

# The Benefit of Christ's Death

*by*

AONIO PALEARIO

Edited by Brad J. Gray



**THE BENEFIT OF  
CHRIST'S DEATH**  
AONIO PALEARIO



**A CHRIST  
CENTERED  
COALITION**

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*The Benefit of Christ's Death: The Glorious Riches of God's  
Free Grace, Which Every True Believer Receives by Jesus  
Christ and Him Crucified*

by Aonio Paleario

Edited by Brad J. Gray

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Editor's Preface

Introduction

Foreword

1. Original Sin and Man's Wretchedness

2. The Law Given by God

3. The Forgiveness of Sins

4. The Effects of Lively Faith

5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

About

## **Editor's Preface**

The following work is a meticulous reproduction of an 1860 reprinting of an all-but-forgotten treatise from Italian reformer, Aonio Paleario, in which he expounds the far-reaching benefits of Christ's atoning death.

In *The Benefit of Christ's Death*, the reader is confronted with the glorious riches of God's free grace, which every true believer is made partaker of by Jesus Christ and him crucified. The present edition was translated from the Italian and carefully edited by John Ayer, a minister of St. John's Chapel in the 19th century. He introduces the treatise with a summary of Paleario's life and death, which is here included.

No words have been added or omitted from the

original edition, save for a small number of Scripture references which have been affixed to the end of sentences. Furthermore, the endnotes have been diligently revised, now displaying proper citations. Those notes marked “*Editor*” reflect external references which have been investigated, examined, and detailed for the reader’s advantage and convenience. Also, minor punctuation and spelling updates have been made.

May you be blessed and encouraged by the following testimony of the gospel—a testimony which was made under severe persecution and duress.

Brad J. Gray

## **Introduction**

The work here republished is the translation of a treatise which appeared originally in the Italian language. There are some interesting circumstances connected with it. But, before adverting to these, it will be proper to give a brief account of the author.

Antonio dalla Paglia, or, as he more generally called himself, Aonio Paleario, was born about the year 1500, at Veroli, in the Campagna di Roma. He studied under eminent masters, and was soon noticed as an accomplished scholar. He acquired the friendship of many of the learned of his age and country, and also of those dignified ecclesiastics whose religious views were esteemed the most moderate. Among those may be named the Cardinals

Sadolet and Pole, who were thought—the last of them particularly—to favor the Reformation.

After passing several years in Rome, Paleario removed to Sienna, where he married a lady by whom he left two sons and two daughters. By the senate of Sienna he was appointed public teacher of Greek and Latin, and he also lectured on philosophy and the belles-lettres. His diligent study of the Scriptures, and of the works of the German divines, imbued his instructions with a spirit very different from the lectures of his colleagues; and this, while it gratified his pupils, provoked the anger of the authorities. Cardinal Sadolet represented to him the danger he incurred, and advised him to yield to the times, and at least clothe his notions in more cautious language. But such advice little suited the zealous mind of Paleario; and he continued to assert his opinions with the greatest freedom. His conduct was therefore watched, and every stratagem employed to fasten the crime of heresy upon him. Thus, because he had exposed the hypocrisy of an ecclesiastic assiduous in his prostrations at the shrine of a saint while evading the payment of his debts, Paleario was represented as an impious wretch, who dishonored the blessed saints. A remarkable proof is afforded, in one of his letters, of the real ground of opposition to him. “Cot-



ta,” says he, “asserts that, if I am allowed to live, there will not be a vestige of religion left in the city. Why? Because, being asked one day what was the first ground on which men should rest their salvation? I replied, ‘Christ!’ Being asked what was the second, I replied, ‘Christ!’ and, being asked what was the third, I still replied, ‘Christ!’”

The charges against him were brought to a point by the publication, in 1543, of his treatise of “The Benefit of Christ’s Death.” The vast reputation which it had, and the eagerness with which it was read, being in the Italian language, increased the virulence of his opponents. Otho Melius Cotta, above mentioned, was his most determined enemy; and with this person three hundred leagued themselves in a resolution to destroy Paleario. And, in order to ensure his condemnation, twelve of these were selected to bear witness against him. He had, in consequence, to defend himself before the senate of Sienna, which he did with so much spirit, that for the moment his defense was successful. Said he:

There are some so censorious as to be displeased when we give the highest praise to the author and God of our salvation, Christ, the King of all nations and people. For writing in the Tuscan language to show what great benefits accrue to

mankind from his death, a criminal accusation has been made against me. Is it possible to utter or conceive anything more shameful? I said that, since he in whom Divinity resided has poured out his life's blood so lovingly for our salvation, we ought not to doubt the good-will of Heaven, but may promise ourselves the greatest tranquillity and peace. I affirmed, agreeably to the most unquestionable monuments of antiquity, that those who turn with their souls to Christ crucified, commit themselves to him by faith, acquiesce in the promises, and cleave with assured faith to him who cannot deceive, are delivered from all evil, and enjoy a full pardon of all their sins. These things appeared so grievous, so detestable, so execrable to the twelve, I cannot call them men, but inhuman beasts, that they judged that the author should be committed to the flames. If I must undergo this punishment for the aforesaid testimony (for I deem it a testimony rather than a libel), then, senators, nothing more happy can befall me. In each time as these, I do not think a Christian ought to die in his bed. To be accused, to be dragged to prison, to be scourged, to be hung up by the neck, to be sewed up in a sack, to be exposed to wild beasts, is little: let me be roasted before a fire, provided only the truth be brought to light by such a death.

Though disappointed for the time, Paleario's accusers were not inclined to let him rest; he was, therefore, soon after obliged to quit Sienna. Being

invited by the senate of Lucca, he repaired to that city, where he taught, and acted on solemn occasions as orator to the republic. One of his former enemies, however,—Machus, called Blaterone (the Babblers),—followed him to this place, and, being anew confounded by the eloquence and noble bearing of Paleario, sought revenge on him through the Dominicans at Rome. But he had friends in the conclave, who for the present stifled the charges of his accuser.

The income of his post at Lucca appears to have been scarcely sufficient for the creditable maintenance of his family; and he had the trial of seeing his wife endure privations to which she had been unaccustomed. After remaining, therefore, for about ten years in his office, he accepted a more advantageous proposal from the senate of Milan. This was to become professor of eloquence, with a liberal salary and various privileges; and here he might have expected to spend the remainder of his life. But the toils of the persecutors were now fast thickening around the reformer; and Paleario, after several years of peril, was just deliberating, in 1566, about a removal to Bologna, when, on the accession of Pius V to the papal chair, the accusation against the author of “The Benefit of Christ’s Death” was directed to be

re-heard. He was then seized by the inquisitor, Angelo di Cremona, conveyed to Rome, and committed a close prisoner to the Torre Nona.

The charges against him were disposed under the following four heads: that he denied purgatory; that he disapproved of the burial of the dead in churches, and preferred the ancient Roman mode of sepulture without the walls of the cities; that he ridiculed the monastic life; and, lastly, that he ascribed justification solely to faith in the mercy of God forgiving our sins through Jesus Christ. In his examinations he appears to have manifested great firmness. When questioned by the cardinals of the Inquisition, he addressed them (it is an enemy<sup>1</sup> who reports his words):

Seeing that your eminences have so many credible witnesses against me, it is unnecessary for you to give yourselves or me longer trouble. I am resolved to act according to the advice of the blessed apostle Peter, when he says, "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, who did no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Proceed, then, to give judgment; pronounce sentence on Aonio, and thus gratify his adversaries and fulfill your office.

Judgment was given, and he was condemned, after more than three years' imprisonment, to be suspended on a gibbet, and his body to be committed to the flames; though, according to some authorities, he was burned alive.

The Romanists, according to their frequent practice in such cases, pretended that Aonio was repentant, and died in the communion of their church. And there is a minute to this effect extant, which purports to be an official document of the Dominicans who attended him in his last moments.<sup>2</sup> But this assertion is refuted by an author, Laderchius, who drew his materials from the records of the Inquisition, and who says, "When it appeared that this son of Belial was obstinate and refractory, and could by no means be recovered from the darkness of error to the light of truth, he was deservedly delivered to the fire, that, after suffering its momentary pains here, he might be found in everlasting flames hereafter." Indeed, the last letters which Paleario wrote to his family on the morning of his death, sufficiently show the falsity of the pretended recantation. They would, we may readily conclude, have expressed his contrition, had he felt any, for opposing the popish doctrines. These letters to his wife and children are as follows:

*My Dearest Wife:*

I would not wish that you should receive sorrow from my pleasure, nor ill from my good. The hour is now come when I must pass from this life to my Lord and Father and God. I depart as joyfully as if I were going to the nuptials of the Son of the great King, which I have always prayed my Lord to grant me through his goodness and infinite mercy. Wherefore, my dearest wife, comfort yourself with the will of God and with my resignation, and attend to the desponding family which still survives, training them up, and preserving them in the fear of God, and being to them both father and mother. I am now an old man of seventy years, and useless. Our children must provide for themselves by their virtue and industry, and lead an honorable life. God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with your spirit! Thy husband,

*Aonio Paleario,  
Rome, July 3, 1570*

*Lampridio and Fedro, beloved children:*

These my very courteous lords do not abate in their kindness to me even at this extremity, and give me permission to write to you. It pleases God to call me to himself by this means, which may appear to you harsh and painful; but, if you regard it properly, as happening with my full resignation and pleasure, you will acquiesce in the will of God, as you have hitherto done.

Virtue and industry I leave you for a patrimony, along with the little property you already possess. I do not leave you in debt. Many are always asking when they ought to give. You were freed more than eighteen years ago; you are not bound for my debts. If you are called upon to discharge them, have recourse to his excellency the duke, who will not see you wronged. I have requested from Luca Pridio an account of what is due to me, and what I am owing. With the dowry of your mother, bring up your little sister as God shall give you grace. Salute Aspasia and sister Aonilla, my beloved daughters in the Lord. My hour approaches. The Spirit of God console and preserve you in his grace. Your father,

*Aonio Paleari,*  
Rome, July 3, 1570

The superscription was: “To his dearest wife, Marietta Paleari, and to his beloved sons Lampridio and Fedro Paleari, at the hill of Yaldenza, in the suburbs of St. Caterina.”

After these last farewells, he rendered up himself to the tormentors, and entered his eternal rest.

Many of the works of Aonio Paleario are extant;<sup>3</sup> but the treatise on “The Benefit of the Death of Christ” is not included in any collection of them,

probably because it appeared anonymously. The original title was, "Trattato utilissimo del beneficio de Giesu Christo crucifisso verso i Christiani. Venetiis, apud Bernardinum de Bindonie. Anno Do. 1543." Its publication attracted great attention, and it was attributed by some to Cardinal Pole, supposed at that time, as already observed, to favor the doctrines of the Reformation. "Many are of opinion," says Vergerio, "that there is scarcely a book of this age, or, at least, in the Italian language, so sweet, so pious, so simple, and so well fitted to instruct the ignorant and weak, especially in the doctrine of justification. I will say more: Reginald Pole, the British cardinal, and the intimate friend of Morone, was esteemed the author of that book, or partly so; at least it is known that he, with Flaminio, Priuli, and his other friends, defended and circulated it."

So great was its popularity, that forty-thousand copies are said to have been sold in six years; and it was translated into several other languages. It was, however, as before noticed, particularly distasteful to the Romish authorities; and consequently the most strenuous attempts were made to suppress it. It is forbidden by the various prohibitory indexes, in which the title only is recited, without Paleario's name; and, indeed, in one index, it is ranked amongst



the books of which the authors were not certainly known. How successful the attempts to suppress this treatise were, shall be told in the words of Mr. T. B. Macaulay. In a paper published in the “Edinburgh Review” for October, 1840, entitled “The Revolutions of the Papacy,” he says:

It was not on moral influence alone that the Catholic Church relied. In Spain and Italy the civil sword was unsparingly employed in her support. The Inquisition was armed with new powers, and inspired with a new energy. If Protestantism, or the semblance of Protestantism, showed itself in any quarter, it was instantly met, not by party-teasing persecution, but by persecution of that sort which bows down and crushes all but a very few select spirits. Whoever was suspected of heresy, whatever his rank, his learning, or his reputation, was to purge himself to the satisfaction of a severe and vigilant tribunal, or to die by fire. Heretical books were sought out and destroyed with unsparing rigor. Works which were once in every house were so effectually suppressed, that no copy of them is now to be found in the most extensive libraries. One book in particular, entitled ‘Of the Benefit of the Death of Christ,’ had this fate. It was written in Tuscan, was many times reprinted, and was eagerly read in every part of Italy. But the inquisitors detected in it the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. *They proscribed it; and it is now as utterly lost as the second decade of*

*Livy.*

Such, indeed, has been the opinion, repeatedly expressed, of other writers; and no copy of the original Italian work is known to exist. It is quite possible that it still may lurk in some unexplored recesses; but there is no certainty of this being the case. It was, however, translated into Spanish and French; and Dr. M'Crie, in his valuable "History of the Reformation in Italy," showed that an English version had been made not later than the year 1577.<sup>4</sup> It was this statement that attracted the attention of the present editor, and induced him to make researches for a book which he felt persuaded must survive in its English dress. He was successful, three or four years ago, in finding the copy of the fourth English edition, from which this volume is now printed, and he has since ascertained the existence of two other copies. It is very probable that more may from time to time be discovered.

This English translation was made, not from the Italian original, but from the French version; and it would appear, from the translator's preface, that he was ignorant of the name of the author. His own initials only are given; but it may be supposed that

these letters designate Arthur Golding, who was long and laboriously employed in Queen Elizabeth's reign in rendering into English the works of several of the foreign Reformers, of the Latin classics, and of other writers. That the translation, however, here given is really that of Paleario's work, is proved both by its agreement with Paleario's own description of it in his defense, already cited, before the senate of Siena, and by the testimony of Riederer, who appears, according to Dr. M'Crie's statement, to have seen the original, and who has supplied a detailed account of it.

The present is a faithful reprint from the copy in the possession of the editor. The spelling and the punctuation have been modernized; but no liberty has been taken with the text, except by the rare introduction of a word absolutely needed to complete the sense. Such additions are included in brackets. The passages quoted from the Fathers have been subjoined; the Scripture references also have been corrected, and the verses of the chapters given. These Scripture references are in the ancient copy very incorrect; and, as it is frequently a mere allusion that is made, the editor is not certain that he has in all cases discovered the texts referred to.

He would only add his earnest prayer, that the

reprinting of this interesting relic of the age of the Reformation may, by God's blessing, prove acceptable and useful to the Christian reader. Perhaps the attention now called to it may lead to its re-translation into its original tongue; and it may be instrumental again in disseminating the doctrine of Christ crucified in the land in which it at first appeared.

## Foreword

Thou hast here delivered to thee, good reader, a little treatise, first written in the Italian tongue, and printed at Venice; after that, translated into the French language, and printed at Lyons; and now translated and printed for thee to read in the English tongue. Inquire not of the author,—he is unknown; and to know him would do thee but little good. Read the book devoutly, regard the matter of it attentively; it may do thee much good in these evil days. This may be accounted among the greatest evils with which this age is infected, that they which are called Christians are miserably divided about Christ. And yet, in truth (as the apostle saith unto us), “there is but one God, which is the Father, of whom are all

things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Cor. 8:6). To discourse on this division and the cause thereof would be, to some, pleasing; to some it would be displeasing. For what one truth can please minds so diversely divided? Would God it could please all to become one in that one Christ whose name we all do carry. In this little book is that benefit, which cometh by Christ crucified to the Christians, truly and comfortably handled; which benefit, if all Christians did truly understand and faithfully embrace, this division would vanish away, and in Christ the Christians should become one. To this end read this book, and much good in Christ may it do to all them which do read it. Amen.



## 1

# **Original Sin and Man's Wretchedness**

The holy Scripture saith, that God created man after his own image and that he had likeness, making him, as in respect of his body, impassible (free from suffering) and, as touching his soul, righteous, true, good, merciful, and holy. But, after that he, being overcome with desire of knowledge, had eaten of the

## 1. Original Sin and Man's Wretchedness

apple that God had forbidden him, he lost the said image and likeness of God, and became like the brute beasts, and like the devil who had abused him. For, as touching his soul, he became unrighteous, untrue, cruel, pitiless, and the enemy of God; and, as touching his body, he became passible (subject to suffering), and subject to a thousand inconveniences and diseases, and not only like, but also inferior to brute beasts. And even as, if our forefathers had obeyed God, they should have left us their righteousness and holiness as an heritage; even so, by being disobedient unto God, they have left us the inheritance of unrighteousness, and God's displeasure, in such sort as it is impossible for us (through our own strength) to love God, or to frame ourselves unto his holy will. Nay, we be enemies unto him, as to one that must punish our sins, because he is a just judge; and therefore can we not any more trust wholly to his holy mercy. To be short, our whole nature was corrupted by Adam's sin. And, like as previously it had superiority above all creatures, so became it an underling to all, the bond-slave of Satan, sin, and death, and condemned to the miseries of hell. Also he lost his judgment altogether, and began to say that good was evil, and evil good; esteeming false things to be true, and true things to be false. Which thing the prophet



## 1. Original Sin and Man's Wretchedness

considering, saith that "all men are liars" (Ps. 116:11), and that "there is not one that doth good" (Ps. 14:3); because the devil, like a stout man of arms, ruleth his own palace, that is to wit, the world, whereof he became the prince and lord. There is no tongue that can express the thousandth part of our misery, in that we, being created by God's own hand, have lost the said image of God, and are become like the devil, and too like to him in nature and condition, willing whatsoever he willeth, and likewise refusing whatsoever he misliketh. By reason whereof, being given up for a prey to that wicked spirit, there is no sin so grievous which every one of us would not be ready to do, if the grace of God stay us not. And this our deprivation of righteousness, and this forward inclination to all unrighteousness and naughtiness, is called original sin; the which we bring with us from out of our mother's womb, so as we be born the children of wrath; and it hath had his first spring from our first fathers, and is the cause and fountain of all the sins and iniquities that we commit; wherefrom if we will be delivered, and return again to our first innocency, to recover the image of God, first of all it standeth us on hand to know our own wretchedness. For, like as no man ever seek to the physician except he know himself to be dis-

## 1. Original Sin and Man's Wretchedness

eased, or acknowledge the excellency of the physician, and how much he is bound unto him, except he know his own disease to be pestilent and deadly; even so no man acknowledgeth Jesus Christ, the only Physician of our souls, except he first know his own soul to be diseased: neither can he perceive the excellency of him, nor how much he is bound unto him, except he first enter into the knowledge of his own outrageous sins, and of the incurable infirmity which we have received through the infection of our first fathers.



## 2

# **The Law Given by God**

How the Law was given by God, to the end that we, knowing our sin, and having not any hope of ability to make ourselves righteous by our own works, should have recourse to God's mercy, and unto the righteousness of faith.

Our God, therefore, minding of his infinite goodness and mercy to send his only Son to set free the

## 2. The Law Given by God

wretched children of Adam, and knowing that first of all it behooved him to make them understand their own misery, chose Abraham (in whose seed he promised to bless all nations), and accepted his offspring for his peculiar people, unto whom (after their departure out of Egypt and deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh) he, by the means of Moses, gave the law; which forbiddeth all lusting, and commandeth us to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength, in such wise as our whole trust be reposed in him, and we ready to leave our life for his sake, to suffer all torments in our members, and to be bereft of all our goods, dignities, and honors, for the love of our God, choosing to die rather than to do anything that may displease him, be it never so little, and doing all things in that behalf with a merry heart, and with all forwardness and cheerfulness. Moreover, the law commandeth us to love our neighbor as ourself, meaning by the neighbor all manner of men, as well friends as foes; and it willet us to do to every man as we would be done unto, and to love other men's cases as our own. And so, by looking in this holy law, as in a clear looking-glass, man doth out of hand espy his own great imperfection and unableness to obey God's commandments, and to render him the honor and love

## 2. The Law Given by God

which he ought to yield to his Maker. The first office of the law, then, is to make sin known, as St. Paul affirmeth (Rom. 3:20). And in another place he saith: “I had not known what sin is, but by the law” (Rom. 7:7).

The second office of the law is to make sin increase; forasmuch as we, being quite gone from the obeying of God, and become bond-slaves to the devil, being full of wicked works and inordinate affections, cannot abide that God should forbid us to lust, which increaseth so much the more as it is the more prohibited; by reason whereof St. Paul saith that sin was dead, but the law came and raised it up again, and so it became out of measure great.

The third office of the law is to show the wrath and judgment of God, who threatened death and everlasting punishment to such as keep not the law throughout in all points. For the holy Scripture saith: “Cursed is he that performeth not thoroughly all the things that are written in the book of the law” (Deut. 27:26). And, therefore, St. Paul saith that the law is a ministry (2 Cor. 3:7), and that it bringeth forth wrath (Rom. 4:15).

The law, then, having discovered sin, and increased it, and showed forth the wrath and indignation of God, who threateneth death, executeth his

## 2. The Law Given by God

fourth office, which is, to put a man in fear; who thereupon falleth into sorrowfulness, and would fain satisfy the law; but, forasmuch as he seeth clearly that he is not able, he waxeth angry against God, and would with all his heart that there were no God, because he feareth to be sore chastised and punished by him, according as St. Paul saith that “the wisdom of the flesh is the enemy of God; because it neither is, nor can be, subject to the law of God” (Rom. 8:7).

The fifth office of the law (which is the principal end, and the most excellent and necessary office of it) is to constrain a man to go unto Jesus Christ; in like wise as the Hebrews, being dismayed, were constrained to appeal unto Moses, saying: “Let not the Lord speak unto us, lest we die; but speak thou unto us, and we will obey thee in all things.” And the Lord answered: “Verily they have spoken exceeding well” (Ex. 20:19; Deut. 5:28). Yea, they were not praised for any other thing than for their desiring of a mediator betwixt God and them, which was Moses, who represented Jesus Christ, that should be the Advocate and Mediator between God and man. In respect whereof, God said unto Moses: “I will raise up a Prophet among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my word in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all the things that I shall command him;

## 2. The Law Given by God

and I will punish all those that will not obey my word, which he shall speak in my name” (Deut. 18:17-19).



### 3

## **The Forgiveness of Sins**

How the forgiveness of our sins, our justification, and our salvation, depend upon Jesus Christ.

When as our God then had sent the said great Prophet which he had promised us (who is his only



### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

Son), to the end that he should set us free from the curse of the law, and reconcile us unto our God; that he should make our will fit for good works, healing our free-will, and repairing in us the foresaid image of God (Col. 3:10), which we had lost through the fault of our first parents; forasmuch as we know that “under heaven there is none other name given unto men whereby we may be saved” (Acts 4:12), but the name of Jesus Christ; let us run unto him with the feet of lively faith, and cast ourselves between his arras, since he allureth us so graciously, crying: “Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you” (Matt. 11:28). What comfort or what joy in this life can be comparable to this his saying there, when as a man, feeling himself oppressed with the intolerable weight of his sins, understandeth so sweet and amiable words of the Son of God, who promiseth so graciously to refresh and rid him of his great pains? But all the matter lieth in acknowledging our own weakness and misery in good earnest. For he shall never know what is sweet, who hath not tasted of the sour. And therefore Jesus Christ saith, “If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink” (John 7:37); as if he had meant to say, If a man know not himself to be a sinner, nor thirst after righteousness, he cannot taste of the sweetness of

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

Jesus Christ; how sweet it is to talk of him, to think of him, and to follow his most holy life. But, when we once thoroughly know our own infirmity by means of the law, let us hearken to St. John Baptist, who pointeth us to the Sovereign Physician with his finger, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). For he it is that delivereth us from the heavy yoke of the law, abrogating and disannulling the curses and sharp threatenings of the same (Gal. 3:13), healing all our infirmities, reforming our free-will, returning us to our ancient innocency, and repairing in us the image of our God; insomuch that (according to St. Paul’s saying) “Like as by Adam we be all dead, so by Jesus Christ we are all quickened” (1 Cor. 15:22). And it is not to be believed that the sin of Adam, which we have by inheritance from him, should be of more force than the righteousness of Christ, that which also we inherit by faith.

It seemeth that man hath great cause to complain that (without any reason why) he is conceived and born in sin (Ps. 51:5), and in the wickedness of his parents, by means of whom death reigneth over all men. But now is all our sorrow taken away; inasmuch as by a like mean (without any occasion given on our behalf) righteousness and everlasting life are come

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

by Jesus Christ, and by him death is slain; whereof St. Paul maketh a very godly discourse, which I purpose to set down here following. “Wherefore (saith he) like as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, even so death went over all men, forasmuch as all men have sinned. For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin was not regarded as long as there was no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam unto Moses, even over them also that sinned not after the like manner of the transgression of Adam, who was a figure of him that was to come. But yet the gift is not so as is the offense; for, if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. Neither is the gift so as that which entered in by one that sinned. For the fault came of one offense unto condemnation; but the gift is of many offenses unto justification. For, if by the offense of one death reigned through one, much more shall they which receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through one, that is, Jesus Christ. Likewise, then, as by the offense of one that fault came on all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the benefit abounded toward all men to the justification of life. For, as by one man’s

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be also made righteous. Moreover the law entered thereupon, that the offense should abound; nevertheless, where sin abounded, there grace abounded much more; that, as sin had reigned unto death, so might grace also reign by righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:12-21). By these words of St. Paul we manifestly perceive the thing to be true which we have said heretofore; that is, to wit, that the law was given to make sin known; which sin we do also know not to be of greater force than Christ’s righteousness, where-through we be justified before God. For, even as Jesus Christ is stronger than Adam was, so is his righteousness more mighty than the sin of Adam. And if the sin of Adam was sufficient enough to make all men sinners and children of wrath, without any misdeed of our own, much more shall Christ’s righteousness be of greater force to make us all righteous, and the children of grace, without any of our own good works; which cannot be good unless that, before we do them, we ourselves be made good; as Augustine also affirmeth. Hereby a man may know in what error they be, who, by reason of some great offense, despair of God’s good-will, imagining that he is not willing to forgive, cover, and

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

pardon all sin, having already punished and chastised all our sins and iniquities in his own only-begotten and dearly-beloved Son, and consequently granted a general pardon to all mankind; which everybody enjoyeth that believeth the gospel, that is to say, which believeth the happy tidings that the apostles have published through the whole world, saying, “We beseech you for Jesus Christ’s sake, Be ye reconciled unto God; for he that never knew sin was made a sacrifice for our sin, that we might become righteous in him” (2 Cor. 5:20, 21). The prophet Isaiah, foreseeing this great goodness of God, writeth these heavenly words, which do so well paint out the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the cause thereof, as it is not to be found better described, even in the writings of the apostles: “Who (saith he) will believe our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? But he shall grow up before him as a branch, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath neither form nor beauty: when we shall see him, there shall be no form that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men: he is a man full of sorrows, and hath experience of infirmities: we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows; yet we did judge

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

him as plagued and smitten of God, and humbled; but he was wounded for our transgressions: he was broken for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all: he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet did he not open his mouth. He is brought as a sheep to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isa. 53:1-7).

O great unkindness! O thing abominable! That we, which profess ourselves Christians, and hear that the Son of God hath taken all our sins upon him, and washed them out with his precious blood, suffering himself to be fastened to the cross for our sakes, should nevertheless make as though we would justify ourselves, and purchase forgiveness of our sins by our own works; as who would say that the deserts, righteousness, and bloodshed of Jesus Christ were not enough to do it, unless we came to put to our works and righteousness; which are altogether defiled and spotted with self-love, self-liking, self-profit, and a thousand other vanities, for which we have need to crave pardon at God’s band, rather than reward Neither do we think of the threatenings which

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

St. Paul useth to the Galatians; who, having been deceived by false preachers, believed not that the justification by faith was sufficient of itself but went about still to be made righteous by the law. Unto whom St. Paul saith, “Jesus Christ shall nothing profit you that justify yourselves by the law; for you be fallen from grace, because that we through the Spirit of faith wait for the hope of righteousness” (Gal. 5:4, 5).

Now, if the seeking of righteousness and forgiveness of sins, by the keeping of the law which God gave upon Mount Sinai, with so great glory and majesty, be the denying of Christ and of his grace, what shall we say to those that will needs justify themselves before God by their own laws and observances? I would wish that such folks should a little compare the one with the other, and afterward give judgment themselves. God mindeth not to do that honor, not to give that glory to his own law; and yet they will have him to give it to men’s laws and ordinances. But that honor is given only to his only-begotten Son, who alone, by the sacrifice of his death and passion, hath made full amends for all our sins, past, present, and to come, as St. Paul and St. John declare (Heb. 7:27; John 12:32; Heb. 10:12, 14; 1 John 1:7; 2:2). Wherefore, as often as we apply this satis-

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

faction of Jesus Christ unto our souls by faith, out of all doubt we obtain forgiveness of our sins, and become good and righteous before God, through his righteousness. And therefore, after that St. Paul hath said that, as touching the righteousness of the law, he had lived unblamable, he addeth: "And yet, whatsoever I have gained by it, I have accounted it in all respects to be but loss, for the love of Christ. And specially I esteem all things to be loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have counted all things to be loss, and deem them but as dung, so I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, which righteousness is given of God, I mean the righteousness of faith, that I may come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:6-10). O most notable words, which all Christians ought to have engraven in their hearts, praying God to make them taste it perfectly. Lo, how St. Paul showeth plainly, that whosoever knoweth Christ aright esteemeth all the works of the law to be hurtful; for so much as they make us to swerve from our trust in Jesus Christ; to whom every man ought to impute his salvation, and to trust only unto him alone; and, to enforce this sentence the more, he addeth further, that



### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

he esteemeth all things but as dung, so he may gain Christ and be found incorporated in him; declaring thereby, that whosoever trusteth in his own works, and pretendeth to justify himself by them, getteth not Jesus Christ, neither is engrafted into him. And, forasmuch as the whole mystery of our faith consisteth in the truth hereof, to the end we might the better understand what he meant to say, he addeth, and repeateth oftentimes, that he had nothing to do with all the outward justification, and all the righteousness that is grounded upon the keeping of the law; but that he would clothe himself with the righteousness which God giveth by faith to all them that believe that all our sins are fully chastised and punished in Jesus Christ; and that Jesus Christ (as St. Paul saith) “is made our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption, to the end (as it is written) that he which will glory should glory in the Lord, and not in his own works” (1 Cor. 1:30, 31). Very true it is, that in the holy Scriptures there are some texts to be found which, being misunderstood, seem to gainsay this holy doctrine of St. Paul’s, and to attribute justification and remission of sins unto works and to charity. But those authorities have already been well expounded by some, who have showed plainly, that such as have understood them in the sense aforesaid

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

understood them not aright. Wherefore, my dear beloved brethren, let us not follow the fond opinion of the bewitched Galatians, but rather let us follow the truth which St. Paul teacheth us, and let us give the whole glory of our justification unto God's mercy and to the merits of his Son; who by his own bloodshed hath set us free from the sovereignty of the law, and from the tyranny of sin and death, and hath brought us into the kingdom of God, to give us life and endless felicity. I say, yet further, that he hath delivered us from the dominion of the law, insomuch as he hath given us his Holy Spirit, who teacheth us all truth, and that he hath satisfied the law to the full, and given the same satisfaction unto all his members (that is to wit, to all true Christians), so as they may safely appear at God's throne, because they be clothed with the righteousness of his Christ, and by him delivered from the curse of the law. Then cannot the law any more accuse us or condemn us, nor move our affections or appetites, nor increase sin in us. And therefore St. Paul saith that the obligation which was against us is cancelled by Jesus Christ, and discharged upon the tree of the cross (Gal. 3:13), insomuch as he hath set us free from the subjection of the law, and consequently from the tyranny of sin and death (Rom. 8:2; Col. 2:14), which

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

can no more hold us oppressed, because it is overcome by Jesus Christ in his resurrection, and so consequently by us, which are his members, in such manner that we may say with St. Paul, and with the prophet Osee, Death is quite vanquished and destroyed. “O death! where is thy sting? O hell! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But God be praised, who hath granted us victory by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:55, 56; Hos. 13:14). He is the blessed Seed that hath crushed the head of the venomous serpent (Gen. 3:15), that is to wit, of the devil; insomuch that all those which believe in Jesus Christ, reposing their whole trust in his grace, do overcome sin, death, the devil, and hell; as Christ hath done. He is that blessed Seed of Abraham, in the which God hath promised blessedness to all nations. It behooved every particular person to fight with the said horrible serpent, and to deliver himself from that curse.

But that enterprise was so great, that all the force of the whole world knit together was not able to go through with it. Wherefore our God, the Father of mercy, being moved with compassion of our miseries, hath given us his only-begotten Son, who hath delivered us from the venom of the serpent, and is himself become our blessedness and righteousness, condi-

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins

tionally that we accept the same, renouncing all our own outward justifications. Then, my dear brethren, let us embrace the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and let us make it ours by means of faith: let us assure ourselves that we be righteous not for our own works, but through the merits of Jesus Christ, and let us live merrily, and assured that the righteousness of Jesus Christ hath utterly done away all our unrighteousness, and made us good, righteous, and holy before God; who, beholding us engrafted into his Son by faith, esteemeth us not now any more as the children of Adam, but as his own children, and hath made us heirs of all his riches, with his own begotten Son.



## 4

# **The Effects of Lively Faith**

Of the effects of lively faith, and of the union of man's soul with Jesus Christ.

This holy faith worketh after such a sort in us, that he which believeth that Jesus Christ hath taken all his sins upon him becometh like unto Christ, and

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

overcometh sin, the devil, death, and hell. And the reason thereof is this, namely, that the church (that is to wit, every faithful soul) is Christ's wife, and Christ is her Husband. For we know how the law of marriage is, that of two they become one self-same thing, being two in one flesh, and that the goods and substance of either of them become common to them both; by means whereof the husband saith that the dowry of the wife is his, and likewise the wife saith that her husband's house and all his riches are hers; and of a truth so they are; for otherwise they should not be one flesh, as the Scripture saith. After the same manner hath God married his only-begotten and dear beloved Son to the faithful soul, which hath not any other thing peculiar of her own, save only sin; and yet the Son of God hath not disdained to take her for his well-beloved spouse, together with her peculiar dowry, which is sin. And now, by reason of the union which is in this holy marriage, look what the one hath is also the other's. Jesus Christ therefore saith thus: The dowry of man's soul, my dear wife, that is to wit, her sins and transgressings of the law, God's wrath against her, the boldness of the devil over her, the prison of hell, and all other her evils, are become mine, and are in my power to do what I list with them. Wherefore it is at my choice to deal

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

with them at my pleasure; and therefore I will put out the handwriting which is against the soul my wife; I will take it out of the way; I will fasten it to my cross in mine own body, and in the same will I spoil principalities and powers, and make a show of them openly, and triumph over them, and consume them utterly unto nothing.

Now, when God saw his Son, who knew no sin, neither had any sin in him, thus willingly taking on him the foulness of our iniquity, he made him to be sin for us, even the very sacrifice for our sin, and did sharply punish our sin in him, putting him to death, even the death of the cross. Howbeit, forasmuch as he was his well-beloved and obedient Son, he would not leave him to death, nor suffer his Holy One to see corruption, but raised him up from death to life, giving him all power in heaven and earth, and set him at his right hand in glory (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9). Now, then, the wife likewise, with exceeding great joy, doth say: The realms and kingdoms of my most dear Husband and Saviour are mine; by him I am an heir of heaven; my Husband's riches, that is to wit, his holiness, his innocency, his righteousness, and his Godhead, together with all his virtue and might, are mine, and for me; and, therefore, in him I am holy, innocent, righteous, and godly, and there is not any

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

spot in me. I am well-favored and fair; inasmuch as my lawful Husband hath not any blemish in him, but is altogether goodly and fair. And since that he is wholly mine, and so, consequently, all that he hath is mine, and all that he hath is pure and holy; it followeth that I also am pure and holy. Therefore, to begin at his most innocent birth, he hath thereby sanctified the birth of his spouse conceived in sin. The godly childhood and youth of the Bridegroom hath justified the childish and youthful life of his dearly-beloved bride. For the love and union that is betwixt the soul of a true Christian, and the Bridegroom Jesus Christ, maketh all the works of either of them to be common to them both. By reason whereof, when a man saith, Jesus Christ hath fasted, Jesus Christ hath prayed, Jesus Christ was heard of the Father, raised the dead, drove devils out of men, healed the sick, died, rose again, and ascended into heaven; likewise, a man may say, that a Christian man hath done all the self-same works; for so much as the works of Christ are the works of the Christian; because he hath done them for him. Verily a man may say that the Christian hath been nailed to the cross, buried, raised again, is gone up into heaven, become the child of God, and made partaker of the Godhead. On the other side, all the works that a Christian man



#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

doth are Christ's works; because it is his will to take them for his. And, forasmuch as they be imperfect, and he thoroughly perfect, and cannot away with any imperfect thing, he hath made them perfect with his virtues; to the end that his wife should be always joyful and well-contented, and not be afraid of anything, assuring herself that, although there be yet still some default in her works, yet notwithstanding they be acceptable to God in respect of his Son, upon whom he hath his eyes always fastened. O that unmeasurable goodness of God! How greatly is the Christian bound unto God! There is no love of man, be it never so great, that may be compared with the love that God beareth to the soul of every faithful Christian, whereof Christ is the Bridegroom. Whereupon St. Paul saith Jesus Christ hath so loved his wife, the church, which is builded of living stones (that is, of the souls of the believing Christians), that for to sanctify her he hath offered himself to the death of the cross, cleansing her with the washing of water, by his word, to join her to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or other like thing; but that she should be holy and unblamable (Eph. 5:25), that is to wit, like unto him in holiness and innocency, and also be the true and lawful daughter of God, who hath loved the world so well, that, as Jesus

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

Christ himself saith, “He hath given his only-begotten Son, to the end that every one which believeth in him should not perish, but have life everlasting. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but to the end that the world might be saved by him, insomuch that he which believeth in him shall not be damned” (John. 3:16, 17).

Some man might demand after what manner the union of his holy marriage is made, and how the soul, which is the bride, and her Bridegroom Jesus Christ, are knit together? What assurance can I have that my soul is united unto Jesus Christ, and become his spouse? How can I assuredly glory that I am queen and mistress of his great riches, as a wife may? I can easily believe that other folks shall receive this honor and glory; but I cannot persuade myself that I am one of those same to whom God hath given so great grace. For I know mine own wretchedness and imperfection. My dearly-beloved brother, I answer thee, that thine assurance consisteth in true and lively faith, wherewith, as St. Peter saith, God cleanseth men’s hearts (Acts 15:9). And this faith is grounded in the believing of the gospel, that is to say, in the believing of the glad tidings which have been published on God’s behalf through the whole world (Luke 2:10); which tidings containeth in effect, that God

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

hath used the rigorousness of his justice against Jesus Christ, chastising and punishing all our sins in him. And whosoever receiveth this good tidings, and believes it steadfastly, hath the true faith, and doth enjoy the forgiveness of his sins, and is also reconciled unto God, and of the child of wrath is become the child of grace, and, recovering the image of God (2 Cor. 3:18), entereth into the kingdom of God, and is made the temple of God; who marrieth man's soul to his only Son, by the mean of this faith; which faith is a work of God, and the gift of God, as St. Paul saith oftentimes. And God giveth it unto those whom he calleth to him, of purpose to justify them, and to glorify them, and to give them everlasting life, according as our Lord Jesus Christ witnesseth, saying, "This is the will of him that sent me, even that every one which seeth the Son and believeth in him should have everlasting life; and I will raise him up again at the latter day" (John 6:39). And, "like as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; to the end that every one which believeth in him might not perish, but have life everlasting" (John 3:14, 15). Also he saith to Martha, "He that believeth in me shall live, although he were dead; and every one that liveth and believeth in me shall not die forever" (John 11:25, 26). And to a com-

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

pany of the Jews he saith, “I am come a light into the world, to the end that every man which believeth in me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46). And St. John in his epistle saith, “Herein appeared the love of God towards us; for that God is love, and sent his only-begotten Son into this world, that we might live through him. And herein is love known, not in that we loved God, but in that he loved us, and sent his Son to make atonement for our sins” (1 John 4:8, 9). And, moreover, he sent him to destroy our enemies. For the bringing whereof to pass, he made him partaker of our flesh, and of our blood, as saith St. Paul, “to the end that by his death he might destroy him that had the dominion of death, that is to wit, the devil, and set all such at liberty as were subject to bondage all their life long, for fear of death” (Heb. 2:14, 15). Seeing, then, that we have records of the holy Scripture concerning the promises, whereof we have spoken heretofore, and concerning many other promises that are dispersed in divers places of the same, we cannot doubt of it. And, for so much as the holy Scripture speaketh to all in general, none of us ought to distrust in himself that the self-same thing which the Scripture saith should not belong particularly to himself.

And, to the end that this point, wherein lieth and

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

consisteth the whole mystery of our holy faith, may be understood the better, let us put the case, that some good and holy king cause the proclamation to be made through his whole realm, by the sound of a trumpet, that all rebels and banished men shall safely return home to their houses, because at the suit and desert of some dear friend of theirs it hath pleased him to pardon them; certainly none of those rebels ought to doubt of the obtaining of true pardon of his rebellion, but rather ought assuredly to return home to his house, to live under the shadow of that holy king. And, if he will not return, he shall bear the penalty of it, because that through his own unbelief he dieth in exile, and in the displeasure of his prince. But this good king is the Lord of heaven and earth; who, for the obedience and desert of our good brother, Jesus Christ, hath pardoned us all our sins, and, as we have said afore, hath made open proclamation through the whole world, that all of us may safely return into his kingdom. Wherefore he that believeth this proclamation doth straightways return unto God's kingdom (whereby we were driven by the offense of our first parents), and is blessedly governed by God's Holy Spirit. And he that giveth no credit to the said proclamation shall never enjoy the said general pardon, but for his unbelief's sake shall abide in

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

banishment under the tyranny of the devil, and live and die in extreme misery, living and dying in the displeasure of the King of heaven and earth—and that justly. For we cannot commit a greater offense against this good God than to account him as a liar and deceiver; which verily we do, in not giving credit to his promises.

O, how passing heavy is this deadly sin of unbelief! Which, so far forth as is possible, bereaveth God of his glory and perfection; besides the great harm that it doth to a man's self, which is his own damnation and the endless torment of his soul, which the miserable conscience feeleth even in this life. But, on the contrary, he that cometh unto God with assuredness of this faith, believing him without any mistrust or doubt of his promises, and warranting himself for a certainty that God will perform all that ever he hath promised him, giveth all the glory unto God (1 Cor. 1:31), and liveth continually in rest and endless joy, evermore praising and thanking the Lord God for choosing him to the glory of the eternal life.

And hereof they have an assured earnest-penny and gage, that is to wit, the Son of God, whom they take for their most loving Bridegroom, the blood of whom hath made their hearts so drunken, that, through this passing holy belief there is in the Chris-

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

tian heart engendered so lively a hope, and so certain a trust of God's mercy toward us, and such an operation is wrought in us, as we rest ourselves wholly upon God, leaving the whole care of us unto him in such wise, that, being thoroughly assured of God's good will, we are not afraid, neither of the devil, nor of his ministers, nor of death. Which holy and steadfast trust of God's mercy enlargeth our heart, cheereth it up, and with certain marvellous sweet affections directeth it unto God, filling it and setting it on fire with an exceeding fervent love. And therefore Paul encoarageth us to "go with all boldness to the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16); and he counselleth us that we should not shake it off, nor "make light of our trust, which hath great recompense and reward" (Heb. 10:35).

But this so holy and divine affiance is gendered in our hearts by the working of the Holy Ghost; who is communicated unto us by faith, which never goeth without the love of God. And hereof it cometh that we be provoked to do good works with a certain liveliness and effectual cheerfulness; whereby we gather such a strength and inclination to do them, as we be throughly ready and forward to do and suffer all intolerable things for the love and glory of our most gracious and merciful Father; who hath enriched us

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

with so abundant grace through Jesus Christ, and of his enemies made us his most dear children. This true faith is no sooner given a man, but he is by and by endued and imprinted with a certain violent love of good works, to yield right sweet and amiable fruits both unto God, and likewise to his neighbor, as a very good and fruitful tree. And it is no more possible that he should be otherwise, than it is possible that a faggot should be set on fire and not cast light immediately.

This is the holy faith, “without the which it is impossible that any man should please God” (Heb. 11:6), and whereby all the holy men (as well of the Old Testament as of the New) have been saved, according as St. Paul witnesseth of Abraham; concerning whom the Scripture saith that “Abraham believed God; and it was reckoned to him for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3; Gen. 15:6). And therefore he saith a little before, “We believe that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom. 3:26). And in another place he saith, “So then in that time shall the remnant be saved, according to the election of grace; and, if they be saved by grace, then is it not by works; for then were grace no grace” (Rom. 11:5, 6). And to the Galatians he saith, “It is a manifest matter that no man becometh righteous before God by the law; because



#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

the righteous liveth by faith. And the law consisteth not in belief but he that performeth the things that the law commandeth shall live by that performance” (Gal. 3:11, 12; Hab. 2:4). And further he saith that “a man cannot become righteous by the deeds of the law, but only by believing in Jesus Christ.” Again, a little after, he saith that “if a man can become righteous by the law, Jesus Christ died in vain” (Gal. 2:16, 21). Moreover, to the Romans, making comparison between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of the gospel, he saith that the one consisteth in the doing of works, and the other in believing: “For, if thou confess our Lord Jesus Christ with thy mouth, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him up from death, thou shalt be saved. For the belief of the heart maketh a man righteous; and the confession of the mouth maketh him safe” (Rom. 10:9, 10). Lo, how this good teacher St. Paul showeth evidently that faith maketh a man righteous without any works.

And not only St. Paul, but also the holy doctors that came after him have confirmed and allowed this most holy truth of justification by faith; among whom St. Augustine is the chief, who, in his book of *Faith and Works*, and in his book of *The Spirit and the Letter*, and in his book of *Fourscore and Three Questions*,

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

and in his book which he did write to Boniface, and in his treatise upon Psalm 31, and in many other places, defendeth this article, showing that we become righteous by faith without any help of good works;<sup>5</sup> howbeit that good works are the effects of righteousness, and not the cause of it. And he showeth that the words of St. James, being soundly understood, are nothing contrary to this article. Which thing Origen doth also affirm in his fourth book upon the epistle to the Romans, saying, that “St. Paul’s meaning is, that faith only is sufficient to make men righteous, insomuch that a man becometh righteous only by believing, although he have not done any good work at all. For so it is that the thief became righteous without the works of the law; forasmuch as the Lord sought not what good works he had done in time past, nor waited until he had done any after he had believed, but, having accepted him for righteous, upon his only confession, took him for his companion, even when he should enter into paradise. Likewise that so renowned a woman in the gospel of St. Luke (Luke 7:47, 50), while she was at the feet of Jesus Christ, heard it said unto her, ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee.’ And a little after he saith unto her, ‘Thy faith hath saved thee; go thy way in peace.’” Afterward Origen saith, “In many places of the

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

gospel, a man may see how our Lord Jesus Christ hath spoken in such wise, as he showeth that faith is the cause of the salvation of the believers. Then is a man made righteous by faith; and the works of the law further him nothing at all. On the contrary, where faith is not (which faith maketh the believer righteous), although a man do the works which the law commandeth, yet notwithstanding, forasmuch as they be not builded upon the foundation of faith, albeit that to outward appearance they seem good, yet can they not justify him that doth them; because he wanteth faith, which is the mark of them that are become righteous before God. And who is he that can boast himself to be righteous when he heareth God say by his prophet Isaiah, ‘that all our righteousness is as a defiled cloth’? (Isa. 64:6). Then can we not justly glory in ourselves, but in the only faith of the cross of Jesus Christ.” St. Basil, in his homily of humility, saith that the Christian ought to hold himself for righteous through belief in Jesus Christ; and his words are these: “The apostle saith that ‘he which glorieth should glory in the Lord; in that God hath made Jesus Christ to be our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption; to the end that he which would glory should glory in the Lord,’ because that the perfect and sound glorying is to glory in the

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

Lord. For in so doing, a man presumeth not upon his own righteousness, but acknowledgeth his want of the true righteousness, and that he is made righteous only by believing in Jesus Christ. And St. Paul glorieth of the despising of his own righteousness and of his seeking of Christ's righteousness, by faith, which cometh of God." St. Hilary, in his ninth canon, upon the exposition of St. Matthew, saith these words: "The scribes, considering Jesus Christ but only as man, were troubled that a man should forgive sins, and pardon that thing which the law could not do, because that only faith justifieth."

St. Ambrose, in expounding these words of St. Paul, "Unto him that believeth in him which justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, according to the purpose of God's grace: like as David also saith, That the man is blessed whom God accounteth righteous without works" (Rom. 4:5, 6), writeth thus: "St. Paul saith, that unto him which believeth in Jesus Christ (that is to wit, to the Gentile), his faith is imputed for righteousness, as it was unto Abraham. In what wise, then, think the Jews to become righteous by the works of the law, and yet to be righteous as Abraham was; seeing that Abraham became not righteous by the deeds of the law, but only by faith? Then is not the law

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

needful; forasmuch as the sinner becometh righteous before God through only faith, according to God's gracious purpose, as David saith. The apostle confirmeth that which he hath said by the prophets example, saying, 'Blessed is the man whom God accepteth for righteous without works,' (Ps. 32:1, 2); whereby David meaneth that those men are very happy whom God hath determined to accept for righteous before him, by only faith, without any painstaking or observation of the law on their behalf. Thus showeth he the blessedness of the time wherein Christ was born; insomuch as the Lord himself saith, 'Many righteous men and prophets have coveted to see the things that you see, and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them.'<sup>6</sup> The selfsame thing saith St. Ambrose, in expounding the first chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, affirming openly, that "whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ is become righteous without works, and without any desert, and receiveth forgiveness of his sins by faith alone." Also he affirmeth the same thing in an epistle which he writeth to Irenssus, saying, "Let no man boast of his own works, for no man becometh righteous by his own works; but he that hath righteousness hath it of free gift, for so much as he is made righteous by Jesus Christ. Then is it faith that

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

delivereth by Christ's blood; for happy is he whose sin is forgiven and pardoned."

And St. Bernard, in his threescore and seventeenth sermon upon the Ballet of Ballets, confirmeth the same, saying that our own merits bear no sway at all in making us righteous; which thing must be attributed wholly unto grace, which maketh us righteous freely, and likewise dischargeth us from the bondage of sin. And he addeth that Jesus Christ marieth the soul, and coupleth it unto himself by faith, without that any desert of our works ought or can come between. But, because I will not be too long, I will make an end of my allegations when I have uttered one very notable and good saying of St. Ambrose, in his book entitled, Of Jacob, concerning the blessed life. The said holy man saith that, like as Jacob, having not on his own behalf deserved the birthright, shrouded himself under the apparel of his brother, and clothed himself with his garment, which yielded a very sweet scent, and in that wise presented himself to his father to receive the blessing under another man's person to his own behoof (Gen. 27); even so is it requisite for us to clothe ourselves with the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith, and to shroud ourselves under the divine pureness of our eldest Brother, if we will be received for righteous

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

before God.

And certainly this is true. For, if we appear before God unclothed of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, out of all doubt we shall be judged worthy of everlasting damnation. But contrariwise, if God see us apparelled with the righteousness of his Son, Christ, then will he surely take us for righteous, and holy, and worthy of eternal life. And verily it is a great rashness in such as pretend to attain to righteousness by the keeping of God's commandments, which are all comprehended in loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourself. But who is so arrogant or so mad as to presume that he is able to perform those commandments to the full? Or who seeth not that God's law requireth perfect love, and condemneth all unperfectness? Let every man consider well his own works, which partly shall seem good unto him, and he shall find that they ought rather to be called transgressions of that most holy law, according also as they be altogether unclean and imperfect; so that he must be fain to utter this saying of David's; "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for no man living shall be found righteous in thy sight" (Ps. 143:2). And Solomon saith, "Who is he that may say, My heart is

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

clean?” (Prov. 20:9). And Job crieth out, “What man is he that can be undefiled, and what man born of woman can show himself righteous? Behold, he found no stedfastness among his saints: yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity as it were water!” (Job 15:14-16). And St. John saith, “If we say we be without sin, we deceive ourselves” (1 John 1:8). And specially our Saviour Jesus Christ teacheth us to say, as often as we pray, “Forgive us all our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us” (Matt. 6:12). And hereby may well be gathered the folly of those that make merchandise of their works, presuming to save by them not only themselves, but also their neighbors; as though our Lord Jesus Christ had not said unto them, “When ye have done all that ever is commanded you, say ye, We be unprofitable servants: we have done but as we ought to do” (Luke 17:10). Ye see that, although we had performed God’s law to the full, yet nevertheless we should esteem and call ourselves unprofitable servants. Now then, seeing that men are so far off from this full performance, who is he that dareth be so bold as to glorify himself, that he hath added so great an overplus of deservings above the full measure, as he may have to deal abroad unto others?



#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

But, to return to our purpose, I would that the proud sinner, who beareth himself in hand that he maketh himself righteous before God by doing some works which are allowable to the world, would consider that all the works which proceed out of an unclean and foul heart are also unclean and filthy, and consequently cannot be acceptable unto God, nor have any power to make the party righteous. Therefore we must first of all cleanse the heart, if we mind that our works should please God. The cleansing of the heart proceedeth of faith, as the Holy Ghost affirmeth by the mouth of St. Peter (Acts 15:9). Then must we not say that the unrighteous person and the sinner becometh righteous, good, and acceptable unto God by his own works; but we must of necessity conclude that faith cleanseth our hearts, and maketh us good, righteous, and acceptable before God, and, furthermore, causeth our works to please him, notwithstanding that they be altogether unprofitable and imperfect. For, inasmuch as we be become the children of God through faith, he considereth our works, not as a severe and rigorous judge, but as a most merciful Father, having pity of our frailness, and regarding us as the members of his eldest Son; whose perfection and righteousness doth supply all our uncleanness and imperfection, which are not laid

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

to our charge, for so much as they be covered under the pureness and innocency of Jesus Christ, and come not to judgment before God.

And hereupon it cometh to pass that all our works which proceed of true faith (notwithstanding that they be wholly sinful and corrupt of themselves) shall nevertheless be praised and allowed by Jesus Christ in the general judgment, because they be the fruits and testimonies of our faith, whereby we be saved. For, insomuch as we have loved the brethren of Jesus Christ, we shall show evidently that we have also been faithful, and brethren of Christ; and therefore by faith we shall be put in full possession of the everlasting kingdom, which our Sovereign Lord God hath prepared for us before the creating of the world (Matt. 25:34), not for our merit's sake, but through his mercy; whereby he hath chosen us, and called us to the grace of his gospel, and made us righteous, to the intent to glorify us everlastingly with his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; who is the holiness and righteousness of us, but not of them which will not confess that faith is sufficient of itself to make a man righteous and acceptable to the Lord God, who, through his fatherly goodness and loving-kindness, offereth and giveth us Jesus Christ with his righteousness, without any desert of our own works.

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

What thing can work or cause a man to deserve so great a gift and treasure as Jesus Christ is? This treasure is given only through the grace, favor, and mercifulness of God; and only faith is the thing that receiveth such a gift, as to make us enjoy the forgiveness of our sins. And therefore, when St. Paul and other doctors say that only faith maketh men righteous without works, they mean that it maketh us to enjoy the general forgiveness of our sins, and to receive Jesus Christ, who (as saith St. Paul) dwelleth in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17), and, overcoming and pacifying the troubles of our consciences, satisfieth God's justice for our sins. Furthermore, it appeaseth God's wrath, justly moved against us, quenqueth the fire of hell, whereunto our natural corruption did throw us headlong, and cheerfully destroyeth and overthroweth the devil, together with all his power and tyranny; which things all the works that all the men in the world can lay together are not able to deserve nor to bring to pass. That glory and that prerogative is reserved all only to the Son of God, that is to wit, to the blessed Jesus Christ; who hath power above all the powers that are in heaven, in earth, and in hell, and giveth himself and his merits to all such as, distrusting in themselves, do set their whole hope of being saved in him and in his merits.

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

And therefore let no man beguile himself when he heareth it said that only faith justifieth without works, and think, as false Christians do (who draw all things to live fleshly), that the true faith consisteth in believing the bare story of Jesus Christ, after the same manner as men believe the story of Caesar or Alexander. Such manner of belief is but a historical belief, grounded merely upon the report of men, and upon their writings, and lightly imprinted in our conceit by a certain custom, and is like to the faith of the Turks, who, for the like reasons, believe the fables of their Alcoran.

And such a faith is but an imagination of man, which never reneweth the heart of man, nor warmeth it with the love of God; neither do any good works ensue, or any change of life which faith should bring forth. And, therefore, they falsely hold opinion, against the holy Scripture, and against the holy doctors of the church, that only faith maketh not men righteous, but that they must also have works. Unto whom I answer, that this historical and fond belief, and all the works that ensue thereof, are not only unable to make a man righteous, but also do cast the parties headlong to the bottom of hell, like unto those that have no oil in their lamps (Matt. 25:3), that is to say, no lively faith in their hearts.

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

The faith that maketh men righteous is a work of God in us, whereby “our old man is crucified” (Rom. 6:6), and we, being transformed in Jesus Christ, become new creatures, and the dear beloved children of God. This heavenly faith is it that graffeth us into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and, consequently, mortifieth our flesh with the effects and lusts thereof. For, when we, by the operation of faith, do know ourselves to be dead with Jesus Christ, we are at a full point with ourselves and with the world, and are thoroughly resolved how it is meet that they which are dead with Jesus Christ should mortify their earthly members, that is to wit, the sinful affections of their mind, and the lusts of the flesh; and forasmuch as we know we be raised again with Christ, we bend ourselves to the leading of a spiritual and holy life, like unto that which we shall live in heaven after the last resurrection.

This holy faith, making us to enjoy the general pardon that is published by the gospel, bringeth us into the kingdom of our good God, and pacifieth our consciences, maintaining us in continual joy, and holy and spiritual sweetness. This selfsame faith knitteth us unto God, and maketh him to dwell in our hearts, and clotheth our soul with himself; so as thenceforth the Holy Ghost moveth us to do the same

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

things whereunto he moved Jesus Christ, while he was in the world and was conversant among men; that is to wit, unto lowliness, meekness, obedience unto God, lovingness, and other perfections, where-through we recover the image of God. For these self-same causes Jesus Christ did rightly attribute blessedness unto this inspired faith; which blessedness cannot be without good works and holiness of life. And how can it be that a Christian should not become holy, seeing that Jesus Christ is become his holiness through faith?

Therefore, by faith we be justified and saved; and therefore St. Paul doth, in a manner, always call those saints whom we call now Christians; who, if they have not Christ's Spirit, are none of Christ's, and, consequently, no Christians at all. But if they have the Spirit of Jesus Christ to rule and govern them, we must not doubt but that, although they know well that they be made righteous through faith only, yet, for all that, they will become never the more slothful to do good works. For Christ's Spirit is the Spirit of love; and love cannot be idle, nor cease from the doing of good works. But, if we will say the truth, a man can do no good works except he first know himself to be become righteous by faith; for, before he knoweth that, his doing of good works is

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

rather to make himself righteous than for the love and glory of God; and so he defileth all his works with self-love, for the love of himself and for his own profit. But he that knoweth himself to be become righteous by the merits and righteousness of Christ (which he maketh his own by faith), laboreth happily, and doth good works, all only for the love and glory of Christ, and not for love of himself, nor to make himself righteous. And thereupon it cometh that the true Christian (that is, to wit, he that accounteth himself righteous by reason of Christ's righteousness) asketh not whether good works be commanded or not; but, being wholly moved and provoked with a certain violence of godly love, he offereth himself willingly to do all the works that are holy and Christian-like, and never ceaseth to do well.

He, therefore, which feeleth not the marvellous effects by his faith, which we have heretofore declared, that the inspired faith works in the heart of the Christian, let him assure himself that he hath not the Christian faith, and let him pray earnestly unto God to give it him, saying, "Lord, help mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). And when he heareth it said that only faith maketh men righteous, let him not deceive himself, and say, What need I to weary myself in doing good works: faith is enough to send me to par-

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

adise? To such a one I answer, that only faith sendeth us to paradise; but yet let him take good heed; for “the devils do also believe and tremble,” as saith St. James (2:19). O miserable man, wilt thou go with them to paradise? By this false conclusion thou mayest know (my brother) in what an error thou art; for thou weenest to have the faith that maketh men righteous, and thou hast it not. “Thou sayest thou art rich, and hast no need of anything; and thou seest not how thou art poor, wretched, blind, and naked. I counsel to buy gold of God, that is thoroughly fixed with fire (that is to say, true faith set on fire with good works), to the intent thou mayest become rich; and to clothe thyself with white raiment (that is to wit, with Christ’s innocency), to the end that the shame of thy nakedness (which is the great filthiness of thy sins) be not seen to the whole world” (Rev. 3:17, 18).

Then is the justifying faith, as it were, a flame of fire, which cannot but cast forth brightness. And, like as the flame burneth the wood without the help of the light, and yet the flame cannot be without the light; so is it assuredly true that faith alone consumeth and burneth away sin, without the help of works, and yet that the same faith cannot be without good works. Wherefore, like as if we see a flame of



#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

fire that giveth no light, we know by and by that it is but vain and painted; even so, when we see not some light of good works in a man, it is a token that he hath not the true inspired faith which God giveth to his chosen, to justify and glorify them withal. And hold it for certain that St. James meant so when he said, "Show me thy faith beside thy works; and I will show thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18). For his meaning was, that he which is plunged in ambitiousness and worldly pleasures believeth not (though he say he believe), forasmuch as he showeth not in himself the effects of faith.

Also, we may liken this holy faith to the Godhead which is in Jesus Christ; who, being very man (but without sin), did wonderful things, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, walking upon the water, and raising up the dead unto life again; and yet these marvellous works were not the cause that he was God. For, before he did any of those things he was God, and the lawful and only-begotten Son of God, and he need not to work those miracles to make himself God by them; but, forasmuch as he was God, therefore he did them. And so the miracles that Christ wrought made him not to be God, but showed openly that he was God. In like wise, true faith is, as it were, a Godhead in the soul of a Christian, which

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

doth wondrous works, and is never weary of well-doing; and yet those works are not the cause that a Christian is a Christian, that is to wit, that he is righteous, good, holy, and acceptable unto God; neither needeth he to work all those good works to become such a one. But, forasmuch as he is a Christian by faith, like as Jesus Christ, being a man, was also God by his Godhead, he doth all those good works; which make not the Christian to be righteous and good, but show him to be good, righteous, and holy. So, then, like as Christ's Godhead was the cause that he wrought miracles; even so faith, working through love, is the cause of the good works that a Christian man doth. And like as a man may say of Jesus Christ, that he hath done this miracle or that, and that those miracles, besides that they glorified God, were also a great honor unto Jesus Christ as he was man, who for his obedience even unto death was recompensed at God's hand in his resurrection, and had given unto him all power both in heaven and earth, which he had not afore as in respect of his manhood, but deserved it by the union which is betwixt the Word of God and the manhood of Christ; so doth faith in a Christian; which faith, by reason of the union that it hath with the soul, attributeth that thing to the one which is proper to the other. Whereupon it cometh

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

that the holy Scripture promiseth the Christian everlasting life for his good works; because good works are the fruits and testimonies of lively faith, and proceed of it, as light proceedeth from a flame of fire, according as I have said heretofore. And by this holy faith which embraceth Jesus Christ it comes to pass that our soul is joined with Christ, and is so united and knit to him, that, whatsoever Christ hath merited and deserved, the same is imputed unto the soul, as though it had merited and deserved it. And, therefore, Augustine saith that “God crowneth his own gifts in us.”

Of this union of the soul with Jesus Christ, Christ himself beareth good record, where he prayeth to his Father for his apostles, and for such as should believe in him by their preaching. “I pray not (saith he) for them only, but also for all those that shall believe in me through their word, to the end they may be all one thing; that, like as thou, my Father, art in me, and I in thee, so they also may be one in us, and that the world may believe that thou hast sent me, and that I have given them the glory which thou hast given me, so as they should be one self-same thing, like as thou and I are one” (John 17:20-22). Whereby it appeareth evidently that, if we believe the word of the apostles, who preached that Jesus Christ “died

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

for our sins, and rose again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25), we become all one thing with him; and, forasmuch as he is all one with God, we also become all one with God by the mean of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 6:16). O wonderful glory of the Christian, to whom it is granted, through faith, to possess the unspeakable benefits which the angels long to behold!

By this present discourse a man may plainly perceive the difference that is betwixt us and them that defend the justification by faith and works together. Herein we agree with them, that we establish works, affirming that the faith which justifieth cannot be without good works, and that those which are become righteous are they that do the good works that may rightly be called good works (1 Pet. 2:12). But we differ from them in this, that we say that faith maketh men righteous without the help of works. And the reason is ready, namely, because that by faith we “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:26, 27), and make his holiness and righteousness to be ours. And, seeing the case so standeth that Christ’s righteousness is given us by faith, we cannot be so thankless, blind, and unhappy, as not to believe that he is of sufficient ability to make us acceptable and right before God. Let us say with the apostle, “If the blood of oxen and

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

goats, and the ashes of a cow sprinkled, cleanseth the unclean, as touching the cleansing of the flesh; how much more shall that blood of Jesus Christ, who by the everlasting Spirit offered himself undefiled unto God, cleanse our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God” (Heb. 9:13, 14).

I pray thee now, thou good and devout Christian, consider well which of these two opinions is the truest, holiest, and worthiest to be preached. Ours, which advanceth the benefit of Jesus Christ, and pulleth down the pride of man, which would exalt his own works against Christ’s glory; or the other, which, by affirming that faith of itself justifieth not, defaceth the glory and benefit of Jesus Christ, and puffeth up the pride of man, who cannot abide to be justified freely by our Lord Jesus Christ, without some merit of his own. But, say they, it is a great quickening up to good works to say that a man maketh himself righteous before God by means of them. I answer, that we also confess that good works are acceptable to God, and that he, of his mere grace and free liberality, recompenseth them in paradise. But we say, moreover, that no works are good, saving those that (Augustine saith) are done by those that are become righteous through faith; because that if the tree be not good, it cannot yield good fruit.

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

And, furthermore, we say that such as are become righteous through faith, forasmuch as they know themselves to be righteous through God's righteousness, purchased by Christ, make no bargaining with God for their works, as though they would buy their manner of justification, such as it is with them; but, being inflamed with the love of God, and desirous to glorify Jesus Christ, who hath made them righteous by giving them his merits and riches, they bestow all their whole study and labor to do God's will, fighting manfully against the love of themselves, and against the world and the devil. And, when they fall through frailty of the flesh, they recover themselves by and by, and are so much the more desirous to do good, and so much the more in love with their God, considering that he layeth not their sins to their charge, because they be ingrafted into Jesus Christ; who hath made full amends for all his members, upon the tree of his cross, and maketh continual intercession for them to the eternal Father, who, for the love of his only-begotten Son, beholdeth them always with a gentle countenance, governing and defending them as his most dear children, and in the end giving them the heritage of the world, making them like-fashioned to the glorious image of Christ.

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

These loving motions are the spurs that prick forward the true Christians to do good works; who, considering that they are become the children of God through faith, and made partakers of his divine nature, are stirred up, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, to live as it becometh the children of so great a Lord, and are greatly ashamed that they maintain not the beauty of their heavenly nobleness; and therefore they employ their whole endeavor to the following of their first-born Brother, Jesus Christ, living in great lowliness and meekness, in all things seeking the glory of God, giving their lives for their brethren, doing good to their enemies, glorying in the sufferance of reproaches, and in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:14), and saying with Zachary, “We be delivered out of the hand of our enemies, to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:74, 75). They say with St. Paul, “The grace of the Lord is appeared to abolish all wickedness and worldly desires in us, to the end we should live a sober, holy, and honest life in this world, waiting for the blessed hope, and for the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour” (Titus 2:11-13). These and such other like thoughts, desires, and affections, are wrought by inspired faith in the souls of them that are become righteous. And as for

#### 4. The Effects of Lively Faith

him that either wholly or partly feeleth not these godly affections and operations in his heart, but is given over to the flesh and the world, let him assure himself that he hath not yet the justifying faith, nor is the member of Christ; because he hath not Christ's Spirit, and consequently he is none of his; and he that is none of Christ's is no Christian (Rom. 8:9). Then let man's wisdom cease henceforth to fight against the righteousness of the most holy faith; and let us give all the glory of our justification to the merits of Jesus Christ, with whom we be clothed through faith (Gal. 3:26, 27).





## 5

# **The Christian Clothed With Christ**

Although that by the things aforesaid a man may easily and plainly enough perceive how a Christian may clothe himself with Jesus Christ, yet, nevertheless, I mind to speak a little of it, assuring myself that unto the good and faithful Christian it can seem neither grievous nor troublesome to speak thereof although

## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

the thing were repeated a thousand times. Therefore I say that the Christian knoweth that Jesus Christ, together with all his righteousness, holiness, and innocency, is his own through faith. And, like as when a man purposeth to present himself before some great lord or prince, he laboreth to array himself in some fair and costly apparel; even so, when the Christian is decked and arrayed with the innocency of Christ and with all his perfection, he presenteth himself boldly before God the Lord of all, assuring himself that, through Christ's merits, he is in as good case as if he had purchased all that which Jesus Christ hath purchased and deserved. And, truly, faith maketh every one of us to possess Christ, and all that is his, as we possess our own garment.

And, therefore, to be clothed with Jesus Christ is nothing else but to believe for a certainty that Christ is wholly ours; and so is he, in very deed, if we believe so, and hold ourselves assured that by the same heavenly garment we be received into favor before God. For it is most certain that he, as a most dear Father, hath given us his Son, meaning that all his righteousness, and all that ever he is, can, or hath done, should be in our power and jurisdiction, in such wise as it should be lawful for us to make our boast of them, as if we had done, purchased, and de-

## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

served them by our own strength. And whosoever believeth this shall find that his belief is good and true, as we have showed heretofore. Then must the Christian have a steadfast faith and belief that all the goods, all the graces, and all the riches of Jesus Christ are his; for, since that God hath given us Jesus Christ himself how should it be possible that he hath not given us all things with him? (Rom. 8:32). Now, if this be true, as true it is indeed, the Christian may rightly say, I am the child of God; and Jesus Christ is my brother. I am lord of heaven and earth, and of hell and of death, and of the law; insomuch as the law cannot accuse me, nor lay any curse upon me, because the righteousness of God is become mine. And this faith is it alone that maketh a man to be called a Christian, and which clotheth him with Jesus Christ; as we have said afore. And boldly may this be called a great mystery where-under are contained marvellous things, and things not heard of, concerning that great God, which cannot enter into man's heart except God do first soften it with his holy grace; as he hath promised to do by his holy prophet, saying, "I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new mind into you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your body, and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:25).

## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

Now, then, he that believeth not after the said manner that Jesus Christ, with all the goods that he possesseth, is his, cannot call himself a true Christian, nor ever have a quiet and joyful conscience, nor a good and fervent courage to do good, but shall easily faint in doing of good works; yea, and moreover he shall never be able to do good works that are truly good. This only belief and trust that we have in the merits of Jesus Christ maketh men true Christians, stout, cheerful, merry, lovers of God, ready to do good works, possessors of God's kingdom and of God himself, and his right dear beloved children, in whom the Holy Ghost doth truly dwell. What heart is so cowardly, cold, and vile, which, considering the inestimable greatness of the gift that God hath bestowed upon him, in giving him his own so well-beloved Son with all his perfectness, is not inflamed with an exceeding earnest desire to become like unto him in good works? specially seeing that the Father hath given him unto us for an example whereon we must continually look, framing our life after such a sort as it may be a true counterpart of the life of Jesus Christ; forasmuch as Christ, as saith St. Peter, "hath suffered for us, leaving us an example, to the end that we should follow his footsteps" (1 Pet. 2:21).

Out of this consideration issueth another kind of

## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

clothing of a man's self with Christ, which we may term an example-clothing; for so much as the Christian must frame his whole life after the example of Christ, fashioning himself like unto him in all his deeds, words, and thoughts, leaving his former wicked life, and decking himself with the new life, that is to wit, with the life of Christ (Eph. 4:23, 24). By reason whereof St. Paul saith, "Let us cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light; not in feasting, nor in drunkenness, nor in chambering and wantonness, nor in strife; but put upon you the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no preparation for the flesh, nor for the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:12-14). Hereupon the true Christian, being in love with Jesus Christ, saith in himself, Since that Jesus Christ, not having any need of me, hath redeemed me with his own blood, and is become poor to enrich me; I will likewise give my good, yea, and my very life, for the love and welfare of my neighbor. And, like as I am clothed with Jesus Christ, for the love he hath borne to me, so will I have my neighbor in Christ to clothe himself with me, and with my goods likewise, for the love that I bear him for Christ's sake. He that doth not so is no true Christian, for he cannot say that he loveth Jesus Christ, if he love not the members and brothers of him. And if we love not our neighbor, for

## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

whose sake Christ hath shed his blood, we cannot truly say that we love Jesus Christ; who, being equal with God, was obedient to his Father, even to the death of the cross (Phil. 2:6, 8), and hath loved and redeemed us, giving himself unto us, with all that ever he hath. After the same manner, we, being rich and having abundance of good things at Christ's hand, must also be obedient unto God, to offer and give our works and all that we have, yea, and even ourselves, to our neighbors and brethren in Jesus Christ, serving them and helping them at their need, and being to them as another Christ. And, like as Jesus Christ was lowly and gentle, and far from all debate and strife (Matt. 12:19), so must we set our whole mind upon lowliness and meekness, eschewing all strife and impatience, as well which consist in words and reasoning as in deeds. And, as Jesus Christ hath endured all the persecutions and spites of the world for the glory of God, so must we with all patience cheerfully bear the persecutions and reproaches that are done by false Christians (2 Tim. 2:12) to all such as will live faithfully in Jesus Christ; who gave his life for his enemies, and prayed for them upon the cross; and so must we also pray always for our enemies, and willingly spend our life for their welfare.

## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

And this is to follow Christ's steps, according as St. Peter saith. For, when we know Jesus Christ, with all his riches, to be our own good (which thing is to be clothed with Christ and to become pure and clean without spot), there remaineth nothing more for us to do, but to glorify God by following the life of Jesus Christ, and to do to our brethren as Christ hath done to us; and specially for so much as we be warranted by his word, that, whatsoever we do to his brethren and ours, he accepteth it as a benefit done to himself. And doubtless, seeing that the true Christians are members of Christ, we cannot do either good or evil to the true Christians, but we do it likewise unto Christ; insomuch that he rejoiceth or suffereth in his members. Therefore, like as Jesus Christ is our clothing by faith, so also must we through love become the clothing of our brethren, and have as good care of them as of our own bodies; for they be members of our body, whereof Christ is the Head.

And this is the godly love and charity which springeth and proceedeth of the true unfeigned faith, which God hath breathed into his elect; which faith, as saith St. Paul, "worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Howbeit, forasmuch as the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, wherewithal we must be clothed (Rom. 13:14), was a continual cross, full of troubles, reproaches,

## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

and persecutions; if we will fashion ourselves like unto his life, we must continually bear the cross (2 Tim. 2:11, 12; Gal. 5:24); as he himself saith, “If any man will come after me, let him forsake himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Luke 9:26).

But the chief cause of this cross is, for that our God purposeth to mortify the affections of our mind and the lusts of our flesh by that exercise; to the end we may conceive in ourselves the great perfection wherein we be comprised by our Lord Jesus Christ, by being grafted into him (John 15:5). Also his will is, that our faith, being fined like gold in the furnace of troubles, should shine bright to his glory (Phil. 3:10, 20, 21). Moreover, his intent is that we, by our infirmities, should set out his great power which the world, in despite of it, beholdeth in us; inasmuch as our frailty becometh strong by troubles and persecutions, and the more that it was beaten down and oppressed, so much the more it is strong and steadfast (2 Cor. 12:9, 10). Whereof the apostle St. Paul saith, “We carry this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be God’s and not ours. On all sides we suffer tribulation, but we are not overcome; we be poor, but not overcome of poverty; we suffer persecution, but yet are we not forsaken; we be despised, but yet we perish not: and so we dai-



## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

ly bear about us the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ in our body, that the life of Jesus Christ may also be openly showed in us” (2 Cor. 4:7-10). And, seeing the case is so, that our Lord Jesus Christ and all his dear disciples glorified God by tribulations, let us also embrace them joyfully, and say with the apostle St. Paul, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. 6:14); and let us so deal, as the world may (whether it will or no) perceive and see with his eyes the wonderful effects that God worketh in such as sincerely embrace the grace of his gospel. Let us so deal, I say, as the worldlings may see with how great quietness of mind the true Christians endure the loss of their goods, the death of their children, slanders, the diseases of the body, and the persecutions of false Christians; and also that they may see how the only true Christians do worship God in spirit and truth, taking in good worth at his hand whatsoever happeneth, and holding all that he doth to be good, righteous, and holy, praising him always for the same, whether it be in prosperity or adversity, thanking him as a most gracious and loving Father, and acknowledging it for a right great gift of God’s goodness to suffer any adversity, and chiefly for the gospel and for following the steps of Christ; specially forasmuch as we know that “tribula-

## 5. The Christian Clothed With Christ

tion engendereth patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope maketh us not ashamed” (Rom. 5:3-5). I say, that patience engendereth trial; because that, whereas God hath promised help in trouble to such as trust in him, we find it by experience, in that we continue strong and steadfast all the while, and are upholden by the hand of God; which thing we could not do with all the powers that we have of our own. So, then, by patience we find that our Lord giveth us the help that he hath promised us at our need, whereby our hope is confirmed. And it were an over-great unthankfulness, not to trust to such an aid and favor for the time to come, as we have found by experience to be so certain and steadfast heretofore. But what need we so many words? It ought to suffice us to know that the true Christians are through tribulation clothed with the image of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified; which if we bear willingly and with a good heart, we shall in the end be clothed with the image of Jesus Christ glorified (Rom. 8:17). “For, as the passions of Jesus Christ do abound, so through him shall the consolations over-abound” (2 Cor. 1:5); and, if we suffer with him here below for a time, we shall also reign with him there above forever.



## 6

# **Certain Remedies Against Distrust**

But, forasmuch as the devil and man's wisdom labor continually to dispossess us of this most holy faith, where-through we believe that all our sins are chastised and punished in Jesus Christ, and that through his most precious bloodshed we be reconciled to the majesty of God; it is very needful for a Christian to

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

have his weapons always in a readiness to defend himself from the said most mischievous temptation which seeketh to bereave the soul of her life.

Among the said weapons (in my judgment) the mightiest and best are, prayer, the often use of the holy communion, the remembering of holy baptism, and the minding of predestination.

In our prayer we may well say with the father of the poor lunatic person, of whom mention is made in the gospel of St. Mark, “Lord Jesus, help mine unbelief” (Mark 9:24). Or else we may say with the apostles, “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). And, if there reign in us a continual desire to grow in faith, hope, and love, we will “continually pray” (1 Thess. 5:17); as St. Paul instructeth us. For prayer is nothing else but a fervent mind settled upon God.

By the remembering of baptism we shall assure ourselves that we are at peace with God. And forasmuch as St. Peter saith that the ark of Noe was a figure of baptism; therefore, like as Noe was saved from the flood by the ark, because he believed the promises of God, so also are we by faith saved in baptism from God’s wrath (1 Pet. 3:20, 21). Which faith is grounded upon the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, who saith that “he which believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). And good right it is; for

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

in baptism we put on Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:27), as the apostle St. Paul affirmeth, and consequently we be made partakers of his righteousness, and of all his goods; and under this precious robe the sins that our frailty committeth lie hidden and covered, and are not imputed unto us. And so, according as St. Paul saith, the blessedness which the Psalmist speaketh of appertaineth to us; namely, “Blessed are they whose misdoings are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin” (Rom. 4:6-8; Ps. 32:1, 2).

But it standeth a Christian in hand to take good heed that upon these words he take no liberty to sin; for this doctrine belongeth to none such as honor themselves with the name of Christians, confessing Christ with their mouth, and yet deny him in their deeds. But it concerneth the true Christians, who, though they fight manfully against the flesh, the world, and the devil, do notwithstanding fall daily, and are constrained to say, Lord, forgive us our offenses. These are they to whom we speak, to comfort them, and to hold them up, that they fell not into despair; as though the blood of Christ washed us not from all sin, and that he were not our Advocate, and the atonement-maker for his members.

And therefore, when we be provoked to doubt of

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

the forgiveness of our sins, and that our own conscience beginneth to trouble us, then must we furnish ourselves with true faith, and out of hand have recourse to the precious blood of Jesus Christ, shed for us upon the altar of the cross, and distributed to his apostles at his last supper, under the veil of a most holy sacrament, which was ordained by Christ, to the end that we should celebrate the remembrance of his death, and that by the same visible sacrament our troubled consciences might be assured of our atonement with God. The blessed Jesus Christ made his last will when he said, “This is my body which is given for you” (Luke 22:19); and, “This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many” (Mark 14:24), to the forgiveness of their sins. We know that a testament (saith St. Paul), “although it be but a man’s testament, yet nevertheless, if it be allowed, no man despiseth it or addeth anything to it” (Gal. 3:15); and that no testament is of force till the testator be dead, but hath full power after the party’s decease. Then did Jesus Christ make his testament, wherein he promiseth forgiveness of sins, and the grace and good favor of himself and his Father, together with mercy and everlasting life. And, to the intent that the said testament should be of full force, he hath confirmed it with his own precious

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

blood and with his own death. By reason whereof St. Paul saith that Jesus Christ is “the Mediator of the New Testament, that, by his dying for the redemption of those transgressions which were in the former testament, they that are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For wheresoever there is a testament, there must also be the death of the testator; for the testament is confirmed by the death of the party, insomuch as it is of no value so long as the maker of it is alive” (Heb. 9:15-17). Wherefore we be very certain and assured by the death of Jesus Christ that his testament is available, whereby all our misdeeds are pardoned, and we made heirs of eternal life.

And for a token and faithful pledge hereof instead of a seal, he hath left us this divine sacrament; which not only giveth our souls assured hope of their everlasting salvation, but also warranteth unto us that immortality of our flesh, forasmuch as it is even now quickened by that immortal flesh of his, and in a certain manner becometh partaker of the immortality thereof; and he that is partaker of that divine flesh by faith shall not perish forever (John 6:54). But unto him that receiveth it without the said faith, it turneth to a dangerous poison; because that, like as when bodily sustenance findeth the stomach encum-

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

bered with evil humors, it corrupteth likewise and worketh great annoyance, even so, if this spiritual food light into a sinful soul that is full of malice and misbelief, it casteth it headlong into some greater ruin, not through its own default, but because that to the unclean and unbeliever all things are unclean; notwithstanding that the things be sanctified by the Lord's blessing. For, saith St. Paul, "He that eateth of that bread and drinketh of that cup unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," and "he eateth and drinketh his own damnation, because he maketh no difference of the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:27, 29). For he maketh no difference of the Lord's body, which presumeth to the Lord's supper without faith and charity. And forasmuch as he believeth not that body to be his life, and the cleanser of all his sins, he maketh Jesus Christ a liar, and treadeth the Son of God under foot, and esteemeth the blood of the testament, whereby he was sanctified, but as a common or worldly thing, and doth great wrong to the Spirit of grace, and he shall be punished very sore at God's hand for this his unbelief and wicked hypocrisy. For whereas he repositeth not that trust of his justification in the passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, yet nevertheless he receiveth this most holy sacrament, and maketh protestation that



## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

he putteth not his trust in any other thing. Whereby he accuseth himself, and is a witness of his own iniquity, and condemneth himself to everlasting death, by refusing the life which God promiseth him in that holy sacrament.

And in this point, when the Christian feeleth that his enemies are like to overcome him; that is to wit, when he beginneth to doubt whether he have received forgiveness of his sins by Jesus Christ, and that he shall not be able to withstand the devil and his temptations, and that the accusation of his own doubtful conscience comes to press him, so as he beginneth to fear lest hell-fire should swallow him up, and death hold him in his everlasting bands by reason of God's wrath; I say, when the good Christian feeleth himself in such agony, let him get him to his holy sacrament with a good heart and stout courage, and receive it devoutly, saying in his heart and answering his enemies thus: I confess I have deserved a thousand hells, and everlasting death, by reason of the great sins which I have committed. But this heavenly sacrament, which I receive at that present, assureth me of the forgiveness of all my misdoings, and of mine atonement with God. For, if I have an eye to my works, there is no doubt but I acknowledge myself a sinner, and condemn mine own self in such

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

wise as my conscience should never be quiet if I should think that my sins are pardoned me for my works' sake. But when I look to the promises and covenants of God, who promiseth me forgiveness of my sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, I am as sure that I have obtained it, and that I have his favor, as I am sure that he which hath made the promises and covenants cannot lie nor deceive; and through this steadfast faith I become righteous by Christ's righteousness (Rom. 4:5, 24), where through I am saved, and my conscience quieted. Hath he not given his most innocent body into the hands of sinners for our sins? Hath he not shed his blood to wash away my iniquities? Why then dost thou vex thyself, O my soul? put thy trust in the Lord, who beareth thee so great love, that, to deliver thee from eternal death, it hath pleased him that his only Son should suffer death and passion, who hath taken upon himself our poverty, to give us his riches; laid our weakness upon himself, to establish us in his strength; become mortal, to make us immortal; come down unto the earth, to advance us up to heaven; and become the Son of man with us, to make us the children of God with himself. "Who is he then that shall accuse us? God is he that justifieth us; and who shall condemn us? Jesus Christ is dead for us, yea, and risen again for us, and he sit-

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

teth at the right hand of God, making intercession for us” (Rom. 8:33, 34). Wherefore say with David, “Why art thou heavy, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?” (Ps. 13:5). Dost thou see nothing but the law, sin, wrath, heaviness, death, hell, and the devil? Is there not now to be seen grace, remission of sins, righteousness, consolation, joy, peace, life, heaven, Christ, and God? Trouble me no more, then, O my soul; for what is the law? What is sin? What is death and the devil, in comparison of these things? Therefore, trust in God, who hath not spared his own dear Son, but given him to the cross for thy sins, and hath given thee victory through him.

This is the sweet doctrine of the gospel, which I desire that all Christians could receive with thanksgiving and an assured faith; for then would Christ be nothing but joy and sweetness to them; then would they take heart in the victory of Christ’s death, who indeed was made a curse for us, subject to wrath, putting upon him our person, and laid our sins upon his own shoulders, and he hath made with us this happy change, that is to say, he took upon him our sinful person, and gave unto us his innocent and victorious person, wherewith we being now clothed are free from the curse of the law.

And therefore may every poor sinner say, with an

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

assured confidence, Thou, Christ, art my sin, and my curse; or, rather, I am thy sin, and thy curse; and, contrariwise, thou art my righteousness, my blessing, and my life, my grace of God, and my heaven. And thus, if we by faith do behold this brazen serpent, Christ hanging upon the cross, we shall see the law, sin, death, the devil, and hell killed by his death; and so may, with the apostle Paul, sing that joying heart-ditty: "Thanks be to God, who hath given us victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

And so, with these thanksgivings, with these or such other like thoughts, must we receive the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. After this manner is all fearfulness driven out of the soul of the Christian; and charity is increased, faith strengthened, the conscience quieted, and the tongue never ceaseth to praise God, and to yield him infinite thanks for so great a benefit. This is the virtue, efficacy, and only trust of our soul. This is the Rock whereupon if the conscience be builded, it feareth neither tempest, nor the gates of hell, nor God's wrath, nor the law, nor sin, nor death, nor the devils, nor any other thing. And forasmuch as the substance of the Lord's supper and table consisteth in this divine sacrament, when the Christian is at it he must hold his eyes fastened continually upon the

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

passion of our gracious Saviour, beholding him on the one side upon the cross loaden with all our sins; and God on the other side punishing, chastising, and whipping his own only-begotten and dear beloved Son instead of us. O, happy is that man that shutteth his eyes from all other sights, and will neither hear nor see any other thing than Jesus Christ crucified; in whom are laid up and bestowed all the treasures of God's wisdom and divine knowledge! Blessed, say I, is he that feedeth his mind with so heavenly a food, and maketh himself drunken in the love of God with so sweet and singular a liquor.

But, before I make an end of this matter, I will first advertise the Christian that Augustine hath ordinarily been wont to term this holy sacrament the bond of charity, and the mystery of unity. And he saith that "whosoever receiveth the mystery of unity, and regardeth not the bond of peace, receiveth not the sacrament to his own behoof, but as a witness against himself." Therefore we must understand that the Lord hath ordained this holy sacrament not only to make us sure of the forgiveness of our sins, but also to inflame us to peace, unity, and brotherly charity. For in this sacrament the Lord doth after such a manner make us partakers of his body, as he becometh all one thing with us, and we with him. By

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

reason whereof, forasmuch as he hath but one body whereof he maketh us partakers, it is meet that we also should by such partaking become all one body together among ourselves. And this union is represented by the bread of the sacrament; which as it is made of many grains mingled and kneaded together, in such wise as one of them cannot be discerned from another; so also must we be joined together after such a sort, and so united together into one agreement of mind as no division may creep in. And this doth St. Paul show us, when he saith, “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless the communion of the blood of Jesus Christ? is not the bread that we break the communion of the body of Jesus Christ? Whereas we be many, yet are we but one bread and one body, for so much as we be all partakers of one bread” (1 Cor. 10:16, 17). By these things we understand that, when we receive his most holy communion, we must consider that we are all of us ingrafted into Christ, and are all become members of one self-same body, that is to wit, of Jesus Christ, in such wise as we cannot offend, defame, or despise any of our brethren, but we must therewithal offend, defame, and despise our said Head, Jesus Christ; neither can we be at variance with any of our brethren, but in like wise we must be at odds with him. Also we cannot love him,

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

except we love him in our brethren. Look, how much care we have of our own body, so much must we have of our Christian brethren, who are the members of our body. And, like as no part of our body feeleth any grief which spreadeth not itself into all the other parts, so ought we to determine with ourselves that our brother feeleth not any inconvenience which should not move us to compassion. With such manner of thoughts must we prepare ourselves to this holy sacrament, quickening up our spirits with a fervent love to our neighbors. For what greater spur can we have to prick us to love one another, than to see that Jesus Christ, by giving himself unto us, not only allureth us to give ourselves one to another, but also, by making himself common to us all, maketh us also to be all one self-same thing in him? In respect whereof we ought to covet and procure that in all of us there may be but one mind, one heart, and one tongue, accorded and united together in thoughts, words, and deeds.

And we must mark well that, as oft as we receive this holy and worthy sacrament, we bind ourselves to all the duties of charity; as not to offend any of our brethren, nor to leave anything undone that may be profitable and helpful in their necessity. But if there come any to this heavenly table of the Lord that are

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

divided, at variance with their brethren, the same must assure themselves that they eat unworthily, and are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and that they eat and drink their own damnation; for that there wanted nothing on their behalf but that the body of Jesus Christ was rent and plucked in pieces again, whilst they by hatred are divided from their brethren, that is to wit, from the members of Jesus Christ, and have not any part with him, and yet nevertheless, in receiving this holy communion, pretended to believe that their whole salvation consisteth in the participation and union with Jesus Christ. Then let us go, my brethren, to the receiving of this heavenly bread, to celebrate the remembrance of our Lord's passion, and to strengthen and fortify the belief and assurance of the forgiveness of our sins with the remembrance thereof, and to quicken up our minds and tongues to praise and exalt the infinite goodness of our God, and finally to cherish brotherly love, and to witness the same one to another by the strait union which all of us have in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Besides prayer, and the remembering of baptism, and the often resorting to the most holy communion, there is one other very good remedy against distrust and fearfulness, which is no less friend to Christian



## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

charity; namely, the remembrance of our predestination and election to eternal life, grounded upon the word of God, which is the sword of the Holy Ghost (Eph. 6:17), wherewith we may beat back our enemies. “Rejoice ye in this,” saith the Lord, “that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). There is no greater joy in this life, nor anything that more comforteth the Christian that is afflicted, tempted, or fallen into any sin, than the remembrance of predestination, and the assuring of ourselves that we be of the number of them whose names are written in the book of life, and which are chosen to be fashioned like unto the image of Jesus Christ. O, how unspeakable is the comfort of him that hath this faith, and museth continually in his heart upon this exceeding sweet predestination, whereby he knoweth that, although he fall often, yet, notwithstanding, God his Father, who hath foreordained him to everlasting life, holdeth him up, and reacheth out his hand unto him continually! (Ps. 37:24). And he saith continually in himself, “If God have chosen me, and predestinated me to the glory of his children, who can hinder me?” “If God be with us,” saith St. Paul, “who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31). Nay, rather, to the end that the predestination may be accomplished in us, he hath sent his dear-beloved Son, who is a

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

most sure earnest-penny and pledge unto us that we, which have received the grace of the gospel, are God's children, chosen to eternal life.

This holy predestination maintaineth the true Christian in a continual joy, increaseth in him the endeavor of good works, and inflameth him with the love of God, and maketh him enemy to the world and to sin. Who is so fierce and hard-hearted, which, knowing that God of his mercy hath made him his child from everlasting, will not by and by be inflamed to love God? Who is of so vile and base courage, that he will not esteem all the pleasures, all the honors, and all the riches of the world as filthy mire, when he knows that God hath made him a citizen of heaven? Yea, these are they that worship God rightly in spirit and truth, receiving all things (as well in prosperity as in adversity) at the hand of God their Father, and evermore praising and thanking him for all, as their good Father, who is righteous and holy in all his works. These, being inflamed with the love of God, and armed with the knowledge of their predestination, fear neither death, nor sin, nor the devil, nor hell; neither know they what the wrath of God is; for they see none other thing in God but love and fatherly kindness towards them. And, if they fall into any troubles, they accept them as tokens of

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

God's favor, crying out with St. Paul, "Who is it that shall separate us from God's love? shall tribulations, shall anguish, shall persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? as it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long, and counted as sheep appointed to the slaughter. But in all these things we get the upper hand through him that hath loved us" (Rom. 8:35-37). Wherefore, it is not for nought that St. John saith, how the true Christians know right well that they must be saved and glorified, and that, by reason of the same affiance, they make themselves holy as Jesus Christ is holy (1 John 3:2, 3). And when St. Paul exhorteth his disciples to a good and holy life, he is wont to put them in remembrance of their election and predestination (Eph. 1:4-6), as of a thing of very great force to stir up the minds of the true Christians to the loving of God, and to the performance of good works. And for the same cause our good Lord Jesus Christ speaketh openly of this holy predestination (Luke 10:20), as one that knew of how great importance the knowledge thereof is to the edifying of his elect.

But perchance thou wilt say to me, I know well that they whose names are written in heaven have cause to live in continual joy, and glorify God both in word and deed; but I know not whether I am of that

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

number or no, and therefore I live in continual fear; specially because I know myself to be an exceeding weak and frail sinner, from the violence whereof I am not able to defend myself, but that I am overcome of it daily. And furthermore, forasmuch as I see myself continually afflicted and troubled with divers temptations, methinks I do as it were behold with mine eyes the wrath of God scourging me. To answer to these doubts of thine, I say, my right dear brother, that thou must assure thyself that all these are but temptations of the devil; who by all means seeketh to rob us of that faith and confidence that springeth of faith, and assureth us of God's good-will towards us. He laboreth to strip our souls out of this precious garment; for he knoweth that none is a true Christian except he believe God's word, which promiseth forgiveness of all sins, and peace to all them which accept the grace of the gospel. Verily I say that he which, upon these promises of God, persuadeth not himself assuredly that God is a merciful and loving Father unto him, nor with steadfast confidence looketh to receive the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom at his hand, is not faithful indeed, and maketh himself utterly unworthy of God's grace. In respect whereof St. Paul saith that "we be the temple of God, so far forth as we firmly maintain the confi-

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

dence and glory of our hope unto the end” (Heb. 3:6). And in another place he exhorteth that we “should not give over our trust, which hath great reward of recompense” (Heb. 10:35). And, therefore, my brethren, let us give our whole endeavor to do the will of God, as it becometh good children, and beware that we sin not, as near as we can. And, although we fall oftentimes into sin through our own frailty, yet let us not by and by surmise that we be vessels of wrath, or that we be utterly forsaken of the Holy Ghost; for we have our Advocate Jesus Christ before God the Father, and he is the atonement-maker for our sins.

Let us bethink us of the opinion of Augustine, who saith that “none of the saints is righteous and without sin; and yet, notwithstanding that, he ceaseth not to be righteous and holy, so far forth as he retains his holiness with affection.” And therefore, if we have afflictions and tribulations, let us not think that God sends them because he is our enemy, but because he is our most loving Father. “The Lord,” saith Solomon “chastiseth him whom he loveth, and scourgeth every child of his whom he receiveth” (Prov. 3:12). Wherefore if we have received the grace of the gospel, whereby man is received of God for his child, we must not doubt of God’s grace

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

and goodwill towards us. And when we perceive ourselves to delight in God's word, and to have a desire to follow the life of Jesus Christ, we must steadfastly believe that we be the children of God, and the temple of the Holy Ghost; for those things cannot be done by the power of man's wisdom, but are the gifts of the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us by faith, and, as it were, a seal of authority, which sealeth up God's promises in our hearts; the certainty whereof is printed aforehand in our minds, and is given us as a pledge to establish and confirm the same. "As soon as you believe (saith the apostle St. Paul) ye be sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest-penny of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13, 14). Behold how he showeth us hereby that the hearts of the faithful are marked with the Holy Ghost, as it were with a seal; in respect whereof he calleth the Holy Ghost the Spirit of promise, for so much as he confirmeth the promise of the gospel, the which (as I have oftentimes told you) is a happy tidings that promiseth forgiveness of sins and everlasting life to all such as believe that all their misdoings are blotted out in Jesus Christ. "All we that believe in Jesus Christ (saith St. Paul) are become the children of God"; and, "Because we be his children, he hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our heart, which crieth Father,

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

Father” (Gal. 3:26; 4:6). And to the Romans, “Those,” saith he, “that are guided by the Spirit of God, are the children of God; for ye have not received again the spirit of bondage in fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Father, Father. For certainly the same Spirit beareth our spirit record that we be the children of God. Now then, if we be children, we be also heirs” (Rom. 8:14-17).

And we must mark well that, in these two places, the apostle St. Paul speaketh plainly, not of any special revelation, but of a certain record which the Holy Ghost doth commonly yield to all such as receive the grace of the gospel. Then, if the Holy Ghost assure us that we be God’s children and heirs, why should we doubt of our predestination? The same man saith in the same epistle, “Whom he hath predestinated, them he hath also called; and whom he hath called, them hath he also made righteous; and, whom he hath made righteous, them also hath he glorified. What shall we then say to all these things? If God be on our side, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:30, 31). And therefore, if I plainly perceive that God hath called me by giving me faith and the fruits of faith, that is to wit, peace of conscience, mortification of the flesh, and quickening of the spirit, whether it be in whole or in part, why should I doubt

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

that I am not predestinated? And, moreover, we say with St. Paul, that all true Christians, that is to wit, all such as believe the gospel, “receive not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that cometh from God; by the inspiration whereof they discern the things that God hath given them” (1 Cor. 2:12). What marvel then is it if we know that God hath certainly given us everlasting life?

But there are some which say that no man ought to presume so far as to boast himself to have the Spirit of God. They speak in such wise, as if the Christian should glory of the having of it for his own deserts, and not by the only and mere mercy of God; and as though it were a presumptuousness to profess himself a Christian; or as though a man could be a Christian without the having of Christ’s Spirit (Rom. 8:9); or as though we could without flat hypocrisy say that Jesus Christ is our Lord (1 Cor. 12:3), or call God our Father, if the Holy Ghost moved not our hearts and tongues to utter so sweet words. And yet, notwithstanding, even they that count us presumptuous for saying that God hath given us He that his Holy Spirit, with faith, forbid us not to say every day “Our Father,” but rather command us. But I would have them to tell me how it is possible to separate faith and the Holy Ghost asunder; seeing that faith is the



## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

peculiar work of the Holy Ghost? If it be presumption to believe that the Holy Ghost is in us, why doth St. Paul bid the Corinthians try themselves whether they have faith or no, affirming them to be reprobates if they know not that Jesus Christ is in them? (2 Cor. 13:5). But, in very deed, it is a great blindness to accuse the Christians of presumptuousness for taking upon them to glory of the presence of the Holy Ghost; without which glorying there cannot be any Christianity at all. But Jesus Christ, who cannot lie, saith that his Spirit is unknown to the world, and that they only do know him within whom he dwelleth (John 14:17). Then let them begin to become good Christians, and put away their Jewish minds, and embrace the grace of the holy gospel in good earnest; and then shall they know that the good and true Christians both have the Holy Ghost, and also acknowledge themselves to have him.

But some may say to me that the Christian cannot by any means know that he is in God's favor without some special revelation; and so, consequently, that he cannot know whether he be predestinated or no. And he may specially allege these words of Solomon, "A man knoweth not whether he be worthy of hatred or of love" (Eccl. 9:1); and also these words of the apostle St. Paul to the Corinthians, "I feel not myself

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

guilty of anything, and yet feel I not myself justified for all that” (1 Cor. 4:4). It seemeth to be sufficiently declared by the texts of holy Scripture, that the said opinion is false; and now remaineth only to be showed briefly that these two texts, whereupon the same opinion is chiefly grounded, ought not to be taken in that sense. As touching Solomon’s sentence, although it be scarce well and faithfully translated in the common translation, yet is there not any man so dully, who, in reading Solomon’s whole discourse, may not plainly perceive that by saying so he meant that, if any man will take upon him to judge by the casualties that happen in this life, who is loved or hated of God, he laboreth in vain, considering that the self-same chances, which light upon the righteous, light also upon the unrighteous; upon him that sacrificeth, as well as upon him that sacrificeth not; and as soon upon the good man as upon the sinner. Whereof it may be gathered that God doth not always show his love towards those whom he endueth with outward prosperities; and, contrariwise, that he showeth not his displeasure towards those whom he punisheth. Then, my right dear brethren in Christ Jesus our Lord, do you think it reason to conclude that a man cannot be sure of God’s favor because the same sureness cannot be perceived by the sundry

chances that happen every day in these transitory and temporal things? A little before, Solomon saith that a man cannot discern any difference between the soul of man and the life of a beast; for it is seen that both man and beast die after one manner (Eccl. 3:19). Shall we then conclude, by this outward accident, that the persuasion which we have conceived of the immortality of the soul is grounded but only upon conjecture? No, surely; and it were a great folly to stand upon a thing so notably known.

And as for St. Paul's words, I say that, forasmuch as he was speaking of the administration of the gospel, he meant that his heart misgives him not of any misdealing therein, and yet, for all that, that he is not sure he hath done his whole duty to the full, and therein obtained the praise of righteousness to God-ward, as if he had done all that pertained and was convenient to be done by a faithful steward; and therefore in speaking of his office, like a just and discreet person, he durst not justify himself nor avow that he had discharged his duty to the uttermost, and satisfied his Lord's will, but referred all things to the only judgment of his Lord. And verily, whosoever readeth these words of the apostle St. Paul, and considereth the words going afore them with some judgment, and likewise the words that follow, will

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

not doubt but this is the true sense of them. I know well that some men, in expounding these words of the apostle St. Paul, say that, although he knew himself to be without sin, yet he knew not whether he were righteous to God-ward or no; according as David affirmeth that no man can perfectly know his own sins (Ps. 19:12). But these men perceive not that St. Paul groundeth not righteousness upon works, but upon faith (Rom. 3:28; 5:1, 18), and that he utterly refuseth his own righteousness, to embrace only the righteousness which God hath given us, through our Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:9). Also, they consider not that he was most certain to be accepted for righteous, in maintaining the soundness and pureness of the Christian faith, and that he knew well how the crown of that righteousness was laid up for him in heaven (2 Tim. 5:8); and, also, that he was fully assured that no creature in heaven, earth, nor hell was able to separate him from the love of God (Rom. 8:38, 39); and that he longed to die, because he knew for a truth that after his death he would be with Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:21-23). All which things should be false, if he had not been well assured that he was righteous, I mean by faith, and not by works. Therefore, my dear beloved brethren, let us cease to speak that thing of the apostle St. Paul which he never once

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

thought of himself but fiercely fought against it continually, in answering such as measured righteousness by works, and not by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

But, besides these two authorities of Solomon and St. Paul, a man might allege some other places of holy Scripture, which, whereas they warn and encourage men to fear God, seem to be contrary to the assurance of this our predestination. And if I would declare them all particularly, I should be over-long. But I say generally that the fear of punishment was proper to the Old Testament, and childly love to the New Testament; according as St. Paul witnesseth, when he saith to the Romans, “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage to fear, but ye received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Father, Father” (Rom. 8:15). And likewise unto Timothy he saith that “God hath not given us the spirit of fearfulness, but rather of power and love” (2 Tim. 1:7); which Spirit Jesus Christ hath given us according to the promise made by the mouth of the holy prophets, and brought to pass, “that we, being delivered out of our enemies’ hands, may serve him without fear before his holy presence, in all holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:70, 74, 75).

By these and many other places of the holy Scrip-

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

ture, a man may plainly gather that the painful and slavish fearfulness agreeth not with a Christian; and this is already confirmed by this, that such manner of fearfulness is utterly contrary to the spiritual cheerfulness and joy which is peculiar to the Christian; as the apostle St. Paul showeth openly to the Romans, saying that “the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom. 14:17), that is to say, that every man which entereth into the kingdom of the grace of the gospel is become righteous through faith; and afterward addeth peace of conscience, which consequently breedeth such a spiritual and holy rest and gladness, in respect whereof the same St. Paul doth oftentimes encourage the Christians to live merrily (Eph. 5:19; Phil. 4:4). And St. Peter saith that all they which believe in Jesus Christ do continually rejoice with an unspeakable and glorious joy, notwithstanding that they be afflicted with divers temptations (1 Pet. 1:6, 8). And therefore, when the holy Scripture threateneth and frayeth the Christians, they must understand that it speaketh to such as are so licentious, that, for so much as they keep not the thankfulness and honesty that belong to God’s children, they must be handled as servants, and held in awe, until they come to taste and feel how sweet and

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

pleasant the Lord is, and until such time as faith work his effects in them, and that they have so much childly love as may suffice to keep and maintain them in honesty of Christian conversation, and in following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when the self-same Scripture exhorteth Christians to the true fear, it meaneth not that they should fear the judgment and wrath of God, as though it were presently ready to condemn them; for (as I have said already), by the record which the Holy Ghost giveth to their spirit, they know that God hath chosen them and called them, of his own mere mercy, and not for their deserts. By reason whereof they doubt not at all but that, by the self-same goodness and mercy, he will maintain them in the happy state wherein he hath placed them. And after such manner the Scripture exhorteth them not to slavish fear, but to childish fear, that is to wit, that like good children they should be loth to offend against the Christian religion, or to commit anything against the duty and honesty of God's true children, and likewise to grieve the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in them (Eph. 4:30); to the end that, knowing the corruptedness of our nature, we should always be heedful and diligent, and never have any trust in ourselves; for in our flesh and in our minds do the appetites and affections con-

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

tinually dwell, which, as deadly enemies of the soul, lay a thousand snares and baits for us, incessantly laboring to make us proud, ambitious, lecherous, and covetous. This is the fear whereunto the whole Scripture exhorteth the Christians that have once tasted how sweet the Lord is, and which bestow all their endeavor in following Christ's footsteps, who cast not from them this holy fear, because they labor to put off the old man.

And the good Christians must never bereave themselves quite and clean of this childly fear, which is the singular friend of Christian charity; like as the slavish fear is such an enemy unto it, as they can by no means dwell together. And by the aforesaid things a man may plainly perceive that the good Christian ought never to doubt of the forgiveness of his sins, nor of God's favor. Nevertheless, for the better satisfying of the reader, I purpose to set down hereunder certain authorities of the holy doctors, which confirm this aforesaid truth.

St. Hilary, in his fifth canon upon Matthew, saith, "It is God's will that we should hope without any doubting of his unknown will. For, if the belief be doubtful, there can be no righteousness obtained by believing." And thus we see that, according to St. Hilary, a man obtaineth not forgiveness of his sins at



## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

God's hand, except he believe undoubtedly to obtain it. And good right it is that it should be so. "For he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea, which is tossed and turmoiled with the wind. And therefore let not such a one think to obtain anything at God's hand" (James 1:6, 7). But let us hear Augustine, who in his Manual counselleth us to drive away the said foolish imagination, which intendeth to dispossess us of the aforesaid good and sage assuredness. "Let such foolish imagination (saith he) murmur as much as it listeth, saying, Who art thou? How great is that glory? By what deserts hopest thou to obtain it? I answer assuredly: I know in whom I have believed, and I know that he (of his great love) hath made me his son: I know he is true of his promise, and able to perform his word; for he can do what he will. And when I think upon the Lord's death, the multitude of my sins cannot dismay me; for in his death do I put all my trust. His death is my whole desert, it is my refuge, it is my salvation, my life and resurrection; and the mercy of the Lord is my desert. I am not poor of desert so long as the Lord of mercy faileth me not. And since the mercies of the Lord are many, many also are my deservings. The more that he is of power to save, the more am I sure to be saved." The same Augustine, talking with God in another place, saith

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

that he had despaired by reason of his great sins and infinite negligences, if the Word of God had not become flesh. And anon after, he saith these words: "All my hope, all the assurance of my trust, is settled in his precious blood, which was shed for us and for our salvation. In him my poor heart taketh breath; and putting my whole trust in him, I long to come unto thee, O Father, not having mine own righteousness, but that righteousness of thy Son Jesus Christ." In these two places, Augustine showeth plainly that the Christian must not be afraid, but assure himself of righteousness by grounding himself not upon his own works, but upon the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth us from all our sins, and maketh peace with God. St. Bernard, in his first sermon upon the Annunciation, saith most evidently that "it is not enough to believe that a man can have forgiveness of his sins but by God's mercy, nor any one good desire or ability to do so much as one good work, except God give it him; no, nor that a man cannot deserve eternal life by his works, but if God give him the gift so to believe. But, besides all these things, which ought rather to be counted a certain entrance and foundation of our faith, it is needful that thou believe also that thy sins are forgiven thee for the love of Jesus Christ." See how this holy man

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

confesseth that it is not enough to believe generally the forgiveness of sins; but he must also believe particularly that his own sins are forgiven him by Jesus Christ; and the reason is ready at hand, namely, that forasmuch as God hath promised thee to accept thee for righteous through the merits of Jesus Christ, if thou believe not that thou art become righteous through him, thou makest God a liar, and consequently thou makest thyself unworthy of his grace and liberality.

But thou wilt say to me, I believe well the forgiveness of sins, and I know that God is true; but I am afraid that I am not worthy to have so great a gift. I answer, that the forgiveness of thy sins shall not be a gift of free grace, but a wages, if God should give it thee for the worthiness of thy works. But I reply upon thee, that God accepteth thee for righteous, and layeth not thy sin to thy charge, because of Christ's merits, which are given unto thee and become thine by faith. Therefore, following the counsel of St. Bernard, believe thou not only the forgiveness of sins in general, but also apply the same belief to thine own particular person, by believing without any doubt that all thy misdoings are pardoned thee through Jesus Christ. And in so doing thou shalt give the glory unto God, by confessing him to be merciful

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

and true, and shalt become righteous and holy before God; for so much as by the same confession the holiness and righteousness of Jesus Christ shall be communicated unto thee.

But to return to our purpose of predestination: I say that, by the things above mentioned, a man may evidently perceive that the assurance of predestination doth not hurt, but rather greatly profit the true Christians. And I think not that it can hurt the self-Christians and reprobates. For, albeit that such manner of folk would bear themselves in hand, and pretend to the world-ward to be of the number of the predestinate, yet can they never persuade their own consciences, which will ever be gnawing and crying out to the contrary. But yet it seemeth greatly that the doctrine of predestination may hurt them. For they be wont to say, If I be of the number of the reprobates, what shall it avail me to do good works? And if I be of the number of the predestinate, I shall be saved without any laboring of mine to do good works. I answer thee at a few words, that by such devilish arguments they increase God's wrath against themselves, who hath disclosed the knowledge of predestination to the Christians to make them hot, and not cold, in the love of God; and to set them forward, and not backward, unto good works. And

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

therefore the true Christian on the one side holdeth himself assuredly predestinated unto everlasting life, and to be saved, not at all by his own merits, but by God's election, who hath predestinated us not for our own works' sakes, but to show the greatness of his mercy; and on the other side endeavoreth himself to do good works after the example of Jesus Christ, as much as if his salvation depended upon his own policy and painstaking. As for him that ceaseth to do good, because of the doctrine of predestination, saying, If I be predestinated, I shall be saved without straining of myself to do good works; he showeth evidently that his travailing is not for the love of God, but for the love of himself. By reason whereof the works that he doth may perhaps be good and holy to the sight of men, but they be wicked and abominable before the Lord God, who hath an eye to the intent. And hereupon it may be gathered that the doctrine of predestination works rather good than harm to the false Christians. For it discovereth their hypocrisy, which cannot cure itself so long as it lieth hidden under the mantle of outward works. But I would have them that say, I will not strain myself to do well, for if I be predestinated I shall be saved without tiring of myself so much; I say, I would have them tell me how it happeneth that, when they be

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

diseased, they say not also, I will have neither physician nor physic; for look, what God hath determined upon me cannot but come to pass. Why eat they? why drink they? why till they the ground? why plant they vines? and why be they so diligent in doing all things convenient for to sustain the body? Why say they not, also, that all these turmoilings, policies, and travails of ours are superfluous; forasmuch as it is not possible but whatsoever God hath foreseen and determined, concerning our life and death, must needs come to pass? And therefore, if God's providence make them not negligent and idle in things pertaining to the body, why should it make them more slothful and negligent in that which concerneth the Christian perfection, which without all comparison is far nobler than the body? But, forasmuch as we see that neither Jesus Christ, nor St. Paul, for any doubt of offending the reprobates, have forborne to preach the truth, which is necessary to the edifying of the chosen, for the love of whom the everlasting Son became man and was put to death upon the cross, we also in like wise ought not to forbear the preaching of predestination to the true Christians, forasmuch as we have seen that it importeth great edification.

Now are we come to the end of our purpose,

## 6. Certain Remedies Against Distrust

wherein our chief intent hath been (according to our small power) to magnify the wonderful benefit which the Christian man hath received by Jesus Christ crucified, and to show that faith of herself alone justifieth, that is to wit, that God receiveth and holdeth them for righteous which believe steadfastly that Christ hath made full amends for their sins; howbeit, that, as light cannot be separated from fire, which of itself burneth and devoureth all things, even so good works cannot be separated from faith, which alone by itself justifieth.

And this holy doctrine (which exalteth Jesus Christ, and represseth, abateth the pride of man) hath and always shall be rejected, and fought against, by such Christians as have Jewish minds. But happy is he who, following the example of St. Paul, spoileth himself of his own righteousness, and would have none other righteousness than that which is of Jesus Christ, wherewith if he be clothed and apparelled, he may most assuredly appear before God, and shall receive his blessing and the heritage of heaven and earth with his only Son Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom be all honor, praise, and glory, from this time forth for evermore. Amen.



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<sup>1</sup> Laderchius, the continuator of the Annals of Baronius.

<sup>2</sup> *Article and Memorial*, copied from a record belonging to San Giovanni de' Florentini di Roma. This memorial, together with the letters which follow, are reprinted in the original Italian by Schelhorn, as referred to by Dr. M'Crie.

<sup>3</sup> He published in his lifetime four books of epistles, fourteen orations, and three books in verse on the immortality of the soul. After his death, appeared, "Testimonia et Actio in Pontifices Romanas et eorum Asseclas"; also a letter to the Reformers in the Council of Trent, first printed, it would seem by Schelhorn. One or two other pieces have been ascribed to him.

<sup>4</sup> From the will of Thomas Bassinden, printer in Edinburgh, who died October 18, 1577.

<sup>5</sup> In all these places Augustine maintains the doctrine here advanced at considerable length.

<sup>6</sup> These commentaries on St. Paul's epistles, which were in the author's time ascribed to St. Ambrose, are not really by that father.