

THE FOURTEENTH SERMON

WHICH IS THE EIGHTH UPON THE SECOND CHAPTER

20 So, I live: [yet] not I now, but Christ liveth in me, and whereas I live now in the flesh, I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

21 I refuse not the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain. — ^{<480220>}GALATIANS 2:20-21

WE HAVE SEEN this morning to what end we be offered up in Sacrifice unto God when our Lord Jesus Christ knitteth us together in his body. It is not to the end we should lie still in death, wherein we be plunged already by nature: but rather to make us partakers of the heavenly life. Now the Apostle having spoken after that manner, magnifieth God's grace, saying *that he himself liveth not anymore, but Jesus Christ in him:* which is as much as if he had said that all of us by nature have nothing in us but cursedness, and therefore that look what good soever God bestoweth upon us, it becometh us to acknowledge and confess the same to come of him, and to do him service for it. For faith bringeth always this humility with it, that men imbase [*debase, value lower*] themselves to give all praise unto God. But by the way it may seem strange, that a faithful man should boast that Jesus Christ liveth in him, and yet be mortal still. So long as we live in this world, we be subject to many infirmities: and therefore this saying should seem to be a vain speculation or [fantastical conceit,] that Jesus Christ liveth in us. But Saint Paul bringeth us back to faith, and telleth us that although our life be corruptible to outward appearance, and we subject to all the adversities of the world: yet doth faith quicken us, so as our Lord Jesus Christ ceaseth not to make us partakers of his heavenly life, yea and in very deed we possess it, insomuch as we must no more consider the state of the faithful according to that which may be judged of it by our natural wit, but mount up higher. For the life which our Lord Jesus Christ imparteth unto us, is a hidden treasure which we attain not to but by faith which mounteth above the

whole world. Now it behooveth us to hope for the things which we see not, and which are hidden from us: and God is then highly honored of us, when we make such account of his word and promises, as that all the things which we see in the world, cannot hold us back from seeking him continually, and from going to him, and from employing all our wits about him. Now then, first we have to gather upon this text, that a man hath never profited well in the Gospel, till he father all his welfare upon our Lord Jesus Christ. For if we reserve never so little to ourselves, we be unthankful to God out of hand: and his grace cannot be darkened by us, but that we be bereft of it as we are worthy. And therein it appeareth, that all such as trust in their own merits, are still full of pride, and as it were mortal enemies to God's glory. It is true that they will not profess it with their mouths: but yet for all that, the hypocrites which hope to be righteous by their own worthiness, do deck themselves with God's fetters. Humility is the principal virtue among all others. For what are all their merits? Contrariwise, when the faithful humble themselves, it is not to purchase grace in God's sight as though they were worthy of it: but to confess as truth is, that they have not aught [*anything*] whereof to boast, but must receive all things of God's mere liberality. At leastwise it serveth to make us acknowledge how greatly we be bound unto him, seeing he hath showed himself so kind towards us, as to spare nothing from us. That therefore is the thing that Saint Paul showeth us here. And it behooveth us to weigh well the second point where he saith, *that we live in the flesh, howbeit by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This word *live in the flesh*, doth in this text signify as much as to be a wayfarer here upon earth, and to pass through this transitory life. For when he speaketh of living in the flesh in ^{<450805>}Romans 8:5, he meaneth to be given to wicked lusts, as they be which have no fear of God, who give themselves to do what they list [*wish*]. Therefore such as follow their own swinge [*impulse, inclination*] like brute beasts, do live in the flesh. But in this place Saint Paul compareth this outward life with the heavenly life which we possess by faith. For how shall a man put a difference between the faithful and the faithless? As well the one sort as the other do eat and drink. Surely the faithful do eat and drink soberly. Yea and ye shall see of the faithless sort very well stayed, and not given to any drunkenness or excess. But howsoever they fare, a man would deem at the first sight, that this life is common to all men. Nevertheless, the faithful do oftentimes drag their

wings after them, and nothing else but droop in this world, and finally die as well as all other men. Then if a man look but upon the outward show, there is no diversity betwixt them. To be short, a man might say it is but lost labor to believe in Jesus Christ. For we receive not here the reward of our faith: and although God call us to a further thing, yet have we all one common and like life, in respect that all of us must come to death. How then doth Jesus Christ live in us? For his living is hidden. Saint Paul bringeth us back unto faith. Now remaineth to know what the nature of faith is. It is to behold the things that are incomprehensible to our senses: to forsake the world, and to seek the kingdom of God: and to hold ourselves to the pure and simple word that proceed out of God's mouth, without respect of anything that we can perceive here. If we have not this ground work, we shall never understand what Saint Paul telleth us in this text. For when men have read it a hundred times, yet shall they not know what difference there is between living in the flesh, and living in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then is there an outward state: in respect whereof Saint Paul doth (under that saying) comprehend all things that concern this transitory life. There is also an inward state which is hidden from us, that is to wit, the state which is promised us, and which we wait for [by hope]. For the outward man must needs be defaced, and decay by little and little, till it be utterly done away. According whereunto, although it be promised to God's children that God will give them new liveliness, and make them as it were to cast their fetters: (^{<19A305>} Psalm 103:5) yet notwithstanding ye shall divers times see them so diseased as it is pity, and the strongest men of the world wax old and come to death. Seeing it is so: what preferment have they above the unbelievers? [Great:] howbeit that the same cannot be perceived by eyesight. For we have an inward man which lies hidden within us: and what meant Saint Paul by that? He meant that God worketh in such wise in us by his holy spirit, as we be always assured of the heavenly life that is prepared for us, and that although we do but glide away here below, and be as strangers, yet there is an everlasting heritage which cannot fail us. According as the outward man decayeth (saith Saint Paul) so the inward man reneweth. (^{<470416>} 2 Corinthians 4:16) For the more that the faithful see themselves decay, the more are they warned and provoked to look upward. For we know that such as are strong and lusty, do beset and forget themselves, and therefore our Lord is fain [*pleased*] to tame us in such wise, as we may renew by

decaying: I say in such wise as we may be (as ye would say) new cast in a mold again, to the end that the hope of the heavenly life may be established in us, and we have our sight cleared to behold the thing which otherwise would be wrapped up from us. Mark how gold and silver do greatly waste when men make them to pass the furnace. When it is cast into the fire, it is a great mass of metal: but when it is taken out again, there is but a small quantity of it. And yet the gold (if it were not so fined) would never serve to any purpose, no more would silver nother [*neither*]. Even so is it with us: we could never be renewed to come to the kingdom of heaven, except we died first. We must ever go forward to that utter defacement, and not rest by the way upon anything that we see with our eyes. For this earthly life is but a shadow, and a smoke that slideth and vanisheth away: and yet nevertheless we be renewed thereby within. Not that all men have that benefit: For the faithless do well enough find their own weakness, and are enforced to feel the summonings of death, especially when they be grown old, for then they perceive that any little blast is enough to cast them down: and thereupon they fall to storming, and could find in their hearts to fall out with God and nature. Howsoever the world go, though they rot, yet are they not renewed. For one grain of corn may well rot, and yet not take root to spring again and to bring forth fruit: and another grain shall rot likewise, howbeit forasmuch as it is in good earth, and hath taken root, it will bring forth fruit in seasonable time. (<431224> John 12:24) So then the faithful come to decay, and therewithal are renewed and gather new force: and why? For they rose in this world, to the end to be restored and renewed again in the heavenly heritage. The faithless also do go away too, they rot likewise, they slip aside and they vanish quite away: but they have no advantage by it, because they be not restored to eternal life. So then let us mark well, that whereas Saint Paul saith we live by the faith of Jesus Christ: it is to waken us so as nothing in the world may keep us from resting continually upon God's promises. When we look upon all the things that are about us, there is nothing but death. But what for that? God hath given us his word, that being dead in our own nature, we have our life elsewhere, namely in our Lord Jesus Christ, inasmuch as he was purposely sent to bring us from death to life. Seeing then that we have that promise of god, ye see how he may be honored at our hands. And, forasmuch as the case standeth so, that only saying ought to suffice us. And if we settle and resolve ourselves fully

thereupon: it is a token that we set our hands to God's truth as faithful witnesses thereof, as saith Saint John. (<430333> John 3:33) Contrariwise when we doubt or be in a mammering [*hesitant condition*], then hath God's word no authority nor reverence among us. For if we look no further than to the things that are before us, and to the things that are near at hand: we cannot acknowledge that God is faithful, and that the things which God hath uttered with his own mouth are infallible. Moreover, in so doing we turn away from our Lord Jesus Christ, who notwithstanding is the pledge of all that is contained in God's word. Seeing we have the word, we must no more ask (as Moyses saith) (<053012> Deuteronomy 30:12; <451006> Romans 10:6) who shall climb up above the Clouds or who shall go down into the deep? or who shall go over the Sea? The word (saith he) is in thy mouth, and in thy heart: and we must content ourselves with it. And moreover seeing that we have our Lord Jesus Christ for a larger confirmation: we know that he went down into the hells, that is to say, bear the curse that was due to us for our sins, and answered as our pledge and surety before the judgment seat of his father: and afterward went up into heaven, and in our behalf took possession of the heritage that he had purchased for us. For he was exalted up in our flesh and nature. Seeing that we have such an assurance, must we not needs be too too wretched, if we cannot hold ourselves to it? Again, the matter willeth us to look still back to that which hath been said: (<470418> 2 Corinthians 4:18) namely, that we hope, not for things that are open and manifest, but for the things that are unknown to worldly perseivance. Then sith [*since*] it is so, let us learn to live by the faith of Jesus Christ: that is to say, although we be miserable in this world and be fain [*obliged*] to endure never so many heartbitings, grief's, anguishes, troubles, and distresses: yet notwithstanding let us continue in this constancy, of believing that there is nothing but singular happiness in all our miseries, because God blesseth and halloweth them for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and all is turned to our help and welfare as it is said in <450827> Romans 8:27. Therefore as we have seen in another text, (<471209> 2 Corinthians 12:9) God must utter the perfectness of his strength in our weakness, and we suffer him to make us to stoop, in such sort as this world may not keep us back from having the promises of the Gospel thoroughly printed in our hearts, nor hinder us to be glad and cheerful in the midst of our miseries and afflictions, nor boldly to despise all the slanderings and mockages of the faithless, when they offer us reproach,

saying? Gods, you silly wretches, think yourselves to be princes when you believe the Gospel. But alack poor souls, where is the joy and happiness which you say is promised you of God? Where is the inestimable benefit which you make so great account of? For ye have no more than those whom you call God's enemies, reprobates, and cursed kaytifs. But (as I said) all this geer [*whimsical mockery*] must not thrust us out of the way: for we must come back unto faith. Although then that here beneath we perceive not the things that are promised us in the Gospel: yet let us assure ourselves of them out of all doubt. For (as saith Saint Paul) our life is hidden, and the time of the discovery thereof is not yet come. And where is our life but in our Lord Jesus Christ: (<510303> Colossians 3:3) Now the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is apparent enough: howbeit, that is but in part: we have but a taste of it: and things are so troubled and disordered in this world, that if we will judge of our salvation by the outward appearance, what would become of it? Therefore let us suffer our life to be hid till our Lord Jesus Christ come, and then shall we perceive that we have not been beguiled in putting our trust in him, and in admitting the doctrine of his Gospel. Ye see then after what manner we must live by faith: that is to say, we must not be so nice as to seek a quiet life here, and to have all our commodities and ease here. For in so doing, we should forgo the thing that God hath promised us, we should forget him, and it would be an utter destruction of our faith. But let us take the mirror of God's word, and there look upon the things that surmount all our wit, and are set far out of this world, and are utterly invisible: and let us lift up our eyesthither, not so far forth as our own reason and skill shall be able to guide us, (for that is not enough) but so as we may climb above the world, and forsake the present things, to the end to hold ourselves fast in God's promises, and to be patient in all afflictions and miseries whereby we shall be exercised, and against which we must be fain [*obliged*] to fight, till we receive the fruit of our victory, when we be conveyed up into therest of heaven. Thus ye see what have we to gather upon this saying of Saint Paul, which might seem dark at the first sight: but when we have on the one side marked well what our state is while we be in this world, and on the other side considered what the nature of faith is, we shall easily perceive that there is no darkness at all in it. And now Saint Paul addeth expressly, *that Jesus Christ loved him and gave himself to the death for him*. This is an exposition of that which we saw erewhiles

[*heretofore*]. For men do oftentimes misconside the word *Faith*, because they consider not what the pith of it is. And indeed every man will be called faithful, and yet even among those that make profession of Christianity, ye shall scarce find one of a hundred that hath so much as one drop of faith. For (as I said afore) it is never sought what is meant by faith. The word is very short, but it draweth a long tail after it, as we see by the addition that is set down here. For Saint Paul declareth that he liveth by faith, because Jesus Christ had loved him, and delivered himself to death for him. As much must we do. For inasmuch as we see that the Son of God, the Lord of glory, the head of the Angels, he by whom all things were made, and by whom all things are still maintained, yieldeth himself to death, yea and to so vile a death, that he took our curse upon him, and not only was hanged upon a Cross, which was an irksome thing to all the world, but also was pronounced accursed by God's own mouth: (<052123> Deuteronomy 21:23) seeing (say I) that we have such a price to ransom us from death, and to purchase us life and salvation: have we not cause (if we think well upon it) to overleap all the letts [*hindrances*] that Satan can cast in our ways to make us turn head or to retire back, that we might not continue in the certainty of our faith? Surely the victory will be easy enough for us against all temptations, if we can consider of what value the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is, and what it importeth. So then Saint Paul armeth us here, to the end we might hold out with invincible constancy, against all the stops that Satan laboreth to lay afore us, to hinder us from keeping on our course. When the faithful are pinched with hunger or thirst, they be troubled with looking here and there for the promise that they shall be heirs of the world, and in the meanwhile do well near starve for famine and penury [*extreme poverty*]. But if they look to our Lord Jesus Christ, that will dispatch them of all their trouble, and sweeten all the bitterness that might have put the promises of salvation out of taste with them. Therefore whensoever the faithful are in any peril, or be persecuted, so as they have many wrongs and injuries done them, and yet are not succored of all that while: they might think thus with themselves: Where is God? (<262508> Ezekiel 25:8) He hath promised to dwell in us, to keep us as the Apple of his eye, (<191708> Psalm 17:8) and to be our shield and fortress: and yet in the meanwhile we be cast up to the spoil, wherefore it is certain that we shall be undone at every blow. But when we come to the death and passion of our Lord Jesus

Christ, we must conclude that the Son of God was not offered up in vain. Seeing then that our Lord Jesus Christ spared not himself, but abased himself so far as to suffer so slanderous, yea and cursed a death, and afterward also the pains of Hell, howbeit but for a while, to the end to set us free and clear, and to purchase us grace before the judgment seat of God his father: should that doing of his be unavailable? Is it possible that it should be? No: For if Heaven and earth were turned upside down, it were not so great a confusion, as to imagine that the Son of God hath suffered in vain. Then see we now why Saint Paul telleth us that he lived by faith. For it behooveth us to be settled upon the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, assuring ourselves that it is able enough to draw us out of the dungeons of death.

And furthermore it behooveth us to look upon our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as dead in the infirmity of his flesh, but also as risen again through his divine and heavenly power, as is said of him in another Text. (Romans 1:4) And therefore when there is any speaking of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, it standeth us on hand to consider what the same importeth: that is to wit, that it is a sacrifice to make an atonement of Reconciliation between God and man, an obedience to cover all the naughtiness that is in us, and a washing to scour away all our uncleanness and filthiness. Forasmuch then as we know that there is such power in the death and passion of the son of God, and that thereupon we march further, that is to wit, to the glory whereunto it leadeth us: let us not anymore imagine, that man ought hereafter to continue still in his own nature, but that he ought to live in the faith of the Gospel, assuring himself that he shall not be disappointed in resting upon the promises that are contained there. Thus ye see in effect, whereunto we should refer this saying, where Saint Paul telleth us expressly, that the Son of God gave himself. And he contenteth not himself to say, that Christ gave himself for the world in common, for that had been but a slender saying: but [showeth that] every of us must apply to himself particularly, the virtue of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereas it is said that the Son of God was crucified, we must not only think that the same was done for the Redemption of the world: but also every of us must on his own behalf join himself to our Lord Jesus Christ, and conclude, It is for me that he hath suffered. Likewise when we be baptized, as it is not for any one man alone, so is

not the water sprinkled upon all men in common: but every man is baptized severally in his own behalf, to the end that every of us may apply it particularly to himself, to say that we be all members of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also when we receive the holy Supper, every man taketh his own portion, to show us that our Lord Jesus Christ is communicated unto us, yea even to every one of us. Saint Paul therefore doth purposely use that manner of speech, to the end we should not have any cold imagination, after the manner of diverse ignorant persons, which take themselves to be Christians, and yet in the meanwhile are as wretched beasts. But when we once know that the thing which was done for the redemption of the whole world, pertaineth to every of us severally: it behooveth every of us to say also on his own behalf, The son of God hath loved me so dearly, that he has given himself to death for me. Furthermore, the word *Love* is not superfluous here: for Saint Paul's intent is to magnify the gracious goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ: as if he should say, that we be very wretches if we accept not such a benefit when it is offered us, seeing that God in sending us his son, had none other respect but to our miseries which he intended to relieve. Also our Lord Jesus Christ did so neglect himself, that he spared not his life for our welfare. And what was the cause of it? The love that he bear us. Seeing it is so: must we not needs be worse than out of our wits, if we accept not such a benefit? But it is a very common doctrine in the holy Scripture, that God so loved the world, that he spared not his only son, but gave him to death for us: (<430316> John 3:16) and also that our Lord Jesus Christ, at such time as we were his deadly enemies as saith Saint Paul, did confirm a marvelous love towards us, in that he offered himself in sacrifice to make atonement between God and us, and to do away all our sins, (<450508> Romans 5:8) so as they might no more come to account. Lo here a warrant of our salvation, so as we ought to think ourselves thoroughly assured of it. Howbeit Saint Paul meant purposely here, to rebuke men's unthankfulness, in that they accept not the benefit which God granteth them so bountifully, yea and of his own free goodness. For it behooveth us to call to mind, how Saint John in his Canonical Epistle saith, that we loved not God first: (as if he should say, we did not prevent him, as those think they do which say, I have done him such service and such. For alas what is it that we can do to him?) but that he loved us, (<620419> 1 John 4:19) [yea even] at such time as we were his deadly enemies, and came even then to seek us out in the very

deepest of the bottomless Dungeons. And thereupon Saint Paul addeth, *that he doth not despise* or shake off *the grace of God*. This is the knitting up of the things that we have hitherto seen. For here he meant to show, that the Devil must needs possess those that make none account of God's mercy, that is uttered in our Lord Jesus Christ, and daily offered us in his Gospel. For look how oft the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is preached unto us, and the infinite goodness of our God talked of: so oft is this message renewed unto us, that our Lord Jesus Christ calleth us unto him, to the end we should forsake the world and being out of all hope in ourselves, fasten and settle our whole trust in him. Sith [*since*] it is so: it is good reason that we should not reject the grace of God. And Saint Paul in saying so, meant to call back such as had gone astray before, and to show them the way, as if he had said, whereas the poor ignorant souls that never heard word of the Gospel might be excused: we must needs be worse than damnable, seeing we refuse the grace of God when it is offered us: for it smelleth of such an unthankfulness, as can by no means be excused. Saint Paul therefore doth here make mention of those whom our Lord Jesus Christ calleth to the hope of salvation by his Gospel, and yet do still welter in their own wretchedness, and become brutish, not knowing whither there be a better life or no: or else of such as are sufficiently tormented with inward heartbiting, and yet seek no remedy nor comfort. Yet notwithstanding, all they to whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath not preached his Gospel, shall not fail to perish without mercy. They cannot defend themselves by ignorance: I say that all the heathen folk and Idolaters that ever were, must have their mouths stopped. And what shall become of us then, which have had our ears beaten daily with the message that God sendeth us: which is that he requireth nothing but that we should be drawn unto him, whereunto he encourageth, yea and beseecheth us, as we have seen in ^{<470520>} 2 Corinthians 5:20? Is it not a great shame for us, that God should so far abase himself in the person of his only son, that he should beseech us? Let us fall to atonement, saith he. And what hath he done on his side? What hath he offended us? Nay contrariwise, we cease not to provoke him daily against us, and yet he cometh to say unto us I will fall to atonement with you, whereas notwithstanding there is nothing but spitefulness in us, we be like little fiends, and to be short, we be damned and forlorn, and yet cometh he to seek unto us, and desireth nothing but to have the atonement made. After that manner speaketh Saint

Paul word for word. But now what will become of us, if we reject such grace, seeing that God offereth it us so freely? This is it which is meant by that saying. And thereupon he concludeth in the end, *that if we seek righteousness in the Law, Jesus Christ died in vain*. As if he should say, that if we intend to enjoy the grace that is contained in the Gospel, we must utterly give over the fond opinion of our own merits. For men are deceived by bearing themselves in hand, that there is ever somewhat of value in them: and to be short, they cannot find in their hearts to come as poor beggars before God, but will always bring some present with them. And yet not withstanding all that ever we think ourselves to have, is but abomination. Therefore Saint Paul showeth us, that there is none other means for us to receive life at our Lord Jesus Christ's hand, and to be made partakers of his death and resurrection, and so to attain to the heritage of heaven by his means, than to be utterly voided of all the foolish overweenings [*high opinions*], which the children of this world conceive, when they imagine with themselves, O as for me, I have some virtue in me, I have some towardness [*promise*]: and to lay it all down and cast it quite away. For until we have forgotten our own deserts, surely we shall never be able to conceive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we then come unto him? Let us come utterly empty. For if we make any countenance of havingaught [*anything*], it is nothing else but wind. Truly whensoever men are puffed up with pride: they become so full that they are ready to burst, howbeit all of it is but wind. But yet howsoever we fare, that wind holdeth us back from receiving the benefits that are purchased and brought unto us by the Son of God, and which he communicateth to us by his Gospel. Thus ye see whereunto the conclusion tendeth which Saint Paul maketh here. Now the Papists will grant well enough that we be not able to purchase salvation, except we be helped by our Lord Jesus Christ: howbeit they imagine that men may half save themselves, and that look what wanteth is supplied by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so they suppose themselves to have a good and available startinghole. But in saying so, they show themselves deadly enemies of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and upholders of the case and quarrel of the false Apostles and deceivers that had corrupted, deflowered, and falsified the pure truth in the Church of Galatia. For those sort of men could well enough confess that Jesus Christ was the Savior of the world, and they would have been ashamed to say that Jesus Christ was nothing, nay rather they professed

Christianity. And what deemed they of Jesus Christ? That he came to help men's infirmities, because they were not able to discharge the law to the full, and that forasmuch as they could not have so great and large perfection as was requisite, therefore it behooved them to be helped by Jesus Christ: and even as much do the Papists say at this day. But Saint Paul concludeth on the contrary part, that then Jesus Christ had died in vain. If any man reply, no not so: for there should come some fruit of his death and passion, by helping us to the forgiveness of our sins: and although we have means to satisfy God withal, yet would not the same suffice, unless Jesus Christ should work therewith. I say if any man make such reply: let us mark that Saint Paul held this for a certain and undeceivable principle, that do the best we can, there is nothing but cursedness in us, till God have received us of his mere grace. Lo wherein the Papists beguile themselves, and not they only: for it hath been a common error among the Turks and among all the Heathen men that ever were. The Turks can confess well enough that they have need of God's mercy, and that hath always been an opinion through the wholeworld: but they have intermingled their own satisfactions with God's grace, as if they should say, although God be pitiful towards us, yet must we procure favor in his sight by our own deservings. After that manner were the Heathen folk wont to speak. And what say the Papists nowadays? All one thing. For after they have once granted themselves to be wretched sinners, and to have need to be succored by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that his death and passion are available to make them way unto God: they interlace their own freewill, and their preparations, and thereunto say that they deserve on their side, and that although Jesus Christ help them, yet he doth not all himself. And in very deed that is the flat doctrine of the Papists word for word. For they say we cannot deserve aught [*anything*] except Jesus Christ go before us and show us the way, for they say that he hath purchased us the first grace, and that it lieth in us to follow on and to attain to the second. And if a man ask them what is meant by that first grace: they say it is the occasion of meriting or deserving: for that is their terming of it, and their manner of speech. And this occasion of meriting is nothing else with them, but that men are able of themselves to bind God to them by their own satisfactions. But Saint Paul telleth us that it is too outrageous, yea and too Devilish a traitorousness to have such pride: and therefore he concludeth that Jesus Christ should have died in vain, if we

should seek righteousness in the law. Will we then possess our Lord Jesus Christ? It behooveth us to know wherefore we come unto him: namely because that by the Law we are already condemned, cursed of God, cut off from hope of life, and full of all corruption, so as God must be fain [*pleased*] to cleanse us by his holy spirit, and forasmuch as there are many infirmities in us, we must always come to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to confess that there is nothing in us but all cursedness and misery: we must needs come to this conclusion of Saint Paul, that Christ had died in vain, if it behooved us to obtain righteousness by the law, whither it were wholly or partly. We must needs confess that, and the veriest idiots are able to perceive it, insomuch that if we receive not Jesus Christ with that condition, it is certain that his coming shall profit us nothing at all. It will be but as a wind to blow us away together, so as we shall be no more able to take hold of God's mercy that is offered us in Jesus Christ. Now seeing it is so: let us learn to leave such manner of mingling, and acknowledge ourselves beholden to our Lord Jesus Christ for all things: for when we go about to interlace our own merits with the free remission of our sins, it is but a falsifying of God's truth. Besides this, when we have learned to rest ourselves after that manner upon him: let us be taken in love with the spiritual benefits which he bringeth us, and let not the afflictions and adversities of this world hinder us from holding on our course, and from the overcoming of all temptations and distresses, but that we may have full joy in the midst of all our sorrows and troubles, assuring ourselves that all that ever we can suffer in this world, is nothing in comparison of that which is prepared for us in the kingdom of heaven. And that is the thing whereunto Saint Paul leadeth us. For first of all he exhorteth us to a holy and well ruled life, and to be lowly as becometh us, to give ourselves wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ. And secondly he exhorteth us to arm ourselves with patience, that we may overcome all the assaults and distresses that come upon us, and walk in such wise in this world, as we may always go forward to the heavenly heritage, which we see not, and which passeth all our understanding, not ceasing for all that to assure ourselves of it, sith [*since*] we have so good a promise of it made unto us. And further seeing we have the earnestpenny and pledge of it given unto us in our Lord Jesus Christ: let the same serve us for a full assurance, to show us that we need not run at random, but have a perfect faith and a

firm and substantial hope, forasmuch as we have already in the person of the Son of God, a full performance of all things that we can wish.

But now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgement of our sins, praying him to make us feel them more and more, and to touch us in such wise with true repentance, as the same may provoke us more and more to seek forgiveness and mercy at God's hand, and therewithal also to beseech him to govern us so by his holy spirit, as we may be encouraged more and more to forsake all the lusts of our own flesh, and all that is of our old Adam, till we be come to the perfection whereunto he allureth us, and from which we be so far off as yet. That it may please him to grant this grace not only to us, but also to all people, etc.