

THE NINTH SERMON

WHICH IS THE THIRD UPON THE SECOND CHAPTER

- 6** But as for those that are in estimation, (I pass not what they have been in time past: for God regardeth not the outward appearance of man) surely those that were in estimation did add nothing unto me.
- 7** But contrarywise when they saw that the preaching of the Gospel to the uncircumcised was committed unto me, as the preaching to the circumcised was committed unto Peter:
- 8** (For he that was of power in Peters Apostleship towards the Circumcision, was of power in me also towards the Gentiles.)
— <480206> GALATIANS 2:6-8

WE SAW this morning, that when men mingle their own fancies with God's truth, there is nothing but corruption, and by that means the Gospel is falsified. Which thing ought to hold us in such awe, as no man should presume to add aught [*anything*] at all to the things that we have from above. For God hath taught us so perfectly, as we cannot put to anything without great blasphemy, forasmuch as it were a covert accusing of him of unadvisedness or else of niggardship [*stingy, covetous*] as who should say he were loath to bestow things upon us which would be for our welfare. Seeing then that the doctrine of the Gospel is sufficient for us, let us abide in it. And if any man step up to bring in some addition of his own, let us abhor it, yea though the thing seem to have never so great reason in it, as oftentimes the devil useth to shroud himself under this covert, that we must not stick at light and slender points. But [surely] God must be hearkened to in all points and all respects, according as it is to be deemed by Saint Paul's doing, who could easily have let slip the circumcising of Titus as a small thing, and yet notwithstanding would not bend in that behalf: the reason whereof was, lest the Gentiles should be made subject to such necessity as was intended to be laid upon them. Yet we read that he

sticked not to circumcise Timothy. Nevertheless the matter seemed to be all one, and that Saint Paul used unconstancy and variableness in that behalf. Behold, there were two Heathen men which had not been nourished and instructed in the law of Moyses from their birth. And the Jews would never have received any man that had not been circumcised. For they deemed all men to be unclean which bear not that warrant about them.

Now Saint Paul circumciseth the one, (^{<441603>} Acts 16:3) and will not do the like to the other, who will think that he kept an even hand? If we consider all things well, we shall see why he refused to circumcise Titus, and yet had circumcised Timothy. Circumcision was at that time lawful of itself. It was not like the Idolatries that are in Papistry nowadays. If ye ask what holy water is, it is an unhallowing of baptism. For in baptism we have a washing that ought to suffice us both in life and death, and God will not have us to have any other warrant of the spiritual cleansing that was obtained for us by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we must be contented with it. But as for the Holy water of the Papists, what else is it than an endless baptizing of ourselves? As touching the Mass, it is so villainous and outrageous a treachery, that no man can come at it, but he must defile himself by renouncing the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. But Circumcision stood not in the like case: for it was profitable for the time that it lasted. True it is that it was abolished at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: but yet for all that, the Jews might keep it still till they were fully instructed in the liberty of the Gospel. Saint Paul therefore had circumcised Timothy: and the reason why, was for that he saw many weaklings, which would have been offended because they were not yet thoroughly confirmed in the knowledge of the Gospel, but thought that it behooved them to keep still the ceremonies of the Law. And it is said, that we must yield one to another, for charity bindeth us thereunto. Every man must not do what he himself thinks good, to the troubling of his neighbors: but we must so fashion ourselves one to another, as none may be offended through our fault. Saint Paul then forbear in having respect to the poor Ignorant weaklings, who not withstanding might be brought to knowledge in time. And as concerning the person of Titus, he saw how men went about to lay a yoke of bondage upon the Gentiles, and that the same would be a holding of the Jews always under the Law, which was then but superstition. For it was for them to have known that the law had served

out his time, and that the ceremonies should not continue forever. If this had not been made plain, the Jews had been hardened in a wrong opinion, and the Gentiles had received a yoke of bondage: and therefore Paul made resistance against it. And so we see it is not only lawful, but also needful to use things diversely which are nother [*neither*] good nor bad of their own nature. As for example, if we see a man drawn back from coming to the Gospel, or troubled, because he is not yet well strengthened: it becometh us to forbear the thing that else were lawful for us, according as we have seen heretofore, that we must always have regard what is expedient and fit for every man's salvation. But if we see that under color that a thing is neither good nor bad, men go about to interlace some holiness with it, and to bind men's consciences by constraining them to keep it: there we must withstand them to the uttermost. As for example, To eat flesh or fish is a thing indifferent, as they term it, for it is neither forbidden nor bidden of God to eat flesh. Now if some ignorant person be offended at the eating thereof, and think it to be deadly sin, because he knoweth not whether [the forbearing of] it be a tradition of the Pope, or a commandment of God, till he be taught it: we must exchew offense. Yea and when we have to do with any Jews, which are not acquainted with our customs, and that we go about to win them and draw them to the obedience of the Gospel: we must for a time (in being conversant with them) abstain from the things which they think to be foresended [*prohibited*]. For inasmuch as they are armed with the authority of God, they would think they had some reason to condemn us, if it were not showed them before, how and by what warrant we might eat of all meats indifferently, and without exception. But contrariwise, if the Papists would bring us to this point, that we should continually forbear the eating of flesh upon Fridays and Saturdays, and in Lent season, and upon other days of their appointing: whichsoever of us should agree to that, he were a traitor to the Gospel, and we should rather die a hundred times. For why? we must keep the liberty that is purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. If it be said, and how so? Ought a man to trouble the whole world, and to be so willful for a little liquorousness [*pleasant desire*] of eating flesh? The question is not whether a man should eat flesh or no: but whether God ought to be obeyed and the thing used which he permitteth, or whether we should rest upon the fancies of men.

Now if a thing be lawful for me by God's word, is it to be condemned because men judge of it after their own fashion and guise? But we see that God's authority is blemished when the right that belongeth to him, and is reserved only to himself, is given to mortal creatures. Again, there is a clog laid upon men's consciences, insomuch that our Lord Jesus Christ is defrauded of his due honor. For if he have purchased us such liberty as to set us free from the ceremonies of the law: it is much more reason (as I told you this morning) that the things which men have devised should be laid away, and abolished. Wherefore let us mark well that in all indifferent things we must have regard to edifying, and although it be lawful for us either to use or to forbear a thing: yet Charity bindeth us one to another. It is a willing serviceableness when for the edifying of our neighbors we abstain from the thing which is free for us to do. But yet in the meanwhile, we must not under the shadow of peace and concord betray God's truth, and make a mingle mangle of it, so as men may not know who ought to rule the roost here beneath, nor what law is to be followed, but we must utterly maintain the liberty whereof Saint Paul speaketh here. Lo what we have in effect to hold us to.

Now he addeth immediately, that the Apostles *which were in great estimation, brought nothing unto him*, (And he uppeneth [*mentions*] here Peter, John, and James, who were had in great reputation above the rest, as pillars,) but only took in good worth, and allowed the doctrine which he had taught theretofore. And therewithal he addeth, *That be passed not what opinion men had of Peter, John, and James, forasmuch as God regardeth not any man's person*, That is to say, his outward show or estimation to the worldward.

It should seem here at the first blush, that Saint Paul striveth for himself, and for his own authority and credit. There were dogs that barked against him in times past, and specially the backsliders that had tasted of the Gospel: who to pretend some color of their backsliding and of their renouncing of Christ, alleged thus for themselves. Tush [*def: to express disdain or reproach*] it is well enough known, that the Apostles strove to wit who should be greatest, which was an unseemly thing, and showed well that they had ill borne away their masters doctrine, who commanded them to humble themselves in such wise, that every of them should make himself least, although he were the greatest. But we have to mark here, that

Saint Paul had no controversy with the Apostles, as he himself also declareth. Therefore there is some special cause why he magnifieth himself so much: which is, for that those dogs which labored to set debate between the Apostles, and therewithal to turmoil and falsify the Gospel, pretended always to be the disciples of the Apostles and familiar with them, like as in these days we see many fugitives and shameless fellows, which abuse the names of God's servants, and pass not to lie with open throat, saying: Oh, I learned it of such a man. And yet they speak of a matter that was never heard of, yea and their shamelessness overshooteth itself so far as to name to the very cities, when as not withstanding if a man examine them thoroughly, he shall find the clean contrary. So then it was for Saint Paul to show that the authority of men is not sufficient to deface the sovereign authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor the reverence that men ought to bear to his word. Therefore we see first of all, that Paul strove not here against Peter, James, or John, for he agreed very well with them. And secondly that he regarded not his own person, but meant to maintain God's case: that is to wit, that he was ordained and established in the state of an Apostle. Mark for one point that he did not thrust himself in upon a bravery nor at adventure, but that God had chosen him thereunto, and that thereupon, he had so borne abroad the doctrine that was betaken unto him as the pure truth of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherefore if we consider whereat Saint Paul aimed, we shall not only have wherewith to stop the mouths of all misspeakers, but also be the more confirmed in the faith which we hold by his teaching. And although there be not nowadays any such shameless persons that labor to deface him, or to abolish the authority of his Apostleship: yet doth not that doctrine cease to be for our profit. As how? We have seen already how Saint Paul hath said, that if the Angels of Heaven should step up to preach a Gospel contrary to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: we should hold them accursed. And even at this day the same is good for us. For we may defy Satan, and all the misbelief and wiliness of men, and all the trash and subtleties which they have to thrust us from the singleness of our faith: I say we may defy every whit of it. And why? For God's word hath such a Majesty in itself, that all things that can be set up against it, are but smoke, leasing [*falsehood*], and filthiness. Now then if we take it for a general rule, that nother [*neither*] Peter nor John may diminish the

Majesty of the Gospel: it will serve us for a buckler toward all things that can be alleged in these days to shake us withal: according also as we see, that diverse weaklings are thrust out of the way by that it is said unto them, how now? we see that the wisest men of the world, the men of greatest skill, the Prelates and such as have the government of the Church, together with the Kings and Princes, stick to the faith that hath been received of long time, and to the old accustomed manner of living. Thus the poorer sort have their eyes bleared [*blurred*], and their wits utterly dulled, and their hearts discouraged, by means whereof God's truth is forsaken, so as it hath nother [*neither*] credit nor reverence among them, and in the mean season these maskers get the upper hand, and flaunt it, as who would say, that men should make Idols of them, and worship them in despite of God. Then sith [*since*] it is so, we see it standeth us on hand in these days, to be armed with the doctrine that is contained here in Saint Paul: which is, that God will have us to receive his word without gainsaying: and that when our Lord Jesus Christ came down into the world, he was ordained to be our Master, with condition that every of us should hearken to him, and stick to the things that he speaketh, without adding aught [*anything*] to, or diminishing aught [*anything*] from that which it pleased him to show, because the full perfection of all wisdom is in him. When we once know this, we may despise all the gewgaws [*trinkets, showy trifles*] that men can lay before us. And if men tell us that the greatest men, the wisest men, the richest men, and the men of authority of this world do live so or so: [we may answer,] yea marie [*def. expression of surprise*], but when all comes to all, what are they in comparison of God? When creatures come before him they must all vanish away: for whensoever there is that Majesty given to God's word, whereby he intendeth to try whither we honor him or no: it is certain that we will receive all that proceedeth out of his holy mouth. Now, that word is contained in the Gospel, insomuch that when we have once granted that God is to be obeyed, we must no more run over sea or land to seek what his will is: for we have a sure and infallible warrant of it in the Law, Prophets, and Gospel. Sith [*since*] the case standeth so, we see it is not without cause that the holy Ghost would have this doctrine to continue to the worlds end. And furthermore we be warned therewithal, to rest upon God without wavering at every blast of wind, according as we see how the

Devil stirreth up much variety of opinions, which are as whirlwinds and tempests to drive us to and fro.

But let us learn to be settled upon God, and then shall we stand out to the last brunt. For if we held our faith of John or Peter, it would be but a lean faith, because they were frail creatures, and we know that man is subject to leasings [*falsehoods*] and vanity. Therefore it standeth us on hand, to have a much substantialer and surer groundwork and foundation, than all that is to be found in this world. And so, forasmuch as we know that God hath taught us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that men have been no more but the instruments thereof: it behooveth us to mount up unto God. That is the way for us to apply this doctrine to our own instruction, where Saint Paul saith that the Apostles added not anything unto him. Neverthelater, it is not meant that he despiseth them, or that he intended not to profit with them: for he liked very well of that, yea and employed himself by all means thereunto, and held no scorn to be taught even of the meanest sort, as we have seen. But his intent was that God's word which he had preached should abide firm: and thereupon he putteth the wisest men in subjection to it, and the men of greatest countenance in the world, and such as bear greatest show and reputation in the Church, to the end that Jesus Christ should keep his preeminence still, and men have an eye unto him, and not unto men, but ground themselves altogether upon one selfsame faith, and say that forasmuch as the Son of God is sent unto us to show us the will of God his father: it is not lawful for us in any wise to doubt of the things which we receive of him. Thus ye see what we have to do at this day. And whereas Saint Paul saith, *that he passeth not what the Apostles were because God regardeth not man's persons*: thereby he showeth that he ought not to be counted inferior to John or Peter, for that he had been an infidel, and not believed in Jesus Christ, at such time as the other Apostles did already preach the Gospel. For the manner of the world is, that they which come first, should be first served. Saint Paul therefore perceiving that the same might be some prejudice to his doctrine, saith that men must not look what a one he had been afore, or what the other had been afore. And yet his meaning is not, that he ought not to look back to humble himself continually, or that the gifts of grace which God had bestowed upon John and Peter, should not be esteemed and commended as they were praise worthy: for we see that in other places he

termeth himself a poor thing born out of time, and confesseth himself to be unworthy to be counted in the number of the Apostles. (<461508> 1 Corinthians 15:8, 9) Saint Paul then did not as a number of hypocrites or rather shameless persons do, who all their life long have been either whoremongers, or drunkards, or loose livers, and of a beastly conversation, and yet for all that do but wring their mouth at it and say, tush [*def: to express disdain or reproach*], men must not inquire what I have been. But surely men must not look to have any other judges [against them than themselves.] For every of us ought to condemn himself, as Saint Paul exhorteth us: (<461128> 1 Corinthians 11:28) and specially when we consider how we have been wretched unbelievers, and as good as beasts, we ought to be ashamed of our own lewdness. Saint Paul therefore wist [*knew*] well there had been cause for him to mislike of himself, and to be ashamed of his striving against the Gospel, and therewithal disdained not the goodness that had been in John and James. At such time as Peter and John were scourged and whipped for the Gospel, Saint Paul was a murderer, and passed not to say that they were rightly dealt withal, and that it made no matter. But yet for all that, he aimeth at the mark which I spake of afore: namely that forasmuch as God had so advanced him within a little while, his former misbehavior in times past ought not to hinder the receiving of the gracious gifts that were in him, that they might not profit to the common edifying of the Church.

Thus ye see in effect, that the thing which we have to bear in mind, is that if it be late ere [*before*] we be called to the Gospel, we must be sorry that we have spent our time so ill, and specially that we have lived like wretched brute beasts, without knowing who is our father to whom we ought to do homage, both for our life and for all the goods which we have received of him. Therefore we ought to be sorry for that. Again, when we see a man return that was gone astray, we must acknowledge such change to be a miracle of God. For if a man has been a wild beast, and past all hope of being brought unto God, and yet afterward becometh as a sheep, and submitteth himself willingly to the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ: it cannot be but that the hand of God hath passed upon him. Therefore it behooveth us to know what all men have been aforesaid, and every man ought to be his own judge in that behalf: but yet for all that, when a man hath been slow in coming unto God, if God work in him with such power

as it is seen that he mindeth to set him forwarder in one day, than some other men in ten years: his so doing must not cause us to pluck back him that was able to edify, as men sometimes do, saying, what was such a one a two or three years ago? Such sayings are nought worth. Let us rather understand, that our Lord hath showed himself so much the more, to the end to be honored. And therewithal, forasmuch as God's gifts ought not to be unprofitable: let us suffer them to be applied to the profit and welfare of the faithful. Ye see then that our looking what men have been aforesaid, must not be to despise them still: for it may be that God gave him the bridle for a time to the intent to bring him down, so as he became an unthrift [*prodigal, of dissolute conduct*] or lived in ignorance, and knew not goodness, or had not any excellent or commendable quality in him: and yet for all that, God will set him as it were upon the scaffold and show by effect that he intendeth to be served by him. Therefore it behooveth us to take in good worth, the thing that God giveth and offereth unto us in that wise.

Thus ye see what we have to bear in mind, and how needful it is that we should so do: for there is not anything contained here, whereof we have not the experience nowadays. As touching the words where Saint Paul saith *that God accepteth not any man's person*: it is all one as if he had said, that God is not tied to the things that are seen of us, or which we have in estimation, but that he is free to bestow his gifts on whom he listeth [*desireth*], and how he listeth [*desireth*]. Many men, when they hear this word *Person* spoken of, do beguile themselves, and wrest it against the meaning of the holy Ghost. And thereupon many men suppose that God accepteth not any one man more than another, for then [think they] he should be partial. But see how they darken God's free Election: as who should say he were beholden to men, and that if he chose any of them, the same ought to be general without exception, insomuch that (to their seeming) God's grace flieth in the air like a Tennis ball, and it is in our power and freewill to reach out our hand to catch it, and to apply it to our use. Thus are diverse besotted [*dulled, made stupid*], yea even with too gross ignorance, because they understand not what is meant by the word person. But the holy Scripture telleth us, that God in vouchsafing to choose men, and to set them in a more excellent state, and to bestow the gifts of his holy Spirit upon them, stayeth not upon anything at all in the

party, ne [*nor*] passeth whither he be white or black, old or young, noble or un noble, rich or poor, beloved or behated of men, fair or foul. God thinketh not upon any of these small trifles: for if he should delay to love us till he found some good thing in us: he should let us alone still in such plight as we be. That therefore is the cause why Saint Paul saith expressly, that God regardeth not any man's person. And so we see now what we have to gather upon that Text. First of all (as I have said already) let us learn to receive God's gifts, and to make our own profit of them when they be offered us, and let us not take occasion to refuse them as many men do, which labor to cloak their unkindness by alleging one thing or other. But whither they allege antiquity, or whatsoever thing else, let it not hinder us to take profit by those whom God sendeth to us: for though they be not past three days old, nor can magnify themselves among men, nor have done many exploits and valiant enterprises: yet is it no matter to us, so we perceive that our Lord hath given them such gifts as may be available to our edification, and therefore let every of us stoop and become teachable, assuring ourselves that if we refuse the good that is offered us by man, we do not wrong to the man, but forasmuch as God is the author thereof, and we hold scorn to receive that which cometh of him, we be worthy to be utterly bereft of the thing that he is minded to bestow upon us, and of the benefits which he hath after a sort put into our hand. Lo what we have to bear away. Furthermore let us learn also, not to bring any imagination of self-value when we come unto God. But let him that is noble, mighty, or rich to the worldward, lay away all self-estimation, and acknowledge it to be utterly nothing before God: and let him that is poor and miserable, assure himself that he is not quite shaken off, though men despise him. Also let us practice that which is showed us by Saint James, which is, that the brother which is great and noble should glory in his smallness, knowing that he hath all things of God's only mere goodness: and that the brother which is poor and of low and mean degree, should glory in that God hath adopted him, and given him such a state as passeth all the kingdoms of the world, seeing it pleaseth him to avow us after that fashion for his children. True it is that whereas men gaze upon the outward appearance and fair show of things: God accepteth a good conscience, God looketh at the uncorruptness of the heart. But yet must he be fain [*pleased*] to put the same before into it: for at the first he shall not find it in us. Let God look upon all the children of Adam, and (as it is

said in the ^{<191403>} Psalm 14:3) he shall find nothing but utter corruption. They be stark rotten in their wickedness. See what our nature is. Then is there not anything that could move God to accept us, and to prefer us before others: but we must become vessels of his goodness, and acknowledge that his accepting of us, is not for our own worthiness: but that when he chose us to himself, and set us into the way by his holy spirit, even then he knew what soundness was in us. Not that we have any at all of our own: but because he doth as it were behold himself in us. For look how many good things there are in the faithful, so many records are there of God's goodness in that he hath showed himself bountiful towards them. That is the cause why that in ^{<441034>} Acts 10:34 and in other places, this accepting of persons is put for the deckings and visors which are as false illusions: of which sort are riches, credit, dignity, nobility and such other things, which serve to make men to set store by themselves, and to stand in their own conceits. But it is said that God doth look into men's hearts, and not gaze upon the outside of them, (^{<091607>} 1 Samuel 16:7) so they submit themselves to him obediently, as I have declared already. This is in effect the thing that we have to bear in mind. Now Saint Paul addeth immediately, *that the Apostles avowed him to be their fellow and gave him their hand*, as it were to warrant that the Gospel which he had preached, was in all points conformable to their doctrine, and that all of them had served our Lord Jesus Christ. Hereunto Saint Paul addeth, *that he was by common consent received as the Apostle of the Gentiles*, that is to say, of such as had not been brought up under the law, nor were Jews by birth and ancestry. Here we see that Saint Paul's striving was not with the Apostles: for they avowed him to be their fellow: nother [*neither*] did he disdain them: for we have seen before, that although his coming to Jerusalem was with assured knowledge that God had appointed him, and upon sure and infallible revelation, after he had been caught up into the third Heaven: yet notwithstanding he was not carried with pride, nother [*neither*] undertook he that journey to Jerusalem, to common with the Apostles for fear lest he had already or should thereafter run in vain. For his desire was to have all men know, that he challenged not any special thing to himself, but that his only seeking was, that the Son of God might be published all the world over, and that men should worship him and rest upon him, so as he brought not a new Jesus Christ, but was conformable in all points to Peter and John, and to all their fellows. If Saint Paul had

shrunk aside by himself, it would have been said, that his meaning was not to have any consent of doctrine with the rest of the Apostles. But now, seeing he cometh after that sort to agree with them: he showeth that he was not carried away with any pride or presumptuousness: and that is it which he meaneth by saying new again, that the Apostles avowed him to be their fellow. Then doth he not take upon him to be above them: but will have men know that the Apostles served our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he was one of their number, and that the Gospel which he had preached must not be taken as a doubtful thing, but [as certain] as if Peter or John had spoken it, insomuch that when Saint Paul treateth thereof, he saith not, it is I, but he saith it is Jesus Christ. Whither it be Peter, John, or James that speaketh, let us look that the Son of God have ever the masterhood above us, and let the thing that cometh of him be received, whither it be by me or by another. Saint Paul will not have men to gaze after him, anymore than after the least man in the world. The thing which we have in effect to remember in this text of Saint Paul's is that he had no mind at all of himself, ne [*nor*] sought any whit of his own, but was contented that Jesus Christ should have the praise that he deserved, and that his word should be received with all reverence, and as for all other things, he cared not what became of them. As touching the other point, that he was accepted for the Apostle of the Gentiles: it is agreeable to that which Saint Luke also rehearseth: namely that Paul and Barnabas were ordained Apostles, because God had sholed [*brought*] them out for the same purpose, to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles. (<441312> Acts 13:12) Then did not that matter come of men: but God had pronounced his unrevocable sentence of it: and Saint Paul's treating after that sort of himself, doth no whit diminish the commission of the other Apostles. But seeing he was sent of God in deed, and that his calling was not grounded upon men, nor he had preaced [*pressed*] in unmeasurably, nor thrust himself in upon a geerishness [*whimsical mocking*], but was chosen thereunto of God: the Apostles showed that they would not in any wise speak against such a calling, because it was of sufficient authority, as coming from God. And here we see yet better, how all men ought to frame themselves to obedience, to the intent that nothing may let the word of God to be a bridle and yoke, to hold us so in awe, as none of us may follow his own fancies, lusts and affections, but suffer ourselves to be guided and governed by the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now if it were

not lawful for the Apostles to refuse Saint Paul, because he was sent from heaven: what shall we do? Shall it not be a devilish pride, if we cannot endure that the government and order which God hath stablished in his Church, should continue unimpeached, but would change callings at our own pleasure, to set up and pull down according to the device of our own foolish brain? Then if we go about to make such trouble in the Church, is it not all one as if we would pluck the Sun out of the sky to spite God withal. Therefore ye see here, that the thing which we have to bear in mind, is that the government of the Church is ordained of God, and that they which go about to change anything in it, are full of devilish pride, and must in the end fall down for advancing themselves in such wise. Now as touching that Saint Paul was sent among the Gentiles: it was not an altering of that which had been uttered already by the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ when he said, go preach ye the Gospel through the whole world. (<411615> Mark 16:15) It might seem at the first sight, that here was some change and contrariety, in that Saint Paul was sent on the one side, and Saint Peter on the other. Nevertheless, both of them do stand very well together, forsomuch as our Lord Jesus Christ spake not severally to any one of the Apostles, Thou Peter shalt go over all the world, thou shalt go about the whole earth to preach my Gospel, or thou John shalt do the like, and so consequently to the others: but he saith, All you whom I have ordained, go spread abroad my Gospel everywhere. And his giving of Commission after that sort in general terms, is no let but that one might go one way, and another another, and every of them employ himself wheresoever God made him way, or gave him entrance, according also as they labored to spend themselves thereabouts, as well in death as in life. But besides this, there was a special commission given to Saint Paul to go into Countries further off, where there was not such a multitude of Jews. True it is that wheresoever Paul came, he did put forth the doctrine of the Gospel throughout all the Synagogues of the Jews, so as he was rightly their Apostle also. Howbeit, this letted [*hindered*] him not to be ordained for the Gentiles, and to carry abroad the Gospel through the whole world, even where God had not been known afore, and where there had not been any light of good doctrine, any law, or any Religion. Saint Paul then was sent chiefly unto them. And seeing it is so: what title of supremacy can the Pope now pretend, under color that Saint Peter (as he himself saith) was Bishop of Rome? Surely the saying that Peter was at Rome, and lived

as Bishop there, is but a fable and flat mockery. But let us put the case it were so. Yet according to that which I have said already, Peter's calling was specially for the Jews. And therefore if the Pope pretend to be Saint Peter's successor, he must be the Bishop of the Jews, and his supremacy must stretch no further than to them. For as for Saint Paul, it is very certain that he was never Bishop of Rome, nor never was there, saving when he was brought prisoner thither: and it is not known whither he continued there or no, howbeit it is very likely that he answered for his life. The Pope then cannot brag that he succeedeth Saint Paul therein. And what warrant hath the City of Rome, or what worthiness can it pretend to say that the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ were there: but that it is a den of thieves, and that God's servants have been murdered there? So then let us mark well this Text, where Saint Paul showeth, that Saint Peter was appointed for the Jews, and himself sent to the Gentiles: for inasmuch as this lesson serveth expressly for our turn, we ought to be the more moved to profit by it. True it is that the doctrine of the other Apostles belongeth to us as well as this, for our Lord Jesus Christ will be heard when he speaketh to us, whither it be by the mouth of Peter, or by the mouth of John, for all are instruments of his spirit, and we must not make a difference between persons. But howsoever the case stand, forasmuch as Saint Paul's doctrine concerneth us, it ought to serve us as a spur to prick us to the quick. And forasmuch as God chose him to bring the wretched Gentiles unto him, making him the mean to draw those unto him which had been cut off from his Church: surely it ought to give us the more courage, seeing he did his endeavor to draw the wretched unbelievers out of the darkness of ignorance wherein they were, (making that his only mark to shoot at) that is to wit, us that come not of the race of the Jews as concerning the flesh. Nevertheless, let us consider therewithal, that Jesus Christ will be heard of us in such wise, as we must not regard either Peter or Paul, or James or John, or anything else but him. Let us hold us contented with the master that is given us of God the father to bring us to all perfection and wisdom, and let us also suffer ourselves to be taught by such means as he listeth [*desires*], and let the things that Saint Paul hath written serve us, and likewise the writings of John and of James, and of the rest of the Apostles: so they lead us to Jesus Christ, let us receive whatsoever is brought us by them, and let us shut our eyes at all other things, and not have any other consideration, than our Lord Jesus Christ

calleth us by their means. And although we follow the guiding of the doctrine of Peter, John, James and Paul: yet let our shootanchor always be to be joined and united to our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we shall find the fullness of all welfare and joy, so as we shall have whereof to glory thoroughly in him.

But let us offer ourselves before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledging of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, that we may be sorry for them, and ask him forgiveness with true repentance, and fight against our lusts all the days of our life, till we be thoroughly rid of them. And forasmuch as we be so wretched wights, that we cannot be quit and clean discharged of them: let us beseech him to bear with us till he have buried all our sins, to cloth us all over again with his own righteousness. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people, etc.