

THE SIXTEENTH SERMON

WHICH IS THE SECOND UPON THE THIRD CHAPTER

- 3** Are ye so unwise, that when ye have begun by the spirit, now ye end in the flesh?
- 4** Have ye suffered so much in vain? At leastwise if it be in vain
- 5** He therefore that giveth you the spirit, and worketh mightily in you: doth he it by the works of the law, or by the preaching of the faith? — ^{<480303>}GALATIANS 3:3-5

WE KNOW that all the doctrine of the Gospel tendeth to draw us out of this world, and to make us come unto God. But that is impossible, unless we be lifted up continually more and more. Therefore if we intend to profit in God's school, we must so labor to correct the infirmities that are in our nature, as if we were always at the point to be taken out of the world. True it is that God of his goodness stoopeth down unto us, but that is not to hold us here beneath: Likewise when he sendeth us mortal men to be as his messengers, and exhorteth us to come unto him by such means as are fittest for us, and thereto giveth us his Sacraments, which are earthly and visible signs: therein we see how he vouchsafeth right well (as ye would say) to make himself low, to the end we should not have any excuse, to say we were not able to mount up to such a height. But howsoever the case stand, if we look well upon the Gospel, we shall find that the mark whereto it aimeth, is to bereave us of ourselves, and of all that belongeth to our flesh, to the end we should come unto him. But on the contrary side, men abuse the favor that God showeth them in setting such visible signs afore them, by bearing themselves in hand, that the whole perfection of their holiness is to be found there, and that that is the thing whereunto they must hold them. And the same is not a vice of two days or yesterday's breeding: but it hath reigned from the beginning of the world, and continueth yet still, and (which worse is) men think it not enough to overthrow the thing that God had set up to draw them unto

him: but they do also forge and frame many hindrances to keep themselves aloof from him. This would be dark if it were not declared by example. God had in his law ordained Sacrifices, shadows, and figures for a time: yet did he it not for any pleasure that he had in those bare things: but by reason of the rudeness of the people (who were as then like little children) whom he meant to train still forward to a spiritual service, by means agreeable to their rawness. That is the cause why the Ceremonies of the Law are said to be as it were fleshly. For why? God intended to teach his people grossly to come thither as they ought to do. But howsoever they fared, the pattern that was showed unto Moses in the mount was heavenly. Then were there two things in all the Ceremonies of the Law. For when men washed themselves at their entering into the Temple, when they offered the Sacrifices, when they used lights and perfumes, and when the Priest clothed himself with his special apparel: all those things (as in respect of the outward show) might well be called fleshly and temporal: but (as in respect of their end) they were spiritual. But what did the Jews? They gazed upon the figures, without considering wherefore God had ordained them, and bear themselves in hand, that they had very well discharged their duty, in coming to Church, and in doing the things that were commanded them outwardly. But truly they disguised God after their own fancy, as he himself mocketh them for it by his Prophets, (^{<236601>}Isaiah 66:1), saying that he dwelleth not in houses made with men's hands, and that the very heaven is not able to comprehend his majesty, which is infinite. Furthermore the Papists at this day, thinking it not enough to abuse the things that are contained in God's law, have so put to piece after piece, as there is none end at all of their folly: and yet notwithstanding they entitle them to be the service of God. But whatsoever they say, they be nothing else than juggling tricks and masking toys. But now let us come to that which is spoken here. Saint Paul compareth the spirit with the flesh. What meaneth he by the spirit? All the doctrine which God setteth forth to us in his Gospel. For there is a spiritual guiding, so as we be no more held under the old shadows as the Jews were. Ye see then that God in these days revealeth himself fully unto us, and having beaten down and disannulled all the shadows of the Law, showeth us that he will have us to come right forth unto him, and not have anything remain to hold us back here beneath anymore. Under the law only the Priest preaced [*pressed*] near unto God, and all the people kept

themselves afar off. But we have our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Priest, by whom the way is opened us in his blood, to make us to come unto God his father, as the Apostle speaketh of him in the Epistle to the Hebrews. (<580911> Hebrews 9:11) Then if we receive the Gospel as it becometh us, God will deal with us after such sort, as if we were meet to come near unto him, and will leave all the things which he had ordained in old time for such as were more rude and gross. Thus ye see why Saint Paul upbraideth the Galatians with their beginning in the spirit, that is to say, for that they had had the doctrine of the Gospel, which had showed them the things that had been hidden from the Jews, or at leastwise had been showed them but aloof under dark shadows. Thereupon he upbraideth them, that they intended to end in the flesh, that is to say, with these lower things. And it is all one as if he had said, God hath been so gracious to you, as to have taught you his will out of hand, and you will needs be held still in your Apsie [A,B,C's] and in your first principles. He hath given you a high and perfect knowledge, whereby ye have perceived the inestimable love which he beareth you in our Lord Jesus Christ: and will you now return again to your Apsie [A,B,C's], and forget the things that have been taught you? Were not that a perverting of all order, and a putting away of the grace that he had offered you? But we know that naturally when men intend to learn anything they begin at the smallest points, and afterward in all crafts and all trades, proceed by little and little through experience. For if a man should teach a child high sciences, without teaching him first his Apsie [A,B,C's], and to write and read, and afterward his grammar to guide him forth by degrees: what a thing were it? Again, when a child is well forward [*earnest*], and comes to man's age, if he should be set back again to his Apsie [A,B,C's] after he hath well profited: it would be a plain mockery. In likewise is it with handicrafts. For it is well known, that he which cometh newly into a shop, shall not be of skill to understand as much at the first day, as he shall be at the end of a year or twain: but first he must be taught his principles, and afterward grow more and more in cunning. But if that he which hath learned his craft, do at the four years end turn back again to that which he ought to have known the first day: in so doing he shall show himself to be a beast, and that he hath lost his time. But now let us apply this lesson to ourselves. Truly forasmuch as we be heavy and earthy, we had need to have the things chawed unto us, which we be not able to digest: yet notwithstanding God is so gracious and chary [*careful*]

to us, as to teach us spiritually: that is to say, after a higher and excellent manner than he taught the fathers under the Law. We see that Abraham had not this privilege, and yet nevertheless he is the father of the faithful, and it behooveth us to be fashioned like unto him, as we shall see a while after. We see that David was an excellent King and Prophet, and yet notwithstanding he saw not the things which we see now, but only in a shadow. As much is to be said of all those whom God guided under the ancient figures. And for that cause our Lord Jesus Christ saith, (⁴⁰¹³¹⁶Matthew 13:16) that the eyes are happy which see the things that we see since his showing of himself to the world, and that the ears are happy which hear the doctrine of the Gospel as it is preached unto us. Seeing then that God cometh after that sort unto us, and becometh so familiar with us: if we shrink back, and take Ceremonies and figures instead of the good doctrine, as though we might not come at him: is it not a kicking against him as it were in spite of him? And doth not that rebelliousness show us to be unwilling that God should be merciful and bountiful towards us, as he showeth himself to be? Now then we may easily understand what Saint Paul meaneth here. For he upbraideth the Galatians with their going backward like Seacrabs, in that whereas they had been trained in the spiritual doctrine of the Gospel, they turned back again to the shadows of the Law. Likewise if we in our time, after we have once acquainted ourselves with such order as is according to the Gospel, and be inured with such service of God as is ruled by his pure word, would needs afterward be mingling of fancies with it, and say, it will be good to do thus and thus yet: it were a turning back again to the flesh, that is to say, whereas God hath advanced us on high, we would draw down: and that is a manifest fighting against him. Wherefore let us learn to apply this doctrine to our own profit, and forasmuch as God hath given us his word purely preached among us, if we once know how he will be honored and served, let us not swarve from it, neither to the right hand nor to the left, but let us so profit in the word that is preached faithfully unto us in the name of God, as it may appear that we desire to make it available. And surely the further forward [*earnest*] that we shall have been in it, the less excuse shall we have if we turn back afterward, as we see many do, which wax cold or else would fain [*willingly*] row between two streams, and whereas it were to be looked for that they should have gone continually forward, and have come nearer and nearer unto God, they be still musing

upon a sort of seely [*silly, pitiable*] toys. And nowadays they that would shun persecution, find such shifts as these: They disguise and falsify God's word by mingling and turmoiling men's inventions with it. So much the more therefore doth it behoove us to take heed to this doctrine, where Saint Paul telleth us, that if God have once set us forward, we must no more return back to our Apsie [*A,B,C's*] like little babes. For it is a shame for us, when we have once profited in the Gospel, or at leastwise have had leisure long enough for to profit, and yet notwithstanding it shall seem that we never heard one word of it, according as the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews (^{<580512>} Hebrews 5:12) upbraideth the Jews, saying: Ye ought all of you to be teachers in respect of the time that you have been taught, and yet notwithstanding you be still like young beginners. Thus ye see the first point that we have to mark upon this text. Now he addeth consequently, *Have ye suffered so many things in vain? If at leastwise it be in vain.* Here he wakeneth up the Galatians, by telling them that God had done them the honor to make them as witnesses of his Gospel, and yet notwithstanding that afterward they had swarved from it. And this is a thing well worth the marking. For sometimes God doth us so great honor as to serve his turn by us, so that his word is by our means maintained before men. Now if thereupon we swarve aside, and hold not out to the end in such constancy as appeared to be in us, it is a double shame, and also it is to be taken for the greater crime, because the occasion of offense is double: and moreover it is a villainous unthankfulness if we continue not in the serving of our God, when he hath reached us his hand after that manner. And this is so much the more to be noted, because we see many men brag and boast themselves to have wrought wonders, if our Lord Jesus Christ have served his turn by them in anything. What, say they? have not I done this and that? They will allege their own abilities: insomuch that (if ye believe them) God is greatly bound unto them. But put the case they had done a hundredfold more than they speak of: yet are they even therefore so much the more beholden to God. For it came not of their own good towardness, but of God who governed them by his holy spirit: and if they overshoot themselves afterward, their fault and offense is so much the worse. And why so? Because they ought to go forward, and they go backward. And moreover they cause many more to stumble, than they should have done if they had not been set forth to the view. For when God lifted them up as it were upon the stage, it was to have them

seen afar off. By means whereof they trouble an infinite multitude of people, and therefore their fault is so much the heinouser. But yet is that vice too common. For nowadays, such as think themselves to have done anything for the Gospel, will needs be exempted from all law and rule: insomuch that if a man blame them for doing amiss, what (say they?) ought I not to be borne withal? For I have done this and that. To be short, men will dispense with themselves after that manner, and (which is worse) they advance themselves proudly against God, when he doeth them the honor to employ them about his service. But let us mark how Saint Paul saith here, *Have ye suffered so much in vain?* He taketh occasion to blame the Galatians so much the sorer, because they had already suffered for the Gospel's sake, and been persecuted, and endured many troubles both in their goods and in their persons. How now (saith he?) what is to be said of all that you have suffered? Is it not a record that God had called you to the magnifying of his name? For in good faith the things that we suffer for the Gospel's sake, ought to serve us for a badge, as if God did set us in some honorable office. The greatest honor that we can have, is to be witnesses of God's truth, so that although we be subject to lying, yet notwithstanding he justifieth his eternal truth which proceedeth from himself, even by us which are wretched creatures, which are but wind, smoke shadows, and less than nothing. Seeing then that God appointeth and ordaineth us to be lawful witnesses for the advancing and enlarging of his Gospel by us: hath he not just cause to complain, if we swarve aside from it after we have suffered for it? Therefore let all such look narrowly to themselves, as have had any good beginning. And there is not any warning better worthy to be taken heed unto, than this. For saying that the least of the Church have enough to bind them to Godward for his choosing of them from out of the world, and for his directing of his Gospel unto them, insomuch that he hath left the great ones and such as take highly upon themselves by reason of their great excellency, and preferred the lesser sort and such as are despised to the worldward, and shall surely have the harder account to make, if they shrink away afterward: what shall become of those whom God vouchsafed to have to be his standard bearers, and whom he preferred in such wise, as they ought to have been an example and looking-glass to others? what excuse shall there be for them, if they give the slip? And specially if they that have suffered for the name of Jesus Christ, and for the doctrine of his Gospel, so far forth as to have

been kept in prison and to have been tormented, yea and to have been brought even unto death's door, do afterward start aside: is it not an abolishing of God's grace so far forth as in them lieth? So little then ought any man's suffering for the Gospel, serve to excuse him or cause him to be borne withal: that such as have suffered most ought to bridle themselves shortest, knowing that the honor which God doth them, holdeth them so much the more bound unto him, and that it behooveth them to be the more watchful and warer [*careful, vigilant*], that they give none occasion of stumbling to anybody. For when folk shall say, how cometh this to pass? such a one should have been a Martyr of God, he hath endured much for the maintenance of the truth, and now behold he is become a renegade: it is a putting of the Gospel to shame and reproach, and what a thing is that? By that means the name of God shall be greatly misreported. And therefore let us mark well, that if we have for a time served God, and he hath made our labor fruitful, so as the Church hath been profited and edified by it: we must walk in the greater carefulness, and take good heed that we play not the shrewd Cow, that gives a good deal of milk, and when she hath done, strikes down the pail and spills it. For if we do a hundred times more harm than we did good: what can we allege for our defense? how can we say that we have suffered for the Gospel? Wherefore if we purpose that God should allow of our service, let us learn to be constant, firm and fast settled, that we never swarve aside from our calling, but continue and go forward in it more and more. Howbeit forasmuch as this upbraiding was very rigorous, Saint Paul mitigateth it, saying: *If at leastwise it be in vain*. Wherein he giveth the Galatians an inkling, that he hopeth much better of them, and that although they were start aside for a time, yet it would not endure long, but that upon warning and exhortation they would return again into the right way. And in this text we see, that when we be rebuked by God's spirit, it is not to make us fumish [*emit smoke*], nor to drive us to such a desperateness that we should take the bridle in our teeth and fall to chafing: but rather to draw us to repentance. God then intendeth not to make us so dismayed, as to leave us in the briars: but after he hath showed us our faults, he calleth us always home again to him, and calleth us to repentance, and showeth us that he is ready to receive and take us to mercy, as oft as we be touched with true lowliness to be sorry for our sins, and to acknowledge them unfeignedly [*genuinely*] and freely. Sith [*since*] it is so, let us on our side be well

advised, that when we be told of the faults that we have done, we play not the mad Bedlems [*lunatics*], nor go about to win anything by starting aside or dragging back: but yield ourselves guilty, and be so meek and patient minded, as to suffer ourselves to be blamed after as we have need. And when rebukings shall seem somewhat with the sharpest and pricking to us: let us always bear in mind, to consider to what end they tend, and what fruit followeth them, and that although God rebuke us thoroughly, yet he is ready to forget all our faults afterward. Ye see then what we have to remember: as if Saint Paul should say, that although we to the uttermost of our power have abolished the grace of God: yet notwithstanding he on his part is loath they should perish and would fain [*happily*] make them to prosper. And thereunto he rebuketh us, to the intent we should not continue unamendable. Therefore whensoever we shall have been so far overseen as to stray from the right way: yet let us know that our Lord calleth us back to him, and giveth us a mean to return again, if our fault be not matched with willfulness. Now after that Saint Paul hath spoken so, he addeth again, that God had dealt forth the gifts of his holy spirit among the Galatians, yea and that by means of the gospel, insomuch that the same ought to have been enough to hold them to the doctrine which they had received, without turning aside or wandering away from it. Whereas he speaketh here of God's spirit, he meaneth not the grace that was treated of this morning, which is common to all the faithful: but useth another kind of reasoning (as we shall see by the sequel:) namely that besides God's showing of himself generally to all the Galatians, that he had adopted them for his children: he had also ordained Prophets among them, and men endued, some with the gift of Tongues, some with the gift of healing, and othersome with such other like. But all this came to them by means of the Gospel: and therefore their turning back again to the Ceremonies of the law, was a burying of all the operations of God's spirit. I have told you already how we must bear in mind, that God communicateth his spirit to all [*his*]: for without that, we could not be Christians, because there is nothing but evil in our nature. God must be fain [*pleased*] to reform us and bring us back to himself, so as we may become as it were new creatures. Ye see then that God doth make us generally all partakers of his holy spirit, by means whereof we be touched with the fear of him, enlightened with faith to seek our salvation in Jesus Christ, and cheered up to resort unto God, to call upon him, and to yield ourselves obediently to his will:

and to be short, so ye see that God's spirit is common to all the faithful, and to all his children. But yet doth he grant us other special graces besides, as when he giveth us men that teach us his word faithfully, or that govern the common wealth wisely, or which have other gifts: for in so doing he giveth us certain tokens that he dwelleth among us, and thereby also he bindeth us so much the more unto him. Let us mark the reason that Saint Paul setteth down here. He blameth the unthankfulness of the Galatians, for that they considered not how it came unto them by the preaching of the Gospel. And he saith it purposely, because men will always make fair protestations ynow [*enough*], that they mean not to reject God's grace, and yet do show the clean contrary in their doings. As how? They that are loath to suffer themselves to be taught and would drive away all the ministers of God's word if they could, and they which through envy and spitefulness, could find in their hearts to abolish the remembrance of all those whom God hath established to maintain the welfare of his people, they (say I) do show well enough, that they would have God to hold himself afar off from them: and that they be loath to come at him. For he setteth before them the means to come to him, and they vouchsafe not to take it, but do thrust it from them. So then, whereas Saint Paul findeth fault with the Galatians, it was not for that they protested openly with full mouth that they would none of God's spirit, or that they held scorn of his gifts: but to show them that they had very ill regarded God's uttering of the gifts of his spirit in their Church. What ought we then to gather upon this Text. That if God give us means to come unto him, we must take them aworth [*as having worth*], even by fashioning of ourselves unto them. For if the Gospel be preached among us, and we willfully forget what is told us: it is all one as if we rejected God, and turned our back upon him, of purpose to stray away from him. Wherefore if we intend that God should continue his grace towards us: let us hold us to the means that he hath ordained for us: that is to say, let us suffer ourselves to be taught by such as he sendeth unto us, let every of us exercise himself alone also in reading the holy scripture, let such as have done good in edifying the Church have room and place among us, and let us not shut the gate against the holy Ghost. This in effect is the thing that we have to bear in mind. Furthermore forasmuch as Saint Paul's intent here, is to bring back the faithful to the Gospel: let us assure ourselves that if we swarve never so little from it, we be straight in the highway to

destruction. And so there is none other knitting of God unto men, than by means of the Gospel which must go as a chain that cannot be broken betwixt them. And Paul doth purposely once again call it the preaching of faith, to show us how great need we have that God should prevent us. For until such time as he have reached us his hand in our Lord Jesus Christ, and drawn us out of the gulf of confusion wherein we be by nature, what are we? Moreover we see how bountiful he showeth himself towards us, in that he giveth himself fully to us in the person of his only Son: surely it is much more than if he gave us heaven and earth, and all the goods that are in them. For what are all other things in comparison of our Lord Jesus Christ? Wherefore let us mark, that seeing that God having declared unto us that we be utterly unfurnished of all goodness, addeth that he will not keep back anything from us, nor show himself a niggard [*covetous, stingy*] towards us, if we seek to him for all things that we want: we must be contented with it, and if we swarve never so little one way or other, we deserve well to be utterly bereft and dispossessed, even of that which we have received already. And thereupon Saint Paul bringeth us back to the example of Abraham, because he is the father of all the faithful, and moreover because that in his person it pleased god to show how we may become righteous to be saved: for there is none other way to bring us to the kingdom of heaven than the same that he went. There is but only one way, and that is set forth to us in the example of Abraham. Saint Paul therefore saith *that Abraham believed God, and the same was reckoned to him for righteousness*: and therefore that if we will be Abraham's children, we must believe. Here we have to call to remembrance the thing that hath been declared already heretofore: that is to say, what this word *faith* or *le cefe* importeth. It is not a single believing that there is but one God which governeth the world: but an assuring of ourselves that he taketh us for his children, and that we may fully and freely call upon him as our father, because he accepteth us for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Then if we be sure of the favor and fatherly love of our God, and take such warranties of it by his promises, that we have our look wholly fastened upon our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we find means to come unto God, and to go freely unto him: that is the very thing which Saint Paul meant by that word *Faith*. And so, when he saith that to be Abraham's children we must be faithful: it is all one as if he said, that we cannot be faithful Christians nor members of the Church, but by faith: that is to say, except we be bereft of

all opinion of our own deservings, and moreover so beaten down and dismayed in ourselves, as we may not wot [*know*] where to become, nor seek any other means of salvation, than in the free goodness which God offereth us, when he telleth us that we be fordone [*exhausted*] and damned in our sins, and yet notwithstanding, that we must not cease to have full hope and trust of salvation, in Jesus Christ.

Thus ye see what it is: that is to wit, to be utterly out of heart in himself, in consideration that he bringeth nothing with him but sin and cursedness: and yet upon the feeling of himself to be so utterly void of all well deserving: to come unto God to be clothed with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it is not enough for us to be out of heart in ourselves, as we see that Cain was, who being as it were upon the rack confesseth his fault: (howbeit, that was but through despair, and so consequently there was nothing in him but murmuring and blasphemy against God: and in like case is it with all reprobates or castaways) but we must so taste of the love of our God, as we may be able to settle ourselves upon it, and be out of all doubt that he will receive us if we come to the Gospel, at leastwise if we come in such wise as our hope be grounded, not upon our own self-weening [*opinion*] or imagination, but upon God's promise, and for that we cannot be disappointed in waiting upon him and in holding ourselves assured of his word. Thus ye see in effect what it is to be faithful: for we must always have an eye to the disputation that Saint Paul undertaketh. He striveth against such as pretended to purchase righteousness before God by the works of the Law. If there were no more but this saying *to be of the faith*, without considering what matter Saint Paul treateth of here: that manner of speech were but dark. But when we see how Saint Paul declareth expressly, that all such as go about to purchase favor at God's hand by their own deservings, are puffed up with pride, and that their presumptuousness shutteth the gate of Paradise against them, and that God vouchsafeth not to hear them, because they defraud him of his due honor, and would fain [*happily*] as it were deck themselves with his feathers, and that they be traitors in robbing him of his righteousness: forasmuch as Saint Paul handleth that point: there is now no doubt but he taketh all those to be of the faith, which distrust themselves, and are utterly out of all hope in themselves, and yet notwithstanding do return unto Jesus Christ, resting, leaning, and trusting wholly unto him. Those

therefore are the true children of Abraham. But now let us see how few Christians there are in the world. True it is that the word *Christian* runneth roundly in every man's mouth: but in the meanwhile it is fully defiled, and God must needs disclaim all such as pretend after that fashion to be his: like as in the Popedom [*papal government*] every man groundeth himself upon his baptism or Christendom. And surely in baptism we have on God's behalf an infallible pledge of our salvation. But what for that? they take but the visible sign, and separate it from our Lord Jesus Christ. And in very deed the Papists know nought at all of that which is told us here by Saint Paul: but (which worse is) they have their freewill, their merit, and their satisfactions: instead of God's service, which they thrust under foot and falsify, they have gewgaws [*trinkets, baubles*] yea and abominations of the Devil's own forging: and therefore they be sufficiently convicted to have no Christianity in them. And for our part, although we have not the Idolatries and superstitions that reign among the Papists: yet are we not so grounded in the Gospel, that every of us can offer himself frankly unto God, and fully and freely call upon him, quietly suffering him to guide us: but we shall see many that are but wretched beasts. True it is that they will well enough protest themselves to hold nothing at all of the Pope's abuses and superstitions: but if a man talk to them of the grounds and principles of the gospel, they wot [*know*] not what thing it is. Othersome which ween [*think*] themselves to be great Clerks, when it cometh to the trial, do show that all was but a countenance, and that they did but prate like pyes [*dogs*] in a Cage. So much the more therefore doth it behoove us to bear well in mind, how Saint Paul telleth us here, that we cannot be Abraham's children nor members of the Church, except we come thither with belief of the Gospel, so as every of us renounce his foreconceived opinions of his own merits, and assure ourselves that we be utterly damned and drowned in despair, and thereupon resort to the mere grace of God, and to the mercy which he offereth us in our Lord Jesus Christ, so as we fall to dipping of ourselves in the blood which he hath shed to cleanse us withal, assuring ourselves that there all our debts are released, and God's wrath and vengeance so appeased, as we cannot fail but to find him favorable. Howbeit for the better understanding hereof, let us mark also after what manner Abraham believed God. And it behooveth us to have the definition of this word *Faith*: for without that, all this doctrine would be to no purpose. I have told you already that whereas the

Papists strive against us: they know nother [*neither*] why nor wherefore they do it, nor whereat they bend themselves, but rush forth overthwart, awry [*astray, out of the right course*], and at all adventure. For they never wist [*knew*] what faith meant, and that do they show well enough, I mean even the greatest doctors of them, for all that they will say is that faith is to believe in God: and if they believe in God, so do the Devils too. But when as Saint Paul speaketh here of faith, he meaneth not that we should have but only some guess that there is a God which reigneth in heaven: but that we must take him to be our father, assuring ourselves thoroughly of it by the promises which he giveth us, and so link ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ, as we doubt not but that all that ever he hath is proper and belonging to us, because we be members of his body. But when the Papists talk of faith, they say it is a confused thing, and that it serveth not to make us good men so as we might be saved by it. We see then that the Papists go brutishly to work as folk utterly dulled by Satan. And it is a just punishment of God upon their pride, because they cannot find in their hearts to humble themselves, by confessing themselves to owe all unto God, and that there is nothing in them worthy to be accepted at his hand, but that they must be fain [*obliged*] to receive the mere grace that is offered them. Thus ye see after what manner we must take the word *Faith*. But here is yet one point more which serveth greatly to that purpose: which is, to know after what manner Abraham believed God, and that shall be the conclusion. If Abraham had believed no more but that there was a God in heaven: that would not have served to have justified him, for the Heathenfolk believed as much. Again, if Abraham had believed that God was judge of the world: that would not have served his turn nother [*neither*]. But when as God saith unto him, (^{<011501>}Genesis 15:1; ^{<011707>}Genesis 17:7) I am thy plentiful reward, and I will be thy God and the God of thy seed after thee, and moreover all nations shall be blessed in thee: by accepting such promises wherein God acquainted himself with him, and witnessed to him that he took him for one of his household and as his own child, and became his father: Abraham was justified by accepting that promise. And why? For as soon as God offered him his goodness and grace, he believed the word and received it: and then was he full sure of his salvation. Now may we much better judge what it is to be justified by faith: namely that it is not a confused opinion of believing that there is a God, but a holding of him for our father and Savior, and that

because he showeth himself to be so by his word, and also giveth us a good pledge and earnest penny of it in our Lord Jesus Christ, insomuch that there he showeth himself to be joined and united with us, and that although we be wretched creatures and have nothing in us but all mischief, yet he faileth not to take us for his own, and to admit us into his favor: the reason whereof is, because our Lord Jesus Christ is the mean betwixt him and us. Therefore when we have that promise, and rest wholly upon it, and doubt not but that God doth and will show himself gracious to us unto the end, and therewithal call upon him and resort only unto him, giving over this world, and continuing in the hope of the heavenly life: then be we sure that we have faith, and are justified: Abraham's believing: and without that, let us assure ourselves there is no Christianity at all in us. For (as Saint Paul saith in ^{<451014>}Romans 10:14) until we know what the Gospel is, we cannot call God our father. We cannot call upon God (saith he) (^{<451017>}Romans 10:17) except we knew him, and believed in him. And how is it possible for us to know him, till he be revealed unto us? Therefore faith must needs go before. And whereof cometh faith? Of hearing, saith Saint Paul. Then must we be trained in the Gospel, or else we can have no faith. And hereby we see yet better, that all that ever is termed faith in Popery, is but stark dotage. And why so? For there God's word is hidden, and the greatest brutishness that can be, is taken for greatest devotion. When men babble they wot [*know*] not what, when they gad [*go wandering*] on pilgrimage and never come at God, when they busy their heads about fond Ceremonies and hear not so much as one word of good doctrine: O, that is great devotion and holiness. But we see how there is no Christianity without faith, nor faith without teaching of the Gospel: and so consequently we cannot be Christians, till God have given us the grace to taste of his goodness and mercy, as it is daily set afore us in the Gospel: assuring ourselves that he accepteth us in the number of his children, so as we may be bold to call upon him, and continue therein to the end, at leastwise in waiting for the full performance of the things which he revealeth unto us now by his mouth, that is to say by his word.

But now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us feel them more and more, and that the same feeling of them may draw us unto him with true repentance, so as we may not only ask him forgiveness of them, but also

so reform and change ourselves, as we may truly bear the mark of his children, when we shall appear before his judgment seat, and as our Lord Jesus Christ also may repair the Image of his father in us, in such wise as he may acknowledge us for his members. And in the meanwhile, let us beseech him to bear with our infirmities, till he have utterly cleansed us of them. That it may please him to grant this grace not only to us, but also to all people, etc.