

THE FIFTH SERMON

UPON THE FIRST CHAPTER

- 11** But brethren, I do you to wit, that the Gospel which was preached by me, is not of man.
- 12** For I receive it not of man, neither learned I it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, etc. ^{<480111>} GALATIANS 1:11-12

WE SAW THIS MORNING, that all such as have the charge and office to teach in god's Church, must forget all liking and favor of the world: for otherwise they can never discharge their duty faithfully, considering how men do always desire and covet to be flattered, and cannot abide to have their faults rebuked as they ought to be. Thereupon I told you also, that every man must rid himself of all fleshly affections, that they may become true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. For so long as we shall follow our own lusts, the gate shall be shut against us, and we shall never have any entrance in unto the Gospel. And truly we see how the Prophet Esay speaketh thereof. He saith that all such as will have men to preach pleasurable things to their liking, do drive away God as far off from them as they can. (^{<233010>} Isaiah 30:10) True it is that they will not speak after that sort. For even in the Country of Jewry, every man protested to serve the God that was revealed to their father Abraham, and which had published his law by Moyses. Sacrifices were offered in the Temple, and there were fair shows ynow [*enough*] there. Nevertheless the Prophet concludeth in one word, that men were desirous to be soothed, and fair spoken to, and by means thereof could not suffer God to guide them, nor give him leave to lay his yoke upon their neck. Ye see then that the means for us to be prepared to receive the doctrine of the Gospel, and to be edified by the same, is that we be not wedded to our own likings, but suffer our Lord Jesus Christ to speak the things that are expedient for our instruction. Howbeit besides this, we must also be as it were wounded to the heart by the word that is preached to us, or else we shall never fare the better for it. For (as I declared this morning) it is not without cause that the Gospel is likened to a sharp sword, (^{<580412>} Hebrews 4:12) and it

behooveth us verily to be made true sacrifices by renouncing all our own lusts, and all other things which God condemneth, and to endure the same patiently, to the intent to be wholly brought back to the obeying of his will. And herewithal we must also call to mind what hath been treated of heretofore that is to wit, that all men as well great as small, must stoop, and the Son of God must have the preeminence and masterhood, in such wise as there may be no more Shepherds but he, and we all of us be his sheep. True it is that such as have the charge to preach the Gospel may well be called Shepherds: howbeit, that is not for that they may do anything in their own name and authority, or that the same should impeach the superiority of the Son of God. For as for me which do speak here now, I must not bring ought of mine, nor advance myself above others: for my speaking unto all this company is in such wise, as my doctrine must first be applied to myself, and [afterward] bear sway over all other men without any exception. For there is no highness in the world, which can exempt itself from the subjection which all of us owe to the Son of God: according as we have seen heretofore, how it is the property of the Gospel to bring down all the glory of the world, so as men may not presume to set up their bristles [*show fight*], nor to challenge ought to themselves, but that such as ween [*think*] themselves to be most excellent, may be utterly abased and made nothing, and all things be made captive to the obedience of the Gospel. And that is the cause why Saint Paul to confirm his doctrine, declareth that it came not of men, nor was learned in their schools: but that he had it of our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom the father gave commandment, that men should hear him. (⁴⁰⁰³¹⁷ Matthew 3:17; ⁴⁰¹⁷⁰⁵ Matthew 17:5) For that prerogative is given peculiarly unto him, and ought not to be communicated, neither to any man, nor to any Angel of heaven. Good reason it is, that men which speak as instruments of our Lord Jesus Christ, should be heard: but (as I told you before) that is not to impeach the authority which he hath over us. But howsoever the case stand, the certain and infallible rule to attain to salvation, is that our Lord Jesus be the only master and teacher, and that we be teachable to receive his word without gainsay or replying. And Saint Paul thinks it not enough that he holdeth the things of Jesus Christ which he hath published: but also he utterly rejecteth and excludeth men in that behalf, to show that the authority of them were not sufficient to ground and settle our faith upon. For we shall never leave staggering till we be come unto God, and

unto that person whom he hath stablished as head and chief teacher over us. Now whereas Saint Paul saith that he telleth it them: it is not for that the Galatians and others had not heard the like afore: but because they had been unthankful, so as they had been entangled in many errors and paltries [*worthless trash*]. Therefore he bringeth them back again to the well head: as if he should say, until such time as men have full concluded with themselves to suffer themselves to be governed simply by the pure word of God they shall be always in a mammering [*hesitant, waivering condition*], and the Devil shall no sooner raise up any trouble against them, but they shall be so dismayed, as they wot [*know*] not which way to turn them. For it behooveth us to be first of all sure, that as touching the doctrine whereupon our faith is settled, we hold it of God and not of men. True it is that all men shall not have the like revelation that Saint Paul had: but it ought to suffice us, that our Lord Jesus Christ having ratified the Gospel with his own blood, and also commanded his Apostles to publish it abroad, hath given them such proof, that the doctrine which we receive of them is of full authority, and utterly out of all doubt: this (say I) ought to suffice to hold us as it were in prison, and to keep us from admitting any of all the things that men can allege. But let us also call to mind what the Apostle telleth us in the first to the Hebrews: (^{<580102>} Hebrews 1:2) namely that God hath lastly spoken to us by the mouth of his own son, to the intent we should have all perfection of doctrine in him. Ye see then that the thing which we have to bear away, is that the revelation whereof Saint Paul speaketh here, shall not be common to all other men, but serveth to warrant the doctrine which we have received by his means, so as we see it is our Lord Jesus Christ that hath spoken. And whereas he excludeth men after that sort: it is to show us, that our Lord Jesus Christ doth not give us some bare entrance, as if a man should teach a child his Apsie [*A,B,C's*], and afterward send him to a better learned master: Our Lord speaketh not so by halves unto us, but in full perfection: insomuch that both in life and death, we must always stand steadfast in the things that we receive of him, and forsake whatsoever cometh of men: for all mingling will be but corruption, as I told you this morning. And that also is the cause why he exhorteth those that speak in the Church, to hold fast continually the Majesty of God, and not to bring in ought of their own, nor to put forth anything which breedeth of their own brain. (^{<600411>} 1 Peter 4:11) For in what case should we be, if men might intermeddle

themselves with our Lord Jesus Christ, and every man cast in his morsel and collop [*piece of meat, fold of fat flesh*] (as they say) and that we might have a Gospel stuffed with men's dreams and fancies? It would be nothing else but a horrible confusion. Ye see then that our Lord Jesus Christ hath not his authority among us, until men be put down, and all other creatures with them, and that all give ear unto him from the least to the most. This in effect is the matter which we have to bear in mind. And in deed we see how that in another Text to the Corinthians, (<460206> 1 Corinthians 2:6) Saint Paul declareth that he had preached the perfect wisdom, when he did set forth our Lord Jesus Christ, and that there a man shall find whatsoever he can wish for his welfare. And in one other Text to the Ephesians (<490318> Ephesians 3:18) he saith, that that is the thing whereunto we must apply all our study, both far and wide, so as we need not to bring any petty trash to further the thing that he had set out afore. Then sith [*since*] it is so, we see that all such as entangle themselves in men's devices and inventions, have a disguised Jesus Christ, and a bastard Gospel which God disclaimeth, so that our Christianity can be no Christianity, except we continue in the things which we have learned of the son of God, who is our only Master, and in the things which the Apostles also have taught us in his name. Lo what we have to remember in this Text. Now hereupon Saint Paul showeth his own conversation whereby it may be gathered, that out of doubt he was as it were fashioned by the spirit of God. For so strange an alteration as was seen in his person, could not happen, except God had put to his hand, and wrought after a secret and unaccustomed fashion. And so ye see in effect whereat he aimed when he saith that the Galatians knew his conversation or manner of living. We have here a good lesson. Howbeit, that we may profit the more by it, let us mark how Saint Paul continueth the thing that he had touched afore: which is, that a man shall not find a steadfast foundation in any creature whereon to settle faith, but that God only must be the founder thereof, and although men be mean, and instruments of it, yet notwithstanding they have need to be authorized of God, and to have it known that he hath sent them and allowed them, and that they bring not anything which they have not received of him. Now if a man have an eye to the virtues that were in Saint Paul, certainly he deserved well to have some credit and audience among men. Yet notwithstanding he acknowledgeth and confesseth, that he is nothing as in respect of himself, and that all that ever he hath, is only to serve our Lord

Jesus Christ, and to set forth the things faithfully which he hath received of him. What shall we then say to such as have neither good life, doctrine or ought else? Whereas they call themselves Prelates, and take upon them some stateliness and superiority, so as their sayings go for laws: are they therefore advanced above Saint Paul? [Admit they were:] yet must all loftiness of man cease, and be pulled down, so as nothing may hinder the exalting of Jesus Christ. As for example, although Saint John Baptist had record born unto him that there was not an excellenter man born of woman: (^{<401111>} Matthew 11:11) yet notwithstanding he saith that both himself and others must be diminished, that Jesus Christ might grow and increase. (^{<430330>} John 3:30) Likewise Saint Paul speaking of it in another place, saith that the Church must in such wise be builded, (^{<490220>} Ephesians 2:20) as our head Jesus Christ may always have preeminence. (^{<510118>} Colossians 1:18) For if we should so advance men, that Jesus Christ should be defaced among them, that were a terrible building and such a one as should bring nothing but ruin and confusion. And in good sooth [*truth*], if a man should become as big as a Pillar of this Church, and his head of the bigness of one's fist, so as it should be hid between his shoulders: He should be a monster, and it were much better for him to keep his ordinary proportion. But like as the Church is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ: (^{<490123>} Ephesians 1:23) So must he be advanced above all men, and every man must look upon him, and stick to him. And certes [*certainly, in truth*] the Papists condemn themselves at this day by their own proverb, in that they say a man cannot know God for his Apostles. And in very deed they have buried Jesus Christ in such sort, that he is as good as hidden in the world. For they have robbed him of all that belonged to him: insomuch that whereas he is called the lawgiver, the Judge and the King, (^{<233322>} Isaiah 33:22) to show that he alonely [*solely*] ought to bear rule: we see how men have decked themselves with all those feathers. Therefore let us keep ourselves from such confusion: and if we increase, let us always abide in the root and groundwork of the simplicity of the Gospel. Let us take good heed that we swarve not a hair breadth from it. And as touching that which is rehearsed here concerning the conversion of Saint Paul: it tendeth still to this end, namely to do us to wit, that he did not thrust himself in of his own head, but that God reached him his hand, and that the doctrine which he had preached was given him by revelation, so as it might safely be held as the

word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, and [consequently] as the certain and infallible truth. I have told you heretofore, that if a man seek to be heard for his own skill, for his great and deep understanding, for his fair speech, or for his great eloquence: all those things are nothing but filthiness and dung, and that God only must have that authority and honor at our hands: and that forasmuch as it pleaseth God to speak to us by the mouth of his only son: only Jesus Christ must have the preeminence to be the master and teacher of all his, and we likewise must become his flock to hear his voice. Lo how our Lord Jesus Christ is to be honored among us: namely by becoming his true scholars, and without feigning [*pretending*]. In the Popedom [*papal government*] a man may well enough worship some Marmoset [*monkey*] with the honor of Jesus Christ, whenas in the meanwhile the Gospel is trodden under foot and blasphemed, and yet notwithstanding those blind wretches think themselves to have made a fair hand. Yea, but [in very deed] it is an open spitting in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, when men renounce his word wherein they should behold his glory and majesty, as Saint Paul saith in ^{<470217>} 2 Corinthians 2:17. Then is it no honoring of Christ, when men make many murlimewes [*foolish gestures or antics*] and ceremonies: but when they submit themselves simply to the doctrine wherein it is his will to be known, and wherein he showeth himself unto us as it were face to face. Thus ye see in effect what we have to bear away. And herewithal in this conversion of Saint Paul's, we see perfectly the heavenly power which he minded to show us here: that is to wit, that it was not of man, but that God had uttered his arm, to the end it might be known that such change came of him, and that Saint Paul was become a new creature. For surely it is a more excellent work of God, when a man is repaired after his image, than when we be born into this transitory life. And so we see how Saint Paul was made a new man. And that is the cause why he saith expressly, that he persecuted the Church of God, that he made havoc of all things, and that he played the cutthroat (as ye would say,) until God had changed him, and of a ravening wolf made him a meek sheep, and finally a shepherd in his Church under our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus then we perceive, that Saint Paul was sent us by the hand of God, and that he bringeth a sure mark, so as we see he did not thrust himself in, but that it was a work of the holy Ghost, and there was nothing of his own coining in the doctrine that he preached, forso much as it behooved him to have quit and clean renounced himself, to

the end to give and apply himself to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. For had Saint Paul been led with vainglory, we be sure he was honored among his own countrymen, and he could have won his spurs there. Again, if he had stood upon the reputation of a holy life, he was unblamable. On the other side he was at his ease and lived in rest. But it stood him on hand to have made no more account of all the things that are to be desired to the worldward, and which he had highly esteemed before, than of dung and dirt, (as he himself protesteth to the Philippians) (^{<500308>}Philippians 3:8) and it behooved him to cast them all away as things hurtful, forasmuch as he saw well how they were all of them impeachments that hindered him from coming to our Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Paul therefore not only gave over the reputation which he had to be a great doctor and therewithal a holy man, and as it were a little Angel: and moreover the rest, ease and commodities of the world: but also did before god give over all his opinion of purchasing eternal life by his own good works. All these things he rejected as abominable, knowing well that he was blinded with pride, in that he had imagined that anything was available before God, or that he could purchase any favor by that mean. It behooveth him (say I) not only to have thrust all these things under foot, but also to have abhorred them, as he himself protesteth. Forsomuch then as we see this, we be so much the better confirmed in that which he saith: namely that in executing his office of Apostleship, he had nothing of man, nor of himself, for he had been quit and clean stripped out of all the things which he had made great account of before. For in that he confesseth himself to have been a persecutor of God's Church, we see that to the intent to maintain still the honor of God, and the authority and masterhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he served, he doth not in any wise spare himself. But behold also it behooveth us to proceed in the like case. If we purpose to employ ourselves to God's service, it standeth us on hand to forget ourselves, and not to be curious in seeking the things that are for our own behoove, or for our own honor. Until such time then as we be come to the utter abasing of ourselves, we can never give ourselves to the service of God whereunto we be called. I speak purposely of those that have the charge to preach the Gospel, whom it behooveth to be abased in themselves, or else they can never execute faithfully the charge that is committed unto them. On the other side, we see how Saint Paul doth not disguise anything, nor take any shadow or covert to be received among men, but had rather reap the blame

that he had deserved, and to be shamed afore men, than to cover himself with vain startingholes. For he saith he had persecuted the Church, been a rover and a cutthroat, and had shed innocent blood. But yet doth not this prove that Saint Paul had not endeavored to live in holiness and perfection: for he had been a mirror of great uncorruptness. He termeth himself unblamable: (<500306> Philippians 3:6) and not without cause. For he saith he was so blinded, that he thought himself righteous before God, because there was not any spot in him that could be condemned by men. Truly there was hypocrisy in him, like as there is in all men that are not renewed by God's spirit. When they surmise themselves to be well liked of all the world: then is it certain that they are nothing but corruption, till God have taken them into his guiding. And so ye see that men shall be abused, because they stick to their mother wit in judging what is good and evil. But contrariwise our Lord Jesus Christ telleth us, that all the things which are highly esteemed afore men, are abominable before God. (<421615> Luke 16:15) Surely howsoever the case stand, Saint Paul had endeavored himself to live holy and without any blame or reproach, And yet for all that, when he was once converted, he could not say he had done well, and that his devotion was worthy to be allowed. But contrariwise he declareth that he had been a persecutor, and that all this geer [*whimsical mockery*] was nothing worth. What is to be said then of that which nowadays is called devotion and the service of God? As for example, in popery those terms run roundly enough in every man's mouth: all things are done of good intent, all men (to their own seeming) have affection and zeal, and they bear themselves in hand that God is much beholden and indebted to them for the things which they do. Yea, but we know that God hath not commanded them any of the things that they bring unto him, but every of them behaveth himself after his own fancy. Howsoever the world go with them, it is but an opinion, that they ween [*think*] they do well, and that is all. One says, it seemeth so to me: another says, I learned it so, and so was I taught. Now if God should allow all these things, he should have great burdens to bear. For the things that men have invented of their own heads, are but stinking dung before him. And yet for all this, every man alleges this foolish brag, that he meant to serve God. But therefore it is said in one word by the Prophet Esay, who hath required these things at your hands? (<230102> Isaiah 1:2) Let him that set you a work pay you. For as for me, I will never put this geer [*whimsical mockery*] in my reckoning book: I

utterly disclaim it, because I require obedience. Now Saint Paul hath very well gathered this matter. For if he had judged here of other men, it should have had less power and force, than when he speaketh of himself, and in no wise spareth himself, but saith that all the holiness for which he had been commended among men, was but a thievery, because he had been as a mad beast, full of fierceness and rebellion against God. Then if Saint Paul make such a plain and free confession: must not all mouths be stopped, and all of us understand that when we thought to have served God, we were (as ye would say) in a maze, and it was but a leading of us to the bottom of Hell? And in good sooth, as the wretched unbelievers rack themselves, they do but double their own condemnation, for the Devil snarleth them so much the more in their damnation. Therefore let us acknowledge that we have been rebels to God ever since the time that we would needs serve him so after our own fancy, and that there was nothing in all our whole life, but error to make us stray all the world over, and to pluck us back rather than to set us forward, and finally that all the devotions which men devise, are but sleights and illusions of Satan, to sink us down to the deepest dungeons of death. So then let us return to this obedientness, and acknowledge that there is no way for us to rule our life well, but by being taught in the school of the Son of God. But do we think that the Superstitions that reign nowadays in the world, and have their full scope there, are better than the traditions that were in the time of Saint Paul? It is true that there were many wicked corruptions in the Church of the Jews. For Sects were sprung up, and the Pharisees (which were yet the purest and soundest of all the rest) had mingled many gewgaws [*trinkets, showy trifles*] with the service of God, insomuch that all was corrupted among them. But howsoever they fared, yet Saint Paul had always the law and the holy Scripture. As for the traditions whereof he speaketh, he took them as appurtenances: but yet in the meanwhile his mind was to maintain the Law of Moyses, which had God's word in it, and the unchangeable truth, and which ought to have the same reverence to the world's end. Yet notwithstanding he had but the letter of the law, as we have seen heretofore in the Epistle to the Corinthians. (^{<470306>} 2 Corinthians 3:6) But nowadays as for them that be the devoutest in the Popedom [*papal government*], what have they? When they have alleged all that they can, it is certain, that the holy Scripture is as good as buried among them, and no man makes account of it. They will not say that it ought to be cast away,

for that were too great a blasphemy, and men would abhor it. But whatsoever they pretend, the Gospel is nothing with them in comparison of that which hath been ordained by their holy Councils, and by our mother holy Church. Yea and they are not ashamed to say, that the Gospel and all the holy Scripture is as a nose of wax, so as there is no certainty in it, but that it must be interpreted altogether by men. Lo how Jesus Christ is mocked and scorned. Think ye that such men may make us believe all their own inventions, when as they be so manifestly contrary to themselves. Then let us mark, that if Saint Paul did so condemn himself with his own mouth [in the things that he did] when he followed not our Lord Jesus Christ: no excuse shall be available nor go for payment before God, when men swarve aside from the simplicity of the Gospel. This is in effect the thing that we have to gather upon his text. But let us mark therewithal, that God uttered a singular grace in Saint Paul, to the end that by his example we might know, that our calling to salvation hath been of his mere and undeserved goodness. And furthermore, that if we have slid back, and broken our promise made in Baptism to our Lord Jesus Christ, yet howsoever the case stand, we shall not fail to be received to mercy, so we confess freely and without hypocrisy, that there was nothing in us but confusion, and that God must have been fain [*pleased*] to remedy the matter of his wonderful goodness. True it is (as I have touched before) that Saint Paul was taken for a holy man, and it might well have been said, that God had accepted his devotions, and that there had been some good preparation in him aforehand: howbeit, all that was but a plucking of him back, as I have touched already in ^{<500308>} Philippians 3:8, where he saith he could not take hold of Jesus Christ, and of the incomprehensible benefits that are in him, until he had misliked all the things that he had erst [*earlier*] esteemed and had in reputation, as his own righteousness and holiness. We see then after what sort God wrought in the person of Paul, insomuch that in the first to Timothie, (^{<540113>} 1 Timothy 1:13) he setteth forth himself for an example and pattern, saying that Jesus Christ had showed in him, that he was come to save all wretched sinners, to the end we should not doubt to be received when we keep the right way. What did Freewill in Saint Paul for the bringing of him to the obedience of the Gospel? [nothing:] but God was fain [*pleased*] to thunder down upon him from heaven, to drive out the pride and presumption that was in him. He was not only drawn by the hand, but also God did cast so thick scales

upon his eyes, that he was as a blind wretch. And besides that, he was stricken to the ground and astonished, to show that the knowledge and cunning, which he thought himself to have before, was but stark blindness, and that this darkness had served to bring him to a new light. For if God had let him still alone in his perfect plight, surely there would always have remained some foolish self-weening [*opinion*] in him, and he would always have mingled some trick of his own device and brain, with the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore it behooved him to be blinded and to abide so. For inasmuch, as he had erst [*formerly*] been in great reputation, and been tempted to hold his state still: it was requisite that he should be brought down, and lifted up again, and carried like a little babe, or rather like a carcass or dead body. Thus ye see how it behooved Saint Paul to be corrected after a violent manner: whereby we see that nother [*neither*] freewill, nor devotion, nor holiness stood him in any stead, but that all ought to be attributed to the mere mercy of God. And in very deed we see how he yieldeth a pure and unconstrained confession thereof. Then seeing it is so, let us mark also, that when God calleth us to him, it is not for that he seeth us disposed thereunto, or for that we be in any good readiness to it aforehand: but because it pleaseth him to draw us of his own mere mercy, as we shall see yet more at large hereafter. And if we mind to be partakers of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as Saint Paul was, the way that we must take, is to confess that there is nothing at all in us, but that we must be fain [*obliged*] to receive from above, all the things whereof we be destitute, and to have God work in us after such a sort, as the praise of our salvation may be reserved to him alone without any exception. And in that respect also Saint Paul addeth, *that when it had pleased God to call him to preach the Gospel, he did immediately fall in train, and waited not at all for the advice of man*, for it was enough for him that God had sent him, and that he was avowed by such a Master. Whereupon he did not in any wise spare himself, nor stand scanning [*examining, searching*] of the matter, but resolved himself fully to go forward on his way, and to hold out in such wise as we have seen, which is a sure record that God governed him by his holy spirit. This is the thing which we have to bear in mind. And therewithal we must also mark well how he saith, *that God had prepared him from his mother's womb, and in the end called him to publish his Gospel*. Here Saint Paul showeth that his calling after that manner, was not for any forwardness [*earnestness*] or worthiness that was

in his own person: but because he had been chosen of God, even before he was born. That is the cause why he purposely useth this saying that *from his mother's womb*, he had been as it were separated and dedicated unto God. How then could he bring anything of his own power. For what could he do when he was yet unborn? God therefore must needs be the worker in that behalf. Again, he addeth that God called him. True it is that he speaketh this concerning his office: but yet notwithstanding he magnifieth God's goodness in general, to show that to him only we be beholden for all that we have, not only in respect of this flightful life, but specially for the everlasting salvation of our souls. This cannot be laid out to the full at this time, and therefore we will leave a piece of it till the next time. Howbeit for a conclusion, let us mark how Saint Paul showeth us as it were in a mirror, that our yielding of ourselves in obedience unto God, happeneth not through any man's putting forth of himself, but through God's reaching out of his hand from above, and through his drawing of us to himself, even at such time as we could not seek him. No doubt but men will always imagine somewhat to commend themselves withal. Neverthelater all is but illusion: and the Devil useth that trick to make us to darken God's grace, to the intent we might be bereft of it. For it is good reason that God should leave men in such plight as they be, when they will take upon them that which belongeth unto him, and not condemn themselves as they be worthy. Therefore let us mark well, that all the goodness which we perceive in this world, proceedeth of God's mere grace, and that there is not anything that can be granted to ourselves. And that we may the better perceive this free goodness: let us understand that we must lay down all worthiness of our own deserts, and have an eye, first to God's free election, and afterward to his calling. Wherefore then are we enlightened with the knowledge of the Gospel? Is it for that we have deserved aught [*anything*]? No: but because God hath chosen us before we were born, yea and even before the making of the world, as it is said in another place. (^{<490104>} Ephesians 1:4) Ye see then at what point we must begin, to the end we be not puffed up with vain pride which would make us break our necks in the end, but rather bethink us to walk in lowliness, remembering how it is said in another place, Who is it that sholet[h] [*shovels*] thee out, or that maketh thee more excellent than others? It is God (saith he,) who hath done it of his own mere goodness. When Saint Paul confesseth there that it is God which hath separated or sholed

[*shoveled*] us out it is to cut off all allegations of men, being well assured that no man can say he is better than his fellows, save only because God hath chosen us, yea even before we were born. And this choice of God is secret, until he show by effect that he calleth us to him. And how doth he that? By his Gospel: and therein there is a double grace. The one is when the doctrine is preached to us. For we see the miserable state of the world, how a number of silly souls, and a number of blind wretches wander there in darkness, without succor or aid, when in the meanwhile our God offereth us food, yea and putteth it into our mouths: and is not that singular grace? But yet further, God must be fain [*pleased*] to call us inwardly, and to touch us in such wise by his holy spirit, as his doctrine may rightly have authority with us, and we acknowledge that it comes of him, and he seal the same in our hearts by his holy Ghost, according as he speaketh of it as well in the ^{<470122>}2 Corinthians 1:22 as also in ^{<460113>}1 Corinthians 1:13. To be short, according as it is said by the Prophet Esay, that it behooveth us to be taught of God: (^{<235413>}Isaiah 54:13) Let us understand that we must be thoroughly assured in our hearts by the holy Ghost, that the doctrine which we hold cometh not of men, but is the infallible truth of God: and we cannot but have so sure record of it, that (if we be not too lewd and unthankful,) we may perceive by eye sight, that it is the very same whereunto we ought to stick even to the end, and also which will bring us into the kingdom of heaven, when we shall have finished our course in this mortal life.

But now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us perceive them more and more, to the end that being humbled to mislike of ourselves, and to renounce all our own wicked affections and desires, we may offer ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ, and yield him the honor that he requireth at our hands, not only for fashion sake, but also in such wise, that as he hath his mouth open to show us the way of Salvation, so we also may have our ears attentive to submit ourselves quietly unto him, and our hearts open, so as there may be nother [*neither*] hardness nor sturdiness in them, but that we may abide his yoke, being ready to receive the same, and to dedicate our whole life to the obeying of him, and to the framing of ourselves unto his holy will, that when God's name is so glorified in us, others may also be drawn thereunto, and all of us be

gathered into his flock, to the end we may worship him with one common accord, and our Lord Jesus Christ have the due honor and service that belongeth unto him. And for the performance hereof, it may please him to raise up true and faithful ministers of his word, etc.