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THIRTY FOUR

S E R M O N S

O F

Dr. MARTIN LUTHER;

D I S C O V E R I N G

Clearly and evidently to every Capacity,

The Difference betwixt Faith and Works, Law and Gospel, the Christian and Creature Operations, Troubles and Consolations, and the best way to make Christians, keep them so, and in case of Relapses to recover them again by Christ, the only Cure of all Soul Maladies.

To which is prefix'd,

A View of the gracious Spirit of LUTHER.

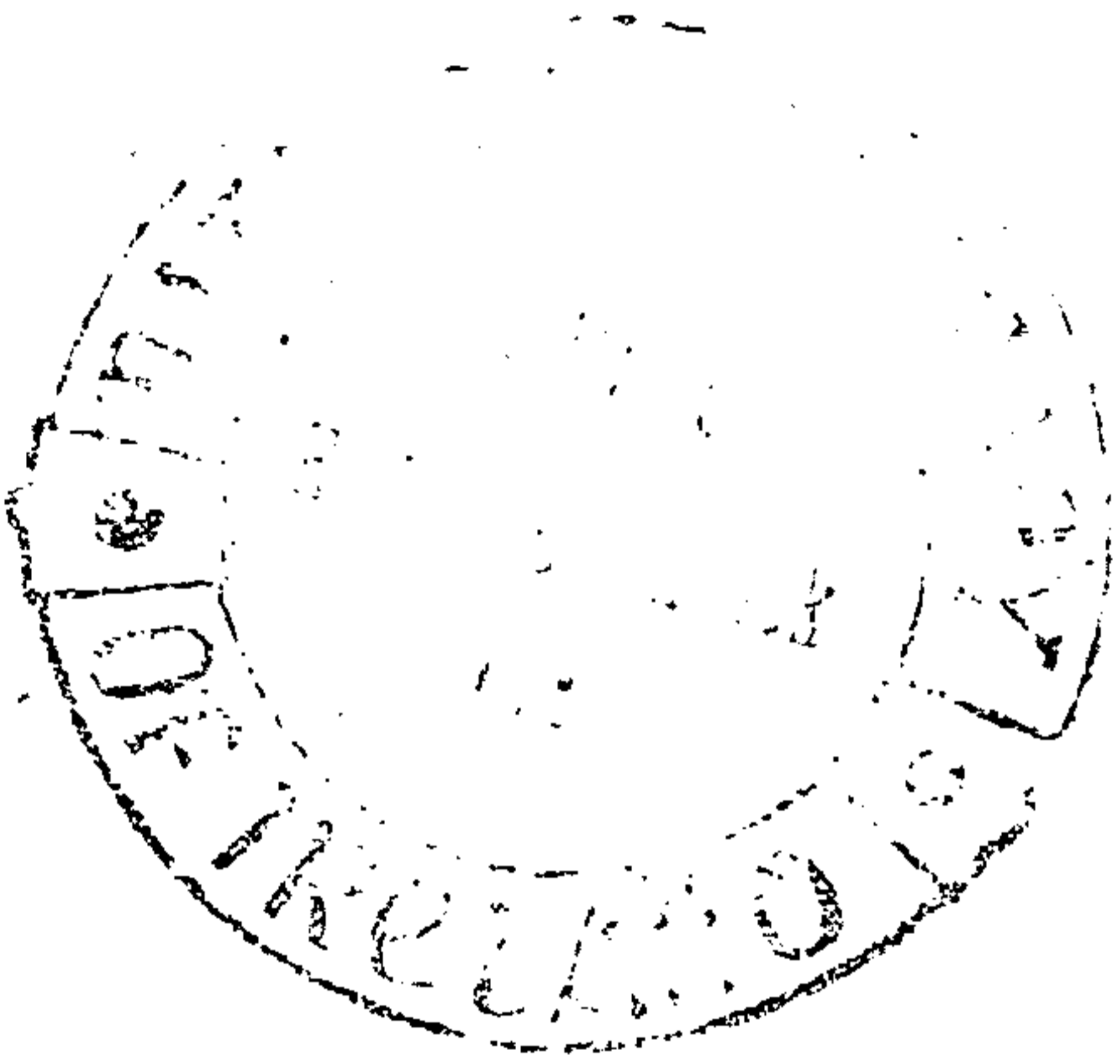
Rev. v. 11, 12, 13. *And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

Translated by WILLIAM GACE.

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A VIEW of the Gracious Spirit of LUTHER.

LUTHER, saith *Melancthon*, is a miracle amongst men. Another saith, that there was never any more trusty servant to his master; never any of more undaunted courage in his master's cause; never any that adventured, or durst adventure farther; never any that used more constancy, magnanimity and force in battering the fortresses of the enemy; never any that pierced deeper, prevailed farther, and procured larger for the safety of poor Christians, so many hundred years, oppressed, imprisoned, impoverished, yoked and chained in miserable captivity, through the monstrous outrage of the execrable *Nimrod* of *Rome*, than *Luther*. He had the enjoyments of God, by his spirit, in his bosom, and was carried on (though mightily opposed) to do good to the Church and State, in that age wherein he lived, by imparting what he had received from that all-powerful Spirit which reveal'd the hidden mysteries and deep things of God to him abundantly; and yet did not content himself with so doing, and like those of *Reuben*, *Manasseh* and *Gad* beyond *Jordan*, *Joshua* xxii. 21, 30. but was so carried on, by the same spirit, that he sought the good of posterity to come, and succeeding ages will have cause, as we have, to praise God for his labour of love and works extant, wherein we may solace ourselves as he did. Who since *Paul's* death spake and wrote so of God, Christ, Christians, the Law, Gospel, Faith, Love, Grace and Works, setting them in their proper place, in Conversation amongst men, on this side Jesus Christ, as *Luther* hath? Never man or woman that read *Luther*, but it pierced their hearts, and left behind a deep impression in their minds, to the quieting of their perplexed, troubled and distressed consciences, if they were Christians; (Oh! what ease of heart, refreshings, and unspeakable delights have they had!) but a wonderful

A

derful sting in the consciences of the wicked, especially if they were brought up Antichristian, for they can't bear to hear, that all the glory of our salvation should be given to God and Christ alone, and that Christians should have their joy, peace and consolation from a sure foundation, God's love in Christ Jesus, whom *Luther* by the evident demonstration of the Spirit hath most manifestly laid down for salvation; and for good works, none ever prest them more upon men for conversation so exactly, and according to the spiritual meaning of the law, than *Luther* hath; and there is more solid divinity in one leaf of *Luther's* works, than in many prolix treatises extant. O what voices doth he utter? what light doth he hold forth? what spiritual majesty, glory and power is there in his expressions? what heavenly doctrine doth he preach? what spiritual consolations doth he propound? what great, profound, and continual exercises, practice and experience of inward conflicts, agonies and straits of conscience had he? what fights with Satan, the Flesh, the World, and the Law, against sin, death and all the infernal powers of Hell? what contemplations of Christ, Grace, Justification and Faith? yea, and his phrase and eloquence of speech doth discover so much holy boasting and height of spirit, in the discovery of the inestimable, free, perfect and permanent love of God the Father, the admirable glory, durable riches and everlasting kingdom ordained for saints elected, and purchased by Christ, yet salvation is free to us, though it cost Christ full dear, all applied by faith, that maketh the nativity, conception, birth, thoughts, words, works, life, death, resurrection, ascension, mediation or intercession of Christ, ours, and this the Spirit revealeth, and faith sealeth up our salvation to us, and brings it home to the conscience, and assures us that the conquest of Christ over sin, death and hell is ours, and that satisfaction to the law made by Christ, whereby he hath pacified the wrath of God felt in our consciences; so that all fears and terrors are removed, and conscience discharged as if it had never been stung by sin, that biting serpent, the jaws of hell so broken, death so vanquished, the

teeth

teeth of the law so beaten out, that they can bite us no more, shut us up prisoners no more, neither hurt the poorest christian once freed, clothed and healed by Christ, and enjoying him by faith, how ghastly, strong and terrible soever they appear to sense, reason or incredulity that lies hid in our nature, like the viper's tooth under his gums, and too too often breaks forth to our great disturbance. In all these feats of spiritual activity and soul victories, he is much to be wondred at and justified, by sacred faith, so highly was he raised, as may appear in some few instances following, collected out of his works. When the law would trouble the conscience, and rule there, and disturb the Christian's sweet enjoyment of Christ; Thus saith he, O law, thou mighty Queen, and cruel regent of all mankind, what have I done, that thou hast accused me, terrified me and condemned me, which am innocent? O law, thou hast no power over me, and therefore thou dost accuse and condemn me in vain, for I believe in the Son of God, whom the Father hath sent into the world, to redeem us miserable sinners, oppressed with the tyranny of the law. He gave his life and shed his blood for me; therefore feeling thy terrors and threatenings, O law, I plunge my conscience in the wounds, blood, death, resurrection and victory of my Saviour Christ. Besides him I will see nothing, I will hear nothing. O law, thou wouldest climb up into the kingdom of my conscience, and there reign and reprove it, of sin, and wouldest take from me the joy of my heart which I have by faith in Christ, and drive me to despair, that I might be without all hope, and utterly perish. This thou dost beside thy office: keep thy self within thy bounds, and exercise thy power upon the flesh, but touch not my conscience, for I am baptized, and by the Gospel I am called to the partaking of righteousness and everlasting life, to the kingdom of Christ, wherein my conscience is at rest, where no law is, but altogether forgiveness of sins, peace, quietness, joy, health and everlasting life. Trouble me not in these matters, for I will not suffer thee, so intolerable a tyrant and cruel tormentor, to reign in my conscience: for it is the seat and temple of Christ the Son

of God, who is the King of righteousness and peace, and my most sweet Saviour and Mediator: He shall keep my conscience joyful and quiet in the sound and pure doctrine of the Gospel, and in the knowledge of this Christian and heavenly righteousness, in that righteousness and life I have no sin, no care, no sting of conscience, no fear of death. O law, thy tyranny can have no place in the throne where Christ my Lord sitteth; there I cannot hear thee, for I am free, and a son, who must not be subject to any bondage or law. Therefore when Christ is come, we ought to know nothing of the law, unless it be in this respect, that it hath power and dominion over the flesh, to bridle and keep it under. But when the law cometh to trouble thy conscience, thou must 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 comest then, yet shalt thou come too late. For then hath the promise prevented thee 430 years: to which I assent, and sweetly repose myself in the same. Therefore I have nothing to do with thee: I hear thee not, for I live in Christ who hath abolished thee, O law! O law, thou accusest me and sayest, that I have committed many sins: Indeed I grant that I have committed many sins, yet, and do still commit sins daily without number. This toucheth me nothing: I am now deaf and cannot hear: therefore thou talkest to me in vain, for I am dead unto thee. But if thou wilt needs dispute with me as touching my sins, get thee to my flesh and members, crucifie them, but trouble not me, nor my conscience, I say, which am a Lady and a Queen, and have nothing to do with thee, for I am dead to thee, and now I live to Christ, with whom I am under another law, to wit, the law of grace, which ruleth over sin and the law. Therefore the law cannot accuse or condemn those that believe on Christ, *Gal. v. 23*. Indeed the law troubleth and terrifieth our consciences, but Christ apprehended by faith, vanquisheth it with all his terrors and threatnings. To them therefore the law is utterly abolished, and hath no more power to accuse them: For they do that of their own accord which the law requireth. Christ apprehended by faith,

secretly

secretly by his Spirit saith thus to the soul distress'd :
Dost thou see nothing but the law, sin, terror, heaviness, despair, 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, &c. 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, and blessing, these do not accuse me, terrifie me and condemn me, but they comfort me, and bid me trust in the Lord, and promise unto me victory and salvation in Christ. There is no cause therefore why I should despair. What therefore must I do? The law assailing and urging my conscience, especially when I perceive myself not to do that which it requireth? I answer, that which Christ doth here, who admitteth or acknowledgeth no law, although brought out of the law of God, so learn thou also to do, that thou mayest boldly say to the law, leave off law to dispute with me, I have nothing to do with thee, and for that very same cause for which thou comest to dispute with me, and to enquire of me, how good and righteous I am, I will not hear thee : For it here maketh no matter what I am or what I ought to do, and what not to do, but what Christ himself is, ought to do, and doth. For now we are in the bride-chamber, where only the bridegroom and bride must have to do, and it behoveth not thee to come thither, nor to intermeddle with any thing there. When he speaks of Satan, death and sin troubling the conscience, how triumphingly is it? saith he, fir devil, I fear not thy threatnings and terrors, for there is one whose name is Jesus Christ, in whom I believe : he hath abolished the law, condemned sin, vanquished death, and destroyed hell ; and he is thy tormentor, O Satan, for he hath bound thee, and holds thee captive, so the end that thou shouldest no more hurt me, or any

that believe in him. Therefore, Satan, thou shalt not prevail against me, in that thou goest about to terrifie me, in setting forth the greatness of my sins, and so to bring me into heaviness, distrust, despair, hatred, contempt, and blaspheming of God: Yea rather, in that thou sayest I am a sinner, thou givest me armour and weapon against thy self, that with thine own sword, I may cut thy throat, and tread thee under my feet: for Christ dyed for sinners, if I were righteous, and had no sin, I should have need of Christ to be my reconciler. Why then, O thou peevish holy satan, wilt thou make me to be holy and seek righteousness in my self, when indeed I have nothing in me but sins, and most grievous sins, &c. This I know and more than thou canst accuse me of. Therefore whether thou lay my sins before me, or my good works, I pass not, but removing both far out of my sight, *I only rest on Christ*; I know him to be profitable unto me, therefore I will not make him unprofitable: which I should do, if either I should presume to purchase to myself favour and everlasting life by my good deeds, or should despair of my salvation because of my sins. Also as often as thou objectest that I am a sinner, thou callest to my remembrance the benefits of Christ my Redeemer, upon whose shoulders, and not upon mine own lie all my sins. *For the Lord hath laid all our iniquities upon him*, Mai. liii. 6. Wherefore, when thou sayest I am a sinner, thou dost not terrify me, but comfort me above measure; and the more vehement thou, O Satan, fightest against my conscience, so much the stronger is my righteousness made, I do the more ardently pray, and my faith is increased. Here I will abide in the arms of Christ, cleaving inseparably about his neck, and creeping into his bosom, whatsoever the law shall say, and my heart shall feel. When I feel the terrors of death, I say thou hast nothing to do with me, O death: for I have another death which killeth thee, and that death which killeth, is stronger than that which is killed, namely Christ, *thou hast slain both death and the devil*, Heb. ii. 14. If death creep upon thee and attempt to devour thee, say unto it, good mistress death, dost thou know this

man Christ? come and bite out his tooth, hast thou forgotten how little thy biting prevailed with him once? go to, if it be a pleasure unto thee, encounter with him again. Thou hadst persuaded thyself that thou shouldst have prevailed somewhat against him, &c. thou didst bite indeed, but it turned worse to thyself, &c. although I am a sinner by the law, yet I die not because Christ liveth, who is both my righteousness and everlasting life, in that righteousness and life I have no sin, &c. When he read *John xvi. 33. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,* he breaks out into these words. A man could find in his heart to fetch such a sentence upon his knees from *Rome* or *Hierusalem*, how was he taken up into admiration with it. Oh! saith he (on *Mat. iii. 17.*) nothing else was heard and seen but love, good will, and the infinite and incredible favour of God towards us; nothing but unmeasurable and bottomless goodness, and gentleness; all the whole vast heaven seemed not to distil drops, put to pour and rain down whole showers and floods of most sweet honey and sugar, &c. for this would God sound these words from heaven with his own voice, that he might persuade us certainly, and that we might fix it deeply in our minds, that in Christ, and for Christ his beloved Son, 'tis his will to load us with his benefits, &c. and embrace us as a Father most lovingly. Truly with no praises could Christ be more glorified, nor extolled more magnificently; for by this voice he is set in a most illustrious dignity, and high glory, he is proclaimed and declared the true King of peace, a true Priest, working perfect attonement, and the Heir and Lord of all things, who alone pacified his Father, and brings to pass, that he is well pleased with us. Moreover in these words, God the Father testifieth that he is of a right fatherly and well pleased mind to them that believe in Christ; to these he declares and opens himself wholly, and leaves it witnessed to our consciences that he is at perfect peace with us, &c. And on *Mat. xi. 28. Come unto me, &c.* As though he said, run and seek in what place soever ye will, hear and learn whatsoever can be preached unto you, yet shall ye find no quietness of heart, ye shall find no peace but in me alone. Here he

looketh

looketh for us, here he will receive us, here is the throne of grace and the true mercy seat, from which none is driven away, which with true faith resort unto it, but, here they that seek shall find, here they that ask shall be heard, here they that knock, the endless treasures of heaven shall be opened. Beware thou presume not to deal with God without me. Oh ! creep into me, put on me, and so come and have whatsoever thou desirest, being wrapt, shrouded, and cloathed in the humanity of Christ, and so in Christ only thou hast access to the Father. When he advises against curious speculations of God, how sweet and safe is his advertisement, on Psalm 130, and in many other places. For this cause I so often admonish you, that without Christ you should shut your eyes, and stop your ears, and say *you know no God besides him which was in the lap of the Virgin Mary, and suckt her breasts.* Where this God Christ Jesus is, there is God wholly, there is the whole divinity, there is the Father and the Holy Ghost. Without this Christ there is no God. I have known many in the kingdom of Antichrist, which seeking to comprehend God by man's speculations, have horribly perished. And if God through his inestimable mercy had not delivered me from this temptation, I had also fallen headlong into destruction. The nature of God is higher than that we are able to attain unto it. Wherefore he hath humbled himself to us, and taken upon him that nature which is best known and most familiar unto us, to wit, even our own, here he will receive us, *Eccl. Job vi. No man cometh to the Father but by me, &c.* Here is the mercy-seat and throne of grace that we may safely and comfortably conceive of God, and come to him, in, and by. For the nature of man is more frail, than that it should once conceive of God out of a Mediator; wherefore he hath given us this new and living way, that through the veil of Christ's flesh we may behold him, and in whom, and by whom, we must have to do with him. Hence it is that Turks, Jews, and others so grossly err, &c. and therefore they also that strive to come directly to God, do profit themselves nothing at all thereby, whilst thus they come to God in prayer without the Son, they which do here neglect him, as though

though he were made man for nought, and in the mean season do without a Mediator pray unto God, who hath created Heaven and Earth, they pray indeed, but none shall help them, they shall cry and none shall hear them. Therefore beware that thou presume not to deal with God, not once to conceive of him out of Christ, who is *God-man, and blessed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. When he speaks of the great article of Justification, on *Psalm cxxx.* and in many other places he saith, 'Tis the chiefest point of our salvation and righteousness before God. The true and sincere knowledge whereof is it which maintaineth and preserveth the Church; for it is the knowledge of truth and life: but on the contrary, where the knowledge of our Justification is lost, there is no life, no church, no Christ, neither is there any judgment left, either of doctrine or of spirit, but all is full of horrible darkness and blindness. And on *Gal. ii. 11.* for he hath here no trifling matter in hand, but the chiefest article of all Christian doctrine. The usefulness and majesty whereof, who so rightly esteemeth to him all other things, shall seem but vile and nothing worth. For what is *Peter*? what is *Paul*? what is an Angel from heaven? what are all other creatures to the article of Justification? which if we know, then are we in the clear light: but if we be ignorant thereof, then are we in most miserable darkness. Wherefore if ye see this article impugned or defaced, fear not to resist *Peter*, or an Angel from heaven, &c. This doctrine bringeth with it all good things, as well spiritual as bodily, namely, forgiveness of sins, true righteousness, peace of conscience, and everlasting life. It approveth and establisheth civil government, household government, and all kinds of life that are ordained and appointed of God. It rooteth up all doctrines of errors, sedition, confusion, and such like: and putteth away the fear of sin and death, and to be short, it discovereth all the subtile flights and works of the devil, and openeth the benefits and love of God towards us in Christ. What means the world to hate this doctrine, and glad tidings of everlasting comfort, grace, salvation and eternal life, so bitterly, and to persecute it with such devilish outrage? accounting it the greatest plague

plague that can befall them. I know that the devil goeth about nothing more, than that he may take away this knowledge from the sight and minds of men, by busying them with disputations, that this article may be forgotten, or not so effectually be made use of, for he knows the force of it, and it is no wonder that Satan doth so bestir him. By it he is overthrown, his kingdom is destroyed, the law, sin, and death (wherewith as most mighty and invincible tyrants, he hath brought all mankind in subjection under his dominion) are wrested out of his hands, and his prisoners are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and liberty. Should the devil suffer all this? should not the Father of all lies employ all his force and subtil policies, to darken, to corrupt, and utterly to root out this doctrine of our salvation and eternal life? indeed *S. Paul* complained, that in his time the devil shewed himself a cunning workman in this business. This passive righteousness, or Christian Righteousness, the righteousness of faith is hidden in a mystery, which the world doth not know, yea Christians themselves do not thoroughly understand it, and can hardly take hold of it in the time of temptation, therefore good Pastors will be day and continually handling this point, &c. for who so doth not understand and apprehend this righteousness, must needs in afflictions and terrors of conscience be overthrown, for there is no comfort of conscience so firm and so sure as this passive righteousness, that is apprehended by faith. And *Mr. Fox* saith of it, 'That unless the special grace of Christ do help, hard it is to flesh and blood to comprehend this mystical and joyful doctrine of Justification; so strange it is to carnal reason, so dark to the world, so many enemies it hath, that except the Spirit of God from above do reveal it, learning cannot reach it, wisdom is offended, nature is astonished, devils do not know it, men persecute it, briefly, as there is no way to life so easy, to whom it is given from above, so there is none so hard to the carnal sense not inspired, the ignorance whereof is the root of all the errors, sects, and divisions in the world. When he speaks of the perverse nature of man, he saith, There is nothing else in man but wickedness,

wickedness,

wickedness, delusion, guile, deceits, lying, fraud, and all kind of evil, yea by nature man is but lies and vanity. We must not trust any man, in any thing do not persuade thyself, that any man speaketh the truth unto thee, for whatsoever man speaketh is a lye. Why so? the fountain or spring head, the heart is not sincere, wherefore neither can the rivers be pure, &c. As soon as thou thinkest in thy mind, he is a good man, and one that will keep his promise, I am sure that he will not deceive me, but will deal faithfully, even then hast thou fallen from God and worshipped an idol, putting thy trust in a liar. Wherefore when thou hast any dealing with man, think boldly: If he doth faithfully it is well, if he do otherwise, in the name of God let him go, and say, I will commit all things to the will of God, he shall prosperously bring them to pass. O how often have we committed idolatry in this kind? When he speaks of faith, and its three arms, how excellent is he in his Christian liberty and elsewhere. He saith through faith every Christian is advanced above all things, and in spiritual power he is even Lord over all, yet faith frees us not from good works, but from the wicked opinion of works, and that by faith we dwell in Christ, and in our neighbour by love, faith killeth reason, that beast and monster in religion, that all the world cannot kill, &c. Faith even laugheth at all the iniquity, rage and fury of the world, and maketh that unto itself matter of spiritual joy, wherewith others are even killed, faith overcomes sin, death and the flesh, the world and the devil. Faith is that noble champion which overcometh and extinguisheth every sin, and if all the sins which the whole world hath committed from the beginning, were laid upon an heap, it would extinguish and abolish them altogether: Faith hath to do in great matters, it giveth glory to God, it believeth in him, it counteth him true, wise, righteous, merciful and Almighty, &c. Faith and the life of a Christian is not hypocrisy, &c. as their life is, which seek to come to perfection, by certain speculations of spiritual union (as they call it) but altogether in vain, as I have proved by mine own experience, &c. But every
Christian

Christian through his faith filleth heaven and earth, heaven with his faith, and earth with his works. Faith doth couple Christ and the Christian more near together, than the husband and his wife are united together. Faith makes us divine people (and as a man would say) it is the Creator of a certain divinity, not in the substance of God, but in us; for without Faith, God loseth in us his glory, wisdom, righteousness, and mercy, &c. Faith in Christ is a treasure inestimable, containing in itself all salvation, and preserving from all evil, &c. Believe in Christ, in whom are promised unto thee grace, righteousness, peace, freedom, and in whom thou shalt have all things if thou believe, and without whom, thou shalt lack all things if thou dost not believe, for that which is impossible to thee in all the works of the law, thou shalt very easily and briefly atchieve, and bring to pass through faith; because God hath so established all things in faith, that whosoever hath faith may possess all things, and who so doth want faith do possess nothing. *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all, Rom. xi. 32.* That so all things may belong unto God only, as well the commandments as also the performance of the same, only God commandeth, only God performeth, therefore God's promises have relation to the new Testament itself. The first arm of faith is this. Forasmuch therefore as the promises of God be holy words, true, just, peaccable, and full of all goodness, it cometh to pass, that the soul which doth cleave stedfastly to the same, with an unshaken faith, is become so united unto them, yea is also so swallowed up of them, that it doth not only partake thereof, but is thoroughly satisfied and made drunken with all the power and force of the same; for if the touching of Christ did give health, how much more shall a very tender feeling of the word in the Spirit: nay rather a thorough swallowing down of the word, communicate to the soul all things that appertain to the word. By this means therefore the soul through faith only is justified, sanctified, pacified, delivered and replenished with all goodness, and is truly made the daughter of God, *John i. 12.* By this it may easily be perceived from whence faith hath

hath received so great force, and why neither any one, nor all good works are comparable unto her, because no work can cleave fast unto God's word, nor be within the soul, wherein faith only and the word do reign and govern, for such as the word is, such becometh the soul made by force of the word, even as a fiery plate of iron doth glimmer like unto fire, by means of uniting the fire and the plate together, so that it is manifest, that to a Christian man faith only sufficeth to Justification. Now if he needs no works, then also he needs not the law: if he have no need of the law, surely he is then free from the law. So this also is true, the Law is not made for the righteous man, and this is that same Christian liberty our faith which doth work in us not to be idle, nor to give ourselves to lust and evil life, but that we be not tied to a necessity of observing the law, or doing works to the end to obtain righteousness or salvation thereby. The second arm of faith, 'tis to reverence him in whom we do believe, with a most godly and earnest bent affection, to wit, that it account him true, and worthy to be believed, for there is no honour like unto the opinion conceived of truth and righteousness, wherewith we do most highly esteem of him we do believe, for what are we able to ascribe to any person, more than truth, righteousness, and goodness, of all parts perfect and absolute? on the contrary it is a detestable reproach to conceive a secret opinion of a man to be false, faithless and wicked. So the soul as long as it steadfastly believeth in God that maketh the promise, doth account him true and righteous, this is the highest honour to God, to ascribe unto him truth, justice, and whatsoever else ought to be yielded to him in whom we believe; this man is ready to execute all his will; this man doth sanctify his name; this man suffereth himself to be exercised according to the will and pleasure of God, because cleaving firmly to his promises, he doubteth not but that he is true, just, wise, and will do, dispose and govern all things for the best: but is not such a soul by the same (his faith) most humbly obedient to God in all things? what commandment remaineth then, that this obedience hath not sufficiently

ciently satisfied? what fulness can be more absolute? than all manner of humble obedience? but this obedience cometh not by works but by faith only, and believing the promises, on the other side, what rebellion? what impiety? what greater reproach can there be unto God, than not to believe him when he promiseth? for what is this else, than either to make God a lyar, or be doubtful of his truth? to ascribe truth to himself, and condemn God of vanity and lying? wherein doth he not deny God and make to himself an image of himself in his own heart? what avail works in this unbelief, tho' they see me never so angelical and apostolical? and therefore very well did God conclude all (not in wrath and lust, but) in unbelief, lest such as fain that they have fulfilled the law through chaste and meek works of the law, should presume upon their salvation, when as being shut up in the sin of unbelief, they must either seek for mercy, or be damned through justice, &c. The third arm of faith which is a jewel inestimable, is this, that it coupleth the soul with Christ, even as the spouse with her husband. By which sacrament (as *Paul* teacheth) Christ and the soul are made one flesh. If they be one flesh, then is there a true marriage betwixt them, yea, rather a marriage of all the most perfect, absolutely accomplished betwixt them, for marriages betwixt the man and wife, are but slender figures of this union. Whereupon it followeth, that all things are common betwixt them, as well good as bad, so that whatsoever Christ doth possess, the faithful soul may boldly presume upon the same, and triumph over them, as though they were his own. Likewise, whatsoever appertaineth to the soul, the same may Christ challenge unto himself as his own. Let us compare these two together, and we shall perceive inestimable treasure. Christ is full of all grace, life, and saving health, the soul is full of all sin, death and damnation. Now let faith come between these two, and it shall come to pass that Christ shall be loaden with sin, with death and with hell, but unto the soul shall be imputed grace, life and salvation, for it becometh Christ to accept, and jointly possess the things appertaining to his spouse, and withal to communicate

to his spouse the things that appertain to his possession, for he that giveth to her his body, and himself wholly, how can it be but that he must give her all things else withal; and he that is possessed of the spouse, how doth he not withal possess also the things pertaining to the spouse; here cometh low to the view, a most sweet spectacle, not only of communion, but of a comfortable battle, of victory, of salvation, and redemption. For, inasmuch as Christ is God and man, and such a person as never yet sinned, never dieth, nor is damn'd: Yea such a one as neither can sin, nor die, nor be damn'd, and that his justice, his life, his saving health is unvanquishable, everlasting and omnipotent, when as such a person doth communicate to himself, yea rather doth wed the sin, death, and damnation of his spouse, through the union of faith. And that the case now standeth none otherwise, than as if they were his own proper peculiar, even as if himself had sinned, were travelling, dying and descending into hell, to bring all things into subjection, and that sin, death, and hell, could not swallow him, being of all necessity, clean swallowed up in him, by a miraculous conflict, for his righteousness is greater than the sins of all men, his life surmounteth in power, all death, his saving health, is more victorious than all hell. Even so, the faithful soul, through the assurance of her faith, in Christ her husband, is delivered from all sins, made safe from death, guarded from hell, and endued with everlasting righteousness, life, and saving health, of her husband Christ; on this wise Christ doth couple her to himself, a glorious Spouse without spot or wrinkle, cleansing her with the fountain in the word of life, through faith in the word of life, of righteousness, and of salvation. Even so doth he marry her unto himself, in faith, in mercy and compassion, in justice and judgment, *Hos. ii. 19.* When his friends persuaded him from going to *Worms*, lest they should burn him as they did *John Hus*, how little did he fear the rage of man, so firm was his faith, that he said, 'That if I knew there were so many devils in *Worms* as tiles on the houses, (in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ) I will go thither. Neither shall any kind of death

death or persecution shake my confidence. Oh! what faith and courage had he? when others were almost at their wits end for fear of the Pope and Emperor's rage, and threatned wars, *Luther* was so far from being daunted, that he brake out to the admiration of them all, saying, come let's sing the *xlvith Psalm*, and then let all the devils in hell do their worst, so strong was his faith in Christ his refuge, rock, and strong tower. When he speaks of himself, Oh! how disrespectfully it is, a sack of *Worms* meat, O wretch that I am! a lump of earth, a bundle of wickedness, an unworthy Minister of the Gospel. When of his marriage so cried down by Papists, if my marriage be a work of God, what wonder is it, if the flesh be offended at it? it is offended even at the flesh which God our Creator took, and gave to be a ransom and food for the salvation of the world, if the world were not offended with me, I should be offended with it, and should fear that it was not of God which I have done. Now seeing the world is vexed and troubled at it, I am confirmed in my course, and comforted in God. When a prodigious lye was raised on him by a libel of his death, and how the devils had carried away his body, &c. with an hypocritical admonition to take heed of his doctrine, &c. and spread abroad two years before his death by the wicked Papists: *Luther* read it, and thank'd God that the devil and his instruments were such fools that they could not stay until he were dead, and subscrib'd, *I Martin Luther* do profess and witness under mine own hand, that I on the 21st of *March* 1544, received this figment (so little did he regard this egregious lye) full of anger and fury, concerning my death, and that I read it with a joyful countenance, and that but I detest the blasphemy which ascribeth an impudent lye to the Divine Majesty. For the other passages, I cannot but with great joy of heart laugh at Satan's, the Popes, and their Accomplices hatred against me, God turn their hearts from their diabolical maliciousness. But if God have decreed not to hear my prayer for their sin unto death, then God grant that they may fill up the measure of their sins, and so-lace themselves to the full with their libels full of such like

like lies. When he was kept in *Coburg*-castle, that the Pope and Emperor might not murder him, being banish'd, he wrote to *Melancthon* and told him, 'That if I perceive that the cause goeth not well with you ('twas at *Ausburg* assembly) or be endangered, I shall not contain myself, but shall come with speed unto you, that I may see the ghastly jaws of Satan's teeth, if the cause be faulty, let's revoke it, and fly back, if it be good, why do we make God a liar, &c. But I am resolute and secure for the public cause, because I am sure that it is just and true, that it is God's and Christ's cause, &c. When he spake to God, how confidently was it? I know thou art a father and our God, I know therefore assuredly, that thou wilt destroy the persecutors, &c. Lord God maker of the whole world, I am certain that I am holy before thee, and am thy servant, not for my own sake, who as yet feel sin in myself, but through Christ who hath taken away my sin, and made satisfaction for me, &c. And at his death, what confidence had he in his prayer. O heavenly Father, my gracious God! and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou God of all consolation, I give thee hearty thanks that thou hast revealed to me thy Son Jesus Christ, whom I believe, whom I possess, whom I love, whom I glorify, I beseech thee, Lord Jesus Christ to receive my soul. O! my gracious heavenly father, though I be taken out of this life, though I must lay down this frail body, yet I certainly know that I shall live with thee eternally, and that I cannot be taken out of thy hand. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* Farewel.

S E R M O N I.

On the Nativity of Christ.

Luke ii. Ver. 1. to the 14. *And it came to pass in those days, &c.*

1. **A**S the Evangelist here describeth the time and place of the nativity of Christ, first herein is required faith of us, to wit, that we believe this to be the same Christ, of whom these things be recorded. Moreover the house and stock of *Davia*' is here notified and shewed forth, whereof our Messias should rise. 2. The shepherds which are here mentioned, are the first fruits of those *Jews*, which come unto Christ, as the wise men from the east are the first fruits of the *Gentiles*, and the innocent infants of all them, which must bear the Cross for Christ's sake. 3. Whereas the angel of the Lord appeareth to the shepherds in great glory, it signifieth, that the gospel cometh unto men with the glory of God. First indeed it maketh us afraid for it condemneth our darkness and whatsoever is in us, until we hear the comfort, which is here declared unto the shepherds in these comfortable words; *Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* 4. Also, as one Angel first preacheth unto the shepherds, that noteth to us the prince of all preachers Christ himself. Secondly, whereas many Angels are gathered together, it signifieth the multitude of preachers, who all say with one mouth, *Glory be to God and peace unto men.* 5. The fruit and profit wherefore Christ took flesh upon him, is here expressed to be evangelical peace and good will to men, whereof the hymn of the angels makes mention; *Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men.*

Ye have often times heard this history before, and must hear it still both this year, and every year, though to sluggish and drowsy Christians, that are soon weary and cloyed with good things, the same peradventure may seem tedious. But to them that are endued with true faith, it always cometh again as new. For the holy Ghost can speak so diversly of one thing, that to them which be his, it always seemeth new. Moreover we might speak at large of this history, for it is very full of matter, if we should not want time, and if it were not perilous lest we should somewhere stray from the purpose: Nevertheless we will speak somewhat thereof, as God shall permit. Ye have already heard in the text, how the angel himself expresth all this history, giving us to understand, that the same is published for our cause: and that the fruit thereof doth redound and appertain to us only, and is wrought to our salvation. And therefore the angel speaking to the shepherds, saith in these words: *Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* Here is declared first, that his nativity doth pertain unto us, when he saith, *unto you is born a Saviour.* For the Lord Christ came not for his own cause only, but that he might help and succour us. Wherefore let us diligently endeavour, that we believe the angel, and we shall enjoy the whole benefit. I have heretofore oftentimes said, that the gospel preacheth nothing else but faith, that the angel also here doth, and this must all preachers do, otherwise they be no true ministers. For the angel was here a beginning and example to all preachers. Now we must in this place speak of a double nativity, namely of our own and of Christs. But before I begin to treat hereof, I will handle the history briefly, that ye may lay it up in your heart, and may be partakers of the joy which the angel here bringeth. First therefore the evangelist saith, *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed every one into his own City.* Ye know
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right well, that the *Jews* had a promise made of the patriarch *Jacob*, that a prince, lawgiver or ruler, of the house of *Judah*, should not be wanting in *Judea*, until the *Messias* which was promised them did come. For the words of *Jacob* to *Judah* are plain after this sort: *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, Gen. 49. 10.* now at this time the case was so, that the *Romans* possessed *Judea*, and had set a lieutenant over it, whom the evangelist here calleth *Cyrenius*. The *Jews* before for a long time had used priests for kings, when as the *Maccabees* had obtained the kingdom, so that the dominion of the house of *Judah* was already taken away and suppressed, neither was there any prince or ruler, of the stock and blood of *Judah*, governor over the people. But that Christ or the *Messias* should now come, that was a great sign, that the prophecy at that time especially might be fulfilled. Wherefore the evangelist saith here, that at the time when Christ was born, *Augustus Cæsar* had set a lieutenant over *Judea*, under whom the *Jews* should offer themselves to be taxed. As if he said: Even at that time at which he should be born, he is born. All that lived under the *Roman* emperor were compelled to pay tax, for a testimony that they were subject unto him. This the *Jews* knew, but they did not understand the prophesie. *Jacob* had said thus: *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come:* That is, a Prince and ruler of the stock of *Judah* shall not be wanting in *Judea*, until Christ come. *Jacob* did sufficiently shew in these words, that he should be wanting at the coming of Christ. Moreover they understood it so, as though such a *Shiloh* should come, as should bear rule with the sword, it is a false understanding thereof, neither can it be gathered out of that text. For he saith thus, that at the coming of Christ the temporal kingdom of the *Jews* should end. So *Luke* also here sheweth that very time, when it behoved this to be done. It followeth moreover in the text: *And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David)*

to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. Joseph also and Mary obeyed this commandment of Cæsar, and submitted themselves as other honest and obedient men, and went to *Bethlehem*, which was the chief and head city of the house of *Judah*, and suffered themselves to be taxed. Mary, in as much as she was with child, and near her delivery, might have excused herself, that she should not take this journey upon her, but she doth not so, they will not be an offence to others. Moreover it ought thus to be that they should come to *Bethlehem*, because of the prophesy of the prophet *Micah*, chap. 5. which foretold that Christ should be born in *Bethlehem* of *Judah*. Mark I pray you, how that tax must serve hereunto, which neither Cæsar nor his lieutenant did know. Thus God dealeth in his works, in which he useth the means of heathen and evil men, whereby he may make us, which are miserable and wretched men and so deeply drowned in flesh and blood, certain of our faith, which the evangelist *Luke* here specially setteth forth, inasmuch as he often declareth in the history, the places and times, least that we should be deceived concerning this Christ. The manner of his birth the evangelist sheweth, saying: *And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished, that she should be delivered: And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.* Let it nothing move us, or be any offence unto us, that the Lord came into the world in so great poverty and misery. For it ought to be, a great joy and comfort unto us, rather than in any wise to discomfort and discourage us. It may seem a strange thing, and hard dealing, that a virgin which was new married, and that year joined to her husband, might not be permitted to bring forth her child at *Nazareth* in her own house, but was forced in poor estate to go almost three days journey being great with child? and when she came at her journey's end, she had not so much room in the inn, as that she might be delivered in some parlour or chamber. The Inn being full there was none that would vouchsafe to give place to this woman being great with child, that she

she might have the use of their chamber, but she was enforced to go into a stable, that there she might bring forth the Creator of all creatures, here may be plainly perceived what is the knowledge and wisdom of the world concerning divine matters, namely, that it is blind, and vain in understanding, that it seeth not the works of God, and if it be so that it seeth them, that it knoweth not what they mean. From hence let us learn, not to be moved or discouraged, if we be poor and miserable, and forsaken of the world, for we have here great comfort. If Christ the maker of all things with his beloved mother, was cast into so great misery and so contemned of the world, why may not the same also come unto us? or why should not we being in misery, and compassed about with all calamities, bear them patiently, yea if God will at any time kill us with adversity and distress? but this thing is to be lamented, that we exclude such an example from our eyes, but much farther from our heart, we should easily suffer adversity and contempt if so be that we believed, and had a sure trust and confidence in God, as we see that the Lord Christ suffered this misery, poverty, and calamity. This is therefore first thoroughly to be marked and considered of us, how Christ came into the world in so great poverty, and found not so much as one in so great a city, which was dutiful and beneficial toward him. Thus this nativity was received in the earth, over which notwithstanding all the heavenly host did exceedingly rejoice, as it followeth: *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.* Here is declared, how God in heaven, setteth forth this nativity, which the world contemneth, yea, knoweth not neither seeth. This joy is so great in heaven, that it cannot be contained therein, but bursteth forth, that it may be declared and communicated to the world. For the angel here bringeth tidings of great joy to the shepherds, which to them is great comfort, which the world notwithstanding contemneth and rejecteth, but is of the angels had in great admiration, yea and if

if they might, they would with greater praises, and goodly pomp have set forth so wonderful a thing. But it was not meet it should be so. For God would set an example in this his Son, that the ostentation and glorying of the world might at the last be neglected, and that it might be known what the world is. Man's reason seemeth always very wise unto it self, it always looketh unto things that are aloft, it considereth only high matters, it humbleth not it self to those things that are below. This now is an excellent comfort, that the angels and all the heavenly host esteem him so much, whom the world contemneth, by which we may learn that altho' we be outcasts in the world, there be notwithstanding that have regard and care of us. However we do hardly believe this, we do not fasten our eyes thereupon, but look unto great, precious, and high things, according to the example of the world, and are dismayed, as soon as a little misfortune cometh, neither thinking nor knowing, if any adversity assaileth us, that it is done by the will of God. Believe thou this undoubtedly, if it had not so pleased God, he would not have suffered this his beloved son to be laid in a manger, he would not have permitted him to be born in so great poverty, misery, and contempt. But the poorer and more despised he is before the world, so much greater care and regard God and all the heavenly soldiers have of him, so that we may conceive comfort thereby, and believe assuredly, that the more we are rejected of the world, the more we are esteemed before God. Thou mayest find many who here think thus, and are touched with such devotion as this: O! if I had been there then, with how great diligence would I have served this child, and done for him: Yea, I would have washed even his swaddling clothes. O! if I had been so happy as the shepherds, that I also might have seen the Lord lying in a manger. Now, indeed, thou wouldest be ready to do those duties, when thou knowest Christ to be so high and noble. Surely thou wouldest have been as slack in thy duty, at that time, as the citizens of *Bethlehem* were. Thou revolvest in thy mind childish and altogether foolish cogitations. Why dost thou not

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perform the like duties now? Behold Christ walking before thee in thy neighbour, do for him, and bestow benefits upon him; whatsoever thou shalt bestow upon thy neighbour, which is needy and destitute of help, that thou shalt bestow upon Christ himself, as he shall say in the last day, to the elect, *Mat. xxv. 40. In as much as ye have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* Wherefore it is a vain and very foolish thing to admit such childish cogitations. Let us therefore at the last open our eyes, let us not hear examples of so great importance in vain, otherwise the time will come, when we shall be grievously punished. But with what words did the angel speak unto the shepherds? the Evangelist saith, after this sort: *And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.* Learn by these words of the angel, how to use rightly the nativity of the Lord Christ; neither let it suffice you, to hear them only. A great treasure hidden in the earth, or some other where, is of no use, but if it be opened, and occupied, then is it profitable and precious. Wherefore give heed hereunto, that thou mayest use this nativity; otherwise, it shall be no advantage or comfort unto thee. For as thou knowest the bare history only, to wit, what came to pass in his nativity, and that he was born needy and poor, thou shalt learn no greater use hereby, than if thou heard an history written of the king of *France*, or of some other puissant prince, whereby no advantage or comfort should come unto thee: But how must we use this nativity rightly, and with fruit? Even as I have said, if we be thus perswaded that he was born for us, that his nativity is ours. Our nativity is such, that it altogether aboundeth with sin, as *David* saith, *Psal. 51. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* As if he would say, Here is nothing but sin, as well in the conception as in the birth; whatsoever I bring with me from my mother's womb, it is wholly damnable, it is due to death,
Satan,

Satan, and hell : Forasmuch then as our nativity, skin and hair, are defiled, What good can come thereof ? This is our title which we have received from *Adam*, in this one thing we may glory, and in nothing else, namely, that every infant that is born into this world, is wholly in the power of sin, death, Satan, hell, and eternal damnation ; our nativity is altogether miserable, and on every side to be lamented. To deliver us from this nativity, God sent another nativity, which it behoved to be pure and without spot, that it might make this unclean and sinful nativity pure : This is that nativity of the Lord Christ, his only begotten son. Wherefore he would not have him born of flesh and blood, infected with sin ; but it behoved that he should be born of a pure virgin. He suffered no spot at all, or sin in his flesh, but replenished it with the Holy Ghost ; and permitted nothing to stick therein, but those miseries which proceed of flesh and blood, as hunger, thirst, adversity and death, sin excepted, as the epistle to the *Heb.* chap. iv. witnesseth, that he *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* This is that most excellent thing, which the Lord our God hath done for us ; whereof none taketh any fruit, but he that believeth. And none will easily believe this, but he that feeleth of what sort his own nativity is : He that hath no feeling of his own misery, tasteth not of this nativity of Christ. But if we feel our misery, it followeth forthwith, that we cry with the Prophet *David*, and say, *Behold I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me :* For we feel our sin, and our evil nativity. When death shall come upon us, and our heart shall be touched with anguish and grief, then at the last, it may be, that we would taste of this happy and pure nativity, and will exceedingly thirst after it, to enjoy it. But now when as we feel not our sin, neither do as yet taste of the bitterness of sin, it slideth coldly to the heart, we hear it indeed, but truly it doth not thoroughly enter unto the heart. For if a man did believe, that this nativity was for his advantage, he would fear neither sin nor death. Wherefore I have said, that a Christian must believe, and doubt nothing, that the nativity of Christ

is as well his, as it is the Lord Christ's : And as he hath of the virgin pure blood and flesh, so that he himself also is pure ; and that this virgin is his mother spiritually, as she was the mother of Christ carnally. Let the heart have sure confidence in this persuasion, otherwise it will be in an evil case. This the angel signifieth in these words, when he saith, *Unto you he is born* ; as if he had said, Whatsoever he is and hath, ye may challenge it to yourselves. Also he is your Saviour, not that ye should only look upon him, but which is able to deliver you from the tyranny of sin, death, Satan, and all evil ; yea, and how great soever he be. he is *born unto you*, and is yours, with all that he hath. Now forasmuch as he is mine, and hath changed his nativity into mine, his flesh and blood also is mine, he himself is mine, with all wherewith he is indued, so that I dare say unto his mother, Behold, that child which thou hast brought forth, is mine, his flesh and blood are my flesh and blood, yea, and thou art my mother, and I will be counted of thee for thy son ; for whatsoever Christ bringeth with him, it must be mine, even as he himself is mine : If so be that his nativity is mine, being of a virgin, and without sin, replenished with the Holy Ghost, my nativity also must be of a virgin, and pure from sin. Here now *Eve* the first mother is no more my mother, for it must needs be that that nativity utterly dye and perish, that there may be no sin remaining. Here this mother *Mary* is to be set against that mother, of whom I was born in sin. And thus the Angel bringeth with him great joy, for it cannot be, but that the heart should be made glad, when it enjoyeth this Saviour as his own. When we come to hand strokes, that is, when we feel our misery and calamity, there remaineth no comfort or help ; then my heart cannot lift itself above the heavy burden, wherewith it is pressed down, but it must faint and be discouraged : But if I conceive a trust, and doubt nothing that Christ's nativity is mine, that my sins are taken away by him, I become exceeding joyful, and am confirmed with comfort, whereby all heaviness and sorrow is shaken off. This only is that comfort, and no other, which maketh a good conscience ; which feareth neither death

nor hell, for it always resteth upon the word of God, which giveth Christ unto us : Wherefore it is a thing altogether miserable and lamentable, if such a good conscience be sought in any other things than here. Thou shalt find no joy, no peace of conscience, neither in heaven, nor in earth, but in this Christ ; be thou certain and sure thereof. Wherefore let all other things pass, and cleave unto him only, if thou desirest to be bold and courageous against sin, death, the devil, hell, and all things that are against thee ; He is the Lord and Saviour. Ye understand, I trust, this right well, forasmuch as ye have now heard it so often. But I do with so great earnestness, as it were, beat it into your minds, that ye may see, that there is but one thing taught in the whole scripture, which I would have to stick firmly and undoubtedly in you ; this is that which I have said, that the use of this nativity be known. They which seek any other thing, and use not this nativity, are in a desperate case, as ye have heard ; which ye have very well expressed in this song, the author whereof, whosoever he was, did nothing err from the purpose, to wit, that the only child Christ is our comfort ; which words surely are of very great importance, and deserve most diligently to be weighed. For ye sung after this sort ; A child, highly to be praised, is born unto you this day, of a chaste virgin, to the comfort of us wretches. If that child had not been born, we had perished all. Is it not said here, that there is no comfort beside only Christ ? which indeed is most true. Without doubt the Holy Ghost taught him that made this song, to sing after this sort. If the case stands thus, it followeth that monks, nuns, sacrificing priests, and all which leave this child, and seek to come to heaven by other ways and works, be condemned ; for such say, that they need not this child, otherwise they would confess, that their own works are nothing worth. These therefore do nothing but deceive and seduce, by whom men's hearts are procured to depart from Christ, and are led away unto Satan. In the aforesaid song is contained moreover, He is the salvation of us all ; oh ! sweet Jesus Christ, forasmuch as thou art born man, defend us from hell. I

greatly desire that ye did well understand this ; it is sung abroad every where, but there is none that throughly believeth it. Whereupon it cometh, that some do oppose these things, especially they, which know, sing and babble very much of them ; that truly I fear, that Christ is never more blasphemed, than at this featt of his nativity, and at other great feasts ; that it should be no marvel, if, when he is so blasphemed, he should suffer the whole world to be swallowed up : But the last day is at hand. Wherefore endeavour that ye may sound this excellent song in your heart ; and as ye sing it in mouth, so ye may also believe it. If the case stands thus, that all things without this Child are vain, what need is there then of much business ? why dost thou run this way and that way, and endeavourest to do works, whereby thou mayest prepare thee a seat in heaven ? which they especially do, that murmur over many rosaries, and continually extol the mother of God in mouth only, but in heart think more evil of her than of all others ; and not only of her, but of Christ himself also, the Lord and Saviour. Wherefore commit this so to memory, that ye may be certainly perswaded, that whatsoever dependeth of any other than of that child, it is all damnable ; otherwise the Angel had lyed. This must be accounted for most certain, without any addition ; neither are these trifles to be weighed, to wit, that this sufficeth not that thou dost believe, more things are to be added. Forasmuch then as the Angel saith, that this Child doth all, and that he is the Saviour ; and if he be not, that all labour is lost ; tell me, how can it follow, that something is to be done of thee, when it is already done before ? Dost thou go about to do any thing that thou mayest obtain him ? That Child suffereth not himself to be apprehended and obtained by works ; for altho' thou heapest together works, notwithstanding thou dost not yet enjoy the Child. Moreover thy works be unclean, by which such great treasure cannot be gotten, no though they were even holy. But he is to be apprehended in heart, so that thou believe, and say to the Angel, I believe that it is true which thou sayest, and nothing at all doubting, I count this Child for a Saviour
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born unto me. And this part, whereof we have now spoken, pertaineth to faith. Now we have here also another part, pertaining to christian life, namely, charity, that works may not be rejected. If thou wilt do works, do them not in that respect, that thou perswade thyself that thou dost obtain any thing of God by them: But follow this example; such a one as Christ hath shewed himself to thee, be thou also toward thy neighbour. If thou more nearly consider the example of Christ, thou shalt find nothing but meer love; whereas he humbleth himself, and is born in so great poverty, that declareth nothing but love toward thee, which moved him to become a servant for thy sake, as *Paul, Phil. ii.* saith, who knew that he might remain in divine glory. Now this he did for thy advantage, he bowed his eyes to thy misery and calamity, which art so miserable a man, wholly damnable, and abounding with sin; thy nativity is unclean, thy misery is on every side most great, thou hast deserved nothing but the wrath of God, and eternal damnation. If thou hadst been a *Carthusian* monk a thousand years, thou couldst not deliver thyself from this misery and damnation. But Christ is able to help thee, he is rich, and hath strength sufficient; seeing therefore he can do such things, he doth them willingly and with pleasure. Love enforceth him so far, that he employs all things for thy sake, and bestows whatsoever he hath for thee. Forasmuch then as Christ sheweth so great love toward thee, and giveth unto thee whatsoever he is able, do thou likewise to thy neighbour. Wilt thou work works, derive them to thy neighbour, who is compassed with troubles and miseries. Thou must do nothing for this cause, that Christ hath need thereof, whereby thou mayest enrich him; for neither was he bountiful to this end, that he might any thing profit his Father thereby, or that he might receive any benefit of him; but he did it only for this cause, that therein the Father might be well pleased, inasmuch as he submitted himself wholly to his Father's will, and loveth us with so great affection: After the same sort we also must do in our works towards our neighbour, which we ought therefore only to do, that we may give thanks to the

Father, that he sheweth his favour unto us, for that he hath given his beloved son unto me, to bestow upon me whatsoever he hath. When I believe this undoubtedly, I burst out and say, If God sheweth unto me such benefits and favour in his beloved son, that he suffereth him to bestow all things upon me, I also will do the like again, and bestow all things whereby I may do good to my neighbour, and love him. And so I do not lift up mine eyes unto heaven, but I go thither, where my neighbour is oppressed with adversity, poverty, sickness, sin or error, and I help him wherein soever I am able. Thus do thou, whosoever thou art, which mindest to do true good works; as thou wouldest have done to thy self, if thou wert troubled with poverty, so do thou to thy neighbour being poor. Again, if thy neighbour be a sinner, and thou seest it, but thou thyself art without sin, and hast a holy nativity, go preach unto him, whereby he also may be delivered. But thou must do all these things freely in every respect, as Christ hath done for thee without all works and merits of pure grace, love, and mercy. Such work see thou do if thou wilt do good and Christian works indeed. God hath no need of them, nevertheless thou must do them in respect of him, inasmuch as it so pleaseth him, and he will have it to be so. This only is rightly to do good works, which those hypocrites do not, which will merit heaven by their chastity, poverty, and obedience. Unto whom I pray you are such works of theirs good? I myself need them not, neither do they profit my neighbour, wherefore it is meer deceit, whereas a name is given to works as though they did merit heaven; when as they are nothing worth, neither profitable to others. Lay up these things in your hearts, and do also according to them. In all this text being discussed from the beginning to the ending, ye have these two things, namely faith and love. If ye shall keep these, then both the holy nativity of Christ shall be a help, and comfort unto you, and also ye shall be spiritually the children of his mother, as Christ Jesus is her child carnally. [*An exposition of the song of the Angels, Glory be to God on high, &c.*] *Glory be to God on high, and on earth, peace, good will*

will towards men. Forasmuch as this song is very common, and there be few that rightly understand it, notwithstanding it containeth many things, I think good to handle it somewhat at large. The Angels in this hymn apply three things to three: glory to God, peace to the earth, and good will unto men. The first is the honour or glory of God, with which we must begin, that in all things praise and glory may be ascribed to God, as to him which doeth, giveth, and hath all things, so that none may challenge any good thing unto himself, neither ought to count it his own. Glory is so due to God only, that no part thereof may be derived to any other. *Adam* being persuaded of Satan, went about to take this glory to himself, whereby all men fell into the displeasure of God, and have that vice so thoroughly fixed in their mind, that nothing can be so hardly pluckt away from them. Every man pleaseth himself, no man can bear to seem that he is nothing, or is able to do nothing, whereof come almost all evils, so many contentions, wars, and innumerable other inconveniencies. This glory Christ gave to God his Father, teaching that all our things are nothing before God but sin, which deserve his wrath and indignation. Wherefore there is no cause, that we should even never so little please ourselves or glory in them, but rather that we should be ashamed and fear, being set in so great peril and confusion, that so all our glory and pleasing of ourselves may pass away and come to nothing, and we may rejoice being destitute of our own glory, that we may be found and saved in Christ alone. The second is peace in earth; for, as where the glory of God is not, and where every one seeketh his own glory, there cannot be peace, according as *Solomon* saith, *Prov. xiii. 10. Only by pride cometh contention*: on the contrary, where the glory of God is known, there true peace also must needs be. For why should they contend? why should they disagree, which know every one of them, that they have no good thing of their own, but that all things which are, which they have, and which they are able to do, come from God, to whose power also they commit all things, in the mean season

season being very well content, that they have God favourable unto them? how also can it be, that when one counteth nothing of himself, and the things that be his, he should be so careful of himself and his things, that he should move contention with any because of them? such believe that Christ only is made all things unto them, him they think on, and for him alone they contend. Hereupon it certainly followeth, that there can be no contention or discord at all among true Christians: which manner of peace of Christians *Isaiab* declareth, and saith, c. xi. v. 9. *They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain*; that is, in the Church of Christ. The cause hereof he addeth next after, *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord*, that is, for all know God as to whom all good things do belong, and all their own things they confess to be nothing but sin, they may easily therefore have peace among themselves. Wherefore the same *Isaiab* saith, c. ii. v. 4. *And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.* Hereupon Christ is called the King of peace, or the Prince of peace, of whom *Solomon* was a figure, who is called peaceable. For Christ is truly called our King *Solomon*, that is, peaceable, which hath restored peace unto us inwardly with God through faith in him, and outwardly with our neighbours through love, whereby we live friendly with all men; and so by him we have peace every where both inwardly, and outwardly in the earth.

The third is good will of men. Not that good will, whereby we work good works, but whereby we take in good part all things that happen, whether they be good or evil, sweet or sour, and receive them with a quiet heart. The Angels knew that the peace which they sung of, should be only among Christians, which in all things depend upon Christ, and usurp nothing themselves as their own. But in the mean season the world and Satan, which exceedingly envy them, do on every side procure trouble unto them, and persecute them

them even unto death, so that they may look for no peace or quietness at all, for Christ saith, *John xvi. In me ye shall have peace, but in the world ye shall have tribulation.* Therefore it was not enough for the Angels to have sung, *peace on earth,* but it was to be added, *and good will towards men,* that when they, as much as they are able, have peace with all men, and nevertheless are continually hated of all men, and suffer persecution, they may always keep a good will whereby they may take all things in good part, and give thanks to God; however he dealeth with them, or suffereth them to be dealt with, they may not murmur, but resign and commit themselves wholly to the will of God, yea (forasmuch as they know that God disposes and governs all things, whom they are sure, that they have a merciful and most favourable father unto them through Christ) they may even rejoice and be glad in persecution, according to that saying of *Paul* in the Epistle to the *Romans*: *We rejoice in afflictions and persecutions.* For inasmuch as they have a joyful conscience and a sure trust of the favour of God, they cannot but count all things for the best, whatsoever happen. Behold what kind of good will it is in all things, whether they be prosperous or unprosperous, which the Angels here wish unto men, and sing, to be proper to the believers. Where such good will is wanting, there peace cannot belong. Men take all things in the worse, they take nothing in good part, but always encrease and double the evil. Hereupon howsoever God dealeth with them, they like it not, but require that they may be dealt otherwise with, and so it falleth out as it is in *Psalms xviii. With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure, and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward,* that is, with him that counteth all things pure to himself, and hath that good will in all things, whereof we have spoken, thou also doest well agree, as he pleaseth thee and all good men. But he that is froward, so that neither thou, nor those things that are thine like him, cannot but displease both thee and all good men. Of this well-pleasing one another *Paul* speaketh, *1 Cor. x. Endeavour to please all men, even as I please all.* By what means shall this be done? if

if thou take all things in good part, and suffer others to please thee, thou also shalt please others. The matter may be comprehended in one word: if thou wilt be liked of none, nothing shall be liked of thee: if thou wilt be liked of all, suffer that all things may be also liked of thee, but so, that thou do not neglect the word of the Lord. For that ought to be preferred before all, without any regard had of all men, what pleaseth them, or what displeaseth them. But whatsoever may be done without transgressing the word of God, give place to all, and submit thy judgment to the judgment of others, that thou mayest take every thing in good part, which shall chance unto thee, and so thou shalt have the good will, whereof the Angels sung. By this song may be understood, what nature the Angels have. I omit those things which the Philosophers have dreamed hereof; here is so described what the Angels are, that it cannot be more fully done, their heart and cogitations being declared. First with great joy they sing praises to God, acknowledging all things to be due unto him, and therefore with an ardent mind, sing and glorify him. As therefore thou wouldest think of a right lowly, pure, and obedient heart, praising God, and always enjoying perpetual gladness in him, so think also of the Angels; and thou hast now the nature of Angels, as much as they have to do with God. The second thing to be considered in them is their love towards us. Think that they are most loving towards us, which desire that it may go as well with us as with themselves, they do no less rejoice for our safety than for their own, and even in this hymn full of love towards us, they declare themselves so affected towards us, that surely, we may think and rejoice of them, as of most loving friends. This is to know the Angels truly, not according to their essence, whereof the Philosophers foolishly and without fruit spake many things, but according to their heart and mind, so that altho' I know not, what their nature is in itself, yet I know what is their chief desire, and their continual work. Thus much shall suffice at this time concerning the song of the Angels, and the fruit of the nativity of the child

Jesus Christ. God grant us his grace, that we may print these things in our heart, and according unto them also amend our life. *Amen.*

S E R M O N II.

On the Epiphany or appearing of Christ.

Mat. ii. verse 1. to the 11th. Now when Jesus was borne in Bethlehem of Judea, &c.

WE celebrate this day a noble, and most comfortable feast, concerning the appearing of the Lord Jesus, who appeared a special comfort to all them which seek him with a strong faith: First, to the wise men which came from the east: Secondly, to *John* the Baptist, when being about thirty years of age he was baptized of him in *Jordan*, and the holy Ghost and voice of the Father gave testimony of him, that he is the Son of God: Thirdly, when he shewed his glory and power in a miracle, wherein he turned water into wine at a marriage, whereby he would procure reverence and estimation to matrimony, which now, alas, is after a shameful sort torn, contemned, and rejected of the Pope and his adherents as a certain miserable and wretched state. For whatsoever God hath ordained, that of the world is contemned: whereof at convenient time we will speak more, and we have already as I think written sufficient thereof. Now we will speak in few words of the first appearance.

The wise men of *Arabia*, which were industrious men, and without all doubt governors of that country (as it was that time the manner in those parts) when they had seen the star in the East, breaking off all delay, made haste to *Jerusalem*, diligently seeking for the King of the *Jews* being new born. Where we ought to mark that they could neither seek nor find out this King, the Lord Christ, but by the star going before them, which

at the last led them so far, that by the word of God they were certified, where this King was to be found. So also is it with us: we cannot find Christ without the Gospel, without the word of God; that must shew him unto us; and bring us thither where we may find him; which is only done, when we receive the same Gospel by faith, otherwise, although we have it, hear it, and know it, it profiteth us nothing, we shall not therefore find him, no more than the Scribes found him, who notwithstanding they had the Scriptures readily, and shewed the way to others not coming into it themselves, for the thing did not touch their hearts; they did drowsily neglect that King, whom with great sighs they had looked for many ages. Wherefore it is not enough that we have the Gospel, or that we hear it, but we must believe it, and lay it up in the secrets of our heart, otherwise we shall never find Christ. Here also you see, that it doth not skill, whether one be learned or unlearned, instructed in many places of Scripture, or in few, unto whom God giveth grace, he enjoyeth Christ. He respecteth not the person, but whom he draweth he is drawn, although in the mean season he provideth that the Gospel be always preached. After therefore that these wise men had found the child Christ, the King of the *Jews* at *Bethlehem*, together with *Joseph* and *Mary*, by the shewing of the Scripture and guiding of the star, they were not offended at the poor estate of the Child, but being taught by the word, acknowledged that Child for the *Messias* and King of the *Jews*, whom the *Jews* had looked for so many years, and opened their treasures, before him, offering unto him gold, frankincense and myrrh. Wherein again we ought to mark the nature of faith, that is offended at nothing, but cleaveth to the word only, and not esteem those things that shine outwardly. These wise men did not therefore disdain, neither turn'd back, because the Child, together with his parents, were without pomp, in poverty and misery, and nothing less than a Kingly Child appeareth unto them, but they go on, and undoubtedly acknowledge him for a King, as they had learned concerning him out of the Scriptures. Moreover they give
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unto him the honour meet for a King, they offer most precious gifts, which they had brought, being even of the best sort, out of their own country. Now the world would have done no such thing, but according to the manner thereof, would have looked for garments of purple, and resort of servants, and handmaidens. In such places it is wont to bestow his gifts, to wit, where there is great plenty and abundance before: yet it is of that quality, that it depriveth the poor and afflicted of those things that they have, it taketh bread out of the mouth of the hungry and needy, which have nothing, but as they get it hardly, by labouring all that they are able. Whereof we learn, that if we will honour Christ with these wise men, we must shut our eyes, and turn them from all that which seemeth fair, goodly and noble before the world: neither must thou be offended or abhor it, if any thing seem vile, contemptible and ridiculous unto the world: let this suffice that thou knowest that it pleaseth God, which is in heaven. Take heed unto thyself concerning these things, which shine before the world, exercise thy self in those works, which seemeth unto reason foolish and light, as are, to help the needy, to comfort the afflicted, and to count the calamity of thy neighbour thine own. If thou shalt be diligently exercised in these, and faith being thy guide. shalt endeavour rightly to apply thyself, unto them, then other works which have a fair shew, as to institute masses, to be occupied in vigils, to build temples, and such like follies, shall be pluckt out of thy heart and vanish away, unto which works, almost the whole world is addicted; they are indeed fair in outward shew; and seem to be very precious, notwithstanding they are an abomination unto God. But whatsoever God hath commanded, as to do good to our neighbour, and to be touched with his adversities no less than with our own, to bear a friendly and willing mind toward him, these are neglected, and in the eyes of the world appear trifling and foolish; whereupon we greatly abhor them. How cometh this to pass? even because they have no goodly shew outwardly. And the common people of *Germany* are wont to say, That which shineth not, nor hath not a fair

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shew, is nothing set by. Moreover God doth sooner suffer himself to want his own honour and due service, than he would have us to leave off doing our duty toward our neighbour, as Christ witnesseth, *Mat. v. 23, 24.* *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembrest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Here ye most plainly both hear and see, that God will not be served, unless we first go to our neighbour, and be reconciled to him. For the same cause also God rejecteth the sacrifices of the *Jews*, as it is in the prophecy of *Isaiab*, chap. i. for that they neglected those things which were more necessary, namely, mercy and faith: for thus he saith: *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fcd beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto me, the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow, &c.* as is there rehearsed in *Isaiab*. By these words you see what God requireth, and what he alloweth. When we neglect those works, by which our neighbour is served, he will neglect us. For whatsoever benefit we bestow upon our neighbour, that we bestow upon God and Christ himself, as he shall pronounce in the last judgment; *Mat. xxv. 40.* *In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* When thou hearest this, thou wilt not glory much of the temples which thou hast built, or masses which thou

thou hast founded. For then he will say, what have I to do with thy temples and masses? what with thine altar and bells? thinkest thou that I am delighted with stones and wood, with bells and banners? are not all things mine first? heaven is my seat, and the earth is my footstool. Who commanded thee to build temples? I have set living temples before thee, these are to be edified, nourished and relieved, but thou hast been occupied with other trifles, which I have not commanded; I know thee not, away with thy temples and masses: ye ought to have put your trust in me only, but all your delight consisted in such works, as though it had been your purpose to wrest heaven from me, and that I may comprehend all in a brief sum: whatsoever I have commanded, that have you neglected; and whatsoever I have detested and abhorred, that you have diligently done; this therefore I will requite you with again. I know you not, you may resort unto that God which hath commanded you to do these things. Hence therefore let us learn, how the wise men did not abhor the poor and on every side miserable appearance of this infant and his parents, that we also may be so affected toward the miserable and pitiful estate of our neighbours, and may be persuaded that we find Christ in them, and that whatsoever is bestowed upon them, Christ doth acknowledge it as bestowed upon himself. His Kingdom consisteth in the poor, despised and abject, yea, in the holy cross, in contempt, in persecution, in affliction and misery, as *St. Paul* saith out of the *Psalms*: *Psalms* xlv. 22. *Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.* In another place also he saith, *1 Cor.* iv. 13. *We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things.* Wherefore Christ said to his Disciples, when he sent them forth to preach in *Judea*, *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves,* *Mat.* x. 16. They now that seek Christ any other than in such a contemptible form in the cross, and in persecution, do not find him. The wise men find the King Christ being newly born, not in *Herod's* court, not among the Princes and Priests, not at *Jerusalem*, in so noble and famous a city,

but at *Bethlehem* in a stable, with poor and despised creatures, namely *Joseph* and *Mary*. In sum Christ will there be found, where a man would least seek for him. We must diligently consider also, what these wise men signified by their gifts. For assuredly they shewed by them, that this child is a King, and not a King only, but also God, and man. In offering gold they acknowledged him for a King, as if they would say, we bring unto thee gold, not that we would thereby enrich thee. For gold, silver, and whatsoever is made is thine before, but hereby we acknowledge thee to be a most mighty King over all things. So we also offer gold unto Christ, when we acknowledge him for our King and Lord: but unto this is required a very strong faith. For if I ought to acknowledge him for my King and Lord, all mine own will must be extinguished, that it reign not in me: for Christ only must reign and rule in me, that he may do whatsoever it pleaseth him in me, and concerning me, all things must be committed unto him. So the leper in *Matthew* did, which said unto Christ: *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* Therefore my will must be utterly extinguished in me, if that I will have Christ to reign in me. Christ also suffered not his own will to rule, but he always submitted himself to the will of his Father, which he testifieth in the sixth Chapter of the Gospel of *St. John*, ver. 38. *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* Yea he obeyed his father even unto death, and submitted himself wholly to his will. We imitating this example, which is written for our singular consolation, ought to submit our will to God and his Christ, and to rest confidently upon him. He knoweth how to bring the matter to pass, as it is said, *Psal. xxxvii. 5. Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.* And a little after, *Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.* Such sentences ought to provoke us, patiently to suffer the will of God in us, whether sweet things or sour, commodities or discommodities come unto us: for he knoweth with what temperance to lay them upon us. Blessed is he that believeth these things from his heart:

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Who being such a one, can be troubled with sorrow? such a man howsoever he be handled, whether he be burned or drowned, cast into prison, or otherwise grievously dealt with, he taketh all in good part; for he knoweth that these things shall turn to his advantage. After this sort we also offer gold with the wise men, when we take away rule from our own will, and suffer Christ to work in us according to his will and pleasure. Wherefore they are hypocrites which know not to suffer the will of God, but howsoever he dealeth with them, have always complaints. They forsooth suppose, that whatsoever they think, it shall have success according to their thinking. If it fall out otherwise, they are angry, they do not patiently suffer persecution and contempt: they murmur, they find fault, and vex when those things happen, like horses stirred up with fury or rage. So therefore by resisting they stay the kingdom of Christ from them, and deprive Christ of gold, which notwithstanding they ought to offer and present unto him, that is, they themselves will bear rule, and do not vouchsafe to acknowledge Christ for their King and Lord. By frankincense they resembled divine honour, which we offer unto him, when we confess, that whatsoever we have, we must acknowledge to have come from God, and that we have it freely, and without any merit of ours: therefore all these things are to be ascribed unto him, as to the true Lord, neither must we glory in the good things received, but his glory is to be sought in them. And if he take them from us again, we ought to suffer him with quiet minds, and to bless him with the beloved *Job* in these words: *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord,* *Job* i. 21. And so we ought to suffer all misfortunes and adversities, as if God himself cast them upon our neck, so that none shall be able to offend us, unless he take away Christ from us. Not so much as a hair of our head shall perish, as Christ saith to his disciples, *Luke* xxi. Wherefore whatever shall molest us, what adversity soever shall come unto us, we ought never to seek any other God, we ought no where to seek any other help and comfort, than of Christ alone. This is he which

is made unto us of God the Father, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Then only we offer unto Christ that right frankincense of *Arabia*, when we fly unto him alone in our calamities, afflictions, and anguishes. But they that seek after strange helps and comforts, as of forcerers, witches, and such like, they do not offer frankincense unto Christ, but stinking brimstone, wherein they shall be burned for ever, for that they have not believed and trusted in Christ. By myrrh they signified a mortal man: for with myrrh dead bodies were anointed, that for certain years they should not putrify. Now myrrh is a strong and bitter juice, which distilleth from the trees of *Arabia*, like unto gum, or as with us rosin issueth out of the pine tree, and fir tree, &c. But then we offer myrrh unto Christ, when we firmly believe that he by his death hath overcome sin, Satan, and hell. And this is a special faith. If we but a little doubt here, it is not well with us. But if I believe from my heart, that death, sin, the devil, and hell are swallowed up in and by the death of Christ, I shall not be afraid of them all. I shall easily be preserved from rottenness which death bringeth, when I have myrrh, that is, the death of my Lord Christ in my body and soul, this will not suffer me to perish. So strong and valiant a thing is faith, unto which even all things are possible, as Christ saith, *Mark ix.* Here must we learn daily with our Lord Christ to bring under our old *Adam*, and to mortify his concupiscences, by the cross and temptations, not that cross which we choose, but which Christ layeth on us, let us bear it patiently and with a willing mind, that so our body may be subdued, and made subject to the spirit, that being so buried with Christ through baptism, we may be raised up again with him, and he alone may reign and live in us. Hereunto fighting is required, which the Holy Ghost maketh in us for our sake, as *S. Paul* saith, *Rom. 8.* that Christ will help us, to keep under this unruly and obstinate flesh, that it presume not too licentiously, and thrust the noble soul into the mire. This our baptism doth signifie, to wit, that old and stinking *Adam* be mortified and buried, which we ought al-

ways to revolve in our mind, seeing that as long as we live here, sin doth remain in us. Wherefore always something must be repaired in us without all intermission, through the cogitation of baptism, as it were in a house decayed through coldness even until such time as we depart this life. Whereof St. Paul treateth in very good words, *Rom. vi. 3.* which are diligently to be marked of us, he saith thus: *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death: we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead, is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Thus much concerning the first appearance. Now we will speak somewhat of the second, that is of the baptism of Christ. In the baptism of Christ three things are to be considered: The first, that the heavens were opened, when he was baptized. The second, that the Holy Ghost was seen in the likeness of a Dove. The third, that the voice of the Father was heard, which said: *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.* As Christ vouchsafed to be baptized with water, he hath hallowed baptism, and made the water thereof holy, that he which is baptized in his name, might become likewise holy and clean from sin, and might have the heavens open. Now Christ was not baptized for himself, for he was not infected with the spot of any sin, as St. Peter saith, *1 Peter ii.* He behaved himself like unto a good Physician, which before the sick doth first drink some bitter potion, that the sick may more gladly and boldly do the same afterward.

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For we in baptism drink a bitter potion, namely, the mortification of the old *Adam*, which with the bitterness thereof doth greatly trouble us. For that dipping into the water or sprinkling with it doth signifie nothing else, but that that old *Adam* should perish and die. This is greatly furthered by the cross, which God according to his divine will layeth upon us, which we ought not to cast from us, but bear it willingly and with a patient mind. But that this might be easier for us to do, even Christ hath taken it upon himself, he suffered himself to be baptized, and took his cross and carried it not resisting or gainsaying, and so was obedient to his Father unto the death, even the death of the cross, as *Paul* saith, *Phil. ii.* that he might deliver us from sin, and might again appease his heavenly Father, which he did of his meer grace without any desert of ours: whereof we have baptism a sign and pledge, as *Paul* saith unto *Titus*: *But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* Secondly, the Holy Ghost appeared here in the likeness of a dove, when Christ is baptized, whereby is signified that we also receive the Holy Ghost in our baptism, which ruleth and guideth us according to the will of God, which is present with us and helpeth us in bearing the burthen of the holy cross, which exhorteth us, is instant upon us, enforceth us, and when we yield to the burthen of the cross, is present and helpeth us; if we fall, raiseth us up again, and is with us as a certain faithful companion in our journey. He also maketh the burthen of the cross light, which we were very unable to bear; if he did not put his help. If so be that thou fall into sin, remember to go back unto thy baptism, for this is the only ship, wherein we pass over. Wherefore take heed of them which make two tables, whereby we pass over the sea of sin, namely baptism and repentance, believe them not, whatsoever they handle, it is meer delusion &

baptism

baptism is the beginning of repentance. As often therefore as thou fallest into sin, have recourse unto thy baptism, there thou shalt again obtain the Holy Ghost, who may be present with thee: For repentance is nothing else, but a displeasing of himself, a detesting of his wicked life, and renewing of the man, which is represented in baptism. After such a renewing of the life, followeth the praise of God and thanksgiving unto him for the grace received, then such a man bursts forth, and behaveth himself friendly towards his neighbour, and doth good to him in all things. This is signified by the Holy Ghost appearing upon Christ in the likeness of a dove: for a dove wanteth the gall. Such they also become, which receive the Holy Ghost in baptism, to wit, they are gentle and without all bitterness towards all. Thirdly, the voice of the Father is heard in the baptism of Christ: which saith: *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* This is that Saviour, which delivereth us from the tyranny of sin, death, satan and hell. Hence we learn, how we must come unto God. He that desireth to be the gracious and dear child of God the Father, must attain unto this through Christ, through him alone the beloved son, who sitteth in the bosom of his Father: unto whom alone the Father looketh, without whom he alloweth nothing, and whatsoever pleaseth the Father, it pleaseth him in respect of this his Son. Therefore he that desireth to go to the Father, must cleave to this beloved Son, must lay himself upon his back. For by this voice all titles albeit they seem very goodly and holy, are taken away, nothing is of value or estimation with the Father but only this his beloved Son, he is in his special favour. Now he that desireth to be in favour with the Father, and to be beloved of him, let him flie into the bosom of the Son, by whom he findeth access to the Father, as St. *Paul* saith, *Ephes. 1.* that through Christ we are adopted, without this Christ we are the enemies of God. Whosoever therefore cleaveth to Christ through faith, he abideth in the favour of God, he also shall be made beloved and acceptable, as Christ is, and shall have fellowship with the Father and the Son. But where this is not done,
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there is nothing but wrath, there is no honesty, no virtue, no free will, neither prayer, nor fasting, nor other works shall profit, thou shalt but trifle with all these. For this is a most mighty and most excellent voice: This is my beloved Son, in whom all things consist and are comprehended, which are extant in the whole Scripture. Even as all things are delivered into the hands of Christ, and gathered into one, that they may obey him, as *St. Paul* saith: for when God saith, *This is my beloved Son*, by shewing Christ only, and shewing and naming no other, he maketh it plain enough, that none is his beloved Son beside him. If so be that other are not beloved Sons, it is certain that they are the children of wrath and indignation. For if there were more beloved sons, He would not so set forth and shew this Son alone, saying: *This is my beloved Son*, neither would turn his eyes unto him only, and glory of him alone, as though he knew no other. For the words seem to shew, that he diligently look'd about, and yet found none, beside him, of whom saith: this is he, as if he said: here at the last I have found such a one as pleaseth me, and is my beloved Son, all other generally are not such. Moreover, these words are not so only to be understood, that it is shewed by them that Christ is very God, as the epistle to the *Hebrews* saith: *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? &c.* For it is most certain that Christ in these words is declared to be the true and natural Son of God, seeing that this word was never said to any creature. Howbeit he had been as well the Son of God, and had so remained for ever, as he hath been from everlasting, although this had not been spoken unto us from heaven, neither is any thing added or taken away from him by this name, but we must thus think and perswade ourselves, that so excellent a praise, and so noble honour of Christ was spoken for our cause. For he himself witnesseth in *Jahn*, xii. 30. *This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.* He hath no need that it should be said unto him, that he is the Son of God. He knew this before,
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and hath from everlasting and by his nature, that which he heareth. Wherefore when that is conceived by voice and word, it pertaineth to us, and not unto Christ. Christ without the word, is such as he is said to be. We have the word without him, of whom it is spoken. Wherefore we must lay fast hold upon the word without the essence, even as he hath the essence without the word. But what doth this word? it teacheth us to know Christ, in which knowledge our salvation consisteth, as *Isaiah*, *Paul* and *Peter* witness. But how doth it teach us to know him? so, that he is the Son of God, and doth especially please God his Father, by which words God cheereth the hearts of all the faithful, and greatly delighteth them with meer comfort, and heavenly sweetness. How is this done? When I know, and am sure, that this man Christ is the Son of God, and doth in all things please the Father, whereof I must be most fully persuaded: forasmuch as the divine Majesty confirmed this by his voice from heaven, which cannot lie, whereby I am certain, that whatsoever that man doth speak and work, they are the meer words and works of the beloved Son, which are above measure approved of God. This therefore I singularly well mark, and lay up in the bottom of my heart. When I hear Christ speak, or see him do any thing, and that for my advantage, which surely he every where doth, (for he saith, that he doth, and suffereth all things for us, that he came to serve and not that he should be served) then I remember these words of the Father, that he is the beloved Son, then I am enforced to think, that all that Christ speaketh, doth and suffereth, and that for my sake, doth singularly well please God. Now how can God pour out himself more liberally, or shew himself more lovingly and sweetly than by saying, that it doth please him from the heart, that Christ his Son doth speak so gently with me, doth with so great affection look unto my advantage, and with such unusual love suffer, die and do whatsoever for my sake. Dost thou doubt, that if man's heart did with due sense feel such favour of God in Christ, to wit, that he doth so much for our sakes, it would not for joy burst into pieces? for then it would look into the depth of the di-

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vine breast, yea, and into the exceeding and eternal goodness and love of God, which he beareth towards us, and hath born towards us from everlasting. But we are too hard-hearted and cold, the flesh doth lie more heavy upon us, than that we are able to comprehend such words, we do not well consider them with ourselves, neither doth our heart come near to feel what marvellous and unspeakable love and joy they contain in them, otherwise without doubt we should perceive, that heaven and earth are full of the fire of the divine love, of life and righteousness, full of honour and praise, whereunto the fire of hell, sin and death being compared, are nothing but as it were a thing painted or pictured. But we are cold, sluggish, and unthankful wretches, for we pass over such precious words, as things of no importance, and as uttered of man, as being contained in a book, or written in paper, as things utterly decayed, and now long since grown out of use by long custom, as though they pertain only to Christ, and to us. And being dull and senseless, we do not see that they belong not to Christ, but were committed to writing and are extant only for our sake. Seeing therefore that Christ the beloved Son being in so great favour with God in all things that he doth, is thine, and doth in the same, serve thee, as he himself witnesseth, without doubt thou art in the same favour and love of God that Christ himself is in. And again, the favour and love of God are insinuated to thee as deeply, as to Christ, that now God together with his beloved Son doth wholly possess thee, and thou hast him again wholly, that so God, Christ, and thou dost become as one certain thing. Hereunto make many sentences of the gospel, but especially in *John*, as this: *If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him, John xiv. 23.* Also, *And where I am, there shall also my servant be, John xii. 26.* Again, *That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee; That they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me, John xvii. 21.* But where is Christ? In the favour of God, in the depth of his heart, there also are we, if so be that we know and

love Christ, there I think we are safe enough, there our refuge is placed high enough, whither no evil can come, as it is in the xci. Psalm. But thou see'st that faith is required, and that unto these things no law, no work, no merit doth prevail. Hence it cometh to pass, that so precious words are so abstruse and unknown unto reason. For it hath been governed by Satan from the creation of the world, when as in paradise it would be as God, and presumed after honour, which God here attributeth to Christ alone, as he is his Son, whereunto it is yet also prone and inclined, and setteth itself against these words, and the words again are against it. For because Christ is here declared the only Son of God, it is mightily overthrown, whatsoever maketh itself God. But who be they that make themselves God? surely Satan and man, which please themselves, and love themselves, they seek not after God, but strive to attain unto this, that they also may become Gods. But what will God say unto these: Truly a certain contrary thing, to that which he said unto Christ. Christ is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, seeing that he glorifieth not himself, and maketh not himself God although he is God. But ye are wretches, in whom I allow nothing, seeing that ye glorify yourselves, and make yourselves Gods, although ye are creatures and men, and not God. So this sentence given of Christ doth humble the whole world, doth shew them to be all void of divinity, and ascribeth it to Christ, and that all for our use, if we will admit this sentence: or to our condemnation, if we will not; so that I may say at once, without Christ there is no favour, nor any beloved son, but very wrath and sore displeasure of God.

Certain sentences out of the scripture, concerning Christ, wherein is declared, that through him we are loved of the Father, and without him are refused.

John i. 16, 17. *Of his fulness, (to wit, Christ's) have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*
 John iii. 13. *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which*

is in heaven. John iii. 16, 17, 18. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John iii. 35, 36. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John vi. 40. This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. John vii. 37, 38. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Titus iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Many other such sentences there be, especially out of the epistles of Paul, which every one may gather by himself.

S E R M O N III.

On the Genealogy, or Pedigree of Christ.

Mat. i. ver. 1. to the 16. *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, &c.*

1. **M** *Attherw* beginneth his book with a title or inscription, by which the believer is provoked with greater pleasure to hear and read it. For he saith thus much in effect: Whom the law and prophets have hitherto promised and preached, Jesus, that is, a Saviour, and Christ, that is an eternal king; that he, according to the promise of God, should spring and come of the seed of *Abraham* and *David*, even him do I describe in this book, to wit, that he is now born, and made man, and already come into the world. This I handle through this whole book. 2. Three lines or degrees are here rehearsed. In the first is contained the stock of the fathers, in the second of the kings, in the third is contained the decaying stock of *David*; after the decay whereof, it behoved that Christ should come. For so the goodness of God is wont to do, when all things seem even past hope and recovery, then at the last he cometh. 3. *Matthew* omitteth one in his rehearsal, but that maketh no matter, seeing that he observeth this one thing, that he counteth by the right line from *David*, by *Salomon*, to *Joseph* the husband of *Mary*. *Luke* counteth otherwise, and useth another order.

When *Adam* our first father, having fallen by a great offence, was guilty of death, with all his children, as well in body as in soul, it was notwithstanding promised unto him, although obscurely, that both he and his posterity should be delivered, in those words, which God spake to the serpent, *Gen. iii. 15. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head.* Of these words *Adam* took

comfort, that a woman should come, by whose fruit such guile and subtilty of the serpent should be amended, and *Adam* redeemed : This comfort upheld *Adam*, with his posterity, until *Noah* ; for then the promise was renewed, when God made a covenant with the sons of *Noah*, and set the rainbow for a sign of the covenant, whereby men might conceive a trust and confidence, that God is yet favourable unto them, and doth not purpose their destruction ; whereby mankind was again upheld and comforted, even until *Abraham*.

In the time of *Abraham* God did somewhat shew forth his mercy, he declared that he would send a Saviour, who should deliver us again from death, both of body and soul ; for altho' the body should die, yet it should not always remain in death, but rise again with the Lord Christ : The words which God spake to *Abraham*, *Gen. xxii.* are thus, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* Here miserable men had a cause to hope and look for a Saviour, which should deliver them. From that time all the prophets did diversly foretel of this above measure flowing fountain of all mercy, that is, of this seed, of the Lord Christ, how that he at the last should come, that all which believed in him, might obtain salvation by that promise which cannot be revoked. If men would now open their eyes, they must needs confess and say, that a strange and incredible thing is done with us ; that man being in the state of damnation, cursed, and desperate, should be restored by the nativity of one man. Hereupon the prophets cried out with ardent prayers and unspeakable groaning, that God would vouchsafe to send the Saviour whom he had promised. By faith in this Saviour the *Israelites* afterward obtained the law, and this honour before all people, that they were called the elect people of God. By which ordinances, written of *Moses*, the anointed was plainly figured and signified, whom this text which we have now in hand, setteth forth ; what he is, from whence he is, and by faith all obtained salvation, from *Abraham* unto *David*, even as many as were saved. In the time of *David* God made the coming of the *Messias* to be more manifestly declared, that it might be certainly

tainly known of what stock he should come, namely, of the stock of *David*, as when God said unto *David*, 2 Sam. vii. 12. *When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.* And yet more plainly in the *Psal.* cxxxii. 11: *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.* Here Christ is described, that he shall be a king, and an eternal king, as it is mentioned of him in another Psalm; *Psal.* xlv. 6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.* Howbeit he is a spiritual king, which ruleth the world by his word; and whosoever receiveth his word, pertaineth to his kingdom; but he that is not under this sceptre, neither heareth his word, is not of God, neither pertaineth to his kingdom, but is subject to the kingdom of Satan, under whose tyranny we all are, until the Lord doth deliver us from it, and defend us with his sceptre, which is then done when we believe in him. Forasmuch therefore as our salvation doth come meerly by the promise of God, let every one assuredly perswade himself, that he shall never obtain salvation without this promise; although he should do the works of all saints, yet they should profit him nothing hereunto. On the contrary, if we lay hold on the sceptre of this king, that is, of the promise of God, we shall not perish, although the sins of the whole world should lie upon us; they shall be all swallowed up in him, notwithstanding no good work be done of us; as we see in the thief which hung by the Lord on the cross, who laid hold on the word of God, and believed in Christ, and therefore he obtained the promised paradise. Here is no doubt left, let us only believe that it is so, and it is so indeed; all things which men teach, or which we have done or can do, being set aside. Here all things must give place, at the coming of this new King, that he alone may rule and reign in us. Let a man intermeddle with those things

that are written of this King, as being his own matters and as pertaining all unto him ; for whatsoever is written any where of Christ, it is written for our comfort, that we may thereby feed and cherish our faith. To the establishing such faith, God hath mercifully left unto us his promise written, and hath suffered to be published, that he will perform that which he hath promised. Whosoever apprehendeth this in his heart, it must needs be that with sighing he thirst for such scripture and promise of God, who of his grace being not provoked of us, offereth unto us, and bestoweth upon us such goodness and mercy. But let us now come to our present text, which not with words only, but also with a certain force pierceth the heart, and poureth into it love, pleasure, joy, gladness, &c. as if an Angel should now come from heaven, and say unto us miserable and condemned wretches, after this manner ; Behold, O man, thou hast sinned, wherefore thou hast deserved to be condemned for ever ; (this being heard, the heart must needs tremble.) Now although all this be true, yet nevertheless God of his grace hath mercy upon thee, and sendeth to thee a Saviour, as he promised to *Abraham* and his seed ; be of good cheer, and give thanks to God, lo ! here is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, who is the son of *David*, the son of *Abraham*, so that this is not only done, but also written, that thou mayest be certain thereof ; neither will he, neither can he deceive, believe only, and thou shalt have all things. Now it is to be noted, that *Matthew* setteth *David* before *Abraham*, although the promise was first made to *Abraham*, and came afterward to *David* ; which promise made to *David*, the prophets afterward published more abroad, and did by it comfort the people, as in the 11th chapter of *Esaiab*, where the prophet saith thus ; *There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.* *Jeremiab* likewise saith thus, chap. xxiii. *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.* And many other such prophecies there are to be found in the writings of the prophets, which foretold

of *David*, that his kingdom should be raised up; as the Angel also declared unto *Mary*, when he said, *Luke* i. 32. *The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* Wherefore *Matthew* thought good here to set *David* first, as the better known, and next unto him, *Abraham*, unto whom the promise was first made, as *Mary* in her song saith, *Luke* i. 54. *He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.* And that promise is now performed, and in this our text described, as we shall see hereafter. *S. Matthew* maketh a triple difference of fathers, of whom *Christ* came, fourteen patriarchs, fourteen kings, and fourteen princes. For it behoved that the sceptre and kingdom should be taken from *Judah*, according to the prophesy of *Jacob*, which is thus, *Gen.* xlix. 10. *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* Here all things must be fulfilled; and there are thrice fourteen generations, even as *Matthew* rehearsed them: From *Abraham* to *David* fourteen generations, from *David* till they were carried away into *Babylon*, likewise fourteen generations. However, there is a person omitted in *Matthew*, that is, *Jakim*; and it ought thus to be written: *Josias* begat *Jakim*, and *Jakim* begat *Jeconias* and his brethren; this the *Chronicles* witness. And after they were carried away into *Babylon*, until *Christ*, fourteen generations. Which triple distinction hath a great mystery, as we shall see. The *Jews*, among other laws, were commanded to observe these three precepts, namely, to worship that God whom their fathers had worshipped; secondly, to chuse no priest of any other stock than of their own, that is, of the tribe of *Levi*; thirdly, to chuse no king but of their own people. These three precepts did very well agree in our Lord *Christ*, to wit, that he is that one God, that he is an eternal Priest, of our flesh and blood, and a King, our brother, who hath taken our nature upon him; who by his divine power is able to help and save us, and being

being an eternal Priest, continually maketh intercession for us ; he is a King also, that he may defend and preserve us, who is not to be feared of us, since he is a man as we are, yea, and was made a most contemptible man, that our heart might be wholly quieted and appeased in him our Saviour, who can never forsake us. Who were able to stand in the sight of God, and not be terrified, if that Priest did not stand before God ? Who should defend us, if he were not a King ? Who should save us, if he were not God ? How should he have care of us, if he were not a man, and our brother ? with whom we may speak, as well as we speak one with another among ourselves. O most gracious Saviour, how wisely hast thou done all things ? I know that thou art my brother, as it is in *Psal.* xxii. 22. *I will declare thy Name unto my brethren*, as it is alledged in the epistle to the *Heb.* altho' thou art God, my Lord Christ, and King of heaven and earth, yet I cannot be afraid of thee, for thou art my friend and brother ; this is no hindrance unto me, that I am a sinner, and thou holy ; for if I had not been a sinner, there had been no need that thou shouldest suffer punishment for me. I see also in thy genealogy, that both good and evil are rehearsed, of whose posterity thou wouldest come, that thou mightest comfort timorous and weak consciences ; that they should confidently and cheerfully put their trust in thee, which hast taken away our sin ; and that we might be certain hereof, thou hast left us thy word, which assuredly declareth it unto us. Among the kings and princes which *Matthew* rehearseth, some were exceeding evil, as we may read in the books of the *Kings* ; yet God suffereth them to be mentioned in his genealogy, as if they were worthy, that he should come to them ; but he suffered not so much as one honest woman to be named therein. Four women are named, which all had an evil report, and were counted lewd ; as *Tamar*, *Gen.* xxxviii. of whom *Judah*, the father of her husband, begat *Pharez* and *Zarah*, as in the first book of *Moses* it is mentioned. *Rahab* is called an harlot, in the book of *Joshua*. *Ruth* was an heathen woman, of whom although we read no evil,

Jos. ii. 1. yet forasmuch as she was a heathen, she was despised of the *Jews* as a dog, and was detested of them. *Bathsheba*, the wife of *Uriah*, was an adulteress before she was married to *David*, and of her he begat *Solomon*. Which women are undoubtedly thereof rehearsed, that we may see how God hath set forth, as it were a certain glass unto all sinners, wherein they may see, that he would be born of the posterity of sinners, that the greater sinners we be, so much more certain and greater refuge we might have to so gracious a God, Priest and King, who is our brother; in whom only, and in none other, we are able to fulfil the law, and obtain the grace of God: He came down from heaven therefore, neither doth he require any thing of us, but that we assuredly believe that he is our God, Priest and King, and then all things shall be well with us; by him alone we become the sons of God, and heirs of the heavenly kingdom, as *S. Paul* saith to the *Galatians*, *Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, Gal. iii. 26. Here the hearts of all sinners may leap for joy, that they are counted worthy of such a Saviour. Must not he needs be regenerate, whose heart understandeth and feeleth this? Yea, he is carried with a most ardent love to lead a new life, for he is inspired with the grace of God, inasmuch as he layeth hold of the promise of remission of all his sins.

If we will count upon our fingers the persons named in this text, we shall find them to be forty two, which were in time past figured by the two and forty mansion places, which the children of *Israel* had, before they came into the promised land, as it is written in the fourth book of *Moses*; if we also will come into the promised land, which our Lord *Jesus Christ* hath prepared for us by his nativity, we must also occupy two and forty mansion places, that is, we must cease from our own purpose, and be regenerate man by man, until we come to *Mary* and *Jesus*; there at the last we shall find rest unto our souls. But this nativity is hard, for our evil and corrupt nature is very loth to leave her own will and purpose; and again, the case of nature is such, that no nativity can be without grief, yet one hath more grief, temptation

temptation and affliction, than another. The thief on the cross leapt at one leap two and forty degrees, and came suddenly to Christ; so did many martyrs also, and other holy men. Notwithstanding, none can go so great a journey with small grief, unless he be carried with a great wind, that is, by the Holy Ghost. We must go fair and softly from *Abraham* to *Isaac*, from *Isaac* to *Jacob*, and so forth. But we must begin at *Abraham*, that we may be found endued with like faith as he was, and obtain the blessing promised unto him; then we shall more easily and cheerfully go from one patriarch to another. That is, we shall pass over one affliction after another, until we be called out of this travel and journey unto our rest; for a man must be so long exercised with afflictions, and so oft renounce his own will, until at the last he be brought under, and his flesh by this means be subdued, that it may obey the spirit, and walk joyfully in the will and obedience of God. Wherefore let no man purpose with himself, to come unto heaven by leading a quiet life, and following pleasure; thus Christ saith in *Luke*, *It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*, *Luke xviii. 25.* And in the *Acts* of the Apostles, *Paul* teacheth, *That we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*, *Acts xiv. 22.* Again, in *Luke*, *Abraham* said to the rich glutton, *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented*, *Luke xvi. 25.* So it behoved Christ also to suffer, and by the cross to enter into his glory. And *St. Paul* saith, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*, *2 Tim. iii. 12.* Hence we may learn, that all is poison which is according to the lust of the flesh; wherefore *Paul* saith to the *Romans*, *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*, *Rom. viii. 13.* The Spirit which is of God, is ready to suffer, but the flesh resisteth; this Jesus signified by his answer unto *Peter*, when he shewed unto his disciples, *That he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed.*

illed. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men, Mat. xvi. 21. Here it is manifest, that the reason of man doth flatly strive against the will of God ; God will have us enter into glory by the cross and persecution, but the flesh resisteth, and is troubled in affliction. Moreover, they that are endued with the Spirit of God, rejoice, if they be afflicted for God's sake, as it is written of the apostles ; *They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, Acts v. 41.* Wherefore James saith in his epistle, James i. 2. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* O how necessary is patience for a Christian man ? that *In your patience ye may possess your souls,* as Christ saith in *Luke xxi. 19.* otherwise we shall lose them. Wherefore we must enter into a new kind of life ; and if, at any time, calamity cometh, we must not burst forth into evil speeches, and take it impatiently, but we must always lift up our heart to God, and bear his will with a patient mind ; he will deliver us in his time, when it seemeth good to him, and we must always think, that he beareth a fatherly affection toward us, even when he sendeth persecutions, anguishes, afflictions, and adversities, as the epistle to the *Hebrews* saith, *Heb. xii. 5.* *Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you, as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons : for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.* God give us his divine grace, that we may courageously pass these two and forty degrees, and with the Lord Christ be regenerate into a new life. Amen.

S E R M O N IV.

On the Hymn of Zacharias.

Luke i. ver. 68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

THAT godly man *Zacharias* speaketh here of things as already done, when he saith, *he hath visited and redeemed his people, &c.* For he was certain of them; now the child *John* was come, being about to begin to preach of our redemption, as the Angel had foretold of him, that he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of *Elias*, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the Children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just men, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord: this promise he knew should assuredly come to pass. Wherein this redemption consisteth, I think it is already sufficiently known unto you, namely in this, that God visiteth and delivereth us. Which visitation and deliverance is accomplished neither by sword nor violence, but by the word alone, wherein consisteth more, than in the blood and death on the cross. For because of the word Christ shed his blood on the cross. It was the word that *John* preached, when he shewed the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, that is, when he declared our visitation and redemption, which Christ purchased with his blood. This *John* was the first messenger which preached the gospel to us, to whom the gospel was not before preached, it is, as if *John* himself did now preach it, for now is first set forth unto us redemption, sweet consolation, deliverance from sin, death, hell, and all evil. To visit is to come unto us, to bring and declare unto us the word of salvation, by which we are saved. *Zacharias* conceived so great joy and pleasure in his heart, that he could not contain himself, but he must needs burst forth into those words

in this hymn, not only because of the infant newly born, although even this brought great joy unto him, but also for that by the birth of this child he beholdeth a far greater joy, forasmuch as he was a messenger sent of God to preach his word to the world. He rejoiceth therefore because of such a word which he should hear, and for that he should be as it were altered from an old man to a young man, and should become the scholar of an infant now lying in the cradle, whom he confesseth to be a prophet better learned than himself. Manifest natural joy is here, for that that infant was born after a marvellous manner. Moreover here is joy of the Spirit, in as much as that infant should become a preacher of the word of God. And I am of that mind that I think there was never any father, which conceived so great joy of his child, as this *Zacharias* did of his son, being so wonderfully born by the power of God, and for that, especially in the time of old age, when he was now near unto death, he is made a father of so great a Saint, which should be a master and teacher of the world. It is a delight and pleasure unto us, if we beget a child that is sound, fair, and well proportioned in body, that I may say nothing, what joy it would bring, if our child should be an Apostle and preacher of the word of God to the world. Whatever ignominy therefore and contempt he suffered before, when he was barren together with his wife *Elizabeth*, he is now most abundantly recompensed with plentiful honour and joy, such great blessings doth God bestow, if we patiently abide his leisure. For if he at any time come, he cometh very rich and plentiful in gifts, and giveth much more than we ever either wished or hoped for.

Ver. 69. *And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of his servant David.* These words are not spoken of *John*, for that he is not a horn raised up in the house of *David*, for he was born of the tribe of *Levi*; but Christ our Lord is of the house, and of the royal stock and blood of *David*. Wherefore *Zacharias* doth not sing here, in the house of *Levi*, but that in the house of *David* an horn is raised and lifted up; and when Christ was not yet born, he nevertheless singeth so,

as if he were born, neither was the horn of salvation yet come; notwithstanding he knew by the revelation of the spirit, that it should forthwith come. An horn, among the *Hebrews* signifieth power, confidence, dominion, and that whatsoever, wherein any man may trust, as we read, *Daniel*, c. vii. where the Prophet first seeth kingdoms, then he beholdeth beasts, some having one horn, some two horns. And he afterward interpreting himself, expoundeth them for kingdoms and kings; and this is a phrase, and manner of speaking peculiar to this language. Now *Zacharias* signifieth that Christ is our head, yea our God, whose kingdom is his horn, thus you have what a horn signifieth among the *Hebrews*. He addeth, the horn of salvation or blessedness, some kingdoms are famous in name and power, others are large, abounding with plenty of great treasures, much people, honours, and all temporal things; but this is called a kingdom of salvation, grace, life, righteousness, truth, and of every thing that pertaineth to salvation, whereby it differeth from all other kingdoms. For altho' they be large, rich or mighty, yet are they counted the kingdoms of death, for they that govern them must at the last fall, die, perish, and leave their power and riches behind them. Nor was there ever any worldly kingdom, which might be called a kingdom of life, wherein is life, peace, and salvation; for only the kingdom of Christ doth glory, and triumph in this title, as God hath raised it up, that there may be nothing in it but salvation and felicity. I find nothing here spoken of manners and trades of life, or of works; For this kingdom consisteth neither in outward life nor works, but in the horn, in Christ and his gospel; this kingdom is ours, whereof ye have heard, that it is a kingdom of grace, life, righteousness, salvation and mercy: so that whosoever is in it, although he be inferior to *John* in holiness, and far unlike Christ in perfection, yet he liveth in a kingdom, wherein is nothing but salvation, and blessedness, whereof also it hath and reserveth the name; you see what difference there is betwixt other kingdoms, and the kingdom of salvation, which God hath raised up. It is said moreover, that this kingdom is raised up, in
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the house of *David*: but by what means was it raised up? even by the holy Ghost, and by his word, he saith in the house of *David*, for it must be a kingdom in the earth, and yet a kingdom of salvation: now confer these two one with another, the house of *David* is the tribe and stock of *David* who was a man, as the subjects of this kingdom. So that thou canst not say, that he doth here make mention of an heavenly kingdom among the Angels, when as he doth nothing less; but he speaketh of a certain kingdom which is among men, which live, cloathed with flesh. *David* was a man, the subjects of his kingdom were also men subject to death. For as the scripture witnesseth, *Man that is born of a woman, liveth but a small time*, he cannot pass the bounds appointed him: how is it then, that honour and dishonour come together in this kingdom? what agreement and consent appeareth here, where mortal men are delivered from the power of death; where they that are worthy of death, enjoy life, the unhappy are happy, and they that are subjects to Satan, become the sons of God? the reason hereof, I hope you are sufficiently instructed in, yea, I think that you understand it, as well as myself. But because the text requireth it, it must be often repeated; we have affirmed that a Christian which liveth in this kingdom, shall never die, forasmuch as he cannot die, for Christ had therefore suffered death, that he might therefore overcome death, and deliver us from it. He took our sins also upon himself, that we might not need to bear them. Moreover he subdued, and overthrew Satan, that we might not be subject unto him. Wherefore it is given to a Christian, that he can never die, he can never be subject to sin and the devil, for that must needs be true which he saith, that he hath raised up a horn of blessedness or salvation. And in whatsoever place that horn shall be, there is no access, neither of death, neither for sin, nor the devil, and that in the house of *David*. Wherefore a Christian, is both defiled, and yet without sin, and free from Satan. How cometh this to pass? after this manner: Your brotherly charity, hath oftentimes heard heretofore, that God leaveth in us an appearance and feeling of death and the

devil. So that my sin disquieteth me, and troubleth my conscience, and would drive me into despair. Moreover the judgment of God terrifieth me, death assaileth me, as if it would devour me. Satan is at hand and seeketh to suppress me, God suffereth these to remain, and taketh them not quite away. For this appearance must continue, that we may perceive and feel that we are nothing of ourselves but sinners, subject to sin and Satan. And yet under this appearance lyeth hid, life, innocency, dominion and victory over sin, Satan, hell, &c. as Christ himself saith, *Mat. xvi. 18. Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*; he saith not, they shall not assail it, nor fight against it, for these two remain to sin and death. Now it is also expedient that I feel the biting of sin, the terror of the wrath of God, the horror of death, yea, and death itself. But all this is certain outward appearance before my sight and the sight of the world, which know and judge no otherwise, but that sin, death and Satan are present. Notwithstanding in the mean time, under that assault and terror the word and spirit are encouraging, preserving, and assuring me, that God is not angry with me, that my sin is forgiven me, that I shall never die, nor be forsaken: upon this foundation and hope my heart doth wholly rest. And no man having such a confidence in God, remaineth under sin, neither is drowned in death, but is made a conqueror of sin and death. This is, not to prevail or overcome, for that altho' Satan attempteth, yet he doth not get the victory. We call the house of *David*, a mortal house, sinful, and subject to the devil, according to the manner of all flesh and blood, and yet notwithstanding the horn of salvation is raised up in the same, that men of that kingdom may enjoy salvation and felicity. Hence ye see that this kingdom is the kingdom of faith, which cannot be touched nor outwardly perceived of any, which one cannot shew to another, but every one must have it in himself, that when he shall draw near unto death, shall feel sin, or even see death before him, he may then in faith, lay hold on this kingdom, and believe that his sins are forgiven him. For Christ there-

fore died, that thou mightest be in this kingdom of faith. Therefore sin shall encounter with thee in vain, death is taken away, Christ is with thee, who can hurt thee, who can do any evil unto thee? Here life and death, sin and innocency, Christ and Satan, fight one with another; but Christ, life and innocency, do overcome and conquer. This is soon spoken, but not so easily felt, yea, the contrary surely is rather felt; therefore if thou wilt esteem, and consider this kingdom according to the judgment of the world, thou shalt utterly err and be deceived. The world calleth that a good and peaceable kingdom, where all things are quiet, prosperous, and go well forward, where is safety, peace and innocency, outwardly. But here is the kingdom of salvation and grace, although it always appear otherwise; wherefore all these things are to be understood in spirit and faith, and not to be judged according to the person or outward appearance. Neither ought it to seem strange that this kingdom doth flourish in the midst of sins, the force of Satan and death, whereof *Zacharias* here singeth even from the bottom of his heart, and knoweth well how it cometh to pass, faith and the spirit revealing it. Concerning sin, I have seen or known none in whom it is not; whomsoever thou settest before thee, sin will by and by appear; *Paul*, a most holy apostle, affirmeth of himself, that he feeleth sin in his members. *Will*, saith he, *Rom. vii. 18. is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.* He wished, indeed, to be free from sins, but yet he could not but live in them: And I, such like also, am also desirous to be exempted from sin, but that can by no means be brought to pass; we do only repress and keep them under; when we have fallen into sin, we rise again: But as long as we are clothed with this flesh, and bear the burden about us, so long sin is not extinguished, nor can be wholly subdued. We may well go about, and endeavour to subdue it; notwithstanding old *Adam* will lead his life also, until he shall die, and come unto the grave. What shall I need to say any more? The kingdom of Christ is a certain spe-

cial kingdom, wherein every one of the saints is compelled to make this confession: Almighty God, unto whose power all things acknowledge themselves subject, I confess myself to be a miserable sinner; revenge not, I beseech thee, my old iniquities. All also must sing this song: *Our father, &c. forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* Other righteous and holy ones, which know no measure or end of their righteousness and holiness, do understand nothing hereof; and therefore this gospel is not preached unto them, seeing that they think the kingdom of Christ to be such, that there is no sin in it, but that all things in it are clean and pure: They require such a christian as is wholly clean from all filth of sin, and without sin, as Christ himself; such a one they shall never be able to find. Now he is a christian, who being a sinner, confesseth himself a sinner; who hateth the feeling of sin, striving against it from his heart. He is not a christian, which thinketh that he hath no sin, neither feeleth any; but if thou knowest any such, he is an antichristian, and not a true christian. The kingdom of Christ therefore consisteth among sins, it is established there where he hath set it, that is, in the house of *David*: Yea, set *David* himself before your eyes, and ye shall find him to have been a sinner; who, notwithstanding, is bold to glory, that he is a servant acceptable to his Lord. There is none of the faithful which ought to be ashamed of this manner of praying unto God, or of any other, not much unlike to it: Lord, forgive us our sins. Is it therefore true, that they have sin, because they say so? Yea, truly, for if they should lie, they should be the children of Satan. But godly christians are weary of this life, greatly desiring the life to come; for it is not given unto them, in this earth, to go so far, that they may say, We are subject to no vices, we are clean from all sin: If they should go so far, it is Satan that deceiveth them. Notwithstanding they are sorry for their sins, and do lament them; yet it grieveth them to the heart, that they must bear the miserable burthen of this flesh; and they cry out, together with *St. Paul, Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me*

from

From the body of this death! This loud cry all the faithful give; for, feeling sin, they most earnestly desire to be delivered from it: And in this feeling, and knowledge of sin, the kingdom of Christ consists: so that, even in sin, there is no sin; that is, altho' I do acknowledge and feel sin, yet salvation, and the kingdom, do so firmly abide in my conscience, that God saith unto me, I will forgive thee thy sin, for thou hast faith, and believest in Christ my beloved Son, who was delivered to death for thee; neither shall thy sin hurt thee. Others, who feel not their sin, but trust in their works, and complain not of their faults and offences, thinking themselves clean; such are given to Satan, and not received or admitted into the kingdom of Christ: For they which are partakers of this kingdom, cannot be without conflicts and tribulation.

And that I may speak more plainly, reckon, I pray thee, any of the saints, whom death doth not trouble; yea, I know thou shalt not find one, who is not afraid, and trembleth not at the horrible sight of death: But the conscience taketh comfort; hence the Prophet *David* saith, *The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death*, P^{sal.} cxviii. 18. It fighteth against us indeed, but prevai^{leth} not; thus a christian, wrapped in sin, is both under sin and above sin, and at the last, notwithstanding, obtaineth the victory. After the same manner, also, must he have to do with Satan, with whom he must wrestle all his life, and at the last, overcome him. So in the world also, he must suffer many conflicts and troubles, and yet, at length, become victor. For although it be a kingdom of Salvation, which hath neither rest nor quietness, but suffereth the force of hell, death, the devil, sin, and all manner of adversity and tribulation, yet they which be in it, do with an invincible courage endure, and at length overcome all evils. But God therefore permitteth these things, that our faith may be exercised, and shew forth it self. Moreover that is a pleasure to the conscience, and bringeth unto it comfort and joy it hath such a kingdom, that it may say: Blessed be the Lord God, who hath visited and redeemed us, and hath raised up a kingdom in the house of *David*.

David. That is, for he visiteth us by his word, delivereth us from sins, and maketh us conquerors over death and Satan. Thus ye have heard both that a kingdom is raised up in the house of *David*, and also that a Christian is both dead and yet alive, is innocent in the midst of sins, and although he is subject to Satan, yet notwithstanding hath dominion over Satan. For both are true, for that sin, death and hell assail the flesh, but do not overcome, forasmuch as this kingdom of salvation triumpheth over them all. Therefore with a certain great boldness or confidence he calleth it an horn, that is, a strong and puissant kingdom, which hath no rest or truce: but being assailed of many and strong enemies, is always diligently occupied in defence of itself, and doth notably repel the force of the enemy. So a Christian laying hold on this horn, overthroweth sin, death and Satan. Neither consisteth this horn in our strength, neither are we makers thereof: for God hath made and raised it up by the ministry of his word, whereby we are saved. Therefore *Zacharias* singeth, that his song hath respect not to his own son, but to Christ. Yea, he celebrateth this kingdom as pertaining to the *Jews* only, and declareth that it shall be glorious, and maketh no mention of the *Gentiles*, how they also should come unto it; as beside others, *Simeon* in his song, the beginning whereof is, *Lord now lettest thou, &c.* prophesied that we *Gentiles* also are chosen into that kingdom. But here he foretelleth of a kingdom raised up of God to the *Jews*, even a kingdom of salvation and blessedness, and that in the house of his servant *David*. Wherefore he saith, *Verse 70.* *As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.* Therefore he hath raised up this kingdom, that he might confirm his promise, whereby he had foretold, that he would sometime raise up a kingdom, &c. And now that time is come, wherein he will fulfil that his promise: So *Zacharias* reduceth the horn of salvation, the kingdom of Christ, to the old Testament, that out of it he may bring witnessers of so strong and puissant a kingdom; for the prophets, from the time of *David*, all prophesied, that the Seed of *David* should have a kingdom in the earth.

earth, yet a spiritual kingdom ; and, above the rest, *Isaiab* and *Jeremiah* foretold, that it should be such a kingdom, that the government thereof should consist in the spirit and word ; to these especially *Zachariab* hath here respect. The other, as *Hoseab*, *Micah*, and the rest, speak of the same kingdom, but not so manifestly. *Verse 71. That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.* The Evangelist hath hitherto generally rehearsed, what that kingdom of Christ is, whereof the prophets prophesied ; now he speaketh of it also, particularly declaring wherein it consists : First, in this, that he delivereth us from the hands of our enemies, and from all them that hate us. Ye see here and understand, most dearly beloved, that this verse doth witness, and most plainly declare, that we, which are his people and kingdom, live amongst enemies, and that no other is to be looked for of us, but to be hated of them ; that also the force, quality, and nature of this kingdom, consists in this, that it delivereth us out of the hands of all them that hate us, as the Prophet *David* saith, *Psal. cx. 2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion : rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.* And *Psal. xlv. 5. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies.* It is a delight unto Christ, that his kingdom is set in the midst of the fight, and in the midst of the haters thereof. These things are written for our comfort, that we which mind to serve under the Prince of this kingdom, be so instructed, that we look for no other than is here prescribed, and set forth unto us ; that we seek not here to get the favour of the world, neither that we serve the world, and labour to have no enemies therein ; for the words of *Zacharias* declare, that it is the quality of this kingdom to deliver from enemies. Now if it delivereth us from enemies, and draweth us out of the hands of them that hate us, surely it cannot be a kingdom of peace, but such a kingdom as is subject to the hatred and malice of the world ; as ye see at this day, that our enemies bear a deadly hatred unto the light, which hath a little shined forth, thanks be to Christ therefore. No man is any where so hated

as a christian ; both the pope, and the furious bishops, with their false apostles, also the raging princes, moreover the holy, learned, and wise of the world, all at this day most bitterly hate christians ; neither are they content, that they be killed and slain, but they would have them extinguished and utterly rooted out, that there may be no memory of them, as they think, left among men. And this is the state, these are the badges, and cognizances of christians ; that when Satan by his ministers persecuteth us, he thinketh quite to root us out. This verse giveth us to understand, that Christ is our King, that he may save and deliver us out of the hands of our enemies ; which he notably performs, and shews his power in the midst of the world, in the midst of the force of flesh and Satan ; as peace and quietness is not left to a christian, but in Christ alone. This also we must mark, that there is not one, but many, which assault and persecute christians ; but yet, that we shall not therefore be destroyed, forasmuch as we have one which is stronger than both the world and the prince thereof, as *John* saith. Now as he promiseth us, we know certainly, that he both will and is able to perform ; we shall indeed feel the assault, but he will not suffer us to be destroyed or overcome, so that we hope and trust in him. It followeth, *Verse 72. To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. Verse 73. The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us.* He will deliver us, not only from all evil both of body, and especially of soul, but also from our enemies, Satan, and men ; and as a christian must be overwhelmed with all evils together, so also he shall be again wholly delivered from all evils. And he sheweth this grace and blessing was promised to their fathers ; such is the manner of the apostles also, that they oftentimes have recourse to the old Testament, as I have said before, that God spake and promised by the mouth of the prophets, &c. even as *Zacharias* in this place. Some men may now say, They are dead, how therefore will he shew mercy unto them ? Again, what need is there to rehearse, that he would shew mercy to the fathers, when it is declared in the prophets ?

prophets ? But this is done, that the truth of God may be shewed forth, and may be approved unto us ; that we should not be ignorant, that those things are not due to our merits. In the first book of *Moses* is mentioned, *Gen. xxii. 18.* how God promised to *Abraham*, That in his *Seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed* ; that is, that by Christ should come peace, grace and blessing, to all nations : Which promise was deferred so long a time, that it appeared, that it was in vain and abolished. So unwise, as it seemeth to the world, doth God shew himself in his matters, as though all things went backward ; notwithstanding, howsoever it was delayed and seemed, yet it is fulfilled and performed, whatsoever was promised to *Abraham* ; and God hath not only delivered him from his enemies, but hath bestowed upon him all good things, and hath given himself unto him, and all that he hath : And all this is therefore done, because (as *Zacharias* here saith) this mercy and goodness was before promised, and confirmed by an oath unto them, which are long since dead, when as yet we were not. He is merciful therefore and favourable, not because of our merits, as though he owed it unto our righteousness, but of his only grace, favour, and mercy. These are horrible thunderings against our merits and works, that we cannot glory, that we have delivered ourselves from sin, or that we have deserved his goodness, and the preaching of the gospel ; no, it is not so. Here is no place for boasting ; but this text saith, that thou, O Lord, didst promise certain thousands of years before I was born, that thou wouldst do it. Who did then desire him. that he would give us those things, when he had determined with himself to give them ? And upon this promise the prophets are bold, and stay themselves ; for by it we attain unto true goodness, that the mouth of every one may be stopped ; that he that will glory, may glory in the Lord. For thus the Lord may say ; that thou livest in my kingdom, that thou enjoyest my goodness and grace, it is not to be imputed to thee, but unto me ; I promised, and determined with myself to fulfil my promises, thou being ignorant thereof. And here the mouth of every

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one is stopped ; so at this day also, none of us unto whom, thanks be to God, the gospel hath shined, can glory that we obtained it by our own means, labour, or good conversation ; for those which are counted the best works, and the most excellent studies, are disallowed and overthrown, as to celebrate mass, to join himself to this or that hypocritical sect, which they call an Order, &c. These the gospel condemn and reject ; And how can I attain to the gospel, by that which it rejecteth ? Wherefore this standeth sure and certain, that all that we have, is of the meer grace and goodness of God ; so that with this honour and praise we may confess, that we have deserved far otherwise, namely, hell-fire ; if besides this he bestoweth any thing upon us, it is the gift of his grace and goodness. And this is that which *Zacharias* saith, that is, was foretold by the prophets, and both promised and confirmed by an oath to the fathers, that he would perform unto us the covenant made to *Abraham*. Thus he saith to *Abraham*, *Gen. xxii. 16. By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee. And in thy seed, &c.* Which words the prophets diligently held, marked, handled, and always trusted unto them ; for he doth here solemnly swear, that he might wholly assure us, that he would pour forth his blessing upon us. And now the time is present, the hour is come, wherein he hath sworn, that salvation should come unto us, as it is declared, *Mark xvi. 15. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Men surely have not merited it, no not *Abraham* himself, who was not made partaker of the promise, seeing that he died long before the fulfilling thereof ; in spirit, indeed and faith, he was partaker of it, but he lived not so long, till the gospel was revealed to the whole world. The promise therefore was made unto him, although, as I said, he looked not for the fulfilling thereof in this life ; that is, his life was not prolonged until the preaching of the gospel in the whole world, although in faith he obtained the gospel for himself. Therefore it cannot be said, that that promise was due to his

merits,

merits, otherwise, he must have lived in the earth until the fulfilling thereof, and a due price or reward must have been paid unto him. But now the performing of the promise was after his death; so that every one must needs confess, that that promise was not made to *Abraham*, because of his merits. Again, it cannot be said, that the Gentiles which enjoy this promise, have obtained it by their merits, which then were not; God promiseth to the fathers and performeth not, he performeth to the Gentiles, to whom notwithstanding no promise was made, who all at that time were not. God will always retain to himself his honour, and be the same God, although the wicked world cannot be so persuaded; he challueth, reproveth, rebuketh, provoketh, stirreth, allureth, doth whatsoever is to be done; but the worldlings rob him of his honour, and attribute it to themselves, that is, they will not acknowledge, that whatsoever they possess or have, it cometh unto them by the only grace of God. When therefore we glory of such good things, and acknowledge not God to be the author and giver of them, we make our selves as God, and him as our servant; so he is dishonoured, and the honour attributed unto us. But although we make merchandize of his honour, yet he hath affirmed in the scriptures, that he will keep his honour and glory only to himself; that so he may be acknowledged to give all things of his meer grace. These things he that believeth; doth also receive them; he that doth not believe, shall at length receive his due reward. *Zacharias* saith moreover,

Verse 74. That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear. Verse 75. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. He hath defined the nature and property of this kingdom; that is, the covenant made with *Abraham*, that in his Seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, &c. Which blessing, saith he, I will interpret unto you, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we may serve him without fear all our life long in holiness and righteousness, before him; which to the world and our flesh savoureth not well; for the world

thus murmureth ; I thought that he would have given us some precious thing, as a purse well stuffed with money, a rich wife, fair and beautiful children, fine houses, and whatsoever the world is delighted in ; but I perceive it to be otherwise, I hear that we must without fear serve him in holiness and righteousness, and so please him. Wherefore it shall be meet that we apply spiritual eyes and ears, that we may rightly consider and understand the words : Whereas he saith, that he will deliver us from all our enemies, it is thus to be understood ; that this kingdom is placed in the midst of enemies, and yet is not therefore destroyed, but always all its enemies and adversaries are overcome. We must understand also, that the deliverance from our enemies tendeth hereunto ; that we should always obey him that delivereth us, without any fear. This is a christian and an amiable kingdom, that a christian shall lead his life without fear ; God hath bestowed this upon us, that we should serve him alone. The words *without fear*, include in them, that we shall quietly enjoy the good things of this present world, and of the world to come ; for a christian is sure and certain of the forgiveness of his sins, although as yet he feeleth them. He is certain that death hath no power in him ; that Satan doth not overcome him ; that the world cannot prevail against him. Such a heart is without peril and fear, and plainly free from them ; which is not so to be understood, as though we do not feel sin at all, but that we are greatly grieved when sins trouble us, when the image or sight of death terrify us, when, being reproached and slandered of the world, we stand as destitute, and have none to whom we may turn or resort for succour, but God alone. These things indeed are felt, but they do not prevail, nor overcome us ; for the heart, notwithstanding, remaineth safe and quiet in God : So poverty also is felt, when thou art pinched with hunger, and hast not wherewithal to fill thy belly, to maintain thy wife, and bring up thy children, nor any certain place where to dwell and abide, but all these things shall not hurt thee ; thou must ask of God whatsoever thou needest, and serve

him without fear, as our present text declareth. But herein we for the most part behave ourselves not as christians, we judge after our own affection and sense, according as the world blame us, or report evil of us. Also when our fields have no corn, no money is in our purse, we think ourselves utterly destitute and forsaken; but a true christian, with shut eyes and ears, saith with *Paul*, speaking to the *Galatians*, *Gal. ii. and vi.* O flesh, sin, death, ye are dead unto me: and I again am dead unto you, that Christ may live in me. The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world; that is, the world hath no care or regard of me, and my preaching and life is mocked and scorned of it. But with the same measure that thou measurest unto me, I will measure to thee again; if thou despisest me, I also will despise thee; if thou makest no account of me, I will make small account of thee. What care I, if the world hate me, when I displease not him that dwelleth in heaven? If this hatred continue even daily, if sin rage, and the world talk and prate many things, what then? Let it do so until it be weary, I will pass over these things as if I heard them not. This is indeed to forsake the world, and die unto it; to live without fear; to be occupied about nothing, but that which is according to God's will; to speak nothing at all but that which shall please him, and which I shall know to be agreeable to his word; that I may live so, and do those works, which I know certainly are acceptable before him; that in my whole life whatsoever I do, either outwardly or inwardly, I may be certain that I seek his glory, and endeavour to fulfil his will: So I am separated from the world, and notwithstanding do still live in the world. No man is less in the world than a sincere christian; and again, no man is more occupied, and hath to do with the world, than an entire christian; that is, the world doth more attentively look unto him, and Satan more often and vehemently assaileth him, than him that is ignorant of Christ, of grace, and of faith: Christ and *Paul* had experience hereof; they had combats and conflicts with the world; they were troubled and molested, yea, the whole world was against them. Again,

a true christian is not in the world, altho' the world rage and fret cruelly against him ; for he always trusteth in God, and saith, Lord, I am thine, deal well with me, according to thy will ; only be thou on my side, and I shall be in safety.

All the days of our life. All our life long ; that is, continually, without ceasing. *In holiness and righteousness before him.* Here St. Luke divideth righteousness and holiness into two sorts ; of which, one is acceptable before God, the other, before him, is of no value : Hence we understand, that the righteousness and holiness of God are of no estimation before the world, even as the world is in no esteem with God ; for that which God calleth just, the world calleth unjust ; and that which it calleth right, God calleth crooked ; and so these two champions are continually at variance between themselves. That which God calleth holy, seemeth to the world devilish and unrighteous ; therefore he comforteth us here, declaring there be two sorts of righteousness and holiness ; one, which we ought to observe diligently, another, which we ought to avoid. Hitherto, it hath been the chief holiness and righteousness of all, which could be invented, to run into monasteries, to put on monkish apparel, to be shaven, to wear a hempen girdle, to give himself to fasting and prayer, to be cloathed with hair-cloth, to lie in woollen garments, to observe an austere manner of living, and in fine, to take upon him monkish holiness and religion ; and thus, resting in a shew of good works, we knew not but we were holy from top to toe, having regard only to works and the body, and not to the heart, where we were full of hatred, fear and incredulity, troubled with an evil conscience, knowing almost nothing rightly of God. Then the world cries openly, O that holy man, O holy and chaste woman, which have shut themselves up within the walls of monasteries, day and night kneeling and saying rosaries ; O what holiness is there, where even God himself dwelleth, where the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, abideth present ? These things the world boast of, and greatly esteem ; but they mark not, how they pray with no earnestness of heart, how they teach and

instruct

instruct no man, how they give nothing to any, but catch unto themselves both the blood and sweat of the poor, and leave true sincere works undone. This righteousness and holiness the world extolleth, which notwithstanding stinketh, and is wholly unclean before God; which he will have even to be unknown unto us, yet the world refuse to admit any other. But there is another righteousness which God esteemeth and accepteth, which also we must consider; it consists not in a grey garment, not in a black or white cowl, but in a pure conscience; to wit, when I believe, that Christ is my salvation, and that my works can prevail nothing hereto, but he doth all things which God hath regard unto. Then I say no more; a grey garment is holy, a red garment is prophane, forasmuch as I know, that not in a grey or any other garment, but in Christ all things consist: For no man can attain to this, that a grey garment may cleanse his heart from filth, or that a monastery may purify it; for it is necessary that God only purify the heart by faith, and the Holy Ghost, as *Peter* witnesseth, *Acts* xv. When the heart is pure, the house is unto it as the field, and the field as the house; the market is as much esteemed as the monastery; and on the contrary, neither remaineth unto me any work, place or garment, which I count prophane; for all things are alike unto me, after that holiness hath fully possessed my heart: That even God saith unto me, 'Thou art godly, I am thy father, thou art my son. And herein we ought to persist, that we, being holy and without fear, obey and serve him. Here the titles and badges of a christian are seen; and this is his cognizance, to wit, that being holy, he is the minister of God, without fear. But what sinner is there which dare challenge to himself this title? Let one come forth, which dare avouch himself to be godly, righteous, holy, and the servant of God; destitute of no good things, either of mind or body: Now he that cannot glory of these things, is not a christian; for of these things must a sincere christian be partaker. But what letteth that one dare not challenge to himself this title? Even a timorous conscience; for we always feel sin, and

our life is ever frail. I see nothing but an honest life ; although God require this also of us, yet he will not be content therewith, but there is need that there be a certain higher thing, that I dare be bold to say, Lord God, maker of the whole world, I am certain that I am holy before thee, and am thy servant ; not for my own sake, who do as yet feel sins in myself, but through Christ, who hath taken away my sin, and made satisfaction for me. These things surely I ought to glory of if I am a true christian ; But this seems difficult and hard ; God admits no sin, my fearful and weak conscience is against me. How am I his servant, when I feel in myself, that I serve the devil, and know not that I am holy ? I speak not here of the common sort of christians, such as I, and such like, are ; but of sincere christians, which have a good conscience, and in whose heart the Spirit of God abideth, whose conscience, altho' frail and weak, and tho' they feel their sins, yet they are forced to say, However sin is, yet I know no sin by myself, neither am I subject to death and hell ; and for this cause they strive, and at last overcome, and therefore they would even die in that confidence. But I find it far otherwise, if I set my life before my sight. Here life and the word must be separated far asunder. If thou wilt consider life, I will set also before thee the lives of *St. Peter, Paul* or *John* ; thou shalt find even them not to have lived without sin. When thou desirest to be holy before God, trust not to thy life, unless thou wilt perish for ever ; for thou must trust only to mercy and grace, and not to life or works, otherwise thy case will be very ill : Wherefore our heart must be so affected that it say, Lord, if thou shouldest call me to an account, I should not be able either by life or works to stand in thy sight, no, although I were even *John the Baptist*. Nevertheless therefore I glory that I am godly, and thy servant, for that thou givest me continually ; and also, as thou hast promised to *Abraham*, thou doest, for thy Christ's sake, vouchsafe to shew thy mercy unto me : If I of myself am not godly and righteous, yet he is godly and righteous for me ; if I am prophane, he is holy ; if I am not the servant of God, he is the
servant

servant of God ; if I am not without fear and carefulness, he is void of all fear and carefulness ; that so, I may transfer myself from myself, and pierce into him, and glory, that in Christ and by Christ I am good. Thus he will have us glory, that we are godly and holy, but not by our own merit ; for we must glory of ourselves, as of most desperate wretches. And that this may be plain, mark our life, consider our good conversation, and manners, weigh how foolishly men apply themselves to the gospel, that I am almost in doubt, whether I should preach any more ; for as soon as these things are taught in a sermon, that salvation consists not in our works or life, but in the gifts of God, every one is slow to do good, no man will live an honest life, and be obedient ; they falsely affirm every where, that good works are inhibited. Nevertheless God requireth of us, that we lead an honest life outwardly ; and he that doth not so, shall at length find his due punishment. Now if it happen that we live godly and honestly outwardly, Satan frameth his wickedness : Neither do I know, at this day, how to order myself in this matter, not because of my own person, but because of life ; for if we preach of an honest and godly life, the world furiously attempts, without judgment, to build ladders to heaven ; which God neither can, neither will by any means suffer : Again, a dishonest and ignominious life doth not become christians, neither doth a delicate life become them. What therefore must we then do ? They which have respect *only* to an honest and fair life, it were better for them to be adulterers and adulteresses, and altogether to wallow in the mire ; and yet, notwithstanding, God will not have us to lead our lives filthily and dishonestly, adjudging thee even unto hell therefore, if thou so do. And if thou lead an honest life, thou wilt rest in it, and arrogate unto thyself ; which he cannot suffer. Thou must therefore remain in the middle path, declining neither to the right hand, nor to the left ; and lead a quiet, fair and amiable life, in the sight of the world, which also may be acceptable before God ; and yet do not therefore so greatly esteem it, nor count for

of it, as though thou dost merit any thing of God thereby. Thus a christian continueth the holy servant of God, without fear, not by his good works and holy life, but by the grace of Christ. But he that affirmeth that he is holy by his works, is blasphemous against God, robbeth God of his honour, and denieth Christ; for whom it were better, that he were ten times an homicide, or an adulterer, than that he should thereby affirm himself to be a christian, or godly and holy; for he doth plainly dishonour Christ, and it is as much as to affirm that there is no Christ; for he is therefore called Christ, for that he is our grace, mercy, redemption and holiness. If I should not attribute to the divine mercy, that God himself saves me, what less should this be but to say, that he is neither holy nor blessed? Therefore if I am a christian, I must confess, that I am holy and a christian for this cause, that Christ himself is holy: And altho' my conscience reprove me of sin, yet I must still persevere in this, that his holiness is greater than my sins. Thus I must live honestly outwardly, but inwardly rest and trust in him alone. It followeth, how *Zacharias* turneth his speech to the child, and saith, *Verse 76.* *And thou shalt be called the prophet of the most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.* This shall be thy office; thou shalt be the first, that is, thou shalt be the prophet of the most High; thou shalt be the forerunner of the Lord, and shall prepare his ways. When any prince cometh, certain go before him, to prepare way and place for him, saying, Give place, depart out of the way. *John*, in like manner, runneth before, crying unto the People, Go aside, turn out of the way, give place, the Lord himself cometh. Such a servant is *John*, whom the Lord followeth. Such things no prophet at any time hath spoken, but they have prophesied of these things, that a prophet should sometime come, which should erect a kingdom that should continue for ever, &c. But all died, not one remained, which beheld this being alive. But this prophet lived even at that time, when the Lord himself came, and followeth him; for the gospel was begun to be preached, and baptism to be ministred, by

the coming and ministry of *John*, who ceasing, *Christ* began, almost in the same year. Now what shall be his office? This truly, to prepare a way for the Lord. Which preparation is to bring people to the Lord the Saviour; *Christ* is the grace, gift, King and horn of our salvation. This Lord and King no man receives, unless he be first humbled, that he think nothing of himself; for he cannot otherwise attain unto *Christ*, neither can stand together, to receive the grace of God by gift, and also to merit the same. *John* therefore in this part teacheth men they are sinners, and altogether nothing. He which acknowledgeth himself, and feeleth himself a sinner before, and to be nothing, well understandeth the voice of *John*, which is, prepare ye the way of the Lord; give place to him: He is at hand, who is greater than I; him ye shall hear, him ye shall obey. The other office of *John* which followeth, is, that he brought men to the knowledge of salvation, and sheweth with his finger that paschal Lamb, who taketh away our sins, that he may fasten them to the cross with himself, and abolish them, as *Zacharias* speaks, *Verse 77. To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins*; that is, thou shalt begin the office, and minister the word, whereby is taught and learned how we are saved: Which salvation consists in this, not how we may be famous through abundance of riches, glory and power, in earth, as the *Jews* have hitherto understood it; but that we may obtain remission of sins, and be made partakers of the grace of God. Now where remission of sins is, there is no merit, no reward or satisfaction; otherwise it could not be called remission of sins. So that this knowledge is, to understand how God forgiveth us our sins without works and merits, and saveth us by meer grace and mercy, as it followeth, *Verse 78. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us.* Here it appeareth that they which teach and observe laws, works and merits, strive both against the mercy of God and knowledge of salvation; for he saith not, that forgiveness of sins came by the prayers and works of the fathers, or of any of the saints, but through the bound-

less mercy of God, which *Luke* calleth the tender mercy, and such mercy as cometh from the most inward affection and bowels. Notwithstanding this forgiveness of sin, which cometh unto us by mercy, is not without merit, although it cometh to pass without our merit; but a Mediator cometh between, who hath in our stead deserved it for us, which is Christ our Lord: For God would that satisfaction should be made for our sins, and that his honour and law should be performed; here we were able to do nothing. But Christ alone was able, and satisfied for us, who of the infinite mercy of the Father, was sent for the same cause, and that to us, that he might dispatch it; therefore he saith, through which infinite and boundless mercy *the day-spring from on high hath visited us*. Without all doubt it was no merit, but only boundless mercy, that Christ came to us, and merited and obtained for us remission of sins unto eternal salvation. Now he calls him, *the day-spring from on high*, which signifieth unto us his divinity. And this is his meaning, *on high*, that is, above all creatures; where nothing is higher, but height alone, there is Christ in his divinity, as the morning or day-spring: For he proceedeth from the Father, as the beams do from the sun; whereof we have elsewhere spoken at large.

Verse 79. To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Many of the fathers understood this of *Lymbus*, as they call it; but *Luke* agreeth here with *Isaiab*, where he saith, *The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light, &c.* His meaning is this; Christ therefore came, that he might be the light of the world, and by the gospel might enlighten men's hearts, and allure them to himself, which were held captive unto Satan, in blindness and darkness of incredulity; that for he might guide our feet in the way of peace, that is, he might govern our conscience well, quietly and cheerfully in the kingdom of grace; that we may be afraid neither of Satan nor of sin, death, hell, nor of any adversity, who before have rested, part of us in filthy vices, part in good works, notwithstanding we could on neither side enjoy any quietness or peace, but were com-

pelled to despair under Satan, and the fear of death; nor did we know how to find that way which leadeth unto peace, according to the fourteenth Psalm, *The way of peace have they not known, &c.* Thus ye have heard *Zacharias*, in most goodly and fit words, most lively paint out the gospel and kingdom of Christ, with all the fruits, colours and conditions thereof; that it is a word and kingdom of grace, of forgiveness of sins, also a kingdom of peace, joy, quietness, salvation and all goodness. God grant that we may thoroughly know and feel the same. *Amen.*

S E R M O N V.

On Christ's Passion.

1. **S**OME think so upon the passion of Christ, that they are incensed with anger against the *Jews*, and envy against wretched *Judas*, which they vent in songs and reproachful words; and thus they are content, and think this to be sufficient, even as they are wont in lamenting the case of others, to take pity on them, and to accuse and condemn their adversaries. But that cannot be called a remembering of the passion of Christ, but rather of *Judas* and his wickedness. 2dly, Some have noted in their minds divers advantages, and fruits proceeding from the meditation of Christ's passion, that saying which is ascribed to *Albertus* being commonly in their remembrance, That it is better to think upon the passion of Christ superficially or once, than if one should fast the space of a whole year, and daily in praying go over the whole Psalter, &c. This they follow hitherto, being blind and justly stumbling, contrary to the true fruit of the Lord's passion; such seek their own things therein, and therefore they bring with them images, books, letters and crosses. Some also go so far, that they think they shall make themselves safe from waters, terrors, fire, and from all danger, as though the Lord's suffering should be without suffering in them, contrary

to the quality and nature thereof. 3dly, Some have compassion on Christ, lamenting and weeping for him as being an innocent man, like unto the women which followed Christ from *Jerusalem*, who were reprehended and admonished by him, that they should weep for themselves and for their children. 4thly, Some so call to mind the passion of the Lord, and so consider Christ, that inwardly they are sore afraid, their reason or understanding is turned into a certain astonishment or bashfulness; which fear ought to proceed from hence, that we should be put in mind thereby of the wrath and immutable severity of God prepared for sin and sinners, forasmuch as he would not grant to his only begotten and beloved son, that sinners should be absolved and pardoned, unless he did make so great a satisfaction for them. as he speaketh by *Isaiab*, chap. liii. 8. *For the transgression of my people was he stricken.* What shall come unto the sinner, when a son so exceedingly beloved is smitten? It must needs be, that there is an unspeakable and a most serious and earnest matter, where so great and excellent a person doth descend to do good unto him, and suffer and die for him. 5thly, Resolve deeply in thy mind, and doubt not a whit, that thou art he which so tormented Christ, forasmuch as thy sins were most certainly the cause thereof. Thus *S. Peter*, in the 2d of the *Acts*, did strike and terrify the *Jews*, as it were with lightning, when he said unto them, whom *ye have crucified*; so that the very same day three thousand men were greatly terrified, and being pricked in their hearts, said unto the apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Wherefore when thou considerest that his hands were pierced with nails, think that it was thy work; when thou rememberest his crown of thorns, persuade thyself that it was thy wicked cogitations which caused it, &c. 6thly, Think with thyself, that whereas one thorn pricked Christ, thou oughtest worthily to be pricked with an hundred thousand thorns, and that without intermission, and much more grievously; and that whereas one nail pierced the hands and feet of Christ, thou oughtest to be grieved

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and molested with many, and far more sharp nails continually, even as it shall come at the last unto those, in whom the passion of Christ hath not been effectual, but frustrate; for Christ who is the truth itself, will lye to no man, will delude no man; and that which he attempteth must needs be a matter of exceeding great importance and wonderful high. 7thly, Such fear *Bernard* had conceived hereof, when he said, I play'd abroad in the street, and in the King's privy chamber sentence of death was given upon me. The King's only begotten son hearing this, laid off his diadem and came forth, clothed in sackcloth, his head sprinkled with ashes, and bare-foot, weeping and crying out, that his servant was condemned to death. I beholding him suddenly coming forth, am amazed at the strangeness thereof, I ask and hearken after the cause. What shall I do? Shall I play still, and delude his tears? Alas, saith he, it is no time now to play, it is no time to be secure, when so weighty a matter is in hand. So he bid the women that they should not weep for him, but for themselves and for their children; and he adjoyneth the cause, *For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* As if he said, Learn what ye obtain by my passion, and howsoever things fall out, yet this is true and known among you, that the whelp is sometimes smitten, that the mastive may be terrified. So also the Prophet hath spoken: *All kindreds of the earth shall wail before him.* He saith not, they shall bewail him, but, *they shall wail before him.* Moreover they were sore afraid, of whom it is before spoken, so that they said unto the apostles, *Acts ii. Men and brethren, what shall we do?* 8thly, That this affection may be wrought in us, the Lord's passion is very diligently to be considered of, and meditated upon, as the most certain profit thereof doth much consist herein, that a man may come to the knowledge of himself, and tremble and be troubled before himself; whereunto he that doth not come, hath not yet attained unto the due profit of the Lord's passion: For the passion of Christ hath this proper and natural vertue, to make a man like unto him; that even as he was grievously tormented both in body and mind for our sins, so we also, to imitate him, must be afflicted in the know-

knowledge of our sins. The matter is not done in many words, but in deep cogitation, and earnest weighing of sins. Take a similitude : As thou hast great cause to fear and tremble, if, when some malefactor is condemned, for that he hath killed the son of the king or prince, thou in the mean season, singing and playing securely as being innocent, art terribly apprehended and convicted, that thou didst suborn the homicide ; so thou oughtest to become much more fearful when thou dost resolve in thy mind the passion of Christ. For altho' the wicked *Jews* be now judged of God, and dispersed, yet were they ministers of thy transgression, and thou for a certain art he, which with thy sins hast crucified and slain the son of God, as it hath been said. 10thly, He that feeleth himself so hardned and dull, that the passion of Christ doth not terrify him, nor bring him unto the knowledge of himself, is in a lamentable case ; for Christ's passion is not effectual in him. But it is a hard thing for thee to be occupied in these things, and earnestly bent to the meditation of them ; therefore pray God that he will mollify thy heart, and give thee grace profitably to meditate upon the passion of Christ, because it cannot in any wise be, that the passion of Christ should be inwardly and rightly thought upon and considered of us, unless God inspire it into our hearts. Neither this meditation, nor any other doctrine, is therefore set forth unto thee, that thou shouldest boldly rush upon it of thyself to fulfil it, but that thou shouldest first ask and desire the grace of God, that thou mayest fulfil it, not by thine own strength, but by God's grace ; for hereof it cometh, that they of whom it is spoken, do not meditate on the passion of Christ aright, because they desire not help of God thereunto, but rather trusting unto their own strength, and following their own invention, meditate upon it after the fashion of men, and after a slender and unfruitful manner. 11thly, If one should through the grace of God meditate rightly upon the passion of Christ, but the space of one day, or of one hour, nay, or the space of a quarter of an hour, we would faithfully pronounce of him, that he hath done better than if he had pined himself with fasting the

the space of a whole year, or had run over the psalter every day ; for this manner of meditation doth change a man, and almost regenerate him a-new, like unto baptism. Then indeed the Lord's passion doth its natural, due and noble office ; it killeth the old *Adam*, it driveth away all pleasure, joy and confidence, which may be had of creatures, even as Christ was forsaken of all, even of his father. 11thly, Since such a thing is not in our own power, we oftentimes ask it, and yet do not obtain it ; notwithstanding, we must not therefore despair or cease : For that is sometimes given for which we have not prayed, and that sometimes is not granted for which we have prayed, even as it is the pleasure of God, and as he knoweth to be best for us, for God will have this gift to be free and without constraint. 12thly, When a man, thus knowing his sin, doth wholly tremble in himself, he must endeavour, that sin do not still remain in his conscience, otherwise meer despair will come upon him ; but he must shake them off, and cast them upon Christ, and so unburthen his conscience. Therefore see again and again, that thou do not that which perverse men do, which, within the secrets of their hearts, do vex and disquiet themselves because of their sins ; and strive with them, that by good works or satisfactions, by going far on pilgrimage, or else by pardons they may become safe, and may be made free from sin, which cannot be. And, alas, such a false confidence in satisfactions and pardons hath prevailed very far. Moreover thou castest thy sins from thee upon Christ, when thou firmly believest that he suffered and was wounded for thy sins, and that he hath payed the full ransom and satisfaction for them, as *Isaiab* saith, chap. liii. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* And *St. Peter* saith, *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,* 1 Pet. ii. 24. *St. Paul* saith, *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* In these, and such like authorities, thou must repose thy hope with all boldness, and that so much the more, as thy conscience doth more grievously vex and trouble thee ; but if thou shalt not do this, but presumest that thou shalt be quiet

by thy contrition and satisfaction, then thou shalt never come unto quietness, but at the last shalt fall even into despair : For our sins kept and medled within our conscience, and set before the eyes of our heart, are far stronger than we, and live immortally. But when we see them laid upon Christ, and to be victoriously conquered of him by his resurrection, and confidently believe this, then they are dead and brought unto nothing ; and yet being laid upon Christ, they must not remain so, for they are swallowed up in the triumph of his resurrection ; so saith *St. Paul, Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification ;* that is, he hath taken upon him our sins in his passion, and hath thereby paid the ransom for them ; but by his resurrection he justifieth us, and maketh us free from all sin, if so be that we believe this. If thou canst not attain unto this faith, thou must, as is before said, resort unto God by prayer, forasmuch as this gift is in the hand of God only, who bestoweth it when and upon whom it pleaseth him. Thou mayest also stir up thyself hereunto ; first, not now considering the passion of Christ outwardly, (for that hath now fulfilled its function and hath terrified thee) but rather by piercing inwardly, and contemplating his most loving heart, with how great love towards thee it is replenished, which brought him hereunto, that he bears thy conscience, together with thy sins, with so great and painful difficulty. So thy heart shall wax sweet towards him, and the strength and boldness of thy faith shall be increased. Then having entered unto the heart of Christ, ascend higher even unto the heart of God, and consider that the love of Christ could not have been shewed unto thee, except the will of God by his eternal love had so appointed, whereunto Christ by his love toward thee did obey ; there thou shalt find a divine heart, a good heart, a fatherly heart, and, as Christ saith, thou shalt be drawn unto the Father by Christ ; there thou shalt understand this saying of Christ, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* For this is to know God aright, when he is understood of us, not
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under the name of power or wisdom (which is a terror unto us) but under the name of goodness and love. Then faith and confidence may stand constantly, and man himself is regenerate a-new in God. When thy heart is thus established in Christ, so that thou art now become an enemy of sin, and that by love, and not through fear of punishment; afterwards the passion of Christ ought to be an example unto thee, in thy whole life, and is now to be considered, in thy mind, after a far other manner than before; for hitherto we have considered it as an outward thing, which should work in us, but now we will weigh it so, that something is to be done of us also: For example; when grief or infirmity molest thee, think how light these are, being compared to the crown of thorns, and the nails of Christ. When thou must either do or leave that which is grievous unto thee, think how Christ was taken and bound, and led up and down. When pride tempteth thee, consider with thyself how thy Lord was mocked, and reputed among thieves. When lust and pleasure prick thee, think with what sharpness the tender flesh of Christ was torn with whips, and pierced through. When anger, envy, or desire of revenge, move thee, think with what tears and cries Christ prayed, even for his enemies; towards whom he might more justly have shewed himself sharp and rigorous. When sadness, or any adversity whatsoever, either corporal or spiritual, trouble thee, strengthen thy heart and say, Well, why should not I also suffer a little sorrowfulness, when my Lord sweat blood in the garden, for anguish and heaviness. Surely he were a sluggish and ignominious servant who, his master lying at the point of death, would be held from him with a soft and easy bed. Lo! thus a man may find strength and remedy in Christ, against all crimes and offences. This is truly, indeed, to meditate upon the passion of Christ; these are the fruits of the Lord's passion, in which, he that doth after this manner exercise himself, doth surely, without comparison, better, than if he heard all passions, or all superstitious masses. Such also are called true christians, which do so represent the life and name of Christ in their

life, as St. Paul saith, *Gal. v. 24. And they that are Christs, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.* For the passion of Christ is not to be handled in words and outward shew, but in deed and verity: so S. Paul admonisheth us, *Heb. xii. 3. Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.* And S. Peter saith, *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, 1 Pet. iv. 1.* But such meditation is now grown out of use and begun to wax rare, wherewith notwithstanding the epistle of Peter and Paul are most abundantly replenished.

S E R M O N VI.

On Christ's Resurrection.

WE have heard in the treatise of the Lord's passion, that it is not sufficient to know only the bare history thereof. After the same manner it is not enough here to know, how and when Christ rose again, but both the use and the profit as well of his passion as of his resurrection must be preached and known, to wit, what Christ obtained for us by them. For where only the history is preached, it is a frivolous preaching and without fruit, which both Satan and the wicked as well know, read, and understand, as we do. But when the use of them is preached, and whereunto they profit, that indeed is a fruitful and wholesome sermon, and full of sweet consolation. Wherefore Christ hath declared the use and profit of his passion and resurrection, when he thus talked with the women, *Mat. xxviii. 10. Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.* And this is the first word, which they hear of Christ after his resurrection from the dead, whereby he confirmeth all his sayings, and all his benefits shewed unto them before, to wit, that they should come unto us also that should believe in him, and belong only to the believers, for here he calleth not only the Apostles his brethren, but also all them which believe

believe in him, although they do not see him visibly as the Apostles did. He doth not defer until we pray unto him and call upon, that we be made his brethren. Let any of us now come forth, and boast of his merit, or of the strength, whereby he is able to merit any thing. What had the Apostles merited? *Peter* denied Christ thrice. All the rest of the disciples fled away from him, they persevere and stand by him, even as the hare tarrieth with her young ones; he might have called them run-aways, and forsakers of their post in the midst of their conflict, yea traitors and wicked men, rather than brethren. Wherefore of meer grace and mercy this word was brought unto them of the matrons, which the apostles themselves then well perceived, and we also thoroughly feel, when we are set in the midst of sins, and are overcome of damnation. This word therefore is full of all consolation and comfort, that Christ careth for such wretched men as we are, yea and that he calls us his brethren. If so be that Christ be our brother, surely I would fain know what good things we shall want. As therefore the case stands among carnal brethren, so doth it stand here. They that are german brethren by consanguinity, use their goods in common among themselves, having the same father, the same inheritance, otherwise they were not brethren; so we also possess in common good things with Christ, enjoying the same father, the same inheritance, which inheritance is not diminished, by parting it, as worldly inheritances are, but is always made more abundant; for it is a spiritual inheritance, a corporal inheritance, when it is distributed into divers parts, is made smaller, but in this portion of the spirit, the case is such, that he that hath gotten part thereof, hath obtained the whole. What is therefore the inheritance of Christ? In his power are life and death, sin and grace, and whatsoever is contained in heaven and in earth, his are eternal verity, strength, wisdom, righteousness. All power is given unto him, he hath rule over all things, over hunger and thirst, prosperity and adversity, &c. he reigneth over all things that can be thought, whether they be in heaven or in earth; and that I may speak at once all things are in his

his power, as well eternal things as temporal. Now if I cleave unto him by faith, I shall be made partaker of all his good things, and shall not obtain a part of the inheritance only, but I shall possess even with him everlasting wisdom, eternal strength. My belly shall not be grieved with hunger, sin shall not oppress me, neither shall I be afraid of the face of death, neither shall I dread the sight of Satan, nor shall I want plenty of any thing that is good, even as he wanteth it not. Hence we may easily understand the sayings uttered commonly in the prophets, and especially in the Psalms, as where *David* saith, *Psal.* xxxiv. 10. *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing: and in another place: The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil times: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. And again: I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.* All which things Christ bringeth with him, for that we are, and are called his brethren, not because of any merit, but of meer grace. If we would print these things in our heart, that we might thoroughly feel them, it should go well with us, but they go in at one ear and out at another. This is that in which *St. Paul* so greatly glorieth, *Rom.* viii. 14. *For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joynt heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* Moreover this title ascendeth so high that mans thoughts is not able to comprehend it; for unless the spirit the comforter impart this grace unto us, no man shall ever be able to say, Christ is my brother. For reason cannot be bold to say, altho' one repeat it in words very often, as the new spirits do. It is a higher thing then that it can be so spoken, for except the heart feel it, as it is requisite

fite it should, it shall be nothing but only flattery. But if thou feel it inwardly in thy heart, it will be so excellent a thing unto thee, that thou wilt much rather say nothing of it, than speak and talk of it, yea by reason of the greatness of so good a thing, thou wilt perhaps doubt as yet and be in an uncertainty whether it be so or not. They which only cry out thus: Christ is my brother, are fanatical spirits, who vainly pronounce words without any fruit. The case standeth far otherwise and far more marvelously with a true Christian, so that he is thereby enforced to be amazed, neither dareth he say or confess any thing sufficiently thereof. Wherefore we must endeavour, that we do not hear this only with fleshly ears, but that we feel it in our heart, then we will not be so rash, but we shall be forthwith carried into an admiration thereof. True and sincere christians enter into the viewing and fear of themselves, thinking thus: O wretched and defiled creature, which am drowned in sins, am I now made worthy, that the Son of God should be my brother? how do I miserable wretch attain to such a thing? thus he is astonished, and doth not well understand the thing. But great study and endeavour surely is required, that a man may believe this, yea if it were felt, as it ought in very deed, a man should forthwith die thereupon; for he cannot understand it according to his flesh and blood, and the heart of man in this life is more narrow and straight, than that it is able to comprehend so great things; but in death, when the heart shall be stretched out, then I say we shall try what we have heard by the word. In the gospel of St. *John*, chap. xx. Christ doth far more plainly declare unto *Mary Magdalen* this use and fruit both of his death and resurrection, when he saith, *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God*; this is one of the most comfortable places whereof we may glory and boast. As though Christ should say, *Mary*, get thee hence and declare unto my disciples, which fled from me, which have thoroughly deserved punishment and eternal condemnation, that this resurrection of mine is for their good, that is, that I have by my resurrection brought

the matter to that pass, that my Father is their Father, and my God is their God. They are but a few and very short words indeed, but they contain great matter in them, namely, that we have as great hope and confidence reposed in God, as his own Son himself. Who can comprehend such exceeding joy, I will not say, utter it? that a wretched and defiled sinner may be bold to call God his Father, and his God even as Christ himself. The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, cap. ii. did well remember the words of the Psalm, and weighed with himself how it speaketh of Christ, who, as he saith, is not ashamed to call the believers, brethren, saying: *I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.* If any wordly Prince or nobleman should humble himself so low, that he would say to a thief or robber, or to one that is infected with some loathsome disease: thou art my brother, it would be a thing which every one would marvel at. But as this King which sitteth in glory at the right hand of his father, saith of some poor man, this is my brother, that no man layeth up in the bosom of his breast, neither doth any man consider of it in his mind, wherein notwithstanding our chief comfort and confidence consisteth against sin, death, the devil, hell, the law, and against all sinister success of things as well of the body as of the mind. Moreover, forasmuch as we are flesh and blood, and therefore subject to all kinds of adversity, it followeth, that the case should stand so also with our brother, otherwise he should not be like unto us in all things. Wherefore, that he might be made conformable and like unto us, he tasted and had experience of all things even as we have, *sin only excepted*, that he might be our true brother, and exhibit himself openly unto us; which the epistle to the *Hebrews* lively set forth, chap. ii. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

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Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. The profit, use and fruit of the Lord's passion and resurrection, St. Paul hath gathered very briefly, and as it were into one short sum, when he saith, Rom. iv. 25. Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Whereof thus much at this time shall suffice.

S E R M O N VII.

On the good Shepherd.

John x. Verse 11. to the 16. *I am the good shepherd, &c.*

THis text is full of consolation, which in a goodly parable sets forth Christ our Lord, and teacheth what manner of person he is, what are his works, and how great his affection is towards men; nevertheless it cannot be understood, but by comparing together light and darkness, day and night, that is, a good and evil shepherd, as the Lord also doth in this place. Ye have now oftentimes heard, that God hath instituted and ordained, in the world, two manner of preachings: One is, when the word of God is preached, which saith, *Exod. xx. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me; also, Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal;* and doth also threaten, that he which doth not keep those precepts, shall die. But that preaching doth justify no man; for although a man be thereby compelled to shew himself godly outwardly, before men, notwithstanding, inwardly, his heart is offended at the law, and had rather there were no law. The other ministry of the word is the gospel, which sheweth where that is to be received, which the law requireth; it nei-

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ther urgeth nor threatneth, but allureth men gently ; it saith not, Do this or that ; but it saith thus, Go to, I will shew where thou mayest receive and take, whereby thou mayest become righteous ; behold, here is Jesus Christ, he will give it thee. Wherefore, these two disagree one with another, as much as to receive and give, to exact and reward ; And this difference is to be well understood and marked. To hardned and untractable men, which feel not the gospel, the law is to be preached ; and they are so long to be urged, till they begin to be mollified and humbled, and do acknowledge their disease ; which when it is done, there is then place to begin to preach the gospel. These two sorts of preachings were instituted and ordained of God, beside these there are other, which were not ordained of God, but are traditions invented by men, ordained of the Pope and his prelates, wherewith they have perverted the gospel ; these are not worthy to be called either shepherds or hirelings, but they are those which Christ calleth thieves, robbers and wolves : For if we will rule and guide men right and well, that must be done by the word of God ; by which if it be not done, we surely labour in vain. Further, Christ treateth here of that second ministry of the word, and describes of what sort it is ; he makes himself the chief, yea the only shepherd, for that which he doth not feed, surely remains unfed. Ye have heard that our Lord Jesus Christ, after his passion and death, was raised from the dead, is entred and placed in immortality ; not that he might sit in heaven, and rejoice with himself, but that he might receive a kingdom, might execute the function of a governor and king, of whom all the prophets, and the whole scripture, speak very much. Wherefore he is to be acknowledged to be unto us, continually, a present governor and ruler ; neither must we think that he is idle in heaven, but that he doth, from above, both fill and govern all things, as *Paul* saith, *Eph. iv.* who hath an especial care of his kingdom, which is the christian faith ; therefore it must needs be, that his kingdom flourish among us here in earth. Of this kingdom we have elsewhere said, that it is so ordained, that we all increase every day, and become purer, and that it is not governed by any force

or power, but by outward preaching alone, that is by the gospel. And this gospel comes not from man, but Jesus Christ himself brought it, and put it into the hearts of the apostles, and their successors, that they might comprehend it, and into their mouths, that they might speak and publish it. Hereby is his kingdom governed, wherein he so reigneth, that all the power thereof consisteth in the word of God; now whosoever shall hear and believe this, do pertain to this kingdom. Moreover, this word is afterwards made so effectual, that it giveth all things which are necessary to man, and bringeth a certain abundance of all good things; *For it is the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth, as Paul witnesseth, Rom. i. 16.* When thou believest that Christ died for thee, to deliver thee from all evil, and so cleavest unto the word, it is sure and certain that no creature is able to overthrow thee; for as none is able to overthrow the word, so none is able to hurt thee, when thou stickest unto it. By the word therefore thou dost overcome sin, death, Satan, hell; and thither thou must resort and fly, where the word is, that is, to eternal peace, joy and life; and briefly, thou shalt be made partaker of all such good things as are promised in the word. Wherefore the government of this kingdom is marvellous; the word is published and preached through the whole world, but the power thereof is very secret, neither doth any man mark that it is so effectual, and that it so much profiteth them that believe; howbeit, it must be felt and tasted in the heart. We therefore of the ministry are able to perform no more, than that we are the mouth of our Lord Christ, and the instrument whereby he openly preacheth the word; for he suffereth the word to be published abroad, that every one may hear it. But faith maketh that it is felt inwardly in the heart, yea, and it is the secret work of Christ, whensoever any knoweth that it is his duty, and is also willing to do according to his divine will and pleasure. That this may be the better perceived, we will now treat of our text, wherein Christ first saith, *I am the good shepherd.* And what is a good shepherd? *A good shepherd, saith Christ, giveth his life for his sheep.*

And I lay down my life for the sheep. Here the Lord declareth what his kingdom is, in the goodly parable of the sheep. Ye know that it is a beast of all living creatures most foolish and simple, so that it is commonly spoken as a proverb, if we have to speak of a simple one, He is a sheep; nevertheless, it is of that nature, more than other living creatures, that it quickly knoweth the voice of his shepherd, neither followeth it any beside his own shepherd, being always of that quality that it cleaveth to him, and seeketh for help of him alone, being not able to help itself, neither to feed itself, neither to heal itself, nor keep itself from the wolves, but relies in the help of another: Christ therefore brings the quality and nature of the sheep in a parable, and transformeth himself into a shepherd, whereby he shews what his kingdom is, and wherein it consists, and his meaning is this: My kingdom is, that I may feed sheep, that is, miserable, needy and wretched men, which well perceive and feel, that they have no help or counsel, but in me alone. But that we may declare this more plainly, we will add a passage out of *Ezekiel*, chap. xxxiv. 2. which speaketh of evil shepherds: *Wo be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves: should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool: ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered thorough all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.* This is well to be marked; his meaning in this place is, that he will have the weak, sick, broken, abject and lost, to be strengthened, healed, cured, sought, not spoiled and destroyed: These things ye ought to do, saith he to the shepherds, but ye have not. Wherefore I myself,

as he afterwards saith, will deal thus with my sheep : *I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.* Here thou seest that the kingdom of Christ is such as hath to do with those that be weak, diseased and broken, and hath care of them to help them : The preaching whereof, indeed, is very full of comfort, but this is wanting in us, that we do not thoroughly feel our misery and weakness, which if we felt, we would forthwith run unto him. But how did those shepherds behave themselves ? They ruled in rigour, and exacted obedience of the law ; moreover, they added their own traditions, as they do also at this day, which if they be not kept, they cry out, and condemn him that transgresseth them, so that they urge more and more, and command their own inventions. But this is not to feed well, or to govern a soul, as Christ saith, who himself is not such a shepherd, for by such manner of feeding, none is help'd, but the sheep are utterly lost. Now we will speak of this place of the Prophet in order : First he saith, that the weak sheep are to be strengthened ; that is, the consciences which are weak in faith, and have a sorrowful spirit, and are of a faint courage, are not to be forced, that it should be said unto them, *This thou must do, thou must be strong, for if thou be so weak, thou art ordained to eternal punishment : This is not the way to strengthen the weak.* Thus saith *Paul*, Rom. xiv. 1. *Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations.* And he addeth, Rom. xv. 1. *We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* Wherefore they are not to be severely compelled, but to be comforted, that although they be weak, they may not despair, for they shall become stronger. *Isaiab* the Prophet thus foretold of Christ, chap xlii. 3. *A bruised reed shall he not break : and the smoking flax shall he not quench.* The bruised reed signifieth miserable, weak and bruised consciences, which are so easily shaken, that they tremble, and lose hope and trust in God. With these God doth not deal rigorously, and after a violent manner, but he dealeth gently with them,

lest he break them. The smoking flax, which as yet burn a little, and nourisheth more smoke than fire, are the same consciences, which ought not to despair, for he will not utterly extinguish them, but always kindle them, and more and more strengthen them; which truly to him that knoweth it, is a great comfort. Wherefore he which doth not gently handle weak consciences, doth not execute the office of a true shepherd. Afterwards the Prophet saith, *The diseased ye ought to have strengthened.* Who are those diseased ones? They which in their manner of living, and in their outward works, have certain diseases and vices. The first belongs to the conscience, when it is weak; the other to the manners or conditions of life, when any, being carried with a wilful mind and wayward brain, doth offend, by wrath and other foolish doings, as even the apostles fell sometimes grievously. Such as are so vicious in the sight of men, that they are an offence to others, and are judged obstinate and wayward, God will not have to be rejected and despaired of; for his kingdom is not ordered after such a manner, that the strong and whole should only live therein (which pertaineth to the life to come) but Christ is therefore set in it, that he may take care of such and help them. Wherefore, altho' we are so weak and sick, we must not so despair, that we should say, that we are not in the kingdom of Christ; but the more we feel our disease, so much the more we must come unto him, for he is at hand, that he may remedy and heal us. Now if thou be weak and oppressed with faintness, feeling great affliction, here thou hast greater occasion to go unto him, and say, Most sweet Christ, I come unto thee because I am a sinner, that thou mayest help and justify me: Necessity compels thee hereunto; for the greater thy disease is, the more needful is it for thee to be healed. And Christ himself requireth the same of us, and allures us to come unto him boldly and cheerfully; but others, which are not such shepherds, think that they shall make men righteous, if they exact much of them and urge them much, whereby they only make that which is evil worse, as we see done at this day; whereas it is come to that disorder, that all things

are most miserably brought out of course, as in this place the Prophet saith. *Neither have ye bound up that which was broken.* To be broken is, as when one's leg is broken, or a wound some where given; that is, when a christian is not only weak and diseased, that he stumblenth sometime, but also runneth into great temptations, and so is brought to that pass, that he falleth and denieth the gospel, after the manner of *Peter*, who forswear Christ. Now if any should so stumble, and be utterly cast down in mind, nevertheless we must not as yet cast him of, as though he did never any more pertain to the kingdom of Christ; for we must leave Christ's property to himself, that his kingdom may remain unto himself, meer grace and mercy, whose desire is to help them only, which are grieved with their calamity and misery, and do greatly desire to be delivered from it; that his kingdom may altogether abound with comfort, and he himself be the comfortable and gentle shepherd, which allureth every one to come unto him. And all this is done by the gospel, whereby the weak are to be strengthened, the sick to be healed; for it is such a word as is fit for all distresses of consciences, giving comfort to all, that none despair although he be a great sinner. Christ therefore alone is the good shepherd, which healeth all sorts of diseases, and helpeth them that are fallen; which he that doth not, is not a shepherd. The Prophet thus goeth forward: *Neither have ye brought again that which was driven away.* What is that that is driven away? The despised soul, which is so scorned and contemned, that it is thought in vain, whatsoever christian doctrine is bestowed upon it; notwithstanding Christ doth not yet suffer, that it should be dealt roughly with. His kingdom is not to straight bound, that only the strong, whole and perfect flourish therein, for this pertaineth to the heavenly life to come; now in this kingdom only grace and sweetness abound. As God promised to the children of *Israel*, *Exod. iii. 17.* that that appointed land of *Canaan* should flow only *with milk and honey*; even as *Paul*, *1 Cor. xii. 23.* affirmeth, that *those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant*

honour. He concludeth, *Neither have ye sought that which was lost.* That is lost which seemeth to be condemned, of whose return there is scarce any hope ; of which sort in the gospel were publicans and harlots, and at this day, they who have not so much as a spark of godliness, but are untractable and unruly. Nor are they to be left, but all means are to be attempted, that at the last they may be reclaimed and brought into the right way ; which *St. Paul* often did, as when he delivered two of this sort unto Satan, *1 Tim. i. 20. Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.* And *1 Cor. v. 5. Deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* Them he cast off as condemned, and yet did not despair of them. Christ therefore is so to be preached, that he rejects no man although he be weak, but that he willingly receives, comforts and strengthens every man, so that he always appeareth to be the good shepherd ; hence it comes to pass, that men willingly resort unto him, and there is no need to compel them. The gospel so allures, and makes them willing, that they come with a certain love and pleasure, and with all boldness ; a desire and love unto Christ is increased in them, so that they do any thing willingly, who before were not to be urged and compelled. If we be constrained, we do grudgingly and unwillingly, which God plainly abhorreth ; but when I perceive that God dealeth so lovingly and gently with me, my heart is as it were ravished, so that I cannot stay myself, but I must even run unto him, leaving all other things, after which all pleasure and joy ensueth unto me. Now consider how great an evil it is, when one judgeth another. The kingdom of Christ, as we have heard, is so ordained, that it healeth and justifieth only sick and miserable consciences, wherefore all they are far deceived, which have regard only to the strong and whole ; it is great therefore, and very effectual knowledge whereby Christ is well known. It is grafted in us, by nature, to be altogether evil and wicked, and yet we would have every one to be honest, we earnestly regard strong christians, not looking to the
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sick and weak, thinking them not to be christians, if they are not strong, and judge others evil, if they be not altogether holy, when we ourselves, at the same time, exceed the rest in wickedness. Now the cause is our corrupt nature, and our blind reason, which will measure the kingdom of God according to her own opinion, whereby we think that those things are unclean before God, which seem unclean unto us, therefore that opinion must be removed out of our mind; for if thou hast very much regard thereunto, thou shalt at the last think, Alas, what shall become of me, if all christians must be such, namely, strong, whole and godly? When shall I once attain so far? And so thou shalt bring thy self into such a perplexity, that thou shalt hardly attain unto true comfort and joy. Thou therefore must be so affected, that thou say, Most gracious Jesu, although I find myself altogether weak, diseased, and in a wretched state, yet I will not therefore cast off all hope, but will fly unto thee, that thou mayest succour me; for thou only art the shepherd, and the good shepherd, such a one I am perswaded thou art, therefore I will not despair although I come unto thee being void of works. We must bestow diligence that we may wisely and well know Christ, that in his kingdom only the weak and diseased are conversant, and it is nothing else, but as it were an hospital, wherein only the sick and feeble lie, of whom a care must be had. But few men have this knowledge, for this wisdom is exceeding hard to be attained unto, so that it is wanting even unto them sometime, who have the gospel and the spirit, nor can any wisdom come unto men which is greater than it. Altho' men look into the scripture, which setteth forth the kingdom of Christ, affirming it to be most precious, nevertheless have not a care what the words signify, neither do they mark that true wisdom is hidden therein, which excelleth our wisdom by many degrees; for it is not christian wisdom to have to do with men which are accounted wise, and skilful, and to make mention and talk of them, but to be occupied among the unwise and them that lack understanding, not that delight and pleasure should be taken thereof, but that they may come from

sin and foolishness to righteousness and sound understanding. Hence it appears that christian wisdom consists in this, not that we look aloft, and consider those things which are high and wise, and behold and see ourselves in them as it were in a glass ; but that we look to those things that are below, and mark that which is humble and foolish. He which knoweth this, let him give thanks unto God ; for by this knowledge he is able to prepare and apply himself to every thing in the world. But ye shall find many, yea, even among them that preach the gospel, which are not yet come thus far. Hitherto we have been so instructed and accustomed, that none must come unto Christ, before he be altogether clean ; thou must therefore forsake that opinion, that thou mayest attain to true understanding, that thou mayest know Christ aright, how he is the true and good shepherd, whereof we have heard sufficient : Now he compareth the good shepherd with the evil, or hireling, and saith, *The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth : and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.* It is true indeed, that Christ is properly the only shepherd, even as the name of Christ belongs to him alone, yet he communicateth the same unto us, that we may be called christians ; so although he be the only shepherd, yet he imparteth the same name to them that be of the ministry. After the same manner, *Mat. xxiii. 9.* he forbiddeth, that we call *no man father upon earth*, forasmuch as there is *one only our Father, which is in heaven* ; notwithstanding Paul calleth himself the father of the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor. iv. 15.* when he saith, *In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.* So therefore it seemeth as though God alone would have the name of a father, and in the mean season notwithstanding he granteth the same name to men, that they also may be fathers, howbeit that they have not of themselves, but by Christ ; even as we are called christians, because we have nothing of our-

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selves, but that all things are given unto us through Christ. Moreover, *An hireling, saith Christ, which is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, &c.* This surely is a hard saying, that they which truly preach the gospel, and strengthen and heal the sheep, nevertheless, at the last, suffer the sheep to be caught and torn in pieces, and fly away, when the sheep have need of greatest help: When the wolves do not appear, they do their duty carefully and diligently, but as soon as they see the wolf break in, they forthwith leave the sheep. If they then have fed them well, that they be fat, strong and whole, they are the better liked of the wolves, for whom they have fed them. But what is the hidden meaning of this parable? The meaning of Christ is this: In my kingdom (which consisteth in nothing else, but that the weak be strengthened, the sick healed, the faint hearted encouraged) the holy cross shall not be wanting. For when it is preached, that Christ only, whose silly sheep we are, hath care of us, strengthens, heals and helps us, and that our strength and our own works are of no importance at all, (whereby all works of the world, and the divers sorts of worshipping God, are utterly disallowed) the world cannot abide such manner of preaching; so that it is a natural property of the gospel, to bring the cross with it as inseparably accompanying it, and he that will unfeignedly profess it before the world, must needs yield himself to bear persecution. Since the case stands thus, it is not hard to perceive what great difference there is between the true shepherds and the hirelings: He that is an hireling preacheth the gospel as long as he is reported among men to be a learned, godly and holy man: but when he is reprov'd or set upon as an heretick and wicked fellow, or mov'd to make a recantation, then he either recanteth, or taketh himself to his feet, leaving the miserable sheep alone without a shepherd, then their case becometh worse than it was before. What doth it then avail the sheep if they were well fed before? If they were true shepherds, they would spend their lives before they would so leave the sheep to the jaws

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of the wolves, and would be ready always to offer their necks to the axe for the gospel's sake. They therefore are never good shepherds which so preach the gospel, that they may thereby get unto themselves honour, riches and profit, without all doubt they are hirelings, who seek after their own things even in sound doctrine, yea, and in the word of God; wherefore they abide no longer, than while they have honour, praise and advantage thereby, but as soon as the wolf cometh, go back, deny the word, and get themselves away, leaving the sheep, which very earnestly seek for pasture and their shepherd, who may keep them from the injury of the wolves; but that good shepherd can no where be found, who flyeth away when at that time, when the sheep have most need of a defender and strengthner. The same shall happen to us in time to come, when we shall once begin to be touched indeed; then the preachers will shut their mouths, and provide for their safety by flying, and the sheep shall be miserably dispersed, so that one shall be carried this way, another that way: God grant that some of them may stand valiantly in defence of the gospel, and spend their blood, if the case so require in delivering their sheep. Thus Christ hath painted forth the hirelings in their colours, who thus saith, *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.* These words contain much, and I should spend over much time if I should handle them severally. He speaketh here of the peculiar duty that belongeth to himself; *I know my sheep*, saith he, and they again know me. Now the sum is this: Christ knoweth us to be his sheep, and we know him to be our shepherd. He knoweth us to be such sheep as are weak and diseased, which he doth not cast off, but hath a care of, and healeth them, although they be so diseased, that all the world thinketh that they are not his sheep; and this indeed is the knowledge of the world. But Christ doth not so know them, nor doth he greatly regard what manner of ones they be, but considereth whether they be sheep: They therefore are the true shepherds, who following Christ, so know their sheep, that they look unto the persons, not to the disease. My Father knoweth

knoweth me, saith Christ, but the world knoweth me not ; therefore the hour shall come, that I shall die an ignominious death upon the cross, all with one voice will cry out, Was this the son of God ? He must needs be a condemned man, and given up unto Satan, both in soul and body. So the world will consider and know me, but my Father will say in this sort : This is my well beloved Son, my King and Saviour. He beholdeth not my affliction, my wounds, my cross and death, but he considereth my person, that is, my very self. Therefore if I were in the midst of hell, or in the jaws of Satan, yet I should come out again, for the Father will not forsake me. Likewise I know my sheep, and they know me. They are certain that I am a good shepherd, they know me, therefore they come to me for succour, and cleave unto me, neither do they fear, that they are subject to manifold infirmities and diseases, they know very well that I would have such sheep to resort unto me. *Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.* Some have handled this place, and affirm it shall be fulfilled before the latter day, when Antichrist, *John* and *Elias* shall come ; which is flatly against the truth, and forged of Satan, that men might believe, the whole world shall at the last become christian ; which Satan did that he might darken the sound doctrine, that we might never rightly understand it. Beware therefore of this delusion, for after the ascension of Christ this was done and fulfilled, and is yet at this day fulfilled. As soon as the gospel was published, it was preached to the *Jews*, and this people was the sheepfold ; now, he saith, that he hath certain other sheep also, which are not of this fold, which also he must gather together, whereby he sheweth, that the gospel must be preached to the Gentiles, that they also may believe in Christ, that the *Jews* and Gentiles may be made one church : Which he performed afterward by the apostles, who preached the gospel to the Gentiles, and brought them to the faith ; so there is now one body, one church, one faith, one hope, one love, one baptism, which continueth at this day.

day, and shall continue even to the end of the world. Wherefore do not so understand it as though all men shall believe in Christ, for the cross must always be born of us, forasmuch as the greatest part is always of that faction, which persecuteth christians; the gospel also must be continually preached, that always some may be brought to christianity. And thus much for a compendious exposition of this text.

S E R M O N V I I I .

On the lost Sheep.

Luke xv. Verse 1. to the 7. *Then drew near unto him, &c.*

IN this text, dearly beloved, that doctrine is contained, which we are perswaded, and glory to be our chief doctrine, and which by best right deserveth to be called christian doctrine, to wit, of grace and forgiveness of sins, set down against the doctrine of the law, and of works. But it is a very shameful thing, that a sermon so excellent, and replenished with so great comfort and joy, should be heard of a man that is wicked and a contemner of the word of God. This is much more miserable, that all think they have thoroughly learned it; to the knowledge whereof every one will seem to have attained, thinking there is nothing in it, which he doth not perfectly understand, and that there is no need to spend any more study in learning it; although it be not grievous to God himself, neither doth it weary him, every year repeating it, or rather every day exercising it, as though he knew to preach nothing else, being unskilful and ignorant of all other kind of doctrine. And we miserable and wretched men as soon as we think we have attained to the knowledge of the chiefest doctrine, it is wearisome and tedious unto us to repeat it, whereby all pleasure and love of the word of God dieth and is extinguished in us. But before I declare the article or chief point here taught, I think it

good, that the beginning of this chapter be diligently considered, *St. Luke* sheweth what gave Christ cause to make this sermon, where he saith, *Then drew near unto him all the Publicans and sinners, for to hear him.* In which words he plainly signifieth with what men Christ kept company, namey with them, which in the sight of all men lived as it did not become them, and were openly called sinners and evil persons. Whereby it appeareth that the Pharisees seemed to have sufficient cause to find fault with Christ, for that he, which would be counted holy, did familiarly keep company with such men; for they were commonly called Publicans, at that time, to whom the *Romans* let out some city or custom, for a certain sum of money: as the *Turk* and *Venetians* do at this day, for which a certain sum of money is yearly paid, and whatsoever they shall scrape together by exactions above this sum, that is their own. So also the aforesaid Publicans did, which so gathered those tributes and money wherewith they were charged, that they themselves might have some gain thereby. And seeing that a sum of money to be paid for some city or office was not small, they by all means dealt unjustly, and used extortion in all things, in all places, and with all persons. For the Lords and masters held them so strictly, that they could not get much thereby, if they dealt rightly and justly, and oppressed no man. Hence they had a very evil report, that they were most unjust exactors, and endued with small honesty and integrity of life: the rest in general were called sinners, which otherwise lived dishonestly and wretchedly, and were defiled with filthy offences, as with covetousness, with whoredom, with surfeiting and drunkenness, and such like; such resort here unto Christ, and come to hear him, as before they had known him by report to be excellent and famous both in words and deeds. However it is certain that in them although they seemed even desperate, there was a spark of virtue and honesty, inasmuch as they longed after Christ, both coveting to hear his doctrine, and also earnestly desiring to see the works which he did, when before they knew him to be a good man, and heard no ill report either of his doctrine or works.

so that their life did far differ from his. Nevertheless they are so well disposed, that they are not his enemies, neither refuse or fly his company, but run unto him, not of any evil purpose or intent, but to see and hear some good thing, whereby they may amend their life. On the contrary the Pharisees and Scribes, which were counted most righteous and holy, are such poisonous beasts, that they are not only sore displeas'd at Christ whom they can abide neither to see nor hear, but also they cannot be content, that miserable sinners should come unto him, and hear him, whereby they being led by repentance might amend: yea they also murmur, and reprove Christ, for that he admitted and received publicans and sinners; saying, Behold, is this that holy and famous man? who will now say that he is of God, when he hath society with wicked wretches? yea rather he is a drinker of wine and a glutton, a friend to publicans and sinners. Such a report he is constrained to bear of the holy Pharisees, not that he gave himself to gluttony and surfeiting, or to feed excessively and follow riotous pleasure with them, but only because he admitted such into his company, and did not contemptuously reject them. For in their opinion he should have gone with a sad and austere countenance, in base apparel, and have remained severed from the conversation and company of men, and refused their fellowship, least that by familiar custom with them, he should be defiled, and should have done as they were accustomed to do after the manner of holy men. Of whom *Isaiah* writeth, that they studied for such purity, that they did fear and suffer against their will, even the touching of a sinner; which indeed plainly appeareth, *Luke* vii. in the Pharisee murmuring against Christ, because he suffered himself to be touched of the sinful woman: and it was they, that would always be his masters, and prescribe unto him rules whereby to live, and behave himself in this life; therefore in this place they murmur that he did not apply himself unto them, neither did disdain the company and conversation of such sinners according to their example. Now Christ also is somewhat stout,

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plainly shewing here, that he can suffer the mastership of any, but that he is altogether free and exempt from the commands of all, as commonly in the gospels we see him to be at his own will and pleasure, who nevertheless was both gentler and more serviceable than all others: but when they would deal with him by laws, and be his masters, then all friendship ceased, for he leapt back, like the adamant laid upon the anvil and stricken, speaking and doing the contrary of that which they require of him, though they seem to speak even right well, alledging the word of God, as they do in this place, where they come and say, thou must do thus, thou must follow the conversation of honest men, thou must fly the company of wicked men. This truly is a substantial doctrine, and confirmed by testimony of the scripture; for *Moses* himself commandeth the *Jews* to avoid evil men, and take away evil from among them: by this text they confirm their sayings, and come with their *Moses*, and would make Christ subject to their laws, and have him ruled by them; but Christ nevertheless will be at his own liberty: and he is not unlike the unicorn, which beast men deny that he can be taken alive, for being hunted, he suffereth himself to be wounded, to be stricken with darts, and to be slain, but not to be taken, so doth Christ also, who although he be set upon by laws, yet doth he not suffer them, but breaketh through as through a spider's web, rebuking them most sharply; as *Mat.* xii. where they found fault with his disciples, because they had plucked the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, alledging the commandment of God that the sabbath was to be kept holy, &c. he avoucheth the clean contrary, tearing in sunder the commandment, affirming the contrary both in words and examples, *Mat.* xvi. where he declareth to his apostles that he shall suffer and be crucified, but *Peter* admonisheth him to be of good cheer, and setteth before him the precept of charities, saying, *Master pity thyself*; there again he doth earnestly and sharply blame and rebuke his admonisher, and saith, *Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those*

that be of men. And in short, he is most impatient of all laws wherewith they deal with him, he will be most free from all commandments, and acknowledged to be the Lord of them: he always giveth such answers, as with which he represseth the exactors, neither will he keep any law as though he were compelled to do it; on the contrary, when he doth any thing of his own accord, then no law is so little or so light, whereunto he doth not willingly obey, and doth much more than it requireth; there can none be found more gentle and serviceable than he, if he be not urged or controuled of none: moreover he so far humbled himself, that he washed the feet of *Judas* which betrayed him, according as he himself speaketh, *I came not to be served, but to serve others, &c.* which is manifest to them that consider his life, how he walked abroad in *Judea, Samaria, Galilee*, and in the night slept on the ground, fasted forty days, and took no rest, but patiently sustained so much labour, that they feared least he should be ravished in mind, or finally bring some hurt to his body; he doth all things, but refuseth to be compelled, and suffereth no laws to be proscribed unto him, which if any set before him, he most stoutly resisteth and striveth against them; so he is both of a most stout and of a most mild spirit, neither is there any more stout, or more serviceable than he, who can do none of those things that are exacted of him, and nevertheless doth all things even most abundantly, and as it were overfloweth with a flood of good works, and watereth all things, no man commanding him, or by way of controulment exacting and requiring any thing of him; but he being permitted to do voluntarily and of his own accord. These things are done for our example, that we may learn what a true Christian man is after the spirit, least we judge him according to the law, and according to our own wisdom and understanding; for Christ is therefore our Lord, that he may make such men of us, as he is himself: and as he cannot suffer himself to be tied and bound with laws, but will be Lord of laws, yea and of all things, so also ought not the conscience of a
christian

christian to suffer them ; for we are so much made free by Christ, that our conscience may know nothing concerning any law, whose judgment and controulment it may abide to suffer : neither ought we any otherwise to be affected according to the state of the inward conscience, than if no law had been given or made ; yea as if neither ten commandments, nor one, either of God, or of bishop, or of *Cæsar* were given to us, that we may plainly say, I know nothing of any law, neither will I know any thing ; for in that state and condition, wherein we Christians are, our works, and the works of all men cease, yea and all laws also ; for where there is no work, neither can there be any law, requiring a work, and saying : this thing was to be done of thee, this to be left undone ; but we through Christ are wholly free from all works, and righteous by meer grace and mercy, whereby we live only before God. And this is our treasure, whereby we are Christians, and live and stand before God ; for how we ought to live in outward conversation, to wit in flesh and blood before the world, it doth nothing pertain unto this place : wherefore a christian must learn so to rule his conscience that he suffer it not to be held captive or entangled with any law ; but whosoever will bind and hold it with any law, let him stoutly and boldly strive against it, and do as he seeth Christ do here and elsewhere, where he useth stoutness and earnestness of mind, that no *Moses* or exactor of the law can prevail any thing with him, altho' otherwise he be most humble, most sweet and gentle of all men ; howbeit this art is above measure high and excellent, which none but he understandeth, whereof he is the master, who knoweth how to appease all laws and teachers of laws. We are not able to do so ; for the devil mightily assaults us, and as often as he setteth upon the conscience of man, he driveth him to that point, that he entrencheth into a dispute with him, what he hath done or not done ; then such a dispute beginneth, wherein is debated of our sin and righteousness, even then man is brought into a dangerous case, and into the mire, where he sticketh, neither can he escape or rid himself out, but is forthwith deeper and deeper plunged ;

for he is laden with a heavy burthen, which he is not able to bear, wherefore he walketh musing, gnawing and consuming his mind, neither can he get any quietness thereof; which I plainly feel in myself, neither can I wrestle out, and deliver myself by any travel, altho' I labour always, trying all means to escape out of this gulph, that I may answer the law, and obtain so much, that it may keep silence, and say, now at length thou hast done so much, wherewith I am constrained to be content; but all endeavour and study is in vain; for such a deep pit and dangerous gulph it is, out of which no man is able to escape, although he joins the help of all men to himself, as they can bear me witness which have made trial hereof, and do as yet daily try it; the cause is our nature, which will have to do with works and laws, and hear what they say, and follow them that say, why doth he eat with Publicans and sinners? if he did eat and drink with us, he should do well. Also, why do thy disciples pluck the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, &c. with whom it will have to do so long, till the law saith, now thou art righteous; for it can attain to no higher understanding, than that the doctrine of the law is the chiefest doctrine, and that the righteousness thereof is the best life before God. In it it continually remaineth captive and bound, nor can it by any means deliver itself out of this prison, being not able to pacify and appease the law, that it doth not exact any thing of it, or reprehend it in any thing, but it is compelled to be captive therein as in a perpetual prison, and the longer it strives and fights with the law, so much worse, until at the last it be wholly subdued. What therefore must I do, the law assaulting and urging my conscience, especially when I perceive myself not to do that which it requireth? I answer, even that which Christ doth here, who admitteth or acknowledgeth no law, although brought out of the law of God. So learn thou also to do, that thou mayest boldly say to the law, leave off law to dispute with me, I have nothing to do with thee; and for that very cause, for which thou comest to dispute with me, and to enquire of me, how good and righteous I am, I will not hear thee;

thee ; for it maketh no matter, what I am, or what I ought to do, and what not to do, but what Christ himself is, ought to do, and doth ; for now we are in the bride-chamber, where only the bridegroom and the bride must have to do, and it behoveth not thee to come thither. nor to intermeddle with any thing there ; but nevertheless it now and then knocketh and saith, in the mean season notwithstanding good works must be done of thee, the commandments of God must be kept, if thou wilt obtain salvation. Answer again : but thou hearest that it is not now time to speak of them ; for now I have obtained my righteousness and the sum of all my salvation without my works in Christ my Lord, and am already saved before thou camest, therefore I have no need of thy presence ; for as I have said, where works prevail nothing, neither is the law there of any importance or weight, and where there is no law, neither is there any sin ; a bride therefore alone, all the rest being excluded, must reign in the bride-chamber with Christ, in whom she hath all things at once, neither needeth she any thing more, which is necessary to salvation : wherefore the law must be excluded and utterly rejected and cast off, as often as it will invade and set upon the conscience ; for surely it ought not to meddle therewith, neither cometh it in time, when it will have much to do there, where it ought to have nothing to do, and whether it ought in no wise to come ; for the conscience resteth in this article of our christian faith, I believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, which suffered, died, and was buried for me, &c. unto whom both *Moses'* law, and *Cæsar's*, and divine laws ought to give place. All that therefore is boldly to be chased from me, whatsoever will dispute with me of sins, righteousness, and such like things ; behold, Christ would in this place resemble this liberty unto us, that as christians we suffer no master in our conscience, trusting constantly to this one thing, that we are baptized, and called unto Christ, and by him justified and sanctified, whereupon we may say, he is my righteousness. my treasure, my work against sin and unrighteousness, (whereof the law endeavoureth to accuse me.) If it please you to have other
righteousness,

righteousness, works, law, &c. then may ye take them from whence you will, surely ye shall find no place for them in me. Thus may a man defend himself, and stand against the suggestions and temptations of the devil and of sin, either past or present. Wherefore *Moses* and Christ are far to be separated asunder, as also works and faith, the conscience and the outward life, so that if the law will set upon me, and make my heart afraid, then it is time to send it away, and if it will not give place, to thrust it out by force, and to say, I will willingly do good works, and will go forward as much as I am able for that time that I live among men, but here I will know nothing at all of them in my conscience, and therefore let me alone, and talk nothing of them; for here I will vouchsafe to hear neither *Moses* nor the Pharisees, but Christ alone doth obtain place to reign here. I will, like unto *Mary*, sit at his feet to hear his word, but let *Martha* tarry abroad, and busy herself in the kitchen and about the household affairs. And in fine, I will not trouble the quietness of my conscience.

But what shall I say, whereas in the mean time I daily sin, which surely is evil? I answer, indeed it is true I am a sinner, and do unjustly, but I must not therefore despair, as though I were subject to condemnation, yea, or tremble because of the rigour of the law; for by faith I apprehended him, which hath apprehended me, and apply myself unto him, which hath embraced me in baptism, and hath put me in his bosom, and by the preaching of the gospel hath called me to the communion of all his good things, bidding me to believe in him. Now as I have apprehended him by faith, then may I be bold to bid the Pharisees, and *Moses* with his tables, all the lawyers with their books, all men with their works, hold their peace and give place. No law hath then any power to convince or accuse me; for in this Christ I have all things abundantly, whatsoever can be required in me. This, I say, is the doctrine and art of christians, the scope and end whereof is this, even to reign with Christ. But blockish men do not understand it, taking hereupon occasion to live more freely,

as they list, saying what need is there that I should do good works, forasmuch as Christ hath abrogated the law, &c. Their foolish babbling is in no wise to be born, for Christ is on the other part also to be considered of thee, and thou must mark what he doth more; for here he himself saith, That he is that man which seeketh the miserable and lost sheep, which also he witnesseth by his present deed, by receiving sinners and Publicans, and by preaching unto them. Whereby thou seest that he doth fulfil much more than the law commandeth to be done, and teacheth thee to do the same by his example. He is of such an heroical spirit, that he will not be under the law, yet doth he of his own accord more than the law requireth; do thou so also, neither look when thou shalt be forced and driven on by the law, but without the law, and of thine own accord, do that which is needful to be done, as *Peter*, 1 Pet. ii. 16. admonisheth, saying, *As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.* And *Paul*, Rom. vi. 18. *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.* These are they, which do all things with a free conscience, without the law, and unconstrained; for when the gospel is truly in the heart, it maketh a man to be such a one, as doth not look while the law cometh, but is so full of joy in Christ, that he is carried unto good works, doing well to all men, as much as he is able, and that of his own accord, before the law cometh into his mind. Moreover he bestoweth both body and life, having no regard what he must therefore suffer, and so he is full of good works, which voluntarily flowing as it were out of a continual fountain are derived unto many: As Christ being compelled, doth not abide to take up so much as a straw, but uncompelled giveth himself to be crucified for me, and for the whole world, dying for the lost sheep. Howbeit it is very necessary to discern these things well, when it is come to hand-strokes, and within the throwing of the dart, as it is said, the law and sin disputing now with thy conscience, then see that thou do boldly repress *Moses*, and bid him keep silence, sending

sending him abroad to the old man. Drive him into *Moses* school, that he may dispute with him, and say, Dost thou hear? Thou art too slow and sluggish in giving and serving thy neighbour. When Christ is to be served of thee, thou wilt more willingly serve thy belly; thou wilt come in no peril for Christ's sake, thou dost deceitfully rob thy neighbour, circumventing him by what means soever thou canst; For that sluggish and flying labour, and following only idleness and wantonness, use the tables of stone, whom even against his will constrain to go on in his duty. Wherefore when thou shalt set upon me, in that thing which is right and meet (thou must say unto *Moses*) I will willingly hear thee, and follow thy admonitions, namely, according to the outward man, and in outward life, where thou mayest bear rule like a school-master, and as one governing a family: Where thou hast power to command me, to be obedient, modest, patient, good to my neighbour, dutiful and liberal to the poor, and to celebrate God with praises poured forth to his glory; moreover to be content for his word sake to abide the contumelies and slanders of all persons, and to suffer every kind of injury of the world. With all which I am not greatly moved, yea, I would do more things than I am able to do according to the outward man; for the Spirit, by the testimony of Christ, is willing and ready, although the flesh be weak. But if thou wilt go so far, whether it is unlawful for thee to come into my heart and conscience, thou wilt I neither see nor hear thee; for there I have an unspareable treasure, whose name is Christ, and is free, who never pertaineth to burden the outward man, though he be laden with a sufficient burden, but thou must not burden the conscience at all; for he that enjoyeth Christ is above all laws, as *Paul* saith, *the law is not given for the just*, who notwithstanding in the mean time doth more things, than he is able to fulfil in the flesh: For according to the law we are sinners, and concerning our person we must abide under it; but through Christ we are far above the law. So *Moses* without Christ must exercise his gross works, whereby he may compel men which are not yet christians, to be

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honest civilly before the world ; for he doth not make christians righteous and honest : However I will not deny that he doth this, that he sheweth unto them their duties, which otherwise they would willingly fulfil and satisfy, but the flesh doth not so willingly and with that readiness it ought, follow the spirit. In which respect they are to be admonished and urged, the conscience nevertheless remaining free, so that the law hath no power to accuse them ; wherefore such doctrine and admonition ought to be among christians (as it is certain that among the apostles there was) whereby every man may be admonished of his state and office. As for the rest, which are not christians, they must be ruled by *Moses* laws, and burdened with them both outwardly and inwardly, whereby they may be forced and afflicted, that they may do that which is right, forsaking that which is evil, although they do it not with a patient and willing mind. Of which kind are the rash multitude of the unruly common sort of obstinate people, who do not regard nor understand the liberty of Christ, although they can babble and glory of many things concerning the gospel, and they notwithstanding do abuse it only to the lust of their mind ; let them know that they are under the discipline and correction of *Moses* : For they are not such men as are capable of this doctrine, which live with such a secure mind, that they think they have no need of the gospel, or that they sufficiently know it. But they only are capable hereof, which are busied with the disputation of the conscience and the law, of sin and of the wrath of God, in consideration whereof they become astonished, feeling the words of the heart speaking thus : Alas, how wretchedly have I led my life ? What account shall I make unto God ? and so they are too fearful and amazed ; the other more than is meet, secure and presumptuous, feeling no law nor sin, no nor any trouble at all. And the case standeth very unequally with both, for they which should have nothing to do with the law, do most of all wrestle with it, and alone feel it ; but others of whom only the law should be felt, are nothing moved with it ; yea, the more grievously they are terrified by the law and the

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wrath of God, so much they become more indurate. There must therefore be another master to amend these, namely, the slayer and tormentor, who may teach them, being unwilling to do well in the name of the Lord and with favour, in the name of another to do that that becometh them, with no favour, the reward also of hell-fire and all miseries being set before them. Howbeit Christ both here and every where else, both by doctrine and also by his own example teach us, which feel our sin and the burden of the law, and would willingly be christians, to accustom ourselves to fight against it, and drive it from us unto others; to give no place to the devil, who would by the law break up the bride-chamber of Christ, and thrust himself into his place; that is, take away from the conscience her joy and comfort, whereby he may draw man into despair, that he may not be able cheerfully to lift up his heart and head before God: For this is the art of christians, whom it behoveth to know and learn more things, than that prophane and blockish common sort knoweth and understandeth, that we may know well the manner how to fight with the devil, and to bear his assault, as often as he shall set upon us, and dispute with us out of *Moses*; with whom when he goeth about such things, we must not dispute in many words, but must forthwith appeal from *Moses* to Christ, and cleave to him: For all his travels and deceits tend unto this end, that he may craftily pluck us from Christ, and draw us unto *Moses*; for he knoweth full well, the matter being brought to that point, the victory shall be on his side. Wherefore thou must again and again take heed that thou suffer not thyself to be plucked out of this haven, neither to be inticed out of this circle; and although he shall lay many things against thee out of the law, as it is the word of God, it is meet that thou obey, yet mayest thou answer him and say, Dost thou not hear, that I will now know or hear nothing concerning the law? For we are now in that circle and haven, wherein it is not inquired what I must do, or leave undone, but by what means we obtain to have God gentle and favourable unto us, and how we get remission of sins. Here I will abide in the arms
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of Christ, cleaving inseparably about his neck, and creeping into his bosom, whatsoever the law shall say, and my heart shall feel; nevertheless, so that we keep the principal part of our faith sincere, and the chief point safe, outwardly I will willingly do and suffer what burden soever it shall lay upon me. Behold, he that understandeth this art well, should be a right and perfect man, as Christ was, so far above all law, that he might be bold to call *Peter* Satan, and the *Pharisees* fools, and leaders of the blind, and put *Moses* himself to silence, and so live altogether without the law, and yet at the same time fulfil all laws; be obstinate and stout against all that will enforce and constrain him, and yet notwithstanding of his own accord profit and obey all. But truly herein consisteth all the defect, that we do never fully and perfectly learn this art, the devil so letting and hindring us, that we go preposterously to work, being too ready and willing to hear all things whatsoever the law saith; at whose threatenings also we are not a little astonished, which it had been better for us not to have heard. Again in outward things also we give ourselves to liberty more than is convenient, whereas the body should be kept under and bridled with works, whereby it might be compelled to bear whatsoever should be grievous unto it, when as yet it oftentimes sinneth, yet so, that sin abide without, where it must abide, and have his *Moses*, who always may be near unto it, with his exactions; however inwardly let no sin or law bear rule or reign, but let Christ alone rule, and reign by meer grace, joy and comfort. So all things should be done rightly, and man should be apt and fit to all good things, both to do and also to suffer, with a glad and obedient heart, by faith not feigned, in the grace of God through Christ: Wherefore let the conscience bear rule over all laws, let the flesh be subject to every law. Now he that is skilful of this art, let him give thanks to God, and take heed that he be not too wise in it, and that he conceive not a false persuasion of knowledge; for I and my like do not yet understand it, as we ought to understand it, although we be most expert of all, and have been long exercised therein; for it is such an

art as no man knoweth, but they which are christians, to the learning whereof they are compelled to be scholars all their life long. Therefore far from the knowing hereof are those secure spirits, who alone know all things, but who in very deed beside that false periwasion of knowledge, know nothing, and by this very periwasion they are farthest of all drawn from this art, and from the whole gospel; neither is there any thing more grievous, no nor a greater hurt can be brought unto christianity, than by those petty doctors and masters, which seem unto themselves to have some wisdom; for they fill all corners of the world with sects and factions, being such men as serve neither God nor men, hear neither the law nor the gospel, but contemn the law with a secure mind, and loath the gospel with hearing it, always seeking after new doctrine. But truly we teach nothing for their sakes, inasmuch as they are not worthy of our doctrine, and are so punished of God, that they can never learn it, and bring forth any fruit thereby, although they hear it; therefore let us keep it, whereof they take away nothing from us, but that they hear a vain noise and sound of it. Thus much for the first part of this sermon, in which Christ teacheth by his own example, how every man ought to keep his conscience free from all disputation of the law, and terror of the wrath of God and sin: Now consequently I think it good diligently to consider this excellent parable of Christ, where he saith, *Luke xv. 4. What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?* Christ is not only of a great mind, who will not follow the words and mastery of them, but bringeth probable causes of his greatness, with wisdom refelling their objections, and stopping their mouths, so that they cannot murmur against him. Moreover, he convinceth them by their own example and deed, and concludeth, that they ought for good cause to be utterly ashamed, being bold to speak unto him, and reprehend that in him, in so great a matter, which they themselves do in a much less; for by what means could
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he more readily answer them, than if he should say, Will you, O excellent and most wise masters, command this thing, and teach me to drive away and alienate from me miserable sinners, which long after me, and come to hear me; there is nothing that you yourselves do not for one lost sheep, who leaving ninety and nine in the wilderness (that is, in the field and at the fold) run to seek that which is lost, neither do ye leave off seeking, until ye have found it, and brought it home? And you count it to be well done, for which if any should find fault with you, without doubt ye would reprove him as mad and beside himself. And should not I, as a saviour of souls, do likewise with men, as you do with a lost sheep? Seeing there is no comparison even of one soul to all the creatures living and breathing in the earth. Why therefore are you not utterly ashamed of your doings, presuming to reprehend me in this work, which you yourselves are forced to commend? Wherefore if ye reprove and find fault with me, you yourselves are first to be reprov'd and found fault with. This is rightly to have answered, and with honour to have stopped the mouths of these fault-finders, the causes being sufficiently shewed, why they ought not here to find fault with or controul him. They have well yielded unto him with shame, as it is meet, and have gained nothing by their mastership, than utter shame and ignominy; for it is a shame to such masters, and an exceeding great abomination, that they stick not to arrogate so much unto themselves, as to teach that man, and admonish him of his duty, who of God is appointed a master over all. But it ought so to fall out, that he which will rule and judge a christian by his mastership, and endeavoureth to bring him from his baptism and the article of Christ, to be ruled by his wisdom or law, doth not only become a fool, but is also the author of extream abomination and homicide; for he worketh shame to the temple and sanctuary of God, and with devilish rashness invadeth his kingdom, where he alone with the Holy Ghost must reign. Wherefore he well deserveth, that God bring him to shame and ignominy before the whole world, seeing that he taketh

to himself mastership in that place, where only Christ ought to be master, and not unworthily to his great evil he kicketh against the prick. Wherefore it is not good to jest with christians, for they are saints, and let him that is wise not be too busy with that man, whose name is Christ, for he can get no gain thereby, for Christ is most impatient of all their mastership and doctrine; so also a christian must by no means suffer them, for if he suffer them, giving place to such suggestions, to wit, thou oughtest to have done this or that, or as yet thou oughtest to do it, then is his case become exceeding ill, inasmuch as he hath fallen from Christ. Therefore we must endeavour to hold Christ fast, having no regard, although all the world should teach us; for if we shall abide with him, and hold the true understanding of the article concerning him, we shall easily overcome all such masters and teachers; for this Christ will be free from all mastership, contending to be the only master and controuler of all men, that either in favour they may reverently acknowledge him for the Lord and master, and themselves for fools, or in fury and indignation, being subject to the reproach of all men, may utterly perish. But I have said before, that the present doctrine for the exceeding goodness, sweetness and consolation thereof, is not to be set forth to the rude, blockish and unruly common sort, to whom we do not preach it, but to those only, which strive with terror and anguish of conscience, or stand in peril and danger of death, and dispute with the devil concerning their sins committed, whereby he would drive them into despair. Before these this amiable image is to be set, by which they may receive comfort and cheerfulness of mind; as for others which live with a secure mind, and little know what anguish and spiritual sorrow is, they are to be led to *Moses* to the tormentor. This is an image most pleasant and amiable, and more artificially painted, than any *Apelles* is able to paint with his pencil; neither doth any man excel in such eloquence of speech, that he is able sufficiently to declare and comprehend it in words. Wherefore it is to be apprehended in the heart by faith; nevertheless we must speak something

thing of it, that we may give cause and occasion to others to think and consider more earnestly thereof. I also saith he, have an hundred sheep, that is, that little flock of all *Christendom*, of which number one is lost, and fallen from the communion of christians: Now dost thou desire to know the affection of my mind? Then must thou bestow thy diligence, to paint out well and artfully both the shepherd and the lost sheep; for that shepherd, which is but a man, and guideth the flock, which is created to be slain, hath great regard to preserve it in safety, and is not a little careful how he may find the sheep when it is lost, and bring it home again; and with no less desire the sheep longeth after the shepherd: Whom if it understand to be his own shepherd (as by nature it doth) it feareth him not, but runneth unto him with great confidence, and being full of good hope, goeth before him; yea, as soon as ever it heareth his voice, it answereth by bleating. On the other side also, the shepherd hath great care and desire to find again the lost sheep which hath strayed from him; both he himself seeketh, and sendeth forth servants to seek, where soever he thinketh it is strayed, neither doth he leave seeking, until, having found it, he hath brought it home; for he is not ignorant how miserable a living creature a solitary sheep is, whose life consisteth only in the help and safe keeping of the shepherd, inasmuch as it cannot help itself, but being destitute of a shepherd, perisheth. Moreover, it is also fearful and ready to go astray, and as soon as it hath wandered out of the way, and from the shepherd, forthwith cometh into peril of life, and cannot tarry, although it cometh to another flock, and a strange shepherd calleth it, it goeth on through thorny and feldgy places, through waters and fens, until it come in danger of the wolf, or by some other mischief utterly perisheth; and although it be brought into by-ways and deserts, and is now thought to be lost, notwithstanding it hath this hope, as much as nature hath put into it, that if it might hear his shepherd, it should exceedingly rejoice, being delivered from all evil. Moreover, neither doth the shepherd therefore seek it, that when he hath found it, he may wrathfully fight with

it, or handle it ill for that it hath gone astray, or cast it to the wolf to be torn to pieces ; but all his care and thought is, that he may most gently allure it to himself, and deal with it most lovingly, to wit, lay it on his shoulders and carry it, until he hath brought it unto the rest of the flock.

This is that picture, resembled in this simple creature, whereby Christ shews us, what affection of mind he bears towards us, and also what we ought to promise ourselves concerning him ; for since this is manifestly true in nature, the same is much more true in the kingdom of Christ, which is the kingdom of grace, love and consolation. Therefore see that thou also set before thyself the sheep pertaining to this shepherd, then shalt thou truly understand how much greater and earnest care he hath taken to preserve it, with how great study and diligence, from the heart, he is careful for it, that he may find it and bring it home again ; for he will have his marvellous and continual kindness, and the unspeakable flames of his most fervent love to be shewed or rather poured forth upon miserable, fearful and trembling consciences, which unfeignedly lament their sins, and desire to be delivered from them, and such are his true sheep ; for with a man that hath lost his shepherd, and heareth him not, the case standeth as with the lost sheep, which being estranged from his shepherd, strayeth more and more from him. And although it be called by the voices of others, and runneth unto them, thinking that it shall find his own shepherd, yet it findeth him not ; he runneth from corner to corner, straying up and down, and wandereth farther out of the way ; neither is it succoured with any comfort or help, before it hear the voice of the true shepherd ; We learn this to be true by daily experience, and every man tryeth it in his own heart ; for the gospel of Christ being taken away, or not exercised, some false master, or author of some sect, in another place some fantastical fellow thrusteth in himself, one perverteth the supper of the Lord, the other baptism, one teacheth this, the other that, of a singular holiness of life, both which allureth to himself the miserable and straying sheep, and sheweth himself
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so, as though he were the true shepherd. But by the means of these the sheep is entangled only with greater errors, until it wandereth altogether out of the way: to these cometh the devil also with his cogitations, which he craftily putteth into the heart. Alas, if thou had done this or that, or had not done, &c. with all which he practiseth nothing else, but that he may make it fall into great errors, that it may not know where to abide; and this truly falleth out, Christ being removed out of sight, and the article of him being extinguished: whatsoever shall be taught, counselled, and shewed, by what means soever, all things nevertheless become worse and draw near unto distraction, unless the true shepherd come with his voice, and call back and bring again the straying sheep. Hence it appears that it is exceeding necessary and convenient, that we learn to know Christ well, that we do not behold him as a cruel tyrant or an angry judge, (as the preachers hitherto have set him forth to the people, and the devil himself sheweth him to the hearts of men no otherwise to be thought upon and considered) who hath drawn his sword already against us: but as the sheep doth naturally look on the shepherd, not as on him, of whom it shall be terrified, chaced, and slain, but as soon as it beholdeth him, is cheered and put in hope of help, and is no more in fear or solitariness, but forthwith goeth to him with all boldness; so also when we desire to conceive a trust and hope of help, and to be strengthened and eased with comfort, then the voice of our shepherd, that is of Christ, must be known and learned well of us, all voices of other shepherds not regarded which draw us only into errors, and toss us up and down, and that only article must be heard and comprehended in mind, which Christ so lovingly and comfortably painteth in our heart, as by any means it can be painted, that I may with all confidence and boldness say, the Lord Jesus Christ is my shepherd, and I alas! the lost sheep, which hath strayed in the desert, but am troubled with anguish of mind for my wretched life, desiring with most fervent affection, to have God favourable unto me, and peace in my conscience; but truly I understand he is no less desirous of
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me, than I am of him ; I labour to come unto him, and he is careful and desirous that he may bring me unto himself. If we were certainly thus persuaded of his affection toward us, and did grave in our mind that it so greatly desireth after us, and is so sweetly poured forth upon us, it cannot be, that we should abhor and fear him, but we would with a cheerful mind run unto him, and tarry only with him, abiding to hear the doctrine or voice of no other ; for the doctrine of another coming between, either of *Moses* or of any other whatsoever, doth nothing but disquiet the conscience, so that it cannot find any peace or quietness. Therefore Christ saith, *Mat. xi. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls, &c.* As though he said, *Run and seek in what places soever ye will, hear and learn whatsoever can be preached unto you, yet shall ye find no quietness of heart, ye shall find no peace but in me alone.* We will easily permit good works to be preached, a righteous life to be taught, the ten commandments to be delivered by instruction, and all things else which serve to the amendment of life, but so far only, as they are taught to the unruly and untractable common sort, also to force and bridle the wantons of our old Adam. But they which preach to the conscience wrapped in anguishes and terrors because of sin, ought to preach no other words than of Christ, *For this is that lost and miserable sheep, of whom no other master is to be born with, but that only shepherd Christ,* who neither urgeth it with the law, nor is eager upon it, but most sweetly and gently handleth it and layeth the miserable and sinful sheep upon his shoulders, doing that of his own accord, which was to be done of the sheep, as we shall hear by and by more at large : but surely in this place the doctrine of both, or the voice of *Moses* and of Christ, must be well discerned ; for *Moses* ought to have no entrance to the lost sheep, no nor by any means is to be admitted to it, although he preach best of all other : for if confounding these, we will comfort and erect the troubled conscience
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by the law after this sort ; be of good cheer, for thou hast not committed homicide, neither hast thou defiled thyself with adultery, neither hast thou perpetrated any other heinous offence, or done it with a good will, &c. This also is a comfort, but endureth a very small time, neither can it sustain the assaults and violence of the enemy, nor bringeth it or containeth any thing but confidence of itself, wherewith the miserable sheep is nothing helped ; for it remaineth as much wandering and lost as before, neither can it help itself, or come to his own shepherd ; but if we will help and succour it, we must shew it the true shepherd, who cometh to seek it, that having found it he may bring it home, and exhibit his voice unto it. Hereby it may obtain *true and effectual consolation*, and be bold to answer Moses, and say, *Now truly I have not any care either of thy comfort or terror, and if it please thee, amplify my sins as much as possibly thou canst, make me a man-slayer and parricide, or the worst man of all men ; for now I will neither hear thee with an astonished mind, nor follow thee : but this is the sum of my comfort and salvation, I confidently trust, that I have such a shepherd as seeketh me of his own accord, and having laid me on his shoulders carrieth me.* Let us enter into dispute hereof if thou art so disposed, not how righteous or unrighteous I am, but how I have come unto Christ ; wherefore we must always preach according to the capacity and quality of the hearers ; *For I have said that this doctrine is not fit for a blockish and untractable man.* As it is not meet that a laborious thresher should be fed with delicates, wherewith the sick are to be strengthened and refreshed, but the hireling is to be fed with brown bread and cheese, and with water ; the other dainty meats and easy of digestion thou must reserve for the sick or children, which are able to digest no gross meat ; so in this thing also thou must observe the same difference, that thou rightly distribute these things, and give unto every one his portion as a prudent householder. For thou must keep the doctrine of *Moses* and of the law, until thou light upon unruly, hardened, and untractable men, which lead their life securely and without fear, Set before these only
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strong and common meats of threshers to be eaten, that is, offer angry *Moses* unto them to be heard, who lightneth and thundreth from mount *Sinai*, who terrifieth the people of *Israel*, bringeth them into the desert, and drowneth king *Pharaoh* in the red sea; but when thou shalt light upon troubled hearts, and weak and afflicted consciences, which are now become lost sheep, then speak not a word concerning *Moses* and all the works of God done in the law, but let thy talk be only of the works done by Christ in the time of grace, and well and diligently repeat to the miserable conscience, how he sheweth himself toward the lost sheep, to wit, that he is the gentle and good shepherd, which is exceeding careful for the lost sheep, so that leaving all the rest he travelleth to find that one, and to bring it again into the way, neither doth he leave off till he hath brought it home; for it is a great grief unto him, that any man should be in sin, and therefore be troubled and fear, neither would he that any should remain therein, and so perish; wherefore he doth most lovingly allure and provoke thee by his sweet gospel to come unto him, and suffer thyself to be laid upon his shoulders and carried, and to be called his well beloved sheep. As for them that live securely and pleasantly, and have no regard whether God be angry or pleased, they are not to be called lost sheep, but rather wild goats, which suffer not themselves either to be fed or ruled: but he, to whom his sins are a burthen, and who fighteth in the fight of faith, where he is not in danger to lose *Moses*, but Christ himself, and the principal article, that is, where the conscience is in anguish and fear, whether it hath God gentle and favourable, this is that very man, who with groaning and sighs seeketh out and cryeth for his shepherd, and desireth to be helped, as *David* doth *Psal.* cxix. 176. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant, &c.* In the mouth of these this sugar and these pleasant delicacies have a good taste, with which the heart is refreshed, that it fall not into despair, but being again recreated with such a consolation, is lifted up not by *Moses* but by Christ; not that it hath *Moses* a friend or is able to pacify him, but because it hath God favourable

favourable through Christ, wheresoever *Moses* remaineth with his comfort; although it be very well, as also it is meet, that we do not contrary to the law practice thievery, that we steal not, that we commit not homicide, or otherwise do injury and hurt to our neighbour: howbeit that is not the right comfort of the heart, but only a momentary tickling of the outer skin, not during and piercing; for the devil coming and setting upon the heart, all comfort is utterly taken away. And although in some point thou hast done well and rightly, he nevertheless again bringeth ten-fold more, wherein thou hast done amiss, yea even in the most pure works he can find much impurity, and turn all into sin; wherefore we must have no wise trust unto such comfort, but must rather refuse it and say, whether I be good or evil at this present I do not dispute, but will reserve it rather unto that place, where it shall be taught and intreated concerning works; but in this circle wherein I now stand, there is no place to entreat of works and integrity of life, but of Christ and his works, which he doth towards me a lost sheep. Wherefore if thou demand whether I be good or honest, I answer plainly, no; but if thou demand whether Christ be good and righteous, that undoubtedly I am able to confirm, and him I set for my goodness and righteousness, unto whom also alone I courageously appeal. For in his name I am baptised, of which thing I have a seal and testimony, to wit, that I am his sheep, and that he is that good shepherd, seeking his lost sheep, and dealing with me without all law, exacting nothing of me, neither as *Moses* urgeth, troubleth and forceth me, but sheweth unto me his meek and most sweet grace, while he submitteth himself to me, and layeth me on his shoulders, and carrieth me; why therefore should I fear the thundings of *Moses* and of the devil, when as I rest in his safe custody, which hath given unto me his righteousness and all other things, which holdeth and carrieth me, so that there is now no more danger lest I perish, I remaining a sheep and denying not my shepherd, but reposing myself wholly in him? thus hast thou Christ most lovingly set forth unto thee; now only faith is required,

quired, whereof there is great need; for this doctrine is excellent, and replenished with most sweet comfort, but this is wanting, that the use thereof is not felt, where it ought to be felt; for when the sheep go astray, that is, when a man feeleth himself grieved with his sins, and cannot tell where to abide, and is cast of the devil into a great fear of mind, then he, always runneth unto the contrary, neither can he comprehend or conceive in mind, that this is true, all things falling out of his mind, which he heard here, because of the present feeling and fear. For the devil hath blinded his eyes, neither can he perceive any thing else but the wrath and indignation of God. Wherewith his heart is so burthened, that he is not able to raise up himself in mind, and to turn his eyes any other where: nay he lieth so drowned in it, that Christ appeareth no otherwise unto him but as an angry judge, as he hath hitherto been painted out, and is so beaten into the hearts of all by the wicked Papists, sitting on the rainbow, with a sword coming out of his mouth. For this is one of the most deceitful crafts of the devil, yea and of his mischiefs which he practiseth against the miserable sheep, to blind his eyes, that he may not know any more his own shepherd, and under a pretence of Christ to lead a man to *Moses*, disputing as much of Christ, as he had accustomed to do before of *Moses*. Wherefore we have need of a strong and firm faith, that we may believe these things to be true, when a man himself, must dispute even against himself; for the sense is vehement of itself, whereunto the devil also cometh marvelously amplifying sin and terror, the greatness and anguish whereof is able to consume even the marrow in the bones, yea and the heart in the body. It cannot therefore be perfectly learned so soon as some think. In prosperity it is easily believed that Christ is sweet and amiable, but anguish and terror coming upon and overwhelming the mind, man is blind and without good understanding, and will judge only according to the sense and understanding of his own heart, which he followeth, and confirmeth himself in his own error; for he is taken therein, and can think no otherwise, but that it is true, never-

nevertheless it is not so. Now it were a point of this art, for a man thus to say unto his heart, if thou confesse thyself to be a lost sheep, thou sayest right; but that thou wilt therefore run from Christ, and so think of him in thy mind, as though he were a man, which would chafe and terrify thee, it is a suggestion and temptation of the devil; for if thou didst rightly consider him, and confesse him as thy true shepherd, then wouldst thou not fly from his sight, neither would conceive terror in thy mind, but with all chearfulness and boldness would run unto him; for surely he is not therefore ready at hand that he may condemn thee, but he cometh to thee, seeking thee, that having laid thee on his shoulders he may carry thee, and exempt and deliver thee from sins, errors, the devil and his power, yea and from all peril. Thou perceivest therefore that thou art a sinner, and hast deserved indignation, so much more earnestly is that shepherd to be sought and called for of thee, that he may deliver thee from it; of whom consider no otherwise in thy mind, than the sheep doth of his own shepherd, whom it cannot fear, but seeing and hearing him becometh glad and chearful, although it hath run from him, so that for this deed it hath a sufficient cause to fear: the whole matter therefore consisteth only in this, that thou do perfectly learn Christ aright, and consider him according to the word of God, and not according to the proper cogitations of thy mind, and thine own senses; for the cogitations of men are false and lying, but his words are true and cannot deceive: wherefore the word alone is to be engraven in our heart, and we must cleave unto it with a constant mind, whereby we may reprove our own heart of lying; for it alone must be true, and all things else that are contrary to it false and vain. But truly this is an art, whereof I am ignorant, but much more those other light spirits, who boast many things of it, as they that know all things, when they have once heard any thing thereof, and nevertheless they do not perceive or try so much as any whit of it; for it is an easy thing to speak and preach of it, but how hard a thing it is to prove it indeed,

deed, they only have experience, who earnestly make trial thereof. This is a most amiable demonstration of our Christ, described by himself in this Gospel, wherein he hath most abundantly poured forth the flames of his most fervent heart, and affection towards us, shewing that he hath exceeding great care and regard to recover his sheep, which alone leaving ninety and nine, he seeketh and enquireth diligently for, not to terrify it and beat it, but that he may help it, and having found it, may bring it home, and with his loving and sweet voice and speaking unto it may cheer it, being miserable and afflicted in conscience. By all which thou seest, how acceptable a thing thou shalt do unto him, if thou trust and cleave unto him with thy whole heart, and promise to thy self from him all goodness and love. Secondly, thou plainly seest this also, how by all manner of outward signs and means, he poureth forth his joy and unspeakable goodness, and also having found his sheep how loving he sheweth himself, for surely he dealeth not with it by any law, as by his right he might deal, and drive it before him as he doth the rest, or suffer it to go by him ; but he doth none of these, but layeth it upon his shoulders, and all the journey carrieth it through the desert, taking all the labour and trouble upon himself, that at the least wise the sheep may rest. Neither doth he it grudgingly, but willingly, for he is full of joy for his sheep recovered. Now mark this also, how well it goeth with the sheep, with how great quietness and ease it lyeth on his shepherd's shoulders, neither doth it unwillingly see itself resting so sweetly, being delivered from the difficulty of the journey, as also void of all fear both of dogs and wolves, that is, of all errors and lies, yea, and of all perils and mischiefs : And this surely deserveth to be called a very pleasant picture, exceeding amiable and comfortable to be looked upon. No otherwise doth our Lord Jesus Christ deal with us, while he delivereth us, which he hath once done corporally, by his passion and death, but now doth often the same by his power, and spiritually by the preaching of his word. Wherefore he layeth us upon his shoulders, carrieth and defendeth us, so that we are safe from all

perils

perils of death and the devil, which although they terrify us, and shew themselves so, as though they would devour us, yet prevail they nothing; for whereas we are carried, it is a safeguard unto us, and the same exempteth us from all dangers, and putteth away all fear; as the sheep lying upon the shepherd's shoulders, is little careful, though the dogs bark, and the wolf craftily goeth up and down, but rather hanging down the head, is quiet and sleepeth soundly; so we also, if we stand and abide unmoveable in this article, I believe in Jesus Christ our Lord, who suffered, died, rose again for us, &c. there is no cause why we should be careful lest we perish, or be devoured of the devil, though he open his jaws never so wide; for we are not then in our own way, neither walk we upon our own feet, but we hang upon the neck of our shepherd, and lie upon his own shoulders, where we are safe enough. For sin, death, and hell, although indeed they be terrible, yet dare they not set upon him, otherwise if it were not for this, we should be miserable sheep, which should forthwith be brought into a lamentable and wretched case. For even as a sheep cannot take heed and foresee to itself, that it stray not out of the way, unless it be led of the shepherd, and when it hath strayed and is lost, cannot by itself come again to the shepherd, but must be sought and inquired for of him, until he hath found it, and so must be laid upon his shoulders and brought home again, lest that it be again frayed and chased from him, or catch'd of the wolf and rent in pieces; so we also our selves can profit our selves neither by help nor counsel, that we might obtain peace and quietness of conscience, and escape out of the hands of the devil, death, and hell, except Christ himself repeat his word unto us, and call us again unto him; and although we come unto him, and now stand in faith, yet it is not in our power to keep ourselves therein, or to stand by our own strength, unless he often by the power of his word, hold, lift up, and carry us, for the devil always imagineth and purposeth deceit and destruction towards us, going about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour, as St. Peter witnesseth. Here is no place to boast of free-will,

or of our own strength, which is none, neither in beginning any thing, neither in going forward, much less in persevering or continuing in it, but Christ our shepherd alone doth all things. But we are sure that while we lye upon the shoulders of Christ, we shall remain safe from all terror and misfortune; for he will not suffer us to be plucked or taken from his neck, neither will he himself cast us off, being so glad and joyful, that he hath found his lost sheep, and brought it again to the rest of the flock; and in fine here is no terror or trouble, but meer life and grace, whereby he handleth his sheep most lovingly and gently. But on the contrary *Moses*, not as a shepherd of miserable and weak sheep, but as a master of stronger cattle, driveth his herds with a staff and rod, three days journey through the desert, until they be tired and weary with walking; of this shepherd those hardened and wild ones are to be tamed and bridled; and we also, when we shall be under *Moses*, to wit, according to the flesh and the outward life, must go, and do that which the law requireth: But in that we are, and are called Christians, we must by no means suffer, that any work be laid upon us or exacted of us, but must give ourselves only to Christ to be carried and gently lifted up, not upon horses and chariots, but even upon his own shoulders; which cometh to pass, when he suffereth the word to be preached unto us, and we believe the same, that he dyed for us, that on the cross he bore our sins in his body, that he hath overthrowed the devil, death, and sin, and put them under his feet, and hath made and opened unto us, entrance to eternal life: We must not have respect to our own life, how righteous and strong we are, but we must study upon this one thing, that we may rest lying upon his shoulders: In this circle we must have no care of sin, death, life, or pensiveness, inasmuch as we have all things to the full in Christ, who beareth and keepeth us. Now he is not content that with such great travel he seeketh his sheep, and having found it, he carrieth it with incredible joy, he maketh festival days, and exceedingly rejoiceth, calling together his neighbours and friends, that they may rejoyce with him; yea, he affirmeth.

firmeth, that God also in heaven with the whole heavenly host, do rejoyce over one sinner that repenteth: In which words he sheweth who he is, which deserveth to be called his lost sheep, namely such a sinner, as being led by repentance of his former life, most fervently desiring to be delivered from sins, and earnestly endeavouring to come unto Christ; such a one hath a miserable and troubled, yea, a contrite and humbled heart, and an afflicted conscience, the devil by all means fighteth against, and so presseth it, that it is almost overcome with distresses, &c. but Christ assisteth and comforteth him, for he seeketh no sheep but that which is lost, and cannot help it self. Can Christ be preached with greater gentleness, and more effectual consolation of words? Or what should he do more to cheer the mind of a sinner, and confirm in him a sure confidence towards himself? We see him set forth by himself to us miserable sinners, as a most loving shepherd, who most sorrowfully seeketh his sheep being lost, and most joyfully bringeth them again being found, and taketh so great joy, that with him all the Angels and Saints rejoyce over us. Now he that firmly believes these things, would without doubt, through Christ, receive true comfort and joy; as here he hath a certain promise, that if he surely cleave unto Christ, and rest upon his shoulders, he shall be an acceptable and welcome guest in the kingdom of Heaven, and shall be received with exceeding great joy. But we being troubled with sorrow and anguish of conscience, have a far different feeling and affection, when the heart thinks that all the Angels stand behind us with drawn swords, which so troubles us, that we can conceive no cheerfulness of mind, neither of God, nor of the Angels; and there are some which can behold no creature with a glad mind, fearing the beholding of the sun, yea, being sore afraid at the noise of a leaf; all which proceed from hence, they trouble and vex themselves with their own thoughts, out of which they would willingly wrestle; sparing no labour, that they might feel that uprightness and integrity, which would be void of fear; but if thou be desirous to conceive true comfort and joy in thy heart, then see that

thou diligently and well print this amiable image of the most loving shepherd, and the word of the Gospel, and seek it where it is to be sought, that is in Christ, and nowhere else ; for in this man thou shalt find all things, so that thou abide in him, and rest upon his shoulders ; but whatsoever comfort can be obtained without him, it cometh not from the heart, although thou call the help of all creatures, and shouldest also partake of the pleasure and joy of the whole world.

S E R M O N IX.

Of the Woman of Canaan.

Matth. xv. ver. 21. to the 28. Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, &c.

IN this text is set forth unto us an example of a constant and stedfast faith ; for this woman did so persevere, that she overcame three most sharp conflicts, and notably teacheth us, what is the quality and proper virtue of a true and right faith, which indeed is a certain trust, and most deeply settled in the mind, of the divine goodness and grace, known and made manifest by the word of God. For *Mark* mentioneth that she heard the report of Jesus, without doubt, good and joyful, that he is a bountiful man, and marvelous ready to help every one ; that report was good tydings, and the word of grace unto her, whereupon this her faith did begin ; for unless she had believed that she might be made partaker of Christ's goodness, she would not have followed him, or cried after him, which is that we have often admonished, and which we are taught, *Rom. 10. 17. Faith cometh by hearing.* Wherefore the word ought always to go before, and give the beginning of salvation ; but how came it to pass, whereas many others heard the same report of our Saviour Jesus, yet they followed him not, but quite despised that report ? I answer, they that are not sick, as they
have

have no need of the Physician, so neither are they desirous of him. But this woman was afflicted and felt her necessity, that report was so joyful unto her, that she being stirred up thereby, did follow Christ, running after such a pleasant Saviour, *Cant. i.* Wherefore *Moses* must always go before; who may teach us to feel sin, whereby grace may be wished for and desired of us; it is in vain therefore, although Christ be preached to be loving, and to be desired and longed for, if a man be not before humbled through knowledge of himself, and made desirous of Christ, according to the song of *Mary*, *The Lord hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away*, *Luke 1. 53.* Now all these things are written for the consolation, and lifting up of them which be miserable, poor, needy, oppressed with sin, and objects, that they may know to whom they may flee in all distresses, and where they may seek for help and safety: But see how Christ urgeth and inflameth faith in them that be his, whereby they may become stronger and more confirmed. First, this woman being encouraged with that alluring fame of his, goeth after him and cried for help, not doubting but she should find him to be such an one, as she had heard him reported to be, and that she should forthwith intreat him for the recovery of her daughter; Christ in all respects sheweth himself unto her so, as though he would deceive all her trust, and make his report false, so that she might think with herself, Is this that man which is so bountiful and ready to help all? Doth he so fulfil the most commendable report which goeth of him? Where doth there appear any thing like those things, which men have told me of him? They were deceived themselves, and deceived me also. He sheweth himself an enemy rather than a friend; why doth he not so much as speak a word, and friendly deny me help, if I be unworthy thereof? He holdeth his peace, and vouchsafeth not to speak a word, neither offereth his help; here surely Christ gave a grievous blow to the mind of the silly woman; so it is an incomparable torment to them that believe, being in distress, when God sheweth himself such an one at their prayers, like unto

unto one that is angry, and whom they pray unto in vain, hiding so deeply his grace, that they now perceive nothing else, but that he will not perform those things which he hath promised, and that so he will shew his own words to be false. That truly happened to the *Israelites* at the red sea, and to many other excellent holy men; but what doth this woman? She removeth out of her sight and mind, that Christ sheweth himself so ungentle and hard to be intreated, she being constant and not moved hereat, persevereth in the trust of his goodness, whereof she had heard, and which she had conceived in her mind, suffering herself in no wise to be turned from it; so also must we do, we must trust unto the word alone, although God himself, and all creatures pretended otherwise than the word preacheth. But this is most hard to nature and reason, to be so utterly destitute, and to depend on the word of God, without any feeling of comfort, even when a man feeleth and tryeth all things to be contrary; God give unto us such a mind and faith, that we may so do, especially at the point of death and in extreme necessities. Secondly, as the cry and faith of this woman seemeth to have suffered repulse, the disciples come with their faith, doubting not but that they shall intreat the Lord, but when they think they shall make him more easy to be intreated, they find him to be much more hard, repelling as it appeared, and as they thought, the faith and prayers both of the woman and also of themselves. Neither doth Christ hold his peace, and leave them in doubt, as before, but he seemeth plainly to deny that which they ask, saying, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*; this stroke is much more grievous than the former, where not only the person is repelled, but all hope is cut off, namely the comfort of the intercession of all other Saints and Elect; for it is almost the last refuge to them that suffer distress and feel the indignation of God, to get themselves to good, godly and holy men, seeking for comfort and help, and as charity requireth, they find them ready and willing, but even they also some time do in vain ask help and succour, for neither are they

heard.

heard, so the case of them in distress become worse and more lamentable; so the afflicted and desolate may truly object unto Christ those words, wherein he hath promised that he will hear his Saints; *if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 18. 19.* Again, *whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive, Mat. 21. 22.* and many such like; but if to him that object these things, and ask him how he can go from his words and promises, he answers thus, I go not from my promises, I have not promised that I will hear all prayers, but the prayers of them that be mine, which are of the house of *Israel*, not of all whatsoever. What thinkest thou, having taken such a repulse? Such an answer is like a flash of lightning, wherewith the heart and all trust is severed and broken in a thousand pieces: For what trust can there be left, when he heareth that that doth not pertain unto him, which because of the word of God he trusted to have obtained, but unto others. Here not so much as a word can be left, if one do according as he feeleth. But what doth this woman? She doth not so fall from hope, she still sticketh to the words which she had heard of Christ, although he went about by this repulse, to wrest them out of her heart, she suffereth not herself to be frayed away, neither with his silence, neither with the hard answer, she continueth stedfastly in a sure confidence, believing that under this difficulty which Christ did pretend, that grace was as yet hidden and laid up for her, which she had heard reported of him, she cannot be brought as yet to judge Christ, not to be bountiful and gracious, and that he can deny the help which she desireth. This was to persevere strongly in faith; she followeth Jesus even into the house, as *S. Mark* writeth, she is instant upon him, falleth down before him, and saith, *Lord help me.* Here the Lord giveth a deadly and the last blow, saying unto her face, *that she is a dog, and unworthy to be partaker of the bread of the children.* What can she answer? For he seemed to signify in these words, that she is of the number of the damned, which can look for no part with the elect; this

word.

word seemeth eternal, and that cannot be gainsaid ; for he which doth not pertain to the company of the elect by the ordinance of God, what may he hope to be left for him ? This woman is not yet discouraged and past hope, but yieldeth to this judgment of the Lord, she confesseth of her own accord, that she is a dog, neither desireth she any thing but that which is wont to be given to dogs, namely, the crumbs which falleth from their master's table. She seems to have used great cunning : She takes Christ in his own words ; he had made her like unto a dog, she acknowledgeth it, and desireth that he will only suffer her to be a dog, according to his own saying ; what should he here do ? How should he escape ? He was now taken : For the crumbs under the table are granted to the dogs, to whom they are said to be due ; here therefore Christ being overcome, opens himself wholly, and granteth the desires of the woman, and sheweth that she is not a dog, but a true *Israelite*. These things are written for the instruction and comfort of us, whereby we ought to learn, how deeply sometimes Christ hideth his grace from us, and how we must not judge of God, according to our own sense and opinion, but only according to his words ; for we see here that although Christ sheweth himself very hard to this woman, yet he did not plainly deny to help her, but whatsoever he answered, howsoever it seemed a denial, yet it was not a denial, but left in doubt, leaving an entrance for faith, although but small. For he said not at her first petition, I will not hear her, but he held his peace, neither promising nor denying help. So to the second petition, which the Apostles made, he dont say, she is not of the house of *Israel* ; I cannot therefore perform that which she desireth, but he only saith, *I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel* ; leaving all things in doubt, between a plain grant and a denial ; so when she had the third time desired him, he saith not, thou art a dog, get thee hence, the bread of the children is not due unto thee, but he saith, *It is not meet to take the childrens bread, &c.* again leaving in doubt, whether she was a dog or no ; nevertheless all these sayings seem outwardly rather a denial of help,

help, than room to hope, but in very deed they did contain in them rather a promise and hope, than a denial, yea, there was nothing but a promise, though most deeply hid and altogether secret under that silence, and answers, although they were hard, and a denial only sounded outwardly : By these it is shewed how our heart is wont to be affected in temptation ; for according as that feeleth in temptation, so Christ here bea- veth himself ; it feeleth all things to be denied, when it is far otherwise ; wherefore it is requisite, that leaving his own feeling, by a sure faith in the word of God, it conceive and hold fast the promise of help deeply hid- den under the denial, and yield to the sentence of God towards us, as this woman did, so shall we overcome and take the Lord in his words, that he cannot but help us ; so that if we feel in our conscience at any time God rebuking us, pronouncing us sinners, and unwor- thy of the Kingdom of Heaven, then we feel as it were Hell, and it seems unto us that we are past all hope and recovery for ever : Then if we had the skill of this woman, that we could take the Lord in his own judg- ment, and say, yea, Lord, I am a sinner, and altoge- ther unworthy of thy grace, but thou hast promised for- giveness to sinners, neither didst thou come to call the righteous, but as *Paul* saith, to save sinners, he truly should bring to pass, that the Lord should be forced, even by his own judgment to have mercy upon him : So did *Manasses*, when being penitent, he prayed for par- don, as we read in his prayer : He yielded to the judg- ment of God, acknowledging himself a most grievous sinner, and so he bound God with his promise, which had promised forgiveness of sin to sinners, not to the righteous. The same also did *David* observe, Psal. 51. 4. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight : that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* For that pur- chases us displeasure, that we disdain to suffer the judgment of the Lord, and against our wills, yield un- to his sentence, when he pronounceth us sinners ; such a hard thing is it to acknowledge sins, and to embrace the
judgment

judgment of God ; we all confess ourselves sinners in words, but as soon as the Lord speaketh in our heart, and pronounceth us sinners, we do not abide by that which before we confessed, we had rather be counted righteous and free from that judgment . But it must needs be, if God must be just in his words, that thou be a sinner, then also mayest thou use the right of sinners, which God himself hath given unto them, namely to pray with a iure expectation of forgiveness of sins, then is it permitted unto thee not only to feed under the table of crumbs after the manner of dogs, but being a child of the household, thou shalt sit at the very table, God having now how great soever he be, given unto thee according to thy desire. Here we have an historical exposition of this text, allegorically ; for as it chanceth to this woman's daughter being sick, for whom through faith she obtained health by a miracle, so also it falleth out with us, when we are delivered from spiritual sickness, to wit, sins, which truly are a most grievous and troublesome Devil unto us ; for as she acknowledged herself a dog, so must we acknowledge ourselves sinners and judged unto Hell, the Lord pronouncing it, which if we can do as she did, we shall be safe. We have already spoken elsewhere of other things, whereof there might be occasion to speak out of this text, as how one may obtain grace and safety by the faith of another, as here it fell out to the daughter of this woman ; this thing also (that Christ's Disciples, and the woman, are here examples of love, forasmuch as none of them pray for, seek or do those things that are their own, but every one that which is another's) is very manifest by itself, and easily acknowledged of every one, especially seeing that we have so largely treated hereof in another place.

S E R M O N X.

Of Salvation by Grace, without Works.

Tit. 3. Verse 4. to the 7. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, &c.

Paul having willed before, that all should be put in mind to be obedient to such as be in authority, and ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men, &c. these few words being put between, that we our selves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, &c. he added those words which we have already mentioned, as if he should say, Wherefore should it grieve us to deserve so well of all men, when God hath before dealt so bountifully, kindly and gently with us, with whom, without comparison, we are less, and have less of him deserved than any, being compared to us, can be, or can deserve of us? As God hath with exceeding bountifulness and kindness most gently behaved himself towards us, of his mercy granting and giving unto us all things; so ought we to do all things with all charity and good will toward our neighbours, altho' they have otherwise deserved, as we are like unto them, subject to sin and evil desires. Here we see how the Apostle will have us to be affected towards men: He will have us subject to them that be in authority, kind unto others, and ready to do well unto them with all gentleness, although they be evil, blind, and in error, that we grudge not to bear these things, and as much as lies in us, endeavour to do them good, taking all in good part, considering that God hath so dealt with us, when we were evil and wicked, like unto them.

This word, *appeared*, we have elsewhere declared to signify the revelation of the gospel, whereby Christ appeared in the world; altho' the unskilfulness of ministers hath wrested it to the carnal nativity of Christ.

He useth not here the word *grace*, which he used before, *Tit. 2. 11.* but instead thereof two other words of great comfort, [*kindness, and love toward man*] which he attributeth to our God. The first is that kindness, gentleness and sweetness of conditions, wherewith we are with pleasure conversant, and greatly delighted with their company, so that they by their gentleness and kindness allure all men to love them; for such can suffer all without grief; they contemn no man; they repel none from them with bitter and hard conditions; access unto them is not hard, but they are so open and ready, that every one dare resort unto them, and desire their help; and to conclude, they are such men as the gospel describes Christ unto us, whom they declare to be gentle to all, a despiser of none, which denieth no benefit to any, pliant, prepared and ready to do good to all. So God also, by the gospel, is preached and offered unto us wholly good, bountiful and sweet, open to all, rejecting none, bearing all our sins and offences, repelling no man with excessive severity; for we read and hear nothing declared in the gospel but meer grace and goodness, whereby he most mercifully hears us, and most gently handles us, and not any man according to his deserts. This is the time of grace, wherein it is granted to all to go with great boldness *unto the throne of grace*, as it is written, *Heb. 4. 16.* and *Psal. 34. 5.* *They looked unto him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed*; that is, he will not suffer you to pray and come in vain, neither to return with confusion. The other word is *Philanthropia*, love of men, as covetousness may be called love of money, as *David, 2 Sam. 1. 26.* calleth the desire of women, *the love of women*: And the philosophers call certain living creatures *Philanthropa*, that is, loving toward men, as are horses, dogs, dolphins; for these creatures are by nature delighted with man, they desire his company, and willingly serve him as though they were moved with some reason and sense of humanity. This name, and such love, the Apostle here attributeth to our God, which *Moses* also did, *Deut. 33. 2, 3.* *The Lord came from Sinai; from his right hand went a fiery law.* *Tea*

he loved the people. The meaning of the Apostle is this : Our God hath in the gospel shewed himself unto us not only bountiful, kind, gentle and sweet, which can bear, and will receive all, but also he so loveth us, that of his own accord he joineth himself unto us, seeketh to have to do with us, voluntarily sheweth and offereth his grace unto us, and most gently embraceth as many as only do not refuse his grace and love, and desire to draw nigh unto him. What should he do more ? Who cannot see why we count the gospel a preaching, joyful, and full of all consolation of God in Christ ? For what can be spoken more lovingly and sweetly to a sinful and afflicted conscience, than these words ?

Now let no man restrain these two words (*kindness and love towards man*) to the persons, for God is plainly without respect of persons, bountiful to all, and a lover of all ; otherwise, if we should here make a difference between men, we should acknowledge that some thing is received through our merits, and not all things through his mercy : Where it must be well marked, that God is said to be a lover of men, not of this or that nature only, not held with love of the person, and therefore these two, *kindness and love toward man*, must be taken after a general sort, that in all things the chief praise may be attributed to his mercy, that no man trust in his own merits, neither be terrified with sin, but altogether trust to his grace, which he voluntarily offereth unto us, with so great kindness and love toward us ; for if any respect of persons might be had here, it should surely be had of them which are rich in the works of righteousness, but *Paul* expressly rejecteth these, saying, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done.* How much less then shall this love of our God toward men appear because of any man's wisdom, power, nobility, riches, or any such thing, when no respect is had of works of righteousness ? Great is the grace of God toward us, which appeareth in the gospel, yea, and nothing but grace, which admitteth no merit at all of ours, utterly taketh away all boasting and glorying, and setteth forth the glory of God alone, who freely giveth

it unto us, being unworthy. So in this text these two, faith and love, are taught to receive benefits of God, and bestow them on our neighbours, which the scripture doth very often repeat, so that even the doctrine of salvation consisteth wholly in them, neither can one be separated from the other; for he that doth not firmly trust in the divine grace, cannot but be remiss, and slow to do well to his neighbour, and so witness the faintness and weakness of his faith, which is the fountain of all duties and benefits: On the contrary, the stronger faith that one is indued with, so much more dutifully, and with readier mind, he endeavoureth to deserve well of his neighbours. Therefore both doctrine and life, worthy of Christ, consist in these two, faith and love; whereby man is made as it were a mean between God and his neighbour, that he may receive of God from above, and give to his neighbours beneath, and be as it were a conduit, through which the fountain of the divine goodness continually flows to his neighbours. And such men are like unto God, which in Christ receive of God whatsoever he hath, and do again by their good deeds declare themselves as it were the gods of other, and fulfil the prophesy of the Prophet, *Psalms 82. 6. I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.* We are children of the most High by faith, whereby of nothing we are made the heirs of God: And we are gods by love, which maketh us beneficial to our neighbour; forasmuch as the nature of God is nothing but bountifulness, and *Paul* saith, *the kindness and love of God toward man*, which he doth with incomparable plenty daily pour forth upon every one, as we see. We must only endeavour, that every one do nothing doubt that these things are spoken to him, that the bountifulness and love of God to manward is revealed and offered to every one, that by these words he may establish, exercise, and strengthen his faith, being certain that they are most true, and that God both undoubtedly is, and always will be bountiful and loving toward him. If thou canst believe this, it will assuredly so come unto thee; thou mayest then with a full confidence pray and desire of him whatsoever thou wilt, and complain unto him of
 whatsoever

whatsoever doth grieve thee or other. - But if thou want this faith, it had been better for thee never to have heard any thing hereof, for that by thy infidelity thou reprovest of falshood these words, so precious and full of consolation and grace, making so light account of them, as not believing that they be true ; which surely is a great contempt and dishonour of God, that scarce a more grievous sin can be committed of thee. On the contrary, if thou be indued with this faith, it cannot be, but that thy heart being thereby cheered, should even as it were laugh and leap for holy joy in God, because void of all care and trouble, and be made above measure confident ; for how can any discouragement, any whit of sorrow remain in that heart, which doubteth not that God is gracious and bountiful unto it, and beareth a singular affection of love toward it, that it is a delight and pleasure unto him to do it good, and enjoy it as a friend ? Surely the heart is necessarily delighted with this spiritual joy and pleasure, or undoubtedly it wanteth faith. *Paul* in the epistle to the *Galatians* calleth this, to receive the Holy Ghost by the gospel ; for the gospel is so pleasant a preaching of the grace and goodness of God, that while it is preached and heard, it bringeth the Holy Ghost with it, in like manner as the beams of the sun do naturally bring heat with them. How could the Apostle use more pleasant and sweet words ? I dare say that I have in the whole scripture read none more pleasant, and so sweet words of the grace of God, as these two, *Chrestotes, Philanthropia*, that is, *kindness, and love toward man* ; in which the grace of God is so described, as whereby he doth not only forgive our sins, but doth also desire to be conversant with us, and is ready to do the part of a very friend toward us, voluntarily offering himself to help us in all things, also to bestow more benefits upon us than we can desire or ask, that we may presume of him no otherwise than of a most near and familiar friend, of whom we may obtain all things, in whose eyes we are most dear, and even delightful. Think in thy mind of a most perfect friend, which hath fulfilled all the parts of friendship toward thee, and thou shalt have after a sort of form, although yet far unlike, of

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the divine goodness and kindness, which is here attributed to our God, by the name of *kindness, and love toward man*; but when thou hast a sound faith in this *kindness, and love toward man*, and thereby dost live in thy God, so bountiful, gracious, and gentle to thee, rejoicest, and art full of all good things, being certain of his continual grace; what shouldest thou do any longer in earth? what in this life? Thou canst not in this case be idle, as surely that love of God, and pleasure which thou enjoyest in him, will not suffer thee to be idle. Thou shalt be inflamed with a marvellous study and desire to do what things soever thou canst know will be an honour unto thy God, so loving and bountiful unto thee, and will turn to praise, glory, and thanksgiving unto him. Thou shalt have no choice of works, thou shalt feel no compulsion of the law, having a most ready will and pleasure to do whatsoever things thou shalt know to be acceptable unto God, whether they be contemptible or noble, small or great, thou shalt count them alike; but first of all it shall be thy desire, that this blessed knowledge of God may be common also to the rest, whereupon by and by thy love will here shew itself, and will attempt all means to make this truth of salvation manifest unto all, it will publish and repeat it wheresoever it shall be able, rejecting and condemning whatsoever other teach or say, that agreeth not with this truth. Whereby it will come to pass, that Satan and the world, which hear nothing so unwillingly as this truth, and cannot abide that their things should be condemned, will rise against thee with all their might, will by and by trouble thee; all the great, learned, rich and mighty of the world will condemn thee of heresy and madness, and will leave no means unattempted until, if they be able, they have dispatcht thee of thy life. Thus with Christ thy Lord thou shalt be persecuted, and suffer extreme ignominy, thy body, life, goods, name, friends, and all things being brought into peril, until they have thrust thee from them out of this life into the eternal and blessed life: In the mean time thou must suffer all these things with a patient mind, and take
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them in good part, losing none of the spiritual joy which thou hast of Christ in thy God, and for thy part shewing to thy persecutors all kindness and love, being always mindful, that thou a little before was not much unlike them, before God ; all which things thou shalt do through faith and love, altho' they exceed the strength of nature. And this indeed is a true christian life, wherein thou dost endeavour to do so to others, as God hath done to thee. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done.* In these words the Apostle signified that which we have now said, and proveth it as it were by rendring a reason ; for if the bountifulness and love of God to man hath appeared, and hath saved us of his mercy, and not because of our own righteousness, yea, we being by all means unworthy, and subject to innumerable sins, it is meet that we also do good to them that have not deserved so much of us, and are unworthy thereof ; for we which are become the sons of God, must resemble God our Father, and bestow benefits according to our ability, as well upon our enemies and persecutors, as upon our friends : Whereof Christ also hath admonished us, *Mat. 5. 44. Love your enemies, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? do not even the publicans the same ?* Now the Apostle doth not only expressly condemn us for evil works, but faith, *Not by works of righteousness,* or, which we have done in righteousness. Where he also rejecteth those works, which we counted righteous, and were thought both of us and others to have been done in righteousness, when they were so far from being righteous, that they made us unworthy of the grace of God, and more unfit to receive it, for they are deceitful works, whereunto we add this sin, that we think them righteous, and trust in them, whereby God is provoked to anger more than can be said, even as our enemies are wont to move us to anger, when they will avouch those things to be just, wherein they do unjustly ; but even as God, when we
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being unwise, by error moved him to anger, counting our sins works of righteousness, did not therefore reject us, but of his meer mercy delivered us from this error and sin ; so we neglecting the foolishness and dotage of our adversaries, whereby they contend that sins are to be counted for righteousness, ought nevertheless of meer love, having no respect of evil or good desires, to be beneficial unto them, and endeavour to do them good in all things, looking for fruit of our benefits, not of them, but of God alone. Let these things suffice to have been spoken for a compendious and general exposition of this text.

Now let us also briefly weigh the words, wherein he setteth forth and commendeth the grace of God. First he so greatly extolleth it, that in respect of it he condemneth all our good works and righteousness ; neither doth he condemn a small thing, when he condemneth our righteousness or righteous works, the most excellent thing that man can have in earth ; for if all men with all their might should labour and endeavour to attain to most exact prudence, wisdom, and liberty of mind and will, which we read that some philosophers and princes have done, as *Socrates*, *Trajanus*, and many others, whose fame the whole world hath long since spread abroad, both by word and writing ; nevertheless all such wisdom, and all such virtues, are nothing but sin before God, forasmuch as they are not done in and by the grace of God. Deers of such virtues are ignorant of God, and therefore they cannot honour him by their studies and endeavours ; they think they have all things of themselves, when no man can have any good thing at all, but of his grace alone, which the gospel preacheth : So *Paul* glorieth, that he, before he knew Christ, lived a blameless life, and was more zealous toward the law, than those of his age ; that he also thought, that he did a thing acceptable to God, by persecuting the christians, who condemned that blameless life which he led ; but afterward, when he had learned Christ, he saith, that he counteth that righteousness to be but dung, that he might be found, not in such righteousness, but in Christ
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by faith, *Phil.* 3. 6. The same thing he witnesseth, and treateth of at large. in the Epistles to the *Galatians* and *Colossians* : Here therefore is condemned all boasting of free-will, man's strength, righteousness, and good works ; and it is concluded, that they are all nothing but sin, and certain destruction, although they have a fair shew ; that they are saved only by the grace of God, as many of us as believe, and call for it, with acknowledging of our own vanity and perdition. Now we must accustom ourselves to the scripture, which maketh mention of two sorts of righteousness, one human, which *Paul* here and in many other places hath mentioned ; the other divine, even that grace of salvation, which justifieth us by faith, whereof he speaketh in the end of this text : *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life,* *Tit.* 3. 7. Here thou seest plainly, that the grace of God is our true righteousness, whereby we are justified, which is therefore called the righteousness of God, for that it is given unto us of God, and is made ours, when we are made partakers thereof by faith : Of this he speaketh also, *Rom.* 1. 17. *In the gospel is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* And, *Gen.* 15. 6. *Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.* Whereupon the scripture concludeth, that no man is counted righteous before God, but he that believeth, as the Apostle testifieth, where he reciteth that saying of *Habukkuk,* *The just shall live by faith :* So it appeareth, that faith, grace, mercy, truth, righteousness, are all the same which God worketh in us by Christ and the gospel. Whereupon it is said, *Psal.* 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth ;* for those are the ways of the Lord in which we, observing his commandments, do walk, and he again in us ; now those ways must be directed by his mercy and truth alone, not by our strength and industry, forasmuch as our ways, being ordered hereby, are nothing but vanity before God, and do deserve his wrath, according to that which the Lord saith, *Isaiah* 55. 9. *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your*

your ways. As if he should say, Your righteousness is earthly and of no value, wherefore ye must bid it farewell and walk in mine, if ye hope for salvation. *But according to his mercy he saved us :* It is marvellous how the credit of these words can stand, wherein the Apostle affirmeth, that we are already saved, although living yet in earth, and therefore in continual misery. But he did so speak, that he might more fully express the power of the divine grace, and the nature of faith against hypocrites, who as though salvation were yet far off, do in vain endeavour to obtain it by their works ; for Christ hath already saved us ; he hath performed all things which are required hereunto, that we may be saved ; he hath overcome and subdued sin, death, hell, &c. so that he hath left nothing for any man to care for ; he hath also given all these things to us in baptism, that whosoever believeth in Christ, hath performed them, hath them together in the same moment, he hath need of nothing more unto salvation, but faith alone, that he may firmly believe that these things are so performed. But mark how incomparable riches of his grace God hath poured upon us in baptism, who hath delivered us even from those works, whereby those foolish holy ones go about to merit heaven, and to be saved ; for we must have heaven, and be saved, before we can do any good works, for that works cannot merit heaven, but heaven being before given of meer grace, causeth us to do good works, and that for no hope of merit or reward, but only to the profit of our neighbours, and the glory of God, until this body be delivered from sin and death.

Wherefore, all the life of a christian, after baptism, is nothing else but an expectation of salvation, and felicity to be revealed, which they that believe in Christ do now possess, although hidden. They have all things now certainly, but they are yet hid in faith, which when it is changed, knowledge being revealed, all things as they now have them, shall appear, which shall come to pass, when pleasant and wish'd-for death cometh, according to that saying of *John*, 1 *John* 3. 2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know, that*

that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him; purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Wherefore suffer not thyself to be deceived, and to be seduced from this truth by those hypocrites, which contemning faith, do falsely affirm that salvation is far from thee, and teach thee to endeavour in vain to attain unto it by thy works; it is in thyself, if thou believe that all things are performed by Christ, even as he himself witnesseth, *The kingdom of God is within you*, Luke 17. 21. So that all our life after baptism ought to be nothing else but an expectation that that should be revealed which is already in us, and that we may apprehend, as we are apprehended, as Paul saith, *Phil. 3. 12. but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus*, that is, that I may at length see those things which are given me, being as yet in the shut closet of faith; he coveteth, and burneth with desire to see the treasure which by faith he received both given and sealed in baptism: whereupon he addeth in the same place; ver. 20. *For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body*. Herewith also agreeth that which he saith, *Gal. 4. 9. Ye know God*, and by and by he doth as it were correct that which he had said, *Yea*, saith he, *rather are known*, both which are true, although not after the like sort: we are now known of God, so that he comprehendeth us, and we indeed know God, but we do not yet comprehend, for that our knowledge is as yet hidden and closed up in faith. He saith moreover, *Rom. 8. 24. For we are saved by hope; that is, we are saved, although we yet see it not, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*. Christ confirmeth this, *Luke 12. 35, 36. Let your loyns be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately*. In which words

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he only biddeth them that be his to be ready to look for him the bridegroom, as which are already saved, being admitted into the number of his ministers. Hereunto also pertaineth that which the Apostle saith, *Tit. 2. 12, 13. We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* In these and such like places whereof thou may read many here and there in the holy scriptures, he witnesseth that we are already saved, and that it doth not behove, that a Christian man should first seek to attain to salvation by his works; this devilish doctrine blindeth the eyes of Christians, extinguisheth the knowledge of faith, and carrieth men from the way of truth and salvation. We must cleave unto that which the apostle here saith, *He hath saved us according to his mercy,* and which he addeth in the end of the text, *that we are heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* We are now heirs, but that is hidden in faith, but we look with a certain hope, that hereafter it shall be revealed. And God will have us so to look for the revelation of this inheritance, and to live a certain time after baptism, that he may chastise our body by our ministry, and declare the power of his grace in fight against the flesh, the world and the devil, but especially for this cause, that by us he may help our neighbours, and both by doctrine, and also by our life which he liveth in us, may bring them to the communion of faith; and altho' he can do this by angels, yet it pleaseth him rather that it should be done by us men, that both the manner of faith may be the better known, and that all things may be done sweetly and lovingly: for if angels should always have to do with us, there should not be so much faith, neither should it be so pleasant, as when we are taught and guided by them that are partakers of our nature, whom we do better know, and with whom we do more familiarly associate ourselves; and so, that there may be some, by whom others also may be converted both by doctrine and good examples, it is not meet that we should by and by after baptism be taken into heaven, wherein notwithstanding we are already admitted citizens.

citizens. Hereupon if one weigh all things rightly, it cannot be doubted, that it is a practice and miracle of Satan and Antichrist, that so much is spent for purgatory's sake, such faith as this being put quite out of mens minds; for men are taught by their works to save themselves from purgatory, or at least to deliver themselves from thence, as though salvation were not yet given us, and it were necessary to come unto it by other means than by faith alone, which how it disagreeeth with the scripture and a christian life, there is no man that doth not see, but he that seeth nothing in the scripture; for thus the holy scriptures do teach every where, that whoever doth not receive salvation by meer grace, through faith before all works, he shall never be partaker thereof; and that whosoever refer their good works, not to the profit of their neighbour but to their own advantage, being more careful of their own salvation than of their neighbours, have no good works at all: all the works of these are void of faith, and infected with pernicious error. It had been greatly to be wished that purgatory had never been invented, and no mention made thereof in the pulpit, for it hath been such cause of hindrance to christian verity and sincere truth, as cannot be recovered; for we see it brought to pass by the means of Satan, that almost all prayer are directed only to purgatory, with this ungodly and pestilent opinion, whereby miserable men think that they shall be redeemed from thence, and obtain salvation by the works of men; whereby the riches of baptism and faith are had in no reputation, and they at the last, of christians are become heathens. O most pernicious abomination! christians should be taught as Christ and *Paul* teach them, that after baptism and absolution from sin they should so live, that they should be ready every hour to receive death, with desire looking for the revelation of salvation already received. Now by the opinion of purgatory they are made secure and slothful, so that they defer the study of godliness even to their death, and think by contrition and confession they shall amend all things, as though there were some sins remaining for which they must go into purgatory, they hope that by

masses for the departed, and other bequests they are persuaded to make in their testaments or last wills, they shall be redeemed out of purgatory; but these miserable men are in these things utterly deceived, and shall at length find them to be far otherwise. *By the washing of regeneration.* He setteth forth the grace of God given to us in baptism, with words very full of praise and commendation: he calleth baptism a washing, whereby not the feet and hands, but the whole man is at once washed, purified and saved. There is need of nothing but only faith in this grace of God, that it may remain and be acknowledged the work or grace alone, that we are saved without all our works and merits, and so also there may remain in us pure love, praise, giving of thanks, and glory of the divine mercy, without all glory and pleading of ourselves in our own strength and endeavour, as it hath been often said and at large. Human righteousness is also a washing, but not whereby the whole man is so washed, but that Pharisaical washing, whereby only the apparel and vessels which are outward, are made clean, whereof it is spoken, *Mat. 23.* Whereby it cometh to pass that men seem unto themselves pure, but inwardly they remain full of filthiness. Therefore he called baptism not a corporal or outward washing, but the washing of regeneration or new birth, by which not those things that are outward are washed, and only the outward man made clean, but the whole nature of man is altered and changed into another nature; that is, the carnal nativity is thereby destroyed, with all the inheritance of sins and perdition. Whereby he again witnesseth, that our salvation is given us at once, so that it is not to be gotten by works; for not one or two members are wont to be born, as the hands or feet, but the whole man, which cannot work this, that he may be born a man, but is first born that he may work: Likewise our works do not purify or save us, but when as before we are pure, justified, and saved, we work freely those things, which may be profit to our neighbour, and honour to God. And this is the simple and pure knowledge of the divine grace, whereby a man learneth to know both God and himself; to praise God

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alone, to humble and cast down himself; to trust in God, to despair of himself. This doctrine of salvation they marvellously hinder, which urge men with laws, precepts, and works, and teach them to seek thereby to be saved. *And the renewing.* That this washing and new birth may be more fully understood, he hath added, *the renewing*, that thou mayest understand, that he that is truly baptized, is become a new man, and a new creature, endued with a new disposition, which now is far otherwise affected, loveth, liveth, speaketh and doth far otherwise, than he was wont or could before. So the Apostle saith, *Gal. vi. 15. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision*, that is, no works of the law are of any value or importance, *but a new creature.* As if he should say, salvation cannot be perfected by joining together certain good works, but the whole man must be at once renewed, and his nature changed, whereupon true good works will follow of themselves, not by piece-meal, but together with great plenty. Of this new birth, whereby the whole man is renewed, Christ speaketh, *John iii. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Here again it manifestly appeareth, that nothing is here done by our works, but that it behoveth, that man, how great soever he be, must die, and be changed into another, which is done in baptism, if we believe. The condemned also shall be born again in the last day, but they shall not be renewed, they shall remain unclean, as they were here, and as they were born of *Adam*. Therefore that he might speak rightly of baptism, he calleth it the washing of the new birth, whereby they that are born again are also renewed; of this new birth many things are to be found here and there in the scripture, because of which God calleth his word and gospel a womb, as *Isaiah xvi. 3. Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb.* He therefore that believeth the gospel, is as it were conceived in the womb of God, and from thence born a new man, and like unto God; whereof we will

in another place speak more; now it shall be sufficient, to have learned by these words, how our works are nothing in fulfilling the commandments of God, and that it is a mad thing to attribute here never so little to our own strength, seeing that it is faith alone, whereby man is at once born again, and renewed; wherefore understand this, that good works must follow a new creature, but to attain unto righteousness, and that new creature they are able to help nothing at all; no otherwise is the grace of God wont to renew man, than as if God should turn some dry and withered block into a new, green, and flourishing tree, which may afterward bring forth fruit plentifully; for the grace of God is a great, strong, very mighty, and marvellous effectual thing, it lyeth not in the mind, as the Schoolmen dream: it sleepeth not, or is borne, as a painted table beareth a picture; it self beareth, guideth, urgeth, draweth, changeth, and worketh all things in men, so that every one may feel and have experience of it, it self indeed is hid, but the works of it cannot be hid, but do witness of it, as the leaves and fruits do of the tree, of what nature it is; wherefore the Schoolmen *Thomas* and *Scotus* do ungodly detract from it, who attribute no more unto it, than that it doth adorn the works of nature, and is a help that they be brought to perfection. For it doth not adorn or help only, but it alone worketh those things that be good, neither doth it work them only, but doth rather change and renew the person; for it exhibiteth the washing of the new birth, and of renewing, not of works only, but much rather of the whole man; he that shall preach these things of grace, shall truly and fully commend it: which *Paul* endeavoured to do when he said, *be saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost.* Nothing can be done here by joyning of works together, the nature must needs be changed, whereupon it cometh to pass, that they that truly believe must suffer many things; for grace worketh in them, and declareth it self present: Hereunto pertaineth that saying of the *exi. Psal.* *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* What are these works?

works? We are they, by grace in Baptism made the great, new, and regenerate works of God; is it not a great thing for a man by and by to be saved, and delivered from sins, death, and hell? Therefore he saith, *sought out of all them that have pleasure therein*; for by this new birth God hath found out, and done whatsoever men can desire; for what else do men covet and desire, but to obtain salvation, to be delivered from sin, death and hell?

Of the holy Ghost. Lastly, that he may the more express the greatness and virtue of grace, he attributeth this washing of regeneration, and renewing to the holy Ghost; for this washing, is so great, and of so weighty importance, that no creature but the holy Ghost alone is able to perform it; but how much, most excellent *Paul*, dost thou condemn free will, the great good works of the proud holy ones, that is, the merits of hypocrites? In how high a place dost thou set our salvation, and again, how dost thou bring it down to us, and place it near us, yea, even with us? How purely and sincerely dost thou set forth grace in these words? Wherefore work whatsoever and how much soever thou wilt, it is impossible for a man to be renewed, and the person changed (without which no works acceptable to God can be done) but by the washing of *regeneration and renewing of the holy Ghost*. We may plainly see in those hypocritical counterfeiters of works, that thou shalt find none harder, none prouder, none so rash and hasty spirits; for they are broken, and not renewed, indurate, obstinate, confirmed by continuance, covering indeed, and somewhat adorning that old *Adam*, but there doth not appear any change of nature in them, they continue still in the oldness of their corrupt flesh. O, what a pestilent people is this, and in how great indignation of God are they, when as in the meantime they think that they sit in God's lap? Now whereas the Apostle attributeth this washing of regeneration and renewing to the holy Ghost, he saith the same which Christ doth, *John 3. 5. Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* For that which Christ signified by

Water, the Apostle calleth the washing, so both make mention of new birth, and of the holy Ghost ; and we must mark that that which is spoken here of the holy Ghost both by Christ, and the Apostle, must not be referred to that Papistical confirmation, as they call it, for both of them referred to Baptism, that which is here mentioned concerning the holy Ghost, who when the body is washed with water doth himself work the new birth, and renewing by faith, which Christ called, to be born again of the spirit. We read in the *Acts* of the Apostles, that the Apostles did often lay their hands on them that were baptised, and that so the holy Ghost came upon them by a visible sign, which the *Papists* also snatch to their confirmation ; but as that was done, that the believers might by a visible sign be endued with the holy Ghost, to preach the Gospel in divers languages, so it continued only the time thereof, until the doctrine of the Gospel was commended to the world by sufficient signs, wherefore it is now long since worn out of use ; but that a certain ceremony hath come from thence even unto us, of laying hands on them, which are ordained Ministers or Preachers, which is now brought into an ungodly and pernicious use ; but of these things in another place. *Which he shed on us abundantly.* See how notable the Apostle setteth forth grace, he saith not that the holy Ghost was given, but shed, and not that only, but shed abundantly ; for he cannot sufficiently extol and magnify grace, and the works thereof, and we, alas, count it vile in respect of our works ; it were a dishonour to God and to his holy Spirit, if when he hath plentifully shed it upon us, there should as yet be something wanting, necessary to righteousness and salvation, which we are able to perform, as though the works of so incomparable grace could not be sufficient ; and *Paul* surely might be reprov'd of lying, which had not spoken all things whereby we must be justified and saved, when he affirmeth that he doth it ; but as he writeth, so it is ; no man can attribute so great things to this washing and regeneration, no man can so much presume of them, but greater things may be attributed unto them, and thou oughtest to promise to thyself more things of them ;

no man shall believe so great things, but he shall receive greater ; forasmuch as those good things which God hath given, are so great and so unspeakable, he would have them here come unto us, being included and hid in his words and faith ; for the nature of our present life cannot bear them being manifest, and therefore it must perish, when they begin to be revealed, that man may by these inestimable riches, which he now possesseth by faith, be as it were swallowed up, and vanish away : we are already abundantly justified by faith, without all our own merit, therefore Christ saith, *John 3. 16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Behold, they that believe, have already everlasting life, and therefore undoubtedly are justified and holy without all their own labour or means, that thou mayest see, that nothing but grace and mercy is plentifully poured upon us, and that our works could avail nothing hereunto. Thou wilt perhaps say, thou canst not preach sufficiently, that the grace and mercy of God doth work all things in us, and that no respect is to be had of our works, to the attaining of salvation ; and how cometh it to pass then, that the Scripture so often witnesseth that they shall be saved which have wrought good works ? As *John 5. 29. And shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* And *Rom. 2. 7, 8. To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life : But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness ; indignation, and wrath.* We read many sentences here and there in the Scripture like unto these ; I answer, as the words sound, so take them without all gloss, for it is even so, they that do well shall be saved, they that do otherwise, shall be condemned ; but herein many err from the truth of the Scripture, in that they judge works according to the outward appearance, contrary to the Scripture, which teacheth that no man can do good, who is not himself good before, and by works no man can become good,

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but works take their goodness of the worker, and he becometh good by the washing of regeneration, and by nothing else; this Christ meant, *Matth. 7. 18.* *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* Wherefore make the tree either good or evil, and it will bring forth like fruits; Hypocrites oftentimes do works like to the works of the godly, yea, sometime have a goodlier shew, for they diligently pray, fast, give alms, and pretend a marvellous holiness; but Christ calleth these sheep's clothing, wherewith most hurtful wolves are clothed and hidden; for none of them is of a true humble, meek, and bountiful heart, which they chiefly declare when they are rebuked, when their holiness is reprov'd; for then bring they forth their natural fruits, whereby they are known; those are rash judgments, impatience, stubbornness, obstinacy, flandering, and such like; it is true therefore, he that doth well, shall be saved, that is, his salvation shall be manifest, but he can do no good at all, if he be not before regenerate by the washing of the new birth; for what good works can one work in the oldness of the flesh, and by the strength proceeded from *Adam*, they are the good works which *Paul* here condemneth, saying, *Not by the works of righteousness which we have done.* They are indeed good works done in righteousness, but not before God, who first hath respect to the person, and then to the works, as we read *Gen. 4.* that he had respect first to *Abel*, then to his sacrifice, as he first turneth himself from *Cain*, and then from his sacrifice, although according to the outward appearance it was as good a sacrifice and work, as the sacrifice of *Abel*. *Through Jesus Christ our Saviour.* This he added that he may keep us under the wings of Christ, as chickens are wont to be preserved under the wings of the hen; for thus Christ saith, *Matth. 23. 37.* *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?* And hereby the nature of a true and right faith is taught; for it is nothing which some say, I believe in God almighty,

mighty, as the *Jews* and many others are wont, and do therefore receive corporal benefits of God ; It is a true and lively faith, whereby thou believest in God, howbeit by Jesus Christ. First that thou doubt not that God is become a merciful father unto thee, which hath pardoned all thy sins, and in Baptism hath adopted thee for his son and heir, that thou mayest certainly know that thou art saved ; again, thou must also know this, that that was not done freely, neither without satisfaction made to the divine justice, for there can be no place in thee for the divine grace and mercy to work salvation, and to give thee eternal good things, unless the justice of God be before most fully satisfied ; for Christ witnesseth, *Matth. 5. 18. One jot, or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* That which is spoken of the grace and goodness of God, cannot come but to them which do most purely and exactly observe his commandments, according to that saying, *Mich. 2.* When as the *Jews* did presume of the goodness of God towards them, and did always promise unto themselves peace, saying, how can God be always angry, *is the spirit of the Lord straitned ?* It is answered them ; are not my words good unto him that walketh uprightly ? Wherefore it shall be lawful for none to attain unto the abundance of grace, unless he hath before most exactly satisfied the commandments of God. Now it hath been spoken at large, that our works are nothing before God, whereby we cannot fulfil so much as the least commandment of God, how much less shall we be able to satisfy the justice of God, that we may become worthy of his grace ? Moreover, if we were able to fulfil all the commandments of God, and in all things to satisfy his justice, notwithstanding we had not as yet deserved grace and salvation, neither should he therefore owe it unto us, for that he may by the right of creation require as due service, all those things of us his creatures, created to live unto him ; wherefore it should yet come of grace and mercy, whatsoever should come from him to us ; this Christ declared very well, *Luke 17. 7, 8, 9, 10. Which of you having a servant plowing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by,*

by, when he is come from the field, Go, and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant, because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do. Seeing then that heaven is given of grace, and for no merit, even unto those, if there were any such, which have done all things that were commanded them, according to that promise, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*: What shall we boast of our good works, which although they were most absolute, yet would they be unworthy of heaven, but inasmuch as it is given us by the free and merciful promise? Hereupon (for that we must so satisfy the divine justice, and yet notwithstanding our works are not able to attain thereunto, whereunto if they should attain, yet should they deserve no grace or salvation, for that they are before due) God first gave unto us a man, which should satisfy the divine justice, for us in all things. Again, he hath by the same man bestowed this grace and bountifulness upon us, that although we without our own merit and worthiness, yea, having evil deserved and being unworthy, receive grace, yet it cometh not unto us altogether freely and without all merit, for we have it through the merit and satisfaction of Christ, whereupon Paul saith *Rom. 5. 18. As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.* That is, as without all our merit, and own work we fell into sin, being born sinners, so again without all our merit and means, we are redeemed from sins, by the washing of the spirit, born again the sons of God, partakers of grace and salvation; and this is the cause why the Apostle where he speaketh of faith and grace, is wont to add, by Jesus Christ; whereby surely he would give us to understand, that none should count it sufficient, if he say, I believe in God, Christ being neglected; he that

that truly believeth, must acknowledge, that his faith cannot be acceptable to God, yea, that it can be no faith at all, if all the commandments of God be not before fulfilled, which seeing it is above thy ability, (and if it were not, yet notwithstanding thou have performed nothing, but that thou oughtest, and have as yet merited nothing, having fulfilled even all the commandments of God) thou hast need of another, which in all things may satisfy the divine justice for thee, and may also merit heaven for thee ; now this other is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath for thee fulfilled the whole Law, and merited for thee, that God now according to his justice cannot but give heaven unto thee, and in all things acknowledge thee for his son and heir ; and this is a true and sound faith, which trusteth in God by Christ, and is certain that by his merit it hath already received of God salvation, which shortly after shall be revealed with blessed abundance of felicity ; neither can any other be called Christian faith, but that whereby it is believed, that by Christ doth come unto us both satisfaction, which we owe to the justice of God, and the gift of salvation, which we ourselves by no means, if the Law could even be fulfilled of us, can merit ; whereupon *Paul, Rom. 4. 25.* saith, *Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* That is, by Christ we have received not only remission of our sins, but also, that before God we are accounted righteous, and the sons of his grace : To the same effect also tendeth that which he saith, *Rom. 3. 25.* *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.* Where again we learn, that it is true faith, which trusteth in the blood of Christ, and believeth that thereby it shall obtain grace ; whereas that thou believest he hath shed his blood for thee, thou receivest satisfaction ; in that thou acknowledgest him the reconciliation, thou confessest that by his merit the divine grace and salvation do come unto thee. We have all things without our own merit and means, but not

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without the merit and means of Christ, who hath for this cause shed his blood. Wherefore that we may allude unto the parable of Christ, we must contain ourselves under his wings, and not trust in ourselves; flee out and contend to come unto God, otherwise we shall be a prey to the hellish kite; for as it hath been often said, our righteousness, our merits, yea, and our faith shall prevail nothing, without this our mediator Christ; and therefore he saith St. *John* 14. 6. *No man cometh unto the Father but by me.* And in the whole Gospel what other thing doth he, but endeavour to take us out of ourselves, and to transfer us to himself under his wings, that we may trust only in his satisfaction and merit? The same the Apostle also teacheth in the words following, *Tit.* 3. 7. *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* He saith that we are justified, *not by our own works, but by the grace of the same Jesus Christ, that is, we are therefore justified, for that Christ hath the grace of the Father, having fulfilled his will in all things, and thereby merited eternal life; for seeing that he hath no need of this merit, he giveth it unto us which do believe in him, that before God all his things may be imputed to us, and by them we may receive salvation.* See, how rich a thing sound faith is, and how great good things it bringeth with it; see also how precious a thing the Gospel is, and how great a treasure it is to have it purely preached; and on the contrary, how great a disadvantage there is, where it is not preached, or not rightly preached, the inventions of men being mingled with it, or thrust in instead of it. Take heed therefore of such deceivers, and of their counterfeit faith, rest not in thyself, but get thee under the wings of Christ, keep thyself under his protection, trust that thou art heir of eternal life, not by thy own righteousness, or grace which thou hast received, but whereby he is righteous and acceptable before God; hereunto pertaineth this saying, *Psal.* 91. 4. *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust:* And in the song of *Solomon* it is said, *ch.* 2. 14. *O my dove, that art in the clefts of the*
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the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, that is, in the wounds of Christ; and this indeed is a true Christian faith, which resteth not in it self as the Schoolmen dream, but reposeth itself wholly in Christ, and as it trusteth in him, so it resteth in him, having received eternal salvation. Whereas he saith that we are made heirs of eternal life according to hope, besides that he proveth, that we without all our own merits, by only hope of grace are born again heirs of eternal life, and do not become heirs by working whereof, we have already spoken at large, he also teacheth this, that our salvation and eternal life is as yet hid, although, if we believe, we do verily possess it, and this body being put off, and the Kingdom of Christ revealed, all things shall appear manifestly. The text fighteth most mightily, and with most plain words against all righteousness and good works of man's reason, and free will, for the words are plain, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing, &c.* All which words do utterly overthrow our righteousness, attributing all things to the washing of the new birth, and the renewing of the holy Ghost, to Christ and his grace; how can there notwithstanding any presumption as yet remain in us? Wherefore let all sacred and prophane laws have a fair shew; let all sacrificing Priests, Monks, and Nuns boast of themselves; let all religious and honest men and women seem goodly in outward appearance; let them even raise the dead; if faith in Christ be absent, whereof we have now spoken so much, all these things are to no purpose. These most false shews do as yet deceive the whole world, and seduce almost every one; they make the Gospel obscure, and extinguish the faith of Christ; all their works and orders, although they appear goodly, and they think them to have merited never so much, do avail no more unto salvation, than the works of beasts, or of artificers, whereby they do maintain themselves and theirs, yea, they do most hurtfully hinder it: therefore that I may conclude, take heed as much as thou art able, of these wolves, which under a fair pretence

counterfeit themselves sheep, and learn and accustom thyself with a found faith to cleave unto Christ alone.

S E R M O N XI.

Of the Kingdom of God.

FOrasmuch as there is often mention made in the new testament of these words, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, and it is very profitable and expedient for a christian to know these, to wit, that they are nothing else, but remission of sins, and grace preached and offered by the gospel; for in this kingdom thou shalt find nothing but grace, goodness, pardon and forgiveness of sins, love and gentleness: I therefore think it good to treat somewhat atlarge of the state and kingdom, and of forgiveness of sins, the kingdom of God, whereby he reigneth over all the faithful, and as a faithful king defendeth, punisheth, rewardeth, guideth, and directeth them, &c. they again from their heart trust in him, suffer his fatherly chastisement and correction with a patient mind, and always serve him through obedience, is not worldly or temporal, but spiritual; neither consisteth in meat and drink, or in any outward thing, but only in justification, quieting and consolation of the heart and conscience of man; wherefore it is nothing else but forgiveness and taking away of sins, by which consciences are defiled, troubled and disquieted; for even as a worldly and temporal kingdom is ordained to this end, that men may live quietly and peaceably one with another; so the kingdom of God giveth these things spiritually, and destroyeth the kingdom of sin, and is nothing else, but an abolishing and pardoning of offences, God reigneth in the hearts, inasmuch as he worketh in them by his word, peace, quietness and consolation; even as sin worketh the contrary, namely, unquietness, anguish, and all kind of evils. Herein God sheweth his

his majesty and grace in this life, that he taketh away and pardoneth mens sins ; and this is the kingdom of grace. Now when as sin with his guard, that is, Satan, death, and hell, shall trouble man no more, then at the last the kingdom of glory, and absolute felicity shall be. Hereupon it followeth, first, that the kingdom of God is ruled or governed by no law, no not by the law of God, much less by the laws of men, but only by the gospel, and faith in God, by which hearts are purified, comforted and quieted, whilst that the holy Ghost poureth love and the knowledge of God into them, and maketh man as it were one thing and one spirit with God ; so that his affection is set upon the same thing, he willeth and desireth the same thing, he seeketh and loveth the same thing that God doth ; neither standeth the case otherwise here, than it doth between two friends, which bare good will to one another, and agree one with another in all things. Hereof it cometh, that a man in this kingdom of God is perfect, merciful, pitiful and bountiful towards his neighbour, seeing that he knoweth by the instinct of the holy Ghost, that God is of the same affection toward him, and toward all men, and doth pour forth his goodness plentifully ; such affection of God no man can know by the law, but only by the spirit, and word of the gospel. None therefore shall obtain quietness, comfort, and peace of the heart, or attain unto the kingdom of God by any law ; and they which prescribe many laws, do withdraw men from the kingdom of God to the kingdom of sin, wherein is nothing else, but unquietness, anguish, affliction, adversity, and all kind of evils, tormenting the conscience. On the contrary, in the kingdom and knowledge of God, there is meer joy, peace, and consolation of hearts.

Secondly, in this kingdom of God the Lord Christ reigneth no otherwise than as a master of an hospital amongst the sick, poor, and diseased ; for unto this kingdom none pertain, but sinful and miserable men, unto whom their sins are forgiven, whereupon Christ saith in the gospel, *Luke 6. 24. Woe unto you that are rich : for ye have received your consolation.* But on the

contrary, the poor, miserable, and succourless receive comfort and joy by the gospel ; for Christ came to call sinners only, and not the righteous, that all glory may be referred to God alone, for that he forgiveth sins of his grace and meer mercy : such abolishing or putting away of sin, wherein Christ reigneth as a King of the kingdom of God, is done of him after two sorts : first thus, in that he remitteth, pardoneth and covereth sins, so that God will not regard, remember or revenge them, although they be in a man. As it is in Psalm 32. 1, 2. *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* And in *Isciah* 43. 25. God saith, *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* Secondly thus, in that he purgeth or rather scoureth sins by divers crosses and afflictions ; for they are two things, to remit sins, and to weaken the body of sin that it may not reign in us. If a man believe and is baptised, then all his sins are forgiven him, but afterward sin must be scoured or abated by manifold affliction and mortification, as long as he shall live ; sin sticketh in us, as long as the mortal body remaineth, but for Christ's sake it is not imputed in the wrath of God, but freely remitted, and the force thereof diminished by his fatherly chastisement : in such chastisement for their amendment, true Christians have great comfort, peace and joy, as *S. Paul* saith, *Rom.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ : By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience : and patience, experience : and experience, hope : and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost, which is given unto us.* So thou hast two things to be considered : the first, that in this kingdom of God we are justified. The second, that by tribulation and affliction we are glorified, without which we cannot attain

to glory. Thirdly, good Christians are not known by this, when any suffer manifold tribulation and chastisement, that the body of sin may be weakened, and they brought to amendment; for herein they do altogether differ among themselves, one suffereth this, another one is chased thus, another otherwise, so that even the very apostles did not love and suffer alike: but they are known in forgiveness of sin, or justification by faith, wherein God turneth his anger from them, and receiveth them unto grace, and counteth them for his dear children, and imputeth no sin to them to condemnation. Herein are all alike, even as all live under one heaven. Wherefore they do most grossly err and stumble, which measure christians by manners, works, and the outward manner of living, even as the *Pharisees* were wont to do, and did therefore find fault with Christ, for that he did not observe their ceremonies, but was a friend of Publicans and sinners. As that *Pharisee* said within himself, *Luke vii. 39. This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner.* Here now an example of those things which are before said: a physician which goeth about to cure the sick, doth first promise him health by the assistance and help of God, whereby he putteth him in great hope and comfort. Afterward he beginneth to purge, cleanse and strengthen, and such like things which make to the recovering of health: so God also, when he hath remitted sins, and received man into the bosom of grace, doth lay on him all kind of affliction, and doth scour him, and renew him from day to day, in the knowledge and love of God, until he become safe, pure and renewed, which then at the last cometh to pass, when this mortal body dieth. Fourthly, in these two partitions of the kingdom of God, two sorts of men are found, which abuse the same kingdom of the grace of God, and the gospel. Some become sluggish and slothful, saying, well, if sins be pardoned freely of meer grace, and be washed away in baptism, there is no need that I should add any thing of mine own. Others think on the contrary, that they shall put away their sins by works, and so trusting to

their own merits, they are proud and arrogant, and in respect of themselves contemn others, which do not so. The first of these contemn God's grace; the others, appugn it as not sufficient, and so they represent swine and dogs. Now all this appeareth by the gospel, by which Christ reigneth in the kingdom of God; for some abuse it unto carnal liberty; others on the contrary are persuaded, that it is not sufficient to salvation, but that their works also do help somewhat, and by this they deny and contemn the grace of God; hereof thou mayest read more in the epistle to the *Romans*, wherein these two sorts of men are plainly set forth. Fifthly, this kingdom of God, or remission of sins hath no bound or measure as that place of the gospel doth very well shew, where *Peter* asketh the Lord, *Mat. 18. 21, 22. Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven; that is, as often as shall be needful.* After this followeth a parable, which the Lord there putteth forth, wherein he most severely admonisheth us, if we will not fall out of the favour of God, that we forgive our neighbour his offences without all delay or grudging, forasmuch as God always forgiveth us innumerable sins. Our debt, whereby we are bound unto God, is ten thousand talents, that is, so unmeasurable and great, that we are not able to pay it with all our substance, all our strength and works; for we can put away no one sin, although it be even very little. Seeing therefore that God doth remit so many sins of his grace in his kingdom, it is meet that we should forgive our neighbour a few offences. Of this kingdom of God, wherein sins are forgiven, the scripture every where maketh mention, and saith, that the kingdom and dominion of Christ doth extend from one end of the land to the other; so saith *David*, *Psal. 72. 8. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.* And a little after he saith, *All nations shall serve him.* This also the Angel *Gabriel* declared to the Virgin *Mary*, *Luke 1. 32. The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever,*

ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. These and such like places do shew that the forgiveness of sins, wherein the kingdom of God doth especially consist, hath no measure or bound. Sixthly, hereof we may see how unchristianly they do, which bring forgiveness of sins to a certain measure, as they do, which measure out their indulgences for prescribed years, with forgiveness of the third, fourth, or half part; for hereby they bring the kingdom of God into a narrow and strait room, and are injurious to his mercy, forasmuch as there is no end of his kingdom, nor measure of his mercy. But whosoever shall in faith call upon the name of God, shall be saved, as often as he doth it. Moreover, when the sinner shall be sorry for his sins, the Lord will no more remember them, as it is in the Prophecy of *Ezekiel*, chap. 18. Seventhly, as this kingdom of God hath no measure or limits of forgiveness of sins, so also it hath no end, but endureth continually without ceasing; altho' the subjects of this kingdom do not abide in it continually, firmly and faithfully, but do oftentimes forsake it. So the favour and grace of God were continually with *Peter*, although he denied the Lord, and revolted from him. To the same effect tendeth the parable in the gospel, whereof we have now spoken; for the servant, which would not have pity of his fellow-servant, did make himself unworthy of the mercy of God, did deprive himself of the kingdom of God, which consisteth in pardoning of offences, as it is above mentioned. Here university-divines of a pregnant wit, as they seem unto themselves, and puffed up with knowledge, have disputed, whether and how forgiveness of sins doth come again when man reneweth his sin, not knowing what they say. But follow thou the plain and simple words of the gospel, to wit, that thy sins are so often forgiven thee, as thou dost forgive thy brother, whom thou must so often forgive as he shall offend against thee. Wherefore in this parable, whereof I have even now made mention, Christ doth admonish us all, that we pardon and forgive all them that have offended us; as if he would say, As in man's affairs, he which is bene-

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ficial to another, hath others also beneficial unto him
 again : so saith Christ, in the kingdom of heaven, which
 consisteth specially in forgiveness of sins, that is, in
 christianity or among christians, he which pardoneth an-
 other his offences, I also will pardon him his : And on
 the contrary, he that is not merciful toward another, to
 him I also will deny grace. I am over you as a Lord
 and King, and ye are fellow-servants and companions
 one with another ; seeing therefore that I your Lord
 do readily forgive you, you also ought more readily to
 forgive one another. After the same sort also he hath
 commanded us to pray in the Lord's prayer, *Mat. 6. 12.*
Forgive us our debts : which he would not have done, if
 he did not promise, and would not mercifully forgive
 us. But nevertheless, he added a condition or sign to
 this promise, when he saith, *If ye forgive men their*
trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
 The first is a sign, the other a promise : Mark that it is
 here enjoined us, to forgive one another his sins and
 offences ; so that we must be merciful and bountiful
 toward our neighbours, if we will have the heavenly
 Father gentle and appeased toward us. And let us be
 most certainly perswaded hereof, when we shall interpret
 at the best, and excuse as much as equity doth suffer,
 the offences and trespasses of others, although they be
 even great and grievous, that we also shall have a boun-
 tiful and merciful Father towards us in heaven. Where-
 fore it is a thing to be abhor'd in christianity, and even
 blasphemous, when it is said, I cannot, neither will I
 forgive him that which he hath committed against me.
 I will be revenged, &c. Surely those blind men are
 ignorant, that they do take from God his glory, to
 whom alone vengeance belongeth, and challenge it to
 themselves, and so they give up to the devil their own
 souls, which they have received of God, and ought to
 render them unto him again, whereunto they are per-
 haps provoked even with some small or trifling matter :
 Such kind of men as these ought to set before the eyes
 of their heart, these words of the gospel, *Mat 18.*
32. O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt,
because thou desiredst me : Shouldest not thou also have had
compassion,

compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. Neither is it sufficient, if in gestures, signs, mouth or tongue thou shew thyself a friend unto him, and forgive him, but thou must do it from thy heart, otherwise God will not forgive thee, yea, thou shalt be driven out of the kingdom of grace; wherefore if, at any time, we have tried the mercy of God towards us, we must also readily pardon our fellow-brethren, which have offended us; for in that respect the merciful Father forgiveth us our sins, that we also should forgive our brethren, and shew mercy towards them, even as he is merciful towards us, and remitteth sin, death, the fault and the punishment. When we shall do this, then are we received into the kingdom of God; for the goodness of God liveth in our hearts, and maketh us also good; Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father, yet nevertheless he reigneth in the hearts and consciences of the faithful, so that they love, fear, reverence, and diligently obey him, no otherwise than obedient subjects do their king, and in all their doings are made like to him, even as he himself saith, *Mat. 5. 48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* Now God is perfect in this, that he taketh away and pardoneth our wickedness, defect, sin, and imperfection, that we also may do the like to our brethren; but when we will not do the like, we are driven out of this kingdom, and are made subject to the kingdom of sin, death, and the devil, as disloyal and disobedient inhabitants of some country, are thrust out: Which God of his mercy turn from us. *Amen.*

[All these things may be comprehended in the principal points following.] 1. Christ reigneth, when, by faith of the gospel, he worketh the goodness and grace of God in our hearts, and maketh them like unto God. 2. In such a kingdom the conscience enjoyeth peace, consolation and rest, when it understandeth and knoweth that God is merciful unto it, and imputeth not sins.

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3. Therefore man beareth all kind of tribulation and affliction, by which sin is scoured, and the force thereof abated : He also endeavoureth to be beneficial unto others, as he himself hath been as it were overwhelmed with the benefits of God. 4. And so the Lord reigneth after two sorts : First, for that he maketh the faithful certain of the grace of God, and remission of sins. Secondly, for that he layeth the cross upon them, that the body of sin may be weakned, and they brought to amendment. 5. He that forgiveth his debtors pertaineth to the kingdom of God, but he that doth not forgive them, remaineth under the kingdom of sin. These things I thought good to speak in this present place concerning the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of Christ, which is the same ; to wit, that it is nothing else but a kingdom, in which thou shalt find nothing but forgiveness of sins. Which kingdom is preached and offered unto us by the gospel : God grant that we may so receive it. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XII.

Of Prayer.

THAT prayer may be good indeed, and may also be heard, we must first consider that two things are necessary thereunto ; one, that we first meditate upon the promise of God, and do as it were advertise God thereof, and trusting unto it, be emboldned and made cheerful to pray ; for unless God had commanded us to pray, and had promised also that he will hear us, even all creatures could not obtain so much as a grain by their petitions. Whereupon it followeth, that no man doth obtain any thing of God for his own worthiness, or the worthiness of his prayer, but by the only goodness of God, who preventing all our petitions and desires, provoketh us to pray and desire of him, by his gentle and bounteous promise and commandment, that we may learn

learn how great care he hath over us, and is ready to give us more things than we durst enterprize to ask, and that we may also learn to pray boldly, inasmuch as he giveth us all things even in more ample manner than we do ask them. It is necessary that we do no whit doubt of the promise of the true and faithful God, for therefore he hath promised that he will hear us, yea, and hath commanded us to pray, that we might have a sure and strong faith that our prayer should be so heard, as he saith, *Mat. 21. and Mark 11. Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.* And in *Luke, chap. 11. 9. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.* If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? We must boldly trust to these and such like promises and commandments, and pray with true confidence. If one so prayeth, that he doubt whether God hear him, and maketh his prayer only at a venture, caring not greatly whether he be heard or not heard, he committeth a double offence: One, for that he himself maketh his prayer frustrate, and laboureth in vain; for so *James saith, chap. 1. 6, 7. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.* Such a man's heart is not quiet and settled, wherefore God can give him nothing; but faith maketh the heart quiet, and capable of the gifts of God. The other offence is, that he counteth the most faithful and true God, as a lying, vain and inconstant man, as he which neither is able, neither will fulfil his promises, so by his doubtings he robbeth God of his honour, and name of faithfulness, and truth. Whereby it is so grievously offended, that even that offence

fence being committed, a christian is plainly changed into a heathen, and denieth and loseth his true God, so that if he continue therein, he is damned for ever without all comfort; and if any thing be given unto him, which he asketh, it is given him not to good but to evil, as well temporal as eternal, not for his prayer sake, but from the wrath of God, that he may recompense those goodly words, which are uttered in sins, unbelief, and to the dishonour of God. Some say, I would trust indeed that my prayers should be heard, if I were worthy, or if I could pray well. Then, say I, if thou wilt not pray, before thou shalt know and find thyself fit to pray, thou shalt never pray. For as it is before said, our prayer must not rest upon our worthiness, or the worthiness of itself, or be grounded thereon, but upon the immutable truth of the promise of God. If so be that it trust to itself or any other thing, and ground itself thereon, it is false and deceiveth thee, altho' thy heart should even burst by reason of the ardent affection of godliness, and thou shouldest weep nothing but drops of blood. For therefore we pray, because we are unworthy to pray, and hereby surely we are made worthy to pray, and fit to be heard, inasmuch as we think that we are worthy, and do boldly and cheerfully trust to the faithfulness and truth of God. Although thou be unworthy, yet have regard hereunto, and mark most diligently, that a thousand times more consisteth in this, that thou honour the truth of God, and not with thy doubtfulness accuse his faithful promise of falshood. For thine own worthiness doth not further thee, neither thy unworthiness hinder thee; but infidelity doth contemn thee, trust and confidence maketh thee worthy and preserveth thee; wherefore so behave thyself all thy life long, that thou do not at any time esteem thyself either worthy or fit to pray or receive, unless thou find thyself to be such a one, as dareth enterprise the matter freely, trusting to the true and certain promise of thy merciful God, which will so shew both his mercy and goodness unto thee, that as he promised to hear thee being unworthy, and having not deserved it, of his meer grace, moved with no prayers;

prayers ; so he will hear thee being an unworthy asker, of his only grace, to the honour of his truth and promise, that so thou mayest give thanks, not to thine own worthiness, but to his truth, whereby he hath fulfilled his promise, and to his mercy, whereby he hath made and set forth his promise. And this the 25th Psalm confirmeth, where *David* saith, *Good and upright is the Lord ; therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment ; and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies.* Grace and mercy are in his promise, faithfulness or truth in fulfilling and hearing. And in the 85th Psalm, he saith, *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other,* that is, they come together in every work and gift, which we obtain of the Lord by praying. In this trust and confidence thou must so behave thyself, that thou do not limit to the Lord any bound or end, day or place, neither appoint any manner or measure of hearing, but that thou do commit all those things to his divine will, wisdom and omnipotence, that thou boldly and cheerfully look to be heard, and yet not desire to know, how, and where, how soon, and how long, and by what means. For his divine wisdom, shall find a better manner and measure, time and place, than we can think, even although that should be done by miracles. Even as in the old testament, *Exod. 14.* when the children of *Israel* trusted that God would deliver them, and yet no possible means were before their eyes, or in all their thoughts, then the red sea opened itself, and gave them passage, drowning all their enemies at once. The holy woman *Judith*, when she heard that the citizens of *Bethulia* would after the space of five days give up the city, if God in the mean time did not help them, rebuked them, saying, *What are ye, that ye tempt the Lord ? these are not devices and purposes, whereby we obtain mercy of God, but rather whereby we provoke him unto wrath and displeasure. Will ye set the mercy of the Lord a time, and appoint him a day after your will ?* Hereupon God did help her after a marvellous sort, that at the last she slew *Holofernes*, and

put the enemies to flight, *Judith* 13. So Saint Paul also saith, *Eph.* 3. that the power of God is such and so great, that it doth far greater and better things than we either ask or think. Wherefore we ought to think ourselves more vile, than that we may name, appoint, or prescribe the time, place, manner, measure, and other circumstances of that which we ask of God, but we must leave all things wholly unto him, constantly and boldly believing that he will hear us.

S E R M O N XIII.

On the bidding of Guests to the Great Supper.

Luke xiv. ver. 16. to the 24. *A certain man made a great supper, and bade many, &c.*

AS in the whole scripture, so in this text also we must endeavour, that according to our ability (as ye have oftentimes heard heretofore) we may understand the true and simple meaning, and thereupon settle our heart and conscience. For he that shall encounter with Satan, must not waver and stagger this way and that way, but must be certain of his cause, and instructed with many places of scripture, otherwise when the devil shall by an uncertain place of scripture, draw him to his fork, he will toss him this way, and that way, as the wind doth a dry leaf. Wherefore out of this text we must gather a certain meaning, whereby we may persist and stand sure. Howbeit it is not to be understood of the reverend eucharist, or the bread of the Lord's table, although *Papists* have miserably wrested it, as they have done many other authorities of scripture. But this is the scope, this is the sum of this text; that the gospel is preached and published through the whole world, but few receive and embrace it; and it is therefore called a supper, for that the gospel must be the last word, which shall continue to the end of the world. Wherefore

fore the supper here is nothing else, but a very rich and sumptuous feast, which God hath made through Christ by the gospel, which setteth before us great good things and rich treasures. And he sent his servant to bid men to this sumptuous supper; that is, the apostles were altogether sent with one word into the whole world, that they might bid and call men to this supper, with one voice, with one gospel, with one embassage; after such sort, that if *S. Peter* had come and preached the gospel of God in that place where *Paul* had preached it before, yet had it been one word, and the same preaching, that the hearers should have been compelled to say, Behold he preacheth the same that we heard before of the other, they wholly consent and agree, and the thing that they publish is all one. That the Evangelist might insinuate this consent and agreement in preaching, he saith, *He sent his servant*, he saith not, his servants, as of many. Now this message the servant must do to the bidden guests, *Come for all things are now ready*. For Christ hath suffered death, and in his death hath slain sin and death, also was risen again from death, the holy Ghost was given: and briefly all things were prepared which pertained unto that great supper. All things were without all our cost. For the father by Christ hath paid the price of all things, that without all our merit and labour we might enjoy his goodness, and be nourished and enriched. He sendeth his servant therefore first to the *Jews*, to bid them to this great supper, unto whom the promise was made of God; for the law and all the prophets were directed hereunto, that they might prepare the people of God. As the angel *Gabriel* declared of *John* the Baptist to his father *Zacharias*, *Luke* 1. 15, 16, 17. *He shall be filled with the holy Ghost, even from his mothers womb. And many of the children of Israel shall be turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.* But what did the guest answer to the message of the servant? The text following declareth, *And they*

all with one consent began to make excuse. This is that whereof the Lord speaketh, *Matth. 10. 37, 38. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me : And he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* For he that will be partaker of this supper, must put all things into danger for the Gospel sake, body, goods, wife, children, friends, &c. Moreover he must leave all things whatsoever they be, that separate him from the Gospel, altho' they seem good, just, right, and holy ; neither think ye that these men which here excuse themselves, were guilty of grievous sins, or occupied about unjust matters and works ; for it is not unjust to buy, to use trade of merchandize, to maintain himself honestly, to marry a wife, to be joined in matrimony. But therefore can they not come to this supper, for that they will not forsake these things, but will rather cleave to them in their heart ; now they must be utterly forsaken and left, when the Gospel so requireth ; thou wilt perhaps say, I would indeed willingly follow the Gospel, I would cleave unto it, and do all other things whatsoever, but to forsake goods, houses, family, wife, children, &c. surely this is a hard matter ; God hath commanded me to labour, to maintain my wife and children, &c. Behold therefore this is the scope and sum, that the Gospel is the word of faith and offence, because of which every faithful man doth bear offence willingly ; indeed God hath willed thee to do these things, however he hath also commanded, that thou prefer him before all creatures, and love him above all things, and think him higher than all things which thou canst know, even as the chief and greatest commandment giveth us to understand ; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, Deut. 6. 5.* Wherefore thou must forsake all things before thou suffer thy self to be pluckt away from the love of him, or his word ; although indeed he loseth nothing, which forsaketh any thing for the Gospel's sake ; if for the Gospels sake thou lose this temporal life, God will give thee another far better,

better, to wit, eternal life, as Christ saith, *Matth. 10. 39. He that findeth his life, shall lose it : And he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.* If thou be compelled to forsake thy wife together with thy children, remember that God hath a care of them, he will be a better father unto them than thyself, which undoubtedly cometh to pass, if so be thou believe ; for we have very great and rich promises that he will not suffer his word to fail, but will always fulfil it ; if we can freely and confidently trust in him, and commit our selves wholly to him ; Christ saith after this sort, *Matth. 19. 29. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my names sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* We have here his words and promise, what would we have more ? Or what can we desire more ? Wherein therefore do we fail ? only in our faith ; Wherefore no man cometh to this supper, but he that bringeth with him a sincere faith, which God preferreth and loveth above all creatures ; but how doth the Lord recompence them which excused themselves that they could not come to the supper ? The text it self declareth, *Then the Master of the house being angry, said to his servant : Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the City, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.* To go into the streets and lanes is nothing else, but that whereas the Jews made themselves unworthy of the Gospel, and did refuse it, the Disciples turned to the Gentiles ; for it was enjoined them of Christ, that they should not turn themselves to the Gentiles, nor preach the Kingdom of God in the Cities of the Samaritans, but should go only to the sheep of the house of Israel, and should feed them only, as they did ; now the Jews striving against this sword, and by no means receiving it, the Disciples said, *Act. 13. 46, 47. It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, *I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles; that thou shouldst be for salvation*

unto the ends of the earth. But what meaneth that which he saith moreover to the servant ?

Go out into the high-ways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. This is to be understood of desperate and weak consciences, which also pertain unto this supper, and are compelled unto it, but this compulsion is not outward, but inward and spiritual, and is done after this sort ; when the law is preached, sin is set before our eyes and revealed, that a man may come to the knowledge of himself, so that to compel, enter or come in, doth rightly signify to drive sin into the conscience, whereby a man may know that he is nothing, that all his works are sins, and subject to damnation, and so suddenly his conscience may become desperate, and his heart faint and terrified, that all that confidence and opinion of help may depart, and man himself be able no where to comfort himself in any thing, and at the last be driven to despair of himself ; if so be that one be once after this sort compelled, then do not long delay to let him come in, but deliver the man out of desperation ; that cometh to pass, when thou comfortest him by the Gospel, and declarest that he is delivered from his sins, saying, believe in Christ, that he hath made thee free from thy sins, then shalt thou be delivered and free from sin. And this is the meaning of that which he saith, *Compel them to come in.* It is not to be understood of outward compulsion, as some interpret it, that wicked and ungodly ones should be violently driven to the supper, for this prevaileth nothing, neither is it so meant in this place wherefore it is to be referred only to the conscience, and is inward and spiritual. Now he goeth on to speak to the servant and the rest, *For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.* This is the conclusion, that they which think themselves most certain that they shall come to the supper, and taste of it, shall not taste of it : the reason ye have heard. Now briefly the guests that are bidden and do not come, are they, which think that they shall obtain the supper by their own works, very much wearying themselves, thinking assuredly that they shall taste of it ; but the Lord concludeth and saith,

faith, Not one of these men shall taste of my supper. Wherefore most gentle Lord? they have committed no wicked thing, neither have been occupied about unjust matters; behold, this is the reason, for that they have forsaken faith, and have not confessed it freely before every one, neither have preferred that rich and sumptuous supper before all creatures; for seeing it is sumptuous, it requireth those men that do judge it to be so, and do put any thing in danger, whatsoever it be, that they may be partakers of it; thus ye have the compendious meaning of this text, which I have only briefly run over, if any will expound it more at large, I am well content he so do.

S E R M O N XIV.

On the Works of Charity.

Luke 6. Verse 36. to the 42. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful, &c.

TH E works of charity which we must do to our neighbours in temporal things, and in corporal necessity, are described unto us in this text; which the Lord then declared, when he said a little before in the same chapter, *Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you: Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other: and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not to take thy coat also, &c.* All which he comprehending in a brief sum, saith, *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* Here ye see all good works summarily described, which we must exercise among ourselves, as our heavenly Father hath exercised them toward us. Ye have oftentimes heard, that it is not needful to do good works toward God, but toward our neighbours only: God can be made neither stronger nor richer by our works, but man may be strengthened
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and enriched by them, unto whom also they are necessary, unto whom only they are to be directed, and not unto God, which ye have very often heard, and which is now in your ears ; but would to God, it would at the last burst forth both into your hands and works. Mark therefore how perverse an order it is, when any deal with God by works, with whom notwithstanding they must deal only by faith, and when faith is directed unto man, whereas it is to be placed in God alone. Turn these contrariwise, and they shall be right, after this sort ; let us first repose faith in God alone, and let us then give ourselves to serve our neighbours, and to direct all our works so, that they may turn to their advantage. We must deal before God by no other thing but by faith alone, because none is able to help us but God only, and whatsoever we possess either in mind or body, that cometh wholly to us from God alone, in whom we ought to trust, upon whom we ought to set our heart. Now some use such a preposterous order, that they repose faith, which ought to have respect to God only, in themselves and others ; they rest upon their traditions, and whatsoever their great masters have invented, in that they put their trust. Of such God saith in *Jeremiab*, chap 2. 13, 35. *My people have committed two evils : they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me : behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned.* First he saith, that his spouse is turned into an harlot, and hath estranged herself from God the fountain of life, from whom life, salvation and every good thing floweth, him they have forsaken. Secondly, they set up their own traditions, and dig unto themselves a fountain of their own, which can hold no water. So *Papists* trust to their own inventions, to their founding of masses, to their fastings, prayers, and such like things, which appear to be as a fountain, out of which they would draw life, and blessedness or salvation, when notwithstanding it is able to hold no water ; they forsake God the fountain of life. Afterward he saith, they dare

dare rise against me, that I should not be angry with them, alledging that their works are just, and they will go to law with me. Behold this is another sin, that they go about to defend their works. Whereupon God also saith, *I will plead with thee. Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way?* So faith pertaineth to God alone, whereunto it belongeth to obtain all whatsoever things are necessary, as well temporal things as eternal, and so to obtain them, that it think not that it hath merited in any thing. Also, it must again apply itself downward toward our neighbour, without looking for any recompense, not that blessedness consisteth in that deriving of faith, to wit, charity, for neither doth God require that, who will have the conscience to rest only in him; even as the spouse must cleave only to her husband, and to no other, so also God requireth of us that we trust in him alone. These things Christ declareth, when he saith, *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* Wherefore I must so order my conscience toward God, that I undoubtedly believe, that I have him a bountiful and merciful Father, as I will afterward declare, and that I also do shew mercy toward my neighbour; which faith must be inward, and carried upward unto God, but works must be without, and derived downward to our neighbours. After this sort *Abraham* did, when at the mountain in the country of *Moria* he ascended to God, he left his servants and asses below at the bottom of the mountain, taking only *Isaac* with him. The same must be done of us if we will ascend unto God, that we may come to him with *Isaac* only, that is, with faith; servants and asses, that is, works, are to be left below. Thus much for the entrance of this text concerning faith and works, to wit, that faith must pierce inward and upward, but works must go without and downward, whereby at the length it cometh to pass, that we are righteous before God and men, for that we give due honour unto God, and believe according to his word, and satisfy our neighbour in the duty of love. Now let us see the very words of the text in order. *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* How therefore is our heavenly Father merciful? After that sort, that he giveth

giveth us all good things, corporal and spiritual, transitory and eternal, freely, and of his mercy ; for if he should give unto us according to our desert, he should give unto us nothing but hell-fire, and eternal damnation. Whatsoever therefore good things he bestoweth upon us, he bestoweth them of his meer mercy ; He seeth us stick fast in death, therefore he hath mercy upon us and giveth us life ; He seeth us to be the children of hell, therefore he taking pity upon us, giveth us heaven : He seeth us to be miserable and naked, hungry and thirsty, in pitying him hereof, he clotheth us, and refresheth us with meat and drink, and maketh us full of all good things : So whatsoever we have either in body or in spirit, he giveth it us of his meer mercy, without any merit or desert of ours. Whereupon Christ here saith, Imitate your Father, and be ye merciful like unto him. This is not simple mercy, such as reason teacheth, for that is greedy of her own advantage, which giveth only to great and learned men, and to them that deserve it ; it loveth them that be fair and beautiful ; it giveth unto them, of whom it looketh for profit again, which is a mercy divided, begging, and as it were torn and broken in pieces : For if I shall give to him that hath deserved, or if I shall regard fairness or friendship, it is a bargain or debt, and not mercy. Hereof Christ speaketh in the same chapter before this text, in this wise, *If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye ? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye ? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye ? for sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again.* But the mercy of christians must not seek her own, but so behave itself, that it be indifferent, that it regard all alike with open eyes, both friends and foes, even as our heavenly Father doth : And wheresoever this mercy is not, neither is there faith also ; for thy heart being settled in faith, so that thou knowest God to have shewed himself thy God, so gentle and bountiful, without thy desert, and of meer grace, when thou wast as yet his enemy, and the child of everlasting malediction ;

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thy heart, I say, being settled in this faith, thou canst not contain thyself, but that thou shew thyself again so to thy neighbour, and that wholly for the love of God, and for thy neighbour's good. Take heed therefore what difference thou make between a friend and enemy, between the worthy and unworthy ; for ye see all which are in this text rehearsed, to have otherwise deserved of us, than that we should love them, or do well unto them. And the same thing the Lord meaneth, when he saith, *Luke vi. 35. Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again : and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest : for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil.* But how cometh it to pass, that a certain contrary thing to that which we have taught, seemeth to appear in this text, where he saith, *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.* Again, *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged : condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned : forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.* All which authorities sound so, that we must deal before God with our works, and by them deserve the mercy of God, when notwithstanding ye have very often heard, that faith alone doth all ; and both *Paul*, and the whole scripture, do commonly say and affirm, that we must believe in God alone, and deal only by meer faith before him. It is requisite here to understand that good works are only a setting forth and condemnation of faith, so that if I believe, I must be merciful, I must not judge nor condemn my neighbour, I must forgive, and give unto my neighbour. Wherefore set an example before yourselves, *Gen. 22. 12.* What did *Abraham*, being commanded to offer his son ? He obeyed the commandment, and drew forth the sword to kill his son : What ensued thereupon ? The Angel of the Lord stayed him, saying, *Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him : for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.* Howbeit this is here to be known and marked of us, that we must first receive, before we give ; before we shew mercy, we must receive mercy of God ; we do not lay the first stone, neither doth the sheep seek the shepherd,

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but the shepherd the sheep. Wherefore so bestow thy works in every respect, that thou look for nothing at God's hands because of them ; for we obtain even every thing of God without merit or desert, so God saith, *Isaiab 65. 1. I am sought of them that asked not for me : I am found of them that sought me not.* And in the end of the same chapter, *And it shall come to pass, (saith God) that before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* For indeed before we seek him, he findeth us, before we ask him, he heareth us. Likewise St. Paul saith, *Rom. 3. 22. There is no difference ; For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ : Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* And in the chapter following, he saith, *Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. And if by grace, then is it no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace,* as he saith afterward in the eleventh chapter. Again, I must bestow my works so, that they may be a certain sign, and as it were a seal graven with letters, whereby I may be assured that my faith is sincere ; for if I feel in my heart, that my works proceedeth from love, I am sure concerning the integrity and soundness of my faith. If I forgive, the same forgiveness doth assure me concerning the sincerity of my faith, doth declare my faith, and certify me, that God hath also pardoned my sin, and doth daily more and more pardon me. So it fell out with *Abraham*, his work made his faith known unto him. God indeed knew that he did believe, but it behoved that *Abraham* also should know, and shew forth his faith ; wherefore works following only freely as fruits of faith, are declarations of such a faith ; for what should it profit me, if I had even a strong faith, but unknown unto me ?

even as if I should have a chest full of gold, yet I being ignorant thereof, should have no advantage thereby; but if any would shew it unto me, he would do me as great a pleasure as if he gave it me. So if I have faith, and yet be ignorant thereof, it is no profit unto me; wherefore it must burst forth, and be shewed by the works that ensue, which are both signs and seals of the present faith. So St. Peter meaneth, when speaking of the works of charity, and the virtues of faith, he concludeth thus: *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11.* He saith not, do good works, that by them ye may be called, but that ye may assure yourselves of your calling. Accustom yourselves well unto the phrases and manner of speaking used in the scripture, that ye rush not upon them like blind moles, and confirm works in such places as this; for works are to be rejected, if we think that we are justified by them; but herein they are extolled and commended, in that they are profitable to our neighbour, and fruits and signs of faith. Behold, it was meet that I should make this digression, least I should confirm the meaning of the *Papists*. Now if it should be demanded why God oftentimes setteth down such contrary sentences, and disagreeing one with another, as it seemeth to us and our reason; I answer, that he may exercise us in reading, and that we should not think that we understand the whole scripture, when we scarce understand one place. Some sayings do guide the spirit, how we ought to behave ourselves toward God, only by faith, as this: *Being justified freely, Rom. 3. 24.* Again, lest the body should be sluggish outwardly, there are sentences also set forth unto us, which do guide and exercise the body, as these which we have heard here rehearsed, *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.* Christ affirmeth that he will require works in the last day, and will say after this sort to the condemned, *Mat. xxv. 42, 43. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye*

took me not in ; naked, and ye cloathed me not ; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Which sentences, while ignorant and light spirits labour to wrest and apply to works, they see not how great evil they commit. But spiritual men refer them to the very body only, they themselves standing naked before God in spirit, which is both just and necessary. For there are two things in man, the spirit and the flesh. Hereupon there are some places which do guide only faith in the spirit : some which do direct only works in the body ; for one place cannot direct both the body and the spirit together. We must so do with our substance, that we be willing to part from it, to lend, and to give to our neighbour, when it shall be requisite. And if we see any not to have, wherewith to make restitution, we must release him, and forgive the debt according to the example of *Nebemi h*, as we read in *Esdras* i. 5. For God hath given many things unto us, who is able to give us more things also if we believe. And thus we hear that if we will be Christians, we ought to lend, give, and to be willing to part from that which we have, otherwise we shall not shew the fruits of a lively faith. Wherefore lay up this text inwardly in your minds, that ye deal by no other thing before God, but by faith only, and refer and bestow your works to the service and profit of your neighbour. Thus much shall suffice to have been spoken concerning the former part. Now what is to be said more of this text, or what doth follow, we will afterward consider. In the words following the Lord interpreteth himself, what kind of mercy he understandeth, saying after this sort, *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged ; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned ; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven ; give and it shall be given you.* In this place the Lord divideth mercy into three parts, that we may not be ignorant, what manner of mercy that ought to be, which it behoveth us to shew to our neighbours. First judgment and condemnation is taken from us. Then thou must forgive thy neighbour if he hath committed any thing against thee. Lastly thou must help the needy. These things this
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word (*mercy*) signifieth, wheresoever it cometh in the scriptures. And all these must proceed from a sincere heart, all colouring and flattery being taken away, that there be no respect had of the person. For if thou desirest to wish well to them, which wish well to thee; or to hurt them, which hurt thee, thou art utterly deceived. But thou must do so, as Christ saith a little before; imitate thy heavenly father, love thine enemy; do well to him, which do evil to thee; forgive him that hurteth thee; lend to the needy, and so of the rest. That therefore we may speak of the former part, that we must not judge or condemn, we must mark, that God hath ordained the sword of the magistrate, to the punishing of public offences, so that it be provided, that it be not done against the precept and commandment of God, as that the innocent be not executed; for whereas the judge dealeth unjustly, he is as well an homicide as another, of which judgment Christ saith nothing here. Elsewhere he maketh mention thereof, when as he said to him, which desired that he would bid his brother divide the inheritance with him, *Luke xii. 14. Who made me a judge or a divider over you?* For the care and governing of outward things do not belong to the kingdom of Christ. But Christ speaketh here of another judgment, namely of that whereby one reputeth and counteth another good or evil, when as notwithstanding he seeth no good or evil to be done of him. Which judgment belongeth only unto God. For it may be, that thou see thy brother offend to-day, notwithstanding to-morrow God doth receive, then may he both be, and also seem unto thee to be good, neither must thou remember his sins, for that Christ hath forbidden; there cannot be either love or concord where this judgment and condemnation is usual amongst men. To judge and condemn another is nothing else, than to have a beam in his own eye, which all hypocrites do without doubt bear in their eyes. For they that judge themselves good, are offended at their brother, whatsoever others do, it displeaseth them, forasmuch as they will not acknowledge their own sin. But it cometh to pass, that when thou seest many sins in others, thou seest not the beam

that is in thine own eye, and so fallest into the judgment of God. Hereof it cometh, that thou which judgest another, art made worse than the most wicked bawd, or the most unchast harlot before God, who alone knoweth who is to be saved, and who to be condemned. Such hypocrites are of that nature, that it is a pleasure unto them, and they take no small delight thereof, if they reason and talk either of the adultery or fault of another man, yea, they increase a small thing or trifle in their neighbour, and whatsoever others do, they interpret it at the worst, so that no man is able to do that, which pleaseth or liketh them; and though they themselves do not such things, yet they willingly hear that other men do them, whereas a godly man helpeth as much as he is able, that these things may be covered and amended; but it many times falleth out, that they are most filthy adulterers, even according to the flesh, which do so judge and condemn others, howbeit they do not judge man only, but even God himself; Wherefore if thy brother be a sinner, conceal his sin, and pray for him to the Lord, if thou reveal his sin and rejoyce thereat, surely thou art not the child of the merciful father, for if thou were, thou wouldst be merciful according as he is. This is a thing most certain, that we are not able to shew so great mercy to our neighbour, as God both hath and doth shew to us; but that is the practice of Satan, that we do those things which are quite contrary unto mercy, which is an undoubted sign, that there is no mercy at all in us. Of these judgers of others, Christ speaketh in the Gospel, when he saith, Luke 6. 39, 40, 41, 42. *Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thy self beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brothers eye.* As if he said, thou thinkest that thy brother is blind, and in thy mind

mind doest find fault with another, that is, thou wilt guide another, notwithstanding thou thy self art blind; thou judgest him a sinner, and thy self an honest and just man; what other thing is this, than for thy heart to be so affected, that thou count thy self better? Which is nothing else, than that thou wilt lead and guide others, when thou thy self art blinder then a mole, so that he which followeth thee, doth fall with thee into the ditch. Of such as judge themselves to excel others, and think themselves to be followed more than the word of God, St. Paul speaketh, Rom. 2. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. *Behold (saith he) thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God; And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, And art confident that thou thy self art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thy self; thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? Whereupon he also saith in the beginning of the same chapter to hypocrites: Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self; for thou that judgest, dost the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Lo, this is to speak the truth to hypocrites, who go about to shew the way to others, which they themselves know not, leading other men into the ditch with them. Therefore the Lord saith, *The discip'le is not above his master, but whosoever will be a perfect discip'le shall be as his master.* This is a common proverb: I can learn no more of my master than he knoweth himself; wherefore doth the*

Lord speak this proverb ? because of two sorts of matters ; the one is blind, whom if I shall follow, I also my self shall become blind ; he himself falleth into the ditch, and I follow. The other master is the merciful father, of whom we must learn mercy, whom if we follow, we also do become merciful like as he is ; if we were merciful daily, we should also become perfect, as he is perfect, but that cometh not to pass, as long as we are in this life. The second part of mercy is, that we forgive them which have endamaged us, or hurt us by any means. A Christian can never be so hurt, but he ought to forgive, not only seven times, but seventy times seven times, as the Lord saith unto Peter, *Mat. 18. 35.* Wherefore God forgiveth a Christian his sin or infirmity, that he may also forgive others their infirmity, which Christ setteth forth in a most goodly parable, which he concludeth in these words ; *So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* And so we pray daily in the Lord's prayer, with an addition, saying, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.* Is this a hard matter, if I a wretched sinner, do forgive my neighbour his trespasses, and his infirmity, whereas the Lord will forgive me my sins and my infirmity ? If one had killed my father, what were this, compared to my sin, wherewith I have offended God, and provoked him to anger ?

The third part of mercy is, that we give to them that be in misery and need, and that we help them, whereas John speaketh thus, *1 John 3. 17.* *But whose bath this worlds good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?* For where the love of God is, it is moved to shew it self even in outward works. Hereunto also pertaineth the saying of Christ, *Mat. 5.* *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* Wherefore the Lord addeth a promise in the Gospel, saying, *Give and it shall be given unto you, a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom.* And continuing on his speech,

speech, he saith, *For with what measure ye mete with, the same shall men mete to you again.* Thus much shall suffice concerning the parts of mercy which we ought to shew to our neighbours ; unto which the special words of Christ ought to exhort us, who when in the Gospel of *Matthew*, he had spoken much of a Christian life, and of love to be shewed to our brethren, thus concludeth, saying, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets,* Mat. 7. 12. Now every one is so affected, that being cast down, and in distress, he would wish all the world to help him ; if I be a miserable sinner, drowned in sins, bearing a burthened and troubled conscience, I would that the whole world should comfort me, should help and succour me, should cover my sin and shame, so I also ought to behave my self toward my neighbour, not to judge him, nor to condemn him, but to forgive him his offences, to help him, to provide for him, to lend unto him, and give him, even as I would wish to be done unto my self, if I were driven into distress, necessity, exile, or poverty ; and herein truly Christians are known, if they love one another, if one do such works of mercy unto another, as Christ said unto his disciples at his last supper, *I give unto you a new commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you ; by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another ;* Thus ye have the meaning of this text, it remaineth that we call upon God for his grace.

S E R M O N XV.

The Sum of a Christian Life.

1 Tim. 1. Ver. 5, 6, 7. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, &c.

IT is well known unto you dearly beloved brethren, with how great severity God hath commanded his word to be heard and learned ; for he most highly esteemeth

steemeth it, and hath bestowed much labour in defending, and publishing it to the world ; he hath suffered all the prophets to come into perils and dangers, at the last also he sent his own son because of his word, whom he suffered to dye even the death of the cross ; and what persecutions have not the apostles themselves bore for the words sake ? what afflictions have not all the christians suffered ? unto some of which he hath committed the ministry of his word faithfully to be executed, and to others, hath enjoined the charge of hearing the same. If there were no other cause besides this, whereby we might be moved to hear and learn God's word, but for that it is the good pleasure, will, and commandment of God, yet this one ought to be sufficient great and weighty ; for it is our duty as creatures to obey our Lord and Creator, and that with all readiness of mind, in as much as he hath given us so many good things, and doth as yet daily give us more, for which we shall never be able to give him sufficient worthy thanks. Howbeit he is not content, only to have commanded us to do this, or to require it of us as bound in duty, but promiseth also that great fruits and advantages shall redound to us thereby, affirming that by this means his greatest and highest worship is given unto him ; for he is the great Lord, whom we serve, who hath many and divers kinds of service, and manifold manners of worship, and whom we may serve divers ways ; but this only service which is given to him by hearing the word, doth excel all the rest ; for if any where a faithful man of the country, or a citizen, or any which is otherwise in subjection doth serve his Lord or Master, he doth by the same service also serve God ; likewise a child, a man servant, or a maid servant, if they be obedient, and do diligently that which belongeth to their duty ; also a prince and parents if they govern well, and do their duty faithfully ; they all do serve God ; for it is his will and commandment which he requireth to be fulfilled of us. Of such services and kinds of worship the world is full. For to every one in his state his works are committed and enjoined of God, whereby he

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daily both ought and may serve him ; that there may be left no place for excuse unto any man, as though he were ignorant, how and wherefore he must serve God, neither that any seek after other things, and invent peculiar manners of serving God, which he hath neither ordained nor commanded, and in the mean time neglect that which he hath commanded, as we have hitherto done in our blindness ; but before all other services and doings of duties, he hath most highly esteemed and extolled this service both of them that hear, and them that preach his word ; and therefore hath ordained also a special day thereunto every week, in which we must apply our selves to no other business ; altho' we serve God by other labours all the week, which he hath bound to no time or certain day ; but he hath chosen this day specially, which he hath severely commanded to be kept, whereby men may have time and leisure to perform this service, lest any might fly unto this complaint, that he hath no leisure by reason of his labours and business ; moreover, he hath appointed special places also for his service, as among us temples and houses, where we do come together ; yea, he hath instituted and kept the whole order of ministers hereunto, giving also other things which pertain to the performing of the charge of this office, as the knowledge of many tongues, and divers gifts beside ; and briefly he hath commanded the whole world by a certain special precept, that it think this worship or service holy, and far more excellent than the rest ; which he will have so to be delighted in of all christians, that it may be manifest, how much he doth esteem it, and how acceptable unto him the exercise and handling of his word is ; these things I speak to stir you up, and to admonish you, why ye ought willingly to hear the word of God, because it is not only the commandment of God, whereunto we must obey, but we have also most ample promises, that it is a thing acceptable to God, and the greatest worship, whereby we can do honour unto him ; and it so far exceedeth other kinds of worship, as the brightness of the sun exceedeth the brightness of the other stars, and the sabbath-day, the other days, and in fine, as much as the
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heavenly kingdom excelleth the kingdoms of the world ; for here all things are holy and specially chosen, the time, place, person, and that because of the word, which sanctifieth all things unto us ; wherefore we must earnestly endeavour, that we take heed unto our selves, that we fall not into sluggishness, and slothfulness, neither that we be carried away with contempt and loathsomeness of hearing the word, as those delicate and cloyed spirits, which seem unto themselves already to be masters, and exactly to know all things, yea, far more perfectly than any can teach them, or as others also, which are soon cloyed with it, thinking, why I have heard this very often, wherefore should I so often hear the same song ? they know not how great and marvelous a thing it is, also how great worship of God they so greatly contemn, and neglect with so great slothfulness ; wherefore they do after unspeakable means provoke God to wrath, having his commandment so in contempt, and suffering his promise to be made void in them, and as much as is in them impairing and hindering by their example so commendable a worship and service of God. But admit it to be true, which is not, that thou dost understand all things perfectly, and as wise and skilful as Christ himself : yet thou seest how earnestly he performeth the office of preaching, and applyeth himself unto this work, whereof he was most skilful before, and had not any whit need thereof, as we do greatly need it ; so *Paul* also a prince of apostles, altho' he was exceedingly well learned, and so excellent a doctor, yet going through many countries did often and every where preach, neither was he wearied or cloyed ; wherefore it is meet that thou be nothing at all weary of hearing this word, inasmuch as the aid and help thereof is exceeding necessary for thee, both against the devil and all other temptations ; and although for thy instruction thou shouldst not need it, yet oughtest thou not to be wearied or cloyed, that thou shouldst not bestow a few hours in a day every week upon this worship and service of God ; seeing that before, applying thy self to false worship, when thou didst pass
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the whole day in temples, and didst run from temple to temple, from altar to altar, thou felt no tediousness or weariness, neither didst say as thou dost at this day ; O, I have heard no new thing, I have heard these things before ; but didst think thus ; this day and yesterday I went to hear Mass, and to morrow I mind to go to hear it again ; how much more oughtest thou to do this now, knowing assuredly that this is the right service and worship of God, and to say, altho' I knew most perfectly, as I do not know, yet to give honour and shew obedience unto God, I will do this service, and because of his love and praise I will hear his word, that my Lord may see by this chief worship, wherewith I am especially delighted, that I am willing to serve him ; for although no other fruit or profit come unto me thereby, yet I may rejoice that I have performed a most holy and acceptable work unto him, whereunto other kinds of worship and services being compared, are of small importance. Now, he that doth not care for these things, neither is moved with them, reverently to think and highly to esteem of the word of God, willingly and earnestly to hear and learn it, whensoever opportunity and means shall be offered, I will have nothing to do with him ; for neither may I, neither will I draw any man hereunto violently ; he that contemneth, let him contemn still, and remain a swine as he is, even until that day, when God will kill him and throw him down headlong to hell ; for such a one cannot be a good man, neither is it a human sin, but a certain devilish obstinacy, so greatly to contemn that, whereunto God hath appointed a place, person, time, &c. Moreover he moveth us by his commandment, lovingly provoketh us by his promises, stirreth us up and admonisheth us by his words, and offereth all these of his own accord, and to be bought with no price or treasure, which is to be far fetched, or hardly come by, the excellency whercof can indeed be countervailed with no gold ; add hereunto that it is a worship or service very easy to be done, which may be performed without all labour or grief, but that thou must attentively hear the preacher, or ap-
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ply thy mouth to speak and read, than which labour none surely is more easy ; and altho' it is to be feared, thou shalt bear the cross, and suffer persecution, yet the work it self is so joyned with no difficulty, as no other labour is, no not even that that is most easie. If so be that it be not grievous unto thee, to sit the whole day in a tavern or an alehouse, or otherwise with thy companions to trifle and sport thy self with filthy and unseemly jests and pastimes, also to sing and prate, and yet art not weary, neither feelest any labour ; thou mayest with a little pain sit in the temple, and hear the preacher, whereby thou serveest God, and dost that which is acceptable unto him : what wouldest thou do, if thou shouldst at his commandment carry stones in quarries, or go armed on pilgrimage to St. *James* ? or if some other laborious and painful work should be enjoyned thee ? as hitherto it hath been the custom amongst us, when as we would do all things willingly, whatsoever was enjoyned us, when we were deceived with meer trifles, and most impudent delusions ; but so doth the devil blind men, in whom also he worketh a satiety and loathing of the word of God, whereby it cometh to pass that they have no regard, what a treasure the word of God is, but live after a beastly sort, contemning all good doctrine. Let us therefore at the last, delight in these things, thinking thus with our selves, that as often as we read or hear the word of God either privately or publickly, of whomsoever it be preached, we apply our selves to the chief service of God, which pleaseth God exceedingly well ; after this sort thou mayest inflame thy self to hear, and God will inspire thee with his grace, that the seed of his word be not sown in vain, but may bring forth plentiful fruit ; the word is never taught without fruit, whensoever it shall be diligently and attentively heard, neither can it be, but that by often hearing it, thou shouldst become better ; and altho' for the present time thou seest or feelest no fruit, yet in process of time thou shalt plainly perceive and feel it. But it were long here to rehearse the fruits proceeding of the word, nay, indeed they cannot be all rehearsed.

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These things I thought good to speak instead of a preface before the words of *St. Paul*, to the intent to stir us up more diligently to hear the word of God; and surely there is great need of such an exhortation daily in every sermon, which also is much pertinent unto the text which we have in hand; for *Paul* in this place reprehendeth curious spirits, which go about by their own wisdom to be masters of the word of God, and do by and by falsely persuade themselves, that they know it well, and that they need not any more the help of any teacher; but turn themselves to trifling and vain jangling, that they may bring forth some new thing, which the common sort may be desirous to hear, presuming also to be Masters of the scripture and of all men, labouring to teach every one, and yet not understanding what they speak, or whereof they affirm; for this is a plague and calamity that followeth, where the word of God is not handled diligently and seriously, the learners are weary of hearing, and the teachers slothful in preaching. Hence it cometh that so great companies of hearers slide away, and churches become desolate. Of which calamity vain talking spirits are the cause, which promise new things, that they may win the hearers of the multitudes unto themselves, boasting in that they are masters of the scripture, and yet are always such men as are ignorant, forasmuch as they have never tried, what it is to teach others, which we now plainly see, and the wrath of God is at hand ready to punish our contempt and unthankfulness; therefore *Paul* beginneth his epistle to his disciple *Timothy* so, that he should take heed, that such teachers do not arise, which can talk many things of the law, bringing many new questions and doctrines, what is to be done, how righteousness is to be obtained, all which they do for ostentation sake, that they may be seen and praised, and seem to be more learned than others, and yet they never came so far as to teach any certain thing, or that which might be counted to be of any importance, but do all things confusedly and out of order: such babblers use only these words, that we must be honest, that good works must be done, and God must be served, &c. but they understand not the sense

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of those words, what they mean ; and being asked how we must do good works, now they teach this particular work to be done, another time another work, as, offer so much sacrifice at this altar, get thee into this or that monastery, run unto this saint, here erect a chapel to the honour of such a saint, in another place found a mass, light tapers, eat fish, buy indulgences, &c. which being done, they by and by bring another work, and forthwith after that another ; so they know not how to instruct any after a constant and certain manner of teaching, much less can they say, this is, or in this doth the sum of a christian life consist, &c. and yet in the mean time those things must be counted very excellent that they teach, so much do they boast, and promise almost golden mountains, as though they alone were doctors, that might not be gainsaid, and controulers and masters of all other ; but he is to be counted an excellent master, and highly to be esteemed, which teacheth the chief point and whole sum of doctrine, to wit, how the heart and conscience, yea, and the whole man must live ; they know nothing of that thing, though they be very full of words, but do altogether err from the principal point of the law. In the meantime, they intangle the minds of the hearers with such a confused company of words, that they know neither how to make a beginning nor end of speaking, and it is uncertain whereunto that disordered company of words doth serve, whereby no man can be made better, much less can he confirm his conscience thereby, as we hitherto have enough and too much seen, and tried in the papacy among our preachers of dreams. What therefore is the sum of that doctrine, which is to be taught to the people ? *St. Paul* answereth, *The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* This is that *Helen*, here thou hast the sum of christian life most excellently and fully comprehended, compendiously and briefly uttered, and which may be not unfitly printed in thy memory ; thou must endeavour, if thou wilt not err from the law, but attain to the chief point thereof (that thou mayest know what

what is to be done and what is to be left undone) to have love proceeding out of a pure heart, from a good conscience, and faith unfeigned ; if thy love be of this sort, then is it right, otherwise thou erreſt from the meaning of the whole law. Now theſe words are profound, and comprehend much matter in them ; Wherefore we muſt partly expound them, that they may be the better underſtood, and that we may accuſtom our ſelves to *S. Paul's* manner of ſpeech. Firſt, he attributed to love the ſum of the whole law, wherein it wholly conſiſteth ; and to love is nothing elſe (as I think it is known to all) but to favour and embrace one from the heart, and to ſhew and perform unto him all the duties of friendship and good will. Now thoſe juggling doctors alſo uſe ſuch words, preaching and boaſting many things of love, but all by piece-meal, and particularly applyed to their own trifles and follies ; even as hereticks, wicked men, and ungracious wretches have love alſo, but that which conſiſteth only among themſelves, and them that are of the ſame ſort with them, in the mean time, they hate and perſecute all good chriſtians, whom they would willingly accuſe of murder, if they could, &c. But this doth not yet deſerve to be called true love. If I chooſe one or two, whoſe conditions like and pleaſe me, whom I do friendly and lovingly imbrace, and no man beſide them, it is called a particular love, which proceedeth not out of a pure heart, but from an infected and filthy heart ; for true love floweth out of a pure heart, when I endeavour as God hath commanded me, to pour forth my love toward my neighbour, and to favour all without difference, whether they be friends or enemies, even as our heavenly father himſelf doth, who *ſuffereth his Sun to riſe on the good and evil, and ſendeth his Rain to the thankful and unthankful*, maketh the earth to bring forth many good things, giveth money, riches, fruits, cattle, and many times, eſpecially unto them that are the worſt of all others ; but from whence cometh the doing of theſe things ? truly from pure love, whereof his heart is moſt full. This he poureth forth abundantly upon all, omitting no man, whether he be good or evil, worthy or unworthy ; and this is called

true, divine, entire, and perfect love, which loveth no one, neglecting the rest, neither cutteth nor divideth it self, but imbraceth all indifferently. The other is love of thieves and publicans, if I love him, which is for my turn, and may do me a pleasure, and which esteemeth well of me, and despise him that contemneth me, and which is not on my side ; for that doth not proceed from the heart which ought wholly to be good and pure, indifferently toward all, but he that is indued with such love, seeketh his own things, and is full of love himself, and not of love towards others ; neither doth he love any man, but for his own advantage sake, regarding only that which may serve for his own use, seeking his own profit by every man, and not the profit of his neighbour, if he be praised and honoured, he laugheth, but being looked upon with sower countenance, or an unthankful word being spoken unto him, he stomacketh, curseth and findeth fault, so that all friendship forthwith ceaseth ; on the contrary, he that hath a pure heart must be so affected according to the word of God, and his example, that he favour every one, and bestow liberal and friendly benefits upon them, even as God hath favoured him, and of his divine love hath bestowed benefits upon him ; but some men will say, he is mine enemy, and doth evil unto me. Surely he is an enemy also to God, unto whom he doth many more things displeasing unto him, than he can do either to me or thee ; but my love ought not to be extinguished or cease, because he is evil, and altogether unworthy thereof ; if he be evil, he shall at the last suffer punishment according to his deeds, but his wickedness must not overcome me ; But if I can through love rebuke and admonish him, or pray for him, that he may amend, and escape punishment, I must do it readily, I must not be an enemy unto him, or do evil unto him in any wise : for what profit should redound unto me thereby ? neither am I made better thereby, and I make him so much the worse ; this therefore ought to delight me, if I shall favour him, and bestow benefits upon him, if so be that he will suffer them to be bestowed on him, and

and pray unto God for him, so I may enjoy peace, and have no trouble or contention with any man. and perhaps I may so profit him, that he will change his life unto the better, and amend. Otherwise surely love being divided or separated, I have more bitterness and sorrow by them, whom I hate, than I have joy and profit by them, whom I love and keep company with. And this is said to trouble the fountain or water, from whence pure love cannot flow ; as it is certain that the *Jesus* also did, against whom *Paul* speaketh in this place ; for they loved them only of whom they were loved, whereby they defiled the sincerity of love with man's affections, and therefore their heart could not be pure ; but whereby is the heart purified ? I answer, it cannot be purified by any other thing better, than by that sovereign purity, which is the word of God ; receive that into thy mind, and order thy life according to the rule thereof, and thy heart is purified ; as in this place, see thou set the word before thee, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self* ; and follow that which it commandeth, and by and by thou shalt see whether it purgeth and cleanseth whatsoever desire there is in thee of thine own profit, or whatsoever love of thy self ; for commanding thee to love thy neighbour, it maketh exception of none, either friend, or foe ; altho' some men be evil and hath been oftentimes injurious unto thee, notwithstanding he doth not therefore lose this name, that he is not to be called thy neighbour, but nevertheless remaineth thy flesh and blood, and is comprehended in these words, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, &c.* Therefore I say if thou shalt consider him and so behave thy self toward him, as the word teacheth thee, then is thy heart made pure, and love sincere, so that thou makest no false difference of persons, neither otherwise considerest him, than another, which is good, and one of thy familiars. Indeed we cannot deny this to be true, that an honest man is more worthy to be loved, unto whom also every one doth more willingly apply himself by nature, than unto the conversation of wicked men, whose familiarity there is no good man that doth not abhor, howbeit flesh and blood is the cause that true and christian love is not

among us ; for a christian must not derive his love from the person, as the world doth ; as some young men seeing a maid, is in love with her because of her fairnes and beauty, and a covetous man taketh his love and desire of his money, a lord or prince of honour and power, &c. ; for all such love is said to be feigned and proceeding not from whence it ought, cleaving to the good things, wherewith he seeth the person adorned, neither doth it continue any longer, than that which he loveth, continueth, and as long as he may enjoy it ; but true love ought to be such as floweth out of a continual fountain, and proceedeth from the bottom of the heart, as a fresh and continual water always springing forth, which cannot be stopped, and is never dried up. This love saith after this sort ; I love thee, not for thy honesty or dishonesty, for I do not derive my love from thy honesty, as from a strange fountain, but out of mine own fountain, that is, out of the word of God which is planted in my heart, which commandeth me to love my neighbour, from hence love plentifully floweth open to all, which have need thereof, watering all both friends and foes ; yea, chiefly prepared and ready for foes, inasmuch as they have more need, that they may by my means be brought to amendment, I praying for them, and doing according to my ability that which I am able, that they also leaving their evil ways, may be delivered from sins, and the snares of the devil ; and this is said to be love flowing from the heart, and not derived from without ; for he that is endued with such love, findeth no such thing in him whom he loveth, from whence he should derive it ; but because he is a christian, because he layeth hold of the word, which is altogether pure by it self, by the power of it his heart also is made pure and replenished with true love. Whereupon he poureth forth the treasures of his love towards every man, neither is he moved or turned away with the person of any, whether he be good or evil. Behold, should they preach, which will rightly teach love required of the law, whereof our babblers know nothing, neither have any regard thereof, altho' they talk many things of the law, and dis-

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pute much of love. They do not see, no they do not so much as once think, that love must be such, that it flow out of the heart, and that the fountain must be first pure and clean. This never descended into their heart, although they hear, read, and teach many things of it. They are occupied with very uncertain, and unprofitable cogitations, yea, rather with dead dreams. Wherefore whatsoever is preached of works and of a good life, that only is well done which proceedeth from the word of God, a pure heart, and a true faith; this thou mayest see in all itates, how every one ought in his calling to do the office enjoined him, and exercise the works of love. A servant-labouring, and thinking no more than thus, My Lord or master payeth me my wages, for which only I serve him, otherwise I would not vouchsafe to look upon him, &c. hath not a pure heart, for he doth not serve but for a piece of bread, or for his hire, which being taken away, his service also ceaseth. But if he were a right and true christian, he would rather be thus affected: I will not therefore serve because my Master payeth me wages, because he is honest or dishonest, &c. but because the word of God doth speak thus unto me: *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, as unto Christ, &c. Eph. 6. 5.* This service proceedeth of its own accord out of the heart, which layeth hold on the word, and greatly esteemeth it, saying, I will serve my Master, and take my wages, but this shall be the chiefest thing for which I do this service, that I may serve my God and Lord Jesus Christ, who hath laid the condition and state of a servant upon me, which I know doth please him in me, &c. Here thou seest a true work, proceeding out of a pure heart; so also let a Lord or Prince, and they which have the charge of governing the common weal, think thus: God hath committed unto me the office of a magistrate, that I should be a ruler; now if I will have regard unto this only, that I may enjoy my dignity, riches, and power, it is certain that my heart is not pure, and yet in the mean time I do the work of a ruler so, that the world cannot complain of me, neither *Cæsar* or the lawyers can blame or find fault with me by their laws.

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Even as neither a servant serving only for wages can be reprehended of the world, whether he seeketh his own things or not. Surely the word of God is not regarded in the office of a ruler that doth so, but his own idol, his own glory, money and power, &c. But if this affection be in his heart: Because I am occupied in this office, wherein God hath placed me, and the word commandeth him that beareth rule to be careful, it is meet that I do execute the same with all faithfulness and diligence, to the praise and glory of my God: The execution of the office of such a ruler, endued with such a mind, cometh out of a pure and sincere heart, wherewith God and good men are delighted. There is moreover in him love, which doth not cleave to the person or outward things, but beginneth in the heart, which the word of God maketh manifest, which forasmuch as it is pure and clean, doth also purify the heart; and so his government and works are the meer services of God, and most acceptable sacrifices unto him, seeing that they are done only according to the word of God, and for God's sake. But our talkers cannot teach this, neither are able to judge of it, only crying out when they teach best of all, that we must be honest. They bring a certain juridicial sermon out of the laws of men, as *Cæsar* and his clerks teach; but how the heart is purified, they have not so much as understood or thought any thing thereof, or how love is to be derived to all states and conditions of men, according to the word of God. Thus must thou say even in spiritual offices and states also: If I or any other shall preach to get some good benefice, whereas otherwise I would easily cease from doing this office, I may preach the gospel, but my heart is not pure, but most plainly polluted. Therefore although I do long and much affirm, that it is a good work and a weighty office, yet do I not perform it aright, forasmuch as I do it not from the heart; but then only it is rightly done when the heart hath his affection: Altho' I must get my living thereby, yet this ought not to be the chief end thereof; but because God hath called me unto it, and hath committed it unto me diligently.

to be done, it remaineth, that I do with all diligence labour therein, to the glory of God and salvation of souls, which I do also for the love of the word willingly and from my heart. Hereby I seek neither love or friendship, nor honour, nor thankfulness of men, but my works come from the heart, which I first do. before I obtain any honour, glory, reward, money, or favour, although if those come and follow, I may have and receive them without sin. Lo, thus the word is the cause, foundation. ground, fountain and spring of love coming out of the heart, and of all good works that please God, which he can by no means away with, if the heart be not pure before ; for neither are works acceptable to men, which are done without the heart, by dissimulation. Now if *Cæsar* and men require the heart, although they cannot see it, of how much greater estimation is that heart before God, which doth all things for the word's sake ? Therefore he also suffereth his word to be preached, that we may order all our life according to the prescript thereof ; and let us not suffer ourselves to be hindred, frayed from it, or discouraged with the let or hindrance of any thing, although for it we shall suffer all kind of losses, unthankfulness, contempt, &c. but let us break and go through all brunts with a bold and manly courage, and say thus : We began nothing for any man's sake, neither will we leave off any thing because of any man, but that we may do that which is acceptable to God, we will go on still, howsoever things fall out with us. They which do thus, become men excellent and most highly to be esteemed, who are ready to do all duties, and serve God with all readiness of mind, and love not feigned ; for the fountain and spring is good, not derived and brought in from without. These things I thought good briefly to speak of the first part, how the heart is purified by the word alone, and not as the monks have dreamed, by a fight taken upon them against evil cogitations, and by feigning of good thoughts ; for what thoughts soever thou shalt feign, the heart shall remain unclean, if the word of God be not in it, although it pretend a great shew of a godly life, as *Paul* witnesseth. But this pure-

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ness, whereof he speaketh, doth extend farther than outward and corporal pureness doth, which the *Jews* did use, eating and drinking their hands being often washed, which our religious men also use in their fasting, diversity of apparel, orders and rites, &c. for this is called pureness of the spirit, which we then have, when being instructed by the word of God, we know thereby how he is to be served in every state and calling, and endeavour to form our lives according thereunto. Now followeth the second part concerning a good conscience, whereof also we must treat, to wit, that love must come from such a heart, as hath a joyful and quiet conscience, both toward God and also toward men. Toward men so, as *Paul* glorieth of himself, that he lived so, that he offended no man, troubled no man, was an evil example and burthen to no man, but all that did see and hear him must needs witness, that he indifferently served all, helped all, counselled all, and dealt friendly and gently with all. Such a conscience *Moses* also glorieth of against the seditious, *Numb.* 16. 15. *I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.* And *Jeremiah*, chap. 18. 20. *Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.* Likewise doth *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 12. 2. *I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am, witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe?* Such boasting and glory every christian must attain unto, that he do so live toward every man, and so exercise and shew his love, that no man can worthily complain any whit of him, whereby he shall trouble or dismay his conscience; but that all that will confess the truth, may be forced to say, that he hath so lived, that he hath been an example to every man of living well, which will only but follow him. And this is called a good conscience before men, or against the complaints and reprehensions of men. And altho' such a conscience is not able to stand before the judgment of God, no nor
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any pureness of the heart in the outward life and work of love (we continuing in sinning oftentimes before God) yet we must attain unto such a heart, that we may comfort ourselves before him also, and say, This God hath bidden and commanded to be done, therefore I do it with a pure heart and a good conscience, neither would I willingly do otherwise, neither of purpose hurt or trouble any man, but whatsoever I say or do, that is willed and commanded of God. Let no christian suffer such a confidence to be wrested from him, that he may boast himself by the word of God against the whole world ; for he that hath no regard how he leadeth his life, that he may stop the mouths of all blamers and accusers, and clear himself before all, and testify that he hath lived, spoken, and done well, he I say is not yet a christian, having not in himself a pure heart and love ; for we will not presume of the doctrine of faith, as though that being had, every man may do what he list, whether it be profitable or unprofitable to his neighbour, that we must in no case do ; otherwise that doctrine should have the name to give licence and free liberty for every one to do what he will. But we must so behave ourselves, that we may obtain love out of a pure heart and good conscience, that no man may accuse us of any crime.

And although these things be spoken of our life and works, and a christian is another manner of man before God, as we shall hear, yet we must earnestly endeavour ourselves in this also, that we may be without blame before God. And when we shall not attain thereunto, we must flee unto prayer, and say before God and man, *Forgive us our trespasses, &c.* that at the least our life may remain without blame, and may obtain a good conscience before men ; and if this cannot be brought to pass by perfect love and pureness of heart, yet let it be done by humility, that we may pray for, and desire of all men pardon of our offences, when as we have not purely and perfectly done our duty, or are not able to do it, so that thy neighbour may be enforced to say, altho' thou hast greatly hurt me, or hast not done thy duty toward me, as it was meet, yet forasmuch as thou
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humblest thyself, I will willingly forgive thee, and take it in the best part. And for this humility's sake, I say thou art a good man, which dost not stand obstinately, as though thou wouldst advisedly and on purpose offend against me, but dost turn thyself unto love ; therefore that life is as yet said to be without blame, which altho' it was subject to reprehension, is with humility covered and reformed, that no man can worthily complain thereof. Thus the law should be expounded and handled, that both love toward every man may rightly proceed out of a pure heart, for God's sake, and the conscience may stand before the world ; and this ought to have been practised of those vain talkers in their sermons, their cold trifles and vain follies being neglected and left off. But that all these things may stand and be of force before God also, there yet remaineth one thing which pertaineth hereunto, which is that, that followeth. [*And of faith unfeigned.*] For as I have said, altho' I have a good conscience before men, and do exercise love out of a pure heart, yet the old *Adam*, that is, flesh and blood remain in me subject to sins, whereby it cometh to pass that I am not altogether holy and pure. And as *Paul* saith. *Gal. 5. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, &c.* And *Rom. 7.* he affirmeth that he must fight a daily fight against himself, because he cannot do that which is good, and yet he would willingly do it. The spirit indeed would very willingly live purely and perfectly according to the word of God, but the rebellious flesh resisteth the desire thereof, assailing us with many great temptations, that we should seek honour, wealth, riches, pleasure, and should become slothful and negligent in our state and duty. So there remaineth a continual fight in us, because of the impurity of our person, wherein there is not yet sincere pureness, nor a good conscience, and perfect love, unless there be perhaps somewhat before men ; but before God many things are found lacking in us, many things are worthy of blame, although all things be perfect before men. For example's sake : Although *David* can obtain that confidence before men, that he can be reprehended of no man, and the holy Prophets *Isaiab, Jeremiah, &c.* do

do glory and are sure, whatsoever they have done according to their duty, is right and well done, seeing it is the word and commandment of God, wherein they have exercised themselves with a pure heart and good conscience, yet can they not stand by this conscience before the judgment of God, but are compelled to say, If we should strive with thee in judgment, then no man shall have so good a conscience or so pure a heart, which doth not dread thy judgment, and acknowledge himself to be worthy of reprehension and blame; for God hath reserved that prerogative unto himself, that he may contend in judgment with every one, altho' he be holy, and accuse him of deadly sin; neither is there any so holy, whom he may not judge and condemn as worthy of destruction. Wherefore although both the heart be pure and the conscience good before men, yet must thou endeavour to attain unto this also, that the same may be likewise good before God, that he may not find fault with them, but that they may be safe and quiet from his judgment, as they are before men. Hereunto now pertaineth the third part, that is, 'faith; and this is the principle part and chief precept, containing all the rest in it, that we may know, that where love is not yet perfect, the heart not sufficiently pure, and the conscience not quiet, and God doth yet find something which is worthy of blame, where the world can find fault with nothing, faith must moreover come, and such a faith which is not feigned, and defiled with confidence of a man's own holiness: For wheresoever this is not, there the heart is never purified before God, neither shall the conscience be able to stand, if they be examined by severe judgment and exact censure. Men indeed shall not justly blame me, altho' I glory, that I have served them by preaching, helping, governing, and by doing the duty of an overseer or ruler, &c. with all faithfulness; and if I have done any thing more or less than I ought, I am sorry at my heart, for I would very willingly have done all things that I ought. Wherefore I am quiet and already excused, neither have they any more, which they may rightly require of me, but are enforced to acquit and discharge me; but here I must

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attain unto this also, that my heart be so pure, and my conscience so good before God, that he may not by any means accuse and condemn me. Howbeit we find not this in ourselves, although we may glory somewhat thereof before the world, I must therefore obtain some other thing whereunto I may trust, if I shall come into peril, and within the throwing of the dart, as it is commonly said; and I must say to my fearful and terrified conscience, I have done that which I have been able, and who knoweth how often I have done less than I ought? for I could not see and mark all things, as *David* also saith, *Psal. 19. 12. Who can understand his errors?* Therefore I can lay no foundation of trust upon mine own holiness and pureness. Well, I have the word, to live, love, and have a good conscience, which is pure and holy; but this I want, that I cannot conclude, that that is in my heart; neither do I find so good a conscience in me, as the law requireth of me; For there is no man living in the earth, which can say this truly, I know that I have done all things, and that I do owe nothing before God. But the most holy ones must say thus: I have done surely according to my ability that which I have been able, but I have offended much oftner than I know; therefore our own conscience doth witness against us, accusing and convincing us, although before the world we are most free from reprehension or blame: For it must follow the word which saith, This thou shouldest have done, this thou shouldest have left undone. It cannot avoid the judgment of this, nor answer to the accusation thereof, but it is at the least enforced to stand in an uncertainty, being wholly wrapped in doubting; but if it doubt, then is it by and by convinced, for it standeth not before God, but flieth and trembleth.

Wherefore the principle part of our doctrine must here help us, to wit, that our Lord Jesus Christ being sent of the Father, did come into the world, and hath suffered and died for us, whereby he hath reconciled the good will and favour of the Father to us, his wrath being appeased, and doth now sit at the right hand of the Father.

Father, having regard of us as our Saviour, and as a continual Mediator and Intercessor for us, making intercession for us, as for them which cannot have and obtain of themselves such pureness and a good conscience: Therefore by his help and benefit we may say before God, Although I am not pure, neither have a good conscience, yet I cleave to him by faith, which hath perfect pureness and a good conscience, which he engageth for me, or rather which he giveth unto me; for he alone is he, of whom we read written, as *Peter and Isaiab*, chap. 53. 9. *He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.* And this praise belongeth only unto him, neither hath he any need to pray, *Forgive us our debts*, neither of that article of the creed, *I believe the forgiveness of sins*, &c. but he is free and quiet in perpetual, pure and perfect righteousness and pureness, unto whose charge none can lay any thing, nor accuse his conscience of any crime, not man, not the devil, no not God himself; for he himself is God, who himself cannot accuse himself. And this is called faith neither coloured nor feigned, which the conscience striving and trembling, dareth come forth in the sight of God, and say, Almighty God, I am innocent before the world, and quiet in mind, so that no man can lay any thing to my charge, or find fault with me; for altho' I have not done all things, yet I ask pardon of every one, that he will forgive me for God's sake, even as I again forgive all. By this means I have cut off the complaints of all, who have no more which they may rightly lay against me; but before thee I must lay aside this trust and confidence, and must wholly acknowledge the guiltiness of innumerable sins, and say as *David* said, *Psal.* 143. 2. *Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified;* wherefore I cannot contend with thee, if thou requirest an account of my life, but I appeal from the judgment-seat to the mercy-seat: I do easily suffer, that I be dealt with according to law and right before the judgment-seat of the world, and I will willingly answer, and will do what I am able: Howbeit before thee I will not come into judgment, but I desire grace, which I take hold of on every side; for

thus the scripture teacheth me, that God hath set two seats before men, the one a judgment-seat, for them which are yet secure and untractable, and acknowledge not their sins, neither will confess and acknowledge them; the other a mercy-seat, for miserable and fearful consciences, which feel their sins, dread the judgment of God, and do earnestly make request for grace: And this mercy-seat is Christ himself, as *Paul* witnesseth, *Rom. 3.* whom God hath set forth unto us, that we might have refuge unto him, being not able to stand before God by our own power. Unto him I will apply myself, if I have done or do less than is meet; and how great pureness and goodness soever my heart and conscience have before men, I will have it here to be altogether nothing, and hidden, and covered as it were with a vault, yea, with a fair heaven, which may mightily defend it, which is called grace and remission of sins. Under the defence thereof my heart and conscience must creep, and remain safe and quiet; for so he commanded his apostles to preach and publish, that through his name all that believe in him, shall receive remission of sins. Again, *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved,* *Mark 16. 16.* And *John 3. 16.* he saith, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Therefore God hath set forth the mercy-seat unto us, whereunto he leadeth us from the judgment-seat. Let us leave others before the judgment-seat, namely, those proud holy ones, contemners and persecutors of the word of God, where they shall hear sentence according to their deeds. We will suffer these to abide in their circle, until they have humbled themselves; but we will not abide in this circle, but will depart from it as far as we shall be able, into the circle of the mercy-seat, unto which we do appeal. Neither have we invented this of our own brain, but it is the word of God himself, which threateneth horrible judgments to them which come with their own holiness, and trusting thereunto, do hope that they shall be able to stand before God the judge, neglecting the mercy-seat of Christ; for the sentence standeth, that

that they shall be set before the judgment-seat, as Christ saith, *John 3, 18. But he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. He that believeth on him, is not condemned:* that is, shall not come to the judgment-seat, but to the mercy-seat, where there is no wrath or rigour, but grace and forgiveness of sins, all things being remitted which be not pure, yea, being blotted out and so consumed, as a drop of water, is consumed of the the heat of the Sun. For where the mercy-seat reigneth, there is nothing else, but meer forgiveness and remission of sins.

This being known, we must exactly understand the difference between the law and the gospel, whereof we often teach. The law draweth us to the judgment-seat, requiring of us, integrity of life, love out of a pure heart and a good conscience, it maketh us also to exercise our selves therein, and must go no further. But when it shall come and accuse thee, and will reason with thee, and have those things to be performed which it requireth, then shalt thou be greatly troubled. For altho' thou hast done them, yet art thou not able to stand before God, before whose judgment-seat, many things are yet found wanting in thee, which should have been done of thee, and thou hast left them undone, neither are they known unto thy self. Whether then wilt thou turn thee? Here the law urgeth thee by all means, and thine own conscience being witness, accuseth thee, requiring the sentence of the judge against thee. Then must thou despair, there is no council or help to be had, except thou knowest to fly from the judgment-seat to the mercy seat, as for example; admit some bishop die in his own holiness, who while he lived was as it seemed of a good life, and acknowledged Christ, no otherwise than a cruel judge (as hath been hitherto preached of him, neither hath he been otherwise set forth, as he is also wont to be unto such, not of his own nature, for indeed, he is most gracious and comfortable, but because they esteem him for no other in their heart) behold this man is a hindrance unto himself that

he cannot obtain any grace ; for he knoweth no difference of the judgment-seat and the mercy-seat, yea, he is altogether ignorant whether there be a mercy-seat, from which he so erreth, and must be bound to the judgment-seat. But we teach thus, that Christ is so to be learned and considered, that we be most certainly persuaded that he sitteth before miserable and trembling consciences, that believe in him, not as an angry judge which commandeth forthwith to carry violently them that be guilty into punishment, but as a gentle, loving, and comfortable mediator, between my fearful conscience and God, which saith unto me, if thou be a sinner, and astonied, and the devil laboureth to draw thee to the judgment-seat, then see that thou flie unto me, and fear no wrath or anger. Wherefore ? Even because I sit here, that, if thou believe in me, I may make intercession for thee to my father, that no anger and severity may hurt thee ; for all anger and punishment shall be sooner laid upon me, than be borne of thee. Howbeit that cannot be ; for he is the only beloved Son, in whom all grace and favour dwelleth, whom as often as the father doth behold, he cannot but replenish both heaven and earth with grace and favour, and forget all wrath and displeasure ; and whatsoever he shall ask of his father, that he shall forthwith obtain without all repulse or denial. So by faith we are made wholly blessed and safe, subject no more to any damnation, yet not for our own holiness and pureness, but for Christ's sake, to whom we cleave by faith as to our mercy-seat, being assuredly persuaded, that with him there remaineth no anger, but meer love, and pardon, and forgiveness of sins. Thus the heart is purified before God, and the conscience made good and quiet, not in respect had of mine own pureness or life led before the world, but by trust and confidence of that excellent treasure, which my heart apprehendeth, which is unto me instead of a pledge and fulness, when as before God I am not able to pay.

But herein the whole force of the matter consisteth that we do again and again take heed, that our faith be not false, or as *St. Paul* speaketh, feigned ; for if this

err, and deceive us, all things deceive us ; for there have been many in all ages, as there be also at this day, which can speak many things of faith, and will be matters not only of the Law, but even of the gospel also. Who say the same that we do, that faith performeth and doth all things, but that the law and good works are also to be joined unto it, and that otherwise, if these be not added, faith availeth nothing, in which words they mix and mingle together our life and works, and Christ. But this is not purely and sincerely to have taught faith, but to have coloured, defiled and corrupted faith, so that it can no more be called faith, but a feigned colour and counterfeiting of faith, the trust and confidence of the heart standing not purely toward Christ, as the only mercy-seat, but being grounded upon our own holiness, as being able to stand before the judgment seat. Wherefore doing thus, we are most rightly cast off before God, and condemned unto destruction, whereof we are most worthy. For if faith must be pure and void of all counterfeiting and feigning, then these two things, Christ and my works must be rightly discerned and severed one from the other. For this is plain even to him that is blind, that Christ and his works are not my life and my works, but are separated from the Law and from the works of all men, yea, and that by a greater distance, than man is unlike or differeth from man. For neither can I say that I and *Cæsar*, or the bishop of *Rome* are the same thing, yet I am much nearer and more like unto either of them, than a moral man and a sinner is unto Christ the Lord, who is not only a pure and holy man, free from all spot and blot, but is moreover God also. Therefore let the law and the pureness of thy heart, yea, and thy good conscience avail in earth only toward men : But where the mercy-seat is, to wit at the right hand of the Father, and the Mediator between thee and God, thither no man's works and merits ought to have access ; much less be they there of any force or value. Wherefore Christ is purely to be separated from all my life, deeds and works, and we must without exception conclude,

conclude, that he is another thing than our life led before men with a pure heart and a good conscience, altho' it be led even perfectly and without blame; for it being presented before God, and by the law brought to the judgment-seat, I am condemned and lost. But Christ is the mercy-seat, and all that cleave unto him by faith, cannot be condemned and judged. So the judgment seat together with the law and all my life go into one part, but my faith must fly and leap far unto another part, and join itself unto him which is pure, and hath no sin, of whom the scripture speaketh, *he that believeth in him shall not be confounded*, because he is present in the sight of the father, and maketh intercession for me. Moreover he giveth me his own pureness and holiness, that being cloathed and adorned therewith, I may be able to stand before God, and all wrath and displeasure may be taken away, instead whereof I may enjoy meer love and favour. Lo, thus faith remaineth pure and free from counterfeiting, for it resteth not upon my works, that because of them it should behove God to be gentle and favourable unto me, as a false and feigned faith doth, which mingleth together man's merits and the grace of God, and although it holds the words of Christ, yet hath it the confidence and trust of the heart reposed in itself, so that it is certain, that it is only a colour which cannot long continue; for the matter cometh at the last to this point, that believing that God is favourable unto thee because of thy life led without fault or blame, thou must despair and say, who knoweth what I have done? whereby am I certain that I have neglected nothing through carelesness, or that nothing is wanting in me? in this doubtfulness of mind the foundation faileth, sliding away under thee like unto sand moved and stirred, and so faith is of no force or value at all. Wherefore it is not unfitly called feigned and painted faith, through which one seeth as it were through a lattise or painted glasse, through which the thing that is seen representeth the colour of the glasse, and yet is not indeed of that colour; so they believe that that affection is in God, that he vouchsafeth to regard

gard our works and merits ; which they paint forth according to their own opinion and dreams, which are utterly false, rash and unadvised. And so judging God and all things according to them, they see only as it were through a lattise or painted glass. But thou shalt only behold him with pure and clear eyes, if thou do well, separate the judgment-seat and the mercy-seat one from the other, that heaven with the stars thereof may remain pure to grace and remission of sins obtained by the Mediator, where Christ reigneth with his works, and the earth also with her trees and herbs, whither we must be referred with our works. The matter I say must be brought to that pass, if we will stand with a right and unfeigned faith before God, that we do purely distinguish and sever ourselves, our life, and Christ or the mercy-seat ; and he that will not do this, but presenteth himself before the judgment-seat with a bold courage, shall feel the reward of his rashness. I myself have been in that danger, and as it were a mouse having tasted pitch have run away, rejoicing greatly that liberty was given to me to attain to the mercy-seat, and now I am enforced to say, 'that altho' I have lived very well before men, yet all things committed of me on the contrary, do remain beneath under the judgment-seat, to be punished according to the sentence and judgment of God. Now I have no other comfort, nor no other help and council of my salvation, than that Christ is my mercy-seat, who hath never offended, hath defiled himself with no sin, who died and rose again for me, and sitteth now at the right hand of the father, and defendeth me under his shadow and protection that I need not doubt, that I am by his benefit and intercession safe before God from all wrath and terror of judgment. Thus faith remaineth in all things pure, setting no other thing before itself, whereunto it may boldly trust, but Christ alone. Now he that knew this well, should be a man of a resolute mind ; for all other have to do with a feigned faith, boasting many things of faith, but mingling all things together, like as vintners mix wine with waters ; by this they say, if thou live thus, God will be favourable unto thee, and they make the judgment-

ment-seat of the mercy-seat, and the mercy-seat of the judgment-seat, which by no means can be, for the judgment-seat shall remain, &c. Wherefore separate these two, one from the other as far as thou shalt be able, that they come not together, namely the life and holiness together with the judgment-seat into one place, which shall drive and enforce thee to have a good conscience, and to lead an upright life before men. But offer thy sins to the mercy-seat to be transferred into another place, where God lovingly receiving thee, will embrace thee as a beloved son, and will never remember more any wrath or sins. If such doctrine of faith were set forth unto men, then should it be excellently well done, and all other things should follow of their own accord, as pureness of heart, and goodness of conscience, although right and perfect love. For whosoever is by faith quieted in his heart, and assured that he hath God favourable unto him, who is not angry with him, altho' he hath deserved his wrath divers ways, he doth all things with a glad and cheerful mind. Moreover he liveth so also toward men, that he is loving and beneficial toward all, although they be not worthy of love. He is quiet toward God through Christ the mediator, who will not throw him down headlong into hell, but doth lovingly favour him, and lifteth him up into heaven. And this is the chief quietness, and principle point and foundation of our salvation. Afterwards he doth in his life shew himself dutiful also towards his neighbour, doing all the best things he is able unto him, whatsoever his state or duty commandeth or requireth; and when he doth less than is meet, he asketh pardon of his negligence before God and men, so that there is left occasion neither to him, nor the world afterward to rebuke him, power also to devour him is taken from hell, and to tear him in pieces, from the devil. Thus a man is said to be in all things perfect, toward men by love, and toward God, not by the law, but by Christ, whom he apprehendeth by his faith, as the mercy-seat; which engageth his holiness for the believers, or rather giveth it to them, so, that in him they have all things that are ne-

necessary to salvation. Now this is right and pure doctrine, which should be exercised and taught unto men distinctly, that they might know how they may be able to stand both before God and men, that faith and love be not mingled together, or life referred both to God and men. This ought to have been performed of those glorious and arrogant teachers, seeing that they will be counted masters of the law, that the difference of the law and faith might be well known unto all. For altho' it be taught and repeated with never so great diligence, yet notwithstanding it is very hard to be well and thoroughly learned, especially to us which have been instructed and trained up in the doctrine of works, and led only to the law and our own works. To these may be added our nature also very prone and ready by it self hereunto, and now brought into a custom, whereby it is confirmed, and in continuance often turneth the heart also into exercise and use, so, that we cannot abstain, nor think otherwise, but, that God will be favourable unto us, which have done so great works, and have led our life so without blame or fault. Therefore we must strive against both our nature and custom. For surely it is a very hard thing to think or be persuaded otherwise, and so purely to put a difference between faith and love, the filth still hanging upon us and cleaving unto us, altho' we be now in faith, so that our heart can scarce rule it self, that it say not, So long time have I taught the gospel, so have I lived, such great works have I done, &c. And we would very willingly have God to regard our life, and turn his mercy-seat for our cause into a judgment-seat. Thou mayest use this boasting toward men, I have done well to all as I have been able, and if any thing be wanting, I as yet will endeavour to make a recompence; but if thou be minded to go to God, I advise thee to cease from such arrogant boasting, and think to appeal from judgment to grace.

Let who will begin and prove this thing, he shall at length see and try how grievous and hard it is for a man that hath been occupied all his life time in the works of his own holiness, to escape out, and with all his heart by
faith

faith to cleave to this one Mediator. I my self have now preached the gospel almost twenty years, and have been exercised in the same daily, by reading and writing, so that I may well seem to be rid of this wicked opinion, notwithstanding I yet now and then feel the same old filth cleave to my heart, whereby it cometh to pass that I would willingly so have to do with God, that I might bring something with my self, because of which he should for my holiness-take give me his grace. And I can scarce be brought to commit my self with all confidence to meer grace, which I should do ; for we ought to fly only to the mercy-seat, forasmuch as God hath set it before us for a sanctuary, which must be the refuge of all them that shall be saved. Wherefore it is not to be marvelled at, if it be grievous unto others, so purely to apprehend and lay hold of faith ; but especially to such as be yet hindered and entangled of devilish preachers, of whom *St. Paul* speaketh, which cry out against the doctrine of faith, and in these words urge the works of the Law, *Do this and thou shalt live : Also, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments, &c.* which indeed are true and right, if thou didst also rightly understand them. Declare unto me the true meaning of these words, otherwise I know sufficiently already, that I ought to be righteous and keep the commandments. But how must I attain hereunto ? or what is it to be righteous ? If thou sayest that it is to have a good conscience and a pure heart, and to do all things that God hath commanded ; well, be it so, but hear ye then : go to, perform me that, or at least shew one, that dareth say, that he hath performed it ; for thou shalt not yet so purify my heart and conscience with thy doctrine, that God cannot accuse and condemn me. But now the law (as it hath been sufficiently declared) requireth such a heart, as hath a good conscience before God. How therefore do we obtain such a conscience ? This is the question and the cause, whereof the controversy is. Truly it cometh not hereof, because thou teachest the judgment-seat, that is, the law, but from hence, for that we have a pure and unfeigned faith, which layeth hold

hold of Christ, in whom it most fully obtaineth all things which the law requireth. So at length all things are brought to pass in me, having a good conscience, inasmuch as I am now made righteous and justified before God. For although that many things be as yet found wanting in me, yet he standeth on my side, who hath so much righteousness as wherewith he is able to supply both mine and all mens defects. Thus we shew the way whereby we are made righteous before God, when as they, when they teach best of all, shew only the way to attain to honesty, and righteousness, which is of force and value before men, contending that it ought to be of force before God also, mingling together all things in one, inasmuch as they have no certain knowledge thereof, understanding not what they say or what they affirm. For to what end tendeth this thy immoderate cry? *He that will enter into life, let him keep the commandments, &c.* in which words thou shalt not shew the way to attain righteousness; for descend a little into thy self, and examine thy self diligently, then shalt thou find thy self to have been in time past conceived and born in sins, and to live in the same now, and not able to perform that which the law requireth. Why therefore dost thou seduce other with vain words, saying, be thou righteous, and thou shalt be saved, which is to no purpose, neither followeth there any fruit thereof, the way being not shewed by which we attain to justification? I hear the words well, what things the law requireth, but how shall we attain unto ability to fulfil them? Then speakest thou to me again, and sayest, thou must do good works. But how shall I stand before the judgment of God, if I have long and much wrought good works, and am righteous before men, as thou teachest me? How shall I be certain, that I seem such a one to God also? For here my heart and conscience are ready to witness the contrary against me. Howbeit I should have been thus taught of thee, as *St. Paul* commonly teacheth, that righteousness must proceed from faith unfeigned, and before all things the mercy-seat must be laid hold of, from whence all things that are wanting in us are to be taken. And so indeed these

words, keep the commandments of God, are rightly to be understood. For the law requireth perfect righteousness in thee, being of force as well before God as before men; thou having obtained this, go forth into the company and assembly of men, and exercise love, and do good works. By this order and means, something is brought to pass, and such sayings of the scripture are fulfilled. For so man doth that which the law requireth, first before God, not by his own strength or virtues, but by Christ, without whom we can do nothing before God, and secondly, by his own endeavour before men, and he is now perfectly righteous, inwardly by faith in Christ, and outwardly also by his works, yet so that there is no place among men for mutual pardoning of offences. Therefore the righteousness of christians doth much more consist in forgiving, than in their own works. Those vain praters do pervert the order of this doctrine, and without preaching of forgiveness, do teach that works only are to be urged. Lo, thus *St. Paul* reprehendeth the error and ignorance of them, which speak much of the law, and repeat it in daily sermons, and yet they themselves do not understand or shew the way, how the law must be fulfilled, knowing nothing so well as to babble forth and often to repeat these words, that the Law, the commandments are to be kept, if thou wilt be saved, good works must be done, &c. As they do at this day, fill all books with such confusion of words, and in all sermons utter nothing else, than such vain babbling, which they themselves understand not. But they never say a word of those things, whereof *St. Paul* here speaketh, namely of the sum of christian doctrine, how love must flow out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, they say no more, but keep the commandments. They levelling at the true mark do never hit it; therefore they corrupt and falsify all things, love the heart, the conscience, &c. For the head of the fountain is wanting, that is, sincere faith, which if it be not right and sound, all things must needs be corrupt, which shall flow and proceed from it. And whatsoever they teach, it is a conceit of their own imagination.

imagination, and like to delusions, not unlike also to those things, that are seen through a lattice or glass, which resemble the colour of the clear glass, and yet indeed are not of that colour. They think that God will regard them, when they live so before men, as it seemeth good to their obscure opinion; but if God were of that opinion, he might then have well kept still Christ and the Gospel; for what need or necessity should move him, to send Christ from heaven, who should purchase that unto us with his precious blood, which we ourselves have before with us? He surely should be the foolishlest of all men, which would pour forth a precious treasure, which no man needeth. Thus thou seest how these men teach their own dreams, whereof they themselves know or have tryed no certainty, neither do any thing else but fill men with errors, being not able to declare, how that which they teach is to be attained unto. They draw men unto works, whereby they confirm them in their old nature and custom, out of which they were to be drawn. These truly are grievous and odious men, and not unworthily sharply accused and reprehended of St. *Paul*: and it appeareth that they were of no small authority and estimation, seeing that he pronounced of them, that they were called and would be counted doctors of the law, and far greater and worthier than the apostles themselves: Wherefore we must endeavour to lay up and print this text even in the bottom of our heart, for it is excellently well ordered, and is pure and perfect doctrine, teaching how we must be righteous before God and men, as the law requireth, that these three may be as it were conjoined in us, namely, a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned; and that our life may flow out of all these, and be occupied and led in them, then have we attained, and fulfilled the meaning of the law. Howbeit we must most diligently take heed, and endeavour to draw Christ unto the law, who is the end and fulfilling of the law, and our righteousness and fullness before God, which we find not in our selves, and without faith shall never find, altho' the law be taught and often repeated with-

out understanding and knowledge ; and these things may suffice to have been spoken at this present for the exposition of this place.

S E R M O N XVI.

Of the Question of the *Pharisees*, and Answer of Christ concerning giving Tribute to *Cæsar*.

Mat. 22. Ver. 15, to the 22. Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might intangle him in his talk, &c.

IN this text is set forth unto us, how subtle reason and man's wisdom agree with the wisdom of God, and how foully reason stumbleth when it striveth to be even most subtle and wise, as it here falleth out with the *Pharisees*, who notwithstanding were the best and most wise of the *Jews*, which even by this their subtlety they declare, nevertheless their wisdom is here proved to be foolishness ; they could blame Christ neither for his preaching nor for his works, and yet would they willingly have had occasion to put him to death, wherefore they thought to set upon him most craftily and wilely, propounding a subtle question unto him, the subtlety whereof was such, that man's reason was not able to comprehend it, than which a subtiller could not be invented ; and thus they speak unto him : *Mat. 22. 16, 17, Master we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man ; for thou regardest not the person of men, Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou ? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not ?* Here think they, we shall intangle him, for he shall be compelled to answer that tribute is either to be given or not to be given. If he affirm that it is to be given, we have overcome him, but if he deny that it is to be given, then is he guilty of death. Whereas they say, master, they will thereby move him, and

and as it were constrain him to answer the truth. But whereas they say, *We know that thou art true*, they do thereby put him in mind of his duty. Whither therefore should Christ turn himself? for there seemeth to be no way for him to escape, yet he would not for all that fall into their net. Was not this a subtle question? Do they not shew themselves to have been sufficient crafty, and wily ones? for which way soever the Lord had answered, he had been taken, Was not this done also full warily and circumspectly? for they associate to themselves the ministers of *Herod*, thinking no other but to intrap him with deceit, that he should not by any means escape, thus casting in their minds, Now we will meet with him well enough, if he deny that tribute is to be given, the *Herodians* are present, which shall forthwith put him to death as a seditious fellow, and one that resisteth the *Roman* empire; but if he affirm that tribute is to be given, he speaketh against the liberty of the *Jews*, then will we stir up the people against him. For the *Jewish* people would be free, and have their king of their own stock, even as it was promised them both of *Moses* and God, that their kingdom should continue until the time of the true king, that is, of Christ; even as the patriarch did prophesie thereof: *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come*, Gen. 49. 10. And therefore God did choose this people specially to himself, and made a kingdom of them, only for Christ's cause. Moreover, there were many sentences in the Scripture which declared, that they should serve none, *For they should be the chiefest and not the lowest*, &c. Deut. 28. 13. This and such like sayings the Scribes had beaten into the peoples heads, wherewith they were greatly disturbed; even as at this day it is put into the peoples mind, that the church cannot err. Hereupon the *Pharisees* thought thus: If he affirm that tribute must be given, he blasphemeth God, he shall be guilty of death, as one injurious to God, and then shall be stoned of the people. For God hath granted and promised liberty unto this people, and they were all even

in the midst of captivity the people of God. Howbeit at that time they wanted a King, as they do at this day, wherefore divers tumults, seditions, and uproars were stirred up among them; for they were taught by the law, that they should have a King of their own flesh and stock, as it is said before, wherefore they did incessantly strive against strange kings and governments, until not a few of them at times were beaten and slain; neither did this happen seldom for they were a stiff-necked, obstinate, and unruly nation, and therefore the *Romans*, which at that time did bear rule over them, did very circumspectly govern them, and divided the land into four charges of government, that being on every side kept in awe by the governors and presidents, they might not so soon flock together and move sedition, and that they might also be more easily resisted if at any time they should rise against the *Roman* empire. Wherefore *Pilate* was appointed of the *Romans* lieutenant of *Judea*, *Herod* tetrarch of *Galilee*, his brother *Philip*, tetrarch of *Iturea*, and of the country of *Trachonitis*, and *Lysamas* the tetrarch of *Abilene*, as *Luke* rehearseth them; and all this was done that they might keep the *Jews* under, whereupon the *Jews* were inflamed with anger, and in a rage and fury, but especially in the time of *Christ* they would willingly have a king. Wherefore the *Pharisees*, having found out this device, thought thus with themselves, Well, we have the matter now at a good stay; the *Romans* challenge to themselves the government, now if he answer unto the question that tribute is not to be given, the lieutenant is at hand, and ready to put him to death; if he answer that it must be given, he shall stir up the people against himself, and so we shall assuredly by this means intrap him; thus they supposed that either they should find cause of death in the Lord, or at the least make his doctrine to be nothing set by of the people: As the *Jews* here do, so also do we, the chief and necessary things being left, we are occupied about other matters not necessary. The *Pharisees* here move a question, whether they be free or otherwise; forasmuch as they had the law and the word of God, they supposed that they ought to be subject to none,

none, but to their own king, yet they were now compelled to obey *Cæsar* emperor of *Rome*. They had scripture concerning the love of God and their neighbour, but that being left, they are occupied about other matters. It was promised unto them, if they obeyed the precepts and commandments of God, that they then should be a free people; they disobey and neglect God's commandments, and yet notwithstanding they will be free, and have their own king. In like manner falleth it out with us, we earnestly challenge to our selves christian liberty, and yet we think, that if we do those things that seem good in our own brain and fancy, we are thereby christians, both faith and charity being of us neglected. But what doth Christ, the *Pharisees* so subtilly setting upon him? he striketh them with their own sword, and entrappeth them in their own device, whereby they thought to have intrapped him, answering neither of those things which they hoped he would, as the Evangelist doth more at large describe, saying: *But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's.* Here thou plainly seest the wisdom and marvellous dexterity of Christ, he willeth the tribute money to be shewed unto him, and asketh of the image and superscription thereof; They answering that it is *Cæsar's*, he very well and most freely inferreth, that they are under *Cæsar*, unto whom they were compelled to pay tribute: as if he said, If ye have so let in *Cæsar*, that his money is coined with you, surely he beareth rule over you, as though he should say, It is come to pass through your own fault that *Cæsar* ruleth over you. What should they say or do unto this question? They marvelled and went their ways, they thought that they should notably have overcome him, but for all their subtilty and wisdom they were deceived. This is written for our comfort, that we which are christians may know that we have such wisdom, as exceedeth all wisdom, such strength and righteousness, as whereunto no strength and righteousness of man is like; for against the holy Ghost there is

no council ; this power and strength we obtain through Christ, that we may tread sin under foot, and triumph over death. When Christ dwelleth in us by faith, we have him which bringeth to pass such things, howbeit, they are not thoroughly felt but in time of temptation. Wherefore when I stand in need, he is present, and giveth unto me strength, that I may couragiously pass through. We must not therefore be afraid that our doctrine shall perish and be put to ignominy and shame. For let all the wise men of the world rise against the word of God, yea, and be never so circumspect, and set themselves against it, yet shall they have the foyle and be overcome. It may be that they bark and bite, so that it seemeth unto men, as though they would destroy the gospel, but when they have set themselves against it to extinguish it, they shall no whit prevail, but in the snare that they have laid for others, they themselves shall at length be taken : as we hear in this text, and commonly in *St. Paul*, but especially in the history of *St. Stephen*, where we read how vainly his adversaries used the scriptures, yea, those that they used were against themselves. For the *Jews* did accuse *St. Stephen*, that he had spoken both against the temple, and against God which commanded the temple to be built, bringing and alledging scriptures, whereby they thought to convince and condemn him. But *St. Stephen* being full of the Holy Ghost, shewed them in order out of the scripture, how that God dwelleth not in temples made with hands : *David* would have built him a house, but God refused it. What was the cause hereof ? A long time before *David* was born, God dwelt among his people. He surely should be a miserable God which should need a house, and so he confirmeth by many histories that God doth not dwell in houses or temples made with hands. What should the *Jews* do here ? they did manifestly acknowledge their own scripture, which they had brought against *St. Stephen*. So all shall be put to shame and overthrown, which set themselves against the wisdom and word of God. Wherefore let no man be afraid, altho' all the wisdom and power of the world strive against the gospel, altho' it would extinguish it even by shedding of blood.

For

For the more blood that is shed, so much more is the number of christians increased. The blood of christians, saith *Tertullian*, is seed whereof christians grow. Satan must be drowned in the blood of christians. Wherefore it is not violence and force that is able to suppress the gospel ; for it is like unto a palm-tree, which hath this nature and quality, that altho' a weight be laid upon it, yet it always riseth and listeth up itself against the weight. Such a nature also hath the gospel, for the more it is striven against, so much the more are the roots thereof spread abroad, and the more mightily that it is oppressed, by so much doth it more and more grow and increase ; wherefore there is no cause that we should be afraid of power, but rather that we should fear prosperity and merry days, which are able to hurt us more than anguish and persecution. Neither let us be afraid of the subtilty and wisdom of the world, for they cannot hurt us, yea, the more that they strive against the truth, so much more pure and clear is the truth made. Nothing therefore can come better to the gospel, than when the world with his force and wisdom setteth itself against it ; the more vehemently sin and Satan do fight against my conscience, so much stronger is my righteousness made ; For if sins do urge and disquiet me, I do then more ardently pray and cry unto God, and so my faith is more and more increased and strengthened. This is that which *St. Paul* meaneth when he saith, *My strength is made perfect in weakness*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. Forasmuch therefore as we have so great a treasure, which is increased and strengthened by persecutions and adversities, there is no cause that we should be afraid, but rather that we should with a cheerful mind rejoice in tribulation, as *St. Paul* saith, *Rom. 5.* according as the apostles did, who with great joy departing from the councils, gave God thanks, that they were counted worthy to suffer rebuke for the name of Jesus, *Acts 5. 41.* If the devyl were endued with such wisdom, that he would be quiet, and suffer the gospel to have free course, he should not suffer so much loss ; for when the gospel is not impugned, it is as it were walled with rust, neither hath it occasion to shew forth the vertue and power thereof. We live therefore

therefore here secure as yet, for no man striveth against us, wherefore we continue still as we were before, yea, alas, we become worse and worse; whereas some of our adversaries have set upon us by writing, that pertaineth to a few. Forasmuch as they have written against us, they have thereby done nothing else, but as it were blown the fire; but if we had been thrown into the fire, or slain with the sword, the number of christians would be greater among us. Wherefore this is a comfort unto us, if we at any time be tempted, that Christ is ready to help us, and reigneth among us, yea, he is so near unto us, that always through him we may overcome, as long as we believe and trust in him: Howbeit when we are touched with no adversity, he doth little or nothing, but when we are fought against and oppressed, he is present, and bringeth all our enemies to confusion. We have moreover to learn here that they which are wise and mightier than other, which are endued with the chief gifts of understanding and nature more than other, which excel in greater industry, learning, and readier capacity than other, which are fit to oversee other, and can govern all things best, that they I say do many times most of all other resist God and faith, and trust more to their own strength and reason than to God; for they are carried so far by their venomous nature, that they neither can nor will use those things to the advantage and profit of their neighbour; but trusting to their own gifts and ability, they hope that now they shall obtain this, now that, neither do they think that they shall have need of God's help also thereunto: As it appeareth here in the *Pharisees* and *Scribes*, who were certain, as they supposed, that if they so set upon the Lord, it could not be, but that they should then intangle him; for it is impossible, thought they, that he should here escape us, we shall here hold him as it were fallen into a net, whether he affirm or deny that tribute must be given. Mark how subtle and perverse the wit of man's nature is, which is here very lively set forth. There is nothing else in man but wickedness, delusion, guile, deceits, lying, fraud,

fraud, and all kind of evil, yea, of nature man is but lies and vanity, as the 116th *Pſalm* ſaith. We muſt not truſt any man in any thing, do not perſwade thyſelf, that any man ſpeaketh the truth unto thee, for whatſoever man ſpeaketh is a lie. Why ſo ? The fountain or ſpring-head, that is, the heart is not ſincere, wherefore neither can the rivers be pure ; and for this cauſe the Lord doth commonly call men the generation of vipers, and a brood of ſerpents. Is not this a goodly title of man ? Let any man now go, and glory of his own righteousneſs, ſtrength or free-will. Before the world indeed ſome man may be, and gloriously appear godly, righteous and holy ; but there is nothing elſe but a generation of vipers and brood of ſerpents, but that eſpecially in thoſe that ſeem moſt excellent, moſt precious, moſt wiſe, and of greateſt underſtanding. If thou go through even all the hiſtories of the *Greeks*, *Jews* and *Romans*, thou ſhalt find the beſt and wiſeſt princes of all, which have governed the affairs of their empire proſperouſly, thou ſhalt find them I ſay to have thought nothing of God, but only truſting to themſelves, to have acknowledged nothing as received from God ; hereupon it is gathered, that the leſs a man excelleth in wiſdom before the world, ſo much leſs doth he commit againſt God ; for they that excel in counſel and authority before the ſight of the world, do for the moſt part deceive and lie more than others, thinking that if they deal by deluſions and deceit, their fraud and iniquity is not perceived, for they can after a pretty ſort cloak their craft and ſubtilty. But the Holy Ghoſt hath a moſt clear and bright ſight, which they cannot avoid, but they ſhall be eſpied. The ſcripture doth often call ſuch, lions, wolves, bears, ſwine, and cruel beaſts, inasmuch as they rage. devour and conſume all things with their fraud and deceit ; wherefore, in the old teſtament the *Jews* were forbidden to eat of certain beaſts, as of thoſe already rehearſed, and of others, for this one cauſe eſpecially, that it ſhould be a type and example to us, whereby we may perceive, that there are ſome men which are ſtrong, mighty, rich, witty, learned, ſkilful and wiſe, which are to be avoided and eſchewed

eschewed as a certain unclean thing, and as such as seduce and deceive others with their fair shew, might, and wisdom ; for neither shall they be counted for such, neither will any man think them to be such, as do so much as think any evil in their heart, much less do it. Wherefore thou must put no trust and confidence in any man, trust not unto him, for he will deceive thee when ever he is able ; again, if thou trustest man, thou art against God, in whom thou puttest not thy trust. It is written in the 17th chap. of *Jer.* ver. 5. *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man ;* and ver. 7. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord.*

Some man may now say, How shall we do then ? One man must have dealing with another, otherwise how can the life of man continue ? We must buy, we must sell, we must utter and change our wares with men : Now if we should not trust one another, the whole trade of man's affairs should be in peril, yea, and perish. I say that no man can deny, but that there must be mutual dealings among men, and that one doth need the help and travel of another ; but this I will have, that whatsoever dealing thou hast with men, either in buying or selling, count it for a thing uncertain, which thou must neither trust nor build upon, for it is certain, that as soon as thou shalt trust to man, he will seek to deceive thee, forasmuch as the nature of man, as it is of itself, can do nothing but lie and deceive ; yea, all things in man are uncertain, both his works and words, there is nothing in him but lightness and inconstancy, which thou mayest boldly believe to be true. Wherefore all our hope and confidence must be reposed in God alone, and after this sort we must say, Lord, give thou me grace that I may direct and order my life, my soul, my body, my substance and goods, and whatsoever is mine, according to thy divine will, for I believe in thee, I trust in thee, do not thou forsake me in so perillous dealing with this or that man : I put no trust in man. If thou knowest that it is good for me, make him to deal faithfully with me ; if thou knowest that it will be to my hindrance and hurt, help me to avoid it, for thy will only pleaseth me, which I wish always to be done.

As soon as thou thinkest in thy mind, He is a good man, and one that will keep his promise, I am sure that he will not deceive me, but will deal faithfully, even then hast thou fallen from God, and worshipped an idol, putting thy trust in a liar. Wherefore when thou hast any dealing with man, think boldly, If he deal faithfully it is well, if he do otherwise, in the name of God let him go, I will commit all things to the will of God, he shall prosperously bring them to pass. Of such a false and ungodly confidence reposed in men, that evil crept in among christians, namely, the worshipping of saints, whereby the christian church, that is, the true congregation of the faithful, hath suffered exceeding great hurt, and incomparable ruin ; for what other was the service and worshipping of saints but a devilish thing ? When as men used to reason after this sort : This man was very holy, that which he taught he did, whom we will follow, and do the like ; *Hierome, Augustine, Gregory* said this, therefore it is true, and therefore will I believe it. *Francis, Benedict, Dominick, Bartholomew*, lived thus, they did this and that, I will imitate their life and works ; moreover, *Augustine* was saved by this rule, wherefore I also shall be saved by it. Fy, how unstable and miserable a thing is this, they are only lies and dreams of men, there is not in one word mention made here of Christ and his word, but they are only the vain inventions and trifles of men. I would utterly break the rule of *Augustine*, if he therefore ordained it, thinking to be saved thereby ; so blind and without understanding is reason, that it receiveth the dotages and vain inventions of men, when as notwithstanding the word of God only is to be received in matters of salvation, as if *Herod, Pilate, Caiphas* and *Annas* should preach the gospel, I ought to receive it. Again, if those that are counted holy, should rise and preach lies, also rules, habits, shavings, ceremonies, and such like vain inventions of men, I ought in no wise to receive them, for we must here have respect not to the persons, but to that which they preach. Dost thou presume to be wiser than all the fathers and saints, than all the bishops and princes of the whole world ? Thus may some object

against me. Far be that from me, for I do not contend to be wiser than they; but this without controversy is thus, that whatsoever is wise, great, liberal, mighty and strong before the world, doth seldom or never agree with the word of God; for so it falleth out, that they that are such do for the most part persecute the gospel, and if they were not so great, the gospel should not so greatly shine forth and triumph. The *Roman* Emperors *Hadrian, Trajan, Dioclesian*, were the most wise *Cæsars* of all, whose government was so liked of, that it was praised of the whole world, yet they persecuted the gospel, and could not abide the truth; the same we find written of the kings of the *Jews*, as of *Ahaz* and others, which governed their kingdom very well, yet despised the word of God, and disobeyed his commandments. We in our time had never such emperors or princes, as are comparable to them; but it ought to be verified in these, that God would by foolish preaching confound the wisdom of this world, as *Paul* saith, *1 Cor. 1.* All these things are shewed unto us in this text, which we have in hand, which hath a simple and slender shew and appearance of itself, but it containeth many things in it most worthy the noting. Now how the Lord concludeth with the *Pharisees*, when they had shewed him the tribute-money, and had answered that it was *Cæsar's* image and superscription, the Evangelist declareth, saying, *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's: and unto God, the things that are God's.* Although they had deserved no such thing of the Lord, nevertheless he teacheth them the right way; and in these words he confirmeth the sword and office of the magistrate: They hoped that he would condemn and resist him, but he doth nothing less, for he commendeth and praiseth him, commanding that they give unto him those things that are his. Whereby he plainly will have, that there be magistrates, princes and rulers, under whose government we must live; neither must we care whether they use and exercise their rule and authority well or ill, we must have regard only to their power and office, for their power and authority is good, inasmuch

as it is ordained and instituted of God ; neither is there any cause why thou shouldest find fault with power, if at any time thou be oppressed by princes and tyrants, for whereas they abuse the power given unto them of God, they shall surely be compelled to give an account thereof. The abuse of a thing doth not make that thing evil, which is in itself good ; a chain of gold is good, neither is it therefore made worse for that a harlot weareth it about her neck, or if one should put out mine eye with it, should I find fault in the chain therefore ? In like manner the power of the prince must be borne, for if he abuse his office, he is not to be counted of me as no prince, neither belongeth it to me to revenge or punish it in him, I must obey him for God's cause only, for he representeth the place of God. How grievous things soever magistrates shall exact, I must for God's sake bare them all, and obey them, so far as they be not contrary to God's commandments ; if they do justly or unjustly, it shall in due time appear. Wherefore if thy substance, life and body, and whatsoever thou hast should be taken from thee by the magistrates, thou mayest say thus, I willingly yield them unto you, and acknowledge you for rulers over me, I will obey you, but whether you use your power and authority well or ill, see you to that ; moreover, whereas Christ saith, *Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's : and unto God, the things that are God's.* We must understand that unto God pertaineth honour, we must acknowledge him for the living, omnipotent and wise God, and ascribe unto him what good thing soever can be named ; and altho' we do not give him this honour, he notwithstanding easily keepeth it, for nothing is either added to, or taken from him by our honouring. Howbeit in us he is true, omnipotent and wise, when as we count him so, and believe that he is such a one, as he suffereth himself to be said to be. Now unto *Cæsar* and the magistrate fear, custom, tribute, obedience, &c. are due ; God requireth especially the heart, the magistrate the body and goods, over which he executeth his office in the place of God, which *St. Paul* doth most notably in plain and manifest words declare, *Rom. 13. 1. Let*

every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. And therefore also are magistrates ordained of God, that they may defend and maintain publick peace, which alone exceedeth all worldly good things: We felt a little in the last commotion of the common people, what loss, misery, calamity and grievous sorrow, conspiracy and sedition bringeth in the world. God grant that it may so continue, that we try it no more. Thus much shall suffice to have been spoken for the exposition of this text.

S E R M O N XVII.

Of Salvation by Christ alone.

John 6. Ver. 44. to the 51. No man can come to me, &c.

The sum of the text.

1. **C**Hrist is known of none but of him whom the Father draweth, that is, except the Father teach us that knowledge inwardly in the heart. Therefore Christ saith unto Peter, Mat. 16. 17. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

heaven. 2. Christ is the wisdom of God which is of more price than precious stones, and whatsoever can be wished, is not to be compared unto it, as *Solomon* saith in the *Proverbs* 8. 11. 3. The old heavenly bread, that is, the righteousness of the law doth not justify; but Christ, if we believe in him, justifieth for ever.

The exposition of the text.

This text teacheth us nothing else but Christian faith, and stirreth it up in us as surely. *John*, through his gospel, doth almost no other thing but instruct us, how we must believe in the Lord Christ; and such a faith as is grounded on the true promise of God, made unto us in Christ, shall save us, as this text plainly declareth. Also they are here all proved fools, which have taught us another way and means to obtain righteousness; whatsoever man's mind can invent, although it be holy, although it have a fair shew before men, it must needs utterly fail, if that he will have salvation to come thereby; for altho' man is exercised with the duties of godliness, he shall not be able to attain unto heaven, unless God prevent him with his word, which may offer his divine grace unto him, and lighten his heart, that he may walk in the right way. Now this way is the Lord Jesus Christ; he that will seek another way, as the most part of men with their outward works commonly do, hath now erred from the right and high way; for *Paul* saith, *Gal.* 2. 21. *If righteousness come by the law, that is, by the works of the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* Therefore I say, that a man must by the gospel be as it were bruised and broken, and humbled even from the bottom of his heart, as being frail and weak, which can move neither hands nor feet, but only lieth prostrate and crieth, Help me, O omnipotent God, merciful Father, I am not able to help myself: Help, O Lord Christ, mine own help is nothing. That so against this corner-stone, which is Christ, all may be broken, as he saith of himself, in *Luke* 20. 17. when he asked the *Pharisees* and *Scribes*, *What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that*