

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SERMON

WHICH IS THE FIFTH UPON THE FOURTH CHAPTER

- 15** Where is then your blessedness? for I bear you witness, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your eyes, and given them unto me.
- 16** Am I then become your enemy because I tell you the truth?
- 17** They be jealous over you, [howbeit] not for [any] good. Nay rather they mean to shut you out, too the end you should be fond of them.
- 18** It is good to be always earnest minded in good things, and not only when I am present with you.
- 19** My little children of whom I travel in birth again till Christ be fashioned in you.
- 20** I would I were with you no and could change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you. — ^{<480415>} GALATIANS 4:15-20

WE NEED no teaching to seek the thing which we think to be good and profitable for us: for every man is inclined to that by nature, yea and too much given unto it. But the mischief is, that we know not the true profit from the thing that is harmful, but are oftentimes so blinded with our foolish lusts, that every of us overthroweth himself willfully. Not that we forget the thing which I said to be imprinted in our hearts: but for that we be carried away by our unruly lusts, or else so bleared with the vanities of this world, that we have no discretion at all to judge rightly. And therefore we ought to flee unto God continually so much the more, that he may give us skill to discern what is good for us, to the intent we may serve him, and have our minds so wholly set upon him, as we may never be removed: specially forsomuch as it oftentimes falleth out, that such as are taken to be very wise to the worldward, become like little children according to the attration of their desires, giving up the things which they had set much

store by, and gadding [*wandering*] after some pelting trifle that cometh in their sight, so as there is no stay at all in them. Sometimes we shall see a child run after three or four at once, and if there come a thing that he sought for he catcheth at that by and by: and anon [*at another time*] after it he spy an apple or a cherry, or some other thing that likes him, he leaves all the residue to run after that. Even so play we: no doubt but we always think ourselves wise enough, and we take scorn to be taught at any man's hand, or to be warned what is good for us, for it seems to us to be an offering of wrong to us: but yet experience showeth that we want both wit and reason. For what is the cause that men do so toss and turmoil themselves out of measure, and yet run astray all their life long? As I said afore, all of us with one common accord hold this principle, that we desire to seek our own profit, there is nother [*neither*] great nor small but he is inclined unto that. But let us see whereunto men apply their minds: there is not that man whose affections boil not within him, insomuch that ye shall see the greatest number (as ye would say) rack themselves, and their minds never cease day nor night to run still upon the things that come afore them, whereby they hope for any profit. And when they have well tormented themselves, a man shall scarcely find one among a thousand that hath his affections well ordered: insomuch that it were much better for them to be asleep all the time of their life, than to take so much travail without knowing why or wherefore. Now then seeing that the most part of us are proved not to discern betwixt good and evil as were requisite and expedient, we have need to submit ourselves unto God, praying him to guide us by his holy spirit. And specially when the sovereign felicity or welfare cometh in question, surely whereas we should be carried away and ravished in love with it: we be haled [*hauled*] another way, and do nothing but fiske to and fro, and there is so great unconstancy and lightness in us, that the thing which we love more dearly than our life today, shall be as good as despised tomorrow. And that also is the cause why Saint Paul doth in this text upbraid the Galatians with their forgetting of their own happiness. For this saying of our Lord Jesus Christ's, (⁴⁰⁰⁶²¹Matthew 6:21) that look where a man's treasure is there is his heart also, is taken of the common order of nature. He termeth that thing our treasure, which we set most store by, and whereupon we do wholly repose ourselves: for there are many things which men do well like of, the which nevertheless they can easily find in their hearts to forbear. Though a man see a fair and

costly thing, yet can he content himself quietly with his own state still, if he have wherewith to maintain himself. But if we esteem our life unhappy or unfortunate without the enjoying of any welfare at all, surely we shall be tossed with continual unquietness, till we have obtained it: and that doth common experience show well enough. Seeing then that our hearts must needs be tied to the thing which we take to be requisite to our chief felicity, let us now see how every man behaveth himself. Such as are given to the flightful goods of this world, or are so inflamed with ambitiousness and desire of honor, that they seek nothing else but to magnify themselves, and to be in some high degree and great estate, that they might be had in estimation: will always labor for the same. Such as are possessed with covetousness, will never leave gathering of goods, nor never be satisfied with anything. They endure hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and dare not [neither] eat nor drink half their fill, and all to the intent to heap up out of measure. Lo at what point they be. Again, such as covet to be esteemed and exalted to the worldward, endure as great misery as if they were in the hands of the hangman: nay, the hangman would not torment them so cruelly as they do themselves: and yet they be so headstrong, as they cannot by any means be turned from it. But when God is so gracious as to show us where our welfare lieth, that is to wit, in the kingdom of heaven: although we be warned that our life is of no continuance, and that we slip away out of hand: yet are we so ravished in love with our vanities, that we forsake the inestimable joy whereunto God calleth us, and set light by the heritage of heaven, in comparison of these worldly things which are right nought. Therefore let us consider, that Saint Paul's present upbraiding of the Galatians when he asketh them where their happiness is become, toucheth and concerneth us nowadays. For he presupposeth that the Galatians knew that God could not have done them a greater good turn in this world, than to enlighten them with the knowledge of his Gospel, whereby they had been thoroughly persuaded and resolved, that the world hath nothing but deceitfulness in it, forsomuch as it turneth us away from the heritage of heaven, according also as our Lord Jesus Christ allegeth the same similitude, (⁴⁰¹³⁴⁴ Matthew 13:44) that the Gospel and the treasures and riches contained therein are a precious stone, and that if we should give over all the things which we esteem in this world, and which we like best of, we should lose nothing by the bargain, nor have any cause to repent us. But now are we double to blame, seeing we turn away after we

have known that God drew us from beneath to make us partakers of his heavenly glory, and put that inestimable benefit out of our remembrance for the whisking of a fly overthwart our eyes as they say. Forasmuch then as it hath pleased God to open our eyes, and to pluck us out of the mire wherein we were plunged with the unbelievers and ignorant persons, not only in following superstitions and idolatries as others did, but also in giving ourselves over to our fleshly likings and wicked lusts: and seeing that God hath made us to perceive where our true joy lieth, and given us such a taste of it as we ought to rest wholly upon it: let us take good heed that we never change our purpose nor alter our mind hereafter. And if we do: let us consider how the spirit of God doth here condemn us of unthankfulness by the mouth of Saint Paul, saying, *Where is your happiness?* For had we been always let alone like brute beasts without knowing wherein our welfare and joy consist, it had been no marvel though we had still kept on our common trace. But seeing that God hath showed us that we must seek all our welfare in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he is the full perfection in whom we must wholly rest: if we do afterward flit to and fro and be shaken now one way and now another: it is certain that we can no more excuse ourselves by ignorance. Ye see then that the thing which we have to bear in mind in this text, is that when we have once been taught the Gospel, we must set light by the things that we made too great account of before, and which men covet without end or measure: that is to wit by the allurements of Satan and of the world, and by all transitory and flightful things which have no substantialness in them and continually seek our Lord Jesus Christ, till we come to the full enjoying of all the benefits which he hath brought us. And now hereupon Saint Paul blameth the Galatians yet further, *that he cannot be their enemy but for telling them the truth.* For it is too great a lewdness to fall out with our friend, only for showing himself faithful towards us. What is the thing that we should chiefly desire in a friend, but that he should deal roundly with us, and not bear two faces in one hood, nor use any craft and untruth towards us? Every man can tell that well enough, and it is as a natural lesson which we know without schooling: and yet notwithstanding we be grieved and displeased with them that tell us the truth, and by that means do work our weal: and therefore must it not needs be that we are bewitched of Satan, if we step up against them and become their enemies? Saint Paul then showeth the cause of his fear that they should be alienated from him, and

blameth them that they were become his enemies, for none other cause than that he had dealt soundly and roundly with them. Now although this vice be horrible, and all men condemn it: yet is it as common as any other nowadays in the world. For what else maintaineth friendship, but lying, flattering, dissimulation, counterfeiting, and such other like things? Insomuch that if a man go roundly to work, he shall purchase himself hatred and ill will on all sides. And the very cause of the greatest contentions and debates that are nowadays in the world, is that men stop their ears against all truth and reason: for we would fain [*happily*] have all things buried that might mislike us. Therefore this was not written for the Galatians only, but is to be applied still at this day to the common instruction of all such, as cannot abide that men should deal faithfully and truly with them. For let every of us look upon himself and examine himself well, and he shall find that all of us are attainted with that vice, till God have purged us of it. So then let us assure ourselves that if we grieve such as tell us the truth, in so doing we despise God, and fall out with him rather than with the men. We will protest the clean contrary: nevertheless we do but lie, when we cannot endure that God should bewray [*divulge*] the thing that we would have concealed, I mean, that he should discover our faults, and rebuke them, and hold us in awe, and not bear with anything that is not lawful for us. Thus ye see in effect what we have to mark upon this text. Now hereupon Saint Paul laboreth to win the Galatians by great gentleness. *My little Babes* (saith he) *of whom I travail in birth again, till our Lord Jesus Christ be fashioned in you.* Howbeit, although that his words be somewhat sweet, yet doth he not fail to sauce them a little to the intent to quicken them up, by calling them little babes, telling them that whereas they ought to have been fashioned and born long ago, yea and to have been grown to man's estate in Jesus Christ, he wist [*knew*] not what to make of them. For you drive me so to my shifts (saith he) that I cannot tell what speech I may use towards you anymore: and therefore seeing you be so strange and untoward, and so fickle to be dealt with that I cannot tell how to handle you, I must be fain [*willing*] to transform myself into a new man. Lo how he useth a manner of speech mingled with rigor and great friendliness. And he is not contented to take upon him only the person of a father, whose love notwithstanding is tender enough towards his children: but he likeneth himself also to a mother that is towards her travail and full of throws, who

(notwithstanding all the pains that she feeleth) is more chary [*careful*] over the child that is to come out of her womb, than she is of her own bowels and life. When Saint Paul used this similitude, it is certain that he wist [*knew*] not how to show himself more affectioned towards them, to the intent to break, or at leastwise to soften the hardness that was in them to whom he spake. But yet whatsoever come of it, he is flat with them in upbraiding them with their lewdness, in that they acknowledged not their mother that bear them and nourished them with the substance of her own blood, but for all the gentleness that he used towards them, became as wild beasts that could not be tamed: and that was an outrageous unkindness. And so we see how Saint Paul doth continually follow the mean that I told you of today: which is that to the uttermost of his power, he laboreth to bring those back again by lovingness, which were gone out of the way. And to that end he telleth them, that he hath a greater care of their welfare, than they would think. But yet howsoever the case stand, he mingleth their oil with tart vinegar, which quickened them up as need was, lest they should fall asleep in their sins. For it is no cockering [*pampering, indulging*] of such as have offended God, and are as good as poisoned or rather bewitched by Satan, so as they perceive not their own filthiness: All such geer [*whimsical mockery*] must be razed out. And therefore, hap what hap will, he holdeth such an even hand, as they must needs perceive that he procureth their welfare, and that all his seeking is to bring them unto God. This in effect is the thing that we have to mark upon this text. Howbeit we have also to mark particularly, that when Saint Paul termeth them little babes, he upbraideth them closely for that they had profited no better. For to what purpose is the Gospel daily preached unto us? It is said to be the incorruptible seed whereby we be begotten again to be the children of God. (<600123> 1 Peter 1:23) Now when we come into the world, we grow by nourishment of milk, and from time to time become stronger, so as at length we feed no more upon milk, but use substantialer food, whereby we gather force and strength more and more, till we come to man's state. Now then, what a thing were it if after we have been made new creatures by means of the Gospel, we will needs hang still upon the dugge [*paps, utter of female animal*], and have so little prospered, that we must still be lulled in arms, and be not able to swallow a piece of bread, but will needs be still muzzling at the teat? Doth this proceed of the nature

of the Gospel? No surely: and therefore we must acknowledge the fault to be in ourselves.

So then whereas Saint Paul calleth the Galatians little babes, although he do therein show an earnest love towards them: yet doth he sting them also, according also as we see how the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews (⁵⁸⁰⁵¹² Hebrews 5:12) saith: How now? You ought to be great Clerks considering the long time that you have gone to school: for this is not the first day that the Gospel hath been preached unto you, and yet you be still at your apsie [*A,B,C's*]: and what a shame is that! For God hath done the office of a good schoolmaster towards you and taught you sufficiently: and you on your part have played the trewands [*one who shirks duty*]: and so what will now become of you? For Saint Paul had long time been delivered of the Galatians in Jesus Christ, and they ought to have been grown strong in the faith of the Gospel. But behold, they be still novices and raw scholars, yea and so brutish as they wot [*know*] not whereunto to stick, nor what to follow. That is the first point. And now consequently he addeth: *that he travaileth of them in birth new again*. He had been brought abed of them before: howbeit, that was as ye would say before their time. Not that he had not given them all that was requisite for their instruction: but for that they were not able to receive it, because they were still too much given to their earthly lusts and likings. Now we know that the sensual man comprehendeth not the secrets of God. (⁴⁶⁰²¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:14) Therefore we must be discharged of our own nature, that we may be renewed in God: and the thing which we call Regeneration, that is to say new birth or second birth, doth us to wit that the old man which is in us, must be mortified and as it were changed. Forasmuch then as the Galatians had not given place to the doctrine of the Gospel: therefore Saint Paul saith that he must be fain [*willing*] to be with child with them again, yea even *till Jesus Christ be fashioned in you* saith he. This saying is added to sweeten that which was somewhat sour of itself. For what a shame was it that they which had received the earnest penny of their salvation in baptism, and in the Lord's supper, (as there were many of them both men and women that had been taught at the age of twenty, thirty, fifty, or threescore years) after protestation made before God that they were fully renewed in Jesus Christ, should need to be as it were new molten, cast, and fashioned again? And in that respect Saint Paul saith, *till Jesus Christ*

be fashioned in you. As if he should say, I marvel that you should be still as little babes, and that I should be forced (as ye would say) to receive you again into my womb and bowels, till the time came that ye might be riper than you have hitherto been: and yet am I afraid also lest the pain and travail that I have taken among you be lost and misspent, and that you be not so well shaped and fashioned as were to be desired. Thus ye see briefly how Saint Paul mitigated the rigor that might have been too great, and have wounded the Galatians too sore, when he said unto them, What? Ye be as it were born before your time: I thought I had conceived you, bred you, borne you, and brought you up in Jesus Christ, and I see now there is no life in you, at leastwise no spiritual life, and that all is slipped and vanished away. If Saint Paul had stayed there: surely those wretched people had been driven to confusion and utter despair. Therefore to give them courage to return again, he saith: Go to, truly ye have profited very ill hitherto: but enter new again into the right way, and let that which seemeth to be stark dead bring forth new fruit again, and let it be perceived that your protesting to walk according to the Gospel heretofore, hath not been vain. For like as if a tree be as good as dead, and seem to be utterly withered, it will spring again if a man put new earth to the root of it and cherish it: so will it fall out that a man which is quite strayed away from the Gospel, shall not only be as it were eftsoones [*soon afterwards*] begotten new again, if he be brought back again into the way: but also the thing that he had received afore shall do him good, as is to be seen wheresoever God giveth the grace to bring those back again into the right way which were strayed from it. But surely that happeneth not to all men: and therefore let us beware that we abuse not God's goodness, as many of these scoffers do, which turn away as though they had confederated themselves with Satan, whereof we see examples in these folk that defile and unhallow themselves, and deface God's truth to the uttermost of their power. And if any man turn away through unconstancy, it seemeth that all is marred, and some will say, what shall a man win by teaching of them? behold, he is but a lost child: and so they will conclude that there is not one drop of good knowledge in them. But if God call them again, as there are many such examples to be seen: a man shall find that the thing which was as good as choked and overwhelmed before, sprouteth again, like as if dung were cast upon a well tilled ground, or as if dust and such other things were strewed upon it, that which is underneath it should lie hid for

a time, but afterward it would shoot up again. This in effect is the thing that Saint Paul meant to tell us here. But by the way we have to mark, that whereas he saith *that Jesus Christ shall be fashioned in them new again* it is meant conditionally that they return under his obeisance. Surely this saying might seem somewhat harsh at the first sight: for we be rather fashioned in Jesus Christ, than he in us. For proof whereof, behold, Jesus Christ is our full and whole perfection. Now, to say that he is nourished in us as a little babe, or that he groweth or is furthered: is not seemly for his person. Nevertheless Saint Paul saith so: howbeit, that is but to show the union that is betwixt us and Jesus Christ our head. Although then that Jesus Christ can neither increase nor diminish in himself: yet doth he take all our faults and infirmities upon him. I have told you already that we are then born in him, when we be called to the hope of salvation by the doctrine of the Gospel: for we be all dead and damned in Adam. There is but one mean of life, which is, to be made one with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the fountain that hath all fullness in it, and whereout of it behooveth us to draw. Then we are born in Jesus Christ (as I said afore): so doth he suckle us with the doctrine of his Gospel, till we be able to receive perfecter learning, and till our faith be so far forward, that we resemble little babes no more, but increase still in profiting more and more, till we be come to man's age, as Saint Paul saith in the fourth to the Ephesians. Furthermore to the end we may know that our Lord Jesus Christ intendeth not to be separated from us, but that he and we be all one: he saith that he taketh our faults upon him, and becometh as a little babe in us. How so? Can Jesus Christ be weak? No, not in respect of himself: but forasmuch as we be members of his body, he saith he is little in us in respect of the little knowledge of him which we have. And forasmuch as we proceed still further and further: he saith also that he groweth and is increased in us. Lo here a record of excellent goodness, yea of the infinite goodness of God's son, in that it pleaseth him so to abase himself, as not only to have compassion and pity of our infirmities, to relieve them and remedy them: but also transformeth himself, and is contented to say that he is as it were unperfect, and as a little babe, and that he groweth greater and greater according to the continual increasing of our faith. And here ye see also why in another place (^{<490123>} Ephesians 1:23) Saint Paul calleth the Church the fullness of God and of his son our Lord Jesus Christ. But surely if we imagine that God is not thoroughly full and perfect in himself,

but that he hath need to borrow of us: it is rank traitorousness: for what are we able to give unto him? When he shall have gathered us all before him, what can he find in us but utter misery? For we be plunged, yea and utterly saped [*steeped*] in it. Yet notwithstanding he telleth us by the mouth of Saint Paul, that we be his accomplishment, and that in that respect he is after a sort imperfect. Not that he could not be without us, for he hath been always everlastingly, before he had created the world. And although there were neither heaven nor earth, could not God be satisfied with himself? Were he not rich enough of his own glory? Yes, surely: but he will not be perfect nor fully satisfied till he have us knit in one with him. Thus ye see what we have to mark upon this text. And by this word *Fashion* we be warned, that it is not enough for us to have some slight knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: but that he must be so lively shaped in us to the full, as we may have such a print of his power, of all his graces, and of all his benefits graven in our hearts, as may never be blotted out or defaced again. He said heretofore, that when the Gospel is preached with such efficacy as belongs unto it, Jesus Christ is after a sort crucified among us: insomuch that we not only see him painted lively afore us, but it is as much as if we saw him upon the Cross, with his blood streaming down, as though he were presently offering up the everlasting sacrifice to God his father, to wash away all our offenses and misdeeds. Now like as God showeth us that favor: so let us on our side beware that we let not the thing slip that is set afore us, as many folk do, who when they have gotten the understanding of a two or three words of the Gospel, do fall to flourishing, and think themselves to have too much, whereas notwithstanding they have but a confused imagination. Therefore it is not to be wondered at, though they be utterly at their wits' ends in every temptation be it never so small, so as all that they ween [*think*] themselves to have learned, serveth them to no purpose: for God doth by that means punish their negligence. Wherefore, inasmuch as God hath granted us the grace to know his son: let the foresaid representation be printed in us as oft as we come to any Sermon, and let us be renewed in knowledge and remembrance: that when the Devil shall labor to darken, and finally to deface the faith which we shall conceive, he may gain nothing at our hands because we have the lively impression [of Christ's sacrifice] so deeply graven in our hearts, as it may well be said that he is truly and thoroughly fashioned in us. And herein it is to be seen, that the Papists have utterly

renounced our Lord Jesus Christ: For they cokes [*coax*] the world, saying that it is enough to have a confused faith, and that men must not be too inquisitive, and that it is perilous for men to endeavor themselves to profit in the Gospel. Behold their blasphemies. But here we see how Saint Paul telleth the Galatians, that it is a great shame for them that Jesus Christ should be fashioned new again in them, saying that it is all one as if they were doted, and had not received the doctrine as they ought to have done which had been preached among them. Therefore if we do our duty and be as good scholars to Godward, as he is a good and faithful schoolmaster towards us: surely we shall not have an entangled faith of some confused imagination, but we shall behold the son of God as he is spoken of the Corinthians, (^{<470318>}2 Corinthians 3:18) where it is said that the Gospel is the true looking glass wherein we behold Jesus Christ as it were in the face. Not that we see him with our eyes, for that is reserved to the last day, at what time we shall be like unto God. As then his glory shall be fully discovered unto us: but as now we behold our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel so far forth as is meet for us, and as our weakness and rudeness will bear, that we may be transformed and fashioned like unto him. And whereas Saint Paul addeth, *that he would fain be with the Galatians, to change his speech because he was sorry for them*: therein he bewrayeth [*exposes*] again how gross and intolerable their fault is, sith [*since*] he woteth [*knoweth*] not at which end to begin with them, and that although he have bred them in Jesus Christ, and fed them up with the doctrine of the Gospel, yet he knoweth not how to rule them anymore, whereas notwithstanding, a mother ought to know the complexion and nature of her child. Needs then must those men be utterly forward and lewdminded, whose fathers and mothers are at their wits' end and wot [*know*] not how to behave themselves: and when their children are become either serpents full of poison, or Lions full of pride and stubbornness, so as they be past teaching or handling: it must needs be that they are become friends. And yet doth Saint Paul upbraid the Galatians with it. Howbeit, instead of blaming them, let us see if the like vice be not to be found in us: namely that when God openeth his mouth to teach us, he find us so fickleheaded, that he must be fain [*willing*] to alter his speech at every turn. It is true that he can well enough wield our hearts when it shall please him. But we treat not here of his secret power whereby he worketh in his chosen. We treat here but only of our own nature, how beastly it is if it be

considered in itself, and of the preaching of the Gospel. Are not they that would preach the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully, stricken continually in heaviness to see men so beastly as they show themselves to be? For our tasting of the goodness of our God ought to tame us. Surely we ought to give good care to his doctrine: and if we could be drawn unto him by gentleness, or if we would be warned with every little beckoning of his finger, like the child that seeketh to please his father, who as soon as his father doth but speak the word, hath his feet ready out of hand to run whithersoever his father sendeth him, and both his hands ready to do whatsoever he commandeth him: he should not need to use long process with us. But when God speaketh to us, we be so dull-witted as we wot [*know*] not what he meaneth: or else we stop our ears, that cry he never so loud, it is to no purpose, for we abide always at one point. Therefore the thing that Saint Paul hath spoken in this text, serveth not for any one people alone: but it is all one as if he blamed the whole world in all ages for unthankfulness, saying that God is after a sort grieved with us for being so crooked and forward, and for the great number of lurking holes and hypocrisies that are in us: insomuch that if he use us gently, we become so much the more sturdy: and if he handle us roughly, we kick against the spur. And in good sooth [*truth*] we see what his gentleness and roughness avail us: that is to wit, so little, that our lewdness must needs be overgreat, seeing he cannot win us by the one nor by the other. Therefore let us bethink ourselves thoroughly. Furthermore forasmuch as God is willing to beget us by his word, to the end we should be his children, and in the end obtain inheritance whereunto he hath adopted us by our Lord Jesus Christ, and which he hath purchased for us by the death and passion of him that is the true and only heir: as oft as we come to Sermons, or any of us read the holy Scripture, let us consider to what end it serveth. And moreover, if we find not such power and efficacy in God's word when we hear it preached or read: let us blame our own naughtiness or dullness for it, assuring ourselves that the world doth still hold us back and hinder us too much: and let us pray God that his word may not be unprofitable to us. Besides this, when we be once reformed by it, so as we are become his children: let us daily feed upon it, assuring ourselves that we have need of it all the time of our life, and that we be not yet come to the perfection whereunto we must tend. Wherefore let that stir us up, and let us always be earnestly minded to go still forward, till we stick fast to our Lord Jesus

Christ, and let us take good heed that we do not stop and shut up the passage that he should have to us, to guide and govern us to our safety. And this is the very same thing which we have seen Saint Paul upbraid the Corinthians (^{<470612>}2 Corinthians 6:12) with, namely that he could not come at them: and why? It was not long of me, saith he. Whereof then? Even of your own overstraightness and shrinking back: and because ye submit not yourselves to God, but rather draw from him, or else shrink back into your lurking holes: I am fain [*willing*] to talk to you, now in one speech and now in another. So then according to his upbraiding of the Corinthians there, and of the Galatians still here, let us beware that we be not so straightlaced as we be of our own nature: but let us pray God to give us access to his word. And seeing that all our lusts, our sinful vanities, and our forward affections are as bars, gates, and such other things cast in the way, to the intent that God's word should not pass: let us fight against them, let it not only enter in unto us as at a crevice, but let it find the gate wide open, and whensoever God speaketh, let us give good ear and open our hearts and minds, to receive the doctrine rightly and roundly, whereby we should be cleansed, till we be come to the fountain of all cleanness.

But 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 condemn ourselves, not only with our mouths, but also with a true meaning heart, and fight valiantly against all our vices, forsaking ourselves more and more, and laboring to rid us quit and clean of them, and of all the corruption and sinfulness that is in us, till he have drawn us fully to himself, and that we be so transformed to the likeness of his image, as we may enjoy his immortal glory, whereunto he now allureth us, and which we cannot possess as yet but in hope, until the latter day. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people and nations of the earth, bringing back all ignorant souls from the miserable bondage of error and darkness, to the right way of salvation, etc.