

THE TWELFTH SERMON

WHICH IS THE SIXTH UPON THE SECOND CHAPTER

- 15** We be Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.
- 16** And yet for as much as we know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by belief in Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law: for no flesh shall be justified by the works of the law. —
<480216> GALATIANS 2:15-16

WE HAVE SEEN already and declared heretofore, why Saint Paul having to treat of the Ceremonies and shadows that were before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, concluded generally that men could not attain righteousness before God to stand in his favor, but by keeping the whole law. Now a man might deem at the first sight, that these were divers matters. Howbeit (as I have said afore) it behooved Paul to come to the pure use [of ceremonies] to show that men do but beguile themselves, when they think to obtain favor at God's hand by their own merits. Secondly, also I declared why Saint Paul doth expressly add the word Law. For although it have always been a common opinion in the world, that by living well men might bind God to be good unto them, yet did they foully deceive themselves therein. For do what we can, God shall not be any whit at all beholden unto us, because we owe unto him whatsoever we be able to do. Then is there not any desert (if there might be any deserving at all) but by the covenant which God hath made, in saying, that he which fulfilleth the law shall obtain life and salvation. (<031815> Leviticus 18:5) Forasmuch as God hath spoken that word, no doubt but he accepteth the obedience that is yielded unto him, as if it deserved salvation: but yet is not that as much to say as that we can deserve aught [*anything*]. For there is none of us all that dischargeth his duty, as we shall see hereafter. That promise would be to no purpose, or at leastwise it would be unavailable, so as it should never take effect, unless God gave us another remedy, that

is to wit, unless he forgave our offenses, and accepted us for righteous, although we be not so. But howsoever the case stand, when Saint Paul saith that we be not justified by the works of the Law, his meaning is, that if we intend to claim favor and salvation, because God hath promised that such as keep his law shall be righteous, and so taken to be: that will not serve our turn, because none of us fulfilleth the Law, but we are all of us guilty before God, and must receive sentence of damnation upon our heads. And for the better expressing hereof he maketh a comparison between the Jews and the Gentiles. *Although* (saith he) *that we be Jews by nature, and not Heathen men*: yet do we know that we shall not otherwise obtain God's favor, than by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now it may peradventure seem, that although men being corrupted in Adam cannot deserve aught [*anything*]: yet notwithstanding the Jews had a special privilege, because God had adopted them as it were for his own children, and accompted [*accounted*] them to be as his household. And that was the thing wherein the Jews deceived themselves. For when the scripture speaketh of uncircumcision, it meaneth the uncleanness wherewith we be compassed about in Adam, insomuch as there is not any man which is not damned already from his mother's womb. But the Jews thought that God had set them free from that common curse, and they made their boast thereof. Surely God's choosing of them after that sort for his own people and heritage, was a great dignity, and worthy to be esteemed above all worldly goods. But yet nevertheless it became them to have acknowledged with all humbleness, that there was not any excellence at all in their own persons. For according to our own wanted manner of drawing God's gracious gifts too much to vain overweening [*high opinion*], the Jews did commonly overshoot themselves, by bearing themselves in hand that they were above all the rest of the world: Verily as who should say, that God had found anything in them, why he should prefer them before those whom he had forsaken. Therefore that doing of theirs was a great pride, which carried with it a shameful thanklessness, in that they imputed not to God's mere goodness, the things which they had of his free gift, but were puffed up with overweening [*high opinion*], as though God had known them to be better or worthier of everlasting salvation, than the Gentiles. But now Saint Paul to dispatch all overweening [*high opinion*], saith: Go to, we be Jews by nature. As if he had said, Is it true that we have some favor above the Gentiles, whom God hath not vouchsafed to

receive into his Church. When he speaketh after that fashion, it is not to give the Jews occasion to wax proud: but to lay before them the things which they had received freely of God. Wherein they had no cause at all to brag of themselves, according as we see how that in the Epistle to the Romans, he uttereth two sayings, which at the first blush might seem contrary. For on the one side, Have we then (saith he) no privilege above the Gentiles? Yes verily, for God hath chosen us for his people, he hath given us the seal of Circumcision to show that he avoweth us for his children, he hath allied himself unto us, he hath promised us the Redeemer of the world, and (to be short) he hath sanctified us in such wise, that if we consider the favor which he hath uttered toward us, there hath been well wherewith to advance and exalt us above the residue of the whole world. Thus on the one side Paul doth there magnify the goodness of God: and afterward he falleth to questioning again, and asketh, what advantage have we then? None at all (saith he) for all men are shut up under God's curse. If the Gentiles be to be condemned, we be to be condemned double: for there may be yet some likelihood that ignorance shall serve to excuse them. But yet can they make no defense of that before God, but shall perish although they never had any instruction or teaching. Needs then must we be condemned by the law (saith he) seeing that God hath taught us, and yet for all that we cease not to sin still, and to transgress his commandments, insomuch that we be plunged in greater and deeper cursedness, than the Heathen folk and unbelievers. Now then he saith that the Jews are indeed separated after a sort from the Gentiles, not that the Jews are of more worthiness, or that they have any righteousness in themselves: but because God of his own mere goodness vouchsafed to choose them: like as at this day the children that are born of believing parents, are not better than the children that are born of Paynims [*Pagans, Heathens*] and Turks, if a man consider them both in their own nature. For we be all of a corrupted and cursed lump, and God hath so condemned us, as no man can justly set up his bristles [*show fight*], to think himself of more value than his fellows. But yet nevertheless, Saint Paul showeth that they be sanctified, and that they be not unclean, (^{<460714>} 1 Corinthians 7:14) as they are which are born of unbelievers or Heathen folk. Here should seem to be some contrariety: nevertheless, all agreeth very well together. For there is nothing but uncleanness and filthiness in us all without exception, and that cometh of nature. Howbeit, there is a

supernatural gift, that is to say, a remedy that God giveth: which is, that the children of the faithful are dedicated unto him, and he acknowledgeth and avoweth them for his. Then like as nowadays the children that are born of the Church, are reckoned to be of the number of God's people, and of the company of the chosen: even so under the law, the Jews were separated from the rest of the world. And that is the cause why Saint Paul saith, *we be Jews and not sinners of the Gentiles*. Whereas he speaketh of Sinners, he meaneth such as continue in their filthiness, and are not cleansed by the grace of God. For Circumcision was a token and witness that God accepted Abraham's issue and offspring for his own household and peculiar people. The thing then wherein the Jews differed in old time from the unbelievers, was that although they were all of one suit, forasmuch as they were all indifferently the children of Adam: yet notwithstanding God had chosen the one sort, and left the other sort still strangers from his house. If a man ask why he did so: there was none other cause than his own mere grace, and yet were not the Jews in the meanwhile the more excellent. But now let us follow the matter that Saint Paul handleth here, *We know* (saith he) *that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the Law, but by belief in Jesus Christ*. In so saying he showeth, that the Jews themselves (what grace soever they had received) could not ground themselves upon other men, nor upon themselves, as though they had deserved aught [*anything*] at God's hand, but must be fain [*obliged*] to flee to his free goodness, acknowledging that there is no salvation but in Jesus Christ, who is come to find out the thing that was already lost. And herein is fulfilled that which he saith in another place, how that as well they which were near hand, as they that were far off, (^{<490217>} Ephesians 2:17) were all gathered together into one Jesus Christ as the peacemaker to cause God to love us, and to receive us to mercy: not only those that were erst [*formerly*] far off, as the Gentiles: but also the children of Abraham, what nobleness or dignity soever were in them, for that came not of their own nature. And let us mark, that when Saint Paul saith, that the Jews which were converted to the Christian faith, know they could not be justified by the works of the law, but by belief in Jesus Christ: he maketh a comparison between faith and the Law, to show that we cannot be justified by grace, except we forsake all our own merits: and that is a thing well worthy to be marked. For the Papists will well enough confess that we be justified by faith, howbeit they add that it is but partly. But that

gloss marreth all. For here it is proved that we cannot be found righteous before God, but by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by resting upon the salvation which he hath purchased for us. The Papists see this well enough: and therefore for fashion sake they say we be justified by faith, but not by faith alone: they will none of that. That is the thing that they fight against: and it is the chief point that is in controversy between them and us. But Saint Paul bewrayeth [*exposes*] here their beastliness, when he saith, but by belief. For that word betokeneth that all that ever men presume to bring unto God to win his favor with, is quite cut off. Ye see then that the door is shut against all deserving, when Saint Paul avoucheth, that there is none other mean than by faith. We shall see more plainly hereafter why faith is so compared with the law, as a thing full but against it. For the law presupposeth that if we have once fulfilled God's commandments, we shall be taken for good servants, and that he will pay us the wages which he hath promised: and faith presupposeth us to be wretched, damned, and forlorn folk, and that we must be fain [*obliged*] to seek the things that we want in Jesus Christ. As for example. There are two men that desire to be boarded and lodged: whereof the one bringeth money with him, and looks to be well entertained for his well paying: and both of them require meat and drink howsoever the case standeth, but the second man is poor, and hath neither penny nor pennysworth and he desireth alms. Thus do both twain of them match just in one point, for they desire food as the thing whereof they have both need. But the first hath money to content his host, and like as he shall have fared well, and been well and courteously entertained: so shall his host receive money of him, and hold himself contented with it, and not think his guest beholden or bound unto him: for why, he is recompensed, yea and he hath gained by him. But as for the poor man that craveth alms, he thinks himself beholden for his life to him that fed him, and lodged him: for he bringeth him nothing but a charge. So then, if we will be justified before God by the Law, we must deserve it so as he may receive of us, and we of him, and there may be as it were an interchange betwixt us. And is that possible? No: as we shall see more at large hereafter. Therefore we must conclude, that we be excluded from the righteousness of the Law, and that if we think to bring anything to bind God withal, we do but provoke his wrath. Then is there none other shift, but to go to him like poor beggars, and so to be justified by faith: not as by a virtue that is of ourselves, but because we confess

with all lowliness, that we cannot obtain salvation but by his free gift. Thus ye see how the law is set here full but against faith, as if Saint Paul should tell us, that all they which go about to win God's favor by their own merits, forsake the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as shall be declared more at length hereafter: But now if any man say, that the law was given of God, so as it cannot have any contrariety against faith, whereof God is the author also: the answer thereunto is easy. For God made both day and night, fire and water, cold and heat. Now it is certain that the day is not contrary to the night: but we see the wonderful order of God's goodness and wisdom, in that men have the light of the sun to do their work in by day, and [the darkness] as it were a covert to rest in by night. So then, although the day differ from the night: yet is there no contrariety betwixt them, neither is there any between fire and water, so each creature be put to his own proper use: but we see that God hath very well agreed the fire and the water, and yet notwithstanding if a man behold them fighting together, then is there great contrariety. Even so is it between the law and the Gospel. And if anybody will have a man to be justified both by the law and by the Gospel too, he doth but turmoil and mingle things together, and it is all one as if he should set heaven and earth together by the ears. To be short, it were much easier to mingle fire and water together, than to say that we can purchase any grace at God's hand by our own deservings, and therewithal also have need to be succored by our Lord Jesus Christ. But if a man consider what the law is, and to what purpose it was given: he shall find that it is no whit at all repugnant to the Gospel, nor consequently unto faith, but that they agree very well. Thus ye see how this difficulty is dispatched: so that if it be alleged, that faith cometh of God as well as the Law: it is true. Nevertheless, it is to be considered (as we shall say hereafter) to what end God gave as well the one as the other. But let us return to that which Saint Paul saith. He saith that *we be not justified but by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*. When he speaketh of being justified, let us mark that it is all one with being reckoned or taken for righteous before God. And that word hath need to be well understood: for the case standeth upon knowing after what manner we be saved. But are we not wretched caitiff [*dispicable captives*], if after we have lived long in the world, a man ask us which is the mean to be saved, and we cannot tell him? We shall see many beastly wretches, which have devoured God's bread, and yet notwithstanding cannot tell how they should offer

themselves before him. And therefore it behooveth us to take so much the better heed to the things which are taught us here by Saint Paul. He saith that we be justified: and how? Is it that we be righteous, and that there is nothing amiss in us? No: but it is for that God accepteth us. Then is the word *Righteousness* put for the favor which God showeth us, in that he vouchsafeth to be our father and to take us for his children. If a man demand why the Scripture useth the word *Justify*, sith [since] it seemeth to make nothing to the purpose: for it might well be said, God loveth us, God pitieth us, God vouchsafeth to become our father and Savior: [and therefore] why should not men rather use that manner of speech, than say that he vouchsafeth to justify us? [I answer,] it is not without cause that the scripture speaketh so. For if we take the word *Salvation* rawly, and say [no more but] that we be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: we shall not well perceive what our own state is, nor how wretched it is, nor also the remedy that we must apply to it. For to the intent we may put our trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, we must understand that we be utterly forlorn as well by reason of the sin of Adam, as by reason of the infinite number of iniquities wherein we be saped [*steeped*]: yea and we must fully believe it. But we should never perceive that our sins condemn us and curse us before God, except we knew that we have need of righteousness. And on the other side we should not know God's righteousness, if we should singly say that we be saved by faith and by grace. For God cannot once renounce himself, because he is the sovereign righteousness, and there is nothing in him but pureness and perfection, by reason whereof he must needs hate evil. Now it is so that we be full of corruption, there is nothing but evil in us: and therefore God must needs hate us. And if he hate us, woe worth [*become*] us: for then are we damned. Then standeth it us on hand to be made righteous, before we can be in God's favor. That is to say, it behooveth us to be purged of our faults and misdeeds, for else (as I said) we shall never be able to conceive, that God intendeth to show us mercy. But in acknowledging ourselves to be sinners, we perceive by and by that God must needs hate sin, and that although he hate sin, yet notwithstanding he findeth means to save us, which is by forgetting our offenses, and by cleansing and purging them with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our spiritual washing. God then purgeth us in that wise, to the end we should be received of him, and being made partakers of his love, be assured of our salvation. Thus ye see

why the Scripture useth the word *Justify*. But the Papists descant [descend] upon it like blind buzzards. What, say they? should we be justified by faith? Faith is no such virtue as maketh men perfect: and how then shall it make us righteous? They consider not that this righteousness whereof the Scripture speaketh, is God's covering of our sins (as I declared afore) and his taking of them quit and clean away for the sake and by the mean of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the virtue of the Sacrifice of his death and Passion. Howsoever the case standeth, it is said that we be counted righteous before God, because he releaseth and forgiveth our sins. And after the same manner doth Saint Paul speak of it in ^{<450406>}Romans 4:6, where he saith that David hath well declared in effect, how we be justified by faith, when he saith, Blessed is the man whose iniquities God hath forgotten, and whose sins he hath covered. (^{<193201>}Psalm 32:1) And in another place he saith, that our Lord Jesus Christ who knew no sin, nor had any spot in him, was made sin for us: (^{<470521>}2 Corinthians 5:21) that is to say, received all the condemnation of our faults, to the end that we should become God's righteousness in him, that is to say, to the end that being grafted into his person, and made one body with him we might be taken for righteous, because there was such perfectness in his obedience, that our sins were buried and rid quit and clean away. Thus much concerning the word *Justify*. Now as touching the word *Faith* [or *belief*] Saint Paul addeth for a declaration, *that they had believed in Jesus Christ*. If a man ask an unlearned person what *Faith* is: he will perchance answer that it is to *believe*: but he shall not be able to tell what is meant or imported by any of them both. Will we then have the understanding of them according to the raw capacity of the unskillfullest sort? We must always mark, that our Lord Jesus Christ is set to be the butt of our faith and belief. Do we obtain salvation by faith? It is as much to say, as we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. But let us now consider why our Lord Jesus Christ is set before our eyes for our faith to aim at, and to rest wholly upon. It is because we shall find in him whatsoever belongeth to the making of us righteous. I have told you already that we be taken for righteous before God when he forgiveth our sins, and calleth them not to account anymore. And how shall we obtain that, but by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed to wash us withal? For inasmuch as he hath made full amends for us by his death and passion: therefore God is appeased towards us, conditionally that we seek not to pay him with any

other thing, than with the sacrifice that was offered up to him by his only son our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called God's well beloved son, (<400317> Matthew 3:17) to the end that we should be beloved in him: and the righteous, to the end we should be made partakers of his righteousness: (<235311> Isaiah 53:11) and the holy, to the end we should be made holy in him. (<420135> Luke 1:35) Thus then ye see why we must have an eye toward our Lord Jesus Christ, when we intend to know what the word *Faith* importeth. But the Papists stand willfully in their own conceit, because they never tasted what it is to believe: and that do they show well enough by their allegations. How is it possible (say they) that a man should be justified by believing, seeing that the very Devils do believe? It is true, and Saint James (<590220> James 2:20) useth the same reason. Howbeit in that place he mocketh at such as pretend a vain and fond cloak of Christianity and faith, and in the meanwhile show no fruits at all of it. But the Papists beguile themselves yet much more grossly, in saying that *Faith* is to believe in God, and that God is the mark that faith aimeth at, so as it seemeth to them, that to make up belief, there needeth no more but to imagine that there is some one certain God that made the world, and which governeth all things. And so they fall fast asleep in their ignorance, and yet cease not to take themselves for good Christians and Catholics (as they themselves babble) although they be altogether dulled in deed. But it is no wonder that they fight so against the doctrine of the holy Scripture, and with such unamendable willfulness deny that a man can be saved by faith, saying they have neither discretion nor understanding: for they wot [*know*] not what the matter meaneth. So much the more therefore doth it stand us upon, to mark well what Saint Paul telleth us here: that is to wit, that if we look not unto Jesus Christ, we know not what faith is. And the reason thereof is, for that we know not what it is to have forgiveness of sins, to come unto God, to be able to put our trust in him, and to call upon him: neither do we know anymore what it is to have our consciences quiet, and to hope for the everlasting life. All these things we want till Jesus Christ be set afore us, and till we have cast our look upon him, so as all our senses be settled upon him, and as it were shut up there. Ye see then that the faith whereby we obtaineth grace, is that after we know ourselves to be wretched creatures, and that there is nothing but loathsomeness in us, we seek the remedy of it in our Lord Jesus Christ, and understand that he was offered up for us to redeem us from the curse wherein we were

plunged, that he hath made us clean by his blood, that by his obedience he hath put away all our offenses, and that for the same we be assured that God accepteth and receiveth us for his children. Thus ye see how this text is to be understood. And whereas Saint Paul saith, that he himself and all the Jews that were converted unto Christianity, did look to be saved by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ: he added also the reason why: namely, because *no flesh shall be justified by the works of the Law*. He hath well used that word, if he had applied it but to his own countrymen: but here he speaketh of all men in general. And whereas he saith *no flesh* at all: first he betokeneth that the Jews differ nothing at all from the Gentiles in the mean of obtaining salvation. Wherefore although the Jews being circumcised, were taken as it were for God's heritage, and sanctified unto him: yet notwithstanding they could not have any hope of salvation but by his mere grace. Lo how they be matched with the Gentiles and ranged in like degree with them. Again, Saint Paul meant here to deface utterly all the overweening [*high opinion*] that men conceive of their own virtues. There are many which know they have overshot themselves so far, that they cannot challenge any glory to them as though they have deserved aught [*anything*] at God's hand. Wretched drunkards, unthrifths [*prodigals, of dissolute conduct*], and such as have given themselves over to all naughtiness, will be ashamed to advance themselves, and to brag that they can bind God by their deserts and well doings, for even before men they be fain [*willing*] to hide themselves because of their lewdness. But as for those that have some cloak of hypocrisy, and show some sign of holiness before men: they by and by become drunken with it and so harden themselves, that they believe they deserve Paradise, and that God is greatly bound unto them. Of which suit are these Popeholy ones, who although they be full of all filthiness, so as there is nothing in them but ambition, covetousness, cruelty, and such other like things: yet howsoever the world go, forasmuch as they have good store of their Church stuff and other counterfeittings, they bear themselves in hand that God seeth not a whit into their lewdness, but persuade themselves that God ought to accept them for their own merit's sakes. Also, such as hear Mass devoutly, such as run from the Tavern [or from the Alehouse] to the Chapel, especially such as buy pardons and such other like stuff, and such as keep fasting days and holy days, will be puffed up with such an overweening [*high opinion*], as to think they have bound God unto them.

But Saint Paul, in naming all flesh, showeth that men must not shole [*shovel*] out themselves asunder, as though one were righteous, though another were not so: but must all stoop and humble themselves and pass condemnation, assuring themselves that all their virtues, (yea even of the excellentest men of all) are but filthiness before God. For although a man be perfectly righteous to our opinion, so as he doth no man harm, but hath steadfastness in himself to withstand all vices, and is chaste and sober, and (to be short) is taken and esteemed to be as an Angel: yet notwithstanding he hath nothing in him but corruption. And how can that be? Because we may not rest upon the outward appearance, for (as the Proverb saith) all is not gold that glittereth. It is not for us to judge what is vice, and what is virtue, except we could enter into a man. For if a man yield not unto God that which belongeth unto him, what is to be said of it? He robbeth not men, but he robbeth God of his honor. Again though men give him never so great praise and clap their hands at him: yet shall he but burst for vainglory and pride, and nothing shall be able to frame him to humility, save the knowing of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then they which make a goodly outward show in their life, shall nevertheless be still condemned before God. This is the thing whereby Saint Paul intendeth to forestall all the vain trust that men can conceive or nourish concerning their own deservings. But there is yet more. For he speaketh not only of such men as were after a sort forsaken of God, and were not renewed by his holy spirit: but when he saith *All flesh*, he comprehendeth the faithful also. For although God's holy spirit dwell in us after he have drawn us to the knowledge of his Gospel and grafted us into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ: although (say I) that God's spirit dwell in us, yet are we all comprehended under the word *Flesh*, in respect of that which we have of our own: Saint Paul then giveth sentence here, that no flesh shall be justified, because the faithless are condemned in Adam, and abide in their condemnation, and the faithful are always unperfect, so as they have many vices and blemishes: by means whereof they be condemned as well as the other, and so this condemnation is general, That he which will be justified by the works of the law, shall always be found guilty, yea even the holiest men that ever were. Let us take Abraham who was a mirror of all perfection: let us take David who excelled in all virtue: Let us take Noe, Job, and Daniell who are reckoned up for three righteous men by the Prophet Ezechiell: (²⁶¹⁴¹⁴Ezekiel 14:14) and let us take such other like:

and yet nevertheless, even they also are ranged in the same array, that is to wit, that they could not obtain righteousness before God, but by Grace. Now then I pray you what shall we do? Must not the Devil needs drive them headlong into terrible pride, which at this day do stay still, that they may be justified by their own deserts or meritorious works as they term them? For who is he that can match either David, Noe, Abraham, or Daniell? Had not men need to have profited well in God's school, and to be inflamed with a true zeal of giving themselves wholly unto him, that they may be utterly convicted, that they be yet very far off from being come to the point which we see David, Noe, and Daniell to have been at? Forasmuch then as we know this: let us mark, that here the holy Ghost beateth down such as mount up too high, to the end we should be the more ashamed that we have not one drop of desert of glory: and seek all that pertaineth to our salvation, in the mere grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus ye see that this saying where Saint Paul avoweth that no flesh shall be justified, ought to be understood as though he had said, If men look upon themselves in their own nature, they shall find nothing but evil, notwithstanding all the fair shows that they can have. They may well be highly praised and esteemed in the world, and they may well beguile themselves by vain self-soothings: but until such time as God have wrought in them to change them, it is certain that there shall be nothing in them but filthiness, and all the virtues that men make account of, shall be stark vice, to lead them to destruction and to plunge them in Hell. For although that they which are renewed by God's grace and have already profited in his obedience, have some virtues which he loveth and esteemeth: yet are they not able to bring aught [*anything*] that may pass account before him: for they shall always find themselves in arrearages. And that goodness which is in them, they have it of him, and yet is that goodness also corrupted with their sins and infirmities: by reason whereof they are utterly bereft of all trust in their own righteousness: and so if we now seek our righteousness in the law, we be beguiled, we shall not find it there, we be all of us condemned from the greatest to the least. But here we see much better that which I touched afore: namely that when we perceive and find by experience, that we want all that ever pertaineth to the life of our souls: we must resort to Jesus Christ as to our refuge, so that the true preparative to make us believe in Jesus Christ, is to be touched with a lively conceit and feeling of our own sins. And for the same

cause also he saith, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will refresh you, and you shall find rest to your souls. (<401128> Matthew 11:28) Again it is said expressly, that he is sent to preach the message of gladness to the poor, to set free such as are in prison and to comfort such as are utterly oppressed and as it were overwhelmed. (<236101> Isaiah 61:1) Those then which take pleasure in their sins, will never come at our Lord Jesus Christ. True it is that they will boast enough of faith, according as many scornors of God do unhallow that word as holy as it is. Every man will be counted a Christian, and they that be furthest out of square in all wickedness, will say they believe as much as any other man. But when a man speaketh after that manner, it is a token that he hath not one drop of faith. For the faithful will surely say, I believe howbeit with so great weakness, that I see well that if my God should not pity me, that little which I have would soon vanish away utterly. Therefore they that vaunt with full mouth that they have a perfect faith, are but dogs and swine which never tasted what the fear of God or what religion is. But howsoever the world go, the name of faith shall be shamefully defiled by those dogs, which do nothing else but mock God. For they have no skill to discern between good and evil. They be so blockish, that they do as it were welter in their filthiness: insomuch that a gross drunkard that is past all shame, and therewithal hath overglutted himself also, would fain [*happily*] continue full in his disordinateness. Besides this, the whoremongers, the perjurers, the blasphemers, and such other like will protest well enough that they have faith: but yet for all that, it is certain that they were never in any towardness to come to our Lord Jesus Christ. And why so? For they have not considered that they cannot be justified but by grace. Howbeit let us mark, that to be thoroughly persuaded, that we cannot be justified by the law, we must set God before us in his judgment seat, and every us of summon ourselves before him, and morning and evening bethink us that we must yield up an account of our whole life. Thereupon let us understand, that we should be overwhelmed a hundred thousand times, if God should not pity us and bear with us of his infinite mercy. That is the way for us to know that we cannot be justified by the law: for be as good as damned, so oft as we appear before God. It is meet for us to be put in such fear, as we may have neither release nor rest, till our Lord Jesus Christ have succored us. Ye see then how it behooveth us to be loden and foretravailed, that is to say, to mislike of our sins, and to

be grieved with such anguish, as we may be pinched with the sorrows of death, to the end we may seek all our ease in God, assuring ourselves that we cannot otherwise obtain salvation, neither whole nor in part, but must be fain [*obliged*] to have it given us. For Saint Paul doth not set down any mean way here, as though he said that we should find that which we want, in Jesus Christ, and be able to have the rest of ourselves. But he saith that forasmuch as we know once that we cannot be taken as righteous for our own deserts, nor for our own works, only faith must content and suffice us. Wherefore let us understand, that there is not one whit of our salvation out of Jesus Christ, but that we have there both the beginning and the end of it, that is to say every whit of it: and let us abide continually in that lowliness, knowing that we bring nothing with us but damnation, and that all that ever pertaineth to our salvation must be received of God's only free mercy, so as we may say that it is by faith that we be saved, that is to say, because God the father hath appointed his son our Lord Jesus Christ for us to rest upon, that he might both begin and finish our salvation, in such wise as the whole must be fathered upon him, and we learn to renounce ourselves, and to give ourselves fully and wholly unto him.

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