

THE SEVENTEENTH SERMON

WHICH IS THE THIRD UPON THE THIRD CHAPTER

- 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham.
- 8 And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, shewed glad tidings aforehande unto Abraham, saying. In thee shall all nations be blessed.
- 9 Those then which are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. — ^{<480307>} GALATIANS 3:7-9

IF WE were such as we would be taken to be, that is to wit, if we were Christians: we should be well acquainted with this manner of speech of being justified by faith. But there are very few to be found even among those that boast themselves to have profited in the Gospel, which know what is meant by the righteousness whereof the Scripture speaketh so much. Howsoever the case stand, either we must have skill of that article, or else we can never have any assurance of our salvation, nor resort unto God at our need to call freely upon him. And that is the cause why Saint Paul standeth so much upon that matter. The last Sunday we saw how Abraham was counted righteous because he had believed God: and I told you that thereby is showed us, that no man can bring any worthiness of his own, wherewith to win God's favor, but that we must be fain [*obliged*] to receive it [of his free gift.] For the word *believing*, hath a respect to the promise, insomuch that God's free offering of himself unto Abraham, was the cause that Abraham was counted righteous, because he accepted the favor that was offered him of free gift, being well assured that of himself he had nothing but all iniquity and cursedness. And thereupon Saint Paul concludeth, *that such as are of faith are the children of Abraham*. It is certain that Abraham is the father of all the faithful, and of all God's children: and therefore it followeth, that either we must be fashioned after his example, or else the gate of life and salvation is shut against us, and we

be quit and clean banished out of God's kingdom. Here Saint Paul showeth us the way: For we come not of Abraham as concerning the flesh, neither belong we aught [*anything*] at all unto him: and yet notwithstanding it behooveth us to be of his race: the only way whereof, is to be partners of the promise that was given unto him, and to receive it as he did, (here ye see what it is to be of faith) so that when we once know and find by proof that we cannot deserve any favor at God's hand, nor be allowed for our own works and merits, we repose our whole trust in his goodness, and apply this promise to ourselves, which is that he adopteth us for his children. Thus ye see Saint Paul's Text made plain enough. Howbeit he addeth, that that [promise] served not for the Jews alone, but rather that all men in general are comprehended in it. For without that addition, the doctrine that we have treated of would serve us to no purpose. God chose Abraham and his offspring: So then, are we shut out from the hope of salvation: for his choosing importeth a forsaking of all those whom he chooseth not: but he hath chosen the lineage of Abraham, and so by that means it seemeth that all of us are forsaken. But the promise which Saint Paul rehearseth consisteth of two parts. The one is, that God would be the protector of Abraham's lineage, and shole [*shovel*] it out from the rest of the world. The other is, that all nations should be blessed in Abraham and in his seed. (<011203> Genesis 12:3) Now if God had placed his Church in the only household of Abraham, then should we at this day be miserable. But forasmuch as in the second part we also are joined in it, and God enlargeth his goodness and mercy further, which he had appointed to one certain lineage: by that means we become partakers of salvation: And that is the thing which Saint Paul treateth of here [when he telleth us] that the Scripture foreseeing that God not only justifieth the Jews, but also useth the like mercy towards the Gentiles, which were as good as cut off from the house, saith, All Nations shall be blessed in thee. Then is there no speaking here of some handful of men, or of some certain people: but without any exception, God openeth the gate to all such as had erst been [*previously been*] quit and clean past hope. And thereupon also Saint Paul concludeth, *that they which are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham*. As if he should say, when God justified Abraham, he had not respect neither to Circumcision, nor to anything that he had wherewith to win favor after the opinion of men: but received him in another kew [*mood, vein*] that is to wit, as a believing man. God therefore contented

himself with Abraham's faith only. And in that respect also it was his will to make him the father of the whole Church. Seeing then that God made none account of anything else in Abraham but of his faith: (<011704> Genesis 17:4) let us conclude that God doth now still receive us to him in likewise, if we have the like faith that Abraham had, though not in like measure, and that God taketh it in good worth, though we do but follow him aloof. Then belongeth not this blessing to Abraham's fleshly offspring only, but also to those that were strangers to him, so there be the like substance and fashion of faith in them. Howbeit to the end we take profit by this doctrine, let us remember what I have touched already, that is to wit, what it is to be of faith: namely that it is a reposing of ourselves wholly in God's mere mercy. But Saint Paul setteth down a comparison of things contrary, and which can no more agree than fire and water: that is to wit, of being of the law, and of being of faith. Yet followeth it not that the law cometh not of God: insomuch that if we reject it, at whom doth such contempt point? Is not God's authority impeached thereby? But in these words of *Law* and *Faith*, Saint Paul respecteth not simply the doctrine of either of them, but the hope of salvation that men may conceive of them. For the righteousness of faith hath his record of the law and the Prophets, as Saint Paul saith in <450321> Romans 3:21. They be not contrary things: but the diversity of them is in this, that such as misknow themselves, and are blinded with hypocrisy, think to purchase favor in God's sight by keeping the Law, which thing is impossible. Those therefore are of the law, which hold of the Law, as though they were able to earn the heritage of the heavenly life at God's hand. On the contrary part, they that are needy, yea or rather utterly empty of themselves, acknowledging that they have not so much as one drop of grace in them: they are of faith. For why, they forsake themselves, and seek their righteousness elsewhere. They come and offer themselves like poor beggars unto God, to the end he should fill them, whereas they were utterly empty before. Therefore mark it for a schoolpoint [*point debated in the school*], that by the force of faith we must be quite rid of all self-trust, and of all overweening [*high opinion*] of our own merits, and have our whole refuge to God's mere goodness. But truly we cannot come right forth unto God, without some mean: our Lord Jesus Christ must be fain [*pleased*] to make us a way thither: and all this is comprehended under the word faith. For faith is not an imagination of men's own forging: it is an assuredness which we conceive of God's

goodness, when he cometh to us and uttereth familiarly the love that he beareth us. Then must the promise go before, or else there shall be no following of faith. To be short, whosoever hath not been trained in the Gospel, can have no faith at all. For God must first have told us that he loveth us, or else we cannot rest upon his goodness, nor call upon him as our father. Now let us see what this promise is. God not only saith that he will have pity upon us, but also telleth us that although we be wretched sinners, yet he will not cease to accept us, because he burieth all our sins, namely by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ: for that sacrifice must needs come forth everywhere, where any mention is made of the forgiving of sins. Never can there be any pardon gotten at God's hand, except there be bloodshedding with it for a satisfaction. So then the foundation of this promise where God saith that he will be merciful to us, is Christ's shedding of his blood to wash away our spots, and his offering up of himself for a full amends, to pacify the wrath of God his father. Thus ye see how that if we be of faith, we have our eyes fastened upon Jesus Christ, and our rest and quietness is altogether in his death and passion, which is the only mean to reconcile us unto God. Also let us mark, that to be *blessed*, and to be *justified*, are all one thing, accordingly as Saint Paul declareth here. Hardly shall a man find one among thirty of such as are called Christians, that can skill to define this word *justify*. And surely it is a foul shame that we should have our ears daily beaten with the Gospel, and yet notwithstanding be ignorant of the chief article of our faith. Then to be justified, is not to have any righteousness in a man's self, but to be admitted for righteous at God's hand though we be not so. And here ye see why I said that we have a good opening of this doctrine, in that Saint Paul setteth down the word *Bless*, instead of the word *justify*, which he had used afore, according to ^{<450405>}Romans 4:5, where he saith that the righteousness of faith, is that our sins are forgiven us. Forsomuch then, as God is favorable and loving to us, and receiveth us as his children: therefore it is said that we be justified before him. And why justified? Because he cannot love sinners, till he have forgiven their sins, and put them quite away. We know that forasmuch as God is righteous, he cannot agree with sin, but must needs always hate it. Then sith [*since*] the case standeth so: if we intend to have his favor, we must needs be first cleansed of our offenses. For so long as they come to reckoning, God must needs hate us, and curse us. But contrariwise when he wipeth away all our sins,

then receiveth he us to mercy. And by that means do we begin to be blessed of him. Are we then blessed, that is to say, beloved of God? Verily we are therewithal justified also: that is to say, whereas there was nothing but sin in us, God maketh us partners of the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the obedience that he yielded is conveyed over unto us. As for example: If I owe a sum of money, and another pay it for me, although I lay out nothing out of mine own purse, yet am I quit. I had not wherewith to pay, but I found one that discharged me. Even so is it with us: who being destitute of righteousness, have Jesus Christ for our surety, and he hath satisfied God his father for us. By means whereof our sins are quite wiped out, so as they come not anymore to account or remembrance before God, and therefore we be justified or blessed, that is to say, whereas God must heretofore have held us as accursed and damnable, now he holdeth us for his children. And herein also we see the fondness of the Papists, who cannot find in their hearts to be persuaded that we be justified by faith, because that (to their seeming) faith is not so excellent a virtue as some other are. For a man shall not be perceived to do much in holding himself to God's promises, and in resting upon them. Men will say, very well such a one is a wretched sinner, and knoweth that he had need indeed to be succored by God's goodness, and that is the cause why he resteth thereupon. But the man whose conversation bears a goodly show, and is magnified everywhere, shall be counted the righteouser. As for example, if a man be liberal and deal freely of his goods, and also show himself well disposed in all other parts of his life, such a one shall be counted more excellent than a believer. Besides this, they do also allege Saint Paul's saying in another place, (^{<461313>} 1 Corinthians 13:13) how that Charity is above Faith and Hope. Yea truly: but the question is not here, whether of them is the greater, higher, or nobler virtue.

When we say we be justified by faith, it is not meant that there is any worthiness or desert in our faith, as who should say, that God were bound unto us, and therefore received us for it: but that because God hath showed himself merciful towards us, and promised to be our Savior, we being first bereft of all trust in our virtues, do come unto him by faith, knowing well that if he consider us in ourselves, he must needs curse and abhor us. Seeing then that faith bringeth not anything on man's behalf, but receiveth all things of God's mere and free goodness: there is no

questioning what worthiness is in us. And so we see that faith not only helpeth us to the attainment of our salvation, but also bringeth us all perfection. Now after that Saint Paul hath said, that all the heathen are blessed in Abraham: he addeth that it is together with the faithful Abraham. As if he should say, there is none other means to make us find favor in God's sight, than only faith. There is no seeking of help elsewhere in that behalf. For that is yet too gross an error wherewith the Papists are entangled. For although they wot [*know*] not what faith meaneth, nor what it is to be justified: yet are they enforced to say that faith helpeth to salvation: Howbeit they add, that it is but partly, and that charity, and all other virtues work together with it, and that if men purpose to be allowed of God, they must deserve well at his hand, so that all is nought worth, without obedience and holiness of life. It is true that faith cannot be separated from the fear of God: but the matter here is nothing else but to know by what means God acknowledgeth us for his children. But if he have respect to our works, woe be to us. Therefore he must be fain [*pleased*] to turn away his countenance from the considering of our persons, and to receive us alonely [*solely*] in our Lord Jesus Christ, or else (in his looking upon us) to mark nothing but our miseries, that he may be moved and provoked to mercy. Ye see then that God hath a double respect in justifying us. The one is that he beholdeth our miseries: for inasmuch as he seeth us so plunged in all confusion, he is moved to pity. Again, to the intent he may no more be an enemy and take part against us which are sinners, he must be fain [*pleased*] to look upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and upon his righteousness, that the same may do away all our offenses. Now Saint Paul saith here, that we cannot be blessed but with faithful Abraham. As if he should say that Abraham though he were never so holy a man, brought nothing of his own with him when he obtained righteousness before God. Faith (as I have said already) doth utterly bereave a man of all the worthiness which he supposeth himself to have. Seeing that Abraham had none other help than faith: it followeth that he renounced all his own works, as which in very deed were nothing worth. Then sith [*since*] it is so, let us learn to leave such mingling, which bringeth nothing but corruption before God: and let us be contented that we be allowed at God's hand if he find us faithful. If a man pose us, and say, had Abraham's virtues no favor in God's sight? It is easy to answer, that Abraham of his own nature had nothing but all manner of iniquity. He had

been a castaway, if God had not plucked him out of the dungeon wherein he was sunken, according as he himself showeth in the last chapter of Joshua. Consider (saith he to the Jews) (<062402> Joshua 24:2) from whence I took your father Abraham. Did not his fathers serve Idols? Then did I pluck him out of the bottom of hell. So, Abraham had not aught [*anything*] whereof to boast. For he could not have done any good, if God had not prevented him with his grace. But now after that God had given Abraham so great and excellent virtues, that he is become as a pattern of all holiness: yet were not those virtues able to justify him, for there was always some fault to be found in him, either more or less. Let a man enforce himself as much as is possible to obey God: and yet shall he always go limping. Now there cannot be so little a fault nor so small a blemish in our works, but the same is enough to make them foul and loathsome before God. Thus all Abraham's virtues, if they had been examined straightly, could not have brought him ought but damnation. As much is to be said of David, and of all others. Besides this, when we fall to scanning [*examining, searching*] whether God love us, and acknowledge us for his children: it must not be thought he doeth it for two or three good deeds, but for such a perfect obedience as we fail not in any one jot [*the smallest in the alphabet*]. But surely although Abraham had some perfection in part of his life, yet could he not be justified by it. For he was continually a man, that is to say, a sinner: and God held him so at the stave's end, to the intent to humble him, as he doth all the rest of the faithful. Then could not Abraham bring aught [*anything*] of himself, for look what goodness so ever he had, he held it of God and of his free goodness. And moreover, the same was yet still insufficient to save him: for by nature he was utterly lost and damned, as all the rest of Adam's line is. Therefore it stood him in hand, that God should receive him through pardoning of his sins, and look upon him singly [*individually*] in his faith. But let us mark also, that God's justifying of us is by faith, that is to say, by his own mere and alonely [*solitary*] goodness, and that thereupon it behooveth us to rest in his promise, by the virtue whereof he alloweth and accepteth us, yea and our works also: not in respect that they come of ourselves, but for that we do them by the grace of his holy spirit: and therefore doth he accept them and allow them as righteous, yea even so far forth as to reward them as the whole scripture doth plentifully witness. And yet doth all this also proceed of faith. For when we be justified, that is to say, accepted for righteous

before God: then also are our works justified, that is to say, God accepteth them for rightful, although there be not any worthiness in them, nor any cause at all why he should receive them. Then like as we ourselves are justified by God's only free goodness, when we receive his promises by faith: even so be our works justified by the selfsame mean. After that manner was Abraham justified in his person: and then likewise were his works also justified before God. But howsoever the world go, if ye consider the original cause and wellspring of all: ye must needs conclude that nothing else was made account of but only faith. For had God listed [*wished*] to sift Abraham's life, he had been condemned as all other mortal men are. But his intent was to take him for his own, and nothing persuaded or moved him thereunto but his own mere mercy. Also, Abraham had his eyes shut against all vain trusts wherewith men deceive themselves: he knew there was nothing able to bring him to life, save the only mercy of God: To be short, like as Abraham had no regard but of God's mere mercy: so God had no regard but only of Abraham's faith: and by that means was he justified. So then let us leave all things that men imagine to bring themselves in favor with God by mingling this and that with faith: for they are all but falsehoods and illusions of Satan: and let faith have such foundation as this: that is to wit, that with all humility we acknowledge ourselves to be then righteous, when God forgiveth us our sins, and that by the same means our works also are reckoned for good and righteous, because God listeth [*chooses*] not to sift them narrowly, but taketh them in good worth of his fatherly goodness. Thus ye see what we have to gather upon that text. Now, that the blessedness of Abraham belongeth unto us, and is meant unto us, it appeareth by that which I have touched already, and by that Saint Paul avoucheth, *that all nations should be blessed in Abraham*. And now remaineth to see the reason that Saint Paul addeth on the contrary part. For men by their good wills can never find in their hearts to give over the opinion which they have of their own righteousness, except they be compelled and enforced to it. For although we be saped [*steeped*] in so many vices as is ugly to behold: yet the worst and deepest rooted vice in our nature is pride or presumptuousness, which is a self-willed weening [*opinion*] that there is somewhat in us: insomuch that although God tell us that we be right nought, and that there is nothing in us but lewdness, filthiness, and uncleanness, and that all the virtue which we dream upon is but vanity and leasing [*falsehood*]: yet can he not

compass to humble us, till we ourselves perceive our own need, and have it proved to our faces. And therefore it behooveth us to mark well the reason which Saint Paul addeth here to draw us to the pure faith, and to turn us away from all the vain trusts which we can have in our own deservings. *All they* (saith he) *that are of the law are accursed. For it is written, Cursed be he that continueth not in all the things that are written and contained in this book, to do them.* When as Saint Paul saith that all they which are of the law are cursed: he meaneth that so long as men rest and muse upon their own works, and think to obtain grace by that mean before God: they be cursed. For (as I have declared heretofore) like as he that forsaketh himself, and renounceth all that he hath of his own, and groundeth himself upon the only mercy of God, is of faith: so contrariwise, he that thinketh to bring any service wherewith to bind God unto him, or imagineth to recompense him with his merits, is of the Law. But Saint Paul saith that such are cursed. And why? He alleageth [*makes alliance with*] the saying of Moyses:

Cursed be he that performeth not all that is written here.

(<052726> Deuteronomy 27:26)

It had been said afore, (<052715> Deuteronomy 27:15) Cursed be he that serveth strange Gods: Cursed be he that blasphemeth God: Cursed be he that breaketh the Sabbath day: Cursed be he that is stubborn against his father and mother: Cursed be he that defileth another man's wife. After the rehearsing of all these Curses, and after the solemn uttering of them, it behooved the people to answer Amen, Amen, as if there had passed some covenant, and that God on his side had made demand, saying: I will have you to serve me after this manner, yea even without failing in any point, and in such wise as ye keep touch with me through stitch in all things that I command you: and the people on their side should answer, Amen, yea Lord we be contented to be all damned if we serve thee not: and then afterward God should come and conclude, Cursed be he that performeth not all that ever is contained in this book, that is to say, which misseth in any one point, and the people should answer again, so be it. Now seeing that the law curseth all such as perform it not to the full: let us see if there be anyone that doeth it. It is certain that all men from the greatest to the least are guilty. For why? let us consider the sum of the Law, which is that we should love God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our

power, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourself and then let every of us try his own life, and he shall need none other judge than himself to condemn him. For although we loved God with an uncorrupted and sound heart unfeignedly [*genuinely*]: yet can it not be, but that we must be drawn diversely with many vanities. Yea put the case that a man were as perfect as an Angel: yet could he not love God as he ought to do, for it would behoove all our wits to be employed in the love of him. But now let us mark if we cast not many vain looks when we open our eyes, or if that when we open our ears, we be not given to their much fond talk that tendeth not to the honor of God, or which is not utterly void of sin if at leastwise it be not wicked. But howsoever the case stand, we should so dedicate our wits wholly unto God, as that we should not think upon anything wherein he should not be glorified. And where shall one be found that doeth so? [No where] but (which worse is) besides that we have our wits far haled [*hauled*] and drawn away from the love of God: we see that they tickle us daily unto naughtiness, and that we do not so soon stir a hand, but it is to put it to many things of no value. As much is to be said of our feet, of our eyes, and of our ears. Again, what a dungeon is there in man's heart? what a number of crooked lusts are there, so snarled one within another, as there is nothing to be found among them but confusion? Insomuch that it is upon very good cause that Jeremy crieth out: (<241709> Jeremiah 17:9) O what a maze is the heart of man, wherein there is neither end nor measure to be seen, so that although a man should sound and gauge himself never so deep, yet it is not possible that he should attain to the knowledge of the hundredth part of his naughtiness. There is none but only God that can be judge of it. So then let us mark well, that although God have begotten us again by his holy spirit, and that we strain ourselves to the uttermost to serve and honor him: yet must we needs come far short of the end, and be still but on our way thitherward, yea and go always halting. And moreover beside our slowness, we meet with many falls, and many shrewd rushes, we limp on the one foot, and stumble on the other, and divers times we tumble over and over. Lo what our life is. Therefore by the Law we see we be all of us accursed, yea even when there is no manifest sin in us. For (as I have declared already) if there were no more but this, that no man dischargeth himself of the full performance of the Law: it were to be concluded thereupon, that all of us are condemned by the Law, and therefore that it standeth us in hand to seek

our righteousness elsewhere, that is to wit, in the mere mercy of God. Now then we see how Saint Paul showeth us, that all such as have any vain trust in their own merits, are rank traitors to God, and make war against him. For he doth as it were drag them forth by the hair of their heads, and show them the distress wherein they be, and what a stubbornness is it if they will not come unto him? Must not the devil needs have dulled them? We see then that Saint Paul's meaning here, was to drive men to seek their righteousness and salvation in the only grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: for without that, the other should never befall us, because we always surmise some value to be in ourselves, and that self-estimation or overweening [*high opinion*] doth so blind us, that we cannot glorify God in his righteousness by keeping our own mouths shut till we be convicted, as we see in this text. Furthermore let us mark, that Saint Paul hath taken here a principle which the Papists cannot find in their hearts to agree unto. For among other things, they say, cursed and banned be he which shall say that God hath commanded us more than we are able to do. They excommunicate and accurse all such as are of opinion, that the righteousness of the Law overreacheth all the ability of man. For it seemeth to them, that God ought not to command us any impossibility, and that either we must have wherewith to perform the Law, or else the Law should be to no purpose. So do they think, and so do they say: but the holy Ghost saith the flat contrary: for God is not bound to fashion himself to our ability. It becometh us to regard what we ourselves ought to do. Who is he that dare step up, and say that he ought not to love God with all his heart? For seeing that we be his, is it not reason that we should be wholly dedicated unto him? Ye see then that we be indebted unto him of the perfect love which he requireth, Again, if we talk of our own strength, it is not to be said that we be able to discharge ourselves of our duty, as in respect of the love which we owe unto our God. As for example, If a man have wasted all his goods in riot, and have not aught [*anything*] left wherewith to pay his creditors, shall that discharge him of his debts? If any man say, it is not through our own default: Yes surely is it. For inasmuch as we be corrupted in Adam, original sin holdeth us sufficiently convicted and guilty before God, so as it is no excuse to say, I am weak or rather utterly untoward, and I cannot so much as think one good thought, according as Saint Paul declareth. (^{<470305>} 2 Corinthians 3:5) It is true that we cannot think so much as one good thought, and that our

hearts are full of sturdiness and malice, so that all our affections are enemies unto God. So speaketh the Scripture: but howsoever the world go, we cease not to be still bound to our duty. Wherefore let us mark, that the Law is commanded us, though it be impossible for us to fulfill and perform it. And if it were not so, Saint Paul would not have said in ^{<450803>}Romans 8:3, that God performed that thing by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was impossible to the Law. In saying so he showeth well that we be not able to perform all that God commandeth us. For if we could bring that to pass, surely we should be justified by it. For it is said (^{<031805>}Leviticus 18:5) that all such as fulfill the Law shall live therein. If any man could be found that had performed it, he should live. But Saint Paul taketh the same reason afterwards to show, that it is a folly to think to get righteousness by keeping of the Law: for no man can bring it to pass as is required. Now then as touching this text, let us understand that Saint Paul presupposeth, that no man is able to perform the Law, though he strain himself never so much: insomuch that although he be governed by the holy Ghost, yet shall he never be able to bring it to pass during this flightful life, because God giveth us his grace by measure. It is true that he could give us such perfection as nothing should be amiss in all our life, but that we should have a full and more than angelical conformity to all his commandments. Howbeit, although he hold us in awe, although he change us and fashion us new again, although he rein us back to the obedience of his will: yet is there no full perfection in us. And why? For he intendeth to hold us still under the bridle of humility, he will have us to know our own weakness, and to groan for it before him: and he will have us to pass judgment, and to know that we be always indebted unto him. Forasmuch then as God doth not in this present life give us such perfection as were requisite to the full performance of his whole law: therefore we can never do thoroughly the things that he commandeth us. And forasmuch as we be not able to perform them therefore this judgment is thundered down upon our heads, that he is cursed which fulfilleth not all the things. It behooveth us to mark well that saying: for it is not said, Cursed be he that rejecteth the Law, or, which keepeth not point at all of it: but, Cursed be he that dischargeth not himself of it point by point, and through stitch, as I said afore. And for that cause also Saint James (to the end to beat down men's pride) saith that he which faileth in any one point, is guilty of the whole. (^{<590210>}James 2:10) We will think this to be very rough dealing at the first

sight. What, say we? will God forget all the good that a man hath done, for the committing of some one only fault? That would be counted cruelty among men. Yea, but Saint James addeth a reason, saying: he that forbad to murder, forbad also to commit whoredom: and he that forbad to steal, forbad all the residue too. Then if I think myself to have satisfied God in forbearing theft, and in the meanwhile am a whoremaster: have I not offended the majesty of God? And therefore we must leave all these piecings: for if we bring God some one piece, and let all the rest alone, what a dealing will that be? We see that one man is given to one vice, and another to another, and so every man would be privileged and dispensed with under color that he had done this or that, notwithstanding that he missed in some other point. But God hath not separated his commandments asunder. He hath not said to one man, thou shalt not steal, and to another, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but he saith to all men without exception, abstain ye from whoredom, abstain ye from theft, abstain ye from murder. Therefore we must examine our life, not by any one commandment alone, but by all the whole law together. But now let us see if we can find any man that is faultless. Ye see then that we must needs be confounded, so long as we stand to be judged by the law. For if Abraham, who was the excellentest that ever could be picked out among men, should be driven to enter into account by that: it is certain that he should not miss to be damned. Seeing it is so, let us bear well in mind that it is not for us to dispute anymore: for when the Papists speak of the righteousness of faith, they do but dally and scoff with God, as if he were a little babe. Let us keep ourselves from such scornfulness: and when God pronounceth this horrible sentence, that all they be cursed which fulfill not all that is written, let us conceive such a terror of it, as we may quake before his majesty, yea and every of us become his own judge, and willingly yield himself guilty, and being so convicted of our wretchedness bewail our utter failing in all things, and thereupon embrace the righteousness that is offered us in our Lord Jesus Christ, taking all our contentment and rest there.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us so to feel them, as we may not only ask him forgiveness with true repentance, but also pray him to hold us up all the time of our life, till he have taken us hence into

his own kingdom, and in the meanwhile to reform us more and more by his holy spirit, to the end we may have sure record that we be of the number of his children, by governing ourselves after that manner in fear, and seek nothing else but to give ourselves wholly unto him. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father, etc.