

THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED MAMMON.

By William Tyndale Printed in 1527

“There was a certain rich man which had a steward, that was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods: and he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer my steward. The steward said within himself, What shall I do, for my master will take away from me my stewardship? I cannot dig, and to beg I am ashamed. I wot what to do, that when I am put out of my stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Then called he all his master’s debtors, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my master? And he said, An hundred tons of oil. And he said to him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, What owest thou? And he said, An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely. For the children of this world are in their kind wiser than the children of light. And I say also unto you, Make you friends of the wicked mammon, that when ye shall have need, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”

FOREASMUCH as with this, and divers such other texts, many have enforced to draw the people from the true faith, and from putting their trust in the truth of God’s promises, and in the merits and deserving of his Christ, our Lord; and have also brought it to pass, (for “many false prophets shall arise and deceive many, and much wickedness must also be,” saith Christ; and Paul saith, “Evil men and deceivers shall; prevail in evil, while they deceive, and are deceived themselves;”) and have taught them to put their trust in their own merits, and brought them in belief that they shall be justified in the sight of God by the goodness of their own works, and have corrupted the pure word of God, to confirm their Aristotle withal; (for though that the philosophers and worldly wise men were enemies above all enemies to the gospel of God; and though the worldly wisdom cannot comprehend the wisdom of God, as thou mayest see 1 Corinthians 1 and 1 Corinthians 2; and though worldly righteousness cannot be obedient unto the righteousness of God, yet whatsoever they read in Aristotle, that must be first true; and to maintain that, they rend and tear the scriptures with their distinctions, and expound them violently, contrary to the meaning of the text, and to the circumstances that go before and after, and to a thousand clear and evident texts:) wherefore I have taken in hand to expound this gospel, and certain other places of the new Testament; and (as far forth as God shall lend me grace) to bring the scripture unto the right sense, and to dig again the wells of Abraham, and to purge and cleanse them of the earth of worldly wisdom, wherewith these Philistines have stopped them. Which grace grant me God, for the love that he hath unto his Son, Jesus our Lord, unto the glory of his name. Amen.

That faith only before all works and without all merits, but Christ’s only, justifieth and setteth us at peace with God, is proved by Paul in the first chapter to the Romans. “I am not ashamed (saith he) of the gospel,” that is to say, of the glad tidings and promises which God hath made and sworn to us in Christ: “for it (that is to say the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe.” And it followeth in the foresaid chapter, “the just or righteous must live by faith.”

For in the faith which we have in Christ and in God’s promises find we mercy, life, favor, and peace. In the law we find death, damnation, and wrath; moreover, the curse and vengeance of God upon us. And it (that is to say, the law) is called of Paul the ministration of death and damnation. In the law we are proved to be the enemies of God, and that we hate him. For how can we be at peace with God and love him, seeing we are conceived and born under the power of the devil, and are his possession and kingdom, his captives and bondmen, and led at his will, and he holdeth our hearts, so that it is impossible for us to consent to the will of God, much more is it impossible for a man to fulfill the law of his own strength and power, seeing that we are by birth and of nature the heirs of eternal damnation, as saith Paul, Ephesians 2? We (saith he) “are by nature the children of wrath;” which thing the law doth but utter only, and helpeth us not, yea, requireth impossible things of us. The law when it commandeth that thou shalt not lust, giveth thee not power so to do, but damneth thee, because thou canst not so do.

If thou wilt therefore be at peace with God, and love him, thou must turn to the promises of God, and to the gospel, which is called of Paul, in the place before rehearsed to the Corinthians, the ministration of righteousness, and of the Spirit. For faith bringeth pardon and forgiveness freely purchased by Christ’s blood, and bringeth also the Spirit; the Spirit looseth the bonds of the devil, and setteth us at liberty. For “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” saith Paul in the same place to the Corinthians: that is to say, there the heart is free, and hath power to love the will of God; and there the heart mourneth that he cannot love enough. Now is that consent of the heart unto the law of God eternal life; yea, though there be no power yet in the members to fulfill it. Let every man therefore (according to Paul’s counsel in the sixth chapter to the Ephesians) arm himself with the armor of God; that is to understand, with God’s promises. And “above all things (saith he) take unto you

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the shield of faith, wherewith ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, that ye may be able to resist in the evil day of temptation,” and namely at the hour of death.

See therefore thou have God’s promises in thine heart, and that thou believe them without wavering: and when temptation ariseth, and the devil layeth the law and thy deeds against thee, answer him with the promises; and turn to God, and confess thyself to him, and say it is even so, or else how could he be merciful? But remember that he is the God of mercy and of truth, and cannot but fulfill his promises. Also remember, that his Son’s blood is stronger than all the sins and wickedness of the whole world; and therewith quiet thyself, and thereunto commit thyself, and bless thyself in all temptation (namely at the hour of death) with that holy candle. Or else perishest thou, though thou hast a thousand holy candles about thee, a hundred ton of holy water, a shipfull of pardons, a cloth-sack full of friars’ coats, and all the ceremonies in the world, and all the good works, deservings, and merits of all the men in the world, be they, or were they, never so holy. God’s word only lasteth for ever; and that which he hath sworn doth abide, when all other things perish. So long as thou findest any consent in thine heart unto the law of God, that it is righteous and good, and also displeasure that thou canst not fulfill it, despair not; neither doubt but that God’s Spirit is in thee, and that thou art chosen for Christ’s sake to the inheritance of eternal life.

And again, “We suppose that a man is justified through faith, without the deeds of the law.” And likewise, “We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.” Also, “Seeing that we are justified through faith, we are at peace with God.” Also, “With the heart doth a man believe to be made righteous.” Also, “Received ye the Spirit by the deeds of the law, or by hearing of the faith? Doth he which ministereth the Spirit unto you, and worketh miracles among you, do it of the deeds of the law, or by hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Understand therefore (saith he) that the children of faith are the children of Abraham. For the scripture saw before that God would justify the heathen or gentiles by faith, and showed before glad tidings unto Abraham, In thy seed shall all nations be blessed. Wherefore they which are of faith are blessed, that is to wit made righteous, with the righteous Abraham. For as many as are of the deeds of the law, are under curse: for it is written (saith he), Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to fulfill them.” Item, Galatians 2 where he resisted Peter in the face, he saith: “We which are Jews by nation, and not sinners of the Gentiles, know that a man is not justified by the deeds of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; and have therefore believed on Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the deeds of the law; for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Item, in the same place he saith: “Touching that I now live, I live in the faith of the Son of God, which loved me, and gave himself for me: I despise not the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

And of such like ensamples are all the epistles of Paul full. Mark how Paul laboreth with himself to express the exceeding mysteries of faith in the epistle to the Ephesians and in the epistle to the Colossians. Of these and many such like texts are we sure, that the forgiveness of sins and justifying is appropriate unto faith only, without the adding to of works.

Take forth also the similitude that Christ maketh: “A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a bad tree bringeth forth bad fruit.” There seest thou, that the fruit maketh not the tree good, but the tree the fruit; and that the tree must aforehand be good, or be made good, ere it can bring forth good fruit. As he also saith, “Either make the tree good and his fruit good also, either make the tree bad and his fruit bad also. How can ye speak well while ye yourselves are evil?” So likewise is this true, and nothing more true, that a man before all good works must first be good; and that it is impossible that works should make him good, if he were not good before, ere he did good works. For this is Christ’s principle, and (as we say) a general rule. “How can ye speak well, while ye are evil?” so likewise how can ye do good, while ye are evil?

This is therefore plain, and a sure conclusion, not to be doubted of, that there must be first in the heart of a man, before he do any good work, a greater and a preciouser thing than all the good works in the world, to reconcile him to God, to bring the love and favor of God to him, to make him love God again, to make him righteous and good in the sight of God, to do away his sin, to deliver him and loose him out of that captivity wherein he was conceived and born, in which he could neither love God nor the will of God. Or else, how can he work any good work that should please God, if there were not some supernatural goodness in him, given of God freely, whereof the good work must spring? even as a sick man must first be healed or made whole, ere he can do the deeds of an whole man; and as the blind man must first have sight given him, ere he can see; and he that hath his feet in fetters, gives, or stocks, must first be loosed, ere he can go, walk or run; and even as they which thou redest of in the gospel, that they were possessed of the devils, could not laud God till the devils were cast out.

That precious thing which must be in the heart, ere a man can work any good work, is the word of God, which in the gospel preacheth, proffereth, and bringeth unto all that repent and believe, the favor of God in Christ. Whosoever heareth the word

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and believeth it, the same is thereby righteous; and thereby is given him the Spirit of God, which leadeth him unto all that is the will of God; and is loosed from the captivity and bondage of the devil; and his heart is free to love God, and hath lust to do the will of God. Therefore it is called the word of life, the word of grace, the word of health, the word of redemption, the word of forgiveness, and the word of peace: he that heareth it not, or believeth it not, can by no means be made righteous before God. This confirmeth Peter in the fifteenth of the Acts, saying that God through faith doth purify the hearts. For of what nature soever the word of God is, of the same nature must the hearts be which believe thereon, and cleave thereunto. Now is the word living, pure, righteous, and true; and even so maketh it the hearts of them that believe thereon.

If it be said that Paul (when he saith in the third to the Romans, “No flesh shall be, or can be justified by the deeds of the law”) meaneth it of the ceremonies or sacrifices, it is an untrue saying. For it followeth immediately, “By the law cometh the knowledge of sin.” Now are they not the ceremonies that utter sin, but the law of commandments. In the fourth he saith, “The law causeth wrath;” which cannot be understand of the ceremonies; for they were given to reconcile the people to God again after they had sinned. If, as they say, the ceremonies, which were given to purge sin and to reconcile, justify not, neither bless but temporally only, much more the law of commandments justifieth not. For that which proveth a man sick, healeth him not; neither doth the cause of wrath bring to favor; neither can that which damneth save a man. When the mother commandeth her child but even to rock the cradle, it grudgeth: this commandment doth but utter the poison that lay hid, and setteth him at debate with his mother, and maketh him believe she loveth him not.

These commandments also, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not lust, desire, or wish after thy neighbor’s wife, servant, maid, ox, or ass, or whatsoever pertaineth unto thy neighbor, give me not power so to do; but utter the poison that is in me, and damn me, because I cannot so do; and prove that God is wroth with me, seeing that his will and mine are so contrary. Therefore saith Paul: “If there had been given such a law that could have given life, then, no doubt, righteousness had come by the law: but the scripture concludeth all under sin (saith he), that the promise might be given unto them that believe through the faith that is in Jesus Christ.”

The promises, when they are believed, are they that justify; for they bring the Spirit, which looseth the heart, giveth lust to the law, and certifieth us of the good-will of God unto usward. If we submit ourselves unto God, and desire him to heal us, he will do it, and will in the mean time (because of the consent of the heart unto the law) count us for full whole, and will no more hate us, but pity us, cherish us, be tender-hearted to us, and love us as he doth Christ himself. Christ is our Redeemer, Savior, peace, atonement, and satisfaction; and hath made amends or satisfaction to Godward for all the sin which they that repent (consenting to the law and believing the promises) do, have done, or shall do. So that if through fragility we fall a thousand times in a day, yet if we do repent again, we have alway mercy laid up for us in store in Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then to those scriptures which go so sore upon good works? As we read Matthew 25, “I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat,” etc. and such like. Which all sound as though we should be justified, and accepted unto the favor of God in Christ, through good works. This wise answer I: Many there are, which when they hear or read of faith, at once they consent thereunto, and have a certain imagination or opinion of faith: as when a man telleth a story or a thing done in a strange land, that pertaineth not to them at all; which yet they believe, and tell as a true thing: and this imagination, or opinion, they call faith. They think no farther than that faith is a thing which standeth in their own power to have, as do other natural works which men work; but they feel no manner working of the Spirit, neither the terrible sentence of the law, the fearful judgments of God, the horrible damnation and captivity under Satan. Therefore, as soon as they have this opinion or imagination in their hearts, that saith, Verily this doctrine seemeth true, I believe it is even so; then they think that the right faith is there. But afterward when they feel in themselves, and also see in other, that there is none alteration, and that the works follow not, but that they are altogether even as before, and abide in their old estate; then think they that faith is not sufficient, but that it must be some greater thing than faith that should justify a man.

So fall they away from faith again, and cry, saying, Faith only justifieth not a man, and maketh him acceptable to God. If thou ask them, Wherefore? they answer, See how many there are that believe, and yet do no more than they did before. These are they which Judas in his epistle calleth dreamers, which deceive themselves with their own fantasies. For what other thing is their imagination, which they call faith, than a dreaming of the faith, and an opinion of their own imagination wrought without the grace of God? These must needs be worse at the latter end than at the beginning. These are the old vessels that rend when new wine is poured into them; that is, they hear God’s word, but hold it not, and therefore wax worse than they were before. But the right faith springeth not of man’s fantasy, neither is it in any man’s power to obtain it; but it is altogether the pure gift of God poured into us freely, without all manner doing of us, without deserving and merits, yea, and without seeking for of us; and is (as saith Paul in the second to the Ephesians) even God’s gift and grace, purchased through Christ. Therefore is it mighty in operation, full of virtue, and ever working; which also reneweth a man, and begetteth him afresh, altereth him, changeth him, and turneth him altogether into a new nature and conversation; so that a

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man feeleth his heart altogether altered and changed, and far otherwise disposed than before; and hath power to love that which before he could not but hate; and delighteth in that which before he abhorred; and hateth that which before he could not but love. And it setteth the soul at liberty, and maketh her free to follow the will of God, and doth to the soul even as health doth unto the body, after that a man is pined and wasted away with a long soking disease: the legs cannot bear him, he cannot lift up his hands to help himself, his taste is corrupt, sugar is bitter in his mouth, his stomach abhorreth, longing after slibbersauce and swash at which a whole stomach is ready to cast his gorge. When health cometh, she changeth and altereth him clean; giveth him strength in all his members, and lust to do of his own accord that which before he could not do, neither could suffer that any man exhorted him to do; and hath now lust in wholesome things, and his members are free and at liberty, and have power to do, of their own accord, all things which belong to an whole man to do, which afore they had no power to do, but were in captivity and bondage. So likewise in all things doth right faith to the soul.

The Spirit of God accompanieth faith, and bringeth with her light, wherewith a man beholdeth himself in the law of God, and seeth his miserable bondage and captivity, and humbleth himself, and abhorreth himself: she bringeth God's promises of all good things in Christ. God worketh with his word, and in his word: and when his word is preached, faith rooteth herself in the hearts of the elect; and as faith entereth, and the word of God is believed, the power of God looseth the heart from the captivity and bondage under sin, and knitteth and coupleth him to God and to the will of God; altereth him, changeth him clean, fashioneth, and forgeth him anew; giveth him power to love, and to do that which before was impossible for him either to love or do; and turneth him unto a new nature, so that he loveth that which he before hated, and hateth that which he before loved; and is clean altered, and changed, and contrary disposed; and is knit and coupled fast to God's will, and naturally bringeth forth good works, that is to say, that which God commandeth to do, and not things of his own imagination. And that doth he of his own accord, as a tree bringeth forth fruit of her own accord. And as thou needest not to bid a tree to bring forth fruit, so is there no law put unto him that believeth, and is justified through faith, as saith Paul in the first epistle to Timothy, the first chapter. Neither is it needful; for the law of God is written and graved in his heart, and his pleasure is therein. And as without commandment, but even of his own nature, he eateth, drinketh, seeth, heareth, talketh, and goeth; even so of his own nature, without co-action or compulsion of the law, bringeth he forth good works. And as a whole man, when he is athirst, tarrieth but for drink, and when he hungreth, abideth but for meat, and then drinketh and eateth naturally; even so is the faithful ever athirst and an hungred after the will of God, and tarrieth but for occasion. And whensoever an occasion is given, he worketh naturally the will of God: for this blessing is given to all them that trust in Christ's blood, that they thirst and hunger to do God's will. He that hath not this faith, is but an unprofitable babbler of faith and works; and wotteth neither what he babbleth, nor what he meaneth, or whereunto his words pertain: for he feeleth not the power of faith, nor the working of the Spirit in his heart; but interpreteth the scriptures, which speak of faith and works, after his own blind reason and foolish fantasies, and not of any feeling that he hath in his heart; as a man rehearseth a tale of another man's mouth, and wotteth not whether it be so or no as he saith, nor hath any experience of the thing itself.

Now doth the scripture ascribe both faith and works, not to us, but to God only, to whom they belong only, and to whom they are appropriate, whose gift they are, and the proper work of his Spirit. Is it not a froward and perverse blindness, to teach how a man can do nothing of his own self; and yet presumptuously take upon them the greatest and highest work of God, even to make faith in themselves of their own power, and of their own false imagination and thoughts? Therefore, I say, we must despair of ourselves, and pray God (as Christ's apostles did) to give us faith, and to increase our faith. When we have that, we need no other thing more: for she bringeth the Spirit with her; and he not only teacheth us all things, but worketh them also mightily in us, and carrieth us through adversity, persecution, death, and hell, unto heaven and everlasting life.

Mark diligently, therefore, seeing we are come to answer. The scripture (because of such dreams and feigned faith's sake) useth such manner of speakings of works, not that a man should thereby be made good to Godward, or justified; but to declare unto other, and to take of other, the difference between false feigned faith and right faith. For where right faith is, there bringeth she forth good works: if there follow not good works, it is (no doubt) but a dream and an opinion, or feigned faith.

Wherefore look, as the fruit maketh not the tree good, but declareth and testifieth outwardly that the tree is good, (as Christ saith, "Every tree is known by his fruit,") even so shall ye know the right faith by her fruit. Take for an ensample Mary, that anointed Christ's feet. When Simon, which bade Christ to his house, had condemned her, Christ defended her, and justified her, saying, "Simon, I have a certain thing to say unto thee; and he said, Master, say on. There was a certain lender which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. When they had nothing to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them, tell me, will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said to him, Thou hast truly judged. And he turned him to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I

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entered into thine house, and thou gavest me no water to my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou hast not anointed; and she hath anointed my feet with costly and precious ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, many sins are forgiven her, for she loveth much. To whom less is forgiven, the same doth love less," etc. Hereby see we, that deeds and works are but outward signs of the inward grace of the bounteous and plenteous mercy of God, freely received without all merits of deeds, yea, and before all deeds. Christ teacheth to know the inward faith and love by the outward deeds. Deeds are the fruits of love; and love is the fruit of faith. Love, and also the deeds, are great or small according to the proportion of faith. Where faith is mighty and strong, there is love fervent, and deeds plenteous, and done with exceeding meekness: where faith is weak, there is love cold, and the deeds few and seldom, as flowers and blossoms in winter.

Simon believed, and had faith, yet but weakly; and, according to the proportion of his faith, loved coldly, and had deeds thereafter: he bade Christ unto a simple and bare feast only, and received him not with any great humanity. But Mary had a strong faith, and therefore burning love and notable deeds, done with exceeding profound and deep meekness. On the one side she saw herself clearly in the law, both in what danger she was in, and her cruel bondage under sin, her horrible damnation, and also the fearful sentence and judgment of God upon sinners. On the other side, she heard the gospel of Christ preached; and in the promises she saw with eagles' eyes the exceeding abundant mercy of God, that passeth all utterance of speech; which is set forth in Christ for all meek sinners, which knowledge their sins; and she believed the word of God mightily, and glorified God over his mercy and truth; and being overcome and overwhelmed with the unspeakable, yea, and incomprehensible abundant riches of the kindness of God, did inflame and burn in love; yea, was so swollen in love, that she could not abide, nor hold, but must break out; and was so drunk in love, that she regarded nothing, but even to utter the fervent and burning love of her heart only: she had no respect to herself, though she was never so great and notable a sinner; neither to the curious hypocrisy of the Pharisees, which ever disdain weak sinners; neither the costliness of her ointment; but with all humbleness did run unto his feet, washed them with the tears of her eyes, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and anointed them with her precious ointment; yea, and would no doubt have run into the ground under his feet, to have uttered her love toward him; yea, would have descended down into hell, if it had been possible. Even as Paul, in the ninth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, was drunk in love, and overwhelmed with the plenteousness of the infinite mercy of God, which he had received in Christ unsought for, wished himself banished from Christ and damned, to save the Jews, if it might have been. For as a man feeleth God in himself, so is he to his neighbor. Mark another thing also. We, for the most part, because of our grossness in all our knowledge, proceed from that which is last and hindmost unto that which is first; beginning at the latter end, disputing and making our arguments backward. We begin at the effect and work, and proceed unto the natural cause. As for an ensample: we first see the moon dark, and then search the cause; and find that the putting of the earth between the sun and the moon is the natural cause of the darkness, and that the earth stoppeth the light. Then dispute we backward, saying, The moon is darkened, therefore is the earth directly between the sun and moon. Now yet is not the darkness of the moon the natural cause that the earth is between the sun and the moon, but the effect thereof, and cause declarative, declaring and leading us unto the knowledge, how that the earth is between the sun and the moon directly, and causeth the darkness, stopping the light of the sun from the moon. And contrariwise, the being of the earth directly between the sun and the moon is the natural cause of the darkness. Likewise, He hath a son, therefore is he a father; and yet the son is not cause of the father, but contrariwise. Notwithstanding, the son is the cause declarative, whereby we know that the other is a father. After the same manner here, "Many sins are forgiven her, for she loveth much;" thou mayest not understand by the word *for*, that love is the natural cause of the forgiving of sins, but declareth it only; and contrariwise, the forgiveness of sins is the natural cause of love.

The works declare love: and love declareth that there is some benefit and kindness shewed, or else would there be no love. Why worketh one and another not? or one more than another? Because that one loveth and the other not; or that the one loveth more than the other. Why loveth one, and another not; or one more than another? Because that one feeleth the exceeding love of God in his heart, and another not; or that one feeleth it more than another. Scripture speaketh after the most grossest manner. Be diligent therefore that thou be not deceived with curiousness; for men of no small reputation have been deceived with their own sophistry. Hereby now seest thou, that there is great difference between being righteous and good in a man's self, and declaring and uttering righteousness and goodness. The faith only maketh a man safe, good, righteous, and the friend of God, yea, and the son and the heir of God, and of all his goodness; and possesseth us with the Spirit of God. The work declareth the same faith and goodness. Now useth the scripture the common manner of speaking, and the very same that is among the people. As when a father saith to his child, Go, and be loving, merciful, and good to such or such a poor man; he biddeth him not therewith to be made merciful, kind, and good; but to testify and declare the goodness that is in him already, with the outward deed, that it may break out to the profit of other, and that other may feel it which have need thereof. 103 After the same manner shalt thou interpret the scriptures which make mention of works: that

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God thereby will that we show forth that goodness which we have received by faith, and let it break forth and come to the profit of other; that the false faith may be known and weeded out by the roots. For God giveth no man his grace, that he should let it lie still and do no good withal; but that he should increase it, and multiply it, with lending it to other, and with open declaring of it with the outward works provoke and draw other to God. As Christ saith in Matthew the fifth chapter, "Let your light so shine in the sight of men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Or else were it as a treasure digged in the ground, and hid wisdom, in the which there is no profit. Moreover therewith the goodness, favor, and gifts of God which are in thee, not only shall be known unto other, but also unto thine own self; and thou shalt be sure that thy faith is right, and that the true Spirit of God is in thee, and that thou art called and chosen of God unto eternal life, and loosed from the bonds of Satan, whose captive thou wast; as Peter exhorteth, in the first of his second epistle, through good works to make our calling and election (wherewith we are called and chosen of God) sure. For how dare a man presume to think that his faith is right, and that God's favor is on him, and that God's Spirit is in him, when he feeleth not the working of the Spirit, neither himself disposed to any godly thing? Thou canst never know or be sure of thy faith, but by the works: if works follow not, yea, and that of love, without looking after any reward, thou mayest be sure that thy faith is but a dream, and not right, and even the same that James calleth in his epistle, the second chapter, dead faith, and not justifying.

Abraham through works was sure of his faith to be right, and that the true fear of God was in him, when he had offered his son: as the scripture saith, "Now know I that thou fearest God;" that is to say, Now is it open and manifest that thou fearest God, inasmuch as thou hast not spared thy only son for my sake.

So now by this abide sure and fast, that a man inwardly in the heart, and before God, is righteous and good through faith only, before all works: notwithstanding, yet outwardly and openly before the people, yea, and before himself, is he righteous through the work; that is, he knoweth and is sure through the outward work, that he is a true believer, and in the favor of God, and righteous and good thorough the mercy of God: that thou mayest call the one an open and an outward righteousness, and the other, an inward righteousness of the heart; so yet, that thou understand by the outward righteousness no other thing save the fruit that followeth, and a declaring of the inward justifying and righteousness of the heart; and not that it maketh a man righteous before God, but that he must be first righteous before him, in the heart; even as thou mayest call the fruit of the tree the outward goodness of the tree, which followeth and uttereth the inward natural goodness of the tree.

This meaneth James in his epistle, where he saith, "Faith without works is dead;" that is, if works follow not, it is a sure and an evident sign, that there is no faith in the heart; but a dead imagination and dream, which they falsely call faith.

Of the same wise is this saying of Christ to be understand: "Make you friends of the unrighteous mammon;" that is, shew your faith openly, and what ye are within in the heart, with outward giving and bestowing your goods on the poor, that ye may obtain friends: that is, that the poor, on whom thou hast shewed mercy, may at the day of judgment testify and witness of thy good works; that thy faith and what thou wast within in thy heart before God, may there appear by thy fruits openly to all men. For unto the right believing shall all things be comfortable, and unto consolation, at that terrible day. And contrariwise, unto the unbelieving all things shall be unto desperation and confusion; and every man shall be judged openly and outwardly, in the presence of all men, according to their deeds and works. So that not without a cause thou mayest call them thy friends, which testify at that day of thee, that thou livedst as a true and a right Christian man, and followest the steps of Christ in showing mercy; as no doubt he doth which feeleth God merciful in his heart. And by the works is the faith known, that it was right and perfect. For the outward works can never please God, nor make friend, except they spring of faith: forasmuch as Christ himself disalloweth and casteth away the works of the Pharisees, yea, prophesying, and working of miracles, and casting out of devils; which we count and esteem for very excellent virtues; yet make they no friends with their works, while their hearts are false and impure, and their eye double. Now without faith is no heart true, or eye single: so that we are compelled to confess that the works make not a man righteous or good, but that the heart must first be righteous and good, ere any good work proceed thence.

Secondarily, all good works must be done free with a single eye, without respect of any thing, and that no profit be sought thereby. That commandeth Christ, where he saith, "Freely have ye received; freely give again." For look, as Christ with all his works did not deserve heaven, (for that was his already,) but did us service therewith; and neither looked nor sought his own profit, but our profit, and the honor of God the Father only: even so we, with all our works, may not seek our own profit, neither in this world nor in heaven; but must, and ought, freely to work, to honor God withal, and without all manner respect seek our neighbor's profit, and do him service. That meaneth Paul, saying: "Be minded as Christ was, which being in the shape of God, equal unto God, and even very God, laid that apart," that is to say, hid it; "and took on him the form

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and fashion of a servant.” That is, as concerning himself he had enough, that he was full and had all plenteousness of the Godhead, and in all his works sought our profit, and became our servant.

The cause is: forasmuch as faith justifieth and putteth away sin in the sight of God; bringeth life, health, and the favor of God; maketh us the heirs of God; poureth the Spirit of God into our souls; and filleth us with all godly fullness in Christ; it were too great a shame, rebuke and wrong unto the faith, yea, to Christ’s blood, if a man would work any thing to purchase that, wherewith faith hath endued him already, and God hath given him freely: even as Christ had done rebuke and shame unto himself, if he would have done good works, and wrought, to have been made thereby God’s Son and heir over all, which thing he was already. Now doth faith make us the sons, or children of God. “He gave them might or power to be the sons of God, in that they believed on his name.” “If we be sons, so are we also heirs” (Romans 8 and Galatians 4). How can or ought we then to work, for to purchase that inheritance withal, whereof we are heirs already by faith?

What shall we say then to those scriptures, which sound as though a man should do good works, and live well, for heaven’s sake or eternal reward? As these are, “Make you friends of the unrighteous mammon.” And, “Gather you treasures together in heaven.” Also, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments:” and such like. This say I, that they which understand not, neither feel in their hearts what faith meaneth, talk and think of the reward even as they do of the work; neither suppose they that a man ought to work, but in a respect to the reward. For they imagine, that it is in the kingdom of Christ, as it is in the world among men, that they must deserve heaven with their good works. Howbeit their thoughts are but dreams and false imaginations. Of these men speaketh Malachi: “Who is it among you that shutteth a door for my pleasure, for nought;” that is, without respect of reward? These are servants that seek gains and vantage, hirelings and day-laborers, which here on earth receive their rewards, as the Pharisees with their prayers and fastings.

But on this wise goeth it with heaven, with everlasting life and eternal reward. Likewise as good works naturally follow faith (as it is above rehearsed), so that thou needest not to command a true believer to work, or to compel him with any law, (for it is impossible that he should not work; he tarrieth but for an occasion; he is ever disposed of himself; thou needest but to put him in remembrance, and that to know the false faith from the true;) even so naturally doth eternal life follow faith and good living, without seeking for, and is impossible that it should not come, though no man thought thereon. Yet is it rehearsed in the scripture, alleged, and promised, to know the difference between a false believer and a true believer; and that every man may know what followeth good living naturally, and of itself, without taking thought for it.

Take a gross ensample: hell, that is, everlasting death, is threatened unto sinners; and yet followeth it sin naturally, without seeking for. For no man doth evil to be damned therefore; but had rather avoid it. Yet the one followeth the other naturally; and though no man told or warned him of it, yet should the sinner find it and feel it. Nevertheless it is therefore threatened, that men may know what followeth evil living. Now then, as after evil living followeth his reward unsought for; even so after good living followeth his reward naturally, unsought for, or unthought upon: even as when thou drinkest wine, be it good or bad, the taste followeth of itself, though thou therefore drink it not. Yet testifieth the scripture, and it is true, that we are by inheritance heirs of damnation; and that ere we be born, we are vessels of the wrath of God, and full of that poison whence naturally all sins spring, and wherewith we cannot but sin, which thing the deeds that follow (when we behold ourselves in the glass of the law of God) do declare and utter; kill our consciences, and shew us what we were and wist not of it; and certify us that we are heirs of damnation. For if we were of God we should cleave to God, and lust after the will of God. But now our deeds, compared to the law, declare the contrary; and by our deeds we see ourselves, both what we be and what our end shall be. So now thou seest that life eternal and all good things are promised unto faith and belief; so that he that believeth on Christ shall be safe. Christ’s blood hath purchased life for us, and hath made us the heirs of God; so that heaven cometh by Christ’s blood. If thou wouldest obtain heaven with the merits and deservings of thine own works, so didst thou wrong, yea, and shamedst, the blood of Christ; and unto thee were Christ dead in vain. Now is the true believer, heir of God by Christ’s descryings; yea, and in Christ was predestinate, and ordained unto eternal life, before the world began. And when the gospel is preached unto us, we believe the mercy of God; and in believing we receive the Spirit of God, which is the earnest of eternal life, and we are in eternal life already, and feel already in our hearts the sweetness thereof, and are overcome with the kindness of God and Christ; and therefore love the will of God, and of love are ready to work freely; and not to obtain that which is given us freely, and whereof we are heirs already.

Now when Christ saith, “Make you friends of unrighteous mammon;” “Gather you treasure together in heaven;” and such like: thou seest that the meaning and intent is no other but that thou shouldst do good; and so will it follow of itself naturally, without seeking and taking of thought, that thou shalt find friends and treasure in heaven, and receive a reward. So let thine eye be single, and look unto good living only, and take no thought for the reward, but be content: forasmuch as thou knowest and art sure, that the reward, and all things contained in God’s promises, follow good living naturally; and thy

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good works do but testify only, and certify thee that the Spirit of God is in thee, whom thou hast received for an earnest of God's truth; and that thou art heir of all the goodness of God, and that all good things are thine already, purchased by Christ's blood, and laid up in store against that day, when every man shall receive according to his deeds, that is, according as his deeds declare and testify what he is or was. For they that look unto the reward, are slow, false, subtle and crafty workers, and love the reward more than the work; yea, hate the labor; yea, hate God which commandeth the labor; and are weary both of the commandment, and also of the commander; and work with tediousness. But he that worketh of pure love, without seeking of reward, worketh truly. Thirdly, that not the saints, but God only receiveth us into eternal tabernacles, is so plain and evident, that it needeth not to declare or prove it. How shall the saints receive us into heaven, when every man hath need for himself that God only receive him to heaven, and every man hath scarce for himself? As it appeareth by the five wise virgins, which would not give of their oil unto the unwise virgins. And Peter saith, in the fourth of his first epistle, that the righteous is with difficulty saved. So seest thou that the saying of Christ, "Make you friends," and so forth, "that they may receive you into everlasting tabernacles," pertaineth not unto the saints which are in heaven, but is spoken of the poor and needy which are here present with us on earth: as though he should say, What, buildest thou churches, foundest abbeyes, chauntries and colleges, in the honor of saints, to my mother, St Peter, Paul, and saints that be dead, to make of them thy friends? They need it not; yea, they are not thy friends; but theirs which lived then, when they did of whom they were holpen. Thy friends are the poor, which are now in thy time, and live with thee; thy poor neighbors which need thy help and succor. Them make thy friends with thy unrighteous mammon; that they may testify of thy faith, and thou mayest know and feel, that thy faith is right, and not feigned.

Unto the second: such receiving into everlasting habitations is not to be understand that men shall do it. For many, to whom we show mercy and do good, shall not come there; neither skilleth it, so we meekly and lovingly do our duty; yea, it is a sign of strong faith and fervent love, if we do well to the evil, and study to draw them to Christ, in all that lieth in us. But the poor give us an occasion to exercise our faith; and the deeds make us feel our faith, and certify us, and make us sure that we are safe, and are escaped and translated from death unto life, and that we are delivered and redeemed from the captivity and bondage of Satan, and brought into the liberty of the sons of God, in that we feel lust and strength in our heart to work the will of God. And at that day shall our deeds appear and comfort our hearts, witness of our faith and trust, which we now have in Christ; which faith shall then keep us from shame, as it is written, "None that believeth in him shall be ashamed." So that good works help our faith, and make us sure in our consciences, and make us feel the mercy of God. Notwithstanding, heaven, everlasting life, joy eternal, faith, the favor of God, the Spirit of God, lust and strength unto the will of God, are given us freely of the bounteous and plenteous riches of God, purchased by Christ, without our descryings, that no man should rejoice but in the Lord only. For a farther understanding of this gospel, here may be made three questions, What mammon is? Why it is called unrighteous? and after what manner Christ biddeth us counterfeit and follow the unjust and wicked steward, which with his lord's damage provided for his own profit and advantage? which thing no doubt is unrighteous and sin. First, *mammon* is an Hebrew word, and signifieth riches or temporal goods; and namely, all superfluity, and all that is above necessity, and that which is required unto our necessary uses; wherewith a man may help another, without undoing or hurting himself; for *hamon*, in the Hebrew speech, signifies a multitude or abundance, or many; and therehence cometh *mahamon*, or *mammon*, abundance, or plenteousness of goods, or riches. Secondly, it is called "unrighteous mammon," not because it is got unrighteously, or with usury; for of unrighteous gotten goods can no man do good works, but ought to restore them home again: as it is said, Esay 61 "I am a God that hateth offering that cometh of robbery;" and Proverbs 3 saith, "Honour the Lord of thine own good." But therefore it is called unrighteous, because it is in unrighteous use. As Paul speaketh unto the Ephesians, 5 how that "The days are evil," though that God hath made them, and they are a good work of God's making: howbeit they are yet called evil, because that evil men use them amiss; and much sin, occasions of evil, peril of souls are wrought in them. Even so are richest called evil, because that evil men bestow them amiss, and misuse them. For where riches is, there goeth it after the common proverb, He that hath money, hath what him listeth. And they cause fighting, stealing, laying await, lying, flattering, and all unhappiness against a man's neighbor. For all men hold on riches' part.

But singularly, before God, it is called unrighteous mammon, because it is not bestowed and ministered unto our neighbor's need. For if my neighbor need and I give him not, neither depart liberally with him of that which I have, then withhold I from him unrighteously that which is his own; forasmuch as I am bounden to help him by the law of nature, which is, "Whatsoever thou wouldest that another did to thee, that do thou also to him;" and Christ, Matthew 5 "Give to every man that desireth thee;" and John, in his first epistle: "If a man have this world's good, and see his brother need, how is the love of God in him?" And this unrighteousness in our mammon see very few men, because it is spiritual; and in those goods which are gotten most truly and justly are men much beguiled. For they suppose they do no man wrong in keeping them; in that they got them not with stealing, robbing, oppression, and usury, neither hurt any man now with them.

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Thirdly, many have busied themselves in studying what, or who, this unrighteous steward is, because that Christ so praiseth him. But shortly and plainly this is the answer, That Christ praiseth not the unrighteous steward, neither setteth him forth to us to counterfeit because of his unrighteousness, but because of his wisdom only; in that he, with unright, so wisely provided for himself. As if I would provoke another to pray or study, saying, The thieves watch all night to rob and steal; why canst not thou watch to pray and to study? here praise not I the thief and murderer for their evil doing, but for their wisdom, that they so wisely and diligently wait on their unrighteousness. Likewise when I say, Miss women tire themselves with gold and silk to please their lovers: what, wilt not thou garnish thy soul with faith to please Christ? here praise I not whoredom, but the diligence which the whore misuseth. On this wise Paul also likeneth Adam and Christ together, saying that Adam was a figure of Christ. And yet of Adam have we but pure sin, and of Christ grace only; which are out of measure contrary. But the similitude, or likeness, standeth in the original birth, and not in the virtue and vice of the birth: so that, as Adam is father of all sin, so is Christ father of all righteousness; and as all sinners spring of Adam, even so all righteous men and women spring of Christ. After the same manner is here the unrighteous steward an ensample unto us in his wisdom and diligence only, in that he provided so wisely for himself; that we with righteousness should be as diligent to provide for our souls, as he with unrighteousness provided for his body.

Likewise mayest thou soy all other texts, which sound as though it were between us and God as it is in the world, where the reward is more looked upon than the labor; yea, where men hate the labor, and work falsely, with the body and not with the heart, and no longer than they are looked upon, that the labor may appear outward only. When Christ saith, “Blessed are ye when they rail on you, and persecute you, and say all manner evil sayings against you, and yet lie, and that for my sake; rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven;” (Matthew 5)

thou mayest not imagine that our deeds deserve the joy and glory that shall be given unto us; for then, Paul saith, Romans 11 “favor were not favor.” I cannot receive it of favor and of the bounties of God, freely, and by deserving of deeds also. But believe as the gospel, glad tidings and promises of God say unto thee; that for Christ’s blood’s sake only, through faith, God is at one with thee, and thou received to mercy, and art become the son of God, and heir annexed with Christ of all the goodness of God; the earnest whereof is the Spirit of God poured into our hearts. Of which things the deeds are witnesses; and certify our consciences that our faith is unfeigned, and that the right Spirit of God is in us. For if I patiently suffer adversity and tribulation, for conscience of God only, that is to say, because I know God and testify the truth; then am I sure that God hath chosen me in Christ, and for Christ’s sake, and hath put in me his Spirit, as an earnest of his promises, whose working I feel in my heart, the deeds bearing witness unto the same. Now is it Christ’s blood only that deserveth all the promises of God; and that which I suffer and do is partly the curing, healing, and mortifying of my members, and killing of that original poison wherewith I was conceived and born, that I might be altogether like Christ; and partly the doing of my duty to my neighbor, whose debtor I am of all that I have received of God, to draw him to Christ with all suffering, with all patience, and even with shedding my blood for him, not as an offering or merit for his sins, but as an ensample to provoke him. Christ’s blood only putteth away all the sin that ever was, is, or shall be, from them that are elect and repent, believing the gospel, that is to say, God’s promises in Christ.

Again in the same fifth chapter: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do well to them that hate you and persecute you, that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun shine upon evil and on good, and sendeth his rain upon just and unjust.” (Matthew 5)

Not that our works make us the sons of God, but testify only, and certify our consciences, that we are the sons of God; and that God hath chosen us, and washed us in Christ’s blood; and hath put his Spirit in us. And it followeth: “If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not the publicans even the same? And if ye shall have favor to your friends only, what singular thing do ye? do not the publicans even the same? Ye shall be perfect therefore, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” That is to say, if that ye do nothing but that the world doth, and they which have the spirit of the world, whereby shall ye know that ye are the sons of God, and beloved of God, more than the world? But and if ye counterfeit and follow God in well-doing, then no doubt it is a sign that the Spirit of God is in you, and also the favor of God, which is not in the world; and that ye are inheritors of all the promises of God, and elect unto the fellowship of the blood of Christ.

Also, “Take heed to your alms, that ye do it not in the sight of men, to the intent that ye would be seen of them; or else have ye no reward with your Father which is in heaven. Neither cause a trumpet to be blown afore thee, when thou doest thine alms, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, to be glorified of the world. But when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth; that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6)

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This putteth us in remembrance of our duty, and showeth what followeth good works; not that works deserve it, but that the reward is laid up for us in store, and we thereunto elect through Christ's blood, which the works testify. For, if we be worldly-minded, and do our works as the world doth, how shall we know that God hath chosen us out of the world? But and if we work freely, without all manner worldly respect, to shew mercy, and to do our duty to our neighbor, and to be unto him as God is to us; then are we sure that the favor and mercy of God is upon us, and that we shall enjoy all the good promises of God through Christ, which hath made us heirs thereof. Also, in the same chapter it followeth:

“When thou prayest, be not as the hypocrites, which love to stand and pray in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, for to be seen of men. But when thou prayest, enter into thy chamber, and shut thy door to, and pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6)

And likewise, when we fast, teacheth Christ in the same place, that we should behave ourselves “that it appear not unto men how that we fast, but unto our Father which is in secret; and our Father which seeth in secret, shall reward us openly.” These two texts do but declare what followeth good works; for eternal life cometh not by the deserving of works, but is, (saith Paul, in the sixth to the Romans) “the gift of God through Jesus Christ.” Neither do our works justify us: for except we were justified by faith, which is our righteousness, and had the Spirit of God in us, to teach us, we could do no good work freely, without respect of some profit, either in this world, or in the world to come; neither could we have spiritual joy in our hearts in time of affliction, and mortifying of the flesh. Good works are called the fruits of the Spirit, Galatians 5 for the Spirit worketh them in us; and sometime fruits of righteousness, as in the second epistle to the Corinthians and ninth chapter, 2 Corinthians 9. Before all works, therefore, we must have a righteousness within the heart, the mother of all works, and from whence they spring. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, and of them that have the spirit of this world, is the glorious shew and outward shining of works. But Christ saith to us, Matthew 5

“Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

It is righteousness in the world, if a man kill not. But a Christian perceiveth righteousness if he love his enemy, even when he suffereth persecution and torment of him, and the pains of death, and mourneth more for his adversary's blindness than for his own pain, and prayeth God to open his eyes, and to forgive him his sins; as did Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles, the seventh chapter; and Christ, Luke 23.

A Christian considereth himself in the law of God, and there putteth off him all manner righteousness. For the law suffereth no merits, no descryings, no righteousness, neither any man to be justified in the sight of God. The law is spiritual, and requireth the heart, and commandments to be fulfilled with such love and obedience as was in Christ. If any fulfill all that is the will of God, with such love and obedience, the same may be bold to sell pardons of his merits, and else not. A Christian therefore, when he beholdeth himself in the law, putteth off all manner righteousness, descryings and merits, and meekly and unfeignedly knowledgeth his sin and misery, his captivity and bondage in the flesh, his trespass and guilt; and is thereby blessed, with the poor in spirit. Matthew 5 chap. Then he mourneth in his heart, because he is in such bondage that he cannot do the will of God; and is an hungred and athirst after righteousness; for righteousness (I mean) which springeth out of Christ's blood, for strength to do the will of God; and turneth himself to the promises of God, and desireth him for his great mercy and truth, and for the blood of his Son Christ, to fulfill his promises, and to give him strength. And thus his spirit ever prayeth within him. He fasteth also not one day for a week, or a Lent for an whole year; but profeseth in his heart a perpetual soberness, to tame the flesh, and to subdue the body to the spirit, until he wax strong in the Spirit, and grow ripe into a full righteousness after the fullness of Christ. And because this fullness happeneth not till the body be slain by death, a Christian is ever a sinner in the law; and therefore fasteth, and prayeth to God in the spirit, the world seeing it not. Yet in the promises he is ever righteous through faith in Christ; and is sure that he is heir of all God's promises; the Spirit, which he hath received in earnest, bearing him witness; his heart also, and his deeds testifying the same. Mark this then: To see inwardly that the law of God is so spiritual, that no flesh can fulfill it; and then for to mourn and sorrow, and to desire, yea, to hunger and thirst after strength to do the will of God from the ground of the heart, and (notwithstanding all the subtilty of the devil, weakness and feebleness of the flesh, and wondering of the world,) to cleave yet to the promises of God, and to believe that for Christ's blood sake thou art received to the inheritance of eternal life, is a wonderful thing, and a thing that the world knoweth not of; but whosoever feeleth that, though he fall a thousand times in a day, doth yet rise again a thousand times, and is sure that the mercy of God is upon him.

“If ye forgive other men their trespasses, your heavenly Father shall forgive you yours.” Matthew in chapter 6. If I forgive, God shall forgive me; not for my deeds' sake, but for his promises' sake, for his mercy and truth, and for the blood of his

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Son, Christ our Lord. And my forgiving certifieth my spirit that God shall forgive me, yea, that he hath forgiven me already. For if I consent to the will of God in my heart, though through infirmity and weakness I cannot do the will of God at all times; moreover, though I cannot do the will of God so purely as the law requireth it of me, yet if I see my fault and meekly knowledge my sin, weeping in mine heart, because I cannot do the will of God, and thirst after strength; I am sure that the Spirit of God is in me, and his favor upon me. For the world lusteth not to do the will of God, neither sorroweth because he cannot, though he sorrow some time for fear of the pain that he believeth shall follow. He that hath the spirit of this world, cannot forgive without amends making, or a greater vantage. If I forgive now, how cometh it? Verily, because I feel the mercy of God in me. For as a man feeleth God to himself, so is he to his neighbor. I know by mine own experience, that all flesh is in bondage under sin, and cannot but sin; therefore am I merciful, and desire God to loose the bonds of sin even in mine enemy.

“Gather not treasure together in earth, etc. but gather you treasure in heaven,” etc. Let not your hearts be glued, to worldly things; study not to heap treasure upon treasure, and riches upon riches; but study to bestow well that which is gotten already, and let your abundance succor the lack and need of the poor which have not. Have an eye to good works, to which if ye have lust and also power to do them, then are ye sure that the Spirit of God is in you, and ye in Christ elect to the reward of eternal life, which followeth good works. But look that thine eye be single, and rob not Christ of his honor; ascribe not that to the deserving of thy works, which is given thee freely by the merits of his blood. In Christ we are sons. In Christ we are heirs. In Christ God chose us, and elected us before the beginning of the world, created us anew by the word of the gospel, and put his Spirit in us, for because that we should do good works. A Christian man worketh, because it is the will of his Father only. If we do no good work, nor be merciful, how is our lust therein? If we have no lust to do good works, how is God’s Spirit in us? If the Spirit of God be not in us, how are we his sons? How are we his heirs, and heirs annexed with Christ of the eternal life, which is promised to all them that believe in him? Now do our works testify and witness what we are, and what treasure is laid up for us in heaven, so that our eye be single, and look upon the commandment without respect of any thing, save because it is God’s will, and that God desireth it of us, and Christ hath deserved that we do it. Matthew 7

“Not all they that say unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Though thou canst laud God with thy lips, and call Christ Lord, and canst babble and talk of the scripture, and knowest all the stories of the bible, yet shalt thou thereby never know thine election, or whether thy faith be right. But and if thou feel lust in thine heart to the will of God, and bringest forth the fruits thereof, then hast thou confidence and hope; and thy deeds, and also the Spirit whence thy deeds spring, certify thine heart that thou shalt enter, yea, art already entered, into the kingdom of heaven. For it followeth, “He that heareth the word, and doth it, buildeth his house upon a rock,” and no tempest of temptations can overthrow it. For the Spirit of God is in his heart, and comforteth him, and holdeth him fast to the rock of the merits of Christ’s blood, in whom he is elect. Nothing is able to pluck him out of the hands of God: God is stronger than all things. And contrariwise, “he that heareth the word, and doth it not, buildeth on the sand” of his own imagination, and every tempest overthroweth his building. The cause is, he hath not God’s Spirit in him, and therefore understandeth it not aright, neither worketh aright. “For no man knoweth the things of God (saith Paul in the first epistle to the Corinthians, in the second chapter, 1 Corinthians 2) save the Spirit of God, as no man knoweth what is in a man, but a man’s spirit which is in him.” So then, if the Spirit be not in a man, he worketh not the will of God, neither understandeth it, though he babble never so much of the scriptures. Nevertheless such a man may work after his own imagination, but God’s will can he not work; he may offer sacrifice, but to do mercy knoweth he not. It is easy to say unto Christ, Lord, Lord; but thereby shalt thou never feel or be sure of the kingdom of heaven. But and if thou do the will of God, then art thou sure that Christ is thy Lord indeed, and that thou in him art also a lord; in that thou feelest thyself loosed and freed from the bondage of sin, and lusty and of power to do the will of God.

Where the Spirit is, there is feeling; for the Spirit maketh us feel all things. Where the Spirit is not, there is no feeling; but a vain opinion or imagination. A physician serveth but for sick men; and that for such sick men as feel their sicknesses, and mourn therefore, and long for health. Christ likewise serveth but for such sinners only as feel their sin, and that for such sinners that sorrow and mourn in their hearts for health. Health is power or strength to fulfill the law, or to keep the commandments. Now he that longeth for that health, that is to say, for to do the law of God, is blessed in Christ, and hath a promise that his lust shall be fulfilled, and that he shall be made whole.

“Blessed are they which hunger and thirst for righteousness’ sake, (that is, to fulfill the law,) for their lust shall be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5)

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This longing and consent of the heart unto the law of God is the working of the Spirit, which God hath poured into thine heart, in earnest that thou mightest be sure that God will fulfill all his promises that he hath made thee. It is also the seal and mark, which God putteth on all men that he chooseth unto everlasting life. So long as thou seest thy sin and mournest, and consentest to the law, and longest (though thou be never so weak), yet the Spirit shall keep thee in all temptations from desperation, and certify thine heart that God for his truth shall deliver thee and save thee; yea, and by thy good deeds shalt thou be saved, not which thou hast done, but which Christ has done for thee; for Christ is thine, and all his deeds are thy deeds. Christ is in thee, and thou in him, knit together inseparably. Neither canst thou be damned, except Christ be damned with thee: neither can Christ be saved, except thou be saved with him. Moreover thy heart is good, right, holy, and just; for thy heart is no enemy to the law, but a friend and a lover. The law and thy heart are agreed and at one; and therefore is God at one with thee. The consent of the heart unto the law is unity and peace between God and man. For he is not mine enemy, which would fain do me pleasure, and mourneth because he hath not wherewith. Now he that opened thy disease unto thee, and made thee long for health shall (as he hath promised) heal thee; and he that hath loosed thy heart shall at his godly leisure loose thy members. He that hath not the Spirit hath no feeling, neither lusteth or longeth after power to fulfill the law, neither abhorreth the pleasures of sin, neither hath any more certainty of the promises of God, than I have of a tale of Robin Hood, or of some jest that a man telleth me was done at Rome. Another man may lightly make me doubt, or believe the contrary, seeing I have no experience thereof myself: so is it of them that feel not the working of the Spirit, and therefore in time of temptation the buildings of their imaginations fall. Matthew 10

“He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet,” that is, because he is a prophet, “shall receive the reward of a prophet;” and

“He that giveth one of these little ones a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward.”

Note this, that a prophet signifieth as well him that interpreteth the hard places of scripture, as him that prophesieth things to come. Now he that receiveth a prophet, a just man, or a disciple, shall have the same or like reward; that is to say, shall have the same eternal life which is appointed for them in Christ’s blood and merits. For except thou were elect to the same eternal life, and hadst the same faith and trust in God, and the same Spirit, thou couldst never consent to their deeds and help them. But thy deeds testify what thou art; and certify thy conscience that thou art received to mercy, and sanctified in Christ’s passions and sufferings, and shalt hereafter, with all them that follow God, receive the reward of eternal life.

Matthew 12 “Of thy words thou shalt be justified, and of thy words thou shalt be condemned:”

That is, thy words as well as other deeds shall testify with thee, or against thee, at the day of judgment. Many there are which abstain from the outward deeds of fornication and adultery, nevertheless rejoice to talk thereof and laugh: their words and laughter testify against them, that their heart is impure, and they adulterers and fornicators in the sight of God. The tongue, and other signs, oftentimes utter the malice of the heart, though a man for many causes abstain his hand from the outward deed or act.

“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19)

First, remember that when God commandeth us to do any thing, he doth it not therefore, because that we of ourselves are able to do that he commandeth; but that by the law we might see and know our horrible damnation and captivity under sin, and therefore should repent and come to Christ, and receive mercy, and the Spirit of God to loose us, strength us, and to make us able to do God’s will, which is the law. Now when he saith, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,” is as much to say as, he that keepeth the commandments is entered into life. For except a man have first the Spirit of life in him by Christ’s purchasing, it is impossible for him to keep the commandments, or that his heart should be loose or at liberty to lust after them; for of nature we are enemies to the law of God.

As touching that Christ saith afterward, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell thy substance and give it to the poor;” he saith it not as who should say that there were any greater perfection than to keep the law of God, (for that is all perfection,) but to show the other his blindness; which saw not that the law is spiritual, and requireth the heart; but, because he was not knowing that he had hurt any man with the outward deed, he supposed that he loved his neighbor as himself. But when he was bid to shew the deeds of love, and give of his abundance to them that needed, he departed mourning: which is an evident token that he loved not his neighbor as well as himself; for if he had need himself, it would not have grieved him to have received succor of another man. Moreover, he saw not that it was murder and theft, that a man should have abundance

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of riches lying by him, and not to shew mercy therewith, and kindly to succor his neighbor's need. God hath given one man riches, to help another at need. If thy neighbor need, and thou help him not, being able, thou withholdest his duty from him, and art a thief before God.

That also that Christ saith, how that "it is harder for a rich man" (who loveth his riches so that he cannot find in his heart liberally and freely to help the poor and needy) "to enter into the kingdom of heaven, than a camel to go through the eye of a needle," declareth that he was not entered into the kingdom of heaven, that is to say, eternal life. But he that keepeth the commandments, is entered into life; he hath life and the Spirit of life in him.

"This kind of devils goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Not that the devil is cast out by merits of fasting or praying: for he saith before, that for their unbelief's sake they could not cast him out. It is faith, no doubt, that casteth out the devils; and faith it is that fasteth and prayeth. Faith hath the promises of God, whereunto she cleaveth, and in all things thirsteth the honor of God. She fasteth to subdue the body unto the spirit, that the prayer be not let, and that the spirit may quietly talk with God: she also, whensoever opportunity is given, prayeth God to fulfill his promises unto his praise and glory. And God, which is merciful in promising, and true to fulfill them, casteth out the devils, and doth all that faith desireth, and satisfieth her thirst.

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world; for I was athirst, and ye gave me drink," etc. (Matthew 25)

Not that a man with works deserveth eternal life, as a workman or laborer his hire or wages. Thou redest in the text, that the kingdom was "prepared for us from the beginning of the world." And we are blessed and sanctified. In Christ's blood are we blessed from that bitter curse and damnable captivity under sin wherein we were born and conceived. And Christ's Spirit is poured into us, to bring forth good works, and our works are the fruits of the Spirit; and the kingdom is the deserving of Christ's blood; and so is faith, and the Spirit, and good works also. Notwithstanding the kingdom followeth good works; and good works testify that we are heirs thereof; and at the day of judgment shall they testify for the elect unto their comfort and glory, and to the confusion of the ungodly, unbelieving, and faithless sinners, which had not trust in the word of God's promises, nor lust to the will of God; but were carried of the spirit of their father, the devil, unto all abomination, to work wickedness with all lust, delectation, and greediness.

"Many sins are forgiven her, for she loveth much." (Luke 7)

Not that love was cause of forgiveness of sins, but contrariwise the forgiveness of sins caused love; as it followeth, "To whom less was forgiven, that same loveth less." And afore he commended the judgment of Simon, which answered that he loveth most to whom most was forgiven: and also said, at the last, "Thy faith hath saved thee" (or made thee safe), "go in peace." We cannot love, except we see some benefit and kindness. As long as we look on the law of God only, where we see but sin and damnation and the wrath of God upon us, yea, where we were damned afore we were born, we cannot love God: no, we cannot but hate him as a tyrant, unrighteous, unjust, and flee from him as did Cain. But when the gospel, that glad tidings, and joyful promises are preached, how that in Christ God loveth us first, forgiveth us, and hath mercy on us; then love we again, and the deeds of our love declare our faith. This is the manner of speaking: as we say, Summer is nigh, for the trees blossom. Now is the blossoming of the trees not the cause that summer draweth nigh; but the drawing nigh of summer is the cause of the blossoms, and the blossoms put us in remembrance that summer is at hand. So Christ here teacheth Simon by the ferventness of love in the outward leads to see a strong faith within, whence so great love springeth. As the manner is to say, Do your charity; shew your charity; do a deed of charity; show your mercy; do a deed of mercy; meaning thereby that our deeds declare how we love our neighbors, and how much we have compassion on them at their need. Moreover it is not possible to love, except we see a cause. Except we see in our hearts the love and kindness of God to us-ward in Christ our Lord, it is not possible to love God aright. We say also, He that loveth not my dog, loveth not me. Not that a man should love my dog first; but if a man loved me, the love wherewith he loved me would compel him to love my dog, though the dog deserved it not; yea, though the dog had done him a displeasure, yet if he loved me, the same love would refrain him from revenging himself; and cause him to refer the vengeance unto me. Such speakings find we in scripture. John in the 4th of his first epistle saith: "He that saith, I love God, and yet hateth his brother, is a liar; for how can he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, love God whom he seeth not?" This is not spoken that a man should first love his brother and then God, but as it followeth: "For this commandment have we of him, that he which loveth God should love his brother also." To love my neighbor is the commandment; which commandment he that loveth not, loveth not God. The keeping of the commandment declareth what love I have to God. If I loved God purely, nothing that my neighbor could do were able to make me either to hate him, either to take vengeance on him myself; seeing that God hath commanded me

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to love him, and to remit all vengeance unto him. Mark now, how much I love the commandment, so much I love God: how much I love God, so much believe I that he is merciful, kind and good, yea, and a father unto me for Christ's sake. How much I believe that God is merciful unto me, and that he will for Christ's sake fulfill all his promises unto me; so much I see my sins, so much do my sins grieve me, so much do I repent and sorrow that I sin, so much displeaseth me that poison that moveth me to sin, and so greatly desire I to be healed. So now, by the natural order, first I see my sin: then I repent, and sorrow: then believe I God's promises; that he is merciful unto me, and forgiveth me, and will heal me at the last: then love I; and then I prepare myself to the commandment. "This do, and thou shalt live." Luke 10. That is to say, "Love thy Lord God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." As who should say, If thou do this, or though thou canst not do it, yet if thou feelest lust thereunto, and thy spirit sigheth, mourneth, and longeth after strength to do it, take a sign and evident token thereby, that the Spirit of life is in thee, and that thou art elect to life everlasting by Christ's blood, whose gift and purchase is thy faith, and that Spirit that worketh the will of God in thee; whose gift also are thy deeds, or rather the deeds of the Spirit of Christ, and not thine; and whose gift is the reward of eternal life, which followeth good works. It followeth also in the same place of Luke, "When he should depart he plucked out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take the charge or cure of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, I will recompense it thee at my coming again." Remember, this is a parable, and a parable may not be expounded word by word; but the intent of the similitude must be sought out only, in the whole parable. The intent of the similitude is to shew to whom a man is a neighbor, or who is a man's neighbor, which is both one, and what it is to love a man's neighbor as himself.

The Samaritan help him, and shewed mercy as long as he was present; and when he could be no longer present, he left his money behind him, and if that were not sufficient, he left his credence to make good the rest; and forsook him not, as long as the other had need. Then said Christ, "Go thou and do likewise;" that is, without difference or respectation of persons: whosoever needeth thy help, him count thy neighbor, and his neighbor be thou, and shew mercy on him as long as he needeth thy succor; and that is to love a man's neighbor as himself. Neighbor is a word of love; and signifieth that a man should be ever nigh, and at hand, and ready to help in time of need.

They that will interpret parables word by word, fall into straits oftentimes, whence they cannot rid themselves; and preach lies instead of the truth. As do they which interpret by the two pence the old Testament and the new, and by that which is bestowed *opera supererogationis* (howbeit *superarrogantia* were a meet term), that is to say, deeds which are more than the law requireth; deeds of perfection and of liberality, which a man is not bound to do, but of his free will, and for them he shall have an higher place in heaven, and may give to other of his merits; or of which the pope, after his death, may give pardons from the pains of purgatory. Against which exposition I answer: first, a greater perfection than the law is there not. A greater perfection than to love God and his will, which is the commandments, with all thine heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind, is there none: and to love a man's neighbor as himself, is like the same. It is a wonderful love wherewith a man loveth himself. As glad as I would be to receive pardon of mine own life, (if I had deserved death,) so glad ought I to be to defend my neighbor's life, without respect of my life or of my good. A man ought neither to spare his goods, nor yet himself, for his brother's sake, after the ensample of Christ. "Herein," saith he, "perceive we love, in that he," that is to say Christ, "gave his life for us; we ought, therefore, to bestow our lives for the brethren." Now saith Christ,

"There is no greater love than that; a man bestow his life for his friend." (John 15)

Moreover no man can fulfill the law: for John saith (first chapter of the said epistle, 1 John 1) "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and truth is not in us; if we know our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to purge us from all iniquity." And in the Paternoster also we say, "Father, forgive us our sins." Now if we be all sinners, none fulfilleth the law: for he that fulfilleth the law is no sinner. In the law may neither Peter nor Paul nor any other creature, save Christ only, rejoice. In the blood of Christ, which fulfilled the law for us, may every person that repenteth, believeth, loveth the law, and mourneth for strength to fulfill it, rejoice, be he never so weak a sinner. The two pence therefore, and the credence that he left behind him to bestow more, if need were, signifieth that he was everywhere merciful, both present and absent, without feigning, cloaking, complaining, or excusing, and forsook not his neighbor as long as he had need. Which example I pray God men may follow, and let *opera supererogationis* alone.

"Mary hath chosen a good part which shall not be taken from her." (Luke 10)

She was first chosen of God, and called by grace, both to know her sin, and also to hear the word of faith, health, and glad tidings of mercy in Christ; and faith was given her to believe, and the Spirit of God loosed her heart from the bondage of sin: then consented she to the will of God again, and above all things had delectation to hear that word wherein she had

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obtained everlasting health, and namely, of his own mouth, which had purchased so great mercy for her. God chooseth us first and loveth us first, and openeth our eyes to see his exceeding abundant love to us in Christ; and then love we again, and accept his will above all things, and serve him in that office whereunto he hath chosen us.

“Sell that ye have, and give alms, and make you bags which wax not old, and treasure which faileth not in heaven.” (Luke 12)

This and such like are not spoken that we should work as hirelings, in respect of reward, and as though we should obtain heaven with merit. For he saith a little afore, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s pleasure to give you a kingdom.” The kingdom cometh then of the good will of Almighty God, through Christ; and such things are spoken partly to put us in remembrance of our duty, to be kind again: as is that saying, “Let your light so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven:” as who should say, if God hath given you so great gifts, see ye be not unthankful, but bestow them unto his praise. Some things are spoken to move us to put our trust in God, as are these: “Behold the lilies of the field:” “Behold the birds of the air:” “If your children ask you bread, will ye proffer them a stone?” and many such like. Some are spoken to put us in remembrance to be sober, to watch and pray, and to prepare ourselves against temptations; and that we should understand and know how that temptations, and occasion of evil, come then most, when they are least looked for; lest we should be careless, and sure of ourselves, negligent and unprepared. Some things are spoken that we should fear the wonderful and incomprehensible judgments of God, lest we should presume: some to comfort us, that we despair not. And for like causes are all the ensamples of the old Testament. In conclusion, the scripture speaketh many things as the world speaketh; but they may not be worldly understood, but ghostly and spiritually: yea, the Spirit of God only understandeth them; and where he is not, there is not the understanding of the scripture, but unfruitful disputing and brawling about words.

The scripture saith, God seeth, God heareth, God smelleth, God walketh, God is with them, God is not with them, God is angry, God is pleased, God sendeth his Spirit, God taketh his Spirit away, and a thousand such like: and yet is none of them true after the worldly manner, and as the words sound. Read the second chapter of Paul to the Corinthians: “The natural man understandeth not the things of God, but the Spirit of God only. And we,” saith he, “have received the Spirit which is of God, to understand the things which are given us of God.” For without the Spirit it is impossible to understand them. Read also the 8th to the Romans: “They that are led with the Spirit of God, are the sons of God:” now the son knoweth his father’s will, and the servant not. “He that hath not the Spirit of Christ, (saith Paul) is none of his:” likewise, he that hath not the Spirit of God, is none of God’s; for it is both one Spirit, as thou mayest see in the same place.

Now “he that is of God heareth the word of God.” John 8. And who is of God, but he that hath the Spirit of God? Furthermore, saith he, “Ye hear it not, because ye are not of God;” that is, ye have no lust in the word of God, for ye understand it not; and that because his Spirit is not in you. Forasmuch then as the scripture is nothing else but that which the Spirit of God hath spoken by the prophets and apostles, and cannot be understand but of the same Spirit; let every man pray to God to send him his Spirit, to loose him from his natural blindness and ignorance, and to give him understanding and feeling of the things of God, and of the speaking of the Spirit of God. And mark this process: first, we are damned of nature; so conceived, and born; as a serpent is a serpent, and a toad a toad, and a snake a snake by nature. And as thou seest a young child, which hath pleasure in many things wherein is present death, as in fire, water, and so forth, would slay himself with a thousand deaths, if he were not waited upon and kept therefrom; even so we, if we should live these thousand years, could in all that time delight in no other thing, nor yet seek any other thing, but that wherein is death of the soul.

Secondarily, of the whole multitude of the nature of man, whom God hath elect and chosen, and to whom he hath appointed mercy and grace in Christ, to them sendeth he his Spirit; which openeth their eyes, sheweth them their misery, and bringeth them unto the knowledge of themselves; so that they hate and abhor themselves, are astonied and amazed, and at their wit’s ends, neither wet what to do, or where to seek health. Then, lest they should flee from God by desperation, he comforteth them again with his sweet promises in Christ; and certifieth their hearts that, for Christ’s sake, they are received to mercy, and their sins forgiven, and they elect and made the sons of God, and heirs with Christ of eternal life: and thus through faith are they set at peace with God.

Now may not we ask why God chooseth one and not another; either think that God is unjust to damn us afore we do any actual deed; seeing that God hath power over all his creatures of right, to do with them what he list, or to make of every one of them as he listeth. Our darkness cannot perceive his light. God will be feared, and not have his secret judgments known. Moreover we by the light of faith see a thousand things which are impossible to an infidel to see: so likewise, no doubt, in the light of the dear vision of God we shall see things which now God will not have known. For pride ever accompanieth

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high knowledge, but grace accompanieth meekness. Let us therefore give diligence rather to do the will of God, than to search his secrets, which are not profitable for us to know.

When we are thus reconciled to God, made the friends of God and heirs of eternal life, the Spirit, that God hath poured into us, testifieth that we may not live after our old deeds of ignorance. For how is it possible that we should repent and abhor them, and yet have lust to live in them? We are sure therefore that God hath created and made us new in Christ, and put his Spirit in us, that we should live a new life, which is the life of good works.

That thou mayest know what are good works, and the intent of good works, or wherefore good works serve, mark this that followeth. The life of a Christian man is inward between him and God, and properly is the consent of the Spirit to the will of God and to the honor of God. And God's honor is the final end of all good works.

Good works are all things that are done within the laws of God, in which God is honored, and for which thanks are given to God. Fasting is to abstain from surfeiting, or overmuch eating, from drunkenness, and care of the world (as thou mayest read Luke 21); and the end of fasting is to tame the body, that the spirit may have a free course to God, and may quietly talk with God. For overmuch eating and drinking, and care of worldly business, press down the spirit, choke her and tangle her that she cannot lift up herself to God. Now he that fasteth for any other intent than to subdue the body, that the spirit may wait on God, and freely exercise herself in the things of God, the same is blind, and wotteth not what he doth, erreth and shooteth at a wrong mark, and his intent and imagination is abominable in the sight of God. When thou fastest from meat and drinkest all day, is that a Christian fast? either to eat at one meal that were sufficient for four? A man at four times may bear that he cannot at once. Some fast from meat and drink, and yet so tangle themselves in worldly business that they cannot once think on God. Some abstain from butter, some from eggs, some from all manner white meat, some this day, some that day, some in the honor of this saint, some of that, and every man for a sundry purpose: some for the tooth ache, some for the head ache, for fevers, pestilence, for sudden death, for hanging, drowning, and to be delivered from the pains of hell. Some are so mad, that they fast one of the Thursdays between the two St Mary days, in the worship of that saint whose day is hallowed between Christmas and Candlemas; and that to be delivered from the pestilence. All those men fast without conscience of God, and without knowledge of the true intent of fasting, and do no other than honor saints, as the Gentiles and heathen worshipped their idols, and are drowned in blindness, and know not of the testament that God hath made to man-ward in Christ's blood. In God have they neither hope nor confidence, neither believe his promises, neither know his will, but are yet in captivity under the prince of darkness.

Watch, is not only to abstain from sleep, but also to be circumspect and to cast all perils; as a man should watch a tower or a castle. We must remember that the snares of the devil are infinite and innumerable, and that every moment arise new temptations, and that in all places meet us fresh occasions; against which we must prepare ourselves and turn to God and complain to him, and make our moan, and desire him of his mercy to be our shield, our tower, our castle, and defense from all evil, to put his strength in us, for without him we can do nought; and above all things we must call to mind what promises God hath made, and what he hath sworn that he will do to us for Christ's sake, and with strong faith cleave unto him and desire him of his mercy and for the love that he hath to Christ, and for his truth's sake, to fulfill his promises. If we thus cleave to God with strong faith and believe his words, then, as saith Paul, "God is faithful that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able," or above our might; that is to say, if we cleave to his promises and not to our own fantasies and imaginations, he will put might and power into us, that shall be stronger than all the temptation which he shall suffer to be against us. Prayer is a mourning, a longing, and a desire of the spirit to God-ward, for that which she lacketh; as a sick man mourneth and sorroweth in his heart, longing for health. Faith ever prayeth. For after that by faith we are reconciled to God, and have received mercy and forgiveness of God, the spirit longeth and thirsteth for strength to do the will of God, and that God may be honored, his name hallowed, and his pleasure and will fulfilled. The spirit waiteth and watcheth on the will of God, and ever hath her own fragility and weakness before her eyes; and when she seeth temptation and peril draw nigh, she turneth to God, and to the testament that God hath made to all that believe and trust in Christ's blood; and desireth God for his mercy and truth, and for the love he hath to Christ, that he will fulfill his promise, and that he will succor, and help, and give us strength, and that he will sanctify his name in us, and fulfill his godly will in us, and that he will not look on our sin and iniquity, but on his mercy, on his truth, and on the love that he oweth to his Son Christ; and for his sake to keep us from temptation, that we be not overcome; and that he deliver us from evil, and whatsoever moveth us contrary to his godly will.

Moreover, of his own experience he feeleth other men's need, and no less commendeth to God the infirmities of other than his own, knowing that there is no strength, no help, no succor, but of God only. And as merciful as he feeleth God in his heart to himself-ward, so merciful is he to other; and as greatly as he feeleth his own misery, so great compassion hath he on

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other. His neighbor is no less care to him than himself: he feeleth his neighbor's grief no less than his own. And whensoever he seeth occasion, he cannot but pray for his neighbor as well as for himself: his nature is to seek the honor of God in all men, and to draw (as much as in him is) all men unto God. This is the law of love, which springeth out of Christ's blood into the hearts of all them that have their trust in him. No man needeth to bid a Christian man to pray, if he see his neighbor's need: if he see it not, put him in remembrance only, and then he cannot but do his duty.

Now, as touching we desire one another to pray for us, that do we to put our neighbor in remembrance of his duty, and not that we trust in his holiness. Our trust is in God, in Christ, and in the truth of God's promises: we have also a promise, that when two or three, or more, agree together in any thing, according to the will of God, God heareth us. Notwithstanding, as God heareth many, so heareth he few, and so heareth he one, if he pray after the will of God, and desire the honor of God. He that desireth mercy, the same feeleth his own misery and sin, and mourneth in his heart for to be delivered, that he might honor God; and God for his truth must hear him, which saith by the mouth of Christ, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." God, for his truth's sake, must put the righteousness of Christ in him, and wash his unrighteousness away in the blood of Christ. And be the sinner never so weak, never so feeble and frail, sin he never so oft and so grievous; yet so long as this lust, desire, and mourning to be delivered, remaineth in him, God seeth not his sins, reckoneth them not, for his truth's sake, and love to Christ. He is not a sinner in the sight of God, that would be no sinner. He that would be delivered, hath his heart loose already. His heart sinneth not, but mourneth, repenteth, and consenteth unto the law and will of God, and justifieth God; that is, beareth record that God which made the law is 129 righteous and just. And such an heart, trusting in Christ's blood, is accepted for full righteous. And his weakness, infirmity, and frailty is pardoned, and his sins not looked upon, until God put more strength in him, and fulfill his lust.

When the weak in the faith, and unexpert in the mysteries of Christ, desire us to pray for them, then ought we to lead them to the truth and promises of God, and teach them to put their trust in the promises of God, in love that God hath to Christ and to us for his sake; and to strength their weak consciences, shewing and proving by the scripture, that as long as they follow the Spirit and resist sin, it is impossible they should fall so deep that God shall not pull them up again, if they hold fast by the anchor of faith, having trust and confidence in Christ. The love that God hath to Christ is infinite; and Christ did and suffered all things not for himself, to obtain favor or ought else; for he had ever the full favor of God, and was ever Lord over all things; but to reconcile us to God, and to make us heirs with him of his Father's kingdom. And God hath promised, that whosoever calleth on his name shall never be confounded or ashamed. If the righteous fall (saith the scripture), he shall not be bruised; the Lord shall put his hand under him. Who is righteous but he that trusteth in Christ's blood, be he never so weak? Christ is our righteousness; and in him ought we to teach all men to trust; and to expound unto all men the testament that God hath made to us sinners in Christ's blood. This ought we to do, and not make a prey of them to lead them captive, to sit in their consciences, and to teach them to trust in our holiness, good deeds and prayers, to the intent that we should feed our idle and slow bellies of their great labor and sweat, and so to make ourselves Christs and saviors. For if I take on me to save other by my merits, make I not myself a Christ and a savior; and am indeed a false prophet, and a true antichrist; and exalt myself, and sit in the temple of God, that is to wit, the consciences of men?

Among Christian men love maketh all things common: every man is other's debtor, and every man is bound to minister to his neighbor, and to supply his neighbor's lack, of that wherewith God hath endowed him. As thou seest in the world, how the lords and officers minister peace in the commonwealth, punish murderers, thieves, and evil-doers; and how the commons minister to them again rent, tribute, toll, and custom to maintain their order and estate: so in the gospel, the curates which in every parish preach the gospel ought of duty to receive an honest living for them and their households; and even so ought the other officers, which are necessarily required in the commonwealth of Christ. We need not to use filthy lucre in the gospel; to chop and change; and to play the taverners, altering the word of God, as they do their wines to their most advantage; and to fashion God's word after every man's mouth; or to abuse the name of Christ, to obtain thereby authority and power to feed our slow bellies. Now seest thou what prayer is, the end thereof, and wherefore it serveth. If thou give me a thousand pounds to pray for thee, I am no more bound than I was before. Man's imagination can make the commandment of God neither greater nor smaller; neither can to the law of God either add or minish. God's commandment is as great as himself. I am bound to love the Turk with all my might and power; yea, and above my power, even from the ground of my heart, after the ensample that Christ loved me; neither to spare goods, body, or life, to win him to Christ. And what can I do more for thee, if thou gavest me all the world? Where I see need, there can I not but pray, if God's Spirit be in me.

Alms is a Greek word, and signifieth mercy. One Christian is debtor to another, at his need, of all that he is able to do for him, until his need be sufficed. Every Christian man ought to have Christ always before his eyes, as an ensample to counterfeit and follow, and to do to his neighbor as Christ hath done to him; as Paul teacheth in all his epistles, and Peter in

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his first, and John in his first also. This order useth Paul in all his epistles: first, he preacheth the law, and proveth that the whole nature of man is damned, in that the heart lusteth contrary to the will of God. For if we were of God, no doubt we should have lust in his will. Then preacheth he Christ, the gospel, the promises, and the mercy that God hath set forth to all men in Christ's blood: which they that believe, and take it for an earnest thing, turn themselves to God, begin to love God again, and to prepare themselves to his will, by the working of the Spirit of God in them. Last of all, exhorteth he to unity, peace, and soberness; to avoid brawlings, sects, opinions, disputing and arguing about words; and to walk in the plain and single faith and feeling of the Spirit; and to love one another after the ensample of Christ, even as Christ loved us; and to be thankful, and to walk worthy of the gospel, and as it becometh Christ; and with the ensample of pure living to draw all to Christ.

Christ is Lord over all; and every Christian is heir annexed with Christ, and therefore lord over all; and every one lord of whatsoever another hath. If thy brother or neighbor therefore need, and thou have to help him, and yet shewest not mercy, but withdrawest thy hands from him, then robbest thou him of his own, and art a thief. A Christian man hath Christ's Spirit. Now is Christ a merciful thing: if therefore thou be not merciful after the ensample of Christ, then hast thou not his Spirit. If thou have not Christ's Spirit, then art thou none of his, nor hast any part with him. Moreover, though thou shew mercy unto thy neighbor, yet if thou do it not with such burning love as Christ did unto thee, so must thou knowlege thy sin, and desire mercy in Christ. A Christian man hath nought to rejoice in, as concerning his deeds. His rejoicing is that Christ died for him, and that he is washed in Christ's blood. Of his deeds rejoiceth he not, neither counteth he his merits, neither giveth pardons of them, neither seeketh an higher place in heaven of them, neither maketh himself a savior of other men through his good works: but giveth all honor to God; and in his greatest deeds of mercy knowledgeth himself a sinner unfeignedly, and is abundantly content with that place that is prepared for him of Christ; and his good deeds are to him a sign only that Christ's Spirit is in him, and he in Christ, and, through Christ, elect to eternal life.

The order of love or charity, which some dream, the gospel of Christ knoweth not of, that a man should begin at himself, and serve himself first, and then descend, I wot not by what steps. Love seeketh not her own profit, 2 Corinthians 12; but maketh a man to forget himself, and to turn his profit to another man, as Christ sought not himself, nor his own profit, but ours. This term, myself, is not in the gospel; neither yet father, mother, sister, brother, kinsman, that one should be preferred in love above another. But Christ is all in all things. Every Christian man to another is Christ himself; and thy neighbor's need hath as good right in thy goods, as hath Christ himself, which is heir and lord over all. And look, what thou owest to Christ, that thou owest to thy neighbor's need. To thy neighbor owest thou thine heart, thyself, and all that thou hast and canst do. The love that springeth out of Christ excludeth no man, neither putteth difference between one and another. In Christ we are all of one degree, without respect of persons. Notwithstanding, though a Christian man's heart be open to all men, and receiveth all men, yet, because that his ability of goods extendeth not so far, this provision is made, that every man shall care for his own household, as father and mother, and thine elders that have holpen thee, wife, children, and servants. If thou shouldest not care and provide for thine household, then were thou an infidel; seeing thou hast taken on thee so to do, and forasmuch as that is thy part committed to thee of the congregation. When thou hast done thy duty to thine household, and yet hast further abundance of the blessing of God, that owest thou to the poor that cannot labor, or would labor and can get no work, and are destitute of friends; to the poor, I mean, which thou knowest, to them of thine own parish. For that provision ought to be had in the congregation, that every parish care for their poor. If thy neighbors which thou knowest be served, and thou yet have superfluity, and hearest necessity to be among the brethren a thousand miles off, to them art thou debtor. Yea, to the very infidels we be debtors, if they need, as far forth as we maintain them not against Christ, or to blaspheme Christ. Thus is every man, that needeth thy help, thy father, mother, sister, and brother in Christ; even as every man, that doth the will of the Father, is father, mother, sister, and brother unto Christ.

Moreover, if any be an infidel and a false Christian, and forsake his household, his wife, children, and such as cannot help themselves, then art thou bound, and thou have where-with, even as much as to thine own household. And they have as good right in thy goods as thou thyself: and if thou withdraw mercy from them, and hast wherewith to help them, then art thou a thief. If thou shew mercy, so doest thou thy duty, and art a faithful minister in the household of Christ; and of Christ shalt thou have thy reward and thanks. If the whole world were thine, yet hath every brother his right in thy goods; and is heir with thee, as we are all heirs with Christ. Moreover the rich, and they that have wisdom with them, must see the poor set a-work, that as many as are able may feed themselves with the labor of their own hands, according to the scripture and commandment of God.

Now seest thou what alms-deeds meaneth, and wherefore it serveth. He that seeketh with his alms more than to be merciful to a neighbor, to succor his brother's need, to do his duty to his brother, to give his brother that he oweth him, the same is blind, and seeth not what it is to be a Christian man, and to have fellowship in Christ's blood. As pertaining to good works,

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understand that all works are good which are done within the law of God, in faith, and with thanksgiving to God; and understand that thou in doing them pleasest God, whatsoever thou doest within the law of God, as when thou makest water. And trust me, if either wind or water were stopped, thou shouldest feel what a precious thing it were to do either of both, and what thanks ought to be given God therefore. Moreover, put no difference between works; but whatsoever cometh into thy hands that do, as time, place, and occasion giveth, and as God hath put thee in degree, high or low. For as touching to please God, there is no work better than another. God looketh not first on thy work as the world doth, as though the beautifulness of the work pleased him as it doth the world, or as though he had need of them. But God looketh first on thy heart, what faith thou hast to his words, how thou believest him, trustest him, and how thou lovest him for his mercy that he hath shewed thee: he looketh with what heart thou workest, and not what thou workest; how thou acceptest the degree that he hath put thee in, and not of what degree thou art, whether thou be an apostle or a shoemaker. Set this ensample before thine eyes. Thou art a kitchen-page, and washest thy master's dishes; another is an apostle, and preacheth the word of God. Of this apostle hark what Paul saith, in the 1 Corinthians 9 "If I preach," saith he, "I have nought to rejoyce in, for necessity is put unto me;" as who should say, God hath made me so. "Woe is unto me if I preach not. If I do it willingly," saith he, "then have I my reward;" that is, then am I sure that God's Spirit is in me, and that I am elect to eternal life. "If I do it against my will, an office is committed unto me;" that is, if I do it not of love to God, but to get a living thereby, and for a worldly purpose, and had rather otherwise live, then do I that office which God hath put me in, and yet please not God myself. Note now, if this apostle preach not, as many do not, which not only make themselves apostles, but also compel men to take them for greater than apostles, yea, for greater than Christ himself; then woe is unto him, that is, his damnation is just. If he preach and his heart not right, yet ministereth he the office that God hath put him in, and they that have the Spirit of God hear the voice of God, yea, though he speak in an ass. Moreover, howsoever he preacheth, he hath not to rejoyce in that he preacheth. But and if he preach willingly, with a true heart, and of conscience to God, then hath he his reward; that is, then feeleth he the earnest of eternal life, and the working of the Spirit of God in him. And as he feeleth God's goodness and mercy, so be thou sure he feeleth his own infirmity, weakness, and unworthiness, and mourneth and knowledgeth his sin, in that the heart will not arise to work with that full lust and love that is in Christ our Lord: and nevertheless is yet at peace with God, through faith and trust in Christ Jesu. For the earnest of the Spirit, that worketh in him, testifieth and beareth witness unto his heart that God hath chosen him, and that his grace shall suffice him, which grace is now not idle in him. In his works putteth he no trust.

Now thou that ministerest in the kitchen, and art but a kitchen-page, receivest all things of the hand of God; knowest that God hath put thee in that office; submittest thyself to his will; and servest thy master not as a man, but as Christ himself, with a pure heart, according as Paul teacheth us; putteth thy trust in God, and with him seekest thy reward. Moreover, there is not a good deed done, but thy heart rejoiceth therein; yea, when thou hearest that the word of God is preached by this apostle, and seest the people turn to God, thou consentest unto the deed; thine heart breaketh out in joy, springeth and leapeth in thy breast, that God is honored: and in thine heart doest the same that that apostle doth, and haply with greater delectation and a more fervent spirit. Now "he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet;" that is, he that consenteth to the deed of a prophet, and maintaineth it, the same hath the same Spirit and earnest of everlasting life, which the prophet hath, and is elect as the prophet is.

Now if thou compare deed to deed, there is difference betwixt washing of dishes, and preaching of the word of God; but as touching to please God, none at all: for neither that nor this pleaseth, but as far forth as God hath chosen a man, hath put his Spirit in him, and purified his heart by faith and trust in Christ. Let every man therefore wait on the office wherein Christ hath put him, and therein serve his brethren. If he be of low degree, let him patiently therein abide, till God promote him, and exalt him higher. Let kings and head officers seek Christ in their offices, and minister peace and quietness unto the brethren; punish sin, and that with mercy, even with the same sorrow and grief of mind as they would cut off a finger or joint, a leg or arm, of their own body, if there were such disease in them, that either they must be cut off, or else all the body must perish.

Let every man, of whatsoever craft or occupation he be of, whether brewer, baker, tailor, victualler, merchant, or husbandman, refer his craft and occupation unto the common wealth, and serve his brethren as he would do Christ himself. Let him buy and sell truly, and not set dice on his brethren; and so sheweth he mercy, and his occupation pleaseth God. And when thou receivest money for thy labor or ware, thou receivest thy duty. For wherein soever thou minister to thy brethren, thy brethren are debtors, to give thee wherewith to maintain thyself and household. And let your superfluities succor the poor, of which sort shall ever be some in all towns, and cities, and villages, and that I suppose the greatest number. Remember that we are members of one body, and ought to minister one to another mercifully: and remember that whatsoever we have, it is given us of God, to bestow it on our brethren. Let him that eateth, eat and give God thanks, only let not thy meat pull thine heart from God; and let him that drinketh do likewise. Let him that hath a wife, give God thanks

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for his liberty; only let not thy wife withdraw thine heart from God, and then pleasest thou God, and hast the word of God for thee. And in all things look on the word of God, and therein put thy trust, and not in a visor, in a disguised garment, and a cut shoe. Seek the word of God in all things; and without the word of God do nothing, though it appear never so glorious. Whatsoever is done without the word of God, that count idolatry. The kingdom of heaven is within us. Wonder therefore at no monstrous shape, nor at any outward thing without the word: for the world was never drawn from God but with an outward show, and glorious appearance and shining of hypocrisy, and of feigned and visored fasting, praying, watching, singing, offering, sacrificing, hallowing of superstitious ceremonies, and monstrous disguising. Take this for an ensample: John Baptist, which had testimony of Christ and of the gospel, that there never rose a greater among women's children, with his fasting, watching, praying, raiment, and strait living, deceived the Jews, and brought them in doubt whether John were very Christ or not, and yet no scripture or miracle testifying it: so greatly the blind nature of man looketh on the outward shining of works, and regardeth not the inward word which speaketh to the heart. When they sent to John, asking him whether he were Christ, he denied it. When they asked him what he was, and what he said of himself? he answered not, I am he that watcheth, prayeth, drinketh no wine nor strong drink, eateth neither fish nor flesh, but live with wild honey and grasshoppers, and wear a coat of camel's hair and a girdle of a skin; but said, "I am a voice of a crier." My voice only pertaineth to you. Those outward things which ye wonder at, pertain to myself only, unto the taming of my body. To you am I a voice only, and that which I preach. My preaching (if it be received into a penitent or repenting heart) shall teach you how to live and please God, according as God shall shed out his grace on every man. John preached repentance, saying, "Prepare the Lord's way, and make his paths straight." The Lord's way is repentance, and not hypocrisy of man's imagination and invention. It is not possible that the Lord Christ should come to a man, except he know himself and his sin, and truly repent. "Make his paths straight." The paths are the law, if thou understand it aright, as God hath given it. Christ saith, in the 17th of Matthew: "Elias shall first come," that is, shall come before Christ, "and restore all things;" meaning of John Baptist. John Baptist did restore the law, and the scripture, unto the right sense and understanding; which the Pharisees partly had darkened, and made of none effect through their own traditions, Matthew 23; where Christ rebuketh them, saying, "Why transgress ye the commandments of God through your traditions?" and partly had corrupted it with glosses and false interpretations, that no man could understand it: wherefore Christ rebuketh them, Matthew 23, saying,

"Woe be to you Pharisees, hypocrites, which shut up the kingdom of heaven before men: ye enter not yourselves, neither suffer them that come to enter in."

and partly did beguile the people and blind their eyes in disguising themselves, as thou readest in the same 23rd chapter, how they made broad and large phylacteries, and did all their works to be seen of men, that the people should wonder at their disguisings and visoring themselves otherwise than God had made them: and partly mocked them with hypocrisy of false holiness, in fasting, praying, and alms-giving, Matthew 6. And this did they for lucre, to be in authority, to sit in the consciences of people, and to be counted as God himself, that people should trust in their holiness, and not in God, as thou readest in the place above rehearsed, Matthew 23:

"Woe be to you, Pharisees, hypocrites, which devour widows' houses under a color of a long prayer."

Counterfeit therefore nothing without the word of God. When thou understandest that, it shall teach thee all things, how to apply outward things, and whereunto to refer them.

Beware of thy good intent, good mind, good affection, or zeal, as they call it. Peter of a good mind, and of a good affection or zeal, chid Christ, Matthew 26, because that he said he must go to Jerusalem, and there be slain; but Christ called him Satan for his labor, a name that belongeth to the devil, and said, "That he perceived not godly things, but worldly." Of a good intent, and of a fervent affection to Christ, the sons of Zebedee would have had fire to come down from heaven to consume the Samaritans, Luke 9; but Christ rebuked them, saying that they wist not of what spirit they were: that is, that they understood not how that they were altogether worldly and fleshly-minded. Peter smote Malchus of a good zeal; but Christ condemned his deed. The very Jews of a good intent, and of a good zeal, slew Christ and persecuted the apostles, as Paul beareth them record, Romans 10; "I bear them record (saith he) that they have a fervent mind to God-ward, but not according to knowledge." It is another thing then, to do of a good mind, and to do of knowledge. Labor for knowledge; that thou mayest know God's will, and what he would have thee to do. Our mind, intent, and affection or zeal, are blind; and all that we do of them, is damned of God: and for that cause hath God made a testament between him and us, wherein is contained both what he would have us to do, and what he would have us to ask of him. See therefore that thou do nothing to please God withal, but that he commandeth; neither ask any thing of him, but that he hath promised thee. The Jews also, as it appeareth, slew Stephen of a good zeal; because he proved by the scripture, that God dwelleth not in churches or temples made with hands. The churches at the beginning were ordained that the people should thither resort, to hear the word of God

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there preached only, and not for the use wherein they now are. The temple wherein God will be worshipped, is the heart of man. For "God is a Spirit" (saith Christ, John 4), "and will be worshipped in the spirit and in truth:" that is, when a penitent heart consenteth unto the law of God, and with a strong faith longeth for the promises of God. So is God honored on all sides, in that we count him righteous in all his laws and ordinances, and also trust in all his promises. Other worshipping of God is there none, except we make an idol of him. "It shall be recompensed thee at the rising again of the righteous." (Luke 14)

Read the text before, and thou shalt perceive that Christ doth here that same that he doth, Matthew 5, that is, he putteth us in remembrance of our duty, that we be to the poor as Christ is to us; and also teacheth us, how that we can never know whether our love be right, and whether it spring of Christ or no, as long as we are but kind to them only which do as much for us again. But and we be merciful to the poor, for conscience to God, and of compassion and hearty love, which compassion and love spring of the love we have to God in Christ, for the pure mercy and love that he hath showed on us: then have we a sure token that we are beloved of God, and washed in Christ's blood, and elect, by Christ's deserving, unto eternal life.

The scripture speaketh as a father doth to his young son, Do this or that, and then will I love thee: yet the father loveth his son first, and studieth with all his power and wit to overcome his child with love and with kindness, to make him do that which is comely, honest, and good for itself. A kind father and mother love their children even when they are evil, that they would shed their blood to make them better, and to bring them into the right way. And a natural child studieth not to obtain his father's love with works; but considereth with what love his father loveth him withal, and therefore loveth again, is glad to do his father's will, and studieth to be thankful.

The spirit of the world understandeth not the speaking of God; neither the spirit of the wise of this world, neither the spirit of philosophers, neither the spirit of Socrates, of Plato, or of Aristotle's ethics, as thou mayest see in the first and second chapter of the first to the Corinthians. Though that many are not ashamed to rail and blaspheme, saying, How should he understand the scripture, seeing he is no philosopher, neither hath seen his metaphysic? moreover they blaspheme, saying, How can he be a divine, and wotteth not what is *subjectum in theologia*? nevertheless as a man, without the spirit of Aristotle or philosophy, may by the Spirit of God understand scripture; even so, by the Spirit of God, understandeth he that God is to be sought in all the scripture, and in all things; and yet wotteth not what meaneth *subjectum in theologia*, because it is a term of their own making. If thou shouldest say to him that hath the Spirit of God, the love of God is the keeping of the commandments, and to love a man's neighbor is to shew mercy; he would, without arguing or disputing, understand how that of the love of God springeth the keeping of his commandments, and of the love to thy neighbor springeth mercy. Now would Aristotle deny such speaking; and a Duns' man would make twenty distinctions. If thou shouldest say (as saith John, the 4th of his epistle), "How can he that loveth not his neighbor whom he seeth, love God whom he seeth not?" Aristotle would say, Lo, a man must first love his neighbor and then God; and out of the love to thy neighbor springeth the love to God. But he that feeleth the working of the Spirit of God, and also from what vengeance the blood of Christ hath delivered him, understandeth how that it is impossible to love either father or mother, sister, brother, neighbor, or his own self aright, except it spring out of the love to God; and perceiveth that the love to a man's neighbor is a sign of the love to God, as good fruit declareth a good tree; and that the love to a man's neighbor accompanieth and followeth the love of God, as heat accompanieth and followeth fire. Likewise when the scripture saith, Christ shall reward every man at the resurrection, or uprising again, according to his deeds, the scripture of Aristotle's Ethics would say, Lo, with the multitude of good works mayest thou, and must thou, obtain everlasting life; and also a place in heaven high or low, according as thou hast many or few good works. And yet he wotteth not what a good work meaneth, as Christ speaketh of good works; as he that seeth not the heart, but outward things only. But he that hath God's Spirit understandeth it. He feeleth that good works are nothing but fruits of love, compassion, mercifulness, and of a tenderness of heart, which a Christian hath to his neighbor; and that love springeth of that love which he hath to God, to his will and commandments: and he understandeth also, that the love which man hath to God springeth of that infinite love and bottomless mercy, which God in Christ showed first to us, as saith John in the epistle and chapter above rehearsed. "In this (saith he,) appeareth the love of God to us-ward, because that God sent his onlybegotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to make agreement for our sins." In conclusion, a Christian man feeleth that that unspeakable love and mercy which God hath to us, and that Spirit which worketh all things that are wrought according to the will of God, and that love wherewith we love God, and that love which we have to our neighbor, and that mercy and compassion which we show on him, and also that eternal life which is laid up in store for us in Christ, are altogether the gift of God through Christ's purchasing.

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If the scripture said always, Christ shall reward thee according to thy faith, or according to thy hope and trust thou hast in God, or according to the love thou hast to God and thy neighbor; so were it true also, as thou seest, 1 Peter 1 "Receiving the end," or reward, "of your faith, the health," or salvation, "of your souls." But the spiritual things could not be known, save by their works; as a tree cannot be known but by her fruit. How could I know that I loved my neighbor, if never occasion were given me to shew mercy unto him? How should I know that I loved God, if I never suffered for his sake? How should I know that God loved me, if there were no infirmity, temptation, peril and jeopardy whence God should deliver me?

"There is no man that forsaketh house, either father or mother, either brethren or sisters, wife or children, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, which shall not receive much more in this world, and in the world to come everlasting life." (Luke 18)

Here seest thou, that a Christian man in all his works hath respect to nothing but unto the glory of God only, and to the maintaining of the truth of God; and doth and leaveth undone all things of love, to the glory and honor of God only, as Christ teacheth in the *Paternoster*.

Moreover when he saith, he shall receive much more in this world, of a truth, yea, he hath received much more already. For except he had felt the infinite mercy, goodness, love, and kindness of God, and the fellowship of the blood of Christ, and the comfort of the Spirit of Christ in his heart, he could never have forsaken any thing for God's sake. Notwithstanding (as saith Mark 10), whosoever for Christ's sake and the gospel's "forsaketh house, brethren or sisters, etc., he shall receive an hundred-fold, houses, brethren," etc., that is, spiritually. For Christ shall be all things unto thee. The angels, all Christians, and whosoever doth the will of the Father, shall be father, mother, sister and brother unto thee; and all theirs shall be thine. And God shall take the care of thee, and minister all things unto thee, as long as thou seekest but his honor only. Moreover, if thou wert lord over all the world, yea, of ten worlds, before thou knewest God, yet was not thine appetite quenched; thou thirstedst for more. But if thou seek his honor only, then shall he slake thy thirst; and thou shalt have all that thou desirest, and shall be content: yea, if thou dwell among infidels, and amongst the most cruel nations of the world, yet shall he be a Father unto thee, and shall defend thee, as he did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all saints whose lives thou readest in the scripture. For all that are past and gone before are but ensamples, to strength our faith and trust in the word of God. It is the same God, and hath sworn to us all that he sware unto them; and is as true as ever he was; and therefore cannot but fulfill his promises to us, as well as he did to them, if we believe as they did. "The hour shall come when all they that are in the graves shall hear his voice," that is to say, Christ's voice,

"and shall come forth; they that have done good into the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil into the resurrection of damnation." (John 5)

This, and all like texts, declare what followeth good works, and that our deeds shall testify with us or against us at that day; and putteth us in remembrance to be diligent and fervent in doing good. Hereby mayest thou not understand that we obtain the favor of God, and the inheritance of life, through the merits of good works, as hirelings do their wages: for then shouldst thou rob Christ, of whose "fullness we have received favor for favor," John 1; that is, God's favor was so full in Christ, that for his sake he giveth us his favor, as affirmeth also Paul, Ephesians 1, "He loved us in his beloved, by whom we have," saith Paul, "redemption through his blood, and forgiveness of sins." The forgiveness of sins, then, is our redemption in Christ, and not the reward of works; "In whom," saith he in the same place, "he chose us before the making of the world," that is, long before we did good works. Through faith in Christ are we also the sons of God, as thou readest John 1

"In that they believed on his name, he gave them power to be the sons of God."

God, with all his fullness and riches, dwelleth in Christ; and out of Christ must we fetch all things. Thou readest also, John 3

"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life: and he that believeth not shall see no life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him."

Here seest thou that the wrath and vengeance of God possesseth every man, till faith come. Faith and trust in Christ expelleth the wrath of God; and bringeth favor, the Spirit, power to do good, and everlasting life. Moreover, until Christ hath given thee light, thou knowest not wherein standeth the goodness of thy works; and until his Spirit hath loosed thine heart, thou canst not consent unto good works. All that is good in us, both will and works, cometh of the favor of God, through Christ, to whom be all the laud. Amen.

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“If any man will do his will,” he meaneth the will of the Father, “he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” John 7 This text meaneth not that any man of his own strength, power, and free will, (as they call it,) can do the will of God, before he hath received the Spirit and strength of Christ through faith. But here is meant that which is spoken in the third of John, when Nicodemus marvelled how it were possible that a man should be born again: Christ answered, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;” as who should say, He that hath the Spirit through faith, and is born again, and made anew in Christ, understandeth the things of the Spirit, and what he that is spiritual meaneth. But he that is flesh, and as Paul saith, 1 Corinthians 2, a natural man, and led of his blind reason only, can never ascend to the capacity of the Spirit. And he giveth an ensample, saying, “The wind bloweth where he listeth, and thou hearest his voice, and wottest not whence he cometh, nor whither he will: so is every man that is born of the Spirit.” He that speaketh of the Spirit can never be understand of the natural man, which is but flesh, and savoreth no more than things of the flesh. So here meaneth Christ, If any man have the spirit, and consenteth unto the will of God, the same at once wotteth what I mean.

“If ye understand these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” (John 13)

A Christian man’s heart is with the will of God, with the law and commandments of God; and hungereth and thirsteth after strength to fulfill them; and mourneth day and night, desiring God, according to his promises, for to give him power to fulfill the will of God with love and lust: then testifieth his deed that he is blessed, and that the Spirit, which blesseth us in Christ, is in him, and ministereth such strength. The outward deed testifieth what is within us, as thou readest, John 5, “The deeds which I do testify of me,” saith Christ. And, John 13,

“Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.”

And, John 14 “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, the same it is that loveth me.”

And again: “He that loveth me, keepeth my commandments; and he that loveth me not, keepeth not my commandments:” the outward deed testifieth of the inward heart. And, John 15

“If ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall continue in my love; as I keep my Father’s commandment, and continue in his love.” That is, As ye see the love that I have to my Father, in that I keep his commandments; so shall ye see the love that ye have to me, in that ye keep my commandments.

Thou mayest not think that our deeds bless us first, and that we prevent God and his grace in Christ; as though we, in our natural gifts, and being as we were born in Adam, looked on the law of God, and of our own strength fulfilled it, and so became righteous, and then with that righteousness obtained the favor of God: as philosophers write of righteousness; and as the righteousness of temporal law is, where the law is satisfied with the hypocrisy of the outward deed. For, contrary to that, readest thou John 15 “Ye have not chosen me,” saith Christ, “but I have chosen you, that ye go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit remain.” And in the same chapter: “I am a vine, and ye the branches; and without me can ye do nothing.” With us, therefore, so goeth it. In Adam are we all, as it were, wild crab-trees, of which God chooseth whom he will, and plucketh them out of Adam, and planteth them in the garden of his mercy; and stocketh them, and grafteth the Spirit of Christ in them, which bringeth forth the fruit of the will of God; which fruit testifieth that God hath blessed us in Christ. Note this also; that, as long as we live, we are yet partly carnal and fleshly, notwithstanding that we are in Christ, and though it be not imputed unto us for Christ’s sake; for there abideth and remaineth in us yet of the old Adam, as it were of the stock of the crab-tree; and ever among, when occasion is given him, shooteth forth his branches and leaves, bud, blossom, and fruit: against whom we must fight and subdue him, and change all his nature by little and little, with prayer, fasting, and watching, with virtuous meditation and holy works, until we be altogether spirit. “The kingdom of heaven,” saith Christ, “is like leaven, which a woman taketh and hideth in three pecks of meal, till all be leavened.” The leaven is the Spirit, and we the meal, which must be seasoned with the Spirit by a little and a little, till we be throughout spiritual.

“Which shall reward every man according to his deeds,” Romans 2; that is, according as the deeds are, so shall every man’s reward be: the deeds declare what we are, as the fruit the tree; according to the fruit shall the tree be praised. The reward is given of the mercy and truth of God, and by the deserving and merits of Christ. Whosoever repenteth, believeth the gospel, and putteth his trust in Christ’s merits, the same is heir with Christ of eternal life; for assurance whereof, the Spirit of God is poured into his heart as an earnest, which looseth him from the bonds of Satan, and giveth him lust and strength, every day more and more, according as he is diligent to ask of God for Christ’s sake: and eternal life followeth good living. “I suppose,” saith St Paul in the same epistle, the eighth chapter, “that the afflictions of this world are not worthy of the glory

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which shall be shewed on us;” that is to say, that which we here suffer can never deserve that reward, which there shall be given us.

Moreover, if the reward should depend and hang of the works, no man should be saved: forasmuch as our best deeds, compared to the law, are damnable sin. “By the deeds of the law is no flesh justified,” as it is written in the third chapter to the Romans. The law justifieth not, but uttereth the sin only; and compelleth and driveth the penitent, or repenting sinner, to flee unto the sanctuary of mercy in the blood of Christ. Also, repent we never so much, be we never so well willing unto the law of God, yet are we so weak, and the snares and occasions so innumerable, that we fall daily and hourly: so that we could not but despair, if the reward hanged of the work. Whosoever ascribeth eternal life unto the deserving and merit of works, must fall in one of two inconveniences: either must he be a blind Pharisee, not seeing that the law is spiritual and he carnal, and look and rejoyce in the outward shining of his deeds, despising the weak, and, in respect of them, justify himself; or else (if he see how that the law is spiritual, and he never able to ascend unto that which the law requireth,) he must needs despair. Let every Christian man, therefore, rejoyce in Christ our hope, trust, and righteousness; in whom we are loved, chosen, and accepted unto the inheritance of eternal life; neither presuming in our perfectness, neither despairing in our weakness. The perfecter a man is, the clearer is his sight; and seeth a thousand things which displease him, and also perfectness that cannot be obtained in this life; and therefore desireth to be with Christ, where is no more sin. Let him that is weak, and cannot do that he would fain do, not despair; but turn to him that is strong, and hath promised to give strength to all that ask of him in Christ’s name; and complain to God, and desire him to fulfill his promises, and to God commit himself; and he shall of his mercy and truth strengthen him, and make him feel with what love he is beloved for Christ’s sake, though he be never so weak.

“They are not righteous before God which hear the law; but they which do the law shall be justified.” (Romans 2)

This text is plainer than that it needeth to be expounded. In this chapter Paul proveth that the law natural help not the Gentiles. For the law of God was written in the hearts of the Gentiles, as it appeareth by the laws, statutes, and ordinances which they made in their cities, yet kept they them not. The great keep the small under, for their own profit, with the violence of the law. Every man praiseth the law, as far forth as it is profitable and pleasant unto himself: but when his own appetites should be refrained, then grudgeth he against the law. Moreover, he proveth that no knowledge help the Gentiles. For though the learned men (as the philosophers) came to the knowledge of God by the creatures of the world, yet had they no power to worship God. In this second chapter proveth he that the Jews, though they had the law written, yet it help them not: they could not keep it, but were idolaters, and were also murderers, adulterers, and whatsoever the law forbad. He concludeth therefore, that the Jew is as well damned as the Gentile. If hearing of the law only might have justified, then had the Jews been righteous. But it requireth that a man do the law, if he will be righteous; which because the Jew did not, he is no less damned than the Gentile. The publishing and declaring of the law doth but utter a man’s sin; and giveth neither strength, nor help, to fulfill the law. The law killeth thy conscience, and giveth thee no lust to fulfill the law. Faith in Christ giveth lust and power to do the law. Now is it true, that he which doth the law is righteous; but that doth no man, save he that believeth and putteth his trust in Christ.

“If any man’s work, that he hath built upon, abide, he shall receive a reward.” (1 Corinthians 3)

The circumstance of the same chapter, that is to wit, that which goeth before and that which followeth, declareth plainly what is meant. Paul talketh of learning, doctrine, or preaching: he saith that he himself hath laid the foundation, which is Jesus Christ, and that no man can lay any other. He exhorteth, therefore, every man to take heed what he buildeth upon; and borroweth a similitude of the goldsmith, which trieth his metals with fire; saying that the fire, that is, the judgment of the scripture, shall try every man’s work, that is, every man’s preaching and doctrine. If any build upon the foundation laid of Paul, I mean Jesus Christ, “gold, silver, or precious stone,” (which are all one thing, and signify true doctrine, which, when it is examined, the scripture alloweth,) then shall he have his reward; that is, he shall be sure that his learning is of God, and that God’s Spirit is in him, and that he shall have the reward that Christ hath purchased for him. On the other side, if any man build thereon “timber, hay, or stubble,” (which are all one, and signify doctrine of man’s imagination, traditions, and fantasies, which stand not with Christ when they are judged and examined by the scripture,) he shall suffer damage, but shall be saved himself, yet as it were through fire: that is, it shall be painful unto him that he hath lost his labor, and to see his building perish; notwithstanding, if he repent, and embrace the truth in Christ, he shall obtain mercy and be saved. But if Paul were now alive, and would defend his own learning, he should be tried through fire; not through fire of the judgment of scripture, (for that light men now utterly refuse,) but by the pope’s law, and with fire of fagots.

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“We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, for to receive every man according to the deeds of his body,” (2 Corinthians 5)

as thy deeds testify of thee, so shall thy reward be. Thy deeds be evil, then is the wrath of God upon thee, and thine heart is evil; and so shall thy reward be, if thou repent not. Fear therefore; and cry to God for grace, that thou mayest love his laws. And when thou lovest them, cease not, till thou have obtained power of God to fulfill them; so shalt thou be sure that a good reward shall follow. Which reward not thy deeds, but Christ’s, have purchased for thee; whose purchasing also is that lust which thou hast to God’s law, and that might wherewith thou fulfilllest them. Remember also, that a reward is rather called that which is given freely, than that which is deserved. That which is deserved is called (if thou wilt give him his right name) hire or wages. A reward is given freely, to provoke unto love, and to make friends.

“Remember, that whatsoever good thing any man doth, that shall he receive of the Lord.” Ephesians 6. “Remembering that ye shall receive of the Lord the reward of inheritance.” Colossians 3. These two texts are exceeding plain. Paul meaneth, as Peter doth, that servants should obey their masters with all their hearts, and with good will, though they were never so evil. Yea, he will that all who are under power obey, even of heart, and of conscience to God; because God will have it so, be the rulers never so wicked. The children must obey father and mother, be they never so cruel or unkind; likewise the wife her husband, the servant his master, the subjects and commons their lord or king. Why? “For ye serve the Lord,” saith he, in the Colossians 3. We are Christ’s, and Christ hath bought us, as thou readest, Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 6, 1 Peter 1. Christ is our Lord, and we his possession; and his also is the commandment. Now ought not the cruelty and churlishness of father and mother, of husband, master, lord, or king, cause us to hate the commandment of our so kind a Lord, Christ; which spared not his blood for our sakes; which also hath purchased for us with his blood the reward of eternal life; which life shall follow the patience of good living, and whereunto our good deeds testify that we are chosen. Furthermore, we are so carnal, that if the rulers be good, we cannot know whether we keep the commandment for the love that we have to Christ, and to God through him, or no. But and if thou canst find in thine heart to do good unto him that rewardeth thee evil again, then art thou sure that the same Spirit is in thee that is in Christ. And it followeth, in the same chapter to the Colossians, “He that doth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done.” That is, God shall avenge thee abundantly; which seeth what wrong is done unto thee, and yet suffereth it for a time, that thou mightest feel thy patience, and the working of his Spirit in thee, and be made perfect. Therefore, see that thou not once desire vengeance; but remit all vengeance unto God, as Christ did, which, saith Peter,

“when he was reviled, reviled not again, neither threatened when he suffered.” (1 Peter 2)

Unto such obedience, unto such patience, unto such a poor heart, and unto such feeling, is Paul’s meaning to bring all men, and not unto the vain disputing of them that ascribe so high a place in heaven unto their piled merits; which, as they feel not the working of God’s Spirit, so obey they no man. If the king do unto them but right, they will interdict the whole realm, curse, excommunicate, and send them down far beneath the bottom of hell; as they have brought the people out of their wits, and made them mad, to believe,

“Thy prayers and alms are come up into remembrance in the presence of God,” (in the tenth chapter of the Acts): that is, God forgetteth thee not; though he come not at the first calling, he looketh on, and beholdeth thy prayers and alms. Prayer cometh from the heart. God looketh first on the heart, and then on the deed; as thou readest Genesis 4 God beheld or looked first on Abel, and then on his offering. If the heart be unpure, the deed verily pleaseth not, as thou seest in Cain. Mark the order: in the beginning of the chapter thou readest, “There was a certain man named Cornelius which feared God, gave much alms, and prayed God alway.” He feared God; that is, he trembled and quaked to break the commandments of God. Then prayed he alway. Prayer is the fruit, effect, deed or act of faith, and is nothing but the longing of the heart for those things which a man lacketh, and which God hath promised to give him. He doth also alms: alms is the fruit, effect, or deed, of compassion and pity, which we have to our neighbor. O what a glorious faith, and a right, is that which so trusteth God, and believeth his promises, that she feareth to break his commandments, and is also merciful unto her neighbor! This is that faith whereof thou readest, (namely in Peter, Paul, and John,) that we are thereby both justified and saved; and whosoever imagineth any other faith, deceiveth himself, and is a vain disputer, and a brawler about words, and hath no feeling in his heart.

Though thou consent to the law, that it is “good, righteous, and holy,” sorrowest and repentest, because thou hast broken it, mournest because thou hast no strength to fulfill it, yet art not thou thereby at one with God. Yea, thou shouldest shortly despair, and blaspheme God, if the promises of forgiveness and of help were not thereby, and faith in thine heart to believe them. Faith therefore setteth thee at one with God.

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Faith prayeth alway. For she hath always her infirmities and weaknesses before her eyes, and also God's promises, for which she always longeth, and in all places. But blind unbelief prayeth not alway, nor in all places, but in the church only; and that in such a church, where it is not lawful to preach God's promises, neither to teach men to trust therein. Faith, when she prayeth, setteth not her good deeds before her, saying, 'Lord, for my good deeds do this or that;' nor bargaineth with God, saying, 'Lord, grant me this, or do this or that, and I will do this or that for thee;' as, mumble so much daily, go so far, or fast this or that fast, enter this religion or that, with such other points of infidelity, yea, rather idolatry. But she setteth her infirmities and her lack before her face, and God's promises, saying, 'Lord, for thy mercy and truth, which thou hast sworn, be merciful unto me, and pluck me out of this prison and out of this hell, and loose the bonds of Satan, and give me power to glorify thy name.' Faith therefore justifieth in the heart, and before God; and the deeds justify outwardly before the world, that is, testify only before men, what we are inwardly before God.

"Whosoever looketh in the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, (if he be not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work,) he shall be happy in his deed." James 1. The law of liberty, that is, which requireth a free heart, or (if thou fulfill it) declareth a free heart, loosed from the bonds of Satan. The preaching of the law maketh no man free, but bindeth; for it is the key that bindeth all consciences unto eternal damnation, when it is preached; as the promises or gospel is the key that looseth all consciences that repent, when they are bound through preaching of the law. "He shall be happy in his deed:" that is, by his deed shall he know that he is happy and blessed of God, which hath given him a good heart, and power to fulfill the law. By hearing the law thou shalt not know that thou art blessed; but if thou do it, it declareth that thou art happy and blessed.

"Was not Abraham justified of his deeds, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?" James 2. His deed justified him before the world; that is, it declared and uttered the faith which both justified him before God, and wrought that wonderful work, as James also affirmeth.

"Was not Rahab the harlot justified when she received the messengers, and sent them out another way?" James 2. That is likewise, outwardly; but before God she was justified by faith, which wrought that outward deed, as thou mayest see, Joshua 2. She had heard what God had done in Egypt, in the Red Sea, in the desert, and unto the two kings of the Amorreans, Seon and Og: and she confessed, saying, "Your Lord God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath." She also believed that God, as he had promised the children of Israel, would give them the land wherein she dwelt; and she consented thereunto, submitted herself unto the will of God, and help God, (as much as in her was,) and saved his spies and messengers. The other feared that which she believed; but resisted God with all their might, and had no power to submit themselves unto the will of God. And therefore perished they, and she was saved, and that through faith, as we read Hebrews 11; where thou mayest see how the holy fathers were saved through faith, and how faith wrought in them. Faith is the goodness of all the deeds that are done within the law of God, and maketh them good and glorious, seem they never so vile; and unbelief maketh them damnable, seem they never so glorious.

As pertaining to that which James in this 2nd chapter saith, "What availeth though a man say that he hath faith, if he have no deeds? can faith save him?" and again, "Faith without deeds is dead in itself;" and, "The devils believe and tremble;" and, "As the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith without deeds is dead;" it is manifest and dear, that he meaneth not of that faith whereof Peter and Paul speak in their epistles, John in his gospel and first epistle, and Christ in the gospel, when he saith, "Thy faith hath made thee safe," "Be it to thee according to thy faith," or "Great is thy faith," and so forth; and of which James himself speaketh in the first chapter, saying, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of life," that is, in believing the promises, wherein is life, are we made rite sons of God. Which thing I also this wise prove. Paul saith "How shall, or can they believe without a preacher? How should they preach except they were sent?" Now I pray you, when was it heard that God sent any man to preach unto the devils, or that he made them any good promise? He threateneth them oft; but never sent any ambassadors to preach any atonement between him and them. Take an ensample that thou mayest understand: let there be two poor men both destitute of raiment in a cold winter; the one strong that he feeleth no grief, the other grievously mourning for pain of the cold. I then come by, and, moved with pity and compassion, say unto him that feeleth his disease, "Come to such a place, and I will give thee raiment sufficient." He believeth, cometh, and obtaineth that which I have promised. That other seeth all this, and knoweth it, but is partaker of nought, for he hath no faith, and that is because there is no promise made him. So is it of the devils: the devils have no faith; for faith is but earnest believing of God's promises. Now are there no promises made unto the devils, but sore threatnings. The old philosophers knew that there was one God, but yet had no faith; for they had no power to seek his will, neither to worship him. The Turks and the Saracens know that there is one God, but yet have no faith; for they have no power to worship God in spirit, to seek his pleasure, and to submit them unto his will. They made an idol of God, (as we do for the most part,) and worshipped him

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every man after his own imagination, and for a sundry purpose. What we will have done, that must God do; and to do our will, worship we him and pray unto him: but what God will have done, that will neither Turk nor Saracen, nor the most part of us do. Whatsoever we imagine righteous, that must God admit; but God's righteousness will not our hearts admit. Take another ensample: let there be two such as I spake of before, and I promise both; and the one, because he feeleth not his disease, cometh not. So is it of God's promises: no man is holpen by them, but sinners that feel their sins, mourn and sorrow for them, and repent with all their hearts. For John Baptist went before Christ, and preached repentance; that is, he preached the law of God right, and brought the people into knowledge of themselves, and unto the fear of God, and then sent them unto Christ to be healed. For in Christ, and for his sake only, hath God promised to receive us unto mercy, to forgive us, and to give us power to resist sin. How shall God save thee, when thou knowest not thy damnation? How shall Christ deliver thee from sin, when thou wilt not knowledge thy sin? Now I pray thee how many thousands are there of them that say, 'I believe that Christ was born of a virgin, that he died, that he rose again, and so forth, and thou canst not bring them in belief that they have any sin at all! How many are there of the same sort, which thou canst not make believe that a thousand things are sin, which God damneth for sin all the scripture throughout! as to buy as good cheap as he can, and to sell as dear as he can; to raise the market of corn and victuals, for his own vantage, without respect of his neighbor, or of the poor, or of the common wealth, and such like. Moreover, how many hundred thousand are there, which when they have sinned, and knowledge their sins, yet trust in a bald ceremony, or in a lousy friar's coat and merits; or in the prayers of them that devour widows' houses, and eat the poor out of house and harbor; in a thing of his own imagination; in a foolish dream, and a false vision; and not in Christ's blood, and in the truth that God hath sworn! All these are faithless; for they follow their own righteousness, and are disobedient unto all manner righteousness of God; both unto the righteousness of God's law, wherewith he damneth all our deeds, (for though some of them see their sins for fear of pain, yet had they rather that such deeds were no sin,) and also unto the righteousness of the truth of God in his promises, whereby he sayeth all that repent and believe them. For though they believe that Christ died, yet believe they not that he died for their sins, and that his death is a sufficient satisfaction for their sins; and that God, for his sake, will be a father unto them, and give them power to resist sin. Paul saith to the Romans, in the 10th chapter,

"If thou confess with thy mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and believe with thine heart that God raised him up from death, thou shalt be safe:"

that is, if thou believe he raised him up again for thy salvation. Many believe that God is rich and almighty; but not unto themselves, and that he will be good unto them, and defend them, and be their God. Pharaoh, for pain of the plague, was compelled to confess his sins, but had yet no power to submit himself unto the will of God, and to let the children of Israel go, and to lose so great profit for God's pleasure; as our prelates confess their sins, saying, Though we be never so evil, yet have we the power. And again, The scribes and the Pharisees (say they) sat in Moses' seat; do as they teach, but not as they do: thus confess they that they are abominable. But to the second I answer, If they sat on Christ's seat, they would preach Christ's doctrine: now preach they their own traditions, and therefore not to be heard. If they preached Christ, we ought to hear them, though they were never so abominable, as they of themselves confess, and have yet no power to amend, neither to let loose Christ's flock to serve God in the spirit; which they hold captive compelling them to serve their false lies. The devils felt the power of Christ, and were compelled against their wills to confess that he was the Son of God; but had no power to be content therewith, neither to consent unto the ordinance and eternal counsel of the everlasting God: as our prelates feel the power of God against them, but yet have no grace to give room unto Christ, because that they (as the devil's nature is) will themselves sit in his holy temple, that is to wit, the consciences of men.

Simon Magus believed, Acts 8, with such a faith as the devils confessed Christ; but had no right faith, as thou seest in the said chapter. For he repented not, consenting unto the law of God. Neither believed he the promises, or longed for them; but wondered only at the miracles which Philip wrought. And because that he himself in Philip's presence had no power to use his witchcraft, sorcery, and art magic, wherewith he mocked and deluded the wits of the people, he would have bought the gift of God, to have sold it much dearer; as his successors now do, and not the successors of Simon Peter. For were they Simon Peter's successors, they would preach Christ, as he did; but they are Simon Magus's successors, of which Simon Peter well prophesied in the second chapter of his second epistle, saying, "There were false prophets among the people (meaning of the Jews), even as there shall be false teachers or doctors among you, which privily shall bring in sects damnable," (sects is part-taking, as one holdeth of Francis, another of Dominic, which thing also Paul rebuketh, 1 Corinthians 1, 1 Corinthians 3) "even denying the Lord that bought them;" (for they will not be saved by Christ, neither suffer any man to preach him to other.) "And many shall follow their damnable ways." (Thou wilt say, Shall God suffer so many to go out of the right way so long? I answer, Many must follow their damnable ways, or else must Peter be a false prophet.) "By which the way of truth shall be evil spoken of;" (as it is now at this present time, for it is heresy to preach the truth;) "and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." Of their merchandise and

Parable of the Wicked Mammoth by William Tyndale

covetousness it needeth not to make rehearsal; for they that be blind see it evidently. Thus seest thou that James, when he saith, "Faith without deeds is dead," and "as the body without the spirit is dead, so is faith without deeds," and "the devils believe;" that he meaneth not of the faith and trust, that we have in the truth of God's promises, and his holy testament made unto us in Christ's blood; which faith followeth repentance, and the consent of the heart unto the law of God, and maketh a man safe, and setteth him at peace with God. But he speaketh of that false opinion and imagination, wherewith some say, I believe that Christ was born of a virgin, and that he died, and so forth. That believe they verily, and so strongly, that they are ready to slay whosoever would say the contrary. But they believe not that Christ died for their sins; and that his death hath appeased the wrath of God, and hath obtained for them all that God hath promised in the scripture. For how can they believe that Christ died for their sins, and that he is their only and sufficient Savior, seeing that they seek other saviors of their own imagination; and seeing that they feel not their sins, neither repent, except that some repent (as I above said) for fear of pain, but for no love, nor consent unto the law of God, nor longing that they have for those good promises which he hath made them in Christ's blood? If they repented and loved the law of God, and longed for that help which God hath promised to give to all that call on him for Christ's sake; then verily must God's truth give them power and strength to do good works, whensoever occasion were given, either must God be a false God. But "let God be true, and every man a liar," as scripture saith. For the truth of God lasteth ever: to whom only be all honor and glory for ever. Amen.