth out of Daniel: 'the abomination standing in the holy place' (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15). Wherefore every monk and religious person, and every justiciary seeking remission of sins and righteousness by his own works or by his afflictions, is a crucifier of Christ now reigning and living, although not in the proper person of Christ, yet in his own heart and in the hearts of others. And whosoever do enter into monasteries to the end that by the keeping of their rule they may be justified, do enter into the dens of thieves, and such as crucify Christ again.

Wherefore Paul useth in this place very severe and sharp words, to the end that he may fear and call back the Galatians from the doctrine of the false apostles. As if he should say: Consider well what you have done. Ye have crucified Christ again (and this I do so plainly shew and paint out before your eyes, that ye may see it, yea and touch it with your hands) because ye seek to be justified by the law. But if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ a minister of sin, and his death altogether in vain. If this be true, then must it needs follow that Christ is crucified again in you.

And it is not without cause that he addeth this clause, 'in you' or 'among you.' For Christ is no more crucified, he dieth no more in his own person, as is said in Romans 6, but he dieth in us when we, rejecting pure doctrine, grace, faith, free remission of sins, seek to be justified by works of our own choosing, or even by the works commanded in the law. Here Christ is crucified in us again. Now this false and wicked persuasion, to seek to be justified by the law or by works, is nothing else (as I have before more amply declared) but the illusion and enchantment of the devil, wherewith men are so bewitched, that in no wise they can acknowledge the benefit of Christ: yea, in all their life they can do nothing else but deny the Lord who hath bought them, and in whose name they were baptized, and crucify him again in themselves. Whosoever then hath any fear of God or love unto Christ and his true religion, let him fly quickly out of this Babylon, and let him tremble at the very name of the Papacy. For the impiety and abomination thereof is so horrible, that no man is able to express it with words, neither can it be otherwise seen, than with spiritual eyes only.

These two arguments Paul prosecuteth and beateth into the heads of the Galatians very diligently: first, that they are so bewitched of the devil, that they obey not the truth most clearly set forth before their eyes; secondly, that they

crucify Christ again in themselves. These seem to be simple and plain words, and without any high eloquence, but in very deed they are so mighty, that they exceed all the eloquence of man. It cannot therefore be comprehended, but only in spirit, how great an impiety it is to seek to be justified by the righteousness of the law, or by our own righteousness. For, as Paul saith here, it is nothing else but to be bewitched of the devil, to be disobedient to the truth, and to crucify Christ again. Are not these goodly commendations of the righteousness of the law and man's own righteousness?

The Apostle therefore is inflamed with a vehement zeal, and with bitter words he reproveth and condemneth the presumption of man's own righteousness, rising upon the observation of the law of God, and chargeth it with this impiety, that it crucifieth again the Son of God. Seeing then it is so dangerous a thing, it cannot be beaten down enough, or condemned as it should be; for thereof ensueth such a fall as is no less than the fall of Lucifer, and such a loss as can never be recovered; and therefore he useth so sharp and rigorous words against it, that he spareth not the very law of God, against the which he so bitterly inveigheth, that he seemeth utterly to reject and condemn it. And this doth he, being constrained by great necessity; for otherwise he could not with stand the false apostles, nor defend the righteousness of faith against them. Albeit then that the law be holy, just, and good, yet must it put on as it were the vizard of an hypocrite that seeketh to be justified by works. Now he presseth them with an argument from experience, which they could not deny, saying:

This only would I learn of you: received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

He speaketh these words with a certain indignation and contempt. If I had nothing else against you but even your own experience, saith he, yet have I enough. As if he should say: Go to now; answer me I pray you, which am your scholar, for ye are so suddenly become doctors, that ye are now my masters and teachers: 'Received ye the Holy Ghost by the works of the law, or by preaching of the Gospel?' With this argument he so convinceth them, that they have nothing to reply again. For their own plain and manifest experience is altogether against them: to wit, that they had received the Holy Ghost, not by the works of the law, but by the preaching of the Gospel.

Here again I warn you, that Paul speaketh not only of the ceremonial law, but of the whole law. For he groundeth his argument upon a sufficient division. If he should speak of the ceremonial law only, it were not a sufficient division. It is an argument therefore standing upon two parts, whereof the one must needs be true, and the other false; that is, either ye received the Holy Ghost by the law, or by the hearing of faith. If by the law, then not by the preaching of faith; if by the preaching of faith, then not by the law. There is no mean betwixt these two. For all that is not the Holy Ghost or the preaching of faith, is the law. Here are we in the matter of justification. But to attain to justification, there is no other way but



either the word of the Gospel, or the word of the law. Wherefore the law is here taken generally, as wholly separate from the Gospel. But it is not the ceremonial law only that is separate from the Gospel, but also the moral law, or the law of the Ten Commandments. Wherefore Paul speaketh here of the whole law.

He groundeth this argument upon a sufficient distinction, after this sort:

Tell me, saith he, 'Received ye the Holy Ghost by the works of the law, or by the preaching of the Gospel?' Answer me to this. Ye cannot say that this was done by the law. For so long as ye were under the law, and did the works thereof, ye never received the Holy Ghost. Indeed ye taught and heard the law of Moses every sabbath: but it hath not been heard or seen that ever the Holy Ghost was given to any, either doctor or disciple, through the preaching of the law. Moreover, ye have not only taught and heard the law, but also ye have labored with all your power to perform the same by your works, whereby ye should most of all have received the Holy Ghost, if he had been given by the law, seeing ye were not only teachers and hearers, but also doers of the law: and yet ye cannot shew me that this was done at any time. But as soon as the hearing of faith or the Gospel came unto you, by and by ye received the Holy Ghost by the only hearing of faith, before ye had done any work, or shewed any fruit of the Gospel.

For as Luke witnesseth in the Acts, at the only preaching of Peter and Paul, the Holy Ghost came upon those which heard the Word, through whom also they received diverse gifts, so that they spake with new tongues, etc. (Acts 10:44).

It is manifest therefore that by the only preaching of faith, ye received the Holy Ghost before ye did any good work, or brought forth any fruits of the Gospel. On the other side, the accomplishing of the law never brought the Holy Ghost; much less could the only hearing of the law do it. Therefore not only the hearing of the law, but that affection and zeal also, whereby ye go about to accomplish the law by your works, is vain and unprofitable.

Wherefore although a man labor to do all things; that is to say, although he have a zeal of God, and with all his endeavour to go about to be saved by the law, and exercise himself day and night in the righteousness thereof; notwithstanding he doth but labor and consume himself in vain. For they which are ignorant of the righteousness of God, and go about to establish their own righteousness (as Paul saith in another place) do not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God (Romans 10:3). Again: 'Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, attained not to the law of righteousness,' etc. (Romans 9:31). Now Paul speaketh here of the manifestation of the Holy Ghost in the primitive Church. For the Holy Ghost came down in a manifest likeness upon those that did believe, and by this sign did plainly witness that he was there present at the preaching of the Apostles; also that they which heard the word of faith preached

by the Apostles, were accepted as righteous before God ; for else the Holy Ghost would not have come down upon them.

### THE ARGUMENT OF THE BOOK CONTAINING THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Wherefore we must diligently weigh and consider the force of this argument, which is so often repeated in the Acts of the Apostles. Which book is written to confirm and establish this argument: for it teacheth nothing else but that the Holy Ghost is not given by the law, but by the hearing of the Gospel. For when Peter preached, the Holy Ghost forthwith fell upon all those that heard the Word; and in one day three thousand which were present at the preaching of Peter, believed and received the Holy Ghost (Acts 2). So Cornelius received the Holy Ghost, not by the alms which he gave, but when Peter had opened his mouth, and was yet speaking, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them which with Cornelius heard the Word (Acts 10). These are manifest arguments of experience, and divine works which cannot deceive us.

Luke also writeth of Paul in the fifteenth of the Acts, that when he had preached the Gospel together with Barnabas among the Gentiles, and was returned to Jerusalem, he set himself against the Pharisees and the disciples of the Apostles, which urged circumcision and the keeping of the law, as necessary to salvation: whose mouths he so stopped (saith Luke) in shewing what things he and Barnabas had done amongst the Gentiles, that the whole Church was amazed at the hearing thereof, especially when they heard that God had wrought so many and so great signs and wonders by them among the Gentiles. And when they which bare a zeal to the law, did greatly wonder how it could be that the uncircumcised Gentiles, not doing the law, nor the works thereof, nor having the righteousness of the law, should notwithstanding attain to this grace, to be justified and receive the Holy Ghost as well as the Jews that were circumcised: here Paul and Barnabas did allege nothing else but manifest experience; wherewith they were so confounded, that they had nothing to reply again. By this means Paulus Sergius, the lieutenant, and all those cities, regions, kingdoms, and countries where the Apostles had preached, by the only hearing of faith did believe, without the law and the works thereof.

In the whole book therefore of the Acts, there is nothing else handled in effect, but that it behoveth as well Jews as Gentiles, as well righteous as unrighteous, to be justified by faith alone in Christ Jesus, without the law and the works thereof. The which thing doth appear as well by the preaching of Peter, of Paul, of Stephen, of Philip, and the other Apostles, as also by the examples of the Gentiles and the Jews. For as God gave the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles which lived without the law, by the preaching of the Gospel, so did he give the same to the Jews; yet not by the law, nor by the ceremonies and sacrifices commanded in the law, but by the only preaching of faith. Now if the law had been able to justify, and the righteousness of the law had been necessary to salvation, then

doubtless the Holy Ghost had not been given to the Gentiles which kept not the law.

But experience itself doth plainly witness, that the Holy Ghost was given unto them without the law (and this did the Apostles, both Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and others see): therefore the law doth not justify, but faith only in Christ, which the Gospel setteth forth.

These things are diligently to be marked, because of the adversaries, which do not consider what is handled in the Acts of the Apostles. I myself in times past also read this book, when indeed I understood in it nothing at all. Therefore when thou hearest or readest in the Acts of the Apostles, or wheresoever it be in the Scriptures, this word 'Gentiles,' thou must know that it is not to be understood literally of the common nature of the Gentiles, but it carrieth with it a spiritual meaning, and is to be taken, not for those which are under the law, as were the Jews (as before is said in the second chapter: 'We being by nature Jews, and not sinners of the Gentiles' etc.), but for those which are without the law. Wherefore to say that the Gentiles are justified by faith, is nothing else, but that men which observe not the law nor do the works thereof, which are not circumcised, which sacrifice not, etc., are justified and receive the Holy Ghost. By what means? Not by the law and the works thereof (for they have no law), but freely and without any other means, except only the hearing of the Gospel.

So Cornelius and his friends whom he had called to his house, do nothing, neither look they upon any works going before, and yet as many as are present, receive the Holy Ghost. No man speaketh but Peter. They sitting by do nothing: they think not of the law, much less do they keep it; they sacrifice not; they care not for the receiving of circumcision, but only are bent to hear that which Peter speaketh. He by his preaching brought the Holy Ghost into their hearts, as it were visibly: for they spake with tongues, and glorified God.

But some men may here cavil and say: Who knoweth whether it were the Holy Ghost or no? Well, let them cavil. Sure it is that the Holy Ghost, so bearing witness, doth not lie, but hereby sheweth that he accepteth the Gentiles for righteous, and justifieth them by no other means, than by the only voice of the Gospel, or hearing of faith in Christ preached. We may see also in the Acts how greatly the Jews marvelled at this new and strange thing. For the faithful which were of the circumcision, and came with Peter to Caesarea, seeing the gift of the Holy Ghost to be poured out also upon the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, were astonished (Acts 10:45).

Also they that were at Jerusalem complained of Peter for that he went in to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them (Acts 11:3). But when they heard the matter declared by Peter in order as it was done touching Cornelius, they marvelled and glorified God, saying: 'Then hath God also given salvation unto the Gentiles.'

This report therefore and this fame, that God had given salvation also to the Gentiles, was at the first not only intolerable, but also a great offense even to the believing Jews. Which they could not easily shake off: for they had this prerogative above all other nations, that they were the people of God. The adoption, the glory, the worship, etc., belonged to them (Romans 9:4). Moreover, they exercised themselves in the righteousness of the law, they labored all the day long, they bare the burden and heat of the day (Matthew 20:12). Moreover, they had the promises as touching the observation of the law; therefore they could not but murmur against the Gentiles, and say: Behold the Gentiles come but even now, and have not suffered any heat, or borne any burden; notwithstanding they have the same righteousness and Holy Ghost without labor, which we by labor and by the heat and burden of the day could not obtain. Indeed they have labored, but that was but one hour, and by this labor they are more refreshed than wearied. Wherefore then hath God tormented us with the law, if it avail nothing to the obtaining of righteousness? He now preferreth the Gentiles before us which have been so long burdened with the yoke of the law. For we which are the people of God, have been vexed all the day long; but they which are not the people of God, neither have any law, nor have done any good at all, are made equal with us.

And for this cause the council of the Apostles, upon great necessity was assembled at Jerusalem to satisfy and pacify the Jews, who though they believed in Christ, yet was this opinion notwithstanding deeply rooted in their hearts, that the law of Moses ought to be observed. There Peter, upon his own experience, set himself against them saying: 'If God hath given the same grace unto the Gentiles, which he hath given unto us which have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could let God?' (Acts 11:17). Again: 'God who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness in giving unto them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us. And he put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt ye God, to lay a yoke on the disciples' necks, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?' etc. (Acts 15:8 ff.). With these words, Peter at once overthroweth the whole law. As if he should say: We will not keep the law; for we are not able to keep it; but we believe through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be saved, even as they did. So Peter here standeth altogether upon this argument, that God gave unto the Gentiles the selfsame grace that he gave to the Jews. As though he would say: When I preached to Cornelius, I learned by my own experience, that the Holy Ghost was given without the law to the Gentiles, by the only hearing of faith: therefore in no case are they to be burdened with the law. To conclude, since it is certain that neither we nor our fathers were ever able to fulfill the law, it behoveth you also to reject this error, that righteousness and salvation cometh by the law. And this the believing Jews did by little and little; but the wicked, which by this preaching were the more offended, at the length were altogether hardened.

## THE COMMENDATION OF THE BOOK CONTAINING THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

So in the Acts ye shall find the experience, the preachings, and also the examples of the Apostles for the confirmation of this matter, against this obstinate opinion touching the righteousness of the law. And we ought therefore the more to love, and the more diligently to read this book, because it containeth most substantial testimonies, which are able to comfort and confirm us against the Papists, our Jews; whose abominations and colored hypocrisy we impugn and condemn by our doctrine, that we may set forth the benefits and glory of Christ. Who, though they have no substantial matter to allege against us (whereas the Jews might have laid against the Apostles, that they had received the law and all these ceremonies from God), yet notwithstanding they are no less obstinate in defending their cursed traditions and abominations, than the Jews were in maintaining their law which they had received from God, glorying and bragging that they sit in the place of bishops, and that the authority to govern the churches is committed unto them. Whereby they would bring us into bondage, and force us to say that we are justified, not by faith alone, but by faith formed and adorned with charity. But we set against them the book of the Acts. Let them read this book, and consider the examples contained in it, and they shall find this to be the sum and the argument thereof: that we are justified by faith only in Christ without works, and that the Holy Ghost is given by the only hearing of faith at the preaching of the Gospel, and not at the preaching of the law, nor by the works of the law.

Wherefore thus teach we: O man, although thou fast, give alms, honor thy parents, obey the magistrate, etc., yet art thou not justified thereby. This voice of the law: 'Honour thy parents,' or any other else, either heard or fulfilled, doth not justify. What then? To hear the voice of the spouse, to hear the word of faith: this word being heard, doth justify. Wherefore?

Because it bringeth the Holy Ghost which justifieth a man [and maketh him righteous before God].

Hereby we may see what is the difference between the law and the Gospel.

The law never bringeth the Holy Ghost, but only teacheth what we ought to do: therefore it justifieth not. But the Gospel bringeth the Holy Ghost, because it teacheth what we ought to receive. Therefore the law and the Gospel are two quite contrary doctrines. To put righteousness therefore in the law, is nothing else but to fight against the Gospel. For Moses with his law is a severe exactor, requireth of us that we should work, and that we should give: briefly, it requireth and exacteth. Contrariwise, the Gospel giveth freely and requireth of us nothing else, but to hold out our hands, and to take that which is offered. Now to exact and to give, to take and to offer are clean contrary, and cannot stand together.

For that which is given, I take: but that which I give, I do not take, but I offer it unto another.

Therefore if the Gospel be a gift, and offereth a gift, it requireth nothing.

Contrariwise, the law giveth nothing, but it requireth and straitly exacteth of us, yea even impossible things.

### OF CORNELIUS IN THE TENTH OF ACTS

Here our adversaries set against us the example of Cornelius (concerning whom also the Master of the Sentences and Erasmus in his Diatribe do dispute). Cornelius, say they, was (as Luke witnesseth) a good man, just, and learning God, which gave alms to the people, and prayed to God continually. Therefore of congruence he did merit the forgiveness of sins, and the sending of the Holy Ghost. I answer: Cornelius was a Gentile, and this cannot the adversaries deny; for the words which Peter allegeth in Acts 10:28, do plainly witness the same. 'Ye know,' saith he, 'that it is unlawful for a man that is a Jew, to accompany with one of another nation' etc. He was therefore a Gentile, and not circumcised, not keeping the law, yea not once thinking of it, because it pertained nothing unto him: and yet notwithstanding he was justified and received the Holy Ghost. And this argument, as I said, is handled throughout the whole book of the Acts: to wit, that the law availeth nothing to righteousness.

Let this suffice then for the defense of the article of justification, that Cornelius was a Gentile, not circumcised, not keeping the law: therefore he was not justified by the law, but by the hearing of faith. God justifieth therefore without the law, and so consequently the law availeth nothing to righteousness. For otherwise God would have given the Holy Ghost to the Jews only, which had the law and kept it, and not the Gentiles which had not the law, and much less did accomplish it. But God wrought clean contrary: for the Holy Ghost was given to them that had not the law. Manifest experience therefore testifieth that the Holy Ghost is given to them that do not the law. Wherefore righteousness cometh not by the law.

By this means, the objection of the adversaries, which do not understand the true manner of justification, is answered.

Here again the adversaries object against us, and say: Be it so that Cornelius was a Gentile, and did not receive the Holy Ghost by the law, yet notwithstanding forasmuch as the text saith plainly, that he was a just man, fearing God, giving alms, etc., at may seem that by these works he deserved to have the Holy Ghost afterwards given unto him. I answer, that Cornelius was a just and a holy man in the Old Testament, because of his faith in Christ which was to come, as all the fathers, prophets and godly kings in the Old Testament were righteous, having received secretly the Holy Ghost through faith in Christ to



come. But the popish sophisters put no difference between faith in Christ to come, and in Christ which is already come. Wherefore if Cornelius had died before Christ was revealed, yet had he not been damned, because he had the faith of the fathers, which were saved by faith only in Christ to come (Acts 15:11). He remained then always a Gentile, uncircumcised and without the law, and yet notwithstanding he worshipped the selfsame God whom the fathers worshipped, by faith in the Messiah to come. But now, because the Messiah was already come, necessary it was that it should be shewed unto him by the Apostle Peter, that he was not now to be looked for, but that he was already come.

And this article concerning faith in Christ to be revealed, and in Christ now revealed (that I may touch this also by the way), is very necessary to be known. For seeing that Christ is now revealed, we cannot be saved by faith in Christ to come, but we must believe that he is already come, hath fulfilled all things, and abolished the law. Therefore necessary it was also that Cornelius should be brought to another belief, not that Christ was yet to come, as he did believe before: but that he was already come. So faith giveth place to faith: 'from faith to faith' (Romans 1:17).

The schoolmen therefore are deceived, when they say for the maintenance of their opus congrui, or merit before grace, that Cornelius by the natural and moral works of reason, deserved grace and the sending of the Holy Ghost. For to be a just man and fearing God, etc., are the properties, not of a Gentile or of a natural man, but of a spiritual man, who hath faith already.

For unless he did believe in God and fear God, he could not hope to obtain any thing of him by prayer. The first commendation therefore that Luke giveth unto Cornelius, is this, that he is a righteous man and fearing God: afterwards he commendeth him for his works and alms-deeds. This our adversaries do not consider, but lay hold only upon this sentence, that he gave alms to the poor: for that seemeth to make for the establishing of their merit of congruence [or desert going before grace]. But first the person or the tree must be commended, and then the works and the fruit. Cornelius is a good tree, for he is righteous and feareth God: therefore he bringeth forth good fruit, he giveth alms, he calleth upon God; and these fruits please God because of his faith. Wherefore the angel commendeth Cornelius for his faith in Christ which was to come, and bringeth him from that faith, to another faith in Christ which was already come, when he saith: 'Call for Simon, whose surname is Peter: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do,' etc. (Acts 10:5 f.): Like as then Cornelius was without the law before Christ was revealed; even so after Christ was revealed, he received neither the law nor circumcision. And as he kept not the law before, so did he not keep it afterwards. This argument therefore concludeth strongly:

Cornelius was justified without the law, therefore the law justifieth not.

NAAMAN THE SYRIAN.

Likewise Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5) was, no doubt, a good and godly man, and had a true opinion of God. And although he was a Gentile and belonged not to the kingdom of Moses, which then flourished; yet notwithstanding his flesh was cleansed, and the God of Israel was revealed unto him, and he received the Holy Ghost. For thus he saith: 'Now I know assuredly that there is no other God in all the world but in Israel.' He doth nothing at all, he keepeth not the law, he is not circumcised; but only he prayeth that so much of that earth might be given unto him, as two mules should be able to carry away. Moreover it appeareth that faith was not idle in him. For thus he speaketh to the prophet Elisha: 'Thy servant will henceforth neither offer burnt sacrifice, nor offering unto any other God, saving the Lord. But in this thing the Lord be merciful unto thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I do bow down (I say,) in the house of Rimmon, the Lord be merciful to thy servant in this point.' To whom the prophet saith: 'Go in peace.' So was he justified. The Jew hearing this, fretteth for anger, and saith: What!

Should the Gentile be justified without the keeping of the law? Should he be compared with us which are circumcised?

#### THE GENTILES JUSTIFIED WITHOUT THE LAW, EVEN WHEN THE LAW AND POLICY OF MOSES WAS YET IN FORCE

Therefore God, long before, when the kingdom of Moses was yet standing and flourishing, did shew that he justified men without the law, as indeed he justified many kings in Egypt and in Babylon; also Job, and many other nations of the East. Moreover, Niniveh a great city was justified, and received the promise of God, that it should not be destroyed. By what means? Not because it heard and fulfilled the law; but because it believed the word of God which the prophet Jonas preached. For so saith the prophet: 'And the Ninivites believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth;' that is to say, they repented. Our adversaries do craftily pass over this word 'believed', and yet the effect of all together resteth therein.

Thou readest not in Jonas: And the Ninivites received the law of Moses, were circumcised, offered sacrifice, fulfilled the works of the law; but, Believing the word, they repented in sackcloth and ashes.

This was done before Christ was revealed, when that faith yet reigned, which believed in Christ to come. If then the Gentiles were justified without the law, and received secretly the Holy Ghost, when the law was yet in force, why should the law be required as necessary to righteousness, which by the coming of Christ is now abolished? Wherefore this is a strong argument, grounded upon the experience of the Galatians: 'Received ye the Holy Ghost by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' (Galatians 2:2). For they were compelled to grant

that they heard nothing of the Holy Ghost, before the preaching of Paul: but when he preached the Gospel, then they received the Holy Ghost.

So we also at this day, convicted by the testimony of our own conscience, are constrained to confess, that the Holy Ghost is not given by the law, but by the hearing of faith. For many heretofore in the Papacy, have gone about with great labor and study, to keep the law, the decrees of the fathers, and the traditions of the Pope; and some, with painful and continual exercises in watching, fasting and praying, did so weary and weaken their bodies, that afterwards they were able to do nothing; whereby notwithstanding they gained nothing else, but that they miserably afflicted and tormented themselves. They could never attain to a quiet conscience, and peace in Christ, but continually doubted of the good will of God towards them. But now, since the Gospel teacheth that the law and works do not justify, but faith in Christ, hereupon followeth a most certain knowledge and understanding, a most joyful conscience, and a true judgment of every kind of life, and of all things else whatsoever. The believing man may now easily judge that the Papacy, with all the religious orders and traditions thereof is wicked: which before he could not do. For so great blindness reigned in the world, that we thought those works which men had devised, not only without the will of God, but also contrary to his commandment, to be much better than those, which the magistrate, the householder, the teacher, the child, the servant etc. did at the commandment of God.

Indeed we ought to have learned by the Word of God, that the religious orders of the Papists (which alone they call holy) are wicked, since there is no commandment of God, or testimony in the holy Scriptures as touching the same. Contrariwise, other orders of life, which have the Word and commandment of God, are holy and ordained of God. But we were then wrapped in such horrible darkness, that we could not truly judge of anything. But now, since the clear light of the Gospel doth appear, all kinds of life in the world are under our sure and infallible judgment. We may boldly pronounce out of the Word of God, that the condition of servants, which before the world is most vile, is far more acceptable unto God than all the orders of monks. For by his Word God commendeth, approveth and adorneth the state of servants, and so doth he not the orders of monks.

Therefore this argument grounded upon experience, ought to prevail with us also. For although many men in the Papacy wrought many and great works, yet could they never be certain of the will of God towards them, but they were always in doubt; they could never attain to the knowledge of God, of themselves, of their calling; they never felt the testimony of the Spirit in their hearts. But now that the truth of the Gospel appeareth, they are fully instructed by the only hearing of faith, in all these things.

It is not without cause that I do so largely intreat of these things, for it seemeth but a very small matter, that the Holy Ghost is received by the only hearing of faith, and that there is nothing else required of us, but that we, setting apart all our works, should give ourselves only to the hearing of the Gospel. Man's heart doth not understand nor believe that so great a treasure, namely, the Holy Ghost, is given by the only hearing of faith; but reasoneth after this manner: Forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death, the giving of the Holy Ghost, of righteousness, and everlasting life, are great things; therefore if thou wilt obtain these inestimable benefits, thou must perform some other great and weighty matter. This opinion the devil doth well like and approve, and also increaseth the same in the heart.

Therefore when reason heareth this: Thou canst do nothing for the obtaining of the forgiveness of sins, but must only hear the Word of God, by and by it crieth out, and saith: Fie, thou makest too small account of the remission of sins, etc. So the inestimable greatness of the gift, is the cause that we cannot believe it; and because this incomparable treasure is freely offered, therefore it is despised.

But this we must needs learn, that forgiveness of sins, Christ and the Holy Ghost are freely given unto us at the only hearing of faith, notwithstanding our horrible sins and demerits. And we must not weigh, how great the thing is that is given, and how unworthy we are of it (for so should the greatness of the gift, and our unworthiness terrify us); but we must think that it pleaseth God freely to give unto us this unspeakable gift, unto us, I say, which are unworthy, as Christ in Luke saith: 'Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give unto you (lo, to give unto you, saith he) the kingdom' (Luke 12:32). To whom? To you unworthy, which are his little flock. If I then be little, and the thing great (nay rather of all things the greatest) which is given unto me, I must think, that he also is great and only great, which giveth it. If he offer it and will give it, I consider not mine own sin and unworthiness, but his fatherly good will towards me which is the giver, and I receive the greatness of the gift with joy and gladness, and am thankful for so inestimable a gift given freely unto me, to me, I say, unworthy, by the hearing of faith.

Here again foolish reason is offended, and reproveth us, saying: Where ye teach men to do nothing at all for the obtaining of so great and inestimable a gift, but to hear the Word of God, this seemeth to tend to the great contempt of grace, and to make men secure, idle and dissolute, so that they slack their hands and do no good at all. Therefore it is not good to preach this doctrine, for it is not true; but men must be urged to labor and exercise themselves unto righteousness, and then shall they obtain this gift. The selfsame thing the Pelagians in times past objected against the Christians. But hear what Paul saith in this place: Ye have received the Holy Ghost, not by your own labor and travail, not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. Briefly, hear what Christ himself saith, and what he answereth to Martha, being very careful, and hardly bearing that her sister Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing his word, should leave her to

minister alone. 'Martha, Martha,' saith he, 'thou carest, and art troubled about many things, but one thing is needful. Mary hath chosen the good part which shall not be taken from her' (Luke 10:41 f.). A man therefore is made a Christian, not by working, but by hearing: wherefore he that will exercise himself to righteousness, must first exercise himself in hearing the Gospel. Now when he hath heard and received the Gospel, let him give thanks to God with a joyful and a glad heart, and afterwards let him exercise himself in those good works which are commanded in the law, so that the law and works may follow the hearing of faith. So may he quietly walk in the light which is Christ, and boldly choose and do works, not hypocritical, but good works indeed, such as he knoweth to please God and to be commanded of him, and contemn all those hypocritical shadows of free-will works. Our adversaries think that faith, whereby we receive the Holy Ghost, is but a light matter: but how high and hard a matter it is, I myself do find by experience, and so do all they which with me do earnestly embrace the same. It is soon said, that by the only hearing of faith, the Holy Ghost is received: but it is not so easily heard, laid hold on, believed and retained, as it is said. Wherefore if thou hear of me that Christ is that Lamb of God, sacrificed for thy sins, see also that thou hear it effectually. Paul very aptly calleth it 'the hearing of faith,' and not the word of faith(although there be small difference); that is, such a word as thou hearing dost believe, so that the word be not only my voice, but is heard of thee, and entereth into thy heart, and is believed of thee: then it is truly and indeed the hearing of faith through the which thou receivest the Holy Ghost; which after thou hast once received, thou shalt also mortify thy flesh.

The faithful do find by their own experience, how gladly they would hold and embrace the Word when they hear it, with a full faith, and abandon this opinion of the law and of their own righteousness: but they feel in their flesh a mighty resistance against the Spirit. For reason and the flesh will needs work together. This saying: 'Ye must be circumcised and keep the law,' cannot be utterly rooted out of our minds, but it sticketh fast in the hearts of all the faithful. There is in the faithful, therefore, a continual conflict between the hearing of faith and the works of the law. For the conscience always murmureth, and thinketh that this is too easy a way, that by the only hearing of the Word, righteousness, the Holy Ghost, and life everlasting is promised unto us. But come once to an earnest trial thereof, and then tell me how easy a thing it is to hear the word of faith. Indeed he which giveth is great: moreover, he giveth great things willingly and freely, and upbraideth no man therewith: but thy capacity is strait and thy faith weak, making it hard for thee, so that thou art not able to receive his proffered gift. But let thy conscience murmur against thee never so much, and let this 'must' come never so often into thy mind, yet stand fast and hold out, until thou overcome this 'must.' So, as faith increaseth by little and little, that opinion of the righteousness of the law will diminish. But this cannot be done without great conflicts.

*Are ye so foolish, that after ye have begun in the spirit, ye would now end in the flesh?*

This argument being concluded, how that the Holy Ghost cometh not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith; he beginneth here to exhort and terrify them from a double danger or incommodity. The first is: 'Are ye so foolish, that after ye have begun in the Spirit, ye would now end in the flesh?' The other followeth: 'Have ye suffered so great things in vain?' As if he said: Ye began in the Spirit; that is, your religion was excellently well begun. As also a little after he saith: 'Ye ran well,' etc. But what have ye gotten thereby? Forsooth ye will now end in the flesh.

Paul setteth here the Spirit against the flesh. He calleth not the flesh (as before I have said) fleshly lust, beastly passions, or sensual appetites, for he intreateth not here of lust and such other fleshly desires, but of forgiveness of sins, of justifying the conscience, of obtaining righteousness before God, of deliverance from the law, sin, and death; and yet notwithstanding he saith here, that they, forsaking the Spirit, do now end in the flesh. Flesh therefore is here taken for the very righteousness and wisdom of the flesh, and the judgment of reason, which seeketh to be justified by the law.

Whatsoever then is most excellent in man, the same here Paul calleth flesh, to wit, the highest wisdom of reason, and the righteousness of the law itself.

And this place must be well considered, because of the slanderous and cavfilling Papists, which wrest the same against us, saying that we in popery began in the Spirit, but now, having married wives, we end in the flesh. As though a single life, or not to have a wife, were a spiritual life; and as though it nothing hindered their spiritual life, if a man, not contented with one whore, have many. They are madmen, not understanding what the Spirit, or what the flesh is. The Spirit is whatsoever is done in us according to the Spirit; the flesh, whatsoever is done in us according to the flesh without the Spirit. Wherefore all the duties of a Christian man, as to love his wife, to bring up his children, to govern his family, honor his parents, obey the magistrate, etc. (which unto them are worldly and carnal) are the fruits of the Spirit, These blind buzzards cannot discern things which are the good creatures of God, from vices.

Here is also to be noted, that Paul having said that the Galatians began in the Spirit, ought now to say in the active voice: 'Ye do end.' Howbeit he doth not so, but he saith: 'Ye are ended,' in the passive voice. For the righteousness of the law, which Paul here calleth the flesh, is so far off from justifying, that they which after the receiving of the Holy Ghost through the hearing of faith, fall back again unto it, are ended in it, that is to say, are utterly destroyed. Therefore whosoever teach that the law ought to be fulfilled to this end, that men might be justified thereby, while they go about to quiet their consciences, they hurt them, and while they would justify them, they condemn them.

Paul hath always a glance at the false prophets; for they still urged the law, saying: Faith only in Christ taketh not away sin, pacifieth not the wrath of God,



justifieth not; therefore if ye will obtained these benefits, ye must not only believe in Christ, but therewith ye must also keep the law, be circumcised, keep the feasts, sacrifices, etc. Thus doing ye shall be free from sin, from the wrath of God, etc. Yea rather, saith Paul, by the selfsame things ye establish unrighteousness, ye provoke the wrath of God, ye add sin to sin, ye quench the Spirit, ye fall away from grace, and utterly reject the same, and ye, together with your disciples, do end in the flesh.

This is the first danger, from the which he terrifieth the Galatians, lest if they seek to be justified by the law, they lose the Spirit, and forego their good beginnings for a wretched end.

### *Have ye suffered so many things in vain?*

The other danger or incommodity is this: 'Have ye suffered so many things in vain?' As though he would say: Consider, not only how well ye began, and how miserably ye have forsaken your good beginning and your course well begun; moreover, that not only ye have lost the first fruits of the Spirit, being fallen again into the ministry of sin and death, and into a doleful and a miserable bondage of the law; but consider this also, that ye have suffered much for the Gospel's sake, and for the name of Christ: to wit, the spoiling of your goods, railings and reproaches, dangers both of bodies and lives, etc. All things were in a happy course and great towardness with you. Ye taught purely, ye lived holily, and ye endured many evils constantly for the name of Christ. But now, all is lost, as well doctrine as faith, as well doing as suffering, as well the Spirit as the fruits thereof in you.

Hereby it appeareth sufficiently, what incommodity the righteousness of the law, or man's own righteousness bringeth: to wit, that they which trust in it do lose at once unspeakable benefits. Now, what a miserable thing is it, so suddenly to lose such inestimable glory and assurance of conscience towards God? Also to endure so many grievous afflictions and perils of goods, wife, children, body and life, and yet notwithstanding to sustain all these things in vain? And out of these two places, much matter might be gathered to set forth and amplify at large the goodly commendation of the righteousness of the law or man's own righteousness, if a man would stand upon every parcel by itself, and declare what spirit it was wherewith they began; what, how great, and how many the afflictions were which they endured for Christ's sake. But no eloquence can sufficiently set forth these matters; for they are inestimable things whereof Paul here entreateth: to wit, the glory of God, victory over the world, the flesh and the devil; righteousness and everlasting life; and on the other side, sin, desperation, eternal death, and hell. And yet notwithstanding in a moment we lose all these incomparable gifts, and procure unto ourselves these horrible and endless miseries, and all by false teachers, when they lead us away from the truth of the Gospel unto false doctrine. And this do they, not only very easily, but also under a shew of great holiness, bring to pass.

### *If notwithstanding it be in vain*

This he addeth as a correction; whereby he mitigateth the reprehension that goeth before, which was somewhat sharp. And this he doth as an Apostle, lest he should terrify the Galatians too much. Although he chide them, yet notwithstanding he always doth it in such sort, that he poureth in sweet oil withal, lest he should drive them to desperation.

He saith therefore: 'If notwithstanding it be in vain.' As if he would say:

Yet I have not cast away all hope of you; but if ye will so end in the flesh, that is to say follow the righteousness of the law and forsake the Spirit, as ye have begun, then know ye, that all your glory and affiance which ye have in God, is in vain, and all your afflictions are unprofitable. Indeed I must needs speak somewhat roughly unto you in this matter; I must be fervent in the defense thereof, and somewhat sharp in chiding of you, especially the matter being so weighty and constraining me thereunto, lest ye should think it to be but a trifle to reject the doctrine of Paul and receive another. Notwithstanding, I will not utterly discourage you, so that ye repent and amend. For sickly and scabbed children may not be cast away, but must be tendered and cherished more diligently than they which are in health. So that Paul here like a cunning physician, layeth all the fault in a manner upon the false apostles, the authors and only cause of this deadly disease. Contrariwise he handleth the Galatians very gently, that by his mildness he might heal them. We therefore by the example of Paul, ought in like manner to reprehend the weak, and so to cure their infirmity, that in the meantime we leave not off to cherish and comfort them, lest if we handle them too sharply, they fall into desperation.

He therefore that ministereth to you the spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it through the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

This argument grounded upon the experience of the Galatians, doth so well like the Apostle, that after he hath reprov'd and terrified them, setting before them a double danger, he now repeateth the same again and that with a more large amplification, saying: 'He which ministereth ' etc. That is to say: Ye have not only received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, but whatsoever ye have either known or done, it came by the hearing of faith.

As though he would say: It was not enough that God gave you once the Spirit; but the same God hath also enriched you with the gifts of the Spirit, and increased the same in you, to the end that when ye have once received the Spirit, it might always grow and be more and more effectual in you.

Hereby it is plain, that the Galatians had wrought miracles, or at the least, had shewed such fruits of faith as the true disciples of the Gospel are wont to

bring forth. For the Apostle elsewhere saith: 'That the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power' (1 Corinthians 4:20). Now, the power is not only to be able to speak of the kingdom of God; but also in very deed to shew that God through his Spirit is effectual in us. So before in the second chapter, he saith of himself: 'He that was effectual in Peter among the Jews, was also effectual in me among the Gentiles' (Galatians 2:8).

When a preacher then so preacheth, that the Word is not fruitless, but effectual in the hearts of the hearers: that is to say, when faith, hope, love, patience etc. do follow, there God ministereth the Spirit, and worketh miracles in the hearers. In like manner Paul saith here, that God hath given his Spirit to the Galatians, and hath wrought miracles among them.

As though he would say: God hath not only brought to pass through my preaching, that ye should believe, but also that ye should live holily, bring forth many fruits of faith, and suffer many afflictions. Also by the same power of the Holy Ghost, of adulterers, of wrathful, impatient, and covetous persons, and of very enemies, ye are become liberal, chaste, gentle, patient, and lovers of your neighbors. Whereupon afterwards he giveth testimony of them in the fourth chapter, that they received him as an angel of God, yea rather as Christ Jesus; and that they loved him so entirely, that they were ready to have plucked out their own eyes for him.

Now, to love thy neighbor so heartily, that thou art ready to bestow thy money, thy goods, thine eyes, and all that thou hast for his salvation, and moreover to suffer patiently all adversities and afflictions, these, no doubt, are the effects and fruits of the Spirit, and these, saith he, ye received and enjoyed before these false teachers came among you. But ye received them not by the law, but of God, who so ministered unto you, and daily increased in you his Holy Spirit, that the Gospel had a most happy course among you, in teaching, believing, working and suffering. Now, seeing ye know these things (being convicted even by the testimony of your own consciences), how cometh it to pass that ye shew not the same fruits that ye did before: that is, that ye teach not truly, that ye believe not faithfully, that ye live not holily, that ye work not rightly, and that ye suffer not patiently: finally, who hath so corrupted you, that you bear not so loving affection towards me, as ye did before? That ye receive not Paul now as an angel of God, nor as Jesus Christ? That ye will not pluck out your eyes to give them unto me? How cometh it to pass, I say, that this fervent zeal of yours waxeth so cold towards me, and that ye now prefer before me, the false apostles, which do so miserably seduce you?

In like manner it happeneth unto us at this day. When we first preached the Gospel, there were very many that favored our doctrine, and had a good and reverend opinion of us; and after the preaching thereof, followed the fruits and effects of faith. But what ensued? A sort of light and brainsick heads sprang up, and by and by destroyed all that we had in long time and with much travail

planted before; and also made us so odious unto them which before loved us dearly, and thankfully received our doctrine, that now they hate nothing more than our name. But of this mischief the devil is the author, working in his members contrary works, which wholly fight against the works of the Holy Ghost. Therefore (saith the Apostle) your experience, O ye Galatians, ought to teach you, that these excellent virtues proceeded not of the works of the law: for as ye had them not before the hearing of faith, so ye have them not now, when the false apostles reign in the midst of you.

We likewise may say at this day to those which vaunt themselves to be Gospellers, and to be freed from the tyranny of the Pope: Have ye overcome the tyranny of the Pope, and obtained liberty in Christ, through the Anabaptists and other such fantastical spirits, or through us who have preached faith in Jesus Christ? Here if they will confess the truth, they must needs say: No doubt, by the preaching of faith. And true it is, that at the beginning of our preaching, the doctrine of faith had a most happy course, and down fell the Pope's pardons, purgatory, vows, masses, and such like abominations, which drew with them the ruin of all popery. No man could justly condemn us; for our doctrine was pure, raising up and comforting many poor consciences, which had been long oppressed with men's traditions under the papacy, which was a plain tyranny, a racking and crucifying of consciences. Many therefore gave thanks unto God, that through the Gospel (which we first, by the grace of God, then preached) they were so mightily delivered out of these snares, and this slaughterhouse of consciences. But when these new fond heads sprang up (who by their denial of the bodily presence of Christ in the Supper, their profanation of Baptism, their destruction of images and abolition of all ceremonies, sought to overthrow popery all at once, and so to darken our repute) then began our doctrine to be evil thought of: for it was commonly bruited abroad that the professors thereof disagreed among themselves.

Whereat many being greatly offended, fell quite from the truth, putting the Papists in comfort, that we, together with our doctrine, should shortly come to nought, and by this means they should recover their former dignity and authority again.

Wherefore, like as the false apostles vehemently contended that the Galatians, now justified by faith in Christ, ought to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, if they would be delivered from their sins, and from the wrath of God, and obtain the Holy Ghost, and yet notwithstanding by the selfsame means they burdened them the more with sins (for sin is not taken away by the law, neither is the Holy Ghost given through it, but only it worketh wrath, and driveth men into great terrors): so at this day these rash heads, which sought to provide for the welfare of the catholic Church, and at once to overthrow and utterly cast out all popery by the abolition of ceremonies, etc., by these self-same things have done no good, but Father harm to the Church: they have not overthrown the papacy, but have more established it.

But if they had, as they began, with a common consent together with us, taught and diligently urged the article of justification; that is to say, that we are justified neither by the righteousness of the law, nor by our own righteousness, but by only faith in Jesus Christ: doubtless this one article, by little and little, as it began, had overthrown the whole papacy, with all her brotherhoods, pardons, religious orders, relics, ceremonies, invocation of saints, purgatory, masses, watchings, vows, and infinite other like abominations. But they leaving off the preaching of faith and true Christian righteousness, have gone another way to work, to the great hindrance both of sound doctrine and of the churches. It hath happened unto them somewhat after the manner of the German proverb about fishing before the net. For they have driven away the fish that the net would have taken, by seeking to catch them with their own hands.

Wherefore the papacy at this day is cast down, not by those tumults of the sectaries, but by the preaching of the article of justification. This article hath not only weakened the kingdom of Antichrist, but it hath also sustained and defended us against his violence. And had we not had this defense, both the sectaries had long since perished, and we together with them. Yet so far off are they from acknowledging this benefit, that (as the Psalmist saith, Psalm 109:5) the love which they owe unto us, they do withhold from us, and with hatred and enmity do furiously assail us. Now the article of justification, which is our sole defence, not only against all the force and craft of men, but also against the gates of hell, is this: that by faith only in Christ, and without works, we are pronounced righteous and saved. If this be the true manner of justifying (as without doubt it is, or else the whole Scripture must needs be done away), then straightway it followeth that we are not pronounced righteous through monkery, vows, masses, or any works. And here without the abolition of any external thing, without tumult, without any force of man, without any attacking of the Sacraments, by the Spirit atone, popery is cast down. Neither is this victory gotten by us, but by Christ whom we preach and confess.

And this that I now say, the thing itself doth testify. For at that time when first the papacy began to totter and fall, the sectaries did nothing at all, for they could do nothing, but held their peace. And we moreover did teach and urge nothing but this article of justification, which alone at that time did threaten the authority of the Pope and lay waste his kingdom. But when the sectaries saw that the papacy did totter and fall, and that the fishes did gather to the net, they sought to destroy and utterly blot out popery all at once, and to snatch from us the glory and take with their own hands all the fishes that were congregated at the net; but they played at the work, for they did not catch them, but only drove them away.

As much therefore as the false apostles did bring righteousness to the Galatians by teaching them that they must observe the law, so did the sectaries overthrow the papacy by their tumults. Images and other abuses in the Church would have fallen down of themselves, if they had but diligently taught the article

of justification. But they were driven by vainglory, for they would gladly have heard it published abroad that they themselves had overthrown the papacy. Wherefore, neglecting the article of justification, they stirred up those tumults whereby they well-nigh overwhelmed us, and confirmed the Papists in their abominations. Such success hath our endeavor when we seek not the glory of God, but our own.

Neither the Pope nor the devil did fear those tumults; but the doctrine of faith, which preacheth that Christ alone is victor over sin, death and the devil, is farsome to him. For it destroyeth his kingdom and (as I have said) it sustaineth and defendeth us at this day against all the gates of hell. And did we not hold fast to this anchor, we should be compelled again to adore the Pope, neither would there be any way or means of resisting him. For should I join myself unto the sectaries, then were my conscience uncertain; for they without any right do set themselves against the Pope, since they seek their own glory and not the glory of God.

Therefore, were I not armed with other weapons than they, I should not dare to attack the papacy, much less to presume that I could lay it waste.

But they say: The Pope is Antichrist! Doubtless; but he in turn replieth, that he hath a ministry of teaching, that with him is the authority to administer the Sacraments, and to bind and to loose, and that he possesseth this power by hereditary right as handed down in succession by the Apostles. Therefore he is not thrust out of his seat by these external tumults, but by this means, if I say: O Pope, I will kiss thy feet, and acknowledge thee to be the supreme Pontiff, if thou wilt adore my Christ, and allow that we have remission of sins and eternal life through his death and resurrection, and not by observation of thy traditions, if thou wilt grant this, I will not take from thee thy crown and authority: but if not, I will constantly cry out that thou art Antichrist, and declare all thy worships and religions to be not only the denial of God, but supreme blasphemy against God, and idolatry. This the sectaries do not, but they seek by external force to take away the Pope's crown and authority; therefore their endeavor is in vain. But this before all must be done, that the Pope's impieties and abominations may be exposed, wherewith under the color of holiness and religion he hath deceived the whole world. If I do this, I shall see what afterward remaineth. For I have taken away the kernel and leave him the husks. They contrariwise do take away the husks and leave him the kernel.

To be brief: as by the works of the law no miracles are wrought, so of those external works which the sectaries do urge, nothing is made in the Church but tumults, more confusion, and hindrance of the Spirit. And this doth experience testify. For they laid not low the Pope, by their overturning of images and attacking of the Sacraments, but they made him the more proud. But by the Spirit he hath been and is still at this day cast down, that is to say, by the preaching of faith, which testifieth that Christ was delivered for our sins. Here the

righteousness and the servitude of the laws of the Pope must needs fall down in ruins. In the meanwhile notwithstanding, I have often declared and still do declare that I am ready to bear the traditions of the Pope, if only he will leave them free, and not bind consciences to them so that men think that they are justified when they keep them and damned when they keep them not. But this he doth not. For if he bound not consciences to his traditions, where were his power? Therefore it is most of all his care to hold men's consciences fast bound and captive with his laws. Hence cometh this saying: Thou canst not be saved except thou obey the Roman See; likewise this thundering and lightning in his bulls: Let him that with bold temerity presumeth to resist, know that he shall bear the wrath of almighty God, etc. Here he altogether taketh away salvation from all that obey not his laws. Contrariwise, he promiseth unto all such as keep them, eternal life.

So he urgeth us into the net of the righteousness of works, as if none might be justified and saved without the observation of his laws. Briefly, he maketh no mention of faith, no, not one word, but teacheth only his own things. But if he would grant, that all his laws avail nothing to righteousness before God, then I in turn would grant him much; but then would his kingdom fall down of itself. For if the Pope lost his power to save and to damn, he would be no more than a mere idol. Briefly: the righteousness of the heart is ignorant of all laws, not only of the Pope, but even of Moses also, since true righteousness cometh not of works of law, but of the hearing of faith, which is followed by the virtues and fruits of the Spirit.

*As Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

Hitherto Paul reasoneth upon the experience of the Galatians, and with this argument he urgeth them vehemently. Ye, saith he, have believed, and believing have done miracles, and have shewed many notable signs; and moreover ye have suffered many afflictions, all which things are the effects and operations, not of the law, but of the Holy Ghost. This the Galatrans were constrained to confess. For they could not deny these things which were before their eyes, and manifest to their senses; and therefore this argument, grounded upon their own experience, is very strong.

Now he addeth the example of Abraham, and rehearseth the testimony of the Scripture. The first is out of Genesis 15:6: 'Abraham believed God,' etc. This place the Apostle her: mightily prosecuteth, as also he did in his Epistle to the Romanes. 'If Abraham,' saith he, 'was justified by the works of the law, he hath righteousness and rejoicing, but not before God, but before men' (Romans 4:2 ff.). For before God he hath sin and wrath.

Now he was justified before God, not because he did work, but because he did believe. For the Scripture saith: 'Abraham believed God, and it was imputed

to him for righteousness.' This place doth Paul there notably set forth and amplify, as it is most worthy: 'Abraham,' saith he, 'was not weak in faith, neither considered he his own body which was now dead, being almost an hundred years old: neither the deadness of Sarah's womb: neither did he doubt of the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, and gave glory to God, being fully assured, that whatsoever God had promised, he was able to do. Now, it is not written for him only, that it was imputed to him for righteousness, but for us also,' etc. (Romans 5:19 ff.).

Paul by these words, 'Abraham believed,' of faith in God, maketh the chiefest worship, the chiefest duty, the chiefest obedience, and the chiefest sacrifice. Let him that is a rhetorician, amplify this place, and he shall see that faith is an almighty thing, and that the power thereof is infinite and inestimable; for it giveth glory unto God, which is the highest thing that can be given unto him. Now, to give glory unto God, is to believe in him, to count him true, wise, righteous, merciful, almighty: briefly, to acknowledge him to be the author and giver of all goodness. This reason doth not, but faith. That is it which maketh us divine people, and (as a man would say) it is the creator of divinity, not in the substance of God, but in us. For without faith God loseth in us his glory, wisdom, righteousness, truth, mercy, etc. To conclude, no majesty or divinity remaineth unto God, where faith is not. And the chiefest thing that God requireth of man is, that he giveth unto him his glory and his divinity: that is to say, that he taketh him not for an idol, but for God; who regardeth him, heareth him, sheweth mercy unto him, helpeth him, etc. This being done, God hath his full and perfect divinity, that is, he hath whatsoever a faithful heart can attribute unto him. To be able therefore to give that glory unto God, it is the wisdom of wisdoms, the righteousness of righteousnesses, the religion of religions, and sacrifice of sacrifices. Hereby we may perceive, what an high and excellent righteousness faith is, and so by the contrary, what an horrible and grievous sin infidelity is.

Whosoever then believeth the Word of God, as Abraham did, is righteous before God, because he hath faith, which giveth glory unto God; that is, he giveth to God that which is due to him (for thus do the jurists define the just man, namely, that he is he which rendereth to every man his due). For faith saith thus: I believe thee, O God, when thou speakest. And what saith God? Impossible things, lies, foolish, weak, absurd, abominable, heretical, and devilish things, if ye believe reason. For what is more absurd, foolish, and impossible, than when God saith unto Abraham that he should have a son of the barren and dead body of his wife Sarah?

So, if we will follow the judgment of reason, God setteth forth absurd and impossible things, when he setteth out unto us the articles of the Christian faith. Indeed, it seemeth to reason an absurd and a foolish thing, that in the Lord's Supper is offered unto us the body and blood of Christ; that Baptism is the laver of the new birth, and of the renewing of the Holy Ghost; that the dead shall rise in the last day; that Christ the Son of God was conceived and carried in the womb



of the Virgin Mary, that he was born, that he suffered the most reproachful death of the Cross, that he was raised up again, that he now sitteth at the right hand of God the Father, and that he hath power both in heaven and in earth. For this cause Paul calleth the Gospel of Christ crucified, the word of the cross and the foolishness of preaching (1 Corinthians 1:18,21), which to the Jews was offensive, and to the Gentiles foolish doctrine. Wherefore reason doth not understand that to hear the Word of God and to believe it, is the most perfect way of worshipping God: but it thinketh that those things which it chooseth and doth of a good intent, as they call it, and of her own devotion, please God. Therefore when God speaketh, reason judgeth his Word to be heresy and the word of the devil, for it seemeth unto it absurd and foolish.

But faith killeth reason, and slayeth that beast which the whole world and all creatures cannot kill. So Abraham killed it by faith in the Word of God, whereby seed was promised unto him of Sarah, who was barren and now past child-bearing. Unto this Word, reason yielded not straightway in Abraham, but it fought against faith in him, judging it to be an absurd, a foolish, and impossible thing, that Sarah, who was now not only ninety years old, but was also barren by nature, should bring forth a son. Thus faith wrestled with reason in Abraham: but herein faith got the victory, killed and sacrificed reason, that most cruel and pestilent enemy of God. So all the godly, entering with Abraham into the darkness of faith, do kill reason, saying: Reason, thou art foolish, thou dost not savor those things which belong unto God; therefore speak not against me, but hold thy peace; judge not, but hear the Word of God and believe it. So the godly by faith kill such a beast as is greater than the whole world, and thereby do offer to God a most acceptable sacrifice and service. And in comparison of this sacrifice and service of the faithful, all the religions of all nations, and all the works of all monks and meritmongers are nothing at all. For by this sacrifice, first, as I said, they kill reason, the greatest and mightiest enemy of God: for reason despiseth God, denieth his wisdom, justice, power, truth, mercy, majesty, and divinity. Moreover, by the same sacrifice they yield glory unto God: that is, they believe him to be just, good, faithful, true, etc., they believe that he can do all things, that all his words are holy, true, lively and effectual, etc., which is a most acceptable obedience unto God. Wherefore there can be no greater or more perfect religion in the world, nor more acceptable service unto God, than faith is.

Contrariwise, the justiciaries, and such as seek righteousness by their own works, lacking faith, do many things. They fast, they pray, they watch, they lay crosses upon themselves. But because they think to appease the wrath of God, and deserve grace by these things, they give no glory to God: that is, they do not judge him to be merciful, true, and keeping promise, etc., but to be an angry judge, which must be pacified by their works. And by this means they despise God, they make him a liar in all his promises, they deny Christ and all his benefits: to conclude, they thrust God out of his seat, and set themselves in his place. For they neglecting and despising the Word of God, do choose unto themselves such a service of God and such works as God hath not commanded.

They imagine that God hath a pleasure therein, and they hope to receive a reward of him for the same.

Therefore they kill not reason, that most bitter enemy of God, but quicken it; and they take from God his majesty and his divinity, and attribute the same unto their own works. Wherefore only faith giveth glory unto God, as Paul witnesseth of Abraham. 'Abraham (saith he) was made strong in faith, and gave glory to God, being fully assured, that whatsoever God had promised he was able to perform, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness' (Romans 4:20 ff.).

Christian righteousness consisteth in faith of the heart, and God's imputation.

It is not without cause that he addeth this sentence out of the fifteenth chapter of Genesis: 'and it was imputed to him for righteousness.' For Christian righteousness consisteth in two things; that is to say, in faith of the heart, and in God's imputation. Faith is indeed a formal righteousness, and yet this righteousness is not enough; for after faith there remain yet certain remnants of sin in our flesh. This sacrifice of faith began in Abraham, but at the last it was finished in death. Wherefore the other part of righteousness must needs be added also to perfect the same in us: that is to say, God's imputation. For faith giveth not enough to God formally, because it is imperfect, yea rather our faith is but a little spark of faith, which beginneth only to render unto God his true divinity. We have received the first fruits of the Spirit, but not yet the tenths; neither is reason utterly killed in this life. Which may appear by our concupiscence, wrath, impatience, and other fruits of the flesh and of infidelity yet remaining in us. Yea, the holiest that live, have not yet a full and continual joy in God, but have their sundry passions, sometimes sad, sometimes merry, as the Scriptures witness of the prophets and Apostles. But such faults are not laid to their charge because of their faith in Christ, for otherwise no man should be saved. We conclude therefore upon these words: 'It was imputed to him for righteousness', that righteousness indeed beginneth through faith, and by the same we have the first fruits of the Spirit; but because faith is weak, it is not made perfect without God's imputation. Wherefore faith beginneth righteousness, but imputation maketh it perfect unto the day of Christ.

The popist sophisters and schoolmen dispute also of imputation when they speak of the good acceptance of the work: but besides and clean contrary to the Scripture; for they wrest it only to works. They do not consider the uncleanness and inward poison lurking in the heart, as incredulity, doubting, contemning, and hating of God, which most pernicious and perilous beasts are the fountain and cause of all mischief. They consider no more but outward and gross faults and unrighteousness, which are little rivers proceeding and issuing out of those fountains. Therefore they attribute acceptance to good works; that is to say, that God doth accept our works, not of duty indeed, but of congruence. Contrariwise we, excluding all works, do go to the very head of this beast which is called

Reason, which is the fountain and headspring of all mischiefs. For reason feareth not God, it loveth not God, it trusteth not in God, but proudly contemneth him. It is not moved either with his threatenings or his promises. It is not delighted with his words or works, but it murmureth against him, it is angry with him, judgeth and hateth him: to be short, 'it is an enemy to God' (Romans 8:7), not giving him his glory. This pestilent beast (reason I say) being once slain, all outward and gross sins should be nothing, Wherefore we must first and before all things go about by faith, to kill infidelity, the contempt and hating of God, murmuring against his judgment, his wrath, and all his words and works; for then do we kill reason, which can be killed by none other means but by faith, which in believing God, giveth unto him his glory, notwithstanding that he speaketh those things which seem both foolish, absurd, and impossible to reason; notwithstanding also, that God setteth forth himself otherwise than reason is able either to judge or conceive, that is to say, after this manner: I will accept and pronounce thee as righteous, not for the keeping of the law, not for thy works and thy merits, but for thy faith in Jesus Christ mine only begotten Son, who was born, suffered, was crucified, and died for thy sins; and that sin which remaineth in thee, I will not impute unto thee. If reason then be not killed, and all kinds of religion and service of God under heaven that are invented by men to get righteousness before God, be not condemned, the righteousness of faith can take no place.

When reason heareth this, by and by it is offended; it rageth and uttereth all her malice against God, saying: Are then good works nothing? Have I then labored and borne the burden and heat of the day in vain? Hereof rise those uproars of nations, kings and princes, against the Lord and his Christ (Psalm 2:2). For the world neither will nor can suffer that her wisdom, righteousness, religions, and worshippings should be reprov'd and condemned. The Pope, with all his popish rabblement, will not seem to err, much less will he suffer himself to be condemned.

Wherefore let those which give themselves to the study of the holy Scripture, learn out of this saying: 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness,' to set forth truly and rightly this true Christian righteousness after this manner: that it is a faith and confidence in the Son of God, or a confidence of the heart in God through Jesus Christ; and let them add this clause as a difference: Which faith and confidence is accounted righteousness for Christ's sake. For these two things (as I said before) work Christian righteousness: namely, faith in the heart, which is a gift of God and assuredly believeth in Christ; and also that God accounteth this imperfect faith for perfect righteousness, for Christ's sake, in whom I have begun to believe. Because of this faith in Christ, God seeth not my doubting of his goodwill towards me, my distrust, heaviness of spirit, and other sins which are yet in me. For as long as I live in the flesh, sin is truly in me. But because I am covered under the shadow of Christ's wings, as is the chicken under the wing of the hen, and dwell without all fear under that most ample and large heaven of the forgiveness of sins, which is spread over me, God covereth and pardoneth the remnant of sin in me: that is to say, because of that

faith wherewith I began to lay hold upon Christ, he accepteth my imperfect righteousness even for perfect righteousness, and counteth my sin for no sin, which notwithstanding is sin indeed.

So we shroud ourselves under the covering of Christ's flesh, who is our 'cloudy pillar for the day, and our pillar of fire for the night' (Exodus 13:21), lest God should see our sin. And although we see it, and for the same do feel the terrors of conscience, yet flying unto Christ our mediator and reconciler (through whom we are made perfect), we are sure and safe: for as all things are in him, so through him we have all things, who also doth supply whatsoever is wanting in us. When we believe this, God winketh at the remnants of sin yet sticking in our flesh, and so covereth them, as if they were no sin. Because, saith he, thou believest in my Son, although thou have many sins, yet notwithstanding they shall be forgiven thee, until thou be clean delivered from them by death.

Let Christian learn with all diligence to understand this article of Christian righteousness, which the sophisters neither do nor can understand. But let them not think that they can learn it thoroughly in one lesson. Wherefore let them read Paul, and read him again, both often and with great diligence, and let them compare the first with the last; yea let them compare Paul wholly and fully with himself: then shall they find it to be true, that Christian righteousness consisteth in these two things: namely, in faith which giveth glory unto God, and in God's imputation. For faith is weak (as I have said) and therefore God's imputation must needs be joined withal: that is to say, that God will not lay to our charge the remnant of sin, that he will not punish it, nor condemn us for it; but will cover it and will freely forgive it, as though it were nothing at all; not for our sake, neither for our worthiness and works, but for Jesus Christ's sake in whom we believe.

Thus a Christian man is both righteous and a sinner, holy and profane, an enemy of God and yet a child of God. These contraries no sophisters will admit, for they know not the true manner of justification. And this was the cause why they constrained men to work well so long, until they should feel in themselves no sin at all. Whereby they gave occasion to many (which, striving with all their endeavor to be perfectly righteous, could not attain thereunto) to become stark mad; yea and infinite number also of those which were the authors of this devilish opinion, at the hour of death were driven unto desperation. Which thing had happened unto me also, if Christ had not mercifully looked upon me, and delivered me out of this error.

Contrariwise, we teach and comfort the afflicted sinner after this manner:

Brother, it is not possible for thee to become so righteous in this life, that thou shouldest feel no sin at all, that thy body should be clear like the sun, without spot or blemish; but thou hast as yet wrinkles and spots, and yet art thou holy notwithstanding. But thou wilt say: How can I be holy, when I have and feel sin in me? I answer: In that thou dost feel and acknowledge thy sin, it is a good

token; give thanks unto God and despair not. It is one step of health, when the sick man doth acknowledge and confess his infirmity. But how shall I be delivered from sin? Run to Christ the physician, which healeth them that are broken in heart, and saveth sinners.

Follow not the judgment of reason, which telleth thee, that he is angry with sinners; but kill reason and believe in Christ. If thou believe, thou art righteous, because thou givest glory unto God, that he is almighty, merciful, true, etc. Thou justifiest and praisest God: to be brief, thou yieldest unto him his divinity, and whatsoever else belongeth unto him.

And the sin which remaineth in thee, is not laid to thy charge, but is pardoned for Christ's sake in whom thou believest, who is perfectly just; whose righteousness is thy righteousness, and thy sin is his sin.

Here we see that every Christian is a true priest: for first he offereth up and killeth his own reason, and the wisdom of the flesh; then he giveth glory unto God, that he is righteous, true, patient, pitiful, and merciful. And this is that daily sacrifice of the New Testament which must be offered evening and morning. The evening sacrifice is to kill reason; the morning sacrifice is to glorify God. Thus a Christian daily and continually is occupied in this double sacrifice and in the exercise thereof. And no man is able to set forth sufficiently the excellence and dignity of this Christian sacrifice.

Christian righteousness, therefore, as I have said, is the imputation of God for righteousness or unto righteousness, because of our faith in Christ, or for Christ's sake. When the popish schoolmen hear this strange and wonderful definition, which is unknown to reason, they laugh at it. For they imagine that righteousness is a certain quality poured into the soul, and afterwards spread into all the parts of man. They cannot put away the imaginations of reason, which teacheth that a right judgment, and a good will, or a good intent is true righteousness. This unspeakable gift therefore excelleth all reason, that God doth account and acknowledge him for righteous without any works, which embraceth his Son by faith alone, who was sent into the world, was born, suffered, and was crucified etc. for us.

This matter, as touching the words, is easy (to wit, that righteousness is not essentially in us, as the Papists reason out of Aristotle, but without us in the grace of God only and in his imputation; and that there is no essential substance of righteousness in us besides that weak faith or firstfruits of faith, whereby we have begun to apprehend Christ, and yet sin in the meantime remaineth verily in us); but in very deed it is no small or light matter, but very weighty and of great importance. For Christ which is given unto us, and whom we apprehend by faith, hath done no small thing for us, but (as Paul said before): 'He hath loved us and given himself in very deed for us: he was made accursed for us,' etc. (Galatians 2:20; 3:13). And this is no vain speculation, that Christ was delivered for my sins,

and was made accursed for me, that I might be delivered from everlasting death. Therefore to apprehend that Son by faith, and with the heart to believe in him given unto us and for us of God, causeth that God doth account that faith, although it be imperfect, for perfect righteousness.

And here we are altogether in another world, far from reason, where we dispute not what we ought to do, or with what works we may deserve grace and forgiveness of sins; but we are in a matter of most high and heavenly divinity, where we do hear this Gospel or glad tidings, that Christ died for us, and that we, believing this, are counted righteous, though sins notwithstanding do remain in us, and that great sins.

So Christ also defineth the righteousness of faith. 'The Father himself,' saith he, 'loveth you' (John 16:27). Wherefore doth he love you? Not because ye were Pharisees, unprovable in the righteousness of the law, circumcised, doing good works, fasting, etc.; but because 'I have chosen you out of the world' (John 15:19), and ye have done nothing, but that 'ye have loved me and believed that I came out from the Father.' This object 'I' being sent from the Father into the world, pleased you. And because you have apprehended and embraced this object, therefore the Father loveth you, and therefore ye please him. And yet notwithstanding in another place he calleth them evil, and commandeth them to ask forgiveness of their sins. These two things are quite contrary: to wit, that a Christian is righteous and beloved of God, and yet notwithstanding he is a sinner. For God cannot deny his own nature: that is, he must needs hate sin and sinners; and this he doth of necessity, for otherwise he should be unrighteous and love sin. How then can these two contradictories stand together: I am a sinner, and most worthy of God's wrath and indignation; and yet the Father loveth me? Here nothing cometh between, but only Christ the mediator. The Father, saith he, doth not therefore love you because ye are worthy of love, but because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from him.

Thus a Christian man abideth in pure humility, feeling sin in him effectually, and confessing himself to be worthy of wrath, the judgment of God, and everlasting death for the same, that he may be humbled in this life: and yet notwithstanding he continueth still in a pure and holy pride, in the which he turneth unto Christ, and through him he lifteth up himself against this feeling of God's wrath and judgment, and believeth that not only the remnants of sin are not imputed unto him, but that also he is loved of the Father, not for his own sake, but for Christ's sake, whom the Father loveth.

Hereby now we may see, how faith justifieth without works, and yet notwithstanding, how imputation of righteousness is also necessary. Sins do remain in us, which God utterly hateth. Therefore it is necessary that we should have imputation of righteousness, which we obtain through Christ and for Christ's sake, who is given unto us and received of us by faith. In the meantime, as long as we live here, we are carried and nourished in the bosom of the mercy and

long-sufferance of God, until the body of sin be abolished, and we raised up as new creatures in that great day. Then shall there be new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell.

In the meanwhile under this heaven sin and wicked men do well, and the godly also have sin dwelling in them. For this cause Paul (Romans 7:23) complaineth of sin which remaineth in the saints; yet notwithstanding he saith afterwards (Romans 8:1) that there is no damnation to them which are in Christ Jesu. Now, how shall these things, so contrary and repugnant, be reconciled together, that sin in us is no sin, that he which is damnable shall not be condemned, that he which is rejected shall not be rejected, that he which is worthy of the wrath of God and everlasting death shall not be punished? The only reconciler hereof is the mediator between God and man, even the man Jesus Christ, as Paul saith: 'there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesu?'

*Ye know therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

This is the general argument and whole disputation of Paul against the Jews, that they which believe, are the children of Abraham, and not they which are born of his flesh and blood. This disputation Paul vehemently prosecuteth in this place, and in the fourth and ninth chapters to the Romans. For this was the greatest confidence and glory of the Jews: We are the seed and children of Abraham. He was circumcised and kept the law; therefore if we will be the true children of Abraham, we must follow our father, etc. It was, no doubt, an excellent glory and dignity to be the seed of Abraham. For no man could deny but that God spake to the seed and of the seed of Abraham. But this prerogative nothing profited the unbelieving Jews. By reason whereof Paul, especially in this place, mightily striveth against this argument, and wresteth from the Jews this strong affiance in themselves; and this could he, as the elect vessel of Christ, do above all other. For if we at the beginning should have disputed with the Jews without Paul, peradventure we should have prevailed very little against them.

So then Paul contendeth against that confidence of the Jews, which did so proudly boast, saying: 'We are the seed of Abraham' (John 8:33). Well, what then? Abraham was circumcised and kept the law; we do the same.

All this I grant; but will ye therefore look to be justified and saved? Nay not so. But let us come to the patriarch Abraham himself, and let us see by what means he was justified and saved. Doubtless, not for his excellent virtues and holy works; not because he forsook his country, kindred, and father's house; not because he was circumcised and observed the law; not because he was about to offer up in sacrifice at the commandment of God, his son Isaac, in whom he had the promise of posterity: but because he believed God. Wherefore he was not justified by any other means than by faith alone. If ye then will be justified by the law, much more ought Abraham your father to be justified by the law. But

Abraham could not otherwise be justified, nor receive forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost, than by faith alone. Since this is true by the testimony of the Scripture, why stand ye so much upon circumcision and the law, contending that ye have righteousness and salvation thereby, whenas Abraham himself, your father, your fountain and headspring, of whom ye do so much glory, was justified and saved without these by faith alone? What can be said against this argument?

Paul therefore concludeth with this sentence: 'They which are of faith are the children of Abraham', that corporal birth or carnal seed maketh not the children of Abraham before God. As though he would say: There is none before God accounted as the child of this Abraham (who is the servant of God, whom God hath chosen and made righteous by faith) through carnal generation; but such children must be given him before God, as he was a father. But he was a father of faith, was justified and pleased God, not because he could beget children after the flesh, not because he had circumcision and the law, but because he believed in God. He therefore that will be a child of the believing Abraham, must also himself believe, or else he is not a child of the elect, the beloved and the justified Abraham, but only of the begetting Abraham, which is nothing else but a man conceived, born and wrapt in sin, without the forgiveness of sins, without faith, without the Holy Ghost, as another man is, and therefore condemned.

Such also are the children carnally begotten of him, having nothing in them like unto their father, but flesh and blood, sin and death: therefore these are also damned. This glorious boasting then: 'We are the seed of Abraham', is to no purpose.

This argument Paul setteth out plainly in the ninth to the Romans by two examples of the holy Scripture. The first is of Ishmael and Isaac, which were both the seed and natural children of Abraham, and yet notwithstanding Ishmael (which was begotten of Abraham as Isaac was, yea and should also have been the first-begotten, if carnal generation had had any prerogative, or could have made children to Abraham) is shut out, and the Scripture saith: 'in Isaac shall thy seed be called.' The second is of Esau and Jacob, who when they were yet in their mother's womb, and had done neither good nor evil, it was said: 'the elder shall serve the younger. I have loved Jacob, and Esau have I hated.' Therefore it is plain, that they which are of faith, are the children of Abraham.

But some will here object (as the Jews do, and certain cavilling spirits at this day), saying that this word 'faith' in the Hebrew signifieth 'truth,' and therefore we do not rightly apply it; and moreover, that this place out of Genesis 15:6 speaketh of a corporal thing, namely of the promise of posterity, and therefore is not well appllied of Paul to faith in Christ, but ought simply to be understood of the faith of Abraham, whereby he believed according to the promise of God, that he should have seed: and hereby they would prove that the arguments and allegations of Paul do conclude nothing. In like manner they may cavil also, that the place which Paul a little after (Galatians 3:11) allegeth out of Habakkuk, speaketh of



faith as touching the full accomplishing of the whole vision, and not of faith only in Christ, for the which Paul allegeth it. Likewise they may wrest all the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, which speaketh of faith and the examples of faith. By these things such vainglorious and arrogant spirits do hunt for praise, and seek to be counted wise and learned, where they least of all deserve it. But because of the simple and ignorant, we will briefly answer to their cavillations.

To the first I answer thus, that faith is nothing else but the truth of the heart; that is to say, a true and right opinion of the heart as touching God.

Now, faith only thinketh and judgeth rightly of God, and not reason. And then doth a man think rightly of God, when he believeth his Word. But when he will measure God without the Word, and believe him according to his own reason, he hath not the truth of God in his heart, and therefore he cannot think or judge of him as he should do. As for example: when a monk imagineth that his cowl, his shaven crown, and his vows do please God, and that grace and everlasting life is given unto him for the same, he hath no true opinion of God, but false and full of impiety. Truth therefore is faith itself, which judgeth rightly of God, namely, that God regardeth not our works and righteousness, because we are unclean; but that he will have mercy upon us, look upon us, accept us, justify us, and save us, if we believe in his Son, whom he hath sent to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). This is a true opinion of God, and in very deed nothing else but faith itself. I cannot comprehend nor be fully assured by my reason, that I am received into God's favor for Christ's sake; but I hear this to be pronounced by the Gospel, and I lay hold upon it by faith.

To the second cavillation I answer, that Paul doth rightly allege the place out of the fifteenth of Genesis, applying it to faith in Christ. For with faith always must be joined a certain assurance of God's mercy. Now this assurance comprehendeth a faithful trust of remission of sins for Christ's sake. For it is impossible that thy conscience should look for anything at God's hand, except first it be assured, that God is merciful unto thee for Christ's sake. Therefore all the promises are to be referred to that first promise concerning Christ: 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head' (Genesis 3:15). So did also the prophets both understand it and teach it. By this we may see that the faith of the fathers in the Old Testament, and ours now in the New is all one, although they differ as touching their outward objects. Which thing Peter witnesseth in the Acts when he saith: 'which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. But we believe through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be saved even as they did' (Acts 15:10 f.); and Paul saith: 'Our fathers did all drink of that spiritual rock that followed them, which rock was Christ' (1 Corinthians 10:4); and Christ himself saith: 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad' (John 8:56). Notwithstanding, the faith of the fathers was grounded on Christ which was to come, as ours is on Christ which is now come. Abraham in his time was justified by faith in Christ to come, but if he lived at this day, he would be justified by faith in Christ now revealed and present; like as I have said before of Cornelius, who

at the first believed in Christ to come, but being instructed by Peter, he believed that Christ was already come. Therefore the diversity of times never changeth faith, nor the Holy Ghost, nor the gifts thereof. For there hath been, is, and ever shall be one mind, one judgment and understanding concerning Christ, as well in the ancient fathers, as in the faithful which are at this day, and shall come hereafter. So we have as well Christ to come, and believe in him, as the fathers in the Old Testament had. For we look for him to come again in the last day with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead, whom now we believe to be come already for our salvation.

Therefore this allegation of Paul offendeth none but those blind and ignorant cavillers. For us notwithstanding it is not lawful to return unto Christ to come (save inasmuch as we look for him at the last day as our Redeemer which shall deliver us from all evils). For in so doing we should believe that Christ was not yet revealed, but was still to be revealed. And so we should deny Christ and all his benefits, and make God a liar, testifying that he had not yet fulfilled his promises, as do the Jews.

Paul therefore, as I have said, rightly allegeth that place out of Genesis, which speaketh of the faith of Abraham, and applieth it unto faith in Christ.

For all the promises past, were contained in Christ to come. Therefore as well Abraham and the other fathers, as also we, are made righteous by faith in Christ: they by faith in him then to come, we by faith in him now present.

For we entreat now of the nature and manner of justification, which is all one both in them and in us, whether it be in Christ to be revealed, or in Christ now revealed and present. It is enough therefore that Paul sheweth that the law justifieth not, but only faith, whether it be in Christ to come, or in Christ already come.

At this day also Christ to some is present, to other some he is to come. To all believers he is present: to the unbelievers he is not yet come, neither doth he profit them anything at all: but if they hear his Word and believe, then he is present unto them, he justifieth and saveth them.

*Ye know therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

As if he would say: ye know by this example of Abraham, and by the plain testimony of the Scripture, that they are the children of Abraham which are of faith, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, without any respect either to reason, or unto the law, or unto works, or to the carnal generation of the fathers. For not by the law, but by the righteousness of faith, the promise was made unto Abraham, that he should be heir of the world: that is to say, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, and that he should be called the father of nations

And lest the Jews should falsely interpret this word 'nations,' applying it unto themselves alone, the Scripture preventeth this, and saith not only, 'a father of nations,' but 'a father of many nations have I made thee' (Genesis 17:4; Romans 4:7). Therefore Abraham is not only the father of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles. Hereby we may plainly see that the children of Abraham are not the children of the flesh (since he is not the father of the Gentiles according to the flesh), but the children of faith, as Paul in Romans 4 declareth: 'who is the father of us all (as it is written: I have made thee a father of many nations) before God whom he did believe:' so that Paul maketh two Abrahams, a begetting and believing Abraham. Abraham hath children, and is a father of many nations. Where? Before God, where he believeth: not before the world, where he begetteth. For in the world he is a child of Adam, and a sinner or (which is more) he is a worker of righteousness of the law, living after the rule of reason, that is, after the manner of men: but this pertaineth nothing to the believing Abraham.

This example therefore of Abraham wrappeth in it the holy Scripture itself, which saith that we are counted righteous by faith. Wherefore this is a strong and a mighty argument two manner of ways, both by the example of Abraham, and also by the authority of the Scripture.

And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles through faith

These things pertain to the former argument. As if he should say: Ye Jews do immoderately glory in the law; and ye commend and extol Moses above measure because God spake unto him in the bush, etc. As the Jews do proudly brag against us (as I have myself at sundry times heard) saying: Ye Christians have Apostles, ye have a Pope, bishops etc.; but we Jews have patriarchs, prophets, yea we have God himself, who spake unto us in the bush, in Sinai, where he gave unto us the law, and in the Temple, etc. Such a glory and such an excellent testimony allege ye for yourselves against us, if ye can. To this answereth Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles: This your proud bragging and boasting is to no purpose; for the Scripture prevented it, and foresaw long before the law, that the Gentiles should not be justified by the law, but by the blessing of Abraham's seed, which was promised unto him (as Paul saith afterwards) four hundred and thirty years before the law was given. Now the law being given so many years after, could not hinder or abolish this promise of the blessing made unto Abraham, but it hath continued firm, and shall continue for ever. What can the Jews answer to this?

This argument grounded upon the certainty of time, is very strong. The promise of blessing is given unto Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the people of Israel received the law. For it is said to Abraham:

Because thou hast believed God, and hast given glory unto him, therefore thou shalt be a 'father of many nations.' There Abraham by the promise of God is appointed a father of many nations, and the inheritance of the world for his

posterity and issue after him, is given unto him before the law was published. Why do ye then brag, O ye Galatians, that ye obtain forgiveness of sins, and are become children, and do receive the inheritance through the law, which followed a long time, that is to say, four hundred and thirty years after the Promise? In Baptism is the promise of salvation: 'He that believeth etc., shall be saved' (Mark 16:16). If any man here denieth (as the fantastical spirits do) that righttousness and salvation is given unto an infant when first it is baptised, making a mock of the promise on this wise, namely that it availeth when a man is come to the use of reason and is now able to work well, and by doing good works to obtain that which is contained in the promise; also, that Baptism is not a sign of the goodwill of God towards us, but only a mark whereby the believers are discerned from the unbelievers, etc. : such an one doth utterly take away salvation from Baptism, and attribute it unto works. So the false apostles and their disciples did in all things. They preached the law and the glory thereof immoderately, but the promise made unto Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law was given, they neglected and despised, and would in no wise know that Abraham (of whom they gloried notwithstanding as the father of their whole nation) being yet uncircumcised, and living so many ages before the law, was made righteous by no other means than by faith alone, as the Scripture most plainly witnesseth: 'Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness' (Genesis 15:6). Afterwards, when he was now accounted righteous because of his faith, the Scripture maketh mention of circumcision in the seventeenth of Genesis, where it saith: 'This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you' (Genesis 17:10).

With this argument Paul mightily convinceth the false apostles, and sheweth plainly that Abraham was justified by faith only, both without and before circumcision, and also four hundred and thirty years before the law.

This selfsame argument he handleth in the fourth chapter to the Romans: to wit, that righteousness was imputed to Abraham before circumcision, and that he was righteous being yet uncircumcised; much more then he was righteous before the law.

Therefore, saith Paul, the Scripture did well provide against this your glorious bragging of the righteousness of the law and works. When?

Before circumcision and before the law. For the law was given four hundred and thirty years after the promise, whereas Abraham was not only justified without the law and before the law, but was also dead and buried: and his righteousness without the law did not only flourish until the law, but also shall flourish even to the end of the world. If then the father of the whole Jewish nation was made righteous without the law and before the law, much more are the children made righteous by the same means that their father was. Therefore righteousness cometh by faith and not by the law.

Preached the gospel before unto Abraham, saying: in thee shall all the gentiles be blessed.

The Jews do not only lightly pass over, but also do deride, and with their wicked glosses do corrupt these excellent and notable sentences: 'Abraham believed God' etc., 'I have appointed thee a father' etc., and such like, which highly commend faith and contain promises of spiritual things. For they are blind and hard-hearted, and therefore they see not that these places do entreat of faith towards God, and of righteousness before God. With like malice also they handle this notable place of the spiritual blessing: 'In thee all the nations of the earth shall be blessed' (Genesis 12:3). For, say they, to bless signifieth nothing else but to praise, to wish well or pray for prosperity, and [to be blessed is] to be glorious in the sight of the world. After this manner the Jew, say they, which is born of the seed of Abraham, is blessed; and the proselyte or stranger which worshippeth the God of the Jews and joineth himself unto them, is also blessed. Therefore they think that blessing is nothing else but praise and glory in this world; in that a man may glory and vaunt, that he is of the stock and family of Abraham. But this is to corrupt and pervert the sentences of the Scriptures, and not to expound them. By these words, 'Abraham believed,' Paul defineth and setteth before our eyes a spiritual Abraham, faithful, righteous, and having the promise of God; an Abraham, I say, which is not in error, and in the old flesh: which is not born of Adam, but of the Holy Ghost. And of this Abraham renewed by faith and regenerate by the Holy Ghost, speaketh the Scripture, and pronounceth of him, that he should be a father of many nations; also that all the Gentiles should be given unto him for an inheritance, when it saith: 'in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.'

This Paul vehemently urgeth by the authority of the Scripture which saith, 'Abraham believed God,' etc. (Genesis 15). The Scripture then attributeth no righteousness to Abraham, but in that he believeth; and it speaketh of such an Abraham, as he is accounted before God. Such sentences therefore of the Scripture do set forth unto us a new Abraham, which is separate from the carnal marriage and bed, and from the carnal generation, and make him such a one as he is before God; that is to say, believing and justified through faith; to whom now believing God maketh this promise: 'Thou shalt be a father of many nations,' and: 'in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' Whereof this is the meaning (saith Paul): that the Scripture preventeth and beateth down all braggings and boastings of the Jews as touching the law, since the inheritance of the Gentiles was given unto Abraham, not by the law and circumcision, but long before the same, by the only righteousness of faith.

Therefore, whereas the Jews will be counted and called blessed, because they are the Children and seed of Abraham, it is nothing else but a vainglorious brag. It is, no doubt, a great prerogative and glory before the world, to be born of Abraham's seed, as Paul sheweth (Romans 9), but not so before God. Wherefore the Jews do wickedly pervert this place concerning the blessing, in

applying it only to a carnal blessing, and do great injury to the Scripture, which speaketh most manifestly of the spiritual blessing before God, and neither can or ought otherwise to be understood. This is then the true meaning of this place: 'In thee shall be blessed.' In which 'thee?' In thee Abraham believing, or in thy faith, or in Christ (thy seed) to come, in whom thou believest, all the nations of the earth (I say) shall be blessed; that as, all the nations shall be that blessed children, even like as thou art blessed; as it is written, 'so shall thy seed be' (Genesis 15:5).

Hereof it followeth that the blessing and faith of Abraham is the same that ours is; that Abraham's Christ is our Christ; that Christ died as well for the sins of Abraham as for ours. For 'Abraham saw my day and rejoiced' (John 8:56). All things therefore are the same. Wherefore we may in no wise suffer the Jews to make light of this word 'blessing' or to corrupt it.

They look but through a veil into the Scripture, and therefore they understand not what or whereof the promise is which was made to the fathers; which we notwithstanding ought to consider above all things: so shall we see that God speaketh to Abraham the patriarch, not of the law nor of things to be done, but of things to be believed; that is to say, that God speaketh unto him of promises which are apprehended by faith. Now, what doth Abraham? He believeth those promises. And what doth God to that believing Abraham? He imputeth faith unto him for righteousness; and addeth further many more promises: as, 'I am thy defender,' 'In thee shall all nations be blessed', 'Thou shalt be a father of many nations,' 'So shall thy seed be.' These are invincible arguments, against the which nothing can be said, if the places of the holy Scripture be thoroughly considered.

*So then they which are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham*

All the weight and force hereof lieth in these words: 'With faithful Abraham.' For he putteth a plain difference between Abraham and Abraham; of one and the selfsame person making two. As if he said: There is a working, and there is a believing Abraham. With the working Abraham we have nothing to do. For if he be justified by works, he hath to rejoice, but not with God. Let the Jews glory as much as they will of that begetting Abraham, which is a worker, is circumcised, and keepeth the law: but we glory of the faithful Abraham, of whom the Scripture saith, that he received the blessing of righteousness through his faith, not only for himself, but also for all those which believe as he did; and so the world was promised to that Abraham which believed. Therefore all the world is blessed; that is to say, receiveth imputation of righteousness, if it believe as Abraham did.

Wherefore the blessing is nothing else but the promise of the Gospel. And that all nations are blessed, is as much to say, as all nations shall hear the blessing; that is, the promise of God shall be preached and published by the Gospel among all nations. And out of this place the prophets have drawn many

prophecies by a spiritual understanding: as, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession' (Psalm 2:8); and again, 'Their voice hath gone through all the earth' (Psalm 19:4). Briefly, all the prophecies of the kingdom of Christ, and of the publishing of the Gospel throughout all the world, have sprung out of this place: 'In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' Wherefore, to say that the nations are blessed, is nothing else but that righteousness is freely given unto them; or that they are counted righteous before God, not by the law, but by the hearing of faith; for Abraham was not justified by any other means than by hearing the word of promise, of blessing, and of grace, Therefore, like as Abraham obtained imputation of righteousness by the hearing of faith; even so did all the Gentiles obtain, and yet do obtain the same. For the same Word that was first declared unto Abraham, was also afterward published to all the Gentiles.

Hereby then we see that to bless signifieth nothing else, but (as I said before) to preach and teach the word of the Gospel, to confess Christ, and to spread abroad the knowledge of him among all the Gentiles. And this is the priestly office and continual sacrifice of the Church in the New Testament, which distributeth this blessing by preaching, by ministering of the Sacraments, by absolving the penitent, by comforting the brokenhearted, by distributing the word of grace which Abraham had, and which was also his blessing; which when he believed, he received the blessing. So we also believing the same, are blessed. And this blessing is a great glory, not before the world, but before God. For we have heard that our sins are forgiven us, and that we are accepted of God; that God is our Father, and that we are his children; with whom he will not be angry, but will deliver us from sin, from death and all evils, and will give unto us righteousness, life, and eternal salvation. Of this blessing (as I have said) do the prophets preach in every place, who did not so coldly consider those promises made unto the fathers as the wicked Jews did, and as the popish schoolmen and the sectaries do at this day, but did read them and weigh them with great diligence, and also drew out of those promises whatsoever they prophesied concerning Christ or his kingdom. So the prophecy of Hosea: 'I will redeem them from the power of the grave: I will deliver them from death:

O death, I will be thy death: O grave, I will be thy destruction' (Hoseah 13:14), and such-like places of the other prophets, did all spring out of these promises, in the which God promised to the fathers the bruising of the serpent's head and the blessing of all nations.

Moreover, if the nations be blessed, that is to say, if they be accounted righteous before God, it followeth that they are free from sin and death, and are made partakers of righteousness, salvation, and everlasting life, not for their works, but for their faith in Christ. Wherefore that place of Genesis 12:3, 'In thee shall all the nations be blessed,' speaketh not of the blessings of the mouth, but of such a blessing as belongeth to the imputation of righteousness, which is available before God, and redeemeth from the curse of sin, and from all those

evils that do accompany sin. Now this blessing is received only by faith. For the text saith plainly: 'Abraham believed, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness.' Wherefore it is a mere spiritual blessing: and there is no blessing indeed but this; which, although it be accursed in the world (as indeed it is) yet is it available before God. This place therefore is of great force, that they which are of faith, are become partakers of this promise of the blessing made unto the believing Abraham. And by this means Paul preventeth the cavillation of the Jews, which brag of a begetting and a working Abraham, and righteous before men, and not of a believing Abraham.

Now, like as the Jews do glory only of a working Abraham, even so the Pope setteth out only a working Christ, or rather an example of Christ. He that will live godly (saith he) must walk as Christ hath walked, according to his own saying in John 13:15: 'I have given you an example, that you should do even as I have done unto you.' We deny not but that the faithful ought to follow the example of Christ, and to work well; but we say that they are not justified thereby before God. And Paul doth not here reason what we ought to do, but by what means we are made righteous. In this matter we must set nothing before our eyes, but Jesus Christ dying for our sins and rising again for our righteousness; and him must we apprehend by faith, as a gift, not as an example. This, reason understandeth not; and therefore as the Jews follow a working, and not a believing Abraham, even so the Papists, and all that seek righteousness by works, do behold and apprehend, not a justifying, but a working Christ; and by this means they swerve from Christ, from righteousness and salvation. And like as the Jews which were saved, ought to follow the believing Abraham; so we also, if we will be delivered from our sins and be saved, must take hold of the justifying and saving Christ, whom Abraham himself also by faith did apprehend, and through him was blessed.

It was indeed a great glory that Abraham received circumcision at the commandment of God, that he was endued with excellent virtues, that he obeyed God in all things; as it is also a great praise and felicity to follow the example of Christ working, to love thy neighbor, to do good to them that hurt thee, to pray for thine enemies, patiently to bear the ingratitude of those which render evil for good: but all this availeth nothing to righteousness before God. The excellent deeds and virtues of Abraham were not the cause that he was counted righteous before God; so likewise the imitation and following of the example of Christ doth not make us righteous before God. For, to make us righteous before God, there is far more excellent price required, which is neither the righteousness of man, nor yet of the law. Here we must have Christ to bless us and save us, like as Abraham had him for his blesser and savior. How? Not by works, but by faith. Wherefore, as there is great difference between the believing and the working Abraham; so there is great difference between Christ blessing and redeeming, and Christ working and giving example. Now Paul speaketh here of Christ redeeming, and Abraham believing; and not of Christ giving example, or of



Abraham working. Therefore he addeth purposely, and that with great vehemency: 'They which are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.'

Wherefore we must separate the believing and the working Abraham as far asunder as there is distance between heaven and earth. He that believeth in Christ, is altogether a divine person, the child of God, the inheritor of the world, a conqueror of sin, death, the world and the devil: therefore he cannot be praised and magnified enough. Let us not suffer this faithful Abraham to lie hid in his grave, as he is hid from the Jews; but let us highly extol him and magnify him; and let us fill both heaven and earth with his name; so that in respect of this faithful Abraham, we see nothing at all in the working Abraham. For when we speak of this faithful Abraham, we are in heaven. But afterwards, doing those things which the working Abraham did, which were carnal and earthly, and not divine and heavenly (save inasmuch as they were given unto him of God), we are among men in earth. The believing Abraham therefore filleth both heaven and earth. So every Christian with his faith filleth heaven and earth; so that besides it, he ought to behold nothing.

Now, by these words, 'shall be blessed,' Paul gathereth an argument of the contrary: for the Scripture is full of oppositions, as when two contraries are compared together. And it is a point of cunning to mark well these oppositions in the Scriptures, and by them to expound the sentences thereof. As here this word 'blessing' importeth also the contrary: that is to say, 'malediction.' For when the Scripture saith that all nations which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham, it followeth necessarily that all, as well Jews as Gentiles, are accursed without faith, or without the faithful Abraham. For seeing the promise of blessing for all nations was given to Abraham, there is plainly no blessing to be looked for, but only in the promise made unto Abraham, now published by the Gospel throughout the whole world. Therefore, whatsoever is without that blessing, is accursed.

*And this Paul sheweth plainly when he saith:  
For as many as are of the works of the law, are accursed*

Here ye see that the curse is as it were a flood, swallowing up whatsoever is without Abraham; that is to say, without faith and the promise of the blessing of Abraham. Now if the law itself, given by Moses at the commandment of God, maketh subject to the curse them which are under it, much more shall the laws and traditions so do, which are devised by man's reason. He therefore that will avoid the curse, must lay hold upon the promise of blessing, or upon the faith of Abraham, or else he shall remain under the curse. Upon this place therefore, 'shall be blessed in thee,' it followeth that all nations, whether they were before Abraham, in his time, or after him, are accursed, and shall abide under the curse for ever, unless they are blessed in the faith of Abraham, unto whom the promise of the blessing was given to be published by his seed throughout the whole world.

To know these things it is very profitable, for they help greatly to comfort troubled and afflicted consciences; and moreover they teach us to separate very far the righteousness of faith from the righteousness of the flesh, or civil righteousness. For we must note that Paul is here in hand, not with a matter of policy, but with a divine and spiritual matter, lest any mad brain should cavil, and say that he curseth and condemneth politic laws and magistrates. Here Jerome laboureth, saying nothing to the point, and the popish sophisters are more dumb than fishes. Wherefore the readers must be admonished that in this place there is nothing handled as touching civil laws, manners, or matters political, (which are the ordinances of God, and good things, and the Scripture elsewhere approveth and commendeth the same), but of a spiritual righteousness, by the which we are justified before God, and are called the children of God in the kingdom of heaven. To be brief, there is nothing handled here concerning the bodily life, but concerning everlasting life, where no blessing is to be hoped for, or righteousness to be sought, either through the law, or the traditions of men, or whatsoever can be named in this life, besides the promise of Abraham's blessing. Let civil laws and ordinances abide in their place and order; let the magistrate make never so good and excellent laws: yet notwithstanding they deliver no man from the curse before God. The kingdom of Babylon ordained of God, and by him committed unto kings, had excellent laws, and all nations were commanded to obey them: notwithstanding, the obedience of the laws did not save it from the curse of the law of God. In like manner we obey the laws of princes and magistrates, but we are not therefore righteous before God: for here we are in another matter.

It is not without cause that I do so diligently teach and repeat this distinction; for the knowledge thereof is very necessary. Albeit there are few that mark it or understand it indeed. Again, the confounding and mingling together of the heavenly and the civil righteousness, is very easy. In the civil righteousness we must have regard to laws and works; but in the spiritual, divine and heavenly righteousness, we must utterly reject all laws and works, and set the only promise and blessing of Abraham before our eyes, which layeth before us Christ the giver of this blessing and grace, and our only savior. So that this spiritual righteousness, secluding the law and all works, looketh only unto the grace and blessing which is given by Christ, as it was promised to Abraham, and of him believed.

Hereby we may plainly see that this argument is invincible. For if we must hope to receive this blessing by Christ alone, then it must needs follow on the contrary, that it is not received by the law. For the blessing was given to faithful Abraham before the law and without the law. Now like as Abraham believed in Christ which was to come, the giver of the blessing: so and by the same faith we believe in Christ which is come and present, and so are we now justified by faith, as Abraham was then justified by faith.

They therefore which are under the law, are not blessed, but remain under the curse.

This the Pope and bishops do not believe, nor can believe, neither can they abide this doctrine. Yet must we not hold our peace, but must confess the truth and say, that the papacy is accursed; yea, all the laws and civil ordinances of the Emperor are accursed; for according to Paul, whatsoever is without the promise and faith of Abraham, is accursed. When our adversaries hear this, by and by they pervert and slander our words, as though we taught that the magistrates should not be honored, but that we raise up seditions against the Emperor, that we condemn all laws, that we overthrow and destroy commonweals, etc. But they do us great wrong.

For we put a difference between the corporal and the spiritual blessing, and we say that the emperor is blessed with a corporal blessing. For to have a kingdom, laws and civil ordinances, to have a wife, children, house and lands, is a blessing. For all these things are the good creatures and gifts of God, But we are not delivered from the everlasting curse by this corporal blessing, which is but temporal and must have an end. Therefore we condemn not laws, neither do we stir up sedition against the Emperor; but we teach that he must be obeyed, that he must be feared, revered and honored, but yet civilly. But when we speak of the blessing after the manner of divines, then we say boldly with Paul, that all things which are without the faith and promise of Abraham, are accursed and abide under that everlasting curse of God. For there we must look for another life after this, and another blessing after this corporal blessing.

To conclude, we say that all corporal things are the good creatures of God.

Therefore (as I have said) to have a wife, children, goods, to have laws and politic ordinances and ceremonies, are the good blessings of God in their place; that is to say, they are temporal blessings belonging to this life. But these blessings the justiciaries and law-workers of all ages, as the Jews, Papists, Sectaries, and such like, do confound and mingle together. For they put no difference between corporal and spiritual blessings. Therefore they say: 'We have a law, and this law is good, holy, and righteous; therefore we are justified through it.' Who denieth but that the law is good, holy, and righteous? But yet it is also the law of malediction, of sin, of wrath, and of death. Wherefore we must make here a distinction between the corporal and spiritual blessing, and say that God hath a double blessing: one corporal for this life, and another spiritual for the everlasting life.

Therefore, to have riches, children, and such like, we say it is a blessing, but in his degree: that is to say, in this life present. But as touching life everlasting, it is not enough to have corporal blessings; for the very wicked do therein abound most of all. It is not sufficient that we have civil righteousness or the righteousness of the law; for therein also the wicked do specially flourish. These

things God distributeth in the world freely, and bestoweth them both upon the good and bad, like as he suffereth the sun to rise both upon the good and the evil, and sendeth rain upon the righteous and unrighteous (Matthew 5:45); for he is liberal unto all. And to him it is a small matter to put all creatures under the feet of the wicked, Romans 8:20: 'The creature is subject to vanity, not of his own will.'

They therefore which have but only these corporal blessings, are not the children of God, blessed before God spiritually, as was Abraham; but they are under the curse, as Paul here saith: 'Whosoever are under the works of the law are under the curse.'

Paul might have said by a general proposition: Whatsoever is without faith, is under the curse. He saith not so, but he taketh that which besides faith, is the best, the greatest and most excellent among all corporal blessings of the world: to wit, the law of God. The law, saith he, indeed is holy and given of God; notwithstanding it doth nothing else but make all men subject to the curse, and keep them under the same. Now if the law of God do bring men under the curse, much more may the same be said of inferior laws and blessings. And that it may be plainly understood what Paul calleth it to be under the curse, he declareth by this testimony of the Scripture, saying:

For it is written: cursed is every man that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them (Deuteronomy 27:26).

Paul goeth about to prove by this testimony taken out of Deuteronomy, that all men which are under the law, or under the works of the law, are accursed, or under the curse; that is to say, under sin, the wrath of God, and everlasting death. For he speaketh not (as I have said before) of a corporal or politic, but of a spiritual and eternal curse, which must needs be the curse of everlasting death and hell. And this is a wonderful manner of proving. For Paul proveth this affirmative sentence: 'Whatsoever are of the works of the law, are under the curse,' by this negative, which he borroweth out of Moses: 'Cursed is every one that abideth not in all things,' etc. Now these two sentences of Paul and Moses seem clean contrary. Paul saith: Whosoever shall do the works of the law, is accursed.

*Moses saith: Whosoever shall not do the works of the law, is accursed.*

How shall these two sayings be reconciled together? Or else (which is more) how shall the one be proved by the other? What manner of proving were it, I pray you, if I should seek to prove this sentence: If thou keep the commandments of God, thou shalt enter into life? Should I not prove the contrary by the contrary? Truly a fine manner of proving! And yet this proof of Paul is very similar. This

place no man understandeth, unless he also know and understand the article of justification. Jerome labourerth abundantly, but leaveth it unexplained.

Paul, no doubt, being among the Galatians, had before more largely entreated of this matter: for else they could not have understood it, seeing he doth here but touch it by the way. But because they had heard him declare the same unto them before, they being now again put in mind thereof, do call it to remembrance. And these two sentences are not repugnant, but do very well agree. We also do teach in like manner: that the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified (Romans 2:13); and contrariwise: they that are of the works of the law, are under the curse. For the article of justification teacheth, that whatsoever is without the faith of Abraham, is accursed: and yet notwithstanding the justification of the law must be fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4). To a man that is ignorant of the doctrine of faith, these two sentences seem to be quite contrary, and as utterly foolish as to say: If thou shalt have fulfilled the law, thou shalt not have fulfilled it; but if thou shalt not have fulfilled it, thou shalt have fulfilled it.

First of all therefore, we must mark well whereupon Paul entreateth in this place, whereabout he goeth, and how he looketh into Moses. He is here (as before I have often said) in a spiritual matter, separated from policy and from all laws, and he looketh into Moses with other eyes than the hypocrites and false apostles do, and expoundeth the law spiritually.

Wherefore the whole effect of the matter consisteth in this word 'to do.'

Now to do the law, is not only to do it outwardly, but to do it truly and perfectly. There be two sorts then of doers of the law: the first are they which are of the works of the law, against whom Paul inveigheth throughout all this Epistle. The other sort are they which are of faith, of whom we will speak hereafter. Now, to be of the law, or of the works of the law, and to be of faith, are quite contrary, yea even as contrary as God and the devil, sin and righteousness, death and life. For they are of the law, which would be justified by the law. They are of faith, which do assuredly trust that they are justified through mercy alone for Christ's sake. He which saith that righteousness is of faith, curseth and condemneth the righteousness of works. Contrariwise, he which saith that righteousness is of the law, curseth and condemneth the righteousness of faith. Therefore they are altogether contrary the one to the other. And Paul speaketh not here of the law and works in respect of their essence, but of the use and opinion of them which consisteth herein, that the hypocrites do seek to be justified by the law and works.

He that considereth this, shall easily understand, that to observe the law, is not to do that which is commanded in the law in outward shew only (as the hypocrites imagine), but in spirit: that is to say, truly and perfectly. But where

shall we find him that will so accomplish the law? Let us see him and we will praise him. Here our adversaries have their answer ready, saying:

The doers of the law shall be justified (Romans 2:13).’ Very well. But let us first define who be these doers of the law. They call him a doer of the law, which doth the works of the law, and so by those works going before, is justified. This is not to do the law according to Paul: for as I have said, to be of the works of the law, and to be of faith, are contrary things.

Therefore to seek to be justified by the works of the law, is to deny the righteousness of faith. Wherefore these justiciaries and law-workers, when they do the law, even in so doing deny the righteousness of faith, and sin against the first, the second, and third commandment, yea even against the whole law. For God commandeth that we should worship him in faith, and in the fear of his name. On the contrary they make righteousness of works, without faith and against faith: therefore in that they do the law, they do clean contrary to the law, and sin most deadly. For they deny the righteousness of God, his mercy and his promises: they deny Christ with all his benefits, and in their heart they establish, not the righteousness of the law (which they understand not, and much less do it), but a mere fancy and an idol of the law. Therefore we must needs say, that not only in doing of the law, they do it not, but also they sin, and deny the Divine Majesty in all his promises. And to this end the law was not given.

Wherefore they, not understanding the law, abuse the law, and as Paul saith: ‘They being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God’ (Romans 10:3). For they are blind, and know not how they ought to judge of faith and of the promises, and therefore without all understanding they rush into the Scripture, taking hold but of one part thereof, to wit the law, and this they imagine that they are able to fulfill by works. But this is a very dream, a bewitching and illusion of the heart; and that righteousness of the law, which they think they do fulfill, is nothing else in very deed, but idolatry and blasphemy against God.

Therefore it cannot be but they must needs abide under the curse.

It is impossible therefore that we should do the law in such sort as they imagine, and much less that we should be justified thereby. This thing first the law itself testifieth, which hath a clean contrary effect: for it increaseth sin, it worketh wrath, it accuseth, it terrifieth and condemneth. How then should it justify? Moreover, the promise also sheweth the very same thing.

For It was said unto Abraham: In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.’ There is no blessing therefore but in the promise of Abraham; and if

thou be without that promise, thou art under the curse. If thou be under the curse, thou fulfillst not the law, because thou art under sin, the devil, and everlasting death: all which do assuredly follow the curse. To conclude: if righteousness should come by the law, then should the promise of God be in vain, and in vain should he pour out his blessing in so great abundance. Therefore when God saw that we could not fulfill the law, he provided for this long before the law, and promised the blessing to Abraham, saying: 'In thee shall all the nations be blessed.' And so hath he testified that all the nations should be blessed, not by the law, but through the promise made unto Abraham. They therefore that lay hold on the law, and seek to be justified thereby, despising the promise, are accursed.

Wherefore 'to do' is first of all to believe, and so through faith to perform the law. We must first receive the Holy Ghost, wherewith we being lightened and made new creatures, begin to do the law, that is to say, to love God and our neighbor. But the Holy Ghost is not received through the law (for they which are under the law, as Paul saith, are under the curse), but by the hearing of faith, that is to say, through the promise. We must be blessed only with Abraham in the promise made unto him, and in his faith.

Therefore before all things, we must hear and receive the promise, which setteth out Christ, and offereth him to all believers; and when they have taken hold upon him by faith, the Holy Ghost is given unto them for his sake. Then do they love God and their neighbor, then do they good works, then do they carry the cross patiently. This is to do the law indeed; otherwise the law remaineth always undone. Wherefore if thou wilt define truly and plainly what it is to do the law, it is nothing else, but to believe in Jesus Christ, and when the Holy Ghost is received through faith in Christ, to work those things which are commanded in the law: and otherwise we are not able to perform the law. For the Scripture saith, that there is no blessing without the promise, no not in the law. It is impossible therefore, to accomplish the law without the promise, which is the preaching of Christ who was promised to Abraham, that through him the world should be blessed.

There is not one therefore to be found in all the world, unto whom this name and title, to be called a doer of the law, appertaineth, without the promise of the Gospel. Wherefore this word 'doer of the law' is a feigned term, which no man understandeth unless he be without and above the law in the blessing and faith of Abraham. So that the true doer of the law is he, who receiving the Holy Ghost through faith in Christ, beginneth to love God and to do good unto his neighbor. So that this word 'to do' must comprehend faith also which maketh the tree, and when the tree is made, then follow the fruits. The tree must be first, and then the fruit. For the apples make not the tree, but the tree maketh the apples. So faith first maketh the person which afterwards bringeth forth works. Therefore to do the law without faith, is to make the apples of wood and earth without the tree: which is not to make apples, but mere fantasies. Contrariwise, if the tree be

made, that is to say, the person or doer, which is made through faith in Christ, works will follow. For the doer must needs be before the things which are done, and not the things which are done before the doer.

The doer then is not so called of the things that are done, but of the things that are to be done. For Christians are not made righteous in doing righteous things, but being now made righteous by faith in Christ, they do righteous things. In politic matters it cometh so to pass, that the doer or worker is made of the things which are wrought, as a man in often playing the zither (as Aristotle saith) becometh a zitherist: but in divine matters the workers are not made of the works going before, but the persons made and framed already by faith, do now become doers and workers. Of such speaketh Paul when he saith: 'The doers of the law shall be justified' (Romans 2:13), that is, shall be counted righteous.

Yea, the very sophisters and schoolmen are compelled to confess, and so they teach also, that a moral work outwardly done, if it be not done with a pure heart, a good will, and true intent, it is but hypocrisy. And hereof cometh the proverb among the Germans: The cowl covereth many a knave.

For the vilest and wickedest knave in the world may counterfeit the same works that a godly man worketh by faith. Judas did the same works that the other Apostles did. What fault was there in the works of Judas, seeing he did the selfsame works that the other Apostles did? Here mark what the popish sophister answereth out of his moral philosophy. Although he did the selfsame works (saith he) which the other Apostles did, notwithstanding, because the person was reprobate, and the judgment of reason perverse, therefore his works were hypocritical and not true, as were the works of the other Apostles, how like soever they seemed to be in outward shew. Wherefore they themselves are constrained to grant that in politic and external matters, works do not justify, unless there be joined withal an upright heart, will, and judgment. How much more are they compelled to confess the same in spiritual matters, where before all things, there must be a knowledge of God, and faith which may purify the heart? They walk therefore in works and in the righteousness of the law, as Judas did in the works of the Apostles; not understanding what they say or whereof they speak. And although Paul saith plainly everywhere that the law justifieth not, but worketh wrath, uttereth sin, revealeth the indignation and judgment of God, and threateneth everlasting death: yet notwithstanding, reading these things, they see them not, much less do they understand them. Therefore they deserve not to be called hypocrites, but visors and shadows of disguised hypocrites, most miserably bewitched, in that they dream that they are justified by the works of the law. Wherefore, as I have said, this word 'doer of the law,' as they define it, is an imagined term, a very monster, and nowhere to be found.

Wherefore, when Paul proveth this place, 'Whosoever are of the works of the law, are under the curse,' by this sentence of Moses, 'Cursed is every one that abideth not in all that is written in this book,' he proveth not one contrary by



another, as at the first sight it may appear, but he proveth it rightly and in due order. For Moses meaneth and teacheth the selfsame thing that Paul doth, when he saith, 'Cursed is every one which doth not all,' etc. But no man doth them. Therefore whosoever are of the works of the law, keep not the law. If they keep it not, they are under the curse. But seeing there be two sorts of men that are doers of the law (as before I have said), that is to say, true doers and hypocrites, the true doers must be separated from the hypocrites. The true doers of the law are they which, through faith, are the good tree before the fruit, doers and workers before the works. Of these speaketh Moses also: and except they be such, they are under the curse. But the hypocrites are not of this sort; for they think to obtain righteousness by works, and by them to make the person just [and acceptable]. For thus they dream: We that are sinners and unrighteous, will be made righteous. How shall that be? By good works. Therefore they do even like as a foolish builder, which goeth about of the roof to make the foundation, of the fruit to make the tree. For when they seek to be justified by works, of the works they would make the worker, which is directly against Moses, who maketh such a worker subject to the curse, as well as Paul doth. Therefore while they go about to do the law, they not only do it not, but also deny (as I have said) the first commandment, the promises of God, the promised blessing of Abraham; they renounce faith and they go about to make themselves blessed by their own works: that is to say, to justify themselves, to deliver themselves from sin and death, to overcome the devil, and violently to lay hold upon the kingdom of heaven. And this is plainly to renounce God, and to set themselves in the place of God. For all these are the works of the Divine Majesty alone, and not of any creature either in heaven or in earth.

Hereupon Paul was able easily to foreshew out of the first commandment, the abominations that were to come, which Antichrist should bring into the Church. For all they which teach that any other worship is necessary to salvation, than that which God requireth of us by the first commandment, which is the fear of God, faith and the love of God, are plain Antichrists, and set themselves in the place of God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). That such should come, Christ himself foretold when he saith, Matthew 25:5: 'Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ.' So we also at this day may boldly and easily pronounce, that whosoever seeketh righteousness by works without faith, denieth God and maketh himself God. For thus he thinketh: If I do this work, I shall be righteous, I shall be a conqueror of sin, death, the devil, the wrath of God, and of hell, and shall obtain life everlasting. And what is this else, I pray you, but to challenge that work unto himself which doth belong to God alone, and to shew indeed that he himself is God? Therefore it is an easy matter for us to prophesy, and most certainly to judge of all those which are without faith, that they are not only idolators, but very idols, which deny God and set themselves in the place of God. Upon the same ground Peter also prophesieth when he saith: 'There shall be among you false teachers, which privily shall bring in damnable heresies, and shall deny the Lord that brought them,' etc. (Peter 2:1).

And in the Old Testament all the prophecies against idolatry sprang out of the first commandment. For all the wicked kings and prophets, with all the unfaithful people, did nothing else but that which the Pope and all hypocrites always do. They, contemning the first commandment and worship appointed of God, and despising the promise of Abraham's seed, even that Seed in whom all nations should be blessed, ordained a wicked worship clean contrary to the Word of God, and said: With this worship will we serve God and set out his praise, which hath brought us out of the land of Egypt. So Jeroboam made two golden calves and said: 'Behold thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt' (I Kings 12:28). This he said of the true God which had redeemed Israel, and yet both he and all his people were idolaters; for they worshipped God contrary to the first commandment. They only regarded the work: which being done, they counted themselves righteous before God. And what was this else, but to deny God himself, whom they confessed with their mouth, and said that he had brought them out of the land of Egypt? Paul speaketh of such idolaters when he saith: 'They profess that they know God, but in their deeds they deny him' (Titus 1:16).

Wherefore all hypocrites and idolaters go about to do those works which properly pertain to the Divine Majesty, and belong to Christ only and alone. Indeed they say not in plain words: I am God, I am Christ, and yet in very deed they proudly challenge unto themselves the divinity and office of Christ, and therefore it is as much in effect as if they said: I am Christ, I am a savior, not only of myself, but also of others. This the monks have not only taught, but also have made the whole world to believe: to wit, that they are able, not only to make themselves righteous through their hypocritical holiness, but also others unto whom they communicate the same: whereas notwithstanding it is the proper office of Christ alone to justify the sinner. The Pope in like manner, by publishing and spreading his divinity throughout the whole world, hath denied and utterly buffed the office and divinity of Christ.

It is expedient that these things should be well taught and well weighed: for thereby we may learn to judge of the whole Christian doctrine, and the life of man; also to confirm men's consciences, to understand all prophecies and all the holy Scriptures, and rightly to judge of all other things. He that knoweth all these things rightly, may certainly judge that the Pope is Antichrist, because he teacheth a far other manner of worship, than the first Table setteth out. He may perfectly know and understand what it is to deny God, to deny Christ, and what Christ meaneth when he saith: 'Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ' (Matthew 24:5); what it is to be against God, and to be lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; what it signifieth that Antichrist sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself as God; what it is to see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, etc. (Matthew 24:15; Daniel 9:27).

Now hereof spring all these mischiefs, that this cursed hypocrisy will not be justified by the divine blessing, nor formed by God the creator; it will not be

merely passive matter, but will actively work those things which it should patiently suffer God to work in it and receive of him. Therefore it maketh itself a creator and a justifier through its own works, despising the blessing promised and given to Abraham and to his believing children; so that every hypocrite is both the matter and the worker (although this be against philosophy, for one and the selfsame thing cannot act upon itself): the matter, because he is a sinner; the worker, because he putteth on a cowl, or chooseth some other work, through the which he hopeth to deserve grace, and to save himself and others: therefore he is both the creature and the creator. No man therefore can express with words, how execrable and horrible it is to seek righteousness in the law by works, without the blessing. For it is the abomination standing in the holy place, which denieth God, and setteth up the creature in the place of the creator.

The doers of the law therefore are not the hypocrites, observing the law outwardly; but the true believers, who, receiving the Holy Ghost, do accomplish the law: that is to say, they love God and their neighbor, etc.

So that the true doer of the law is to be understood, not in respect of the works which he worketh, but in respect of the person now regenerate by faith. For according to divinity, they that are made righteous, do righteous things; but according to philosophy it is not so, but contrariwise, they that do righteous things, are made righteous thereby. Therefore we, being justified by faith, do good works; through the which (as it is said, 2 Peter 1:10) our calling and election is confirmed, and from day to day is made more sure. But because we have only the first fruits of the Spirit, and have not as yet the tenths, and the remnants of sin do still remain in us, therefore we do not the law perfectly. But this imperfection is not imputed unto us which do believe in Christ, who was promised to Abraham, and hath blessed us. For we are nourished and tenderly cherished in the mean season, for Christ's sake, in the lap of God's long-sufferance. We are that wounded man which fell into the hands of thieves, whose wounds the Samaritan bound up, pouring in oil and wine, and afterwards laying him upon his beast, he brought him into the inn, and made provision for him, and departing, commended him to the host, saying, 'Take care of him,' etc. (Luke 10:30 ff.). And thus we in the meantime are cherished as it were in an hospice, until the Lord put to his hand the second time, as Isaiah saith, that he may deliver us (Isaiah 10:11).

Wherefore the sentence of Moses: 'Cursed is every one that abideth not in all things that are written in this book,' is not contrary to Paul, who pronounceth all them to be accursed which are of the works of the law. For Moses requireth such a doer, as may do the law perfectly. But where shall we find him? Nowhere. Moses himself confesseth that he is not such, for he saith that there is none guiltless before God (Exodus 34); and David saith: 'Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant,' etc. (Psalm 143:2); and Paul: 'For what I would, that do I not,' etc. (Romans 7:15).

Wherefore Moses together with Paul doth necessarily drive us to Christ, through whom we are made doers of the law, and are not accounted guilty of any transgression. How so? First by forgiveness of sins and imputation of righteousness, because of our faith in Christ. Secondly, by the gift [of God] and the Holy Ghost, which bringeth forth a new life and new motions in us, so that we may also do the law effectually. Now that which is not done is pardoned for Christ's sake; and moreover, what sin soever is left in us, is not imputed. So Moses agreeth with Paul, and meaneth the selfsame thing that he doth, when he saith: 'Cursed is every one that abideth not,' etc. For he saith that they do not the law, because they would justify themselves by works, and concludeth with Paul, that they are under the curse. Therefore Moses requireth true doers of the law, which are of faith, even as Paul condemneth those which are not true doers, that is to say, which are not of faith. Herein is no repugnance, that Moses spake negatively and Paul affirmatively, so that you define rightly what is meant by this word 'do.' So both sentences are true, to wit, that all are accursed which abide not in all that is written in this book; and, that all they are accursed, which are of the works of the law.

#### AN ANSWER TO THOSE ARGUMENTS WHICH THE ADVERSARIES ALLEGE AGAINST THE DOCTRINE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

Seeing this place offereth unto us an occasion, we must say something as touching the arguments which our adversaries do object against the doctrine of faith, which is, that we are justified by faith alone. There are many places both in the Old Testament and in the New, as concerning works and rewards of works, which our adversaries do allege, and think themselves able thereby utterly to overthrow the doctrine of faith which we teach and maintain. Therefore we must be well furnished and armed, that we may be able, not only to instruct our brethren, but also to answer the objections of our adversaries.

The schoolmen, and all such as understand not the article of justification, do know no other righteousness than the civil righteousness and the righteousness of the law, which after a sort the Gentiles also do know.

Therefore they borrow certain words out of the law and moral philosophy, as 'to do', 'to work,' and such like and they apply the same unto spiritual matters: wherein they deal most perversely and wickedly. We must put a difference between philosophy and divinity. The schoolmen themselves grant and teach, that in the order of nature, being goeth before working; for naturally the tree is before the fruit. Again, in philosophy they grant, that a work morally wrought is not good, except there be first a right [judgment of] reason and a good will 49 [or a good intent]. So then they will have a right [judgment of] reason and a good will to go before the work: that is to say, they make the person morally righteous before the work. Contrariwise, in divinity [and in spiritual matters], where they ought most of all so to do, such senseless asses they are that they pervert and

turn all quite contrary, placing the work before the right[judgment of] reason and good will.

Wherefore, doing is one thing in nature, another in philosophy, and another in divinity. In nature the tree must be first, and then the fruit. In moral philosophy, doing requireth a good will and a right [judgment of] reason to work well, going before. And here all the philosophers are at a stay, and can go no further. Therefore the divines say, that moral philosophy taketh not God for the object and final cause. For Aristotle, or a Sadducee, or a man of any civil honesty, calleth this right reason and a good will, if he seek the public commodity of the commonwealth, and the quietness and honesty thereof. A philosopher or law-giver ascendeth no higher. He thinketh not through a right [judgment of] reason and a good intent to obtain remission of sins and everlasting life, as the sophister or the monk doth. Wherefore the heathen philosopher is much better than such an hypocrite. For he abideth within his bounds, having only consideration of the honesty and tranquillity of the commonwealth, not mingling heavenly and earthly things together. Contrariwise, the blind sophister imagineth that God regardeth his good intent and works Therefore he mingleth earthly and heavenly thing,together, and polluteth the name of God. And this imagination he learneth out of moral philosophy, saving that he abuseth it much worse than the heathen man doth.

Wherefore we must ascend up higher in divinity with this word 'doing' than in nature and in philosophy, so that it may be made altogether new. For when it is transferred from natural things to moral matters, it is no longer the same; neither is it the same when it is taken from philosophy and the law into divinity: but here it must have a quite new signification, and must require a right judgment of reason and a good will, not morally, but divinely; which is, that I know and believe by the word of the Gospel, that God hath sent his Son into the world to redeem us from sin and death. Here 'doing' is a new thing, unknown to reason, to philosophers, to lawyers, and unto all men: for it is a 'wisdom hidden in a mystery' etc. (1 Corinthians 2:7). Therefore in divinity the work necessarily requireth faith itself going before.

Therefore when our adversaries do allege against us the sentences of the Scripture touching the law and works, where mention is made of working and doing, thou must answer them, that they are terms pertaining to divinity, and not to natural or moral things. If they be applied to natural or moral things, they must be taken in their own signification. But if they be applied to matters of divinity, they must include such a right [judgment of] reason and good will, as is incomprehensible to a man's reason. Wherefore doing in divinity must be always understood of a faithful doing. So that this faithful doing is another realm, and as it were a new kingdom, separate from the [natural or] moral doing. Therefore, when we that are divines speak of doing, we must needs speak of that faithful doing: for in divinity we have no other right reason, no good will [or intent] besides faith.

This rule is well observed in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. There are recited many and sundry works of the saints, out of the holy Scripture: as of David, who killed a lion and a bear, and slew Goliath. There the sophister or schoolman, that foolish ass, looketh upon nothing else but the outward appearance of the work, as a cow stareth at a new door. But this work of David must be so looked upon, that first we must consider what manner of person David was, before he did this work; to wit, that he was such a person, whose heart trusted in the Lord God of Israel, as the text plainly witnesseth: 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine'; also: 'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, upon whom thou hast railed this day. And the Lord shall close thee in my hand, and I shall smite thee, and take thine head from thee' etc., 'because the Lord saveth not with sword nor spear' etc. (Samuel 17:37, 45 ff.). You see then that he was a righteous man, acceptable to God, strong and constant in faith, before he did this work.

This doing of David, therefore, is not a natural or moral doing, but a faithful doing.

So it is said of Abel in the same Epistle, that through faith he offered up a better sacrifice unto God than Cain (Hebrews 11:4). If the schoolmen happen upon this place as it is read in Genesis 4:3 ff, (where it is simply set out, how that both Cain and Abel offered up their gifts, and that the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offerings), by and by they take hold of these words: 'they offered their oblations', and 'the Lord had respect to the offerings of Abel', and cry out saying: Here ye see that God had respect to offerings; therefore works do justify. So that these filthy swine do think that righteousness is but a moral thing, only beholding the vizer or outward shew of the work, and not the heart of him that doth the work: whereas notwithstanding even in philosophy they are constrained, not to look upon the bare work, but the good will of the worker. But here they stand altogether upon these words: 'they offered up gifts' and 'the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offerings,' and see not that the text saith plainly in Genesis, that the Lord had respect first to the person of Abel, which pleased the Lord because of his faith, and afterwards to his offerings. Therefore in divinity we speak of faithful works, sacrifices, oblations and gifts, that is to say, which are offered up and done in faith, as the Epistle to the Hebrews declareth saying: 'Through faith Abel offered up a better sacrifice;' 'through faith Enoch was translated;' 'through faith Abraham obeyed God' etc. We have here then a rule set forth in the eleventh to the Hebrews, how we should simply answer to the arguments objected of the adversaries as touching the law and works, that is to say: this or that man did this or that work in faith; and by this means thou givest a solution to all their arguments.

Hereby it appeareth manifestly that in divinity the work is nothing worth without faith, but thou must needs have faith before thou begin to work.

For without faith it is impossible to please God, but he that will come unto God must believe (Hebrews 11:6). Wherefore in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said, that the sacrifice of Abel was better than the sacrifice of Cain, because he believed: therefore the work or the sacrifice of Abel was faithful. Contrariwise in Cain, because he was ungodly and an hypocrite, there was no faith [or trust] of God's grace [or favor], but mere presumption of his own righteousness; and therefore his work whereby he went about to please God, was hypocritical and unfaithful. Wherefore the adversaries themselves are compelled to grant, that in all the works of the saints faith is presupposed, for the which their works do please God [and are accepted of him]. Therefore in divinity there is a new doing, clean contrary to the moral doing.

Moreover, we are also wont to distinguish faith after this manner, that faith is sometimes taken without the work, sometimes with the work. For like as an artificer speaketh diversely of the matter whereupon he worketh, and likewise a gardener of the tree being barren or fruitful; even so the Holy Ghost speaketh diversely of faith in the Scripture: sometimes (as a man would say) of an abstract or absolute faith, sometimes of a concrete, compound, or incarnate faith. Now, an absolute or abstract faith is this, when the Scripture speaketh absolutely of justification, or of the justified, as is to be seen in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. But when the Scripture speaketh of rewards and works, then it speaketh of the compound, concrete, or incarnate faith. We will rehearse some examples of this faith, as: 'Faith which worketh by love;' 'Do this and thou shalt live;' 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;' 'He that doth these things shall live in them;' 'Decline from evil, and do that which is good.' In these and such-like places (as there are many in the holy Scripture) where mention is made of doing, the Scripture always speaketh of faithful doing. As when it saith: 'Do this and thou shalt live,' it meaneth thus: See first that thou be faithful, that thou have a fight [judgment of] reason and a good will, that is to say, faith in Christ. When thou hast this faith, work on with God's blessing.

What marvel is it then, if merits and rewards be promised to this incarnate faith: that is to say, to the working faith, as was the faith of Abel, or to faithful works? And why should not the holy Scripture thus speak diversely of faith, when it speaketh divers ways of Christ, as he is God and man: that is to say, sometimes of his whole person, sometimes of his two natures apart, either of his divine or of his human nature? If it speak of the natures apart, it speaketh of Christ absolutely: but if it speak of the divine nature united in one person to the human nature, then it speaketh of Christ compound and incarnate. There is a common rule among the schoolmen of the communication of the properties, when the properties belonging to the divinity of Christ, are attributed to the humanity: which we may see everywhere in the Scriptures. As in Luke 2:10 f., the angel calleth the infant born of the Virgin Mary, the Savior of men and the

universal Lord both of the angels and men; and in the first chapter he calleth him the Son of God (Luke 1:32). Hereupon I may truly say, that that infant which lay in the manger and in the lap of the Virgin, created heaven and earth and is Lord of the angels. Here I speak indeed of a man; but man in this proposition is a new word and (as the schoolmen themselves do grant) hath relation to the divinity: that is to say, this God which was made man, hath created all things. Creation is attributed only to the divinity [of Christ], for the humanity doth not create; and yet notwithstanding it is truly said that the man created, because the divinity, which alone createth, is incarnate with the humanity, and therefore the humanity together with the divinity is partaker of the same properties. Wherefore it is well and godly said: this man Jesus Christ brought Israel out of Egypt, stroke Pharaoh, and wrought all the wonders from the beginning of the world, etc.

Therefore when the Scripture saith: 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments of God,' 'Do this and thou shalt live,' etc., first we must see of what manner of keeping and doing it speaketh: for in these and in such-like places, as I have said, he speaketh of a compound faith, and not of a naked and simple faith. And the meaning of this place: 'Do this and thou shalt live,' is this: thou shalt live because of this faithful doing; or, this doing shall give unto thee life because of thy faith alone. After this manner faith is attributed to faith alone, as creation is to the divinity. And yet notwithstanding, as it is truly said that Jesus the son of Mary created all things, so also justification is attributed to the incarnate faith, or to the faithful doing. Therefore we must in no wise think with the sophisters and hypocrites, that works do absolutely justify, or that merits and rewards are promised to moral works, but to faithful works only.

Let us therefore suffer the Holy Ghost to speak, as he doth in the Scriptures, either of naked, simple and abstract faith, or of compound, incarnate and concrete faith. All things which are attributed to works, do properly belong unto faith. For works must not be looked upon morally, but faithfully and spiritually. In theology, faith must always be the divinity of works, and so spread throughout the works as is the divinity throughout the humanity of Christ. He that cometh nigh unto the heat in heated iron, cometh nigh unto the iron; and he that hath touched the skin of Christ, hath verily touched God. Faith therefore doth all alone in the works [of the faithful]. Abraham is called faithful, because faith is spread throughout the whole person of Abraham: so that, beholding him working, I see nothing of the carnal or of the working Abraham, but the believing Abraham only. These things I do so diligently repeat, that I may shew you the doctrine of faith, and that ye may be able rightly and casey to answer the objections of the adversaries, which do mingle together philosophy and theology, and of moral works make spiritual and theological works. A theological work is a faithful work, and a theological man is a faithful man; also, a right reason and a good will is a faithful reason and will: in such wise that faith is universally the divinity in work, person and members, as the one and only cause of justification, which notwithstanding afterward is attributed to the matter because of the form, that is, to the work because of the faith. Eternal and infinite power is given unto the man,



Christ, not because of his humanity, but because of his divinity. For the divinity alone created all things, without any help of the humanity; nor did the humanity conquer sin and death, but the hook hidden under the worm, whereon the devil did fasten, conquered and devoured the devil, which sought to devour the worm. Therefore the humanity alone would have effected nothing, but the divinity, joined with the humanity, alone did all things, and the humanity because of the divinity. So here faith alone justifieth and doth all things: and yet notwithstanding the same is attributed unto works, but because of the faith.

These words therefore, 'to do', 'to work', may be taken three ways: substantially (or naturally), morally, and theologically – (though the sophisters have invented certain neutral works, which they alarm to be neither good nor bad). In substances, or natures, and in moral matters (as I have said), these words are taken in their common and natural signification. But in theology they become altogether new words, and acquire a new signification. Wherefore, all the hypocrites that wilt be justified by the law, and have false opinions concerning God, do belong unto the moral doing; against whom Paul here disputeth. For they have such a doing as proceedeth out of a right reason and a good will that are but moral or human. Therefore their works are merely moral or rational; whereas the works of the godly are theological, which include faith.

Wherefore when thou readest in the Scriptures concerning the fathers, prophets and kings, how they wrought righteousness, raised up the dead, overcame kingdoms, etc., thou must remember that these and such-like sayings are to be expounded according to a new and theological grammar, as the Epistle to the Hebrews expoundeth them: 'By faith they wrought righteousness, by faith they raised up the dead, by faith they subdued kings and kingdoms (Hebrews 11:33 ff.). So that faith incorporateth the work, and giveth it his perfection. And this the adversaries, if they be well in their wits, cannot deny, neither have they anything to say or object against it. Indeed they can cry out that the Scripture speaketh oftentimes of doing and working. And we always answer them again, that is speaketh also of faithful doing. For first ought reason to be lightened by faith before it worketh; but when a true opinion and knowledge of God is held as right reason, then is the work incarnated and incorporated into it: so that whatsoever is attributed to faith, is afterwards attributed to works also, but yet because of faith only and alone.

Wherefore they which study divinity, must learn to put a difference between the true and the hypocritical, the moral and the spiritual doing [of the law]. So shall they be able to declare the true meaning of all those places which seem to maintain the righteousness of works. Now the true doing, as I have said, is a faithful and a spiritual doing, which he hath not that seeketh righteousness by works. Therefore every worker of the law and every moral saint is accursed. For he walketh in the presumption of his own righteousness against God, whilst he will be justified by man's will and reason, and so in doing of the law he doth it not. And this, according to Paul, is to be under the works of the law: that is to say,

that hypocrites do the law, and yet in doing it they do it not; for they understand this word 'doing' according to the moral grammar, which in divinity availeth not. Indeed they work many things, but of their own presumption and without the knowledge of God and faith, as the Pharisee did (Luke 18:10 ff.) and as Paul did before his conversion: therefore they are blind and do err, and so remain under the curse. Wherefore again I admonish you, that such sentences as the adversaries do allege out of the Scriptures concerning works and rewards, must be spiritually expounded. As, if they allege this sentence out of Daniel 4:27: 'Redeem thy sins by alms-deeds,' thou must not here expound these words morally, but spiritually. So shalt thou see that this word 'redeem' signifieth no moral, but a faithful doing, that is to say, it includeth faith. For in the Scriptures the work requireth also a good will and a right [judgment of] reason to go before, not moral, but spiritual, which is faith. By this means thou shalt be able to stop the mouths of the sophisters. For they themselves are compelled to grant (and so teach they also out of Aristotle), that every good work proceedeth out of man's choice [or freewill]. If this be true in philosophy, much more in divinity must a good will and right [judgment of] reason guided by faith go before the work. And this do all words of the imperative mood signify in the Scriptures, and all such words also as teach the law, as the Epistle to the Hebrews doth plainly declare: 'By faith Abel offered' etc.

Now, admit the case that this solution is not sufficient (although it be indeed most sure and certain), yet notwithstanding let this be the argument of all arguments and the very lodestar of Christians against all the temptations and objections, not only of the adversaries, but also of the devil himself, namely to apprehend and to hold fast the head, which is Christ. Moreover, admit that the sophisters, being more crafty and subtle than I, should so snare and entangle me with their arguments, which they bring for the maintenance of works against faith, that I should know no way to wind myself out (which notwithstanding it is impossible for them to do), yet will I rather give reverence and credit to Christ alone, than be persuaded with all the places they are able to allege for the establishing of the righteousness of works against the doctrine of faith.

Wherefore, they must be simply and plainly answered after this manner:

Here is Christ, there are the testimonies of the Scriptures touching the law and works. Now, Christ is the Lord of the Scripture and of all works. He also is Lord of heaven, the earth, the sabbath, the temple, righteousness, life, wrath, sin, death, and generally of all things whatsoever. And Paul his Apostle sheweth that he was made sin and became accursed for me (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). I hear then that I could by no other means be delivered from my sin, my death and my malediction, but by his death and blood-shedding. Wherefore I most assuredly conclude, that it behoved Christ himself to overcome my sin, death and malediction in his own body, and not the works of the law or mine own works. And hereunto reason is naturally constrained to yield and say, that Christ is not the work of the law, or my work; that his blood and death is not

circumcision, the observation of the ceremonies of the law, much less a monk's cowl, a shaven crown, abstinence, or vows; and that his victory, which he hath given unto me, is not a Carthusian. Wherefore, if he be the price of my redemption, if he be made sin and malediction that he might justify and bless me, I care not if thou bring a thousand places of the Scripture for the righteousness of works against the righteousness of faith, and cry out never so much that the Scripture is against me. I have the Author and Lord of the Scripture with me, on whose side I will rather stand than believe thee; Albeit it is impossible that the Scripture should be against this doctrine, unless it be amongst the senseless and obstinate hypocrites; but to the godly and such as have understanding, it giveth witness for its Lord. See therefore how thou canst reconcile the Scripture, which thou sayest is against my doctrine. As for me, I will stick to the Author of the Scripture.

Therefore if any man thinketh himself not well able to reconcile such places of the Scripture concerning works, or to answer unto the same sufficiently, and yet notwithstanding is constrained to hear the objections and cavillations of the adversaries, let him answer simply and plainly after this sort: Thou settest against me the servant, that is to say, the Scripture, and that not wholly, neither yet the principal part thereof, but only certain places as touching works. But I come with the Lord himself, who is the King of Scripture, and is made unto me the merit and price of righteousness and salvation. On him I lay hold, him I stick to, and leave works unto thee, which notwithstanding thou never didst. This solution neither the devil nor any justiciary can ever wrest from thee or overthrow.

Moreover thou art in safety before God: for thy heart abideth fixed in the object which is called Christ, who was nailed to the Cross and accursed, not for himself, but for us, as the text saith: 'made a curse for us.' Hold fast this, and lay it against all the sentences of the law and works whatsoever, and say: Dost thou hear this, Satan? Here he must needs give place, for he knoweth that Christ is his Lord and master.

And that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: "for the just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 1:4).

This is another argument, grounded upon the testimony of the prophet Habakkuk. And it is a sentence of great weight and authority, which Paul setteth against all the sentences touching the law and works. As if he should say: What need we any long disputation? Here I bring forth a most evident testimony of the prophet, against the which no man can cavil: 'The just shall live by faith.' If he live by faith, then he liveth not by the law: for the law is not of faith. And here Paul excludeth works and the law, as things contrary to faith. The sophisters (as they are alway ready to corrupt the Scriptures) do wrest and pervert this place after this manner. 'The just man doth live by faith:' that is to say, by a working faith, or formed [and made perfect] with charity: but if it be not formed with charity, then doth it not justify. This gloss they themselves have forged, and by the same they

do injury to the words of the prophet. If they did call formed [or furnished] faith the true and spiritual, or as Paul saith 'unfeigned' faith, which God calleth faith, this their gloss should not offend me; for then faith should not be separated from charity, but from the vain opinion of faith: as we also put a difference between a counterfeit faith and a true faith. The counterfeit faith is that which heareth of God, of Christ, and of all the mysteries of his incarnation and our redemption: which also apprehendeth and beareth away those things which it heareth, yea and can talk goodly thereof, and yet there remaineth nothing else in the heart, but a naked opinion and an empty sound of the Gospel. And in very truth it is no faith, for it neither reneweth nor changeth the heart: it maketh not a new man, but leaveth him in the vanity of his former opinion and conversation: and this is a very pernicious faith, which it were better not to have. The moral philosopher is much better than the hypocrite having such a faith.

Wherefore, if they would make a distinction between the faith formed and the false or counterfeit faith, their distinction should nothing offend me.

But they speak of faith formed [and made perfect] with charity, and make a double faith, that is to say, formed and unformed. This pestilent and devilish gloss I utterly detest. Although, say they, we have faith infused, [called *fides infusa*,] which is the gift of the Holy Ghost, and also faith gotten by our own industry, [called *fides acquisita*,] which we do get for ourselves by many acts of believing: yet both of them lack their form [and perfection, which is charity,] and are formed with charity. So faith alone (as they dream) is like a painting and a thing of beauty in a dark place, which cannot be perceived until light, that is to say charity, is added unto it. And thus charity is the form of faith, and faith the mere matter of charity. This is to prefer charity before faith, and to attribute righteousness, not to faith, but to charity. Wherefore when they do not attribute righteousness to faith, but only in respect of charity, they attribute to faith nothing at all.

Moreover, these perverters of the Gospel of Christ do teach, that even that faith which they call faith infused, and not received by hearing, nor gotten by any working, but created in man by the Holy Ghost, may stand with deadly sin, and that the worst men may have this faith: therefore, say they, if it be alone, it is idle and utterly unprofitable, even though it work miracles. Thus they take from faith her office, and give it unto charity; so that faith is nothing, except charity which they call the form [and perfection] thereof, be joined withal. Therefore according to this pestilent invention of the sophisters, faith – that miserable virtue – must be a kind of unformed chaos, without any work, efficacy and life, being only passive matter. This is a devilish and blasphemous kind of doctrine, which utterly defaceth and overthroweth the doctrine of faith, and carrieth a man clean from Christ the mediator, and from the faith which layeth hold on Christ himself. For if charity be the form [and perfection] of faith, as they dream, then am I by and by constrained to say, that charity is the principal part of the Christian religion; and so I lose Christ, his blood, his wounds, and all his benefits, and now I rest upon

charity, I love, and I fall into a moral doing, even as the Pope, the heathen philosopher, and the Turk doth.

But the Holy Ghost, which giveth to all men both mouth and tongue, knoweth how to speak. He could have said (as the sophisters do wickedly imagine): The righteous man liveth by faith formed [and made perfect with charity]. But this he omitteth of purpose, and saith plainly: 'The righteous liveth by faith.' Let these dotish sophisters go, therefore, with this their wicked and pestilent gloss. We will still hold and extol this faith, which God himself hath called faith: this is to say, a true and a certain faith, which doubteth not of God, nor of his promises, nor of the forgiveness of sins through Christ, that we may dwell sure and safe in this our object Christ, and may keep still before our eyes the passion and blood of the mediator and all his benefits. Now, faith alone which layeth hold upon Christ, is the only means that we suffer not these benefits to be taken out of our sight.

Wherefore, rejecting this pestilent gloss, we must understand this place of faith only and alone. And this Paul himself declareth, when he reasoneth after this sort against faith formed with charity.

### *And the law is not of faith*

The schoolmen say: The righteous man doth live, if his faith be formed [and adorned with charity]. But contrariwise Paul saith: 'The law is not of faith.' But what is the law? Is it not also a commandment touching charity?

Yea, the law commandeth nothing else but charity, as we may see by the text itself: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' etc. (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37). Again: 'Shewing mercy unto thousands that love' (Deuteronomy 5:10). Also: 'On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets' (Matthew 22:40). If the law, then, that commandeth charity, be contrary to faith, it must needs follow that charity is not of faith. So Paul plainly confuteth the gloss which the sophisters have forged touching their formed faith, and speaketh only of faith, setting apart the law. Now the law being set apart, charity is also set apart, with all that belongeth to the law, and faith only is left which justifieth and quickeneth.

Paul therefore reasoneth here out of a plain testimony of the prophet, that there is none which obtaineth justification and life before God, but the believing man, who obtaineth righteousness and life without the law and without charity, by faith alone. The reason is, because the law is not of faith: that is, the law is not faith or anything belonging to faith, for it believeth not; neither are the works of the law faith: therefore faith is a thing much differing from the law, like as the promise is a thing much differing from the law. For the promise is not apprehended by working, but by believing.

Therefore as in philosophy at the first division a difference is put between substance and accident, so in divinity there is as great a difference between the promise and the law, and consequently between faith and works, as there is distance between heaven and earth. But if there be a difference between the promise and the law, then is there a difference also between faith and works. It is impossible therefore that faith should be of the law.

For faith only resteth in the promise, it only apprehendeth and knoweth God, and standeth only in receiving good things of God. Contrariwise the law and works consist in doing, and in giving unto God: as Abel in offering his sacrifice giveth unto God; but he believing receiveth of God. Paul therefore concludeth mightily out of this place of Habakkuk, that the righteous man liveth by faith alone. For the law in no wise belongeth unto faith, because the law is not the promise. But faith resteth only upon the promise. Wherefore, as there is a difference between the law and the promise, so there is also between works and faith. That gloss therefore of the schoolmen is false and wicked, which joineth the law and faith together; yea rather it quengeth faith, and setteth the law in the place of faith.

And here note, that Paul always speaketh of such as would do the law morally, and not according to divinity. But whatsoever is said of such good works as divinity requireth, the same is attributed to faith alone.

*But the man that shall do these things, shall live in them*

These words I do understand to be irony. Notwithstanding I deny not that they may be expounded morally, to wit, that they which do the law morally, that is to say, without faith, shall live therein: that is, they shall not be punished, but shall have corporal rewards thereby. But I take this place as I take that saying of Christ: 'This do, and thou shalt live' (Luke 10:28), so that it is a certain irony or mockery. Yea, do thou it indeed!

Paul here goeth about to shew what is the very true righteousness of the law and of the Gospel. The righteousness of the law is to fulfill the law, according to that saying: 'He that shall do those things, shall live in them.'

The righteousness of faith is to believe, according to that saying: 'The righteous man doth live by faith.' The law therefore requireth that we should yield somewhat unto God. But faith requireth no works of us, or that we should give anything unto God, but that we believing the promise of God, should receive of him. Theretore the office of the law is to work, as the office of faith is to assent unto the promises. For faith is the faith of the promise, and the work is the work of the law. Paul therefore standeth upon this word 'doing:' and that he may plainly shew what is the righteousness of the law, and what is the righteousness of faith, he compareth the one with the other, the promise with the law and faith with works. He saith, that of the law there cometh nothing else but only doing: but

faith is a clean contrary thing, namely, that which assenteth to the promise and layeth hold upon it.

These four things therefore must be perfectly distinguished. For as the law hath his proper office, so hath the promise. To the law pertaineth doing, and to the promise believing. Wherefore, as far as the law and the promise are separate asunder, so far also are doing and believing, even if thou understand 'doing' spiritually. For Paul treateth here of another matter. He urgeth the distinction between doing and believing, that he may separate charity from faith and shew that faith alone justifieth, because the law, whether it be done morally or spiritually, or be not done, helpeth nothing at all unto justification. For the law pertaineth unto doing; and faith is not a thing of this kind, but a thing altogether diverse, which is required before the law is done, that it may be pre-existent and so there may come to pass a lovely incarnation.

Wherefore, faith always justifieth and quickeneth : and yet it abideth not alone, that is to say, it is not idle. Indeed it abideth alone in its degree and office, for it justifieth always alone; but it becometh incarnate and is made man, that is to say, it is never idle or without charity. So Christ according to his divinity is a divine and eternal substance or nature without beginning; but his humanity is a nature created in time. These two natures in Christ are not confused or mingled, and the property of each must be clearly distinguished. It belongeth unto the humanity, to have a beginning in time, but unto the divinity to be eternal and without beginning; and yet notwithstanding these two do agree, and the divinity that hath no beginning is incorporated into the humanity that hath a beginning. As, therefore, I am constrained to distinguish between the humanity and the divinity, and say: humanity is not divinity, and yet a Man is God, so here I make a distinction and say: the law is not faith, and yet faith worketh, and faith and works agree concretely or compoundly, and yet each hath and preserveth its own nature and proper office. Ye see the cause then why Paul allegeth this place, namely, that he may separate faith and charity far asunder.

Fie upon the sophisters therefore with their cursed gloss and their [blind distinction of] faith formed [and unformed]. Let us constantly declare that these terms, 'faith formed', 'faith unformed', 'faith gotten by man's industry' and such like, are very monsters devised by the devil, to no other end but to deface and destroy the true Christian doctrine and faith, to blaspheme and tread Christ under foot, and to establish the righteousness of works. Let us declare this, I say, that we may hold fast the true and right faith without works. Indeed works must follow faith, but faith must not be works, or works faith; but the bounds and the kingdoms of the law or works, and of faith, must be rightly distinguished the one from the other.

When we believe, therefore, we live only by faith in Christ, who is without sin, who is also our mercy-seat and remission of sins. Contrariwise, when we observe the law, we work indeed, but we have not righteousness and life. For

[the office] of the law is not to justify and give life, but to shew forth sin and to destroy. Indeed the law saith: 'He that shall do those things shall live in them.' But where is he which doth them? Where is he which loveth God with all his heart, etc., and his neighbor as himself? Therefore no man doth the law, and although he go about to do it never so much, yet in doing it he doth it not: therefore he abideth under the curse. But faith worketh not, but believeth in Christ the justifier. Therefore a man liveth not because of his doing, but because of his believing. But a faithful man performeth the law; and that which he doth not, is forgiven him through the remission of sins for Christsake, and that which remaineth of sin is not imputed unto him.

Paul therefore in this place, as also in Romans 10, compareth the righteousness of the law and of faith together, where he saith: 'He that shall do those things,' etc. As though he would say: It were indeed a goodly matter if we could accomplish the law; but because no man doth it, we must fly unto Christ, who is the end of the law to righteousness to every one that believeth. He was made under the law, that he might redeem us that were under the law (Romans 10:4; Galatians 4:4). Believing in him we receive the Holy Ghost, and we begin to do the law; and that which we do not, is not imputed unto us because of our faith in Christ. But in the life to come we shall no more have need of faith, for then we shall not see darkly through a glass (as we do now), but we shall see face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12): that is to say, there shall be the brightness of eternal glory, in which we shall see God even as he is. There shall be a true and a perfect knowledge and love of God, a right reason and a goodwill: not moral and not theological, but heavenly, divine and eternal. Here in the meantime, in spirit by faith, we look for the hope of righteousness.

Contrariwise, they that seek forgiveness of sins by the law and not by faith in Christ, do never perform the law, but abide under the curse.

Paul therefore calleth them only righteous, which are justified through the promise, or through faith in the promise, without the law. Wherefore, doing the law is a feigned thing, which signifieth nothing without faith, and they that are of the works of the law, and will seem to do the law, do it not. For the Apostle generally concludeth, that all they which are of the works of the law, are under the curse: under the which they should not be, if they fulfilled the law. Indeed it is true that a man doing these things shall live in them, that is, shall be blessed: but such a one cannot be found. Now seeing there is a double use of the law, the one politic and the other spiritual, he that will understand this sentence civilly may do it after this sort: 'He that shall do these things shall live in them,' that is, if a man obey the magistrate outwardly and in politic government, he shall avoid punishment and death; for then the civil magistrate hath no right to punish and kill him, but suffereth him to live with impunity. This is the politic use of the law, which serveth to bridle those that are rude and untractable. But Paul here speaketh not of this use, but entreateth of this places spiritually, when he saith: 'If a man shall do those things,' etc. There is therefore a condition included, as if he



said: If men could keep the law, they should be happy. But where are they? Therefore they are not doers of the law, except they be justified before and without the law, through faith.

Wherefore, when Paul curseth and condemneth those which are of the works of the law, he speaketh not of such as are justified through faith, but of such as go about to be justified by works, without faith in Christ. This is say lest any man should follow the fond imagination of Jerome, who being deceived by Origen, understood nothing at all in Paul, but took him as a mere civil lawyer. Hereupon he reasoneth after this manner: The holy patriarchs, prophets and kings were circumcised and offered sacrifice; therefore they observed the law; but it were a wicked thing to say that they were under the curse; therefore not all they that are of the works of the law are under the curse. Thus he setteth himself against Paul without all judgment, making no difference between the true doers of the law justified by faith, and those workers which seek to be justified by the law without faith.

But Paul speaketh here nothing against those that are justified by faith, and are true doers [of the law] indeed, for they are not of the works of the law: but against those which not only do not keep the law, but also sin against the same. For the law commandeth that we should fear, love and worship God with a true faith. This they do not, but choose out new kinds of worship and works which were never commanded of God, by the which God is not pacified, but more provoked to anger, according to that saying: 'They worship me in vain with the commandments of men' (Matthew 15:9). Therefore they are full of impiety, rebels against God, and idolaters, sinning grievously against the first commandment above all the rest.

Moreover they are full of wicked concupiscence, wrath and other great passions. Briefly, there is no good thing in them, but that outwardly they would seem to be righteous and to accomplish the law.

So we also which are justified by faith, as were the patriarchs, prophets and all the saints, are not of the works of the law as concerning justification.

But in that we are in the flesh and have as yet the remnants of sin in us, we are under the law (and yet not under the curse, because the remnants of sin are not imputed unto us for Christ's sake, in whom we believe). For the flesh is an enemy unto the law of God, and that concupiscence which yet remaineth in us, not only fulfilleth not the law, but also sinneth against the same, rebelling against us and leading us captive into bondage (Romans 7).

Now if the law be not fulfilled in the saints, but many things are done in them contrary to the law, since evil concupiscence and the remnants of sin are yet remaining in them, which do so hinder them that they cannot perfectly fear and love God, they cannot call upon God with assured trust, they cannot praise God

and reverence his Word as they should do: much more is this true in a man which is not yet justified, but is an enemy unto God, and with all his heart neglecteth, despiseth and hateth the Word and work of God. Yee see then that Paul speaketh here of such as will fulfill the law and be justified thereby, although they have not yet received faith; and not of the fathers and saints (as Jerome imagineth) which are justified by faith already.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us (for it is written; 'cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree') etc. (Deuteronomy 21:23).

Here again Jerome and the popish sophisters which follow him, are much troubled, and miserably rack this most comfortable place, seeking, as they would seem, with a Godly zeal to turn away this reproach from Christ, that he should be called a curse or execration. They shift off this sentence after this manner: that Paul spake not here in good earnest; and therefore they most wickedly affirm, that the Scripture in Paul agreeth not with itself. And this they prove after this manner: the sentence (say they) of Moses which Paul here allegeth, speaketh not of Christ. Moreover this general clause 'every one,' which Paul allegeth, is not added in Moses. Again, Paul omitteth the words 'of God,' which are in Moses. To conclude: it is evident enough that Moses speaketh of a thief or a malefactor, which by his evil deeds hath deserved the gallows, as the Scripture plainly witnesseth in Deuteronomy 21. Therefore they ask this question, how this sentence may be applied to Christ, that he is accursed of God and hanged upon a tree, seeing that he is no malefactor or thief, but righteous and holy? This may peradventure move the simple and ignorant, thinking that the sophisters do speak it not only wittily, but also very Godly, and thereby do defend the honor and glory of Christ, and give warning to all Christians to beware that they think not so wickedly of Christ, that he should be made a curse, etc. Let us see therefore what the meaning and purpose of Paul is.

But here again we must make a distinction, as the words of Paul do plainly shew. For he saith not that Christ was made a curse for himself, but 'for us'. Therefore all the weight of the matter standeth in this word 'for us'.

For Christ is innocent as concerning his own person, and therefore he ought not to have been hanged upon a tree: but because according to the law of Moses every thief and malefactor ought to be hanged, therefore Christ also according to the law of Moses ought to be hanged, for he sustained the person of a sinner and a thief, and not of one, but of all sinners and thieves. For we are sinners and thieves, and therefore guilty of death and everlasting damnation. But Christ took all our sins upon him, and for them died upon the cross: therefore it behoved that he should become a transgressor, and (as Isaiah saith, chap. 53) 'to be reckoned among transgressors.' And this, no doubt, all the prophets did foresee in spirit, that Christ should become the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, blasphemers, etc. that ever was or could be in all the world. For he being made a

sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person and without sins, is not now the Son of God born of the Virgin Mary; but a sinner, which hath and carrieth the sin of Paul, who was a blasphemmer, an oppressor and a persecutor; of Peter, which denied Christ; of David, which was an adulterer, a murderer, and caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord: and briefly, which hath and beareth all the sins of all men in his body, that he might make satisfaction for them with his own blood. Therefore this general sentence of Moses comprehendeth him also (albeit in his own person he was innocent), because it found him among sinners and transgressors: like as the magistrate taketh him for a thief, and punisheth him, whom he findeth among other thieves, though he never committed anything worthy of death.

Now Christ was not only found amongst sinners, but of his own accord and by the will of his Father he would also be a companion of sinners, taking upon him the flesh and blood of those which were sinners, transgressors, and plunged into all kinds of sin. When the law therefore found him among thieves, it condemned and killed him as a thief.

The popish sophisters do spoil us of this knowledge of Christ and most heavenly comfort (namely, that Christ was made a curse for us, that he might deliver us from the curse of the law), when they separate him from sins and sinners, and only set him out unto us as an example to be followed. By this means they make Christ not only unprofitable unto us, but also a judge and a tyrant, which is angry with our sins and condemneth sinners. But we must as well wrap Christ, and know him to be wrapped, in our sins, our malediction, our death, and all our evils, as he is wrapped in our flesh and blood.

But some man will say: it is very absurd and slanderous to call the Son of God a cursed sinner, I answer: if thou wilt deny him to be a sinner and accursed, deny also that he suffered, was crucified and died. For it is no less absurd to say, that the Son of God (as our faith confesseth and pleadeth) was crucified and suffered the pains of sin and death, than to say that he is a sinner and accursed. But if it be not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between two thieves, then it is not absurd to say also that he was accursed and of all sinners the greatest. These words of Paul are not spoken in vain: 'Christ was made a curse for us;' 'God made Christ which knew no sin, to become sin for us, that we in him might be made the righteousness of God' (2 Corinthians 5:21).

After the same manner John the Baptist calleth him 'the Lamb of God' etc. (John 1:29). He verily is innocent, because he is the unspotted and undefiled Lamb of God. But because he beareth the sins of the world, his innocence is burdened with the sins and guilt of the whole world.

Whatsoever sins I, thou, and we all have done, or shall do hereafter, they are Christ's own sins as verily as if he himself had done them. To be brief: our sins must needs become Christ's own sin, or else we shall perish for ever. This

true knowledge of Christ, which Paul and the prophets have most plainly delivered unto us, the wicked sophisters have darkened and defaced.

Isaiah speaketh thus of Christ: 'God', saith he, 'laid the iniquity of us all upon him' (Isaiah 53:6). We must not make these words less than they are, but leave them in their own proper signification. For God dallieth not in the words of the prophet, but speaketh earnestly and of great love: to wit, that Christ this Lamb of God should bear the iniquities of us all. But what is it to bear? The sophisters answer: to be punished. Very well. But wherefore is Christ punished? Is it not because he hath sin and beareth sin?

Now, that Christ hath sin, the Holy Ghost witnesseth in Psalm 40:12 ' My sins have taken such hold of me that I am not able to look up, yea they are more in number than the hairs of my head; ' also Psalm 41:4, and Psalm 69:5. In these Psalms the Holy Ghost speaketh in the person of Christ, and in plain words witnesseth that he had sins. For this testimony is not the voice of an innocent, but of a suffering Christ, which took upon him to bear the person of all sinners, and therefore was made guilty of the sins of the whole world.

Wherefore, Christ was not only crucified and died, but sin also (through the love of the Divine Majesty) was laid upon him. When sin was laid upon him, then cometh the law and saith: Every sinner must die. Therefore O Christ, if thou wilt answer, become guilty, and suffer punishment for sinners, thou must also bear sin and malediction. Paul therefore doth very well allege this general law out of Moses as concerning Christ: ' Everyone 'that hangeth upon the tree is the accursed of God.' Christ hath hanged upon the tree, therefore Christ is the accursed of God.

And this is a singular consolation for all the Godly, so to clothe Christ with our sins, and to wrap him in my sins, thy sins, and the sins of the whole world, and so to behold him bearing all our iniquities. For the beholding of him after this manner shall easily vanquish all the fantastical opinions of the sophisters concerning the justification of works. For they do imagine (as I have said) a certain faith formed [and adorned] with charity. By this (they say) sins are taken away, and men are justified [before God]. And what is this else (I pray you) but to unwrap Christ, and to strip him quite out of our sins, to make him innocent, and to charge and overwhelm ourselves with our own sins, and to look upon them, not in Christ, but in ourselves?

Yea what is this else but to take Christ clean away, and to make him utterly unprofitable unto us? For if it be so that we put away sin by the works of the law and charity, then Christ taketh them not away. For if he be the Lamb of God ordained from everlasting to take away the sins of the world; and moreover, if he be so wrapped of his own accord in our sins, that he became accursed for us, it must needs follow that we cannot be justified and take away sins by charity. For God hath laid our sins, not upon us, but upon his Son, Christ, that he bearing the

punishment thereof might be our peace, and that by his stripes we might be healed (Isaiah 53:5).

Therefore they cannot be taken away by us. To this all the Scripture beareth witness; and we also do confess the same in the articles of the Christian belief, when we say: 'I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, which suffered, was crucified and died for us.'

Hereby it appeareth that the doctrine of the Gospel (which of all other is most sweet and full of singular consolation) speaketh nothing of our works or of the works of the law, but of the unspeakable and inestimable mercy and love of God towards us unworthy and lost men: to wit, that our most merciful Father, seeing us to be oppressed and overwhelmed with the curse of the law, and so to be holden under the same that we could never be delivered from it by our own power, sent his only Son into the world and laid upon him all the sins of all men, saying: Be thou Peter that denier; Paul that persecutor, blasphemer and cruel oppressor; David that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and briefly, be thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men; see therefore that thou pay and satisfy for them. Here now cometh the law and saith: I find him a sinner, and that such a one as hath taken upon him the sins of all men, and I see no sins else but in him; therefore let him die upon the cross. And so he setteth upon him and killeth him. By this means the whole world is purged and cleansed from all sins, and so delivered from death and all evils. Now sin and death being abolished by this one man, God would see nothing else in the whole world, especially if it did believe, but a mere cleansing and righteousness. And if any remnants of sin should remain, yet for the great glory that is in Christ, God would not perceive them.

Thus we must magnify the article of Christian righteousness against the righteousness of the law and works, albeit no eloquence is able sufficiently to conceive, much less to set forth the inestimable greatness thereof.

Wherefore the argument that Paul handleth in this place, of all other is most mighty against the righteousness of the law. For it containeth this invincible opposition: that is, if the sins of the whole world be in that one man Jesus Christ, then are they not in the world. But if they be not in him, then are they yet in the world. Also, if Christ be made guilty of all the sins which we all have committed, then are we delivered utterly from all sins, but not by ourselves, nor by our own works or merits, but by him. But if he be innocent and bear not our sins, then do we bear them, and in them we shall die and be damned. 'But thanks be to God who hath given us the victory by our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen (1 Corinthians 15:57).

But now let us see by what means these two things so contrary and so repugnant may be reconciled in this one person [Christ]. Not only my sins and thine, but also the sins of the whole world, either past, present, or to come, take

hold upon him, go about to condemn him, and do indeed condemn him. But because in the selfsame person, which is the highest, the greatest and the only sinner, there is also an everlasting and invincible righteousness: therefore these two do encounter together, the highest, the greatest and the only sin, and the highest, the greatest and the only righteousness. Here one of them must needs be overcome and give place to the other, seeing they fight together with so great force and power. The sin therefore of the whole world cometh upon righteousness with all might and main. [In this combat] what is done? Righteousness is everlasting, immortal and invincible. Sin also is a most mighty and cruel tyrant, ruling and reigning over the whole world, subduing and bringing all men into bondage. To conclude: sin is a mighty and a strong God, which devoureth all mankind, learned, unlearned, holy, mighty and wise men, etc. This tyrant, I say, flieth upon Christ and will needs swallow him up, as he doth all other. But he seeth not that he is a person of invincible and everlasting righteousness. Therefore in this combat sin must needs be vanquished and killed, and righteousness must overcome, live [and reign]. So in Christ all sin is vanquished, killed and buried, and righteousness remaineth a conqueror and reigneth for ever.

In like manner, death which is an omnipotent [queen and] empress of the whole world, killing kings, princes and generally all men, doth mightily encounter with life, thinking utterly to overcome it and to swallow it up: and that which it goeth about, it bringeth to pass indeed. But because life was immortal, therefore when it was overcome, yet did it overcome and get the victory, vanquishing and killing death. Of this marvellous combat the Church finely singeth: 'In dread and wondrous strife, Did death and life contend.' The Captain of life that died, now liveth and reigneth. Death therefore through Christ is vanquished and abolished throughout the whole world, so that now it is but a painted death, which losing his sting can no more hurt those that believe in Christ, who is become the death of death, as Hosea the prophet saith: 'O death, I will be thy death' (Hosiah 13:14) So the curse, which is the wrath of God upon the whole world, hath the like conflict with the blessing: that is to say, with the eternal grace and mercy of God in Christ. The curse therefore fighteth against the blessing, and would condemn it and bring it altogether to nought; but it cannot do so. For the blessing is divine and everlasting, and therefore the curse must needs give place. For if the blessing in Christ could be overcome, then should God himself be overcome. But this is impossible; therefore Christ the power of God, righteousness, blessing, grace and life, overcometh and destroyeth these monsters, sin, death and the curse, without war or weapons, in his own body and in himself, as Paul delighteth to speak: 'Spoiling', saith he, 'the principalities and powers, and triumphing over them in himself' (Colossians 2:15). So that they cannot any more hurt those that do believe.

And this circumstance, 'in himself', maketh that combat much more wonderful and glorious. For it sheweth that it was necessary that these inestimable things should be accomplished in that one only person (to wit, that

the curse, sin and death should be destroyed, and the blessing, righteousness and life should succeed in their place), and that so the whole creature through this one person should be renewed. Therefore if thou look upon this person [Christ,] thou shalt see sin, death, the wrath of God, hell, the devil and all evils vanquished and mortified [in him]. Forasmuch then as Christ reigneth by his grace in the hearts of the faithful, there is no sin, no death, no curse: but where Christ is not known, there all these things do still remain. Therefore all they which believe not, do lack this inestimable benefit and victory. 'For this (as St. John saith) is our victory that overcometh the world, even our faith' (1 John 5:4).

This is the principal article of all Christian doctrine, which the sophisters have altogether darkened: which also the fantastical spirits do darken anew at this day. And here ye see how necessary a thing it is to believe and to confess the article of the divinity of Christ: which when Arius denied, he must needs also deny the article of our redemption. For to overcome the sin of the world, death, the curse, and the wrath of God in himself, is not the work of any creature, but of the divine power. Therefore he which in himself should overcome these, must needs be truly and naturally God. For against this mighty power of sin, death and the curse (which of itself reigneth throughout the world and in the whole creature), it was necessary to set a more high and mighty power. But besides the [sovereign and] divine power, no such power can be found. Wherefore, to abolish sin, to destroy death, to take away the curse in himself, and to give righteousness, to bring life to light, and to give the blessing (that is, to reduce those things to nothing and to create these), are the works of the divine power only and alone. Now because the Scripture doth attribute all these to Christ, therefore he in himself is life, righteousness and blessing, which is, naturally and substantially God. Wherefore they that deny the divinity of Christ, do lose all Christianity and become altogether Gentiles and Turks. We must learn therefore diligently the article of justification (as I often admonish you). For all the other articles of our faith are comprehended in it: and if that remain sound, then are all the rest sound. Wherefore, when we teach that men are justified by Christ, that Christ is the conqueror of sin, death and the everlasting curse, we witness therewithal that he is by nature God.

Hereby we may plainly see how horrible the wickedness and blindness of the Papists was, which taught that these cruel and mighty tyrants (sin, death and the curse) which swallow up all mankind, must be vanquished, not by the righteousness of the law of God (which although it be just, good and holy, can do nothing but bring men under the curse), but by the righteousness of man's own works, as by fasting, pilgrimages, rosaries, vows, etc. But, I pray you, was there ever any found, that being furnished with this armor, overcame sin, death, etc.? Paul in Ephesians 6:13 ff. describeth a far other manner of armor, which we must use against these most cruel and raging beasts. Therefore, in that these blind guides and leaders of the blind have set us naked and without the armor of God before these invincible and most mighty tyrants, they have not only delivered us unto them to be devoured, but also have made us ten times greater and more

wicked sinners than either whores or murderers. For it belongeth only to the divine power to destroy sin and to abolish death, to create righteousness and to give life. They have attributed this divine power to our own works, saying: If thou do this work or that, thou shalt overcome sin, death and the wrath of God. And by this means they set us in God's place, making us in very deed naturally, if I may so say, God himself.

And herein the Papists under the name of Christ, have shewed themselves to be sevenfold more wicked idolaters than ever were the Gentiles. For it happeneth to them as it doth to the sow, which after she is washed, walloweth herself again in the mire. And as Christ saith: After they are fallen away from faith, an evil spirit entereth again into the house out of the which he was driven, and taketh unto him seven spirits worse than himself, and there dwelleth: and then the latter end of that man is worse than the beginning (Luke 11:24 ff.).

Let us therefore receive this most sweet doctrine and full of comfort, with thanksgiving and with an assured faith, which teacheth that Christ being made a curse for us (that is, a sinner subject to the wrath of God), did put upon him our person, and laid our sins upon his own shoulders, saying: I have committed the sins which all men have committed. Therefore he was made a curse indeed according to the law, not for himself, but (as Paul saith) for us. For unless he had taken upon himself my sins and thine, and the sins of the whole world, the law had had no right over him, which condemneth none but sinners only, and holdeth them under the curse.

Wherefore he could neither have been made a curse nor die, since the only cause of the curse and of death is sin, from the which he was free. But because he had taken upon him our sins, not by constraint, but of his own good will, it behoved him to bear the punishment and wrath of God: not for his own person (which was just and invincible, and therefore could be found in no wise guilty), but for our person.

So making a happy change with us, he took upon him our sinful person, and gave unto us his innocent and victorious person: wherewith we being now clothed, are freed from the curse of the law. For Christ was willingly made a curse for us, saying: As touching mine own person, both as human and divine, I am blessed and need nothing; but I will empty myself and will put upon me your person, that is to say, your human nature, and I will walk in the same among you, and will suffer death to deliver you from death. Now he thus bearing the sin of the whole world in our person, was taken, suffered, was crucified and put to death, and became a curse for us. But because he was a person divine and everlasting, it was impossible that death should hold him. Wherefore he rose again the third day from death, and now liveth for ever; and there is neither sin nor death in him any more, but mere righteousness, life and everlasting blessedness.



This image we must continually behold, and apprehend the same with a steadfast faith, He that doth so, hath this innocency and victory of Christ, although he be never so great a sinner. But it cannot be apprehended by a will of love, but by reason enlightened with faith. By faith only therefore we are made righteous, for faith alone layeth hold upon this victory of Christ. Look then how much thou believest this, so much dost thou enjoy it. If thou believe sin, death and the curse to be abolished, they are abolished. For Christ hath overcome and taken away these in himself, and will have us to believe that like as in his own person there is now no sin nor death even so there is none in ours, seeing he hath performed and accomplished all things for us.

Wherefore if sin vex thee and death terrify thee, think that it is (as it is indeed) but a spectre and a false illusion of the devil. For in very deed there is now no sin, no curse, no death, no devil [to hurt us any more], for Christ hath vanquished and abolished all these things. Therefore the victory of Christ is most certain, and there is no defect in the thing itself (since it is most true), but in our incredulity: for to reason it is a hard matter to believe these inestimable good things. Moreover, Satan with his fiery darts, and the fantastical spirits with their wicked and false doctrine, go about to wrest from us and utterly to deface this doctrine. And specially for this article which we so diligently teach, we sustain the hatred and cruel persecution of Satan and of the world. For Satan feeleth the power and fruit of this article.

And that there is no more sin, death, or malediction, since Christ now reigneth, we daily confess also in the Apostles' Creed, when we say: 'I believe an holy Church.' Which indeed is nothing else but as if we should say: I believe that there is no sin and no death in the Church. For they which do believe in Christ, are no sinners, are not guilty of death, but are holy and righteous, lords over sin and death, and living for ever. But faith only seeth this, for we say: 'I believe an holy Church.' But if thou take counsel of reason and thine own eyes, thou wilt judge clean contrary. For thou seest many things in the Godly which offend thee. Thou seest them sometime to fall into sin, and to be weak in faith, to be subject unto wrath, envy, and other such evil affections – Therefore the Church is not holy! I deny the consequence. If I look upon mine own person, or the person of my brother, it shall never be holy. But if I behold Christ, who hath sanctified and cleansed his Church, then is it altogether holy; for he hath taken away the sins of the whole world.

Therefore, where sins are seen and felt, there are they indeed no sins. For according to Paul's divinity, there is no sin, no death, no malediction any more in the world, but in Christ, who is the Lamb of God that hath taken away the sins of the world: who was made a curse that he might deliver us from the curse. Contrariwise, according to philosophy and reason, sin, death and the curse are nowhere else but in the world, in the flesh, or in sinners. For a sophistical divine can speak no otherwise of sin, than doth the heathen philosopher. Like as the color, saith he, cleaveth in the wall, even so doth sin in the world, in the flesh, or

in the conscience: therefore it is to be purged by contrary operations, to wit, by charity. But the true divinity teacheth that there is no sin in the world any more: for Christ, upon whom the Father hath cast the sins of the whole world (Isaiah 53:6), hath vanquished and killed the same in his own body. He once dying for sin and raised up again, dieth no more. Therefore wheresoever is [a true] faith in Christ, there sin is abolished, dead and buried. But where no faith in Christ is, there sin doth still remain. And albeit the remnants of sin be as yet in the saints because they believe not perfectly, yet are they dead in that they are not imputed unto them because of their faith in Christ.

This is therefore a strong and a mighty argument which Paul here prosecuteth against the righteousness of works. It is not the law nor works that do deliver us from the everlasting curse, but Christ alone. See therefore, good Christian reader, I beseech thee, that thou distinguish Christ from the law, and diligently mark how Paul speaketh and what he saith. All (saith he) which do not fulfill the law, are necessarily under the curse. But no man fulfilleth the law; therefore all men are under the curse.

He addeth moreover another proposition: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Therefore it followeth that the law and works do not redeem us from the curse, but bring us rather under the curse. Charity therefore (which, as the schoolmen say, giveth form unto faith) hath not only not redeemed us from the curse, but rather it wrappeth us more and more in the curse. Now as Christ is something other than the law and the works of the law, so also the redemption of Christ is far other than my merit by the works of the law, seeing it was necessary that Christ himself should redeem us from the curse of the law. They remain therefore under the curse, as many as do not lay hold on Christ by faith. Neither are the sophisters so senseless as to say that Christ is our work or charity. For Christ is something far other than a work that we do. No Papist, how mad soever he be, will dare to say that the alms which he himself giveth to the needy, or the obedience which the monk performeth, is Christ. For Christ is God and man, conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, etc.; of whom Paul saith, that he was made a curse for us that he might redeem us from the curse of the law. Therefore law, works, charity, vows, etc. do not redeem, but rather wrap us in the curse and make it more heavy. Therefore the more we have wrought the less are we able truly to know and apprehend Christ.

Now Christ is apprehended, not by the law, not by works, but by reason or understanding lightened with faith. And this apprehending of Christ by faith is truly the speculative life (whereof the sophisters speak much, but in vain; for they know not what they say). And that speculation whereby Christ is apprehended, is not that foolish imagination of the sophisters and monks in wonders above themselves, but it is a spiritual, faithful and divine beholding of the Serpent set upon the pole: that is, of Christ hanging on the cross for my sins, thy sins, and the sins of the whole world. Therefore it is manifest that faith alone justifieth. But

when we are justified by faith, we go forth into the active life. After this manner the sophisters might have rightly distinguished the contemplative and the active life, if they had called the one the Gospel and the other the law: that is to say, if they had taught that the speculative life ought to be included in and guided by the Word of God, and that nothing ought to be regarded in that life, but the word of the Gospel; whereas the active life ought to be sought from the law, wherein a man apprehendeth not Christ, but exerciseth himself in works of charity towards his neighbor.

This text then is plain, that all men, yea the apostles, prophets and patriarchs had remained under the curse, if Christ had not set himself against sin, death, the curse of the law, the wrath and judgement of God and overcome them in his own body: for no power of flesh and blood could overcome these huge and hideous monsters. But now, Christ is not the law, or the work of the law, or an elicited act, but a divine and human person, which took upon him sin, the condemnation of the law and death, not for himself, but for us; therefore all the weight and force hereof consisteth in this word, 'for us.'

We must not then imagine Christ to be innocent, and as a private person (as do the schoolmen, and almost all the Fathers have done) who is holy and righteous for himself only. True it is indeed that Christ is a person most pure and unspotted: but thou must not stay there; for thou hast not yet Christ, although thou know him to be God and man: but then thou hast him indeed, when thou believest that this most pure and innocent person is freely given unto thee of the Father to be thy High priest and Savior, yea rather thy servant, that he putting off his innocency and holiness, and taking thy sinful person upon him, might bear thy sin, thy death, thy curse, and might be made a sacrifice and a curse for thee, that by this means he might deliver thee from the curse of the law.

Ye see then with what an apostolic spirit Paul handleth this most weighty argument of the blessing and of the curse, whilst he not only maketh Christ subject to the curse, but saith also that he is made a curse. So in Corinthians 5:21 he calleth him sin, when he saith: 'God hath made him to be sin for us, which knew no sin, etc.' And although these sentences may be well expounded after this manner: Christ is made a curse, that is to say, a sacrifice for the curse; and sin, that is, a sacrifice for sin; yet in my judgement it is better to keep the proper signification of the words, because there is a greater force and vehemency therein. For when a sinner cometh to the knowledge of himself indeed, he feeleth not only that he is miserable, but misery itself: not only that he is a sinner, and is accursed, but even sin and malediction itself. For it is a terrible thing to bear sin, the wrath of God, malediction and death. Wherefore that man which hath a true feeling of these things (as Christ did truly and effectually feel them for all mankind) is made even sin, death, malediction, etc.

Paul therefore handleth this place with a true apostolical spirit. There is neither sophister, nor lawyer, nor Jew, nor Anabaptist, nor any other that

speakech as he doth. For who durst allege this place out of Moses: 'Accursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' and apply it unto Christ?

Like as Paul then applied this sentence to Christ, even so may we apply unto Christ, not only that whole twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, but also may gather all the curses, of Moses' law together, and expound the same of Christ. For as Christ is innocent in this general law, touching his own person; so is he also in all the rest. And as he is guilty in this general law, in that he is made a curse for us, and is hanged upon the cross as a wicked man, a blasphemmer, a murderer and a traitor; even so is he also guilty in all others. For all the curses of the law are heaped together and laid upon him, and therefore he did bear and suffer them in his own body for us. He was therefore not only accursed, but also was made a curse for us.

This is to interpret the Scriptures truly and like an Apostle. For a man is not able to speak after this manner without the Holy Ghost; that is to say, to comprehend the whole law in this one saying: 'Christ is made a curse for us,' and lay the same altogether upon Christ; and contrariwise to comprehend all the promises of the Scriptures, and say that they are all at once fulfilled in Christ. Wherefore this is indeed an apostolic and invincible argument, not taken out of one place of the law, but out of the whole law: which Paul also useth as a sure ground.

Here we may see with what diligence Paul read the Holy Scriptures, and how exactly he weighed every word of this place: 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed' (Genesis 22:16). First, out of this word 'blessing' he gathereth this argument: If blessing shall be given unto all nations, then are all nations under the curse, yea the Jews also, who have the law of Moses. And he allegeth a testimony of the Scripture, whereby he proveth that all the Jews which are under the law, are under the curse: 'Cursed is every one that abideth not in all the things that are written in this book.'

Moreover, he diligently weigheth this clause: 'all nations.' Out of the which he gathereth thus: that the blessing belongeth not only to the Jews, but also to all the nations of the whole world. Seeing then it belongeth to all nations, it is impossible that it should be obtained through the law of Moses, forasmuch as there was no nation that had the law, but only the Jews. And although they had the law, yet were they so far off from obtaining the blessing through it, that the more they endeavored to accomplish it, the more they were subject to the curse of the law.

Wherefore there must needs be another righteousness, which must be far more excellent than the righteousness of the law, through the which, not only the Jews, but also all nations throughout the whole world, must obtain the blessing.

Finally, these words: 'In thy seed,' he expoundeth after this manner: that a certain man should issue out of the seed of Abraham, that is to say, Christ, through whom the blessing should come afterwards upon all nations.

Seeing therefore it was Christ that should bless all nations, it was he also that should take away the curse from them. But he could not take it away by the law, for by the law it is more and more increased. What did he then?

He joined himself to the company of the accursed, taking unto him their flesh and their blood, and so set himself for a mediator between God and men, saying: Although I be flesh and blood, and now dwell among the accursed, yet notwithstanding I am that blessed one, through whom all men must be blessed. So in one person he joineth God and man together, and being united unto us which were accursed, he was made a curse for us, and hid his blessing in our sin, in our death, and in our curse, which condemned him and put him to death. But because he was the Son of God, he could not be holden of them, but overcame them, [led them captive] and triumphed over them; and whatsoever did hang upon the flesh, which for our sake he took upon him, he carried it with him. Wherefore all they that cleave unto this flesh, are blessed and delivered from the curse, that is, from sin and everlasting death.

They that understand not this benefit of Christ (whereof the Gospel especially entreateth) and know not another righteousness besides the righteousness of the law, when they hear that the works of the law are not necessary to salvation, but that men do obtain the same by only hearing and believing that Christ the Son of God hath taken upon him our flesh and joined himself to the accursed, to the end that all nations might be blessed, they (I say) are offended; for of all this they understand nothing, or else they understand it carnally. For their minds are occupied with other cogitations and fantastical imaginations: therefore these things seem unto them strange matters. Yea even unto us which have received the first fruits of the Spirit, it is impossible to understand these things perfectly; for they mightily fight against man's reason.

To conclude, all evils should have overwhelmed us, as they shall overwhelm the wicked for ever: but Christ being made for us a transgressor of all laws, guilty of all our maledictions, our sins, and all our evils, cometh between as a mediator. Embracing us miserable and lost sinners, he took upon him and bore all our evils, which should have oppressed and tormented us for ever; and these cast him down for a little while, and ran over his head like water, as the prophet in the person of Christ complaineth when he saith: 'Thy indignation sore oppresseth me, and thou hast vexed me with all thy storms' (Psalm 88:7). Again: 'Thine indignations have gone over me, and thy terrors have troubled me. (ibid. 16). By this means, we being delivered from these everlasting terrors and anguish through Christ, shall enjoy an everlasting and inestimable peace and felicity, so that we believe this.

These are the reverend mysteries of the Scripture and a true cabbala, which Moses also somewhat darkly in some places did foreshew: which also the Prophets and Apostles did know, and did deliver to their posterity. For this knowledge of the things to come, the saints of the Old Testament rejoiced more than we do now, when they are revealed and exhibited unto us.

Indeed we do acknowledge that this knowledge of Christ and of the righteousness of faith is an inestimable treasure; but we conceive not thereby such a full joy of spirit as the prophets and Apostles did. Hereof it cometh that they, and especially Paul, so plentifully set forth and so diligently taught the article of justification. For this is the proper office of an Apostle, to set forth the glory and benefit of Christ, and thereby to raise up and comfort troubled and afflicted consciences.

*That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the gentiles through Christ Jesus*

Paul hath always this place before his eyes: 'In thy seed,' etc. For the blessing promised unto Abraham could not come upon the Gentiles, but only by Christ the seed of Abraham; and that by this means, that it behoved him to be made a curse, that this promise made unto Abraham: 'In thy seed shall all nations be blessed,' might so be fulfilled. Therefore by no other means could this be done that here is promised, but that Jesus Christ must needs become a curse, and join himself to those that were accursed, that so he might take away the curse from them, and through his blessing might bring unto them righteousness and life. And here mark (as I have also forewarned you) that this word 'blessing' is not in vain, as the Jews dream, who expound it to be but a salutation by word of mouth or by writing. But Paul entreateth here of sin and righteousness, of death and life before God. He speaketh therefore of inestimable and incomprehensible things, when he saith: 'that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ.'

Ye see moreover what merits we bring, and by what means we obtain this blessing. This is the merit of congruence and worthiness, these are the works preparative, whereby we obtain this righteousness, that Christ Jesus was made a curse for us. For we are ignorant of God, enemies of God, dead in sins, and accursed: and what is our desert then? What can he deserve that is accursed, ignorant of God, dead in sins, and subject to the wrath and judgment of God? When the Pope excommunicated a man, whatsoever he did was accounted accursed. How much more then must he that is accursed before God (as we all are before we know Christ) do nothing else but accursed things! Wherefore there is no other way to avoid the curse, but to believe, and with assured confidence to say: Thou Christ art my sin and my curse, or rather: I am thy sin, thy curse, thy death, thy wrath of God, thy hell; and contrariwise, thou art my righteousness, my blessing, my life, my grace of God and my heaven. For the text saith plainly:

'Christ is made a curse for us.' Therefore we are the cause that he was made a curse: nay rather we are his curse.

This is an excellent place, and full of spiritual consolation, and albeit it satisfy not the blind and hard-hearted Jews, yet it satisfieth us that are baptized and have received this doctrine, and concludeth most mightily, that we are blessed through the curse, the sin, and the death of Christ, that is to say, we are justified and quickened unto life. So long as sin, death and the curse do abide in us, sin terrifieth, death killeth, and the curse condemneth us. But when these are translated and laid upon Christ's back, then are all these evils made his own, and his benefits are made ours. Let us therefore learn in all temptations to translate sin, death, the curse and all evils which oppress us, from ourselves unto Christ; and again, from him unto ourselves, righteousness, mercy, life and blessing. For verily he beareth all our evils, seeing God the Father hath cast the iniquities of us all, as Isaiah (Isaiah 53:6) saith, upon him. And he hath taken them upon him willingly; for he was not guilty, but this he did, that he might fulfill the will of his Father, by the which we are sanctified for ever.

This is that infinite and unmeasurable mercy of God, which Paul would gladly amplify with all eloquence and plenty of words, but the slender capacity of man's heart cannot comprehend, much less utter that unsearchable depth and burning zeal of God's love towards us, and verily the inestimable greatness of God's mercy not only engendereth in us an hardness to believe, but also incredulity itself. For I do not only hear that the Almighty God, the creator and maker of all things, is good and merciful, but also that the same high sovereign Majesty was so careful for me a lost sinner, a child of wrath and of everlasting death, that he spared not his own dear Son, but delivered him to a most shameful death, that he hanging between two thieves, might be made a curse and sin for me a cursed sinner, that I might be made blessed, that is to say, righteous, and a child and heir of God. Who can sufficiently praise and magnify this [exceeding great] goodness of God? Not all the angels in heaven.

Therefore the doctrine of the Gospel speaketh of far other matters than any book of policy or philosophy, yea or the book of Moses himself; to wit, of the unspeakable and most divine gifts of God, which far pass the capacity and understanding both of men and angels.

### *That we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith*

This is a phrase of the Hebrew: 'The promise of the Spirit:' that is to say, the Spirit promised. Now the Spirit is freedom from the law, sin, death, the curse, hell, and from the wrath and judgment of God. Here is no merit or worthiness of ours, but a free promise and gift given through the seed of Abraham, that we may be free from all evils, and obtain all good things.

And this liberty and gift of the Spirit, we receive not by any other merits than by faith alone. For that only taketh hold of the promise, as Paul plainly saith in this place: 'That we might receive the promise of the Spirit, not by works, but by faith.'

This is indeed a sweet and true apostolic doctrine, which sheweth that those things are fulfilled for us, and now given to us, which many prophets and kings desired to see and hear (Luke 10:24). And such like places as this one is, were gathered together out of divers sayings of the prophets, which foresaw long before in the Spirit, that all things should be changed, repaired, and governed by this man Christ. The Jews therefore, although they had the law of God, notwithstanding besides that law, looked for Christ. None of the prophets or governors of the people of God, did make any new law, but Eli, Samuel, David, and all the other prophets did abide under the law of Moses; they did not appoint any new decalogue, or a new kingdom and priesthood; for that new change of the kingdom, the priesthood, the law and the worship, was referred and kept to him only, of whom Moses had prophesied long before: 'The Lord thy God shall raise up a prophet unto thee of thine own nation and from among thy brethren: him shall thou hear.' As if he should say: Thou shalt hear him only, and none besides him.

This the fathers well understood, for none could teach greater and higher points than Moses himself, who made excellent laws of high and great matters, as are the Ten Commandments, especially the first commandment: 'I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt have none others Gods but me,' 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' etc. This law concerning the love of God, comprehendeth the very angels also. Therefore it is the headspring of all divine wisdom. And yet was it necessary notwithstanding, that another teacher should come, that is to say, Christ, which should bring and teach another thing far passing these excellent laws: to wit, grace and remission of sins. This text therefore is full of power; for in this short sentence: 'That we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith,' Paul poureth out at once whatsoever he was able to say. Therefore when he can go no further (for he could not utter any greater or more excellent thing) he breaketh off, and here he stayeth.

Brethren, I speak according to man : though it be but a man's covenant, when it is confirmed, yet no man doth abrogate it, or addeth anything thereto

After this principal and invincible argument, Paul addeth another, grounded upon the similitude of a man's testament: which seemeth to be very weak, and such as the Apostle ought not to use for the confirmation of a matter of so great importance. For in high and weighty matters, we ought to confirm earthly things by divine things, and not divine and heavenly things by earthly things. Hereof it cometh that Cicero saith of Homer: He applieth the things of men to the Gods;



but I had rather apply the things of God to us. And indeed it is true, that these arguments of all others are most weak, when we go about to prove and confirm heavenly matters with earthly [and corruptible] things, as Scotus is wont to do. A man, saith he, is able to love God above all things. For a good thing, the greater it is, the more it is to be loved. And hereof he inferreth, that a man is able, ex puris naturalibus, that is to say, even of his own pure natural strength, easily to fulfill that highest commandment: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' etc. For, saith he, a man is able to love the least good thing above all things; yea, he setteth at nought his life (of all other things most dear to him) for a little vile money: therefore he can much more do it for God's sake.

Ye have oftentimes heard of me, that civil ordinances are of God; for God himself hath ordained them and approveth them, as he doth the sun, the moon, and other creatures. Therefore an argument taken of the ordinances or of the creatures of God is good, so that we use the same rightly. So the prophets have very often used similitudes and comparisons taken of creatures, calling Christ the sun, the Church the moon, the preachers and teachers the stars. Also there are many similitudes in the prophets, of trees, thorns, flowers, and fruits of the earth. The New Testament likewise is full of such similitudes. Therefore, where God's ordinance is in the creature, there may an argument be well borrowed and applied to divine [and heavenly] things.

So Christ in Matthew 7:2 argueth from earthly things to heavenly things, when he saith: 'If ye then which are evil can give to your children good gifts, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?' Likewise Paul: 'We must obey men; therefore much more must we obey God' (Acts 5:29). Jeremy also in Jeremiah 35:16: 'The Recabites obeyed their father; how much more ought ye to have obeyed me?' Now, these things are appointed of God are his ordinances, that fathers should give unto their children, and that children should obey their parents; therefore such manner of arguments are good, when they are grounded upon the ordinance of God. But if they be taken from men's corrupt affections they are bad and nothing worth. Such is the argument of Scotus: I love the lesser good, therefore I love the greater more. I deny the consequence. For my loving is not God's ordinance, but a devilish corruption. Indeed it should be so, that I, loving myself or another creature, should much more love God the Creator; but it is not so. For the love wherewith I love myself is corrupt and against God.

This I say lest any man should cavil, that an argument taken of earthly things, and applied to divine [and spiritual] matters, is nothing worth. I do not now consider whether it be a rhetorical or a dialectical argument, but this only do I say, that it is a strong enough argument when we argue from the things of man to the things of God, provided that we ground the same upon the ordinance of God, as we see in the present case. For the civil law, which is an ordinance of God, saith, that it is not lawful to break or to change the testament of a man. It is true that while the testator liveth it is not yet ratified, but when he is dead it is not

lawful to change it. But this is said, not de facto but de jure, that is, touching what ought to be done and what is rightly done: for in law it is held that a testament ought not to be changed; yea the laws do command that the last will of a man be most religiously observed, for it is one of the holiest things of men. Now therefore, upon this custom of man's testament, Paul argueth after this manner: How cometh it to pass that man is obeyed and not God? Politic and civil ordinances, as concerning testaments and other things, are religiously kept. There nothing is changed, nothing is added or taken away.

Only the testament of God suffereth change and addition: that is to say, his promise concerning the spiritual blessing, that is; concerning heavenly and everlasting things, which the whole world ought not only to receive with zeal and thanksgiving, but also ought most religiously to reverence and honor. This persuadeth vehemently: when we so argue from the examples and laws of men. Therefore he saith: I speak after the manner of men; that is to say, I bring unto you a similitude [taken of the custom and manner] of men. As if he should say. The testaments and such other things of men are straitly executed, and that which the law commandeth is observed and kept. For when a man maketh his last will, bequeathing his lands and goods to his heirs, and thereupon dieth, this last will is confirmed and made unchangeable by the death of the testator, so that nothing may now be either added to it, or taken from it, according to all law and equity. Now, if a man's will be kept with so great fidelity, that nothing is added to it or taken from it after his death; how much more ought the last will of God to be faithfully kept, which he promised and gave unto Abraham and his seed after him? For when Christ died, then was it confirmed in him, and after his death the writing of his last testament was opened; that is to say, the promised blessing of Abraham was preached among all nations dispersed throughout the whole world. This was the last will [and testament] of God, the great testator, confirmed by the death of Christ; therefore no man ought to change it or add any thing to it, as they that teach the law and man's traditions do: for they say, unless thou be circumcised, keep the law, do many works, and suffer many things, thou canst not be saved. This is not the last will and testament of God. For he said not unto Abraham: If thou do this or that thou shalt obtain the blessing, or: they that be circumcised and keep the law shall obtain the same; but he saith: 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' As if he should say: I of mere mercy do promise unto thee, that Christ shall come of thy seed, who shall bring the blessing upon all nations oppressed with sin and death; that is to say, which shall deliver the nations from the everlasting curse, to wit, from sin and death, receiving this promise by froth: 'In thy seed,' etc.

Wherefore, even as the false apostles were in time past, so are all the Papists and justiciaries at this day perverters and destroyers, not of man's testament (because they are forbidden by the law) but of God's testament, whom they fear nothing at all, although he be a consuming fire. For such is the nature of all hypocrites, that they will observe man's law exactly; but the laws of God they do despise, and most wickedly transgress. But the time shall come when they

shall bear an horrible judgment, and shall feel what it is to contemn and pervert the testament of God. This argument then, grounded upon the ordinance of God, is strong enough.

*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not: and to the seeds, as speaking of many: but, and to thy seed, as of one, which is Christ*

Here by a new name he calleth the promises of God made unto Abraham, concerning Christ that should bring the blessing upon all nations, a testament. And indeed the promise is nothing else but a testament, not yet revealed but sealed up. Now a testament is not a law, but a donation or free gift. For heirs look not for laws, exactions, or any burdens to be laid upon them by the testament, but they look for the inheritance confirmed thereby.

First of all therefore he expoundeth the words. Afterwards he applieth the similitude, and standeth upon this word 'seed.' There were no laws given unto Abraham, saith he, but a testament was made and delivered unto him; that is to say, the promises were pronounced unto him as touching the spiritual blessing: therefore somewhat was promised and given unto him. If then the testament of man be kept, why should not rather the testament of God be kept, whereof the testament of man is but a sign? Again, if we will keep the signs, why do we not rather keep the things which they signify?

Now the promises are made unto him, not in all the Jews or in many seeds, but in one seed, which is Christ. The Jews will not receive this interpretation of Paul, who not without reason repeateth this word 'seed,' and expoundeth this seed to be Christ; and this he doth with a truly apostolic spirit. Let the Jews deny it as much as they will: we notwithstanding have arguments strong enough, which Paul hath before rehearsed, which also confirm this thing, and they cannot deny them.

*Hitherto, as touching the similitude of God's ordinance, that is to say, of man's testament. Now he expoundeth and applieth the same.*

And this I say, that the law which was 430 years after, cannot disannul the covenant that was confirmed before of God in respect of Christ, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Here the Jews might object, that God was not content only to give promises to Abraham, but also after 430 years he made the law. God therefore mistrusting his own promises, as insufficient to justify, added thereto a better thing: that is to say, the law, to the end that when the same, as a better successor, was come, not the idle, but the doers of the law might be made righteous thereby. The law

therefore which followed the promise, did abrogate the promise. Such evasions and starting-holes the Jews seek out.

To this cavillation Paul answereth very well and to the purpose, and strongly confuteth the same. The law, saith he, was given 430 years after this promise was made: 'In thy seed' etc., and it could not make the promise void and unprofitable. For the promise is the testament of God, confirmed by God himself in respect of Christ so many years before the law. Now, that which God once hath promised and confirmed, he calleth not back again, but it remaineth ratified with him for ever.

Why then was the law added? Indeed it was delivered so many ages after, to the posterity of Abraham, not to the end he might through it obtain the blessing (for it is the office of the law to bring men under the curse, and not to bless); but that there might be in the world a certain people which might have the Word and testimony of Christ, out of the which Christ also, according to the flesh, might be born; and that men being kept and shut up under the law, might sigh and groan for their deliverance promised through the seed of Abraham, which is Christ, which only could and should bless, that is to say, deliver all nations from sin and [everlasting] death. Moreover the ceremonies commanded in the law, did foreshadow Christ. Wherefore the promises were not abolished either by the law, or by the ceremonies of the law; but rather by the same, as by certain seals, it was for a time confirmed, until the letters themselves (to wit, the promise) might be opened, and by the preaching of the Gospel might be spread abroad among all nations.

But let us suffer the law and the promise to encounter together, and then shall we see which of them is the stronger: that is to say, whether the promise be able to abolish the law, or the law the promise. If the law abolish the promise, then it followeth, that we by our works make God a liar, and his promise of none effect. For if the law do justify us and deliver us from sin and death, and consequently our works and our own strength accomplishing the law, then the promise made unto Abraham is utterly void and unprofitable, and so consequently God is a liar and a dissembler. For when he which promiseth, will not perform his promise, but maketh it of none effect, what doth he else but show himself to be a liar and a dissembler? But it is impossible that the law should make God a liar, or that our works should make his promise void, nay rather it must needs be firm and stable for ever (for God promiseth not in vain), although we were able to keep and fulfill the law. And let us admit that all men were as holy as angels, so that they should not need the promise (which notwithstanding is impossible): yet must we think that the same promise abideth most sure and certain, or else God should be found a liar, which either hath promised in vain, or else will not or cannot perform his promises. Therefore like as the promise was before the law, so is it far more excellent than the law.

And God did excellently well in that he gave the promise so long before the law. Which he did of purpose and to this end, that it should not be said, that righteousness was given through the law, and not through the promise.

For if he would that we should have been justified by the law, then would he have given the law 430 years before the promise, or else together with the promise. But now, at the first he speaketh not a word as concerning the law, but at length after 430 years he giveth the law. In the meanwhile, all that time he speaketh only of his promises. Therefore the blessing and free gift of righteousness came before the law through the promise: the promise therefore is far more excellent than the law. And so the law doth not abolish the promise; but faith in the promise (whereby the believers even before Christ's time were saved) which is now published by the Gospel throughout the whole world, destroyeth the law, so that it cannot increase sin any more, terrify sinners, or bring them into desperation, laying hold upon the promise through faith.

And in this also lieth a certain vehemency, or rather irony, that he expressly setteth down the number of 430 years. As if he would say: If ye be versed in arithmetic, reckon on your fingers how long it was between the promise given, and the law. It is plain that Abraham received the promise a long time before the law. For the law was given to the people of Israel years after. And this is an invincible argument gathered and grounded upon a certain time. And he speaketh not here of the law in general, but only of the written law. As if he would say: God could not then have regard to the ceremonies and works of the law, and give righteousness to the observers thereof. For as yet the law was not given, which commandeth ceremonies, requireth works, and promiseth life to those that observe them, saying: 'The man that shall do these things, shall live in them.' And although it promise such things, yet it followeth not therefore that we obtain these promises; for it saith plainly: 'The man that shall do these things,' etc. Now it is certain that no man can do them. Moreover, Paul saith that the law cannot abolish the promise; therefore that promise made unto Abraham 430 years before the law, remaineth firm and constant. And that the matter may be better understood, I will declare the same by a similitude. If a rich man, not constrained, but of his own good will, should adopt one to be his son, whom he knoweth not, and to whom he oweth nothing, and should appoint him to be the heir of all his lands and goods; and certain years after that he hath bestowed this benefit upon him, he should lay upon him a law to do this or that: he cannot now say that he hath deserved this benefit by his own works, seeing that many years before, he asking nothing, had received the same freely and of mere favor; so, God could not respect our works and deserts going before righteousness: for the promise and the gift of the Holy Ghost was 430 years before the law.

Hereby it appeareth that Abraham obtained not righteousness before God through the law. For there was yet no law. If there were yet no law, then was there neither work nor merit. What then? Nothing else but the mere promise of God. This promise Abraham believed, and it was counted to him for

righteousness. By the selfsame means then that the father obtained this promise, the children do also obtain it. So say we also at this day: Our sins were purged by the death of Christ above a thousand and five hundred years ago, when there were yet no religious orders, no canon or rule of penance, no merits of congruence and worthiness. We cannot now therefore begin to abolish the same by our own works and merits.

Thus Paul gathereth arguments of similitudes, of a certain time, and of persons, so sure and strong on every side, that no man in his fight mind can deny them. Let us therefore arm and fortify our consciences with such arguments; for it helpeth us exceedingly to have them always ready in temptations. For they lead us from the law and works, to the promise and to faith; from wrath to grace; from sin to righteousness; and from death to life.

Therefore these two things (as I do often repeat): to wit, the law, and the promise, must be diligently distinguished. For in time, in place, and in person, and generally in all other circumstances, they are separate as far asunder as heaven and earth, the beginning of the world and the latter end.

Indeed they are near neighbors, for they are joined together in one man or in one soul: but in the inward affection and as touching their office, they ought to be separate far asunder: so that the law may have dominion over the flesh, and the promise may sweetly [and comfortably] reign in the conscience. When thou hast thus appointed unto them both their own proper place, then thou walkest safely between them both in the heaven of the promise and in the earth of the law. In the spirit thou walkest in the paradise of grace and peace: in the flesh thou walkest in the earth of works and of the cross. And now the troubles which the flesh is compelled to bear shall not be hard unto thee, because of the sweetness of the promise, which wondrously comforteth and rejoiceth the heart. But now, if thou confound and mingle these two together and place the law in the conscience, and the promise of liberty in the flesh, then thou makest a confusion (such as was in popery); so that thou shalt not know what the law, what the promise, what sin, or what righteousness is.

Wherefore if thou wilt rightly divide the word of truth, thou must put a great difference between the promise and the law, as touching the inward affections and whole practice of life. It is not for nought that Paul prosecuteth this argument so diligently. For he foresaw in spirit that this mischief should creep into the Church, that the Word of God should be confounded: that is to say, that the promise should be mingled with the law, and so the promise should be utterly lost. For when the promise is mingled with the law, it is made nothing else but the law. Therefore accustom thyself to separate the promise and the law asunder, even in respect of time, that when the law cometh and accuseth thy conscience, thou mayst say: Lady law, thou comest not in season, for thou comest too soon; tarry yet until 430 years be expired; and when they are past, then come and spare not. But if thou come then, yet shalt thou come too late.

For then hath the promise prevented thee 430 years: to the which I assent, and sweetly repose myself in the same. Therefore I have nothing to do with thee: I hear thee not. For now I live with the believing Abraham, or rather now I live after Christ hath been revealed, who is my righteousness, who also hath abolished thee, O law. And thus let Christ be always before thine eyes, as a certain summary of all arguments for the defense of faith, against the righteousness of the flesh, against the law, and against all works and merits whatsoever.

Hitherto I have rehearsed almost all, but specially the principal arguments which the apostle Paul handleth in this Epistle, for the confirmation of this doctrine of justification. Among which, the argument as touching the promise made unto Abraham and to the other fathers, is the weightiest and of great efficacy: which Paul doth chiefly prosecute both here and in the Epistle to the Romans, the words whereof he diligently weigheth, and moreover intreateth both of the times and persons. Also he standeth upon this word 'seed,' applying the same unto Christ. Finally, he declareth by the contrary, what the law worketh: namely, that it holdeth men under the curse. And thus he fortifieth the article of Christian righteousness with strong and mighty arguments. On the other side, he overthroweth the arguments of the false apostles, which they used in defense of the righteousness of the law, and turneth them upon their own heads: that is to say, whereas they contended that righteousness and life is obtained by the law, Paul sheweth that it worketh malediction and death. Ye contend saith he, that the law is necessary to salvation. Have ye not read that it saith: 'He that shall do these things shall live in them?' Now, who is he that performeth and accomplisheth them? No man living. Therefore, 'as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse' (Galatians 3:10).

And again in another place: 'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law' (1 Corinthians 15:56). Now followeth the conclusion of these arguments.

*For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more by the promise, etc.*

So he saith in the fourth to the Romans: 'For if they which be of the law be heirs, then is faith made void, and the promise of none effect.' And it cannot otherwise be: for this distinction is plain, that the law is a thing far differing from the promise. Yea, natural reason, although it be never so blind, is compelled to confess that it is one thing to promise and another thing to require: one thing to give, and another thing to take. The law requireth and exacteth of us our works: the promise of the Seed doth offer unto us the spiritual and everlasting benefits of God, and that freely for Christ's sake. Therefore we obtain the inheritance or blessing through the promise and not through the law. For the promise saith: 'In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.' Therefore he that hath the law, hath not enough, because he hath not yet the blessing, without the which he is

compelled to abide under the curse. The law therefore cannot justify, because the blessing is not joined unto it. Moreover, if the inheritance were of the law, then should God be found a liar, and the promise should be in vain. Again, if the law could obtain the blessing, why did God make this promise, 'In thy seed,' etc.? Why did he not rather say: Do this and thou shalt receive the blessing? Or else: By keeping of the law, thou mayest deserve everlasting life? This argument is grounded upon contraries: The inheritance is given by the promise; therefore not by the law.

### *But God gave it unto Abraham by promise*

It cannot be denied but that God, before the law was, gave unto Abraham the inheritance or blessing by the promise: that is to say, remission of sins, righteousness, salvation and everlasting life, that we should be sons and heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ. For it is plainly said in Genesis: 'In thy seed shall all nations be blessed.' There the blessing is given freely without respect of the law or works. For God gave the inheritance before Moses was born, or before any man had yet once thought of the law. Why vaunt ye then, that righteousness cometh by the law, seeing that righteousness, life and salvation was given to your father Abraham without the law, yea before there was any law? He that is not moved with these things is blind and obstinate. But this argument of the promise I have before handled more largely, and therefore I will but touch it by the way.

Hitherto we have heard the principal part of this Epistle. Now the Apostle goeth about to show the use and office of the law, adding certain similitudes of the schoolmaster and of the little heir; also the allegory of the two sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, etc.; and last of all he setteth forth certain precepts concerning manners. In this later part of the Epistle, Paul speaketh rhetorically more than he teacheth.

### *Wherefore then serveth the law?*

When we teach that a man is justified without the law and works, then doth this question necessarily follow: If the law do not justify, why then was it given? Also: why doth God charge us and burden us with the law, if it do not quicken and give life? What need is there that we should be so hardly exercised and vexed with it, if they which work but one hour, are made equal with us that have borne the heat and burden of the day? Whenas that grace is once published unto us which the Gospel setteth out, by and by ariseth this great murmuring; without the which the Gospel cannot be preached. The Jews had this opinion, that if they kept the law, they should be justified thereby. Therefore when they heard the Gospel preached concerning Christ, who came into the world to save, not the righteous, but sinners, and that these should go before them into the kingdom of God, they were wonderfully offended, complaining that they had borne the heavy yoke of the law so many years with great labor and toil, and that they were miserably



vexed and oppressed with the tyranny of the law, without any profit, yea rather to their great hurt; whereas the Gentiles who were idolaters obtained grace without any labor or travail. So do our Papists murmur at this day, saying: What hath it profited us that we have lived in a cloister twenty, thirty, or forty years; that we have vowed chastity, poverty, obedience; that we have said so many canonical hours, and so many masses; that we have so punished our bodies with fasting, prayers, chastisements etc., if a husband, a wife, a prince, a governor, a master, a scholar, if an hireling or a drudge bearing sacks, if a wench sweeping the house shall not only be made equal with us, but also [be accepted as] better and more worthy [before God] than we?

This is therefore an hard question, whereunto reason cannot answer, but is greatly offended with it. Reason after a sort understandeth the righteousness of the law, which also it teacheth and urgeth, and imagineth that the doers of it are righteous: but it understandeth not the office and end of the law. Therefore when it heareth this sentence of Paul (which is strange and unknown to the world), that the law was given because of transgressions, thus is judgeth: Paul abolisheth the law, for he saith that we are not justified through it; yea he is a blasphemmer against God which gave the law, when he saith that the law was given because of transgressions.

Let us live therefore as Gentiles which have no law. Yea, let us sin and abide in sin that grace may abound. Also let us do evil that good may come thereof. This happened to the Apostle. And the self-same happeneth at this day unto us. For when the common people hear out of the Gospel, that righteousness cometh by the mere grace of God through faith only, without the law and without works, they gather by and by of it, as did the Jews in time past: If the law do not justify, then let us work nothing ! And this do they truly perform.

What should we then do? This evil doth indeed very much vex us, but we cannot remedy it. For when Christ preached, he must needs hear, that he was a blasphemmer and a seditious person: that is to say, that through his doctrine he deceived men, and made them rebels against Caesar. The selfsame thing happened to Paul and all the rest of the Apostles. And what marvel is it if the world in like manner accuse us at this day? Let it accuse us, let it slander us and persecute us: yet must not we therefore hold our peace, but speak freely, that afflicted consciences may be delivered out of the snares of the devil. And we must not regard the foolish and ungodly people, in that they do abuse our doctrine; for whether they have the law or no law, they cannot be reformed. But we must consider how troubled consciences may be helped, that they perish not with the multitude. If we should hold our peace, then should those consciences have no comfort, which are so entangled and snared with men's laws and traditions, that they can wind themselves out by no means.

As Paul therefore, when he saw that some resisted his doctrine and other some sought the liberty of the flesh, and thereby became worse, comforted

himself after this sort: that he was an Apostle of Jesus Christ, sent to preach the faith of God's elect; and that he must suffer all things for the elect's sake, that they might also obtain salvation: so we at this day do all things for the elect's sake, whom we know to be edified and comforted through our doctrine. But as for the dogs and swine (of whom the one sort persecuteth our doctrine, and the other sort treadeth under foot the liberty which we have in Christ), I am so offended with them that in all my life for their sakes I would not utter so much as one word; but I would rather wish that these our swine, together with our adversaries the dogs, were yet still subject to the Pope's tyranny, rather than that the holy name of God should be so blasphemed because of them.

Therefore, albeit not only the foolish and ignorant people, but they also which seem in their own conceits to be very wise, do argue after this sort:

If the law do not justify, then is it in vain and of none effect; yet it is not therefore true. For like as this consequence is nothing worth: Money doth not justify [or make a man righteous], therefore it is unprofitable; The eyes do not justify, therefore they must be plucked out; The hands make not a man righteous, therefore they must be cut off: – so is this naught also:

The law doth not justify, therefore it is unprofitable. We must attribute unto everything his proper office and use. We do not therefore destroy or condemn the law, because we say that it doth not justify; but we answer otherwise to this question: To what end then serveth the law? than our adversaries do, who do perversely counterfeit an office and use of the law, which belongeth not unto it.

Against this abuse and forged office of the law, we dispute and answer with Paul that the law doth not justify. But in so saying, we affirm not that the law is unprofitable, as they do by and by gather. If the law do not justify (say they), then it is given in vain. No, not so, for it hath its proper office and use; but not that which the adversaries do imagine, namely, to make men righteous: nay, it accuseth, terrifieth and condemneth them.

We say with Paul, that the law is good if a man use it lawfully (Timothy 1:8); that is to say, if he use the law as the law. If I give unto the law his proper definition, and keep it within the compass of his office and use, it is an excellent thing. But if I translate it to another use, and attribute that unto it which I should not, then do I not only pervert the law, but also the whole of divinity. Therefore Paul fighteth here against those pestilent hypocrites, who could not abide this sentence: 'The law was added because of transgressions.'

For they think that the office of the law is to justify. And this is the general opinion of man's reason among all the sophisters and throughout the whole world, that righteousness is gotten through the works of the law. And reason will by no means suffer this pernicious opinion to be wrested from it, because it understandeth not the righteousness of faith. Hereof it cometh that the Papists,

less foolishly than impiously, do say: The Church hath the law of God, the traditions of the fathers, the decrees of councils; if it live after them it is holy. No man shall persuade these men, that when they keep these things, they please not God, but provoke his wrath. To conclude, they that trust in their own righteousness, think to pacify the wrath of God by their will-worship and voluntary religion. Therefore this opinion of the righteousness [of the law] is the sink of all evils, and the sin of sins of the whole world. For gross sins and vices may be known, and so amended, or else repressed by the punishment of the magistrate. But this sin (to wit, every man's own opinion concerning righteousness) will not only be counted no sin, but also will be esteemed for the highest religion and righteousness. This pestilent sin therefore is the mighty power of the devil over the whole world, the very head of the serpent, and the snare whereby the devil entangleth and holdeth all men captive. For naturally all men have this opinion, that they are justified by keeping of the law. Paul therefore, to the end he might show the true office and use of the law, and might root out of men's hearts that false opinion concerning the righteousness thereof, answereth to this objection: Wherefore then serveth the law, if it justify not? after this sort: It was not given to make men righteous (saith he) but:

### *It was added because of transgressions*

As things are diverse and distinct, so the uses thereof are diverse and distinct: therefore they may not be confounded; for, if they be, there must needs be a confusion of the things also. A woman may not wear a man's apparel, nor a man a woman's attire. Let a man do the works that belong to a man, and the woman the works that belong to a woman.

Let every man do that which his vocation and office requireth. Let pastors and preachers teach the Word of God purely. Let magistrates govern their subjects, and let subjects obey their magistrates. Let every creature serve in his due place and order. Let the sun shine by day; the moon and the stars by night. Let the sea give fishes; the earth grain; the woods wild beasts and trees, etc. In like manner let not the law usurp the office and use of another, that is to say, of justification; but let it leave this only to grace, to the promise, and to faith. What is then the office of the law? Transgression; or else (as he saith in another place) 'the law entered in that the offense might abound' (Romans 5:20). A goodly office forsooth! 'The law', saith he, 'was added because of transgressions;' that is to say, it was added besides and after the promise, until Christ the seed should come, unto whom it was promised.

### OF THE DOUBLE USE OF THE LAW

Here you must understand that there is a double use of the law. One is civil: for God hath ordained civil laws, yea all laws to punish transgressions. Every law then is given to restrain sin. If it restrain sin, doth it therefore make men righteous? No, nothing less. For in that I do not kill, I do not commit adultery, I do

not steal, or in that I abstain from other sins, I do it not willingly or for the love of virtue, but I fear the prison, the sword and the hangman. These do bridle and restrain me that I sin not, as bonds and chains do restrain a lion or a bear, that he tear and devour not every thing that he meeteth; therefore the restraining from sin is not righteousness, but rather a signification of unrighteousness. For as a mad or a wild beast is bound, lest he should destroy everything that he meeteth: even so the law doth bridle a mad and a furious man, that he sin not after his own lust. This restraint sheweth plainly enough, that they which have need thereof (as all they have which are without Christ) are not righteous, but rather wicked and mad men, whom it is necessary by the bonds and prison of the law so to bridle, that they sin not. Therefore the law justifieth not.

The first use, then, of laws is to bridle the wicked. For the devil reigneth throughout the whole world, and enforceth men to all kinds of horrible wickedness. Therefore God hath ordained magistrates, parents, teachers, laws, bonds and all civil ordinances, that, if they can do no more, yet at the least they may bind the devil's hands, that he rage not in his bondslaves after his own lust. Like as therefore they that are possessed, in whom the devil mightily reigneth, are kept in bonds and chains lest they should hurt other: even so in the world, which is possessed of the devil and carried headlong into all kinds of wickedness, the magistrate is present with his bonds and chains; that is to say, with his laws, binding his hands and feet, that he run not headlong into all mischief. And, if he suffer not himself to be bridled after this sort, then he loseth his head. This civil restraint is very necessary, and appointed of God, as well for public peace as for the preservation of all things, but specially lest the course of the Gospel should be hindered by the tumults and seditions of outrageous men. But Paul intreateth not here of this civil use [and office] of the law. It is indeed very necessary, but it justifieth not. For as a possessed [or a mad] man is not therefore free [from the snares of the devil] or well in his mind, because he hath his hands and his feet bound [and can do no hurt]: even so the world, although it be bridled by the law from outward wickedness and mischief, yet it is not therefore righteous, but still continueth wicked; yea this restraint, sheweth plainly that the world is wicked and outrageous, stired up [to all kinds of wickedness] by his prince the devil; for otherwise it need not be bridled by laws that it should not sin.

Another use of the law is theological or spiritual, which is (as Paul saith) 'to increase transgressions;' that is to say, to reveal unto a man his sin, his blindness, his misery, his impiety, ignorance, hatred and contempt of God, death, hell, the judgment and deserved wrath of God. Of this use the Apostle intreateth notably in the seventh to the Romans. This is altogether unknown to hypocrites, to the sophisters and school-divines, and to all that walk in the opinion of the righteousness of the law, or of their own righteousness. But to the end that God might bridle and beat down this monster and this mad beast (I mean the presumption of righteousness and religion), which naturally maketh men proud, and puffeth them up in such sort that they think themselves thereby to please

God highly: it behoved him to send some Hercules which might set upon this monster with all force and courage, to overthrow him and utterly to destroy him; that is to say, he was constrained to give a law in mount Sinai, with so great majesty and so terrible a shew, that the whole multitude was shaken with terror (Exodus 19-20).

This, as it is the proper and the principal use of the law, so it is very profitable and also most necessary. For if any be not a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, and outwardly refrain from sin, as the Pharisee did which is mentioned in the Gospel (Luke 18:11), he would swear (because he is possessed with the devil) that he is righteous; and therefore he conceiveth an opinion of righteousness, and presumeth of his good works and merits.

Such a one God cannot otherwise mollify and humble, that he may acknowledge his misery and damnation, but by the law. For that is the hammer of death, the thundering of hell and the lightning of God's wrath, that beateth to powder the obstinate and senseless hypocrites. Wherefore this is the proper and absolute use of the law, by lightning, by tempest and by the sound of the trumpet (as in mount Sinai) to terrify, and by thundering to beat down and rend in pieces that beast which is called the opinion of righteousness. Therefore saith God by Jeremy the prophet: 'My word is a hammer, breaking rocks' (Jeremiah 23:29). For as long as the opinion of righteousness abideth in man, so long there abideth also in him incomprehensible pride, presumption, security, hatred of God, contempt of his grace and mercy, ignorance of the promises and of Christ. The preaching of free remission of sins for Christ's sake, cannot enter into the heart of such a one, neither can he feel any taste or savor thereof. For that mighty rock and adamant wall, to wit, the opinion of righteousness, wherewith the heart is environed, doth resist it.

As therefore the opinion of righteousness is a great and an horrible monster, a rebellious, obstinate and stiff-necked beast: so, for the destroying and overthrowing thereof, God hath need of a mighty hammer; that is to say, the law: which then is in his proper use and office, when it accuseth and revealeth sin after this sort: Behold, thou hast transgressed all the commandments of God, etc! – and so it striketh a terror into the conscience, so that it feeleth God to be offended and angry indeed, and itself to be guilty of eternal death. Here the heart feeleth the intolerable burden of the law, and is beaten down even to desperation, so that now, being oppressed with great anguish and terror, he desireth death, or else seeketh to destroy himself. Wherefore the law is that hammer, that fire, that mighty strong wind, and that terrible earthquake rending the mountains and breaking the rocks, that is to say, the proud and obstinate hypocrites. Elijah, not being able to abide these terrors of the law, which by these things are signified, covered his face with his mantle (1 Kings 19:11 ff). Notwithstanding, when the tempest ceased, of which he was a beholder, there came a soft and gracious wind, in which the Lord was. But it behoved that the

tempest of fire, of wind, and the earthquake should pass, before the Lord should reveal himself in that gracious wind.

This terrible shew and majesty wherein God gave his law in mount Sinai, did represent the use of the law. There was in the people of Israel which came out of Egypt, a singular holiness. they gloried and said: 'We are the people of God. We will do all those things which the Lord our God hath commanded' (Exodus 19:8). Moreover, Moses did sanctify the people, and bade them wash their garments, refrain from their wives, and prepare themselves against the third day. There was not one of them but he was full of holiness. The third day Moses bringeth the people out of their tents to the mountain into the sight of the Lord, that they might hear his voice.

What followed then? When the children of Israel did behold the horrible sight of the mount smoking and burning, the black clouds, and the lightnings flashing up and down in this thick darkness, and heard the sound of the trumpet blowing long and waxing louder and louder; and moreover when they heard the thunderings and the lightnings, they were afraid, and standing afar off they said unto Moses: 'We will do all things willingly, so that the Lord speak not unto us, lest that we die, and this great fire consume us. Teach thou us, and we will hearken unto thee' (Exodus 20:19; Deuteronomy 5:24 ff.). I pray you, what did their purifying, their white garments, their refraining from their wives, and their holiness profit them? Nothing at all. There was not one of them that could abide this presence of the Lord in his majesty and glory: but all being amazed and shaken with terror, fled back as if they had been driven by the devil. For God is a consuming fire, in whose sight no flesh is able to stand.

The law of God therefore hath properly and peculiarly that office which it had then in mount Sinai, when it was first given and first heard of them that were washed, righteous, purified and chaste: and yet notwithstanding it brought that holy people into such a knowledge of their own misery, that they were thrown down even to death and desperation. No purity nor holiness could help them; but there was in them such a feeling of their own uncleanness, unworthiness and sin, and of the judgment and wrath of God, that they fled from the sight of the Lord, and could not abide to hear his voice. 'What flesh was there ever,' said they, 'that heard the voice of the living God, and yet lived? This day have we seen that when God talketh with man, man cannot abide it.' They speak now far otherwise than they did a little before, when they said: 'We are the holy people of God, whom the Lord hath chosen for his own peculiar people before all the nations upon earth. We will do all things which the Lord hath spoken.' So it happeneth at length to all justiciaries, who being drunken with the opinion of their own righteousness, do think, when they are out of temptation, that they are beloved of God, and that God regardeth their vows, their fastings, their prayers, and their will-works, and that for the same he must give unto them a singular crown in heaven. But when that thundering, lightning, fire, and that hammer which breaketh in pieces the rocks, that is to say, the law of God, cometh suddenly

upon them, revealing unto them their sin, the wrath and judgment of God, then the selfsame thing happeneth unto them which happened to the Jews standing at the foot of mount Sinai.

Here I admonish all such as love Godliness, and specially such as shall become teachers of others hereafter, that they diligently learn out of Paul to understand the true and proper use of the law: which I fear after our time will again be trodden under foot and utterly abolished. For even now while we are yet living, and employ all our diligence to set forth the office and use both of the law and the Gospel, there be very few, yea even among those which will be accounted Christians, and make a profession of the Gospel with us, that understand these things rightly and as they should do.

What think ye then shall come to pass when we are dead and gone? I speak nothing of the Anabaptists, of the new Arians and such other vain spirits, who are no less ignorant of these matters than are the Papists, although they talk never so much to the contrary. For they are revolted from the pure doctrine of the Gospel, to laws and traditions, and therefore they teach not Christ. They brag and they swear that they seek nothing else but the glory of God and the salvation of their brethren, and that they teach the Word of God purely: but in very deed they corrupt it and wrest it to another sense, so that they make it to sound according to their own imagination. Therefore under the name of Christ they teach their own dreams, and under the name of the Gospel, nothing else but ceremonies and laws. They are like therefore unto themselves, and so they still continue: that is to say, monks, workers of the law, and teachers of ceremonies, saving that they devise new names and new works.

It is no small matter then to understand rightly what the law is, and what is the true use and office thereof. And forasmuch as we teach these things both diligently and faithfully, we do thereby plainly testify that we reject not the law and works, as our adversaries do falsely accuse us: but we do altogether stablish the law, and require works thereof, and we say that the law is good and profitable, but in his own proper use: which is, first to bridle civil transgressions, and then to reveal and to increase spiritual transgressions. Wherefore the law is also a light, which sheweth and revealeth, not the grace of God, not righteousness and life; but sin, death, the wrath and judgment of God. For, as in the mount Sinai the thundering, lightning, the thick and dark cloud, the hill smoking and flaming, and all that terrible shew did not rejoice nor quicken the children of Israel, but terrified and astonished them, and shewed how unable they were, with all their purity and holiness, to abide the presence of God speaking to them out of the cloud: even so the law, when it is in his true sense, doth nothing else but reveal sin, engender wrath, accuse and terrify men, so that it bringeth them to the very brink of desperation. This is the proper use of the law, and here it hath an end, and it ought to go no further.

Contrariwise, the Gospel is a light which lighteneth, quickeneth, comforteth and raiseth up fearful minds. For it sheweth that God for Christ's sake is merciful unto sinners, yea and to such as are most unworthy, if they believe that by his death they are delivered from the curse, that is to say, from sin and everlasting death; and that through his victory the blessing is freely given unto them, that is to say, grace, forgiveness of sins, righteousness and everlasting life. Thus, putting a difference between the law and the Gospel, we give to them both their own proper use and office. Of this difference between the law and the Gospel there is nothing to be found in the books of the monks, canonists, schooldivines; no, nor in the books of the ancient fathers. Augustine did somewhat understand this difference, and shewed it. Jerome and others knew it not. Briefly, there was wonderful silence many years as touching this difference in all schools and churches; and this brought men's consciences into great danger. For unless the Gospel be plainly discerned from the law, the true Christian doctrine cannot be kept sound and uncorrupt. Contrariwise, if this difference be wellknown, then is also the true manner of justification known, and then it is an easy matter to discern faith from works, Christ from Moses and all politic laws. For all things without Christ are the ministry of death for the punishing of the wicked.

Therefore Paul answereth to this question after this manner:

The law was added because of transgressions

That is to say, that transgressions might increase, and be more known and seen. And indeed so it cometh to pass. For when sin, death, the wrath and judgment of God, hell, etc. are revealed to a man through the law, it is impossible but that he should become impatient, murmur against God, and hate his will. For he cannot bear the judgment of God, his own death and damnation; and yet notwithstanding he cannot escape them. Here he must needs fall into the hatred of God and blasphemy against God. Before, when he was out of temptation, he was a very holy man: he worshipped and praised God; he bowed his knee before God, and gave him thanks as the Pharisee did, Luke 18. But now, when sin and death is revealed unto him, he wisheth that there were no God. The law therefore of itself bringeth a special hatred of God. And thus sin is not only revealed and known by the law, but also is increased, stirred up and magnified thereby. Therefore Paul saith: 'sin, that it might appear to be sin, wrought death in me by that which was good, that sin might become out of measure sinful by the commandment' (Romans 7:13). There he entreateth of this effect of the law very largely.

Paul answereth therefore to this question: If the law do not justify, to what end then serveth it? Although (saith he) it justify not, yet is it very profitable and necessary. For first it civilly restraineth such as are carnal, rebellious and obstinate. Moreover it sheweth unto a man himself, that he is a sinner, guilty of death, and worthy of God's everlasting wrath. To what end serveth this humbling, this bruising and beating down by this hammer, the law I mean? To this end, that



we may have an entrance unto grace. So then the law is a minister that prepareth the way unto grace. For God is the God of the humble, the miserable, the afflicted, the oppressed and the desperate, and of those that are brought even to nothing; and his nature is to exalt the humble, to feed the hungry, to give sight to the blind, to comfort the miserable and the afflicted, to justify sinners, to quicken the dead, and to save the very desperate and damned. For he is an almighty Creator, making all things of nothing. Now that pernicious and pestilent opinion of [man's own] righteousness, which will not be a sinner, unclean, miserable and damnable, but righteous and holy, suffereth not God to come to his own natural and proper work. Therefore God must needs take this maul in hand (the law I mean) to drive down, to beat in pieces, and to bring to nothing this beast, with her vain confidence, wisdom, righteousness and power, that she may so learn at the length by her own misery and mischief, that she is utterly forlorn, lost and damned. Here now, when the conscience is thus terrified with the law, then cometh the doctrine of the Gospel and grace, which raiseth up and comforteth the same again, saying: Christ came into the world, not to break the bruised reed, nor to quench the smoking flax, but to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite in heart, to preach remission to the captives, etc.

But here lieth all the difficulty of this matter, that when a man is terrified and cast down, he may be able to raise up himself again and say: Now I am bruised and afflicted enough; the time of the law hath tormented and vexed me sharply enough. Now is the time of grace; now is the time to hear Christ, out of whose mouth proceed the words of grace [and life]. Now is the time to see, not the smoking and burning mount Sinai, but the mount Moriah, where is the throne, the temple, the mercy-seat of God; that is to say, Christ, who is the king of righteousness and peace. There will I hearken what the Lord speaketh unto me, who speaketh nothing else but peace unto his people.

Nay, the foolishness of man's heart is so great, that in this conflict of conscience, when the law hath done his office and exercised his true ministry, he doth not only not lay hold upon the doctrine of grace, which promiseth and offereth most assuredly the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, but seeketh out yet more laws wherewith he will help himself. If I live longer, saith he, I will amend my life; I will do this, I will do that; I will enter a monastery; I will live most frugally, content with bread and water; I will go barefoot, etc. Here, except thou do the quite contrary, that is to say, except thou send Moses away with his law, to those that are secure, proud and obstinate, and in these terrors and in this anguish lay hold upon Christ, who was crucified and died for thy sins, there is no salvation for thee. So the law with his office, although it justifieth not, helpe by occasion to justification, in that it driveth a man to the promise of grace, and maketh the same sweet and desirable unto him. Wherefore we do not abrogate the law; but we shew the true office and use of the law: to wit, that it is a true and profitable minister which driveth a man to Christ. Therefore, after that the law hath humbled thee, terrified thee, and utterly beaten thee down, so that now thou art at the very brink of desperation, see that thou learn how to use the law rightly.

For the office and use of it is not only to reveal sin and the wrath of God, but also to drive men unto Christ.

This use of the law the Holy Ghost only setteth forth in the Gospel, where he witnesseth that God is present unto the contrite in heart. Wherefore, if thou be bruised with this hammer, use not this bruising perversely, so that thou load thyself with more laws, but hear Christ saying: 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you' (Matthew 11:28). When the law so oppresseth thee, that all things seem to be utterly desperate, and thereby driveth thee unto Christ to seek help and succor at his hands, then is the law in his true use; and, through the Gospel, it helpeth to justification. And this is the best and most perfect use of the law.

Wherefore Paul here beginneth afresh to intreat of the law, and defineth what it is, taking occasion of that which he said before: to wit, that the law justifieth not. For reason hearing this, by and by doth thus infer: then God gave the law in vain. It was necessary, therefore, to seek how to define the law truly, and to shew what the law is, and how it ought to be understood, that it be not taken more largely or more straitly than it should be. There is no law (saith he) that is of itself necessary to justification. Therefore when we reason as touching righteousness, life, and everlasting salvation, the law must be utterly removed out of our sight, as if it had never been, or never should be, but as though it were nothing at all. For in the matter of justification, no man can remove the law far enough out of his sight, or behold the only promise of God sufficiently and as he should do. Therefore I said before that the law and the promise must be separate far asunder as touching the affections [and the inward man], albeit indeed they are very nearly joined together.

### *Until the seed came, unto the which the promise was made*

Paul maketh not the law perpetual, but he saith that it was given and added to the promises because of transgressions; that is to say, to restrain them civilly, but specially to reveal and increase them spiritually, and that not continually, but for a time. Here it is necessary to know how long the power and the tyranny of the law ought to endure, which discovereth sin, sheweth unto us what we are, and revealeth the wrath of God. They whose hearts are touched with an inward feeling of these matters, should suddenly perish if they should not receive comfort. Therefore, if the days of the law should not be shortened, no man could be saved. A time therefore must be set, and bounds limited to the law, beyond which it may not reign.

How long then ought the dominion of the law to endure? Until the Seed come: to wit, that Seed of which it is written: 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' The tyranny of the law then must so long continue unto the fullness of the time, and until that Seed of the blessing come': not to the end that the law should bring this Seed or give righteousness, but that it should civilly

restrain the rebellious and obstinate, and shut them up as it were in a prison; and spiritually should reprove them of sin, humble them and terrify them; and when they are thus humbled and beaten down, it should constrain them to look up to that blessed Seed.

We may understand the continuance of the law both according to the letter and also spiritually According to the letter thus: that the law continueth until the time of grace. 'The law and the prophets', saith Christ, 'prophesied' until John. From the time of John until this day, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force' (Matthew 11:12 f.). In this time Christ was baptized and began to preach: at what time also, after the letter, the law and all the ceremonies of Moses ceased.

*Spiritually the law may be thus understood, that it ought not to reign in the conscience any longer than to the appointed time of this blessed Seed.*

When the law sheweth unto me my sin, terrifieth me, and revealeth the wrath and judgment of God, so that I begin to tremble and to despair; there hath the law his bounds, his time and his end limited, so that he now ceaseth to exercise his tyranny any more; for when he hath done his office sufficiently, he hath revealed the wrath of God and terrified enough. Here we must say: Now leave off, law; thou hast terrified and tormented me enough; 'All thy floods have run over me, and thy terrors have troubled me. Lord, turn not away thy face in thy wrath from thy servant: rebuke me not, I beseech thee, in thine anger,' etc. When these terrors and troubles come then is the time and hour of the blessed Seed come. Let the law then give place, which indeed is added to reveal and to increase transgressions, and yet no longer but until that blessed Seed be come.

When that as come, then let the law leave off to reveal sin and to terrify any more: and let him deliver up his kingdom to another; that is to say, to the blessed Seed, which is Christ: who hath gracious lips, wherewith he accuseth and terrifieth not, but speaketh of far better things than doth the law, namely, of grace, peace, forgiveness of sins, victory over sin, death, etc., gotten by his death and passion and freely given unto all believers.

Paul therefore sheweth by these words: 'Until the seed shall come, unto whom the blessing was promised,' how long the law, should endure laterally and spiritually. According to the letter, it ceased after the blessed Seed came into the world, taking upon him our flesh, giving the Holy Ghost, and writing a new law in our hearts, etc. But the spiritual time of the law doth not end at once, but continueth fast rooted in the conscience.

Therefore it is a hard matter for a man which is exercised with the spiritual use of the law, to see the end of the law. For in these terrors and feeling of sin, the mind cannot conceive this hope, that God is merciful, and that he will forgive

sins for Christ's sake; but it judgeth only that God is angry with sinners, and that he accuseth and condemneth them. If faith come not here to raise a man up again; or else, according to that saying of Christ: 'Where two or three,' etc. (Matthew 18:20), there be some faithful brother at hand that may comfort by the Word of God him which is so oppressed and beaten down by the law; then desperation and death must needs follow. Therefore it is a perilous thing for a man, especially when he is tempted, to be alone. 'Woe be to him that is alone,' saith the preacher, 'for when he falleth he hath none to raise him up' (Ecclesiastes 4:10).

Wherefore they that ordained that monkish and solitary life, gave occasion to many thousands to despair. If a man should separate himself from the company of others for a day or two to be occupied in prayer (as we read of Christ, that sometimes he went aside alone into the mount, and by night continued in prayer), there were no danger therein. But when they constrained men continually to live a solitary life, it was a device of the devil himself. For when a man is tempted and is alone, he is not able to raise up himself, no, not in the least temptation that can be.

*And it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator*

This is a little digression from his purpose, which he neither declareth nor finisheth, but only toucheth it by the way, and so proceedeth. For he returneth incontinent to his purpose, when he saith: 'What; is the law then contrary to the promises of God?' Now, this was the purpose of his digression. He fell into this difference between the law and the Gospel, that the law added to the promises did differ from the Gospel, not only in respect of time, but also of the author or the efficient cause thereof. For the law was delivered by the angels (Hebrews 2), but the Gospel by the Lord himself. Wherefore the Gospel is far more excellent than the law. For the law is the voice of the servants, but the Gospel is the voice of the Lord himself. Therefore to abase and to diminish the authority of the law, and to exalt and magnify the Gospel, he saith that the law was a doctrine given to continue but for a small time (for it endured but only until the fullness of the promise, that is to say, until the blessed Seed came which fulfilled the promise); but the Gospel was for ever. For all the faithful have had always one and the selfsame Gospel from the beginning of the world, and by that they were saved. The law therefore is far inferior to the Gospel, because it was ordained by the angels which are but servants, and endured but for a short time, whereas the Gospel was ordained by the Lord himself, to continue for ever (Hebrews 1). For it was promised before all worlds (Titus 1).

Moreover the Word of the law was not only ordained by the angels being but servants, but also by another servant far inferior to the angels, namely by a man, that is (as here he saith) by the hand of a mediator, that is to say, Moses. Now, Christ is not a servant, but the Lord himself. He is not a mediator between God and man according to the law, as Moses was; but he is a mediator of a better

testament. The law therefore was ordained by angels as servants. For Moses and the people heard God speaking in the mount Sinai: that is to say, they heard the angels speaking in the person of God. Therefore Stephen in the seventh chapter of the Acts saith: 'Ye have received the law by the ministry of angels, and ye have not kept it' (Acts 7:53). Also the text in the third of Exodus sheweth plainly that the angel appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, and spoke unto him from the midst of the bush. (Here the Latin text is wrong, for it hath not the word 'angel', but 'Lord.' And because of ignorance of the Hebrew tongue, this place hath given birth to the disputation whether the Lord himself spake unto Moses, or an angel.) Paul therefore signifieth that Christ is a mediator of a far better testament than Moses. And here he alludeth to that history in Exodus concerning the giving of the law, which saith that Moses led the people out of their tents to meet with God, and that he placed them at the foot of the mount Sinai.

There was an heavy and an horrible sight. The whole mount was on a flaming fire, etc. When the people saw this, they began to tremble for they thought that they should have been suddenly destroyed in this fearful tempest. Because therefore they could not abide the law sounding so horribly out of Mount Sinai (for that terrifying voice of the law would have killed the people), they said unto Moses their mediator: 'Draw thou nigh and hear what the Lord saith, and speak thou unto us.' And he himself saith: 'I myself was a mediator, and one that stood between God and you,' etc. By these places it is plain enough that Moses was appointed a mediator between the people and the law speaking.

Wherefore Paul by this history goeth about covertly to declare, that it is impossible that righteousness should come by the law. As if he should say:

How can the law justify, seeing the whole people of Israel, being purified and sanctified, yea and Moses himself the mediator between God and the people, were afraid and trembled at the voice of the law, as it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews? Here was nothing but fear and trembling. But what righteousness and holiness is this, not to be able to bear, yea not to be able or willing to hear the law, but to fly from it and so to hate it, that it is impossible to hate and abhor anything more in the whole world? – as the history most plainly testifieth, that the people in the very hour when they heard the law, did hate nothing more than the law, and rather wished death than to hear the law.

So, when sin is discovered, as it were by certain bright beams which the law striketh into the heart, there is nothing more odious and more intolerable to man than the law is. Here he would rather choose death, than be constrained to bear these terrors of the law never so little a time: which is a most certain token that the law justifieth not. For if the law did justify, then (no doubt) men would love it, they would delight and take pleasure in it, and would embrace it with hearty good will. But where is this good will?

Nowhere: neither in Moses nor in the whole people; for they were all astonished and fled back. And how doth a man love that which he flieth?

Or how delighteth he in that which he deadly hateth?

Wherefore, this flight sheweth a deadly hatred of man's heart against the law, and so consequently against God himself, the Author of the law. And if there were no other argument to prove that righteousness cometh not by the law, this one history were enough, which Paul setteth out very briefly in these words: 'In the hand of a mediator.' As though he would say: Do ye not remember that your fathers were so far unable to hear the law, that they had need of Moses to be their mediator? And when he was appointed to that office, they were so far from loving of the law, that they by a fearful flight, together with their mediator (as the Epistle to the Hebrews, Hebrews 12, witnesseth), shewed themselves to hate the same; and if they could, they would have gone even through an iron mountain back again into Egypt. But they were inclosed round about, so that they had no way to escape. Therefore they cry unto Moses: 'Speak thou unto us; for if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die' (Exodus 20:19). Now, therefore, if they be not able to hear the law, how should they be able to accomplish it? Wherefore if the people that were of the law, were constrained of necessity to have a mediator, it followeth by an infallible consequence, that the law justified them not. What did it then? Even the same thing that Paul saith: 'The law was added that the trespass might abound' (Romans 5:20). The law therefore was a light and a sun, which struck his beams into the hearts of the children of Israel, whereby it terrified them and struck them into such a fear of God, that they hated both the law and the author thereof: which is an horrible impiety. Would ye now say that these men were righteous? Assuredly not. They are righteous which hear the law and with a good will embrace the same and delight therein. But the history of giving the law witnesseth that all men in the whole world, be they never so holy (especially seeing they which were purified and sanctified could not hear the law), do hate and abhor the law, and wish that the law were not.

Therefore it is impossible that men should be justified by the law: nay it hath a clean contrary effect.

Although Paul (as I have said) doth but only touch this place by the way, and doth not thoroughly weigh it, nor fully finish the same, yet he that shall diligently and attentively read it, may easily understand that he speaketh covertly of both mediators: that is to say, of Moses and of Christ; and compareth the one with the other, as hereafter we will declare. If he would have prosecuted this matter more largely, this only place would have ministered unto him an argument and occasion plentiful enough to write a new epistle: and that history also in Exodus 19 and Exodus concerning the giving of the law, would minister matter enough to write a great volume, although it were read but slightly and without affection:

albeit it may seem to be very barren to those which know not the true office and use of the law, if it be compared with other sacred histories.

Hereby we may see that if all the world had stood at the mount Sinai as the people of Israel did, they would have hated the law and would have fled from it as they did. The whole world therefore is an enemy to the law, and hateth it most deadly. But the law is holy, righteous and good, and is the perfect rule of the will of God. How then can he be righteous, which doth not only abhor and detest the law and fly from it, but moreover is an enemy of God who is the author of the law? And true it is that the flesh can do no otherwise, as Paul witnesseth (Romans 8:7): 'The mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.' Therefore it is an extreme madness so to hate God and the law that thou canst not abide to hear it, and yet notwithstanding to affirm that we are made righteous thereby.

Wherefore the sophisters [and school-divines] are stark blind, and understand nothing at all of this doctrine. They look only upon the outward visor of the law, thinking that it is accomplished by civil works, and that they are righteous before God, which do the same externally, not considering the true and spiritual effect thereof: which is not to justify, and to quiet and pacify afflicted consciences, but to increase sin, to terrify the conscience, and to engender wrath. They being ignorant of this, do conclude that a man hath a good will and a right [judgment of] reason in respect of the law of God. But whether this be true or no, ask the people of the law with their mediator, who heard the voice of the law in the mount Sinai. Ask David himself, who as often as he complaineth in the Psalms that he is cast from the face of God, that he is even in hell, and that he is terrified and oppressed with the greatness of his sin, with the wrath and judgement of God, setteth not the sacrifices nor yet the law itself these mighty tyrants, but is raised up and restored by the only free mercy of God.

*Therefore the law justifieth not.*

If the law should serve mine affections, that is to say, if it should approve mine hypocrisy, mine opinion and confidence of mine own righteousness: if it should say that without the mercy of God and faith in Christ, through the help of it alone (as all the world naturally judgeth of the law), I might be justified before God: and moreover if it should say that God is turned and overcome by works, and is bound to reward the doers thereof, that so having no need of God I might be a God unto myself and merit grace by my works, and setting my Savior Christ apart might save myself by my own merits: if, I say, the law should thus serve mine affections, then should it be sweet, delectable and pleasant indeed. So well can reason flatter itself.

Notwithstanding this should no longer continue, but until the law should come to his proper use and office: then should it appear that reason cannot suffer those bright beams of the law. There some Moses must needs come

between as a mediator; and yet notwithstanding without any fruit, as I will declare hereafter.

To this purpose serveth that place, 2 Corinthians 3:13, concerning the covered face of Moses, where Paul out of the history of Exodus 34, sheweth that the children of Israel not only did not know, but also could not abide the true and spiritual use of the law: first, for that they could not look unto the end of the law (saith Paul) because of the veil which Moses put upon his face. Again, they could not look upon the face of Moses being bare and uncovered, for the glory of his countenance. For when Moses went about to talk with them, he covered his face with a veil, without which they could not bear his talk; that is, they could not hear Moses himself their mediator, unless he had set another mediator between, that is to say, the veil. How then should they hear the voice of God, or of an angel, when they could not hear the voice of Moses, being but a man, yea and also their mediator, except his face had been covered? Therefore except the blessed Seed come to raise up and comfort him which hath heard the law, he perisheth through desperation, in detesting of the law, in hating and blaspheming of God, and daily more and more offending against God. For this fear and confusion of conscience which the law bringeth, the deeper it pierceth and the longer it continueth, the more it increaseth hatred and blasphemy against God.

This history therefore teacheth what is the power of free will. The people are stricken with fear, they tremble and they fly back. Where is now free will? Where is now that good will, [that good intent,] that right [judgment of] reason, which the Papists do so much brag of? What availeth free will here in these sanctified and holy men? It can say nothing: it blindeth their reason; it perverteth their good will. It receiveth not, it saluteth not, it embraceth not with joy the Lord coming with thundering, lightning and fire into the mount Sinai. It cannot hear the voice of the Lord, but contrariwise it saith: 'Let not the Lord speak unto us, lest we die.' We see then what the strength and power of free will is in the children of Israel, who though they were [cleansed and] sanctified could not abide the hearing of one syllable or letter of the law. Therefore these high commendations which the sophisters give to free will, are nothing else but mere toys and doting dreams.

### *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one*

Here he compareth these two mediators together, and that with a marvellous brevity; yet so notwithstanding that he satisfieth the attentive reader, who because this word mediator is general, by and by understandeth that Paul speaketh of the mediator generally, and not of Moses only. 'A mediator,' saith he, 'is not a mediator of one only,' but this word necessarily comprehendeth two, that is to say, him that is offended and him that is the offender: of whom the one hath need of intercession and the other needeth none. Wherefore a mediator is not of one, but of two, and of such two as be at variance between themselves. So Moses by a general definition is a mediator, because he doth the office of a mediator between the law and the people, which cannot abide the spiritual use of



the law. The law therefore must have a new face, and his voice must be changed; that is to say, the spiritual voice of the law, or the living law in the [inward] affection, must put on a [visor or a] veil, that it may now become tolerable, so that the people may be able to hear it by the human voice of Moses.

Now the law being thus covered, speaketh no more in his majesty, but by the mouth of Moses. After this manner it doth not his office any more: that is, it terrifieth not the conscience. And therefore men do no more understand it, but by means thereof they become secure, negligent and presumptuous hypocrites. And yet notwithstanding the one of these two must needs be done: to wit, that either the law must be without his use, and covered with a veil (but then, as I have said, it maketh hypocrites), or else it must be in his use without the veil, and then it killeth. For man's heart cannot abide the law in his true use without the veil. It behoveth thee therefore, if thou look to the end of the law without the veil, either to lay hold on that blessed Seed by faith (that is to say, thou must look beyond the end of the law unto Christ, which is the accomplishment of the law, which may say unto thee: The law hath terrified thee enough; 'Be of good comfort my son, thy sins are forgiven thee,' – whereof I will speak more anon), or else surely thou must have Moses for thy mediator, with his veil.

For this cause, Paul saith: 'A mediator is not a mediator of one.' For it could not be that Moses should be a mediator of God alone, for God needeth no mediator. And again, he is not a mediator of the people only, but he doth the office of a mediator between God and the people, which were at variance with God. For it is the office of a mediator to reconcile the party that is offended with the party that is the offender.

Notwithstanding Moses is such a mediator (as I have said) as doth nothing else but change the voice of the law, and maketh it tolerable, so that the people may abide the hearing thereof; but he giveth no power to accomplish the law. To conclude: he is a mediator of the veil, and therefore he giveth no power to perform the law, but only in the veil. Therefore his disciples, in that he is a mediator of the veil, must always be hypocrites.

But what should have come to pass, think ye, if the law had been given without Moses, either before or after Moses, and that there had been no mediator, and moreover that the people should neither have been suffered to fly, nor to have a mediator? Here the people being beaten down with intolerable fear, should either have perished forthwith, or if they should have escaped, there must needs have come some other mediator, which should have set himself between the law and the people, to the end that both the people might be preserved and the law remain in his force, and also an atonement might be made between the law and the people. Indeed Moses cometh in the meantime and is made a mediator: he putteth on a veil and covereth his face; but he cannot deliver men's consciences from the anguish and terror which the law bringeth. Therefore when at the hour of death or in the conflict of conscience a man feeleth the wrath and

judgment of God for sin, which the law revealeth and increaseth; here, to keep him from desperation, setting Moses aside with his veil, he must have a mediator which may say unto him: Although thou be a sinner, yet shalt thou remain, that is, thou shalt not die, although the law with his wrath and malediction do still remain.

This mediator is Jesus Christ, which changeth not the voice of the law, nor hideth the same with a veil as Moses did, nor leadeth me out of the sight of the law: but he setteth himself against the wrath of the law, and taketh it away, and satisfieth the law in his own body by himself. And afterward by the Gospel he saith unto me: Indeed the law threateneth unto thee the wrath of God and eternal death; but be not afraid; fly not away, but stand fast; I supply and perform all things for thee; I satisfy the law for thee. This is a mediator far other than Moses, who setteth himself between God being offended, and the offender. The intercession of Moses here profiteth nothing: he hath done his office, and he with his veil is now vanished away.

Here a sinner being utterly desperate, or a man now approaching unto death, and God being offended and angry, do encounter together.

Therefore there must come a far other mediator than Moses, which may satisfy the law, take away the wrath thereof, and may reconcile unto God which is angry, that miserable sinner, guilty of eternal death.

Of this mediator Paul speaketh briefly when he saith: 'A mediator is not a mediator of one.' For this word 'mediator' properly signifieth such a one as doth the office of a mediator between the party that is offended and the offender. We are the offenders: God with his law is he which is offended. And the offense is such, that God cannot pardon it, neither can we satisfy for the same. Therefore, between God (who of himself is but one) and us, there is wonderful discord. Moreover, God cannot revoke his law, but he will have it observed and kept. And we, which have transgressed the law, cannot fly from the presence of God. Christ therefore hath set himself a mediator between two which are quite contrary and separate asunder with an infinite and eternal separation, and hath reconciled them together. And how hath he done this? He hath put away (as Paul saith in another place) the handwriting which was against us, which by ordinances (that is, by the law) was contrary unto us, and he hath taken it away fastened to the cross, and hath spoiled principalities and powers, and hath made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them by himself (Colossians 2:14 f.). Therefore he is not a mediator of one, but of two utterly disagreeing between themselves.

This is also a place full of power and efficacy to confound the righteousness of the law, and to teach us that in the matter of justification it ought to be utterly removed out of our sight. Also this word 'mediator' ministereth sufficient matter to prove that the law justifieth not. For else what need should we have of a mediator? Seeing then that man's nature cannot abide the hearing of the law,

much less is it able to accomplish the law, or to agree with the law. Ergo, the law justifieth not.

This doctrine (which I do so often repeat and not without tediousness do still beat into your heads) is the true doctrine of the law, which every Christian ought with all diligence to learn, that he may be able truly to define what the law is, what is the true use and office, what are the limits, what is the power, the time and the end thereof. For it hath an effect clean contrary to the judgment of all men: which have this pestilent and pernicious opinion naturally rooted in them, that the law justifieth.

Therefore I fear lest this doctrine will be defaced and darkened again when we are dead. For the world must be replenished with horrible darkness and errors before the latter day come.

Whoso therefore is able to understand this, let him understand it, that the law, in [true] Christian divinity, and in his true [and proper] definition, doth not justify, but hath a quite contrary effect. For it sheweth and revealeth unto us ourselves; it setteth before us an angry God; it revealeth wrath, it terrifieth us; and it doth not only reveal sin, but also mightily increaseth sin, so that where sin was before but little, now by the law, which bringeth the same to light, it becometh exceeding sinful: so that a man now beginneth to hate the law and fly from it, and with a perfect hatred to abhor God the maker of the law. This is not to be justified by the law (and that reason itself is compelled to grant), but to commit a double sin against the law: first, not only to have a will so disagreeing from the law that thou canst not hear it, but also to do contrary to that which it commandeth; and secondly, so to hate it that thou wouldst wish it were abolished, together with God himself, who is the author thereof and absolutely good.

Now what greater blasphemy, what sin more horrible can be imagined than to hate God, to abhor his law, and not to suffer the hearing thereof, which notwithstanding is supremely good and holy? For the history doth plainly witness that the people of Israel refused to hear that excellent law, those most holy and (in their own nature) most gracious words, namely: 'I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out, etc.; Thou shalt have none other Gods, etc.; Shewing mercy to thousands, etc.; Honour thy father etc., that thy days may be long upon the earth,' etc. (Exodus 20:2 ff.); and that they had need of a mediator. They could not abide this most excellent, perfect and divine wisdom, this most gracious, sweet and comfortable doctrine. 'Let not the Lord, speak unto us,' say they 'lest we die. Speak thou unto us,' etc. Doubtless it is a marvellous thing, that a man cannot hear that which is his whole felicity,<sup>2</sup> namely, that he hath a God, yea and a merciful God, which will shew mercy unto him in many thousands of generations, etc. And moreover, that he cannot abide that which is his [chief safety and] defense, namely: 'Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal.' For by these words the Lord hath defended and fortified the

life of man, his wife, his children and his goods, as it were with a wall against the force and violence of the wicked.

The law then can do nothing, saving that by his light it lighteneth the conscience that it may know sin, death, the judgment and the wrath of God. Before the law come, I am secure: I feel no sin: but when the law cometh, sin, death and hell are revealed unto me. This is not to be made righteous, but guilty and the enemy of God, to be condemned to death and hell-fire. The principal point therefore of the law in [true Christian] divinity is to make men not better but worse; that is to say, it sheweth unto them their sin, that by the knowledge thereof they may be humbled, terrified, bruised and broken, and by this means may be driven to seek grace, and so to come to that blessed Seed. This is the sum of the argument that Paul hath taken out of that word 'mediator' by way of digression.

### *But God is one*

God offendeth no man, and therefore needeth no mediator. But we offend God, and therefore we have need of a mediator, not Moses, but Christ, which speaketh far better things for us, etc. Hitherto he hath continued in his digression. Now he returneth to his purpose.

### *Is the law then against the promises of God?*

Paul said before that the law justifieth not. Shall we then take away the law? No, not so. For it bringeth with it a certain commodity. What is that?

It bringeth men unto the knowledge of themselves: it discovereth and increaseth sin, etc. Here now ariseth another question: If the law do nothing else but make men worse, in shewing unto them their sin, then it is contrary to the promises of God. For it seemeth that God is but only provoked to anger and offended through the law, and therefore he regardeth not nor performeth his promises. We Jews have thought the contrary, to wit, that we are restrained and bridled by this external discipline, to the end that God, being provoked thereby, might hasten the performing of his promise, and that by this discipline we might deserve the promise.

Paul answereth: It is nothing so. But contrariwise, if ye have regard to the law, the promise is rather hindered. For natural reason offendeth God which promiseth; for it will not hear his good and holy law, but saith: 'Let not the Lord speak unto us,' etc. How can it be then that God should perform his promises unto those which not only receive not his law and his discipline, but also with a mortal hatred do shun it and fly from it? Here therefore, as I said, riseth this question: 'Is the law against the promises of God?' This question Paul toucheth by the way and briefly answereth saying:

## *God forbid*

Why so? First, for that God hath made no promise unto us because of our worthiness, our merits, our good works: but for his own inexhaustible and eternal goodness and mercy's sake only. He saith not to Abraham:

All nations shall be blessed in thee because thou hast kept the law. But when he was uncircumcised, had no law, and was yet an idolater (Joshua 24:2), he said unto him: 'Go out of thine own land,' etc.; 'I will be thy protector,' etc.; also: 'In thy seed shall all nations be blessed' (Genesis 12:1 ff.). These are absolute and mere promises which God freely giveth unto Abraham, without any condition or respect of works or merits either going before or coming after.

This maketh especially against the Jews, which think that the promises of God are hindered because of their sins. God (saith Paul) doth not slack his promises because of our sins, or hasten the same for our righteousness and merits. He regardeth neither the one nor the other. Wherefore, although we become more sinful, and are brought into greater contempt and hatred of God, by means of the law, yet notwithstanding God is not moved thereby to defer his promise. For his promise doth not stand upon our worthiness and righteousness, but upon his only goodness and mercy. Therefore, where the Jews say the Messiah is not yet come because our sins do hinder his coming, it is a detestable dream. As though God should become unrighteous because of our sins, or made a liar because we are liars. He abideth always just and true. His truth therefore is the only cause that he accomplisheth and performeth his promise.

Moreover, although the law do reveal and increase sin, yet is it not against the promises of God; yea rather it confirmeth the promises, For as concerning his true and perfect work and end, it humbleth and prepareth a man (so that he use it rightly) to sigh and seek for grace. For when sin is revealed to a man, and so increased by the law, then he beginneth to perceive the wickedness and enmity of man's heart against the law, and against God himself the author of the law. Then he feeleth indeed that not only he loveth not God, but also hateth and blasphemeth God who is full of goodness, and his law which is most holy. Then is he constrained to confess that there is no good thing in him. And thus, when he is thrown down and humbled by the law, he acknowledgeth himself to be most miserable and damnable. When the law therefore constraineth a man so to acknowledge his own corruption, and to confess his sin from the bottom of his heart, then it hath done its office truly, and its time is accomplished and ended: and now is the time of grace, that the blessed Seed may come to raise up and comfort him that is so cast down and humbled by the law.

After this manner the law is not against the promises of God. For, first, the promise hangeth not upon the law, but upon the truth of God; and secondly, when the law is in his chief and best use, it humbleth a man, and in humbling him it maketh him to sigh and groan, and to seek the hand and aid of the Mediator,

and maketh his grace and his mercy exceeding sweet (as is said: 'Thy mercy is sweet,' Psalm 109:21), and his gift precious and inestimable. And by this means it prepareth us and maketh us apt to apprehend and to receive Christ. For, [as the poet saith,] *Dulcia non meminit, qui non gustavit amara*: that is, 'He remembereth not the sweet, who hath not tasted the bitter.' [There is a common proverb that] hunger is the best cook. Like as therefore the dry earth coveteth the rain, even so the law maketh troubled hearts to thirst after Christ. To such, Christ savoureth right sweetly: to them he is joy, consolation and life. And there beginneth Christ and his benefit rightly to be known.

This is then the most excellent use of the law, namely, when a man can so use it, that it may humble him and make him to thirst after Christ. And indeed Christ requireth thirsty souls, whom he most lovingly and graciously allureth and calleth unto him when he saith: 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you' (Matthew 11:26). He delighteth therefore to water these dry grounds. He poureth not his waters upon fat and rank ground, or such as is not dry, and coveteth no water. His benefits are inestimable, and therefore he giveth them to none but unto such as have need of them and earnestly desire them. He preacheth glad tidings to the poor: he giveth drink to the thirsty. 'If any thirst,' saith he, 'let him come unto me,' etc. (John 7:37); 'He healeth the broken hearted,' etc. (Psalm 147:3). That is, he comforteth and saveth those that are bruised and afflicted by the law. Therefore the law is not against the promises of God.

For if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness should have been by the law, etc.

By these words Paul signifieth that no law of itself is able to quicken or give life, but only killeth. Therefore such works as are done, not only according to the laws of the Pope or the traditions of men, but also according to the very law of God, do not justify a man before God, but make him a sinner: they do not pacify the wrath of God, but they kindle it: they obtain not righteousness, but they hinder it: they quicken not, but they kill and destroy. Therefore when he saith: 'If a law had been given which could make alive,' etc., he teacheth plainly that the law, yea even the law of God, justifieth not, but that it hath a clean contrary effect.

Although these words of Paul be plain enough, yet are they utterly obscure and unknown to the Papists. For if they did understand them indeed, they would not so magnify their free will, their natural strength, the keeping of the counsels, the works of supererogation, etc. But lest they should seem to be manifestly wicked and plain infidels in denying the words of the Apostle of Christ so impudently, they have this pestilent gloss always ready (whereby they pervert the places of Paul concerning the law which revealeth sin and engendereth wrath, that is to say, the Ten Commandments): that Paul speaketh only of the ceremonial and not of the moral law. But Paul speaketh plainly when he saith: 'If a law had been given,' etc.; and he excepteth no law. Wherefore this gloss of the

sophisters is not worth a rush. For the laws of the ceremonies were as well commanded of God and as strictly kept, as the moral laws. The Jews also kept circumcision as precisely as they did the Sabbath day. It is evident enough, therefore, that Paul speaketh of the whole law.

These words of the Apostle are sung and said in the Papacy and in all their churches, and yet notwithstanding they both teach and live quite contrary.

Paul saith simply that no law was given to quicken and to bring life: but the sophisters teach the contrary, and affirm that many and infinite laws are given to quicken and to bring life. Although they say not this in plain words, yet in very deed such is their opinion, as their monkish religion doth plainly witness, besides many other laws, traditions and ceremonies of men, their works and merits before grace and after, and innumerable other wicked worshippings, which they have devised of their own heads; and those only have they preached, treading the Gospel under their feet, and assuredly promising grace, remission of sins and life everlasting to all such as should keep and accomplish the same. This that I say, cannot be denied: for their books which are yet extant, give certain testimony thereof.

But contrariwise we affirm with Paul, that there is no law, whether it be man's law or God's law, that justifieth and giveth life. Therefore we put as great difference between the law and righteousness, as is between life and death, between heaven and hell. And the cause that moveth us so to affirm, is that plain and evident place of Paul, where he saith that the law is not given to justify, to give life, and to save, but only to condemn, to kill, and to destroy, contrary to the opinion of all men: for naturally they can judge no otherwise of the law, but that it is given to work righteousness and to give life and salvation.

This difference of the offices of the law and of the Gospel keepeth all Christian doctrine in his true [and proper] use. Also it maketh a faithful man judge over all kinds of life, over the laws and decrees of all men [and over all doctrine whatsoever]; and briefly, it giveth him power to try all manner of spirits. On the other side the Papists, because they confound and mingle the law and the Gospel together, can teach no certainty touching faith, works, the states and conditions of life, nor of the difference of spirits. This same thing happeneth at this day to the fantastical spirits.

Now therefore after that Paul hath prosecuted his confutations and arguments sufficiently and in good order, he teacheth that the law (if ye consider his true and perfect use) is nothing else but as a certain schoolmaster to lead us unto righteousness. For it humbleth men, it prepareth them and maketh them apt to receive the righteousness of Christ, when it doth his own proper work and office, that is, when it maketh them guilty, terrifieth and bringeth them to the knowledge of sin, wrath, death and hell. For when it hath done this, the opinion of man's own righteousness and holiness vanisheth away, and Christ with his

benefits beginneth to wax sweet unto him. Wherefore the law is not against the promises of God, but rather serveth them. True it is, that it doth not accomplish the promise, nor bring righteousness: notwithstanding it fumbleth us with his exercise and office, and so maketh us more thirsty and more apt to receive the grace and benefit of Christ. Therefore, saith he, if any law had been given which might have brought righteousness, and through righteousness life (for no man can obtain life except first he be righteous), then indeed righteous should come by the law. Moreover, if there were any state of life, any work, any religion, whereby a man might obtain remission of sins, righteousness and life, then should these things indeed justify and give life. But this is impossible; for:

### *The Scripture hath concluded all under sin*

Where? First in the promises themselves as touching Christ, as Genesis 3:15: 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent;' and Genesis 22:18: 'In thy seed,' etc. Wheresoever then is any promise in the Scriptures made unto the fathers concerning Christ, there the blessing is promised, that is, righteousness, salvation and eternal life. Therefore by the contrary it is evident, that they which must receive the blessing are under the curse, that is to say, sin and eternal death: for else what need was there to promise the blessing?

Secondly, the Scripture shutteth men under sin and under the curse, especially by the law, because it is his peculiar office to reveal sin and engender wrath, as we have declared throughout this Epistle, but chiefly out of this sentence of Paul: 'Whosoever are of the works of the law, are under the curse' (Galatians 3:10). Also by that place which the Apostle allegeth out of Deuteronomy 27:26: 'Cursed is everyone that abideth not in all the words of this law to do them,' etc. For these sentences in plain words do shut under sin and under the curse, not only those which sin manifestly against the law, or do not outwardly accomplish the law, but also those which are under the law, and with all endeavor go about to perform the same; and such were the Jews, as before I have said. Much more then doth the same place of Paul shut up under sin and under the curse, all monks, hermits, Carthusians and such like, with their professions, rules and religions, to the which they attributed such holiness, that when a man had once made a vow of his profession, if he died by and by, they dreamed that he went straight to heaven. But here ye hear plainly that the Scripture shutteth all under sin. Therefore neither the vow nor the most perfect religion of the Carthusian, is righteousness [before God]; for all are condemned. Who pronounceth this sentence? The Scripture. And where?

First by this promise: 'The seed of the woman,' etc., 'In thee shall be blessed,' etc. and such like places: moreover by the whole law, whereof the principal office is to make men guilty of sin, etc. Therefore no monk, no Carthusian, no Celestine bruise the serpent's head, but they abide bruised and broken under the head of the serpent, that is, under the power of the devil. Who will believe this?



Briefly, whatsoever is without Christ and his promise, whether it be the law of, God or the law of man, the ceremonial or the moral law, without all exception is shut under sin; for he that saith 'all' excepteth nothing.

Therefore we conclude with Paul that the policies and laws of all nations, be they never so good and necessary, with all ceremonies and religions, without faith in Christ, are and abide under sin, death and eternal damnation, except the promise by faith in Jesus Christ go withal, as followeth in the next. Of this matter we have spoken largely before.

Wherefore this is a true proposition: Only faith justifieth (which notwithstanding our adversaries can by no means abide.) or Paul here strongly concludeth that the law doth not quicken nor give life, because it is not given to that end. If then the law do not justify and give life, much less do works justify. For when Paul saith that the law giveth not life, his meaning is that works also do not give life. For it is more to say that the law quickeneth not and giveth not life, than to say that works do not quicken and give life. If then the law itself being fulfilled (although it is impossible that it should be accomplished) do not justify, much less do works justify. I conclude therefore that faith only justifieth, without works.

Paul cannot suffer this addition: Faith joined with works justifieth; but he proceedeth simply by the negative (Romans 3:20) as he doth also before in the second chapter: 'By the works of the law (saith he) shall no flesh be justified.' And again in this place: 'The law is not given to bring life.'

That the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ should be given to them that believe

He said before that the Scripture hath shut all under sin. What! for ever?

No: but until the promise should be given. Now the promise is the inheritance itself, or the blessing promised to Abraham: to wit, the deliverance from the law, sin, death and the devil, and a free giving of grace, righteousness, salvation and eternal life. This promise, saith he, is not obtained by any merit, by any law, or by any work, but it is given. To whom? To those that believe. In whom? In Jesus Christ, who is the blessed Seed which hath redeemed all believers from the curse, that they might receive the blessing. These words be not obscure, but plain enough: notwithstanding we must mark them diligently and weigh well the force and weight thereof. For if all be shut under sin, it followeth that all nations are accursed and come short of the glory of God: also that they are under the wrath of God and the power of the devil, and that no man can be delivered from them by any other means than by faith in Jesus Christ. With these words therefore Paul inveigheth mightily against the fantastical opinions of the sophisters and all justiciaries touching the righteousness of the law and of works;

when he saith, 'that the promise by faith in Christ Jesus might be given to them that believe.'

Now, how we should answer to those sentences which speak of works and rewards, I have sufficiently declared before. And the matter requireth not now, that we should speak anything of works. For we have not here taken in hand to intreat of works, but of justification: to wit, that it is not obtained by the law and works, since all things are shut under sin and under the curse; but by faith in Christ. When we are out of the matter of justification, we cannot sufficiently praise and magnify those works which are commanded of God. For who can sufficiently commend and set forth the profit and fruit of one only work, which a Christian doth through faith and in faith? Indeed it is more precious than heaven and earth. The whole world therefore in this life is not able to give a worthy recompence to such a good work. Yea the world hath not the grace to magnify the good works of the Godly [as they are worthy], and much less to reward them: for it seeth them not, or if it do, it esteemeth them not as good works, but as most wicked crimes, and riddeth the world of those which are the doers thereof, as most pestilent plagues to mankind.

So Christ the Savior of the world, for a recompence of his incomprehensible and inestimable benefits, was put to the most opprobrious death on the cross. The Apostles also bringing the word of grace and eternal life into the world, were 'made as the filth of the world and the off-scouring of all things' (1 Corinthians 4:13). This is the goodly reward which the world giveth for so great benefits. But works done without faith, although they have never so goodly a shew of holiness, are under sin and the curse. Wherefore, so far off it is that the doers thereof should deserve grace, righteousness and eternal life, that rather they heap sin upon sin. After this manner the Pope, that 'man of sin and son of perdition,' and all that follow him, do work. So work all meritmongers and heretics which are fallen from the faith.

### *But before faith came*

He proceedeth in declaring the profit and necessity of the law. He said before that the law was added for transgressions: not that it was the principal purpose of God to make a law that should bring death and damnation, as he saith in Romans 7:13- 'Was that which is good,' saith he, 'made death unto me? God forbid.' For the law is a word that sheweth life, and driveth men unto it. Therefore it is not given only as a minister of death, but the principal use and end thereof is to reveal death, so that it might be seen and known how horrible sin is. Notwithstanding it doth not so reveal death as though it delighted therein and tended to no other end but to kill and destroy: but to this end it revealeth death, that when men are terrified, cast down and humbled, they should fear God. And this doth the text itself in Exodus 20 plainly declare: 'Fear not (saith Moses), for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not'(Exodus 20:20). The office of the law, therefore, is but to kill; and yet so, that

God may be able to give life. The law then is not given only to cause death; but because man is proud and dreameth that he is wise, righteous and holy, therefore it is necessary he should be humbled by the law, that so this beast, the opinion of righteousness, might be slain: for otherwise man cannot live.

Albeit then that the law killeth, yet God useth this effect of the law, this death I mean, to a good end; that is, to [bring] life. For God seeing that this universal plague of the whole world, to wit, man's opinion of [his own] righteousness, his hypocrisy, and confidence in [his own] holiness, could not be beaten down by any other means, he would that it should be slain by the law: not for ever, but that when it is once slain, man might be raised up again above and beyond the law, and there might hear this voice:

Fear not! I have not given the law, and killed thee by the law, that thou shouldest abide in this death; but that thou shouldest fear me and live. For the presuming of good works and righteousness standeth not with the fear of God: and where the fear of God is not, there can be no thirsting for grace or life. God must therefore have a strong hammer [or a mighty maul] to break the rocks, and a hot burning fire in the midst of heaven to overthrow the mountains: that is to say, to destroy this furious and obstinate beast (this presumption, I mean), that when a man by this bruising and breaking is brought to nothing, he should despair of his own strength, righteousness and works, and exceedingly quake before God; and being thus thoroughly terrified, should thirst after mercy and remission of sins.

*But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the laws shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed*

That is to say, before the time of the Gospel and grace came, the office of the law was, that we should be shut and kept under the same, as it were in prison. This is a goodly and a fit similitude, shewing the effect of the law, and how righteous it maketh men; therefore it is diligently to be weighed.

No thief, no murderer, nor any other malefactor taken captive, loveth the fetters and the loathsome prison wherein he lieth fast bound; but rather, if he could he would break and beat into powder the prison together with his iron bonds. Indeed, while he is in his prison, he refraineth from doing of evil: but not of a good will, or for love of righteousness, but because the prison restraineth him that he cannot do it: and now being fast fettered, he hateth not his theft and his sin (yea he is sorry with all his heart that he is not free and able to rob and steal); but he hateth the prison, and if he could escape he would rob and steal as he did before.

The law shutteth men under sin two ways, civilly and spiritually.

Such is the force of the law and the righteousness that cometh of the law, compelling us to be outwardly good, when it threateneth death or any other punishment to the transgressors thereof. Here we obey the law indeed, but for fear of punishment; that is, unwillingly and with great indignation. But what righteousness is this, when we abstain from evil for fear of punishment? Wherefore this righteousness of works is indeed nothing else but to love sin and to hate righteousness, to detest God with his law, and to love and reverence that which is most horrible and abominable. For look how heartily the thief loveth the prison and hateth his theft: so gladly do we obey the law in accomplishing that which it commandeth, and avoiding that which it forbiddeth.

Notwithstanding, this fruit and this profit the law bringeth, although men's hearts remain never so wicked, that first outwardly and civilly after a sort it restraineth thieves, murderers and other malefactors. For if they did not a little believe that sin is punished in this world by the rack, the gallows, the sword and such-like, and after this life with eternal death and hell-fire, then no magistrate, no parent or schoolmaster should be able to bridle the fury and rage of men by any force, laws or chains, But the threatenings of the law strike a terror into the hearts of the ungodly, whereby they are bridled after a sort, that they run not headlong into all kinds of wickedness. Notwithstanding they would rather that there were no law, no punishment, no hell, and finally no God. If God had no hell, or did not punish the wicked, he should be loved and praised of all men. But because he punisheth the wicked, and all are wicked, therefore inasmuch as they are shut under the law, they can do no otherwise but horribly hate and blaspheme God.

Furthermore, the law shutteth men under sin not only civilly but also spiritually; that is to say, the law is also a spiritual prison, and a very hell. For when it revealeth sin, threateneth death and the eternal wrath of God, a man cannot avoid it nor find any comfort. For it is not in the power of man to shake off these horrible terrors which the law stirreth up[in the conscience], or any other heaviness or bitterness of spirit. Hereof come those lamentable complaints of the saints, which are everywhere in the Psalms: 'In hell, who shall confess unto thee,' etc.? (Psalm 6:5). For then is a man shut up in prison: out of the which he cannot escape, nor seeth how he may be delivered out of these bonds, that is to say, these horrible terrors.

Thus the law is a prison both civilly and spiritually, For first it restraineth and shutteth up the ungodly, that they run not headlong according to their own lust into all kinds of mischief. Again, it sheweth unto us spiritually our sin, terrifieth and humbleth us, that when we are so terrified and humbled, we may learn to know our own misery and condemnation. And this is the true and proper use of the law, so that it be not perpetual. For this shutting and holding under the law must endure no longer but until faith come; and when faith cometh, then must this spiritual prison have his end.

Here again we see that although the law and the Gospel be separate far asunder, and utterly contrary the one to the other, yet as touching the [inward] affections they are very nearly joined the one with the other. This Paul sheweth when he saith: 'We were kept under the law, and shut up unto the faith which should be revealed.' Wherefore it is not enough that we are shut under the law: for if nothing else should follow, we should be driven to desperation and die in our sins. But Paul addeth moreover, that we are shut up and kept under a schoolmaster (which is the law) not for ever, but to bring us unto Christ, who is the end of the law. Therefore this terrifying, this humbling and this shutting-up, must not always continue, but only until faith be revealed: that is, it shall so long continue as shall be for our profit and our salvation; so that when we are cast down and humbled by the law, then grace, remission of sins, deliverance from the law, sin death, etc. may become sweet unto us: which are not obtained by works, but are received by faith alone.

He which in time of temptation can join these two things together, so repugnant and contrary: that is to say, which when he is thoroughly terrified and cast down by the law, doth know that the end of the law and the beginning of grace, or of faith to be revealed, is now come, useth the law rightly. All the ungodly are utterly ignorant of this knowledge and this cunning. Cain knew it not when he was shut up in the prison of the law and seriously felt his sin. At the first he was without the prison: that is, he felt no terror, although he had now killed his brother; but he dissembled the matter craftily, and thought that God himself was ignorant thereof. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' saith he. But when he heard this word: 'What hast thou done? Behold the voice of the blood of thy brother crieth unto me from the earth' (Genesis 4:9 f.), he began to feel this prison indeed.

What did he then? He remained still shut up in prison. He joined not the Gospel with the law, but said: 'Mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven.' He only respected the prison, not considering that his sin was revealed unto him to this end, that he should fly unto God for grace.

Therefore he despaired and denied God. He believed not that he was shut up to this end, that grace and faith might be revealed unto him; but only that he should still remain in the prison of the law. These words: 'to be kept under', and 'to be shut up', are not vain and unprofitable, but most true and of great importance. This keeping under and this prison signifieth the true and spiritual terrors, whereby the conscience is so shut up that in the wide world it can find no place where it may be in safety. Yea, as long as these terrors endure, the conscience feeleth such anguish and sorrow, that it thinketh heaven and earth, yea if they were ten times more wide and large than they are, to be straiter and narrower than a mouse-hole. Here is a man utterly destitute of all wisdom, strength, righteousness, counsel and succor. For the conscience is a marvellous tender thing, and therefore when it is so shut up under the prison of the law, it seeth no way how to get out: and this straitness seemeth daily so to increase, as though it would never have an end. For then doth it feel the wrath of God, which

is infinite and inestimable, whose hand it cannot escape, as Psalm 139 witnesseth: 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit?' etc, Like as therefore the worldly shutting-up or prison is a bodily affliction, and he that is so shut up can have no use of his body: even so the spiritual prison is a trouble and anguish of mind, and he that is shut up in this prison cannot enjoy quietness of heart and peace of conscience. And yet it is not so for ever (as reason judgeth when it feeleth this prison), but 'until faith be revealed.' The mind that is so shut up, therefore, must be raised up and comforted after this sort: Brother, thou art indeed shut up; but persuade thyself that this is not done to the end that thou shouldest remain in this prison for ever; for it is written, that we are shut up unto the faith which shall be revealed. Thou art then afflicted in this prison, not to thy destruction, but that thou mayest be blessed by the blessed Seed. Thou art killed by the law, that through Christ thou mayest be quickened again and restored to life. Despair not therefore, as Cain, Saul and Judas did, who being thus shut up, looked no farther but to their dark prison, and there still remained: therefore they despaired. But thou must take another way in these terrors of conscience than they did; that is, thou must know that it is well done, and good for thee to be so shut up, confounded and brought to nothing. Use therefore this shutting-up rightly and as thou shouldest do: that is, to the end that [when the law hath done his office] faith may be revealed. For God doth not therefore afflict thee, that thou shouldest still remain in this affliction. He will not kill thee that thou shouldest abide in death. 'I will not the death of a sinner,' etc. (saith he by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. 33:11). But he will afflict thee that so thou mayest be humbled, and know that thou hast need of the mercy of God and the benefit of Christ.

This holding in prison under the law, then, must not always endure, but must only continue to the coming or revealing of faith; which this sweet verse of the Psalm doth teach us: 'The Lord delighteth in those that fear him' (Psalm 147:11), that is to say, which are in prison under the law.

But by and by after he addeth: 'and in those that hope in his mercy.'

Therefore we must join these two things together, which indeed are as contrary the one to the other as may be. For what can be more contrary than to fear and abhor the wrath of God, and to trust in his mercy? The one is hell, the other is heaven: and yet they must be nearly joined together in the heart. By speculation a man may easily join them together; but in practice so to do, of all things it is the hardest; which I myself have often proved by my own experience. Of this matter the Papists and Sectaries know nothing at all. Therefore these words of Paul are to them obscure and altogether unknown; and when the law revealeth unto them their sin, accuseth and terrifieth them, they can find no counsel, no help or succor; but fall to desperation as Cain and Saul did.

Seeing the law therefore (as is said) is our tormentor and our prison, certain it is that we do not love it, but hate it. He therefore that saith he loveth the law, is a liar and knoweth not what he saith. A thief and a robber should shew himself

stark mad, that would love the prison, the fetters and chains. Seeing then that the law shutteth us up, and holdeth us in prison, it cannot be but we must needs be extreme enemies to the law. To conclude: so well we love the law and the righteousness thereof, as a murderer loveth the dark prison, the strait bonds and irons. How then should we be justified by the law?

*And shut up unto the faith which should after be revealed*

This Paul speaketh in respect of the fullness of the time wherein Christ came. But we must apply it not only to that time, but also to the inward man. For that which is done as an history, and according to the time wherein Christ came, abolishing the law, and bringing liberty and eternal life to light, is done spiritually every day in every Christian: in whom is found continually, some while the time of the law, and some while the time of grace. For the Christian man hath a body, in whose members (as Paul saith, Romans 7:23) sin and the law are at war. Now, I understand sin to be, not only the deed or the work, but also the root and the tree, together with the fruits, as the Scripture useth to speak of sin. Which is yet not only rooted in the baptized flesh of every Christian, but also is at deadly war with it, and holdeth it captive: if not to give consent unto it, or to accomplish the work, yet doth it force him mightily thereunto. For albeit a Christian man do not fall into outward and gross sins, as murder, adultery, theft and such like: yet is he not free from impatency, murmuring, hating, blaspheming, etc. against God; which sins to the carnal reason are altogether unknown. These things constrain him, yea, sore against his will, to detest the law: they compel him to fly from the presence of God: they compel him to hate and blaspheme God. For as carnal lust is strong in a young man, in a man of full age the desire and love of glory, and in an old man covetousness; even so in a holy man impatency, murmuring, hatred and blasphemy against God are strong. Examples hereof there are many in the Psalms, in Job, in Jeremiah, and throughout the whole Scripture. Paul therefore describing and setting forth this spiritual warfare, useth very vehement words, and fit for the purpose, as of fighting, rebelling, holding and leading captive, etc.

Both these times then (of the law and of grace, I mean) are in a Christian, as touching the affections [and inward man]. The time of the law is when the law exerciseth me, tormenteth me with heaviness of heart, oppresseth me, bringeth me to the knowledge of sin, and increaseth the same. Here the law is in his true use [and perfect work]: which a Christian oftentimes feeleth as long as he liveth. So there was given unto Paul 'a prick in the flesh, the angel of Satan to buffet him' (2 Corinthians 12:7). He would gladly have felt every moment the joy of conscience, the laughter of the heart, and the sweet taste of eternal life. Again, he would gladly have been delivered from all trouble and anguish of spirit; and therefore he desired that this temptation might be taken from him. Notwithstanding this was not done, but the Lord said unto him: 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness' (2 Corinthians 12:9). This battle doth every Christian experience. To speak of myself, there are

many hours in the which I chide and contend with God, and impatiently resist him. The wrath and judgment of God displeaseth me; and again, my impatency, my murmuring, and such like sins do displease him. And this is the time of the law, under the which a Christian man continually liveth as touching the flesh. 'For the flesh lusteth continually against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh' (Galatians 5:17), but in some more and in some less.

The time of grace is, when the heart is raised up again by the promise of the free mercy of God, and saith: 'Why art thou heavy, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?' (Psalm 42:5). Dost thou see nothing but the law, sin, terror, heaviness, desperation, death, hell and the devil? Is there not also grace, remission of sins, righteousness, consolation, joy, peace, life, heaven, Christ, and God? Trouble me no more, O my soul. What is the law, what is sin, what are all evils in comparison of these things? Trust in God, who hath not spared his own dear Son, but hath given him to the death of the Cross for thy sins. This is then to be shut up under the law after the flesh, not for ever, but till Christ be revealed. Therefore when thou art beaten down, tormented and afflicted by the law, then say: Lady Law, thou art not alone, neither art thou all things; but besides thee there are yet other things much greater and better than thou art, namely, grace, faith, the blessing, etc. These do not not accuse me, terrify me, condemn me; but they comfort me, they bid me have a good hope and promise unto me certain victory and salvation in Christ. There is no cause therefore why I should despair.

He that is skillful in this art and this cunning, may indeed be called a right divine. The fantastical spirits and their disciples at this day, which continually brag of the spirit, do persuade themselves that they are very expert and cunning therein. But I and such as I am have scarcely learned the first principles thereof, although we be diligent scholars in the school where it is learned. It is learned indeed, but so long as the flesh and sin do endure, it can never be perfectly learned and as it should be. So then a Christian is divided into two times. Inasmuch as he is flesh, he is under the law; inasmuch as he is spirit, he is under grace. Concupiscence, covetousness, ambition, pride, etc. do always cleave to the flesh, also ignorance, contempt of God, impatency, murmuring and anger against God, because he hindereth and breaketh off our counsels, our devices and enterprises, and because he speedily punisheth not such as are wicked [rebellious] and contemptuous persons, etc. Such manner of sins are rooted in the flesh of the saints. Wherefore, if thou behold nothing but the flesh, thou shalt abide always under the time of the law. But these days must be shortened, or else no flesh should be saved (Matthew 24:22). The law must have his time appointed, wherein it must have his end. The time of the law therefore is not perpetual, but hath his end, which end is Jesus Christ.

But the time of grace is eternal. For Christ being once dead, dieth no more (Romans 6:9 f.). He is eternal: therefore the time of grace also is eternal.



Such notable sentences in Paul, we may not lightly pass over, as the Papists and Sectaries are wont to do. For they contain words of life, which do wonderfully comfort and confirm afflicted consciences; and they which know and understand them well, can rightly judge concerning faith: they can discern a true fear from a false fear: they can judge of all affections [of the heart], and discern all spirits. The fear of God is an holy and a precious thing, but it must not be eternal. Indeed it ought to be always in a Christian, because sin is always in him; but it must not be alone, for then is it the fear of Cain, Saul, and Judas, that is to say, a servile and a desperate fear. A Christian therefore must vanquish fear by faith in the Word of grace. He must turn away his eyes from the time of the law, and look unto Christ and unto the faith which is to be revealed. Then his fear becometh sweet unto him, and is mingled with nectar, so that he no longer feareth only, but beginneth also to love God. For if a man do only behold the law and sin, setting faith aside, he shall never be able to put away fear, but shall at length fall to desperation.

Thus doth Paul very well distinguish the time of the law and grace. Let us also learn rightly to distinguish the time of them both, not in words, but in [the inward] affection: which is a very hard matter. For albeit these two things are separate far asunder, yet are they most nearly joined together in one heart. Nothing is joined more nearly together than fear and trust, than the law and the Gospel, than sin and grace. For they are so united together that the one is swallowed up of the other. Wherefore there is no mathematical conjunction like unto this.

At this place, 'Wherefore then serveth the law?' Paul began to dispute of the law; also of the use and the abuse thereof, taking occasion of that which before he had affirmed, that the faithful do obtain righteousness by grace [only], and by the promise, and not by the law. Upon that disputation rose this question: Wherefore then serveth the law? For reason hearing that righteousness or the blessing is obtained by grace and the promise, by and by inferreth: Then the law profiteth nothing. Wherefore the doctrine of the law must be diligently considered, that we may know what and how we ought to judge thereof, lest that either we reject the same altogether, as the fantastical spirits do (which ten years ago stirring up the rustical people to sedition, said that the liberty of the Gospel giveth freedom to all men from all manner of laws), or else lest we should attribute the power of justifying to the law. For both sorts do offend against the law: the one on the right hand, which will be justified by the law, and the other on the left hand, which will be clean delivered from the law. We must therefore keep the highway, so that we neither reject the law, nor attribute more unto it than we ought to do.

That which I have before so often repeated concerning both the uses of the law, namely, the civil and the spiritual use, do sufficiently declare that the law is not given for the righteous: but (as Paul saith in another place) for the unrighteous and rebellious. Now, of the unrighteous there are two sorts, that is to say, they which are to be justified, and they which are not to be justified. They

which are not to be justified must be bridled by the civil use of the law; for they must be bound with the bonds of the law, as savage and untamed beasts are bound with cords and chains. This use of the law hath no end: and of this Paul here speaketh nothing. But they that are to be justified, are exercised with the spiritual use of the law for a time: for it doth not always continue, as the civil use of the law doth, but it looketh to faith which is to be revealed, and when Christ cometh it hath its end. Hereby we may plainly see that all the sentences wherein Paul intreateth of the spiritual use of the law, must be understood of those which are to be justified, and not of those which are justified already. For they which are justified already, inasmuch as they abide in Christ, are far above all law. The law then must be laid upon those that are to be justified, that they may be shut up in the prison thereof, until the righteousness of faith come: not that they attain this righteousness through the law (for that were not to use the law rightly, but to abuse it); but that when they are cast down and humbled by the law, they should fly unto Christ, 'who is the end of the law to righteousness, to every one that believeth ' (Romans 10:4).

Now the abusers of the law, are first of all the justiciaries and hypocrites which dream that men are justified by the law. For that use of the law doth not exercise and drive a man to faith which is to be revealed, but it maketh careless, arrogant hypocrites, swelling and presuming of the righteousness and works of the law, and hindereth the righteousness of faith. Secondly, they abuse the law which will utterly exempt a Christian man from the law, as the fantastical spirits went about to do: which was the occasion that they raised up that sedition of the rustical people. Of this sort there are very many also at this day which profess the Gospel with us: who being delivered from the tyranny of the Pope by the doctrine of the Gospel, do dream that the Christian liberty it a dissolute and a carnal liberty to do whatsoever they list. These (as Peter saith, 1 Peter 2:16) have the liberty of the Spirit as a cloak of maliciousness, through which the name of God and the Gospel of Christ is slandered everywhere; and therefore they shall once suffer worthy punishment for this their ungodliness. Thirdly, such do also abuse the law, who feeling the terrors thereof, do not understand that such terrors ought no longer to continue, but unto Christ.

This abuse in them is the cause that they fall to desperation: as in the hypocrites it is the cause of arrogancy and presumption.

Contrariwise, the true use of the law can never be esteemed and magnified as it is worthy, namely, that when the conscience shut up under the law despaireth not, but being instructed by the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, concludeth in the midst of its terrors: I am indeed shut up as a prisoner under the law, but not for ever; yea, this shutting-up shall turn to my great profit. How so? Because that I being thus shut up, shall be driven to sigh and seek the hand of an helper, etc. After this manner the law is an inforcer, which by compulsion bringeth the hungry unto Christ, that he may satisfy them with his good things. Wherefore the proper office of the law is to show unto us our sins, to make us finally, to humble us, to

kill us, and to bring us down to hell, and ally to take from us all help, all succor, all comfort: but yet altogether to this end, that we may be justified, exalted, quickened to life, carried up into heaven, and obtain all good things.

*Therefore it doth not only kill, but it killeth that we may live.*

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ

Here again he joineth the law and the Gospel together (which are separate so far asunder) as touching the affections [and inward man], when he saith:

The law is a schoolmaster to Christ. This similitude also of the schoolmaster is worthy to be noted. Although a schoolmaster be very profitable and necessary to instruct and to bring up children, yet show me one child or scholar which loveth his master. How heartily did the Jews love their Moses, and willingly do what he commanded! Such was their love and obedience unto Moses, that in every hour (as the history witnesseth) they would with all their hearts have stoned him (Exodus 17:4). It is not possible therefore that the scholar should love his master.

For how can he love him which keepeth him in prison, that is to say, which suffereth him not to do that which gladly he would? And if he do any thing against his commandment, by and by he is rebuked and chastised, yea and is constrained moreover to kiss the rod when he is beaten. Is not this (I pray you) a goodly righteousness and obedience of the scholar, that he obeyeth his master severely threatening and so sharply correcting him, and kisseth the rod? But doth he thus willingly and with gladness? As soon as his master hath turned his back, he breaketh the rod, or casteth it into the fire. And if he had any power over his master, he would not suffer himself to be beaten of him, but rather he would beat him. And yet notwithstanding, the schoolmaster is very necessary for the child, to instruct and to chastise him; otherwise the child without his discipline, instruction and good education should be utterly lost.

The schoolmaster therefore is appointed for the child to teach him, to bring him up and to keep him as it were in prison. But to what end, or how long?

Is it to the end that this strict and sharp dealing of the schoolmaster should always continue, or that the child should remain in continual bondage. Not so, but only for a time, that this obedience, this prison and discipline might turn to the profit of the child, that when the time cometh he might be his father's heir. For it is not the father's will that his son should be always subject to the schoolmaster, and always beaten with rods; but that by his instruction and discipline he might be made able and meet to be his father's successor.

Even so the law (saith Paul) is nothing else but a schoolmaster: not for ever, but until it have brought us to Christ; as in other words he said also before: 'The

law was added because of transgressions until the seed should come;' also: 'The Scripture hath shut all under sin, that the promise,' etc.

Again: 'We were kept under, and shut up unto faith which should after be revealed.' Wherefore the law is not only a schoolmaster, but it is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. For what a schoolmaster were he which would always torment and beat the child, and teach him nothing at all? And yet such schoolmasters there were in time past, when schools were nothing else but a prison and a very hell, the schoolmasters cruel tyrants and very butchers. The children were always beaten, they learned with continual pain and travail, and yet few of them came to any profit. The law is not such a schoolmaster. For it doth not only terrify and torment (as the foolish schoolmaster beateth his scholars and teacheth them nothing); but with his rods he driveth us unto Christ: like as a good schoolmaster instructeth and exerciseth his scholars in reading and writing, to the end that they may come to the knowledge of good letters and other profitable things, that afterwards they may have a delight in doing of that which before, when they were constrained thereunto, they did against their wills.

By this goodly similitude Paul showeth what is the true use of the law, namely, that it justifieth not hypocrites, for they remain without Christ in their presumption and security; and contrariwise, that it leaveth not in death and damnation those that are of a contrite heart (so that they use it as Paul teacheth) but driveth them unto Christ. But they which in these terrors continue still in their faintheartedness, and do not apprehend Christ by faith, do fall at length into desperation. Paul therefore in this allegory of the schoolmaster most lively expresseth the true use of the law. For like as the schoolmaster reproveth his scholars, grieveth them, and maketh them heavy, and yet not to the end that this bondage should always continue, but that it should cease when the children are well brought up and instructed accordingly, and that afterwards without any constraint of the schoolmaster they should cheerfully enjoy their liberty and their father's goods: even so they which are vexed and oppressed with the law, do know that these terrors and vexations shall not always continue, but that thereby they are prepared to come unto Christ which is to be revealed, and so to receive the liberty of the Spirit, etc.

### *That we may be made righteous by faith*

The law is not a schoolmaster to bring us unto another lawgiver which requireth good works, but unto Christ our justifier and savior, that by faith in him we might be justified, and not by works. But when a man feeleth the force and strength of the law, he doth not understand nor believe this.

Therefore he saith: I have lived wickedly; for I have transgressed all the commandments of God, and therefore I am guilty of eternal death. If God would prolong my life certain years, or at least certain months, I would amend my life

and live holily hereafter. Here, of the true use of the law he maketh an abuse, and losing sight of Christ he looketh unto another lawgiver.

Reason being overtaken in these terrors and straits, is bold to promise unto God the fulfilling of all the works of the whole law. And hereof came so many sects of monks, so many ceremonies and so many works, devised to deserve grace and remission of sins. And they which devised these things, thought that the law was a schoolmaster to lead them not unto Christ, but to a new law, or unto Christ as a law-giver, and not as one that hath abolished the law.

But the true use of the law is, that I should know that I am brought to the knowledge of my sin and humbled by the law, that so I may come unto Christ and may be justified by faith. But faith is neither law nor work, but an assured confidence which apprehendeth Christ, 'who is the end of the law,' Romans 10. And how? Not that he hath abolished the old law and given a new; or that he is a judge which must be pacified by works as the Papists have taught: but he is the end of the law unto righteousness to all those that believe; that is to say, every one that believeth in him is righteous, and the law cannot accuse him, etc. This is the true use and force of the law. The law then is good, holy, profitable and necessary, so that a man use it as he should do. Now, they that abuse the law are first the hypocrites which attribute unto the law a power to justify; and secondly they which do despair, not knowing that the law is a schoolmaster to lead men unto Christ: that is to say, that the law humbleth them not to their destruction, but to their salvation. For God woundeth that he may heal again, killeth that he may quicken again, etc.

Now Paul, as before I have said, speaketh of those which are to be justified, and not of those which are justified already. Therefore when thou goest about to reason as concerning the law, thou must take the matter of the law, or that whereupon the law worketh, namely, the sinner and the wicked person. Him the law justifieth not, but setteth sin before his eyes, casteth him down, and bringeth him to the knowledge of himself: it showeth unto him hell, the wrath and the judgment of God. This is indeed the proper office of the law. Then followeth the use of this office: to wit, that the sinner may know that the law doth not reveal unto him his sin and thus humbleth him, to the end he should despair: but that by this accusing and bruising, it may drive him unto Christ the Savior and comforter. When this is done, he is no longer under the schoolmaster. And this use is very necessary. Forseeing the whole world is overwhelmed with sin, it hath need of this ministry of the law, that sin may be revealed: otherwise no man should ever attain to righteousness, as before we have largely declared. But what worketh the law in them that are already justified by Christ? Paul answereth by these words, which are, as it were, an addition to that which goeth before:

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster

That is to say: we are free from the law, from the prison, and from our schoolmaster; for when faith is revealed, the law terrifieth and tormenteth us no more. Paul here speaketh of faith as it was preached and published to the world by Christ in the time before appointed. For Christ taking upon him man's nature, came once in time, abolished the law with all its effects, and by his death delivered from sin and eternal death all those which lay hold on this his benefit by faith. If therefore ye look unto Christ and that which he hath done, there is now no law. For he, coming in the time appointed, verily took away the law. Now, since the law is one, we are not kept under the tyranny thereof any more; but we live in joy and safety under Christ, who now so sweetly reigneth in us by his Spirit. Now where the Lord [reigneth] there is liberty. Wherefore, if we could perfectly apprehend Christ, which hath abolished the law by his death and hath reconciled us unto his Father, that schoolmaster should have no power over us at all. But the law of the members rebelling against the law of the mind, hindreth us, that we cannot perfectly lay hold upon Christ. The lack therefore is not in Christ, but in us, which have not yet put off this flesh, to which sin continually cleaveth as long as we live. Wherefore, as touching ourselves, we are partly free from the law and partly under the law. Like Paul, we serve with our mind the law of God, but with our flesh the law of sin (Romans 7:21 ff.).

Hereof it followeth, that as touching the conscience, we are fully delivered from the law, and therefore that schoolmaster must not rule in it; that is, he must not afflict it with his terrors, threatenings and captivity. And albeit he go about so to do never so much, yet is not the conscience moved therewith. For it hath Christ crucified before her eyes, who hath removed all the offices of the law out of the conscience, putting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, etc. (Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, even as a virgin knoweth no man, so the conscience must not only be ignorant of the law, but also it must be utterly dead unto the law, and the law likewise unto the conscience. This is not done by any works, or by the righteousness of the law, but by faith, which apprehendeth and layeth hold upon Christ. Notwithstanding, sin cleaveth still in the flesh as touching the effect thereof, which oftentimes accuseth and troubleth the conscience. So long then as the flesh doth remain, so long this schoolmaster the law doth also remain, which many times terrifieth the conscience, and maketh it heavy by revealing of sin and threatening of death. Yet is it raised up again by the daily coming of Christ; who as he came once into the world in the time before appointed, to redeem us from the hard and sharp rule of our schoolmaster; even so he cometh daily unto us spiritually, to the end that we may increase in faith and in the knowledge of him, that the conscience may apprehend him more fully and perfectly from day to day, and that the law of the flesh and of sin with the terror of death and all evils that the law bringeth with it, may be daily diminished in us more and more. As long then as we live in the flesh, which is not without sin, the law oftentimes returneth and doth his office, in one more and in another less, as their faith is strong or weak, and yet not to their destruction, but to their salvation.

For this is the exercise of the law in the saints, namely, the daily mortification of the flesh, of reason and of our own strength, and the daily renewing of our mind, as it is said in 2 Corinthians 4:16.

We receive then the first-fruits of the Spirit: the leaven is hid in the mass of the dough: but all the dough is not yet leavened: now it is yet but only begun to be leavened. If I behold the leaven, I see nothing else but pure leaven: but if I behold the whole mass, I see that it is not all pure leaven.

That is to say, if I behold Christ, I am altogether pure and holy, knowing nothing at all of the law; for Christ is my leaven. But if I behold my own flesh, I feel in myself covetousness, lust, anger, pride, etc.; also the fear of death, heaviness, hatred, murmuring, and impatency against God. The more these things are in me, the more Christ is absent from me; or if he be present, his presence is but weak. Here we have need of a schoolmaster to exercise and vex this strong ass the flesh, that by this exercise sins may be diminished, and a way prepared for Christ. For as Christ came once corporally at the time appointed, abolished the whole law, vanquished sin, destroyed death and hell; even so he cometh unto us spiritually without ceasing, and daily quencheth and killeth those sins in us.

This I say, that thou mayest be able to answer, if any shall thus object:

Christ came into the world and at once took away all our sins, and cleansed us by his blood; what need we then to hear the Gospel, or to receive Absolution and the Sacraments? True it is that inasmuch as thou beholdest Christ, the law and sin are quite abolished. But Christ is not yet come unto thee; or if he be come, yet notwithstanding there are remnants of sin in thee; thou art not yet thoroughly leavened. For where concupiscence, heaviness of spirit, and fear of death is, there is yet also the law and sin.

Christ is not yet truly present: for when he cometh indeed, he driveth away fear and heaviness, and bringeth peace and quietness of conscience. So far forth then as I do apprehend Christ by faith, so much is the law abolished unto me. But my flesh, the world, and the devil do hinder faith in me, that it cannot be perfect. Right gladly I would that that little light of faith which is in my heart, were spread throughout all my body and all the members thereof; but it is to be done, it is not by and by spread, but only beginneth to be spread. In the mean season this is our consolation, that we who have the first fruits of the Spirit, do now begin to be leavened. But we shall be thoroughly leavened when this body of sin is dissolved, and we shall rise new creatures wholly, together with Christ.

Albeit then that Christ be one and the same yesterday, to-day, and shall be for ever (Hebrews 13:8); and albeit that Adam and all the faithful which were before Christ, had the Gospel and faith; yet notwithstanding Christ came once in

the time before determined, and faith also came once when the Apostles preached and published the Gospel throughout the world.

Moreover, Christ cometh also spiritually every day; and faith likewise cometh daily by the word of the Gospel. Now, when faith is come, the schoolmaster is constrained to give place with his heavy and grievous office. Christ cometh also spiritually when we still more and more do know and understand those things which by him are given unto us, and increase in grace and in the knowledge of him (2 Peter 3:18).

### *For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus*

Paul, as a true and an excellent teacher of faith, hath always these words in his mouth: 'By faith,' 'in faith,' 'of faith, which is in Christ Jesus' etc. He saith not: Ye are the children of God because ye are circumcised, because ye have heard the law, and have done the works thereof (as the Jews do imagine, and the false apostles teach), but: by faith in Jesus Christ. The law then maketh us not children of God, and much less men's traditions. It cannot beget us into a new nature, or a new birth; but it setteth before us the old birth, whereby we were born to the kingdom of the devil; and so it prepareth us to a new birth, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the law, as Paul plainly witnesseth: 'For ye are all the sons of God by faith,' etc. As if he said: Albeit ye be tormented, humbled, and killed by the law, yet hath not the law made you righteous, or made you children of God, but this is the work of faith. What faith? Faith in Christ. Faith therefore in Christ maketh us the children of God, and not the law. The same thing witnesseth also St. John: 'He gave power to as many as believed in him, to become the children of God' (John 1:12). What tongue, either of men or angels, can sufficiently extol and magnify the inestimable grace and glory which we have in Christ Jesus, namely, that we which are miserable sinners and by nature the children of wrath, should attain to such honor as to be made the children and heirs of God, fellow-heirs with the Son of God, and lords over heaven and earth; and that by the only means of our faith which is in Christ Jesu?

### *For all ye that are baptized, have put on Christ*

To put on Christ is taken two manner of ways, according to the law, and according to the Gospel. According to the law, as it is said in Romans 13: 'Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ;' that is, follow the example and virtues of Christ. Do that which he did, and suffer that which he suffered.

And in 1 Peter 2: 'Christ hath suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.' Now we see in Christ a singular patience, an inestimable mildness of love, and a wonderful modesty in all things. This goodly apparel of Christ we must put on, that is to say, follow these virtues. So also may we imitate the saints.



But the putting on of Christ according to the Gospel, consisteth not in imitation, but in a new birth and a new creation: that is to say, in putting on Christ himself, his innocency, his righteousness, his wisdom, his power, his saving health, his life and his spirit. We are clothed with a leather coat of Adam, which is a mortal garment, and a garment of sin: that is to say, we are all subject unto sin, all sold under sin; there is in us horrible blindness, ignorance, contempt and hatred of God; moreover, evil concupiscence, uncleanness, covetousness, etc. This garment, that is to say, this corrupt and sinful nature, we received from Adam; which Paul is wont to call the old man. This old man must be put off with all his works (Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9), that of the children of Adam we may be made the children of God. This is not done by changing of a garment, or by any laws or works, but by a new birth, and by the renewing [of the inward man] which is done in Baptism, as Paul saith: All ye that are baptized, have put on Christ.' Also: 'According to his mercy hath he saved us by the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Ghost' (Titus 3:5). For besides that they which are baptized, are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost to a heavenly righteousness and to eternal life, there riseth in them also a new light and a new flame; there rise in them new and holy affections, as the fear of God, true faith and assured hope, etc. There beginneth in them also a new will. And this is to put on Christ truly and according to the Gospel.

Therefore the righteousness of the law, or of our own works, is not given unto us in Baptism, but Christ himself is made our garment. Now Christ is no law, no law-giver, no work; but a divine and an inestimable gift, whom the Father hath given unto us, that he might be our justifier, our savior, and our redeemer. Wherefore, to put on Christ according to the Gospel, is not to be apparelled with the law and with works, but with an incomparable gift; that is to say, with remission of sins, righteousness, peace, consolation, joy in the Holy Ghost, salvation, life and Christ himself.

This is diligently to be noted, because of the fond and fantastical spirits, which go about to deface the majesty of Baptism, and speak wickedly of it.

Paul contrariwise commendeth and setteth it forth with honorable titles, calling it 'the washing of the new birth, the renewing of the Holy Ghost' (Titus 3). And here also he saith, that all they which are baptized, have put on Christ. As if he said: Ye have not received through Baptism a mere token whereby ye are enrolled in the number of the Christians, as in our time many fantastical heads have supposed, which have made of Baptism a token only, that is to say, a bare and empty sign. But as many (saith he) as have been baptised, have put on Christ: that is, ye have been carried out of the law into a new birth, which is wrought in Baptism. Therefore ye are not now any longer under the law, but ye are clothed with a new garment; to wit, with the righteousness of Christ. Paul therefore teacheth that Baptism is not a sign, but the garment of Christ, nay, that Christ himself is our garment. Wherefore Baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy. Now, when we are apparelled with Christ, as with the robe of our

righteousness and salvation, then we must put on Christ also as the apparel of imitation and example. These things I have handled more largely in another place, therefore I here briefly pass them over.

*There is neither Jew nor Grecian, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female*

Here might be added many more names of persons and offices which are ordained of God, as these: there is neither magistrate nor subject, neither teacher nor hearer, neither schoolmaster nor scholar, neither master nor servant, neither mistress nor maid, etc. For in Christ Jesus all states, yea, even such as are ordained of God, are nothing. Indeed the male, the female, the bond, the free, the Jew, the Gentile, the prince, the subject, are the good creatures of God; but in Christ, that is, in the matter of salvation they are nothing, with all their wisdom, righteousness, religion and power.

Wherefore, with these words, 'There is neither Jew' etc., Paul mightily abolisheth the law. For here, when a man is renewed by baptism, and Christ is put on, there is neither Jew nor Grecian, etc. The Apostle speaketh not here of the Jew according to his nature and substance, but he calleth him a Jew which is the disciple of Moses, is subject to the law, is circumcised, and with all his endeavor keepeth the ceremonies commanded in the law. Where Christ is put on, saith he, there is neither Jew nor circumcision, nor ceremony of the Temple, nor Jewish laws any more; for Christ hath abolished all the laws of Moses that ever were.

Wherefore the conscience, believing in Christ, must be so surely persuaded that the law is abolished, with all his terrors and threatenings, that it should be utterly ignorant whether there were ever any Moses, any law, or any Jew. For Christ and Moses can in no wise agree. Moses came with the law, with many works, and with many ceremonies; but Christ came without any law, without any exacting of works, giving grace and righteousness, etc.

*For 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ' (John 1:17).*

Moreover when he saith, 'nor Grecian,' he also rejecteth and condemneth the wisdom and righteousness of the Gentiles. For among the Gentiles there were great and notable men, as Xenophon, Themistocles, Marcus Fabius, Attilius Regulus, Cicero, Pomponius Atticus, and many other, which being endued with singular and truly heroic virtues, governed commonweals excellently, and did many worthy acts for the preservation thereof; and yet all these were nothing before God, with their wisdom, their power, their notable acts, their excellent virtues, laws, religions, and ceremonies: for we must not think that the Gentiles did condemn all honesty and religion. Yea all nations of all ages dispersed throughout the world had their laws, religions, and ceremonies without the which

it is not possible that mankind should be governed. All righteousness therefore concerning either the government of families, or commonweals, or divine matters (as was the righteousness of the law), with all the obedience, execution and holiness thereof, be it never so perfect, is nothing worth before God. What then? The garment of Christ which we put on in Baptism.

So, if the servant do his duty, obey his master, serve in his vocation never so diligently and faithfully; if he that is at liberty be in authority and govern the commonwealh, and guide his own family honestly and with praise; if the man to that which pertaineth to the man in marrying a wife, in governing his family, in obeying the magistrate, in behaving himself decently towards all men; if the woman live chastely, obey her husband, see well to her household, bring up her children godly (which are indeed excellent gifts and holy works); yet are all these nothing in comparison of that righteousness which is before God. To be brief, all the laws, ceremonies, religions, righteousness and works in the whole world, yea, of the Jews themselves, which were the first that had the kingdom and priesthood ordained and appointed of God, with their holy laws, religion, ceremonies and worshippings; all these (I say) take not away sin, deliver not from death, nor purchase life.

Therefore your false apostles do subtilly seduce you (O ye Galatians) when they teach you that the law is necessary to salvation: and by this means they spoil you of that excellent glory of your new birth and your adoption, and call you back to your old birth, and to the most miserable servitude of the law, making you of the free children of God, bond-children of the law, whilst they will have a difference of persons according to the law. Indeed there is a difference of persons in the law and in the world, and there it ought to be, but not before God, where all men are equal. 'All have sinned, and are destitute of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). Let the Jews therefore, the Gentiles, and the whole world keep silence in the presence of God. God hath indeed many ordinances, laws, degrees of life and kinds of service in the world, but all these help nothing to deserve grace, and to obtain eternal life. So many as are justified therefore, are justified, not by the observation of man's law, or God's law, but by Christ alone, who hath abolished all laws. Him alone doth the Gospel set forth unto us for a pacifier of God's wrath by the shedding of his own blood, and a Savior: and without faith in him, neither shall the Jew be saved by the law, nor the monk by his order, nor the Grecian by his wisdom, nor the magistrate or master by his upright government, nor the servant by his obedience, etc.

### *For ye are all one in Christ Jesus*

These are excellent words. In the world, and according to the flesh, there is a great difference and inequality of persons, and the same must be diligently observed. For if the woman would be the man, if the son would be the father, the servant the master, the subject the magistrate, there should be nothing else but a confusion of all estates and of all things.

Contrariwise in Christ, where there is no law, there is no difference of persons, there is neither Jew nor Grecian, but all are one. For there is but one body, one spirit, one hope of vocation for all: there is one Gospel, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, one Christ and Lord of all.

We have the same Christ, I, thou, and all the faithful, which Peter, Paul, and all the saints had. The same have all baptized infants. Here therefore the conscience knoweth nothing of the law, but hath Christ only before her eyes. Therefore Paul is always wont to add this clause: 'In Christ Jesu.'

Who, if he be taken out of our sight, then all our salvation is lost.

The fantastical spirits at this day do speak after the manner of the popish school-divines, dreaming that faith is a quality cleaving in the heart without Christ. This is a deadly error. But Christ should be so set forth, that thou shouldest see nothing besides him, and shouldest think that nothing can be more near unto thee, or more present within thy heart than he is. For he sitteth not idly in heaven; but is present with us, working and living in us.

As he saith before in the second chapter: 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' And here likewise: 'Ye have put on Christ.' Faith therefore is a certain steadfast beholding, which looketh upon nothing else but Christ the conqueror of sin and death, and the giver of righteousness, salvation and eternal life. This is the cause that Paul nameth and setteth forth Jesus Christ so often in his epistles, yea almost in every verse. but he setteth him forth by the Word: for otherwise he cannot be apprehended than by faith in the Word.

This was notably and lively represented by the brazen serpent, which is a figure of Christ. Moses commanded the Jews which were stung of serpents in the desert, to do nothing else but steadfastly behold the brazen serpent, and not to turn away their eyes. They that did so, were healed only by that steadfast and constant beholding of the serpent (Numbers 21:6 ff.). But contrariwise, they died which obeyed not the commandment of Moses, but looked upon their wounds and not upon the serpent. So if I would find comfort when my conscience is afflicted, or when I am at the point of death, I must do nothing but apprehend Christ by faith, and say: I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who suffered, was crucified, and died for me, etc., in whose wounds and in whose death I see my sin, and in his resurrection victory over sin, death and the devil, also righteousness and eternal life. Besides him I see nothing, I hear nothing. This is true faith concerning Christ and in Christ, whereby we are made members of his body, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones. In him therefore we live, we move, and we have our being. Vain therefore is the speculation of the fantastical heads concerning faith, which dream that Christ is spiritually, that is, speculatively, in us, but really in heaven. Christ and faith must thoroughly be joined together. We must be in heaven and Christ must live and work in us. Now,

he liveth and worketh in us, not by speculation and naked knowledge, but indeed and by a true and a substantial presence.

*And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*

That is to say: if ye believe and be baptized into Christ, if ye believe, I say, that he is that promised Seed of Abraham which brought the blessing to all the Gentiles, then are ye the children of Abraham, not by nature, but by adoption. For the Scripture attributeth unto him, not only children of the flesh, but also of adoption and of the promise, and foresheweth that they shall receive the inheritance, and the other shall be cast out of the house.

So Paul in few words translateth the whole glory of Libanus, that is to say, of the Jewish people, unto the desert, that is, unto the Gentiles. And this place comprehendeth a singular consolation: to wit, that the Gentiles are the children of Abraham, and consequently the people of God. But they are the children of Abraham, not by carnal generation but by the promise. The kingdom of heaven then, life, and the eternal inheritance, belongeth to the Gentiles. And this the Scripture signified long before when it saith: 'I have made thee a father of many nations' (Genesis 17:5). Again: 'In thy seed shall all nations be blessed' (Genesis 22:18). Now therefore because we which are Gentiles do believe, and by faith do receive the blessing promised to Abraham, and exhibited by Christ, therefore the Scripture calleth us the children and heirs of Abraham, not after the flesh, but after the promise. So that promise: 'In thy seed,' etc. belongeth also to the Gentiles, and according to this promise Christ has become ours.

Indeed the promise was made only to the Jews, and not to us that are Gentiles, Psalm 147: 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, etc. He hath not dealt so with every nation,' etc. Notwithstanding, that which was promised cometh unto us by faith, by the which only we apprehend the promise of God. Albeit then that the promise be not made unto us, yet is it made as touching us and for us; for we are named in the promise: 'In thy seed shall all nations be blessed.' For the promise sheweth plainly that Abraham should be the father, not only of the Jewish nation, but of many nations, and that he should be the heir, not of one kingdom, but of all the world (Romans 4). So the glory of the whole kingdom of Christ is translated unto us. Wherefore all laws are utterly abolished in the heart and conscience of a Christian: notwithstanding they remain without still in the flesh. And hereof we have spoken largely before.