

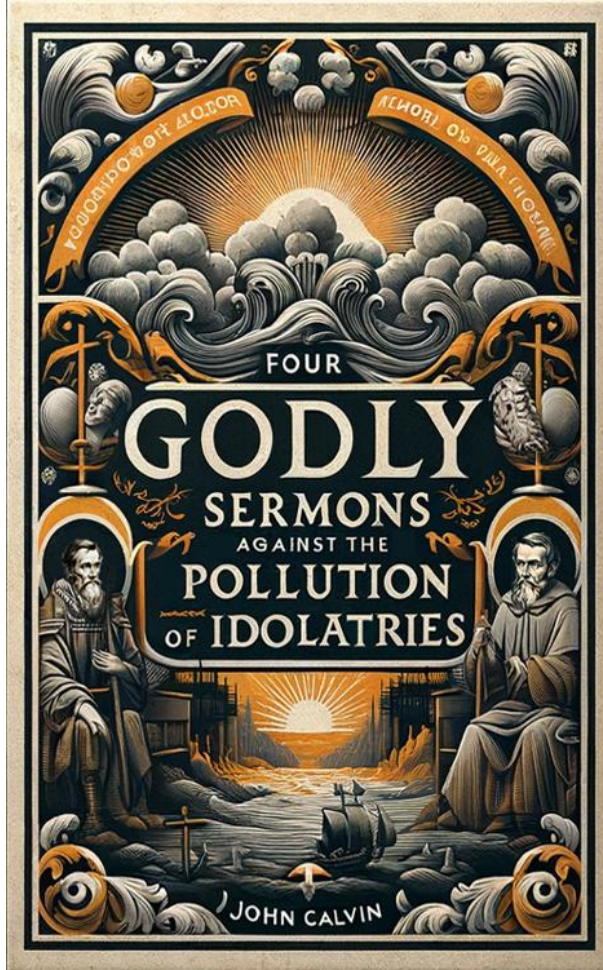


FOUR

GODLY
SERMONS
AGAINST THE
POLLUTION
OF IDOLATRIES



JOHN CALVIN



FOUR GODLY SERMONS

AGAINST THE POLLUTION OF IDOLATRIES

**Comforting Men in Persecutions, and Teaching Them What
Commodities They Shall Find in Christ's Church**

These sermons were preached in French by the most famous cleric,
John Calvin, and translated first into Latin and afterward into
English by various godly learned men.

PSALM 16

"I will not take the names of the Idols in my mouth."

Printed at London by Roland Hall, dwelling in Golding Lane at the
sign of the three arrows.

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A SHORT DECLARATION OF MR. JOHN CALVIN UPON THE
87TH PSALM.

ROULAND HALL TO THE READER

There are three causes especially that move me to print these sermons of Master John Calvin, the faithful servant of God and the apostle of our time. The first is the worthiness of the matter set forth in these sermons. The other is the plainness and simplicity that this great cleric uses in all his sermons to the people. The third is the reverent handling of the Scriptures, without taunts, scoffs, or jests, or any trifling tales, whereby our English nation may see and judge what power the word of God

has of itself, when it is most naked and bare and void of that painted sheath that men would put upon it.

The matter is meet for all men to know and stands in these four points. First, there is a general admonition to flee idolatry. Secondly, an exhortation to follow Christ in suffering persecution and bearing the cross. Thirdly, the liberty to serve God, and the commodity to live in the church of God is commended. Fourthly, with how great pains and care this liberty to worship God purely in some Christian congregation ought to be sought for and desired of all Christians is described. And for a conclusion, there is added the exposition of the 87th Psalm, which teaches that the church of God, though it seems miserable in this world, yet does it excel all the kingdoms of the earth because God loves it, governs it, establishes it, multiplies it, and takes the count and number of his elect people out of it.

Concerning the second point. The simplicity is such as our Saviour Christ and his apostles used in their preaching, of which Saint Paul speaks to the Corinthians, saying that he came not with excellency of words or of man's wisdom to show unto them the testimony of God, lest the cross of Christ and the power of God working thereby should be of none effect, while men should attribute that to eloquence which only is wrought by the Spirit of God in the hearts of the faithful.

For the third: he observes the precept of Saint Peter. If any man speaks, let him speak as the words of God. So that all his sermons seem nothing else but the sweet liquor of the Scriptures and lively word of God set forth before our eyes in crystalline vessels to entice us to behold them and to provoke us to taste and to smell of these liquors of life which he broaches unto us of

that abundance which God has given unto him in these our times. God grant us grace thankfully to receive God's good gifts in this and all other things offered unto us. So be it.

A SERMON WHEREIN ALL CHRISTIANS ARE MONISHED TO FLEE THE OUTWARD IDOLATRY

TAKEN FROM THE 3RD VERSE OF THE 16TH PSALM

"I will not communicate with their bloody sacrifices, neither will I take their names in my mouth."

The doctrine which we shall entreat in this place is plain enough and easy, saving that the greatest part of those that profess themselves to be Christians do seek out and bring, I cannot tell what subtleties to cloak their evil withal. But the sum of this whole doctrine is, that after we know the living God to be our Father, and Jesus Christ our Redeemer, we ought to consecrate both body and soul unto Him, who of His infinite goodness has taken us into the number of His sons: and to acknowledge with all kind of benevolence, honour, and obedience, that same benefit which our most dear Saviour did vouchsafe to bestow on us after He had bought it with so great a price.

And because we are bound not only to renounce all infidelity, but also to separate ourselves from all superstitions, which do as well disagree with the true service of God the Father as the

honour of His Son, our Saviour, and which can by no means agree with the pure doctrine of the Gospel and true confession of the faith, I said this doctrine of itself to be so easy that only the practice and exercise thereof ought to remain unto us, saving that many men do seek certain deceitful shifts, through which they will not be overcome in that thing which is most chiefly condemned by God's own mouth. This cause constrains us at this time to tarry longer in the declaration of this matter, that every man may know his own duty and deceive not himself, thinking that he is escaped when he is covered, as the common saying is, under a wet sack.

But for that there be many of this opinion, whose churches are thoroughly purged from the filthiness and idolatries of the Papism, that this argument or treatise is but superfluous, before we pass any further, it is not unprofitable to declare such men most foully to be deceived. First, when it is declared how great an offence it is for us to be polluted and defiled with the idolaters, feigning ourselves to cleave and consent to their impieties, we are admonished to mourn for our former sins and to ask of God forgiveness of them with all humbleness, and in this thing to acknowledge the singular benefit which He gave unto us, drawing us forth of that same filth wherein we were held down and drowned.

For we truly are not able to set forth this so great a benefit worthily enough. And for that we know not what shall happen unto us, and to what end God does reserve us, it is very expedient to be prepared and armed in time, that into what state soever we shall come, or with whatsoever temptations we may be opposed, we never swerve from the pure word of God.

First, it may be that many of this our church and congregation shall travel into some Papistical country, who ought greatly now to be in a readiness and armed to battle. Then, albeit God gives us at this time liberty to serve Him purely and godlily, yet we know not how long this our benefit shall continue. Let us therefore take this time of our quietness and tranquility, not as though it shall always last, but as it were a time of truce, wherein God does give us leisure to strengthen ourselves, lest when we shall be called to utter the confession of our faith, we be found new and unprepared because we contemned the meditation of that matter in due time.

Neither truly ought we to forget in the meanwhile our brethren who are kept under the tyranny of Antichrist, oppressed with most miserable bondage, but to take remembrance, pity over them, and to pray God to strengthen them with that constancy which He requires in His word. We must also admonish and solicit them by all ways, not to rest in places where men are fast asleep in their voluptuousness, but to apply diligently this thought and will, that they confess the glory due unto God.

For we are not taught of God only for ourselves, but that every man after the measure of his faith should brotherly communicate with his neighbours, and distribute unto them that thing he has learned and known in God's school. Now see we then that it is profitable, yea truly necessary, so well to ourselves as to our brethren, that the remembrance of this doctrine should be renewed very oft, especially seeing the text itself which we shall expound, does lead us to the same purpose.

David does openly protest, and as it were does make a solemn vow, that he will never be partaker in the sacrifices of idolaters,

and also that he will so detest and grievously hate the idols that he will not at any time once name them, as though he should defile his mouth in naming them.

This is not the act of some one man, but the example of David, the most excellent king and prophet, which ought to be unto all God's children a certain common rule to right and godly life. And to the intent we may the better perceive this thing and more vehemently be moved with the true fear of God, the cause is to be noted which he adds wherein truly rests as it were a certain foundation of that same alienation and offence whereby he does most greatly abhor the communion of idolaters.

"The Lord," says he, "is my inheritance." But is not this thing common to all faithful and godly men? There is no man truly who would not glory in so excellent a thing. And this is sure without all doubt, that God being once given unto us in the person of His Son, does daily entice us to possess Him. But there be very few which are so affected in this part as the greatness and worthiness of this same matter should seem to ask and deserve. Neither truly can we by any means possess God unless on this condition that we also become His. David, therefore, of good right and worthily did set the foundation of his godliness and religion in this sentence and reason: seeing that God is his inheritance, he will refrain from all pollutions of idols which do turn us from God Himself.

This is the cause why the prophet Isaiah, when he had upbraided the Jews that they had given themselves to false and strange gods whom they had made, added afterward, "These," says he, "are thy portion," signifying by these words that God denies to the worshippers of idols all bond and fellowship of covenant and

disinherits them and utterly deprives them of that so infinitely great benefit which He would have bestowed on them, giving Himself unto them.

Some may except and say that the prophet treats in that place only of them which put their reliance in idols and deceive themselves through opinion and incredulity. I grant, but this also I answer: if they that transfer God's honour unto idols are utterly separated and cut off from His fellowship, they also do err and decline somewhat from Him who feign themselves to consent to superstitions through fear and weakness of mind.

For no man can in heart or any conformable fashion, or in will and in purpose of mind, or feigning, or by any true or feigned way approach to idols, but he must so far go back from God. Wherefore let this sentence be thoroughly persuaded and remain deeply printed in our hearts, that they who seek God with a true and pure mind, to the end to possess Him for their inheritance, will have no communion and fellowship with idols, with whom God has that divorce and debate that He would have all His to proclaim and make continual and deadly war upon them.

And in this place David by name does express that he will never be partaker of their oblations, neither have their names in his mouth and talking. He might have said on this wise, "I will not deceive myself with unwise and foolish devotions of the unbelievers, I will not put my trust in such abuses, nor I will never forsake God's truth to follow these lies," but he speaks not in this manner. He rather promises constantly that he will never be conversant among their ceremonies. Therefore, he does

testify so far forth as concerns the service of God, he will abide continually in all purity and holiness both of body and soul.

And first, in this place, we must consider whether this be not idolatry to signify and declare by outward tokens our agreement with those superstitions, wherewith the service of God is corrupted and utterly perverted. Those that swim (as the common saying) between two waters, allege this saying: seeing that God would be honoured in spirit, idols can by no means be honoured unless a man put his trust in them. But to this may be easily answered, that God does not so require the spiritual service and adoration of the mind that He grants and remits the other part of our nature unto idols, as though that part should seem nothing at all to belong unto Him.

For it is said in many places that the knees must be bowed before God and also the hands lifted up to heaven. What then? Surely, the chief honour that God requires is spiritual, but the outward signification whereby the faithful do testify that it is God only whom they serve and honour must so immediately follow that they must at one time be joined together. But one place shall suffice for all, to confute that objection which they snatch of one word, that they shall be plainly rebuked and convicted.

In the third chapter of Daniel, it is written that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused and denied under any manner of colour to consent unto the superstition set up and erected by Nebuchadnezzar, declaring that they would in no wise honour his gods. If these goodly witty sophisters had been there at that time, would have laughed to scorn the simplicity of these three servants of God.

For I suppose they would have taunted them with such like words: "You foolish men, this truly is not to honour them, seeing you put no reliance in these things. There is no idolatry but where there is devotion, that is to say, a certain bending and application of the mind to honour and worship the idols." But these godly men did follow a better and wiser counsel, for this answer which they made proceeded not of their own wit, but rather of the Holy Ghost, which moved them thus to speak, whom if we will not resist, we must accept this place and this example as a certain rule and definition, that idolatry is an outward action against God's honour, yea, although it proceed not from the will and purpose of the mind, but be only colourable and feigned.

In which matter they make goodly cavillations that there is no idolatry at all when as our reliance is not put in idols. Yet shall these men continually remain condemned by the sentence which the mightiest Judge has pronounced. But these men do contend only for the name, only going about somewhat to lessen their fault, which they can by no means defend or excuse. Yea, they will grant that this thing is evil done and not rightly, yet notwithstanding they would have this fact to be judged as a certain venial sin.

But although we grant them as touching the name that thing they ask, yet they shall not get so much thereby that they may make their cause much the better. Let us say thus, that such manner of feigned worshipping of idols is not called idolatry, yet nevertheless it shall be a traitorous enterprise against God, a certain fact repugnant to the confession of faith, and a foul, filthy pollution most full of wicked sacrilege. I pray you, when the most sacred service and honour of God is so violated that we

falsely break the promise we made to Him, that through cowardice and faintness of stomach we deny crookedly and falsely our Christian profession, that we become inconstant and double, that we defile ourselves foully with those things which God has cursed with all kind of malediction: is this so light a matter that after we have done it, we ought only to wipe our mouth, and confess that we have committed a certain small fault?

Let us therefore put away these shifts, especially seeing they serve for no other thing but to make us bolder and to give us greater liberty to sin, and do nothing at all to diminish our fault. There are also others more impudent, which do not only, changing the name, go about to persuade that it is not so great and unworthy a sin, but do plainly and precisely deny it to be sin. "It is sufficient," say they, "that God be honoured with heart and mind." Even so truly if the heart itself were not double. For when the mind is truly sound and pure, the body shall never be drawn into a contrary part.

I would know of them what that is that moves and leads their feet to the temple. For when they go to hear mass, their legs will never be stirred of their own motion but must needs be moved by the inward power of the mind. Then must they needs confess that there is in themselves a certain desire and motion of mind whereby they are carried to worship idols, and chiefly because they covet to apply themselves after their will and opinion, which are enemies to the truth, yea, and do so conform themselves to please them, that they do much more esteem their favour and their own life than God's honour and glory.

Besides this, their impudency is so manifest and shameful that I am ashamed to dispute against it, as though it had some colour or likeness of reason, yet I must needs do it, seeing they do please themselves so greatly and are, as it were, men drunken in their own opinions and pleasures, fallen fast asleep. They think this is enough to worship God in spirit, but then shall the body be? Truly, Saint Paul moves us to honour God both in body and spirit, for they are His own and belong to none other. God has created the body, and shall it be lawful for us therewith to serve and honour the devil as though he should seem to be the author and maker thereof? It were better they would profess themselves openly to be Manichaeans and deny that God made the whole man. If they had never so little taste of the gospel, they would not burst out into so licentious impudence. But now it is plain enough that they in no wise know what is the power and greatness of this benefit, to be redeemed with the blood of God's Son.

And to prove this true, how can we look for the resurrection of the flesh except we believe that Christ Jesus is the redeemer both of bodies and souls? Saint Paul also does admonish us not to be the servants of men, because we were bought and purchased with so great a price, which is the blood of God's Son. Then he that does join and addict himself to the wicked service of idols, does he not tread under his feet the most sacred blood of Jesus Christ, wherein does consist the price of the eternal and immortal glory which we look for in our bodies?

What reason is it that our bodies should be defiled and profaned before idols, seeing the crown of eternal life is promised unto them in heaven? This wallowing in Satan's stews and most filthy defiling, is it a mean and way whereby we may come to the

kingdom of God? Moreover, it was not said without a great cause, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, therefore they which perceive not that they ought to be kept in all holiness, do plainly show themselves to perceive and understand nothing at all of the gospel. Also, they declare that they know no whit at all what is the power of Jesus Christ and of His grace. For when it is said on this wise that we are bone of His bones and flesh of His flesh, he ought to understand that we are joined with Him both in body and soul. Therefore, no man can defile his own body with any manner of superstition, but he does separate himself from that conjunction and unto whereby we are made the members of the Son of God.

But now let these witty and subtle doctors answer me, whether they have received baptism only in their souls, or whether God has commanded rather and instituted that this sign should be imprinted in our flesh. Shall the body then wherein the mark of Jesus Christ is printed, be polluted and defiled with so contrary, repugnant, and so wicked abominations? Also, the Lord's Supper, is it received in the mind only, and not also in the hands and mouth? Has God engraven in our bodies the arms and badges of His Son, that we afterward should pollute ourselves with all uncleanness, with most foul spots and shame, and so unseemly deform ourselves that no kind nor likeness of Christian beauty should appear?

It is not lawful in coining one piece of gold to print two contrary coins, neither to set two seals the one repugnant to the other, unto one writing: and shall a mortal man take upon him to counterfeit and corrupt baptism, and the most holy supper of Jesus Christ, and also behold to say that there is no evil in so great and mischievous a fact? Such men truly are worthy that

their servants should persuade and make them believe they have great pleasure to do them service when notwithstanding, they give themselves to sleep, pleasures, and all idleness, and do not move one finger to do any work at all.

If they say it is not alike reason, because we have need of their labour that be under us: I answer, although God has no need of us, yet for that He will use our labour, service, and obedience to serve and honour Him, truly it is too much unseemly, and for us the greatest shame and infamy, to do all things otherwise than He will, and clean to be void of the study and duty which we owe unto Him. Yea, our shame is so much the greater, that the worm of the earth, and an unliving creature shall require more power over us and honour than his creator.

But yet we must talk with these beasts more plainly. They say it is lawful for them to feign and cloak whatever they will among the Papists, and to conform themselves to that manner and fashion of religion, which is thought most apt to nourish superstition. Who is he then that gives them bread to be fed with there? Who does make the ground fertile to bring forth fruit? If God does feed and nourish them in those places where they dwell as He does all other men in the other parts of the earth, why do they not honour the giver of that benefit with that part of themselves which is so bountifully nourished of Him? Why do they rather obey and serve the devil with their bodies? If these men were in any part Christians, I would use with them more weighty and higher reasons, and I would ask of them, to what end we live in this world, and whereunto our life ought to be referred. But O miserable case, that they who with subtleties and shifts will daily with God, are so brutish, that they must be

handled as men not only destitute of God's spirit but in a manner void of natural common sense.

They think this is a sufficient excuse to say they do nothing in this kind, but for fear of peril and danger; but if this colour may take place, then must we say that Joseph should have done no evil if he had committed whoredom with his mistress when it was violently offered him, seeing he should not have followed his own will, but have given place to necessity and violence which she did unto him. It should have been a foolish fact of him, to enter such peril and infamy as afterward he suffered by the false accusation of that naughty woman, seeing he might have escaped those evils if he had accomplished her will. But we ought rather to follow the example of Joseph and allow the testimony of the Holy Ghost, who does commend his constancy.

If there be no wickedness in taking upon us idolatrous religion when we do it to avoid the raging cruelty of the Papists, the servant shall not sin, who for his master's pleasure, shall play the bandit, kill, and play the traitor, for fear to displease him, under whose power he is. But I abide too long in this matter, wherein (as I said before) there is no doubt or difficulty. It shall not be far from the purpose to consider into how great confusion they fall, which travail with all their crafts to escape God's judgment.

Others there be that have found another shift and starting hole, they grant that the superstition of the Gentiles is a wicked and detestable religion, but it is not all one reason of these and the superstitions which are in the Papism. As though all the false religion that ever was among the heathen was not a corrupting and depravation of the true religion of God. From whence did

the heathen draw and take to themselves their ceremonies but of the holy fathers? In which doing this was their great fault, that they depraved and utterly perverted those things which they had received well and wisely instituted of God. But yet all the abominations that ever were in the world have been cloaked with a beautiful title of God Himself and the coverture of His religion. But those counterfeit religions had never that commendation, power, and authority that God did at any time approve those services and congregations, or the faithful men did use and frequent them. Go to let us proceed further.

Although I should grant the idolatry of the Papists to be unlike and different from the superstition of the old Gentiles, yet they cannot deny but God so earnestly did forbid the religion wickedly set up in Bethel, as all other superstitions which were instituted and celebrated in other places. When the calves were erected in Dan and Bethel, this was instituted and done under a certain colour of His name which had brought His people out of Egypt. Yet that same religion which was there appointed is manifestly against the doctrine of the law. God condemns all those that go thither to defile and pollute themselves. And truly, the Supper of Jesus Christ and the Popish Mass are no less repugnant and contrary the one to the other than the sacrifices of Moses and Jeroboam.

From whence then is this dispensation and license to go and hear Mass under this colour that the Supper of Jesus Christ is but transformed, yea rather indeed deformed? But I say and affirm contrariwise, that all they that fear God truly and honour Him godly, ought so much the more to hate and detest it, for that it does more openly violate and profane the holy institution of Jesus Christ, than if it were not so repugnant and contrary

unto the same. Wherefore, let us keep this common rule generally, that all the ordinances and inventions of men proposed and taken in hand to corrupt the simple truth of God's Word, and to pervert that religion which He requires and allows, are very sacrileges with which the Christian man may in no wise communicate, without that injury and contumely, which treads under feet God's honour most wickedly.

I know well enough how grievous and intolerable this severe judgment seems to them, which would, after their own lust and delicate mind, be more nicely and meekly spoken to and taught. Wherein what would they I should do? What moderation and lenity should I use? Truly now I perceive how tender and dainty they are. I covet so much as may be to spare them, but both I and they must be condemned as soon as God has spoken. Therefore, if we will tender our own salvation, let us take it in good part.

They say they find no man more severe and sharp than I am, but I will declare unto them, on the other part, that I handle them more meekly and tenderly than the truth of the cause, the worthiness of God's name, and their own salvation did require. Which thing being so in deed, truly they cannot excuse and deliver themselves from the necessity of that duty and testimony that the prophet Jeremiah does require of the Jews captives in Babylon, whom he not only forbids to come near the abominations of the Chaldeans or colourably and feignedly to give any consent to them, but also gives a plain commandment that they should declare the wicked religion of the Chaldeans to be unto them a most off-filthy savor.

"You shall say to them," says the prophet Jeremiah, "the gods which have not made heaven and earth shall perish both out from the earth and also from under heaven." There is also in this place another circumstance to be marked, that when the prophet had written his book in Hebrew, yet he put in this sentence expressed in the common vulgar speech of the Chaldeans, as though he would by this means constrain the Jews, to change from their tongue, to the end they might more aptly profess the hatred and disagreement they have with the wicked idolaters.

Now let our nice younglings complain of me as though mine advertisement exceeds all measure, and yet I have not at any time desired the half part of the duty which that prophet requires and asks so earnestly. But whatsoever be the manner either of my saying and moderation, or else of my silence and taciturnity, nevertheless, we are tied and bound to that law which God gives unto us. And truly, it is not without a cause that God, speaking to His faithful, says to them, "You are my witnesses and my servants whom I have chosen." Wherefore, whoever will prove himself to be a member of Jesus Christ ought by all means to declare that the praise and honour of God's name do so appertain to him, that they who by their feigning do hide and bury the testimony of His truth, do leave themselves inexcusable.

What, I pray you, is to be thought of them that do all their lifetime subvert the same? Of what sort are they that do not only hide the profession of the Christian religion and show no token thereof before men, but also commit many things, and those most contrary and unseemly? This, therefore, remains, that God's children who live where the impurities and abominations remain, do mourn after the example of that godly man Lot, and

also speak so freely against so many and so great abominable vices of men, as God shall give to them power and opportunity.

Let us now come to show certain kinds of idolatries, which are of most estimation in these days. Among which sort the Mass is chief, whereof I have touched something before. For although it be so famous and notable blasphemy both in absurdity and greatness of mischief that nothing can be imagined more foul and wicked, yet still there are patrons found for an evil cause, which do trifle forth in this part. But will they nill they, they shall be compelled to confess this that I say, that the Mass by itself is a denial of Jesus Christ's death, and a certain sacrilege invented and ordained by Satan to abolish the sacrament of the Supper. Neither are they able to deny but that the invocation of saints, and suffrages for the dead, are wicked abuses, whereby the invocation of God's name, a thing of all others most holy, is profaned. And they who among the Papists do defile themselves with these abominations, do think themselves guilty of no fault. "What should we do?" say they. "It is not lawful for us to correct and amend those things which we know evil and faulty. We are private men, and they that have the power and public authority do earnestly defend these things. Therefore, we must suffer that violent necessity." I grant all this to be true. But I say this is not to the purpose. It belongs not to their office to correct and appoint a common order for the people, neither does any man require this at their hand, yet nevertheless they are admonished to amend themselves, and to institute an honest and manerly behaviour of private life, which thing without all doubt pertains to their duty. Neither do we command them to cleanse the temples and the common streets, but that every man keep his own body and heart in purity and holiness, and labour by all

means that God may be honoured, served, and obeyed in His own house.

For these are far unlike and much dissonant to abolish the Mass in any region, and not to be present at it, when as the use thereof and that religion can by no other means be letted, but they repeat and iterate their saying, that is, that they do not deny the death and passion of Jesus Christ, seeing they have no such purpose, to worship it in their mind. But I do ask of them, what is that a Christian man does confess with his mouth, but that same that he believes in his heart? This is plain and manifest enough, that this thing which they do is most disagreeing with the confession of faith. So that, as much as in them lies, they do not only hide the true and proper testimony of faith but also do utterly deny and forsake it.

I will yet talk with them something more familiarly and plainly. For the Papists do say the Mass is a sacrifice wherein they will offer Jesus Christ to reconcile themselves to God. But if this be so, it follows that Jesus Christ has not obtained unto us by his death righteousness and eternal salvation. Let them seek all the compasses and shifts they will, yet must they come hereunto that all which go to Mass, under the name of devotion and religion, do profess that they consent therewith. Therefore, as much truly as in them lies, they show that they have not their redemption perfect enough by the death of Jesus Christ.

There are many that speak not so largely, neither suffer their talk to wander throughout all sorts of Masses, that is to say, sacrileges. They choose out one kind of Masses only, and that they defend: it is called the parish Mass, or the high Mass, for in this they think there is more likeness and agreeing with the

Supper of Jesus Christ. And truly, it might be said more aptly, that all Masses which are said both of the priests of the lowest degree, and also of the canons, or of those priests that have certain chapels, and all others which are founded by any man's will or that are so saleable that they are set forth daily to sale, that all these, I say, are not unlike to harlots which in the stews setting themselves to sale without all shame and honesty do make their bodies common to all men, but the high Mass to be very like the same harlot which does craftily abuse the honest name of a husband to hide her unshamefacedness, and to retain and defend the estimation of an honest and chaste wife.

Although this similitude does not agree on every part because an harlot joined in matrimony to a husband will have some shamefastness and modesty, that she will not set forth and make herself common to all that comes, but the parish or high Mass is an whorish idolatry of all other most common, ready and set forth to all men's desires and wicked lusts: although these filthy bawds do colour and smoothe here with this colour and such beauty, that they retain still some relics of Jesus Christ's Supper. It is with this as with the thief who brags and boasts himself then more highly and gloriously, when he has won and is clothed with the spoils of him whom he has slain and whose horse he rides on.

"We," say they, "seek the Supper of Jesus Christ, and when we cannot, being oppressed under that tyranny wherein we dwell, have the same pure, we must be content with that which is left to us, looking for the helping hand of God. For such a goodly and pretty excuse. Because they have no right and perfect use of the Supper, as though they had gotten a provision, they witness and openly profess that they have not Jesus Christ the eternal and

only priest and therefore every week do seek a new sacrifice, to put away their sins. For all this is in the high Mass, as well as in that which is said in the name of Nicholas or for the dead. In which thing they feign themselves to worship an idol, and yet do boast that they seek Jesus Christ: and because they would not seem to fight against God without sword or buckler, they bring and object the authority of this or that man, as though the absolution of any one man may exempt and deliver them that they be not condemned of God.

I will not say that they lie grievously when they allege such men as they do for the defence of their cause. But in case it were so that a devout and godly man were sometime of this mind, that he thought it was nothing evil to come to the high Mass, yet afterward when he knows the truth, if he does disallow and condemn his former judgment, his latter is so much the more to be believed, for that God has brought him, or rather compelled him to disallow the same, and because he perceives and plainly knows that he is overcome in that thing which he before did greatly embrace and allow.

But what need we herein to stir the truth, as if we should blunder and trouble a water that is pure and clear. Do they think that with the judgment and saying of a mortal man they may stop God and hedge him in? We know that there is nothing besides the truth that in judgment ought to prevail without the respect of any person. This matter is such that the parish or high Mass is instituted to sacrifice Jesus Christ and to reconcile the favour of God both for the living and the dead, and also that a piece of bread should be there worshipped as though it were the Son of God. I do not examine thoroughly all the abominations

and wickedness that are in that Mass, for they are almost innumerable. But I do rehearse only the worst and grossest.

Now let them that do but feign a consent with such wickedness and corruptions wash their hands so clean as they will, yet shall they never be more just and innocent than Pilate. But this is a marvel that these good and religious parishioners at Easter time do seek some by-chapel or some mock-Christian monk, which may prepare and deliver unto them the apish and counterfeit supper. If the high Mass is most nearest the supper of Jesus Christ, as they say it is, why do they not observe and keep it? But how after that they have been at the high Mass every Sunday throughout the year, because they would seem to communicate in the sacrament of the supper aright, they suddenly shake off and forsake the high Mass.

But we should not marvel at such inconstancy, they say, for this is a sure and due punishment, for them which have laid no foundation at any time of truth in their minds, that they should always waver and be contrary to themselves in all things they do and take in hand. As touching that same hypocritical supper, I know that they are of this mind, that they suppose it to be the greatest injury to themselves that may be when it is rebuked and disproved. But what can we do in that matter seeing it is nothing agreeable to Christ's rule? Neither do I find fault with this that they do it secretly, for I know that the supper was never better celebrated, nor more devoutly, than when the disciples went into some secret place to fly the tyranny of the enemies. But here are two faults truly not to be suffered. One that they who do make such a supper and like apes do falsely and corruptly counterfeit the true supper of Christ, do feign that they keep and worship their Mass. The other is that the minister, which for the most

part is some religious man the rather to dissemble the matter, does not that office as a Christian, but as a priest of the Popish profession. And in this they suppose they have an honest and sure defence if the Mass-sayer have not this purpose to show the bread and wine to them to be worshipped, if he leave out the canon wherein are contained many great impieties, and if he deliver the sacrament to all that be present under both kinds.

But when they shall come before the highest judge then shall they feel the fruit that they sought by such glossing and lies, yea truly they ought now already to perceive it. For I do judge those same goads and pricks wherewith their consciences are pricked and wounded to be grievous feeling of that same judgment. And truly this cause must be decided and plainly debated in that same place and court, where the truth has her grave and true witnesses. For to be short, they themselves do know themselves guilty of that matter which they have purposed to declare both to God's enemies and also to the common people. But God must needs deny himself if he allow the order and doing of that profession. If all the men in the world with one mind and purpose would conspire to pronounce these men righteous, yet none be he never so ready and mighty can excuse and deliver them from this but they shall be thought to halt on both sides.

And God does declare by His prophet, that no such halting of any man shall ever be allowed before Him. As touching the man whom they choose to be the minister of their supper, it is a foolish thing to abuse his person, as though they could seem to make him an apt man to that office and function. "Yea," but they say, "the virtue of that same sacrament rests not in the virtue of the ministers." That I grant and add this to also, if any devil should minister the supper, it should be never the worse. On the

contrary part, if an angel should sing Mass, yet then should it be no whit the better.

But we are now in another question, that is, whether orders given by the Pope to a monk do make him apt to the office and function of a pastor. If they say contrarily, that they perceive, that thing does make nothing to the purpose, and that they do not choose in that sort, the thing itself shows contrary. But let it be that they, as touching the minister, have no such respect. Yet must I abide in that outward profession which they take upon them and worship, yea I must press it earnestly, as a profession most contrary and unworthy a Christian man. For this is plain and manifest that they do and will defend and cover themselves under the person of a priest made for the nonce to color and dissemble.

But if they would rightly and lawfully celebrate that supper, it were their duty so to separate themselves from the order and profession of idolaters that they should appear in that to have nothing common with them. But now they be so far from this separation, that they ascribe themselves into their fellowship and communion, and do every one of them feignedly profess themselves to be members of that body.

After this they will compare us to the old heretics, that did refuse the use of the sacraments for the vices of the ministers, as though we do here respect the proper sins of every man and not rather the common state and condition. I do pass over this matter shortly because that which is spoken is sufficient enough to convince so foul and shameful impudence.

But if these men be so foolish and dull-witted that they perceive not this filthiness, the word of God must suffice us, when the

Lord says by the prophet Jeremiah, "Israel if thou dost turn, turn unto me." In which words is most plainly expressed with what simplicity and integrity of mind we ought to deal and walk before God, without any thought and will to return to those things which we know are not thankful nor allowed of Him.

Which is a cause why S. Paul also does testify that he was sent to turn the unfaithful from their vanities unto the living God, as though he would say, it is to no purpose to change some one old and accustomed evil with other hypocrisies and feignings, but utterly to abolish all superstitions, that the true religion may be set in her own purity and holiness. For without this faith and integrity, men never come the right way unto God but do always waver and are uncertain to what part they may turn themselves.

There be others that are come thus far that they disallow and refuse the Mass, but they would have some patches kept still which they call God's service, lest as some men say, they should seem to be destitute of all religion. And it may be that some of these are moved with a godly mind and zeal; at the least I will so think. But whatever their zeal and purpose be, yet may we not say that they keep the true rule or any good measure.

Many say we may come to their baptisms, because there is no manifest idolatry in them. As who would say, that this sacrament were not also corrupted and utterly deformed with all kinds of corruption, in so much as Jesus Christ may seem to be still in Pilate's house to suffer all opprobries and shames.

To conclude, whereas they say that this is the cause why they would retain some ceremonies, lest they should appear to be void of all religion, if one should examine their consciences, the

same truly will answer, that they do it to satisfy the Papists, and they change their countenance to flee persecution.

Others some do watch a time lest they come in the Mass while and yet they come to the temple, that men should suppose they hear Mass. Others some come but at evensong time, whom I would know, whether they think this to be nothing, that at that same the idols be honoured, that the pictures and images be sensed with fumigations, that a solemn prayer be made in the intercession of some saint, and grounded on his merits, that Salve Regina be sung with a loud voice, and that on every side a matter is heard so filled and replenished with devilish and cursed blasphemy that the mind shall not only abhor the offence of the ears and eyes there present but most vehemently their thought and recollection thereof.

I do pass over that the singing itself in an unknown tongue is manifest profanation of God's praises and of holy scripture as S. Paul doth admonish in the 14th to the Corinthians. But let this last fault be forgiven them. If they come to evensong to give some sign and testimony of their Christianity, they will do this chiefly on the solemn feasts. But then there shall be solemn incensing of the chiefest idols, and great plenty of sweet fumigations poured out, which is a kind of sacrifice as the scripture teaches. It was also a manner used among the Gentiles, and whereby they compelled the weak men to deny God. And for this cause, the greatest part of martyrs did suffer death constantly, for that they would not make perfumes and burn incense to idols.

When these men become thus far, that they receive in their noses the savour of the censers, they also pollute themselves

with that pollution which is most greatest and execrable there, and yet they think we ought to hide and cover this so great wickedness and mischief. But I beseech them in the honourable and holy name of God, that they will diligently mark this saying of the Psalm, that idols are so to be detested of the faithful and godly man, that they should not be in his mouth or tongue, lest the talk had of them should seem to contaminate and defile him.

This one word ought to frighten and withdraw us from all congregation and fellowship of idolaters, because that we living in that congregation may easily be wrapped in and defiled. But to speak plainly and freely what I think of all these who seek a mean way betwixt God and the devil: they have double and variable minds, and I cannot find out a more apt and fit comparison to set them out and paint them in their lively colours, than that same which may be brought of Esau the same filthy and double man.

For when he saw his brother Jacob sent by his father Isaac into Mesopotamia to seek a wife, because the women of the land of Canaan did so much dislike the father and his wife Rebecca that they thought their life bitter and irksome to live among them and rather wished death, he marries a new wife, somewhat to satisfy his parents, but he does not put away the old. So that he does keep still that evil whereof Isaac did so grievously complain, but somewhat to amend the matter, he marries a new wife. Even so they who are so wrapped up in the world, that they can in no wise follow God, do mingle and toss together many and diverse kinds of religions and superstitions, that they may apply and conform themselves by some way to the will of God, and they always keep still some corruption, so that whatever they do cannot appear to be pure and sincere.

I know also right well that there be in those places many miserable souls, which live there in great difficulties and cares, which truly covet to walk rightly without hypocrisy, and yet cannot loose themselves out of many doubts and scruples, which is no marvel in so great and horrible confusion as we see at this time in the Papism. Yea, I do greatly pity their miserable state, which seek means whereby they may serve God devoutly and live among the enemies of faith if it may be possible by any ways.

But what will we? I can do nothing else to the one or to the other but declare their error and sin, that they themselves may add the remedy. If they come hereafter to ask of me this or that more diligently and particularly, I will send such curious inquisitors to the common rule which have of God. I speak this for that there be some of this sort of men so importune, that if a man should answer all their difficulties and doubts, he should seem never to make an end of anything. And methinks such men may well be compared to them who, after they be taught in a sermon to use sober apparel and decking of the body without all dissolute and sumptuous trimming, they would have the preacher to make their hose and sew their shoes. Well, what must we do then? In this matter, there is a certain thing set before us whereunto we ought to direct and confer our whole mind, study, and thought. That is, that the zeal of God's house may eat up our heart and so move us, that we bear and take upon ourselves all dishonours, contumelies, and opprobries which are done most unworthily against God's holy name.

When such desire of God's honour and fervent love shall be kindled in our hearts, not like dry stubble soon set on fire and easily extinguished, but like a fire that burns continually, a man

shall be so far from suffering or approving these abominations wherewith the name of God is most shamefully and unworthily polluted, that when he shall behold them, he shall be able in no wise to suffer dissimulation, silence, and taciturnity. And it is diligently to be marked, that he says, the zeal of God's house, that we should know that to be referred unto the outward order which is instituted in the church, that we should exercise ourselves in confession of our faith.

I do not weigh the mockers who say that I myself, living here without any danger, yea rather in great quietness, do talk goodly of these matters. I am not he with whom these men have anything to do. For this is well known, I have here no land of my own. So may we think and say of all these philosophers which give their judgment without knowledge of the cause. For seeing they will not hear God, who does now truly speak so gently to them, to teach them: I do declare the day and judgment, at what time being called before the judgment seat of God, they shall hear that sentence, against which there shall be no answer nor defence. For seeing they will not hear Him, as the best and most meek master, they shall then know at the last, and feel Him as their most sure and just judge. At which time the stoutest and the craftiest of them shall perceive and know that they were deceived in their opinions.

Let them be so well exercised and prepared as they will, to observe or subvert justice and equity, yet their lawlike and judicial ornaments, and the badges of the great dignity and power, wherewith they now proudly wear insolent, shall not then give them the victory. I speak this by cause councillors, judges, proctors, advocates, and such others bearing the swing in courts and judgments, are not only bold to strive with God,

and so to contend that they would seem to have gotten a certain right to scorn and mock His majesty, but also rejecting all Holy Scripture, do spew out their blasphemies, as the greatest sentences of the law and most high decrees.

These men whom the world does honour as certain idols, so soon as they have spoken one word, cannot suffer reason and truth to have any place to rest in. But yet by the way, I admonish and warn them beforehand, that it shall be better for them to have some remembrance of that same horrible vengeance, which is ordained for them that change justice with iniquity, and truth with lying.

Neither the doctors and chamber-masters, the delitious backbiters and very voluptuous men, take any high degree here, than that they may chatter in their feasts and banquets and babble forth their words against the heavenly Master, to whom truly all men ought to give most diligent ear. Neither can their goodly and famous titles pluck any man from this judgment, in which the lordly and reverent abbots, priors, deans, archdeacons, as chief masters of the game, shall be compelled to lead the dance in that condemnation which God shall make most grievous.

Now although the courtiers are wont to gratify men with the sprinkling of their holy water, let them not think that they can with that kind of doing satisfy God. To conclude, all jesters and praters let them hold their tongue and boast not out their merry witty sayings, unless they will feel His mighty hand, at whose word they ought to tremble. Wherein their error is too much foolish, that believes because they take me for their adversary, therefore they shall not have God to be their judge. Let them

scrape my name out of their books and utterly blot it forth, especially in this kind of cause and question, wherein my purpose is only that God be heard and obeyed, not that I should rule men's consciences after my lust, and charge them with any necessity or law. As for all others which do not so proudly despise God's word, and yet are so delicate and weak that they can in no wise be moved, I do most heartily beseech them that they will take more thought and regard to their own duty, salvation, and God's honour, and do no more flatter themselves, as they have done hitherto. Let them, therefore, open their eyes and rear up themselves that they may behold the misery wherein they are.

I know well enough the evils, difficulties, and stoppages wherein they are wrapped among the papists. I do not speak unto them as though it were an easy matter in the midst of the idolatries to take upon them to defend the pure and sincere religion of God, but if they lack strength, I advise them to fly unto God the author of all power, that they may be made strong by Him and learn to prefer His glory before all things of this world. For I do earnestly desire that all faithful men which are miserably afflicted in the papism should understand and know this, how that the prophet Jeremiah remaining at Jerusalem in Jewry did send this advertisement and exhortation unto the people which were holden captive and oppressed in Babylon. If the tyranny of the pope and of all his ministers be to them sharp and cruel, they must consider that the Jews also of that time suffered heavy and bitter bondage and yet they are commanded in the vulgar speech of the country to execrate the idolatry of the Chaldeans. It is not reason that the tyranny of men should break or any deal diminish from us that due honour we owe unto God. Here is no exception or pretence of privilege, which high or low, rich or

poor, may or ought to usurp unto themselves. Let all men therefore bow down their neck and with most humility submit themselves to God. Let the poor man have the true fear of God, let him not say unconstantly "I know not what to do," lest God answer him, "neither know I what to do with thee." The rich and wealthy men, let them not like drunken sluggards sleep in their wealth and consume in their prosperity and abundance of all things, as it were in a certain draught-tub, but rather after the example of Saint Paul, let them learn to esteem all that, as dirt and damage which does withdraw us from godly and Christian life, or may seem anything to hinder us. We also which live here in rest and quiet enjoying the use of the greatest and singular benefits of God, let us not forget that I touched in the beginning, that we apply these things to our learning, that whatsoever hereafter befall us, or into whatsoever country

we shall be led, yet may we always constantly abide in the pure confession of our faith, detesting all idolatrous religion, superstitions, and abuses, which are against God's truth, do obscure His honour, and utterly subvert His religion.

**THE SECOND SERMON CONTAINING
AN EXHORTATION TO SUFFER
PERSECUTION, THAT WE MAY
THEREIN FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST
AND HIS GOSPEL**

**TAKEN FROM THIS SAYING, IN THE 13TH CHAPTER
TO THE HEBREWS.**

Let us go forth to him without the gates, and suffer rebuke with
him.

All the exhortations which can be made to instruct us to suffer patiently and constantly for Christ Jesus' name and His gospel shall not much move us, unless we know and are perfectly persuaded of the right, truth, and worthiness of the cause for which we contend. For when we are in that jeopardy and danger where we must lose our life, we ought to be most certain of that thing for which we enter into so great peril. But that constancy and firmness of mind cannot be had unless it is deeply founded in a certainty and sure persuasion of faith. There are many who will unadvisedly and rashly venture to die for certain foolish opinions invented of their own brain. But such forwardness of mind ought rather to be thought of as furiousness than as Christian zeal and love. For assuredly, there is no firmness of mind, whether of wit or common sense, in these men who cast themselves into peril with such hardy rashness. However it be, God will not acknowledge and take us for His martyrs and witnesses without a good cause. For death is common for all men, and also the condemnation of thieves and of God's children; the sufferance of shame and punishment seems to be all one, but God makes a difference between them because He cannot deny and forsake His own truth. This also is required: that we have a sure witness void of all error of that doctrine which we will defend.

Wherefore, as I said, there is no exhortation so weighty that can move and persuade us to suffer for the gospel, but if a true

certainly of faith be imprinted in our hearts. For to put our life in danger without any consideration, unadvisedly and chanceably, is most against nature. And so to do should be thought rather rashness than Christian boldness. Moreover, God allows nothing that we do unless we are plainly persuaded that it is for His name's sake and for His cause that the world is so against us and hates us. But when I speak of such certainty and persuasion of mind, I do not only understand this that we should know to discern and judge between the true religion and foolish opinions and constitutions of men, but also that we be thoroughly persuaded of everlasting life and the crown promised unto us in heaven after our conflict in this world. Let us now mark well that these two reasons pertain to our duty and must be joined together so that the one may in no wise be separated and disjoined from the other. It is meet therefore to take our beginning from this: that we understand and know what is our Christian religion, what faith it is that we ought to hold and follow, what rule of life God has given us. Neither must we only have our minds instructed with this godly doctrine, but also have our minds so armed and prepared that we may freely and boldly damn all errors, lies, and superstitions which Satan has brought into the world to corrupt the pure simplicity of God's doctrine. Therefore, it is no marvel that there is so small a number of men who have a ready mind and desire to suffer for the gospel, and that the greatest part of them who profess themselves Christians knows not the power of the Christian religion and their own profession. All men, in a manner, are negligent and have no desire or very small desire to hear and read, who think it sufficient if they have gotten some small taste of the Christian faith. And this is the cause why there is seen in these no surety and constancy of mind, and that as soon as they come into any conflict, they are so abashed as though they

should utterly perish. For which consideration our desire ought to be greater to pursue and search out most diligently God's truth, that therewith our hearts may be persuaded without any doubt. Neither is this all to have such knowledge and understanding.

For we see many so well travelled in God's doctrine that they seem as though they were stained and dyed therewith, in whom nevertheless there is no desire and love of God, no more truly than if they had known nothing at any time of the godly doctrine, but by a certain unsure, light, and wavering opinion. But what other cause is there of this so great uncertainty and levity but that they did never perceive in their minds the majesty of the Holy Scripture? And truly, if we would rightly weigh that it is God who speaks to us therein, we would hear Him with more diligence, attention, and reverence. If we would think in reading the Scripture that we are in the school and discipline of angels, we should have another manner of desire to exercise ourselves in that doctrine which is set forth to us, to comfort, strengthen, and instruct our minds. Now we see what is the way to prepare ourselves to patience and sufferance for the gospel; that is, to go forward in the doctrine thereof, that being thoroughly persuaded of the true religion and that doctrine which we ought to hold and defend, we may nothing esteem and despise all the frauds and illusions of the devil and all the inventions of men as things not only of value but also execrable because they utterly corrupt the Christian sincerity.

And herein we differ as true martyrs of Jesus Christ from the furious and stiff-necked men who suffer for their own foolish opinions. Secondly, we ought to be so minded that, being assured of the right and goodness of the cause, we should be

enflamed with this due desire to follow God wherever He shall call us, to embrace His word with such reverence as it is worthy, and being called back from the deceitful fashion of this world, as men ravished with their whole mind and endeavour should be carried to a heavenly life. But oh, most miserable case, that when the light of God doth shine unto us in these days so bright as it did never shine in the remembrance of men, yet so little zeal, favour, and love should be found. Wherein our misery is so much the greater that in so great filthiness and unthankfulness we are not overwhelmed with blushing shame. For we must shortly come before that Judge, before whom our vice and evil, which we by all means go about to hide, shall be brought forth, with that rebuke and check whereby the just cause of our destruction shall appear. For if we be so indebted and bound to God that for the knowledge He has given us we ought to give to Him honourable and thankful testimony, why is our stomach so abashed and fearful to enter into the battle? Especially seeing God in this our age has so opened Himself that it may be rightly said and truly, that He has opened and plainly set forth the greatest treasures of His secrets. May not this be said, that we so think of God as though we seemed to stand no need of Him at all?

For if we had any consideration of His majesty, we durst never be so bold to turn the doctrine which proceeds out of His mouth into philosophy and vain speculation. In fine, we can have no excuse, but this must be unto us the greatest shame, yea, a horrible condemnation, that in so great knowledge obtained by the singular goodness of God, we have so little love and mind to defend and keep the same. For first, if we will call to our remembrance the martyrs of old time and compare their wonderful constancy with this our tender slothfulness, we shall

find passing great cause to detest our own filthiness. For they were not, for the most part, so travelled and exercised in the Scriptures that they could learnedly dispute of all matters. But first of all, they knew and held fast this, that there is one God, whom they ought to serve and honour; then, that they were redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ, that in Him only and in His grace they should put their affiance and trust of salvation. Moreover, they did judge all other inventions and ordinances of men to worship God so unworthy filthiness that they could easily condemn all idolatries and superstitions. To conclude in few words, this was their divinity: there is one only God, the maker of the whole world, who has declared unto us His will by Moses and the prophets, and then by Jesus Christ and His apostles. We have one Redeemer, with whose blood we were bought, and by whose grace we hope to be saved. All the idols of the world are to be detested and accursed. They came stoutly and boldly to the fire, or other kind of death and punishment, instructed with no other doctrine and more hidden knowledge. And the number of them was not small, as of two or three, but so great that the multitude of them, which were cruelly vexed and tormented of the tyrants, seemed innumerable and infinite.

But we are so taught and instructed that we surpass all our ancestors in knowledge and understanding of holy Scripture. We think in ourselves, and it is true, as touching the understanding of the Scripture, God has endued us with so much knowledge as He has given to any age at any time. And yet there is in us scarcely the least drop of fervent love towards God. There is no reason why we should nourish this nice cowardice of mind unless we would willingly and wittingly provoke the wrath and vengeance of God against ourselves. What must we then? Truly, we must take to us a stout, bold, and constant mind. We must

chiefly consider how precious and honourable the confession and testimony of our faith is before God.

For we do little know how God esteems this confession, when our life, which is of no value, is more set by and dear unto us. Wherein our wonderful and beastly foolishness is showed: for we cannot in this sort spare our life, but we must needs confess that we set more thereby than by God's honour and our own salvation. A certain heathen man could use this saying, that it is a miserable thing to forsake and betray the causes why we live for the conservation of life. Yet he and his like did never know truly to what end men were set in the world and wherefore they lived therein. They might well say that virtue is to be esteemed and followed, and that we ought to live an honest life without blame. But all their virtues were nothing else but colours and shadows.

But we have better understanding whereunto our life must be referred, which is that we honour God with all praise and glory, that He Himself may be our glory. Without Him, our life is miserable, which we cannot continue the least moment but we shall heap upon ourselves a perpetual malediction. And yet we are nothing ashamed for the winning of a few days, for this feeble life, to refuse the eternal kingdom and to separate ourselves from Him by whose power we are continued in this life.

If a man should examine the most unlearned, yea, those whose wit is so dazed and whose life is so voluptuous that they are most like to brute beasts, what manner of life is appointed them, they durst not say plainly and openly that it should consist only in eating, drinking, and sleeping. For they know that they are

created to a better, worthier, and more higher thing: which is nothing else but to serve and honour God with all kind of honour and to suffer ourselves as good children to be ordered and ruled by our most benign Father, that after the end of this frail and unsure life, we may be received into His eternal heritage. In the appointing and winning of this end, consists the chiefest and greatest point of our felicity, yea, all the whole weight of everlasting life.

But when we carry our minds and thoughts another way, and do snatch fast hold of this present life worse than a thousand deaths, what excuse can we have? For, to live and be ignorant of the causes wherefore we live is unnatural. But to forsake the causes wherefore we live here for the desire and love to prolong our life as it were for three days in this deceitful world, and to be separated from God the author of life, is such a bewitching and furious madness that I know not with what words we ought to express and show it. But whatever knowledge we have, and however our life is appointed, for as much as notwithstanding the persecutions are no less and bitter, let us consider how and by what means the Christian men may confirm themselves in patience, and so strengthen their minds that they may constantly venture to danger their life for God's truth.

This same text which we have recited, being well understood, may bring us to that indifference of mind, yea to that willingness, that we shall not refuse to suffer death for God's name. "Let us go forth of the city," says the apostle, "after the Lord Christ, bearing his opprobrium." First, he does teach and admonish us that although the swords are not already drawn to kill us, or the fires kindled to broil and burn us, yet that we cannot truly be joined with the Son of God so long as we have

the roots of our thoughts and desires fixed in this world. Wherefore the Christian man must always, although he be in quiet, have one foot lifted up to the battle, and not only that, but also his mind must be utterly separated from the world although his body be therein.

Although this at the first sight may seem unreasonable, yet one saying of S. Paul ought to be sufficient to persuade us, for that we are called and appointed to this, to suffer persecution. As though he should say, such is the condition of our Christianity, that we must needs enter in and pass through this way if we will follow Christ. In the meantime, to ease our infirmity and to mitigate the tediousness and heaviness which persecutions bringeth, we have this great and sweet comfort, that we suffering all these inconveniences, opprobries, and dangers of life for the gospel, do as it were set our feet in every footstep of God's Son, and do follow Him as our prince and guide.

If it had been only said unto us that we must pass through all the opprobries of the world to keep the Christian profession, and also suffer death freely and without fear whenever God's will were, methinks we should have had some colour to answer and say contrariwise, that it is a thing diverse and abhorring from our nature to wander so without a guide. But seeing we are charged and commanded to follow the Lord Jesus, His leading ought to seem so right and honourable that we have no just excuse to refrain or refuse His commandment. But that we should have more earnest love and desire towards this laudable and healthful example, it was not only said that Jesus Christ does lead the way as a guide and prince but also that we are made like unto His image.

For so, St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans speaketh, that God hath chosen and called all them whom he hath taken into the number of his children, that they should be fashioned after the image of Him who is appointed the pattern and head over all. What, are we so nice and tender that we can or will bear and suffer nothing at all? Then must we needs refuse God's grace whereby he calls us to the hope of salvation and leads us thereto by this way? For these two are so joined together that the one cannot be separated from the other, that we be the members of Jesus Christ, and that by means of this conjunction and communion, we are exercised with many afflictions and calamities.

This same manner of our life, so joined with God's Son, and such conformity to Him, we ought to esteem more than we do, and also to judge it not only by all ways most worthy to be professed but also to be followed. The suffering of calamities for the gospel, in the opinion and judgment of the world, is the greatest infamy. But seeing we know that all the unfaithful are so blinded that they can see or rightly judge nothing at all, ought not we to have clear eyes and to judge more perfectly?

It is shame to be afflicted and vexed of them that occupy the seat of justice. But St. Paul doth show us by his example that we have great occasion to glory in the scars of Jesus Christ, and as it were in certain marks imprinted in us, wherewith we, being marked and decked, God doth acknowledge and receive us for His servants and elect. And we know this that St. Luke doth rehearse of Peter and John, that they were very glad and joyful that they were thought worthy to suffer for the Lord Jesus' name, slander, rebukes, and shame.

Wherein two things may be seen contrary in themselves, shame and honor, by this that the world, running headlong in fury and madness, doth judge against all reason, and by this means doth change the glory of God with dishonor and infamy. Let not us now disdain so to be despised and to be rebuked of the world, that we may hereafter obtain with God and His angels, honor, glory, and praise.

We see what great labors ambitious men take to obtain the order of some king, and after they have achieved it, what triumphs they make. But the Son of God doth offer to us His order, and yet everyone despiseth it and is turned with the whole power of the mind to the vanity of the world. I pray you, when we behave ourselves proudly and unthankfully, are we worthy to have anything common with Him? Although our understanding can perceive and comprehend nothing herein, yet of a truth, these are the proper and honorable badges and arms of heavenly nobility. Imprisonments, banishments, maledictions, after the opinion of men, bring nothing else than great shame and infamy. But what doth let us to see what God doth judge and pronounce of these things, saving our own infidelity?

Wherefore we must labour that the name of God's Son be of such authority, weight, and honor with us, as it is most worthy, that we think we are well and honorably dealt withal, that His brands, as it were certain badges, are printed in us, or else our unthankfulness can in no wise be borne. If God should persecute us after our merits, hath He not just cause every day to chastise and punish us in infinite ways? Yea, surely, no deaths put unto us were able to recompense the least part of our mischief. But of this great and infinite goodness, He treadeth underfoot all our sins, and doth utterly abolish the same, and whereas He might

punish us according to the greatness of our sins, He hath invented another marvellous way whereby the afflictions are traduced from our deserved pain and punishment to great honor and a certain privilege and singular benefit, because that by the partaking and suffering of them we are received into the fellowship of God's Son.

May it be otherwise said or judged, then that we, seeing we despise and disdain this so excellent and blissful condition and manner of living, have little profited in the Christian doctrine? This is the cause why St. Peter, after he had moved us to live a godly and holy life in the fear of God, far from that life wherefor other men, as thieves, whoremongers, adulterers, and menkillers suffer, by and by adds this, if we must suffer as Christian men, therein we give glory to God for that great and singular benefit which He hath bestowed on us.

Nor it is not for nothing that the holy man speaketh thus, what are we, I pray you, that we should be witnesses of God's truth and as it were proctors appointed to defend His cause. Behold, we be miserable men as it were worms of the earth, creatures full of vanities and lies, yet God will have His truth defended by us, which is truly so great honor that it seemeth not to pertain to the angels in heaven.

This one reason well considered, ought it not to enflame and stir up our minds to offer ourselves wholly to God and to show our whole endeavor in so holy and excellent a matter to please Him? And yet many cannot forbear but that they will speak against God or at the least they will complain that He hath no greater regard to ease their imbecility. It is a marvellous matter, say they, that seeing God hath borne us thus much favor, that He

hath chosen us to be His children, yet He will suffer us to be so cruelly vexed and oppressed of wicked men. I do yet answer these men, that although we know no reason why God doth so deal with us, yet His authority should be such with us that we should apply and conform ourselves to His will. But now when we see Jesus Christ to be set for an example to us, lest we should seek any other, ought we not to think ourselves greatly happy that we are so drawn after His image and likeness?

Moreover, God doth set forth and show plain and manifest causes wherefore He will have us to suffer persecution, among which, if there were none other but the reason and advertisement which St. Peter giveth, we must needs be very peevish and sturdy, unless we be satisfied therewith. This is his reason, that seeing gold and silver, which are corruptible metals, are purged and tried in the fire, it is reason that our faith also, which in value excelleth all riches, be tried and approved with such perils of life and grieves. He could by and by, after our calling, without any conflict and suffering of these calamities, have crowned us. But as He would have Christ to reign in the midst of His enemies, even so He would have us also dwelling among the self-same, to bear and suffer their violence and oppression until we be delivered from these afflictions and calamities by Him.

And I am not ignorant that the flesh will then greatly spurn and refuse to be ruled when it must be brought into this state, but yet the will of God must rule all our thoughts and lusts. If we feel in ourselves some contradiction and resistance, it is not greatly to be marvelled at. For that is planted and engraven in our nature to fly the cross. Yet let us abide still in that tenderness of the flesh, but let us go onward, knowing that our obedience is

thankful and acceptable to God, so that we cast down our senses and appetites and do so subdue them that they be under His power.

Neither did the prophets and apostles come to death with a mind that they did not perceive their will to be against it, and inclining another way. "They shall lead thee whether thou would not," said our Lord Jesus to Peter. So when such fear of death doth prick our minds, let us labour by all means that we may have the overhand, or rather that God may overcome, and in the meantime let us thus persuade ourselves that it is to Him a most pleasant sacrifice when we resist our appetites and do so withstand them that by this means being subdued under His power, we may order and lead our life after His will and pleasure. This is the chiefest and greatest battle whereunto God will have all His with all their power to apply, to the end they may labour to cast down and depress all that which doth so much exalt itself in their senses, wits, and appetites that it doth carry and withdraw them from the way which God doth show to them.

In the meantime, the consolations are so great and weighty that it cannot be expressed how much dainty cowardice is in us when we wax faint-hearted and give over for these perils and troubles.

In old time, the number was almost infinite of them which for the desire of a garland made of corruptible leaves did refuse no labour, pain, and wrestling and also did so suffer death itself that they might seem to have their life in no price. And yet there was none of them but did contend chanceably, being uncertain whether he should win or lose the game. God doth set before us an immortal crown wherein we may obtain His own glory. And

He hath not appointed us an uncertain and chanceable conflict but doth promise such a reward to which we ought to confer all the counsels, studies, and desires of our life.

What is the cause that we are so faint-hearted in the largeness and worthiness of this honour, which is certain and eternal? Do we think that this was spoken in vain, that we shall live with Christ if we be dead with Him? The triumph is prepared for us, but we so much as we may do fly from the conflict and battle. But this doctrine is such that it seemeth plainly to disagree with man's judgment. This is true.

Neither also Christ, when he pronounces them blessed who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, does propound such a sentence as the opinion of the world would allow or receive. Yea, He will have us to think that the chiefest felicity, which we judge the greatest misery. We think ourselves most miserable when God does suffer us to be afflicted and oppressed with the tyranny and cruelty of our enemies. But we do wonderfully err in this, that we set not before our eyes God's promises, which do plainly confirm unto us that all things shall come to our perfect joy and salvation. We cast down our stomachs and despair when we see wicked and naughty men to have the overhand on us, and to do that cruelty to us that they seem to tread down our neck with their feet. But this same most cruel vexation of the wicked and so great trouble and confusion of things, as St. Paul warns, ought rather to confirm our minds, raise them up, and lift them into heaven. For because of our own nature, we are bent to the study and love of things present and are so inflamed that with our whole knowledge, mind, and cogitation, we are occupied in too much loving and using this vanity.

God, when He suffers us to be thus even vexed and handled, and the wicked to grow and flourish in all things, doth teach and admonish us by these plain and notable signs of His most just judgment that that day shall once come when all things that be now troubled and confused shall be settled. But if that same time seem far and long to, let us fly to the remedy, and let us not flatter ourselves in our vice. For this is certain that we have no faith at all unless we cast the eyes of our mind to the honourable coming of Jesus Christ. And because God would leave out no consideration that might be apt to move and stir us, He does set forth on the one part promises, on the other part threatenings. Do we feel that the promises of God have not force enough and authority in us? To confirm them withal, let us join thereto the threatenings. We show ourselves wondrously forward since we believe God's promises no more than we do. When the Lord Jesus Christ says He will acknowledge us for His own and confess so of us before His Father, so that we also confess Him before men, what should let us to give to Him that confession which He requires of us? When men have done all they can, the worst they may do is to take away our lives. How precious then shall the heavenly life be unto us when it is compared with this present life which is lost? It is not my purpose in this place to collect all the promises set forth in the Scripture to this end. Yet since they be repeated so often times renewed unto us, we ought so to be experienced not only in the reading but also in the knowledge and consolation of them, that we might be as it were dyed and surely confirmed in them. But if when the plague hangs over our heads three or four of them are not sufficient to confirm and strengthen us, truly a hundred should be sufficient to overcome all adversities and contrary temptations. But if with these great sweet promises cannot entice and draw us to Him, are we not very great dullards and beetle-heads when neither the

severe threatenings can work any more in us? Jesus Christ does appoint a day to accuse all them before His Father who deny the truth for fear of losing this life, for whom He declares destruction both of body and soul to be prepared.

Also, in another place, he protests that he will refuse all manner of communion with them that deny him before men. These words, unless we be utterly void of all sense, ought vehemently to move our minds and so to fray us that for fear the hairs of our head should start up. But however it be, unless we be so affected and moved as the greatness of the matter and danger requires, there remaineth nothing else for us but to look for horrible and most miserable confusion: wherein we may excuse our fault so much as we lust, and we may say that in this great frailty and weakness of nature, we rather are worthy of mercy than of any severity and sharpness of punishment, it will not serve. For it is written on the contrary part, that Moses after he had seen God by faith was so hardened and strengthened that no violence of temptation could melt his mind and bend him from the great constancy.

Wherefore when we be so tender and flexible that there appear in us no power of firm and constant mind, we signify and declare plainly that we be utterly ignorant of God and His kingdom. Also when we are warned that we ought to be joined and coupled with our head, we have gotten a goodly colour to exempt and separate ourselves from Him, if we say we are men. And were not they that were before us men as well as we are? Yea if we had nothing else but even the bare doctrine of godliness, yet were all the excuses which we can bring weak and of no value. But now are worthy more greater check and condemnation, since we have

so great and notable examples whose great authority ought vehemently to excite and confirm our minds.

There are two chief parts of this our exhortation or consolation to be considered. The first is that this has been a common state to the universal body of the church always and ever shall be to the end of the world, that it was vexed with such injuries and contumelies of the wicked as it is reported in the Psalm. They have vexed me even now from my youth hither to, and have drawn a plough over and over every part of my back. The Holy Ghost in this place does bring in the old church speaking on this wise that it should not seem now unto us a new thing nor grievous if we see in these days our cause and condition to be like. St. Paul also reciting the same place of another Psalm where it is said, "We were as it were sheep led to the slaughter," does declare that this pertained not only to one age, but it was and shall be the common, usual and continual state of Christ's church. So that if we see in this time the church to be so handled and vexed by the insolence and pride of the wicked that some bark at her, some bite her, many afflict her, and always invent some mischief and pestilent destruction to her, yea and set upon her without ceasing as it were mad dogs and wild ravening beasts, let us call to remembrance that she was so vexed, afflicted, and oppressed in all times before. God does give unto her sometimes some rest and refreshing and as it were a time of truce. And this is that which is spoken in the psalm above alleged, "the righteous Lord does cut asunder the cords of the wicked," and in another place, that he breaketh their rod, lest the good being too much pressed should move their hands to iniquity.

But God would always have His church to be tossed in this world, and as it were always in a certain conflict reserving for her quiet rest in heaven. The end of these afflictions was always blessed, yea truly God wrought this that the church always pressed with many and great difficult calamities was never utterly oppressed. As it is said in another place, "the wicked with all their labour did never obtain what they desired." St. Paul also so glorifies of like happy end and issue of afflictions that he shows this grace of God to be perpetual in His church. "We," saith he, "are pressed with all kinds of afflictions, but we are not killed with sorrow and care, we live in great need and poverty, yet are we not forsaken we are cast down but perish not, always carrying about the mortification of our Lord Jesus Christ, that His life also may be declared in our mortal body." This issue and end, as we see that God hath always made it happy and prosperous in the persecutions of the church, ought to embolden us, seeing we know that our fathers, who also acknowledged their frailty and weakness, had always the victory over their enemies, because they continued constant in patience.

I do entreat this first part of my exhortation briefly, that I may come the sooner to the second, which doth more pertain to the purpose. And that is, that we apply certain examples of the martyrs who were before us, to our consolation and comfort. And in this kind or number there be not two or three, but a great and thick cloud as the apostle writes to the Hebrews. By which he signifies that there is so great a multitude of them, which have suffered for the testimony of the truth, that both the abundance of excellent examples and the most grave authority ought to provoke us to contentment, patience, and moderation of mind.

And lest my oration should wax too long in heaping together an infinite multitude of examples, I will only speak of the Jews, who suffered most grievous persecution for the true religion, both under the tyranny of King Antiochus, and also shortly after his death. We cannot say that the number of the afflicted men was small, when a great mighty army as it were of martyrs was prepared to maintain and defend the religion. Neither can we allege that they were certain excellent prophets whom God had chosen forth and separated from the common sort of people, for there were women, boys, and infants also in that number of martyrs. Neither will we say that they passed through that persecution only with some light loss, without great peril of life, without great pains and torments of bodies, seeing there was no kind of cruelty unproved in afflicting, vexing, and tormenting them.

Let us hear also what the apostle says of them, and does set forth for us to follow. "Some," saith he, "were hanged up like bells and stretched, despising to be delivered that they might obtain a better resurrection; others were proved with opprobrious words and stripes, or with bonds and imprisonment; others were stoned or cut asunder, or killed with the sword; others went wandering hither and thither through hills and caves of the earth." Let us now come to make comparison between them and us. If they suffered so many and great torments for the truth, which was as then but obscure, what ought we to do in this great light, which has shined unto us in this time? God speaketh unto us now as with full mouth. The greatest gate of the kingdom of heaven is made open unto us. Jesus Christ come from heaven unto us doth so call us to Him, that we have Him present as it were before our eyes.

Into how great ingratitude and shameful wickedness shall we run if we have less stomach and love to bear and suffer for the gospel, than they had who did behold the promises of God but as it were afar off, who had but a very little door opened to enter into the kingdom of God, who had received only a remembrance and obscure testimony in figures of Jesus Christ? These great matters cannot be declared and expressed with any words as they be worthy. Wherefore I leave them to be weighed in every man's thoughts and meditations.

This doctrine, as it hath a common and universal reason, so it must be referred to the exercise and order of every man's life. But every man must apply it to his proper use and profit apt for his own consolation. And I speak this for this cause, lest that they who see themselves to be in no manifest peril should suppose this doctrine to be vain and not to pertain to them. Now they are not in the hands of tyrants, but what know they how God will deal with them hereafter? Therefore we must be of that mind and judgment that if any persecution, which we looked not for, happen unto us, that we fall not therein unawares and unprovided, but that we come to it prepared long beforehand.

But I fear there are many deaf ears to whom this my oration is made without fruit. For those who live in quiet, having all things at will, are so far from preparing themselves to take and suffer death when need shall be, that they have no care nor thought of serving God at all. But this ought to be all our study continually, especially in these great troublesome times wherein we live in great peril. In the meantime, those whom God calls to suffer for the testimony of His name must think indeed that they were prepared long before, and brought to this sufferance of evils, by

the motion and certain judgment of the spirit, that they might bear themselves therein boldly and constantly.

Then also they must diligently call to the remembrance all the exhortations which they have heard before, and be so stirred with the advertisement of them, as the valiant soldier to take his armour when he hears the trumpet blow. But what do we seek? Truly, in these perils, we do nothing else but seek shifts and ways how to escape. I mean this by the most part of men. For this same persecution is as it were a touchstone, wherewith God does try and prove who are His: but there are few found of that faith, courage, and godliness towards God, that they will offer themselves frankly and freely unto death for His name's sake. This is a thing almost incredible, that they who glory that they have some knowledge in the gospel are so impudent and unashamed, they will use such cavillations.

Some will say, "What shall it avail to confess our faith before those stubborn, stiff-necked men, who are purposed to war against God himself? Is not this to cast pearls before swine?" As who would say, Jesus Christ does not most plainly declare that He does require of us the confession of His name, yea, among most perverse and wicked men?

But if this our testimony does nothing profit to their edifying, yet shall it profit to their confusion. Always the confession of our faith does savour sweetly before God, although it bring death and destruction to wicked men. There are others also who will say this, "What shall our death profit when it shall seem to give more offence than utility?" As though God has left to themselves free choice to die when they will or when they shall think it the most apt time of death? But we, contrariwise, do obey Him; but

as for the fruit that must come by our death, we leave to the hand and providence of God.

Wherefore the Christian man must chiefly, in whatever place soever he be, diligently see that he live in that simplicity and integrity that God requires, and that he be not brought from that mind and manner of godly and holy life at any time with any dangers or threatenings. Let him eschew as much as is possible the raging madness of the wolves, so that the same wariness be not joined with the prudence and craftiness of the flesh.

First of all, let him do this: that he give over and resign his life into the hands of God, the most faithful keeper. When he has ordained and kept diligently this manner and fashion of life, if afterward he fall into the hands of enemies, let him think and persuade himself that he is brought into that place of God for this cause: that he may have him a witness of His Son. Therefore, seeing he is called and brought to that confession by the certain decree of God, there is no way to go back unless he will be unfaithful to Him, to whom we have promised all our endeavors both to live and die; yea, whose we are, although we had promised nothing at all.

I mean not hereby to drive every man of necessity at all times to give a full and perfect confession of their faith, not even sometimes when they are asked. For I know what measure and moderation St. Paul used, who was as ready with heart and mind to defend the gospel as any other. Neither was this spoken by the Lord Jesus and promised without a cause, that God would give us in that time and matter a mouth and prudence. As though He would have said, the office of the Holy Ghost is not only to confirm us, that we may be willing, bold, and strong, but also it

consists in giving us judgment, prudence, and counsel, how we may, as it becomes us, govern and rule ourselves in so great and so hard a matter.

Truly, this whole treatise is to this end: that they that be in such distresses should desire and receive from heaven that moderation and prudence, not following the counsel of the flesh to seek some shifts to escape. But there are those who object in this place that the Lord Jesus, yea, when He was asked, would make to them no answer. But I say that this suffices not to take away that rule which He has given to us, to witness our faith then when the confession thereof is necessarily required.

Furthermore, that He did never dissemble or keep silence for this purpose to save His life. Lastly, that He did never make so doubtful an answer, but it contained an apt testimony of that which He had spoken before, or else did first satisfy them that lay in wait to mark both His words and deeds. Wherefore let all Christians be well persuaded and sure of this thing, that no man ought more to esteem his life than the testimony of the truth wherein God will have the praise and glory of His name to appear.

Is it without a cause that He calls His witnesses (for this does the word martyr signify) who are brought to make answer before the enemies of faith and religion? Or is not this rather the cause, for that He would use all their speaking and whole course of life to the confession of His name? Wherein every man must not so look to his neighbour and fellow, that he will seem to do nothing at all without his example and testimony.

And this curiosity is so much the more to be eschewed because we are prone to this vice of our own nature. Peter, when he had

heard of Christ that He should be led in his old age whither he would not, he inquired what should become of John his fellow and companion. There is none of us who, to avoid peril and danger, would not gladly make answer in that wise, because when we should suffer anything, this comes into our mind: what is the cause wherefore I should suffer more than others? But Jesus Christ does counsel and admonish otherwise us all in common, and every man privately, to be prepared and ready, that as He calls one or another, so every man come forth in his order.

And I have showed this before, that we shall be unarmed and unprepared to take and suffer martyrdom unless we be fenced and armed with the promises of God. Now remains to declare plentifully such promises, not that we will set forth every one exactly, but to show the chief and most excellent thing which God would have us to hope for, to comfort us in our calamities. And there be three such things: the first, that seeing all the times both of our life and death consist in His hand, He will so defend us by His power that not one hair of our head shall fall but after His will.

Wherefore all faithful men ought thus to be persuaded, in whose hands soever they be tossed, that God in no wise will lay aside that governance and custody which He has taken upon Him for them with so great care. If this persuasion of God's fatherly care and providence did rest and cleave deep in our hearts, we should be delivered out of hand of the greatest part of these doubts and difficulties which do now trouble and hinder our duty.

We behold now the bitterness of the tyrants and unbridled cruelty, brawling pitiably in all sharpness of punishments. And

hereby we judge that God has no more care nor regard to defend and keep us in safety. And therefore we are so stirred and provoked by our own reasons to look and provide for ourselves, as though the whole hope of God's help and succour were cleanly taken away. But on the other part, the so great providence of God as He has showed unto us ought to be unto us like a strong fenced castle, which can be overcome with no power.

Let us, therefore, learn and hold fast this short sentence: that our bodies are in His hand and power, who also did create them. And this is the cause wherefore God has delivered His, after a marvellous sort and contrary to the opinion and hope of all men, as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego forth of the burning oven, Daniel out of the lions' den, Peter out of Herod's prison, where in he was shortly and watched most diligently, fast bound in chains.

By these examples, He would declare unto us that He could stay our enemies as it were with a certain bridle, and that He had that power that when He would, He could preserve and as it were pluck us out of the mouth of death itself. Not that He always thus delivers His from such perils, but of right having the authority to appoint our life and death, He will have us persuaded that we are so continued and kept under His custody and tuition, that whatsoever the tyrants do invent, or with what fury soever they set upon us, yet it is only in His hand to appoint life or death: and therefore this matter ought only to be referred to His will.

But if He suffers the tyrants to kill us, yet our life is unto Him dear and much more set by of Him than it is worthy. Which He did plainly declare to be so when He pronounced by the mouth

of David that the death of His saints was honourable and precious in His sight. And also when He says by Isaiah that the earth itself shall show forth the blood that was shed, which seems altogether hidden.

Now then, let the enemies of that gospel be as bountiful and prodigal in shedding the martyr's blood as they will, yet this must be, that they shall make a reckoning and horrible account of the effusion of that dear and precious blood, yea even to the uttermost drop.

But now, in this time, they do scornfully and proudly laugh when they burn the faithful men, and after they have dipped and washed themselves in their blood, they become so drunken that they care nothing at all what murders they do. But if we will have this stay and moderation of mind, that we can patiently abide, God will at the last declare that it was not without a cause that He so greatly esteemed our life and had it in so great honour. In the meantime, let us not take it to grief if it be now bestowed to confirm and garnish the gospel, which excelleth heaven and earth in worthiness.

And that we may be more surely persuaded that God will never leave us as abjects in the hands of the enemies, let us not forget that same saying of Jesus Christ, wherein He says that it is He Himself whom men do persecute in His members. God had said before by Zachariah, "whoever touches you, touches the sight of mine eye."

This is much more expressed: if we suffer for the gospel's sake, it is even as the Son of Himself were and suffered in that affliction. Therefore, let us think so that Jesus Christ must forget Himself if He should have no care and thought of us at the time when we

are in prison and danger of life for His cause and glory; and let us also know that God will take all the contumelies and injuries as done against His own Son.

Let us come to the second place of consolation, which is one of the greatest among God's promises: that God will so hold us up with the virtue of His Spirit in these afflictions, that our enemies whatsoever they do, nor Satan their chief captain shall in anything go away with the overhand. And truly, we do see how in that necessity, He does show the succour and helps of His grace. For the invincible stoutness and constancy of mind which is seen in the true martyrs is a notable token of that same most mighty power which God uses in His saints.

There be two things in persecutions grievous, tedious, and intolerable to the flesh, whereof the one consists in the checks and rebukes of men, the other in the pain and torment of the body. In both these kinds of temptations, God does promise so His assistance that we shall easily overcome all the infamy and violence of the griefs and pain. And truly, what He promises, He does perform indeed with most manifest and assured help.

Let us then take this buckler to defend us against all fear, and let us not measure the power of God's Spirit so slenderly that we should not think and believe that He will easily overcome all the injuries, bitterness, and contumelies of men. And of this divine and invincible operation, among all others, we have a notable example in this our age. A certain young man who lived godly here with us in this city when he was taken at Dornick was condemned with this sentence: that if he would deny the confession of his faith, he should be but beheaded; but if he persevered in his purposed opinion, he should be burned. When

he was asked whether he would do, he answered plainly, "he who will give me this grace to die patiently for His name, will also work by the self-same grace that I may abide broiling and burning."

We ought to take this sentence not as pronounced of a mortal man, but of the Holy Ghost, that we should think that God can so well confirm and make us overcome all pains and torments as to move us to take any other kind of meeker death in good part. Yea, we see and often times, what constancy He gives to evil and wicked men who suffer for their evil deeds and wickedness. I do not speak of such as are obstinate and hardened in their wickedness, which have no repentance, but of them which do perceive consolation by the grace of Jesus Christ, and so do take and suffer quietly and with good will most grievous and sharp pain as we see a notable example in the thief who turned at the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Will God who assists with so great power wicked men that suffer accordingly for their evil acts forsake them who defend His cause, and will He not rather give them invincible power? The third place of promises which God promises to His martyrs is the fruit which they ought to look for of their suffering and of death itself if need so require. But this fruit is that after they have set forth and honoured God's name and edified His church with their testimony, they may be gathered together in immortal glory with the Lord Jesus.

But because we have spoken largely enough before of this reward of eternal glory, it is now sufficient to renew the memory of those things that are already spoken. Therefore, let the faithful learn to rear up their head to the crown of immortal

glory, whereunto God does call them; let them not take the loss of this life grievously, considering the greatness and worthiness of the reward.

And that they may be sure and perfectly persuaded of this so great a good thing, as cannot be expressed with any speech, nor in thought be comprehended, nor with any honour enough esteemed, let them have continually before their eyes this likeness and conformable reason with our Lord Jesus Christ that in death itself they behold life, as He by ignominy of the cross and infamy came to glorious resurrection, wherein all our felicity, triumph, and joy consist. Amen.

THE THIRD SERMON WHEREIN THE FAITHFUL ARE ADMONISHED HOW GREATLY THEY OUGHT TO ESTEEM IT TO LIVE IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

where they may purely and with liberty worship Him, taken forth of this sentence of the Psalm 27.

"One thing have I demanded of the Lord, that will I require, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may see the beauty of the Lord," etc.

Although among men, there is such a variety and difference of minds and desires that it is a world to see them, yet do all consent and agree in this one point most plainly, that with whole

heart and mind they are occupied in the world. Everyone, I grant, will have somewhat apart wherein he does set his whole felicity and whereunto he will apply and thereupon bestow all his care and study and the whole trade of his life. But this vanity bears rule generally in all, that they seek their felicity and principal commodity, nowhere else but in this present life subject to corruption. The which thing declares most evidently that men who have cast down their minds, hope, and judgment from the dignity and excellency of their nature are so degenerate and grown out of kind that they seem utterly to be brute beasts. For we were created to another end far contrary, that whiles we remain in this world, we should with our whole mind and care contend towards the heavenly kingdom of God. And this is the very cause wherefore this present life is named a certain pilgrimage course or travail.

Wherefore whoever will not wittingly and willingly deprive himself of the eternal inheritance of the kingdom of God, he must needs begin his course and journey at this principle, to wit, that he ought to cut off all the foolish and light desires whereby he may be retained and withheld in the world, so that his chief care and desire always be to draw near unto God, and that he have none impediment but that in mind and desire at the least he hast thither. In mind, I say, and desire at the least, because it were greatly to be desired and wished that all earthly affections, which do withdraw us from God, should be utterly plucked up and rooted forth of our minds that we might speedily pass over the race and space of this world which we have to run through, and to attain to that place whither our journey lies. But because we are so far unable to have such a mind as is pure and void from all evil affections, this remains: that we conquer and overcome all the impediments that hinder us, that whatever

fault or stop soever be in us, we pursue our course with that mind and desire, that in our greatest infirmities, we always prefer the heavenly life to all worldly things.

But now let us consider by what ways and means we may learn this. It neither lies in man's wit nor authority to invent or appoint them: but those ways are to be trodden and held, which God has ordained and appointed unto us whereof the chief and most sure are here named of David, that is to say, the order and policy and state of a church so governed, that we may be taught therein and instructed in the word of God, that we may worship him with common consent, and pray unto him and praise him with one voice, and have the right use of his sacraments as the aids and stays of his whole worship and religion. For these are the rules wherein we must exercise ourselves, that we may be confirmed in faith, in the fear of God, in holiness, finally in contempt of the world and love of the heavenly life.

And to this purpose and none other pertains David's testimony and prayer, that among many things which he was moved to wish and desire in his banishment, this was the chief and principal: that he might dwell in the temple of God. For under this name of the temple, he does comprehend that freedom and liberty whereby he may both worship God purely and godly with the faithful, and give the confession of his faith, praise God, and make his prayers, and to be partaker as well of all these great comforts and joys, as also of the sacraments which were in that temple rightly and lawfully instituted. For at that time indeed, God had chosen a certain place, in which he commanded to offer sacrifice unto him, and to show him all reverence and honour: whereby they might profess and testify that he was their only God in whom they put their trust, by whose law they should be

instructed and finally should there have all the tokens of his presence. And doubtless he himself utters most plainly what it is that he chiefly regards in this request when he desires to dwell in the temple of God, seeing he does join this therewith, that he does require this for that cause that he may behold the beauty of the Lord. Wherein he declares that the temple of itself was nothing, neither that he had fastened his eyes upon it alone, but that he rather had his heart and his mind bent upon that use and worship whereunto it was consecrated and appointed.

If we should suppose that he regarded or desired nothing save the building made of wood and stone, we should judge far amiss and injuriously of this most godly and wise man: for this could not be given to him as a commendation of virtue but a wicked superstition. We must therefore rather judge and believe of such a man, that by the declaration of such a fervent desire he has testified how honourable he esteemed the outward order and regiment whereby the faithful are governed in the church. And to utter in few words what I judge hereof, he signifies and declares that it is a singular benefit and such a special prerogative as cannot for the great dignity thereof sufficiently be priced, to remain and live in the church, that he may be partaker of all those things whereby God does vouchsafe to allure and to join his children unto him. And let us note diligently his dignity and authority who speaks thus. For he was not one of the rude multitude, a man without knowledge and experience, but the most excellent prophet that ever was both in virtue and knowledge and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

He does not here speak what is profitable or comfortable for the multitude, but in this petition having only regard of his own profit and wealth, he does witness most plainly that he neither

wishes nor desires anything more earnestly than to be in that company and assembly of the people of God, wherein he may declare his faith, and may confirm and edify himself by the holy sacraments and the wholesome doctrine there preached. Neither gives he this testimony in this place only, but also in many others he declares his most fervent desire to the same. As in the former Psalm, he says, "O Lord, I love the habitation of thy house, and the place wherein thy glory hath his residence." Again, Psalm 42, like as the hind brays for the water brooks, so my soul pants after God, my soul is athirst for God, even for the living God, saying, "When shall I come and appear before God?" It had been enough to have said these words, but his vehement affection does carry him higher. For immediately he adds that he was fed with tears instead of bread all that time that he was absent and could not come to the temple of God. And he furthermore joined that his heart is poured forth like water within himself, for the remembrance of that time when he came to the temple with the multitude of the faithful to praise God.

Then after so many and so great mornings and wailings, and desires most lamentably oppressed, he finds no better comfort than in that expectation and hope which he conceives of God, that he will restore again unto him the benefit and comfort which he had lost. "My soul," says he, "why are thou so vexed, so unquiet and troubled within me? Put thy trust in God, for I will yet give him thanks for the comfort of his countenance." And in the 84th Psalm, he declares an especial desire of going to the tabernacle and visiting the court of God, for after he had made an exclamation, "O Lord of hosts, how amiable is thy tabernacle?" he says that his heart and body did leap and dance for the earnest desire to enter into the court of the Lord, and he gives this reason: "For they are all blessed that dwell in the

house of God, because they do praise him," that is to say, they acknowledge his benefits with a thankful mind and with one common consent and yielding a confession of their faith do glorify him.

Now when David, such a worthy man, who was so deeply grounded in all godliness and religion, who lived in the world like an angel sent from heaven, does confess himself to have need of such aids, means, and spurs as God has appointed to his people, what is to be supposed of us, I beseech you, who are so rude and carnal, and whose faith is so weak, whose religion is so cold and barren? Surely we ought thus to judge and think of ourselves, that although David, for his perfection, could have wanted these inferior aids and helps, yet unto us they are always most necessary, namely for that infirmity wherewith we are oppressed continually. But whereof doubt we? Such as have attained to greater perfection and more worthy commendation of virtue do better understand how much they yet want than those which have no virtue at all. David was endued and adorned with Angelical virtues. The which excellency of virtues and perfection in him makes him better to understand and perceive how necessary it was unto him, and how meet for the comfort of his conscience and his salvation, to be stirred up and inflamed more and more to the love and desire of a godly life, by the preaching of the word, by sacraments, and other such like exercises. But these great boasters, void of all virtues, but notable in all sins and vices, which at this day despise things so excellent, so necessary, so wholesome, declare thereby most evidently that they have not one drop of Christian religion and true holiness. I do speak of such great clerks and grave philosophers, in corners and chambers, which do live in the papistry not professing any religion.

Such do say, "O, it is a goodly matter and much to the purpose, that no man can be a Christian unless he run to Geneva, that he may there fill his ears with the sermons and use such ceremonies as in that city are observed. Cannot we ourselves every one, alone both read and pray? What? Must we all needs go to the church to be taught when every one has the scripture at home?" To which things I do thus answer. We do bind no man to depart from that place wherein he dwelleth and hath his certain trade. But rather if my man do live purely and godly under the same tyranny of the pope, and worship God as he ought, I will account him of far greater price than us that have this rest and liberty. But here I must demand two questions: first, whether such do sin which, feeling their infirmity and weakness, do resort to some Christian church, that they may find there that comfort and confirmation of conscience which David sought for at Jerusalem in his time? Secondly, whether that all generally, even such as be retained and oppressed by violence, ought not to sob and to sigh, to mourn and to lament, when they see themselves destitute of those means, and far off from those ways which might guide them and bring them unto God? The brute beasts which want all reason, do cry for food when hunger assails. And shall they which profess themselves to be the sons of God have no care nor consideration of that thing, wherein only the most wholesome food of faith and the most stable comfort thereof is contained? Or can they not be thus content, thus proudly themselves to tread underfoot the graces of God so excellent and precious unless also they deride them which fly into strange countries to seek such comfort by Godly zeal and do enjoy the same with most pleasant tranquillity of the mind and joy of the spirit, wherein their proud stomach and the arrogancy whereby they are brought to this opinion to judge sermons, sacraments, and public prayers unprofitable and vain for them is

so sure and clear a testimony that they ought to be excommunicated and cast forth of the church, that there need none other witness. For Paul does not say that this order which the Lord has appointed in his church does only pertain to the rude and ignorant, but that it is common to all members of the church without exception of any. "The Lord," says he, "has ordained teachers, Apostles, and pastors to the restoration of the saints, to the edification of the body of Christ, until we all do come to the unity of faith, to a perfect man, to the measure of a perfect age in Christ." First of all, let us note that he says, not that God had left his scripture for every man to read it alone, but that he has ordained such a policy and order of the church wherein certain men appointed should teach others: by which only office he understands comprehends all other things which depend of the same doctrine.

Wherefore, though every man may privately read it, yet this ought to be no hindrance but that they should hear it openly. But who are they whom he calls to this public doctrine and discipline? Both high and low without any exception. What does he bind it to? One day? No, surely, but he commands to use continually this order of public and ecclesiastical discipline unto the last end of our life, even to the day of death wherein begins our redemption. Such, therefore, as disdain to be brought under this discipline as unto a certain order whereby they, being governed by the common order of the church, may grow forward in faith and in all kind of virtues, can cut themselves off from the communion and fellowship of the children of God by nothing so much. Let them excuse the matter as finely and craftily as they list. For the sentence of Paul is most evident, that none is of Christ's body neither can or ought to be counted a member thereof unless he submits himself to this common rule and

order. Wherefore, dear brethren, let us not so proudly lift up our hearts, but rather direct and cast down ourselves, and let us not tempt God with this great temerity, thinking ourselves able to fly without wings.

But some man will object: That David did speak of that time when the shadows and figures were in their force. For God then governed his people like children with childlike discipline. As Saint Paul speaks, and therefore those so fervent desires do not belong to us at this present especially now, seeing we are compared unto them, who being past their infancy and childhood are grown to a more strong and stable age. Against which opinion and reason thus I answer: that we have as great necessity as had the ancient fathers, to be taught by sermons, to be confirmed by sacraments, to be exercised in common prayers, and to make confession of our faith. And to this purpose pertain so many promises, especially those that Isaiah writes: by whom God pronounces that his church shall have infinite children, whom it shall not only conceive and bear but also nourish and bring up. The which thing can by no means be denied but that it pertains unto the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and to this our time especially. Now God does plainly and evidently send home her children into the bosom and lap of the church, their mother and nurse. And wherefore does he so, but that an order and rule might be kept which he has appointed to gather and keep together his flocks in the church? The which thing also is expressed, lively by a very apt and godly similitude which the same prophet uses where he says in the 53rd chapter that the Christians shall be like doves which come together by flights into their dovecotes. And what is that dovecote I pray you, and common cote of comfort for all the faithful but the place wherein

the word of God is preached, the sacraments are administered and the name of God is called upon and praised?

And surely those which think themselves so stable and strong, that they have no need of this order and governance do not yet well understand their own state and condition. For why has God ordained and appointed us the sacraments but that while we are closed about and clothed with these bodies, we are over-dull to perceive spiritual things, unless we be helped up with such corporal things and signs which may be known by our sights and senses? The angels have the verity and truth of the sacraments, which is to them sufficient: but our rudeness and ignorance require that God submit himself much more unto us, and apply himself to the weakness of our capacity. But these fantastical Christians which are led with their false opinions and vain imaginations of their proud hearts, must spoil themselves of their bodies and transform themselves into angels and then truly they shall not need these small aids and helps which they now so small do regard. Notwithstanding they which are deprived of the use and liberty of the sacraments and of the comfort of calling upon His name and cannot feel their misery to mourn for the same do far pass all brute beasts in dullness and insensibility.

Moreover, this I do affirm: that if David had a just and necessary cause to make this exclamation, "O Lord, how amiable is thy temple. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. My soul is kindled with most fervent desire to enter into the courts of the Lord," then have we, this day, a far greater, more just, and necessary cause that we should be enflamed with care, love, and desire of the church of God. For what were those godly and comfortable things of the temple whereof David had such necessity, that being absent and deprived of them, he did

account his life altogether bitter and unpleasant? They were in effect and substance the same that we have this day. Howbeit we do know that they were but dark shadows whereby God did not so declare and set forth his grace, as he has at this present poured it out and made it shine before our eyes. For God has opened and uttered himself unto us in the whole order of his church so mercifully and so familiarly, that the very heavens seem after a sort to be opened unto us. Neither do the sacraments signify Jesus Christ afar off unto us like as under the law, but they paint him before our eyes. Wherefore we must needs be too much unthankful except we do prefer these so great and so excellent benefits, which God bestows upon us, to that comfort and joy which was offered to David in the temple of Zion. We are not now in the outer courts as David speaketh, neither is there any veil drawn anymore to hold us back from the sanctuary. Wherefore I will affirm plainly that we small regard and do not rightly know the greatness of so liberal benefits when our desires are not equal at the least to the godly zeal of David. And this do I speak to teach the matter simply and plainly; as for exhortation, it shall follow afterward in due place.

Now then let us consider what was his so great zeal and desire, that thereto we may apply and frame our life as unto a certain form and rule whereby we should lead our life. "One thing," saith he, "have I required of the Lord," where speaking of one certain thing he doth signify that he was so desirous and careful thereof that he contemned all others and despised them as though he had utterly forgotten them.

And had David all other things to be desired so at will, that he wanted nothing but this one thing which he so earnestly required? Nay, surely, he was banished from his country and

fled from place to place as an exile. And in the same exile and banishment, he wanted his father's house, and the most sweet company of his friends and familiars; he was spoiled of all his goods, deprived of most high honors and dignities which he had in his country, his wife was taken from him. Finally, he seemed in the exile to be a man spoiled of all good things and commodities, and utterly deformed and defaced with all calamities and miseries, yet for all this, of so many, so great, and most comfortable things which he then wanted, the want of none was so grievous and painful unto him as that he might not go and have the exercise in the temple, among others. Like as he concludes the same thing in the contrary affection of gladness, when he had all things at pleasure, where he gives thanks unto God for all the benefits which he had abundantly bestowed upon him, and after he had spoken of meat, drink, and rest, and other corporeal commodities, in the end of the psalm he thus concludes his prayer and thanksgiving: that he will dwell all the time of his life in the temple and house of God. By which desire and earnest purpose, he testifies that in all his wealth, pleasures, and quietness, he cared for nothing more nor counted anything more pleasant or more precious than that kind of life and conversation, wherein he was like a sheep in the flock of the faithful and there fed most sweetly, that so he might be led to the chief felicity.

Wherefore let us consider diligently, that David in all his changes both in adversity and prosperity retained that mind and desire, that he might use that liberty continually which God had given to the children of Israel: which can be counted no small virtue. For we see very many, who when they are in danger and distress, in affliction and misery, do remember God gladly; but so soon as they are delivered and have escaped all dangers, when

they are once as they would be, then cast they all memory and remembrance of God forth of their minds, yea and which is most shameful, they rage and fling up their heels against God, like horses that are fed and kept over proudly. And others do bear such adversity so heavily and grievously, and are so angry and grudging against God, that they are most grievously offended if there be anything but spoken of God. But David had a far other mind towards God always.

Was he not so afflicted and oppressed with calamities and miseries, passing number and measure, that he seemed most miserable of all men in the world? Yet was the grief of his mind so far from wounding and oppressing him, that he should be troubled or grieved at the mention of God; that contrariwise that same mention that he makes of his most grievous sorrows is a most sweet comfort unto him, even then when he is not able to think anything of God but with this complaint, that he is banished from the temple and deprived of the sacraments and other exercises of the faith: nevertheless the consideration and lamentation for those discommodities was most pleasant unto him of all other things.

Now of the other side, when the state was changed and he was restored to all honor and prosperity, was he thereby changed? Did he not so overcome his enemies that he enjoyed the kingdom well and peaceably, dreaded of all men? Had he not also that abundance of all things, such plenty and liberty, that he might have given himself to enjoy all pleasures? Yet does he still keep that constant mind and purpose, that he always esteems and judges it to be his only felicity, that he has access and entry into the temple of God, that he may be partaker of the order appointed in the church. Therefore do we see that he professes

boldly and godly, that he has not in vain required of the Lord this one thing so often and earnestly. For this was so dear unto him and so much desired, that he could be well content to give all his other commodities, honors, and joys for the same.

Now let us consider which of us has the desire and judgment that David then had. Will they, think you (who set their whole felicity in those goods which they now enjoy) prefer this liberty to call upon the name of God purely, to hear his word, to use his sacraments, before their accustomed commodities and pleasures? Nay, verily, they are altogether so brought asleep with the feeding of their paunch and fat belly, and dream so much of their delights and pleasures, that they care for nothing but to pamper their carcasses and to live delicately. And to speak the matter at a word, such is the judgment and desire of the whole world, that it had rather to have a trough farced and filled with meat, like a filthy swine all given to the belly, and more they set by it than by the holy temple of God. So soon as any talk or rumor is raised of those wars and tumults which are begun already and are likely to follow more grievous, every man does fear the spoil of his goods and other discommodities, troubles, and dangers which do ensue the wars. But to lose the preaching of the doctrine of salvation, to want the pure administration of the sacraments and other helps and exercises of religion wherewith we are joined unto God, no man makes mention, neither does so great an evil and perilous danger any whit move us.

Neither do we see them that are utterly destitute and deprived of these so many and so great treasures and comforts greatly care for them: unless their rents and revenues be able to keep them throughout the whole year and maintain them in that state of

life, pomp, and vanity whereunto their ambition moves them: if the ways and means of keeping their trade and increasing their substance do fail, if they lose their honour and estimation among men.

They are so troubled and vexed that they think themselves utterly undone, whereas in the meantime they utterly defy and set at naught the peculiar and true food, the ordinary and usual meat of the sons of God. For that which they should be most hungry and careful for, yet the Lord, threatening by his prophet that he would send a famine, not of bread and water but of the word of God, does declare plainly that no greater evil can come unto man. Wherefore, dear brethren, let us take heed with all care, study, and diligence, lest we by the snares of Satan and the enticement of the world become so brutish that we loathe and despise this so great goodness, so necessary to salvation; but that we do count it the most dear and precious thing of all that can be bestowed upon us in this life. This is it I mean, that we should remain continually in God's fold under that rule, discipline, and order which he has appointed among his people. The which thing is more plainly declared and set forth by that which David adds, that he will require again the thing which he before had asked; whereby he signifies that he was not inflamed with any sudden passion which shortly after was feeble and cold, to have this care of religion, but that he was then constant and would so remain in searching for this principal matter. We do see some which are moved with such a fervent zeal and sudden motion, that the next day after they be so touched, they seem ready to forsake all that ever they have. But that constancy whereof David speaks is a certain rare and special virtue. In so much that the most part of them in whose minds any zeal of religion has been kindled, whereas they ought to cherish that

fire that their zeal and love might increase, they do willingly extinguish that same. But as concerning David, we have the like testimony in that psalm which I before alleged.

For where it might have been said unto him, that being banished and driven from Judah, he might go here or there, to some other place, he makes an exclamation: "Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my God and my king," as though he should say, that though he had at commandment and possessed all the palaces of the world, yet could he find no place pleasant nor acceptable unto him whiles that he had no access to the temple of God. He also complains that sparrows and swallows find out places to build their nests there, but his condition was much worse. Why so, I pray you? Was it because he had neither kitchen nor chamber? Not so. But because he found no place meet nor pleasant for him to lead his life therein when he was secluded from the altars of God. And in this banishment no place could be so pleasant, but he would count it bitter to dwell therein.

Now, this is most certain: if this doctrine were well persuaded unto our hearts, we should not be so much hindered, or rather so withdrawn from the exercise and practice of those means which God has given us to go forward in that way which leads to everlasting life. But will you have the very cause thereof? The ambitious desire of honor withholds some in executing their offices and maintaining their estates, and entices others to seek and to covet the like dignities and promotions; covetousness enrages others with a greedy desire of gain and carries them backward; another sort minds nothing else but their delights and pleasures and their vain and dissolute wanton life. Yea, all, every one, do so wallow in their lusts and carnal concupiscence, that not at all thus cries: "Thine altars, O Lord! Where are thine

altars, O my God and my king?" No, certainly; the vanity of this world bears such rule among them that they can by no means suffer the obedience of God.

This word also is of great importance, where David says that he has earnestly required of God the thing whereof he speaks. It is a very small matter to give such tokens of holiness and religion before men that they may seem to be set on fire with singular zeal and love thereof; but then may a man say assuredly that he comes unfeignedly to be conversant among the Lord's flock when he is moved with this earnest desire of holiness, although he have none other witness of his mind but God alone.

For when we must come to this judge, then all hypocrisy and feigned show of holiness must be put away, and the truth and pureness of the heart will appear. Mind we then to follow the notable example of David? Let every man enter into his own conscience and direct his prayer unto God and say: "O Lord, thou knowest that I do esteem the society of thy church more than all the goods of the world." Hereof also are we in this place to be admonished, lest in sorrowing, mourning, or complaining, we bite the bridle and grudge at our state; but direct our desires unto him, and pour forth our complaints as it were into his bosom, which only can remedy our grief and miseries.

And this must we know assuredly, that this horrible corruption and confusion of religion which we see at this day, in that the whole worship of God is corrupted, the doctrine of the word is adulterate, depraved and altered, all the sacraments are contaminated, defiled, and perverted, is the grievous and sore punishment of sins proceeding from God's most just judgment. To whom then shall we fly for the redress and amendment of

these so great evils, that we may obtain the pure doctrine of the sacraments and call upon the name of God with liberty and make confession of our faith, but unto him who does chastise us with this so miserable want and loss of so great treasures?

Howbeit yet this grievous bitterness of pain and punishment ought not so to alienate and turn us from God, that we should not come unto him in whom all succour and mercy is only to be found. Much less then may we kick against the pricks, grudging and disdainng ourselves to seek the remedy at his wholesome hand who has laid this grievous and dangerous plague upon us. David indeed knew right well that he was banished from Judah not without God's providence; yet is he not thereby stayed nor letted to come unto God and to make his complaints unto him: not because his temptation was easy and light, for he seemed utterly to be cast off from God if we only consider the miserable state of this present life. But his faith which he had in the promise made unto him causes him to surmount all difficulties, holds him up, and brings him into the confidence, that he prays God to give him the fruition of the thing continually which he had taken from him but for a certain space.

Here, methinks, I have sufficiently applied this doctrine unto us and to the state and condition of our times, but that the wits of certain men are so dull that nothing can enter into their hearts and minds unless the matter proposed as the meat of most wholesome doctrine be minced and chewed, and made most small that so it may be offered to the stomach and received.

Although, to speak the matter plainly, it is not the slenderness of the capacity or the obscureness of the doctrine which hinders the understanding of these matters so much as their own wicked

wills wherein they wrap themselves, seeking all shifts that they can by their subtlety find out to obscure that thing which is of itself clear and evident. But in this resistance, yet find we this commodity that we are compelled thereby to declare more plainly and diligently how this doctrine which we have pronounced doth also pertain unto our age.

I do grant indeed that now there is no more material temple unto which we must go to offer our sacrifice, but that we are now the spiritual temples and that we may in all places lift up our hands to the heaven. Notwithstanding, the order and manner of calling upon God is always one. Neither may the invocation be counted among the figures of the old testament but judged and esteemed as a most certain rule that our Lord Jesus has given us to observe unto the end.

Wherefore, though the temple of Zion and the manner of the sacrifices then instituted and religiously observed makes some difference and diversity between us and David, yet surely in this point we are like unto him, that we call upon God and pray unto him publicly and with one consent, and that we come into one common place to declare the confession of our faith.

We are not now as children to be kept under the scaling of Moses' law; yet are we men and shall be so long as God permits us in this world. Wherefore, though the figures and shadows which had their force in the time of David do now nothing pertain unto us, yet have we great necessity to be stirred up and drawn to the service of God both by the preaching of the gospel and the administration and participation of the sacraments.

Now if anyone will strive against this sentence and order, very experience may be brought to convince him. For they that have

most of all profited in religion do most evidently declare in the course of their whole life the necessity of this godly help to be most meet and profitable to relieve their infirmity.

We take not in hand here to dispute whether God can govern and lead his people without any inferior aides or means, but to declare how his will is to govern and guide us and to retain us in his true worship and service. For this is certain, that God of his great love and mercy, seeing our infirmity and weakness, has given us as it were certain aids and stays whereby we, being weak and feeble, might be stayed.

What folly, I pray you, and how great foolishness is this, when we feel our feet to fail and our legs to bow under us, to contemn and despise these so great and necessary helps to prop and stay our feet, as though there were no profit at all of such things. Wherefore, whatever difference there is between us and the Jews, yet must we know that this doctrine which David here sets forth is common for all. The name of the temple only must be changed because we are no more bound nor tied to one certain place.

But as concerning the order and manner to worship God truly, which David chiefly regarded, that pertains as much unto us as to him. Now, proud men who have a false opinion of themselves will not much regard this exercise of religion and order by God appointed, that the faithful should come to one place to hear the word of God, to make public prayers, to use and receive the sacraments. But we, though there came no profit, only because it is the most holy institution of God himself, would yet rest thereupon most willingly, and would give Him most hearty thanks that it pleases Him by such means to cherish and sustain

our infirmity. However, as we have before declared, we do feel the fruit of religion which comes unto us of this institution and ordinance of God to be most abundant and most excellent.

However the matter is, whereas St. Paul declares that this is the only way which leads to the perfect and blessed life, that we do remain in the order of the church, which Christ ordained when he appointed pastors: cursed be their pride and arrogance, which will flee in the air and with their vain speculations climb up to heaven setting at naught all doctrine and sermons and use of the sacraments, as though they were such vain ceremonies, whereof small commodity and profit could be received.

And here, dear brethren, I desire you to consider and mark of what manner of men I do now speak. For I do grant undoubtedly that God does preserve His under the tyranny of Antichrist, and in that miserable captivity, although they do want these aids and helps which we have with great liberty. The word of God is not preached unto them, neither have they any place wherein it is lawful to make profession of their faith; yea, the Sacraments are taken away from them. But because they separate themselves from the abomination of Antichrist and do sigh and mourn and count it a heavy burden that they want those things which they do count most necessary to consolation and comfort, God, by the virtue of His Spirit, works in them and supplies their want.

But there be others, which is the greatest part of those that there do tarry, who though they be utterly destitute of these most necessary and comfortable things, yet are they very well pleased and, being in extreme famine, they have no lust at all to eat. Those are the men that feign themselves great philosophers and

profess themselves high clerks, which think it enough to know all that can be known if they have read over one leaf or twain.

These men think with themselves that they have no need of preaching and doctrine, for as concerning the Lord's Supper, they think it makes no matter at all unto them though they never come near unto it. And they reject the outward policy of the church to young children as over base and unworthy for them. What, I pray you, may we judge or say of this kind of men but that they are utterly blind in mind and judgment? Yet notwithstanding, they can accuse us, because we exhort them to whom God has declared His will, to use those reasons and means which God has prepared to increase our faith and to confirm it and to maintain the same unto the last day of our life.

Why do they so? But that they cannot abide to be admonished by us and to be wakened as it were forth of sleep, that they may have some savour and feeling of those evils wherein they are. Let us thus judge and think of them, that they do not worship nor reverence Idols with the other papists, yet truly they cannot deny but that it is a miserable bondage and by all means to be abhorred and avoided that they cannot be suffered not only to call upon the name of God and Jesus Christ with any public testimony of their confession, neither yet to mention or acknowledge the same by any means.

The Holy Ghost, when He would wound the consciences of the faithful who were at Babylon most deeply, He gives them this sentence to grate upon: "How can we sing the praises of the Lord in a strange land?" I do grant verily that the kingdom of God is now in every place, and that there is now no difference between Jewry and other countries; yet do I thus plainly judge and

pronounce that every land and country out of which that order of true religion and holiness is absent is worthy to be counted of us strange and polluted.

Then must this of necessity be concluded, that they which are nothing moved with any grief of mind or sorrow of heart for this cause, that they can make no protestation of their faith, neither set forth and publish the praise of God by any means, are all together oppressed with most gross dullness and dazing madness.

Now, ye children of God must take heed and be taught by this admonition diligently to beware that they do not cast themselves into the same error and dazing of heart. But as concerning them which scornfully do babble and question if there be none other way to heaven but by Geneva: would to God they had the heart and care, that in whatever place soever they remain they would or could have some holy assemblies and congregations gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, and that they would set up in their own houses and their neighbours the form of such a church as may be like this of ours in some point. However, lo their great and excellent wisdom, that in despising and casting away these stays of religion and salvation, they will be counted religious and to have salvation. This is as much as if they should ask if they might sail into the haven, driving to the contrary side as far from the haven as were possible: for so do they, tempting God and declining from the way of salvation, inquire if they can not come to salvation.

But let them make as bold brags and take unto them as high and stout courage as they list, that so, resting upon their power and pride, they may fall down headlong to destruction, so that

faithful men take care that they be not puffed up so proudly with them, but that they retain themselves in all modesty, humility, and reverence. And if there be any of them that can by no means live in Christ's church, yet let him do that thing which no man can let him, that is to say, that he mourn day and night with David: "Thine altars, O Lord. There is none other thing that I desire but thine altars, O my God and my king." And the fear of this most holy love and desire ought so inflame all good hearts, that they should not think it painful to suffer anything that can come, no not to consume themselves wholly by this so great zeal and desire, neither that there should be any time so long deferred which should quench or diminish this fervent desire, but rather continually require this thing most carefully, that they may once be brought unto Christ's fold.

Moreover, every man ought to consider this by himself how he may most speedily get himself to the standard, so soon as our Lord shall grant any liberty to come thereunto. Finally, to make an end of this exhortation, now it remains that we do diligently note that which David adjoints, that is: That he will behold the beauty of the Lord and consider his temple. For it is not enough that we should be exercised in the outward order and discipline of the church except we have our eyes bent and special regard to this end that we may know God himself ever more and more. There be two things which are here required: the one that we do occupy the time of the preachings and public prayers with all care and diligence; the other that we do understand the cause of our assemblies and coming together in the churches. For many do come thither drawn with a certain foolish devotion, thinking that they have done their whole duty if they come forth into that place and show themselves once in the temple. Let us take heed

therefore diligently, dear brethren, that we do not fall into any fault of negligence or ignorance or foolishness.

For it is greatly to be feared lest the most part of them that are herewith us may be condemned in the one of these two vices: that either they are negligent to come to these assemblies in the church, or else they do not weigh with themselves nor well understand wherefore they do come thither. How many are they that come to the sermons, which would be most glad never to hear of any sermons. But I will not speak of them which in the whole course of their life do show themselves manifest contemners of God. I do speak of the contempt which is in many who would never remember to come to the sermon but that the Sunday does admonish them and move them to come thither, and that for manner sake only, as though they would then make up the number of many running together to God. The bell may well ring daily and call them together. But it is sufficient for such if then at last they come forth in the end of the week unto the church and company of the congregation. They are called four times every Sunday, but they come very notably, if they once may be seen to have been there. For there be many of them also which take to them this liberty that they will scarce come every fifteenth day. And surely the most part proves this proverb to be true that being nigh to the Church they are very far from God. And some of them be of that sort which have left their country that they might serve God, who yet in this part of God's service do show themselves over negligent. What ought we then to do? Seeing God does so show himself unto us, let us behold his beauty: and not pass by the means whereby we may most clearly have the fruition and contemplation of this his beauty. That is to say, that we may be moved and as it were ravished with the love

of Him, and as St. Paul says, that we be transformed and changed into His similitude and likeness.

And to come to this point, we must consider more diligently and earnestly than we have accustomed what God does propound unto us in His church. For what is the cause, I pray you, why we do take so small profit of the sermons and sacraments, but that we give no diligence to the things that are there spoken and done? We have our ears beaten with continual doctrine whereas our minds are void and barren of good motions and not touched with any good affection. Moreover, there are some that hear never the whole sermon but here and there a word or half a word rather without regard. Wherefore David says not without great cause, that he would go to the temple of the Lord to visit and regard it, with great care and diligence and the whole study of his mind. And doubtless the excellent treasures of the great wisdom of God which are therein set forth unto us are most worthy to have the eyes of our minds wholly bent and set thereupon. But as I have now touched, God would not have us to behold these treasures only to please our eyes and so to depart without any profit. Let us therefore understand, that the doctrine of Christ has then showed in us her force and fruit when our minds, life, and manners are so changed that we can worship God purely and serve Him without corruption. And this is it that David says in Psalm 84, that they which dwell in the house of the Lord shall praise Him forever.

Wherefore then do we assemble ourselves into one place? Why is that gospel preached unto us? Why do we use baptism and the Lord's Supper but that God should be praised and magnified by us with all kind of praises? The which praise standeth not only in the lips but continues all the life long and flourishes forever.

Therefore, says he in another place, "I will wash my hands, O Lord, in innocency, and then will I enter unto thine altar." Now do we see what is the true and lawful use of all the order in the church, to wit, that we being diligently instructed therein may worship God purely and as becomes His servants. In the old time under the law, they that came to the temple to worship God, especially the priests when they should execute their office, they continually washed themselves. This ceremony indeed is passed away, but the truth that yet remains ought of us always to be maintained and practised.

And because we now do know all the ways and means whereby we may attain to the most perfect and pure worship of God, wherefore we must enter and hold the way of life more warily than others. For the more furtherance that we have granted us by God, so much less of excuse shall be left unless we do apply the same both unto our use and profit and also to the true worship of God. For if we do stumble by the way, it is not because we do not see a plain and trodden way before our feet. And if we do stray forth of the way and wander without assurance, we cannot blame God therefore as though He did not continually set up the clear light of this word. And if we do forget our duty, this negligence and forgetfulness comes not hereof, that we are not admonished of God, most diligently called to all Christian duty; for God leaves no means at all wherein there may be any furtherance to religion, to holiness, to salvation.

Therefore, let us fear that rebuke which God utters by the mouth of His prophet Isaiah: "I have daily stretched forth my arms unto a stubborn and rebellious people." If they who wander and go astray by the desert places of papistry and that horrible wilderness shall not escape just punishment and vengeance

because they have not followed the right way, what may we look for, who are brought up and nourished at home like children in the eyes of our heavenly Father? Some have left their most dear country and the place wherein they were born and brought up, that they might come to some Christian church. Others have gotten a greater benefit and as it were a special prerogative, that it pleases God to visit them in their own country as it were in their own nest. Now, if they that are born here will not acknowledge this so great favour of God, and means of salvation most to be desired, and with thankful minds and mindful hearts testify the same, that they may wholly give and consecrate themselves unto God that comes so nigh unto them, can this ingratitude remain unpunished?

Let them rather say thus: "O Lord, Thou hast here built Thy temple and set up Thine altar among us; grant, we beseech Thee, for Thine everlasting goodness and exceeding mercy, that grace unto us that we may be purged in mind, life, and manners, that we do not pollute Thy holy gifts with the filthy spots of our sins, and so turn the excellent glory of Thy benefits into reproach and shame." And they which do come from far countries must be wary, wise, and diligent, that they do live so godly and blameless as becomes men in the house of God. They might have lived in other places wildly and wantonly; neither should they forsake papistry for this end, that they should lead a dissolute life not comely for the gospel in the church of God.

And surely there be some to whom it had been much better that they had broken their necks when they set that first foot forth of their doors, than that they should enter into this church to behave themselves therein so shamefully and wickedly. Some link themselves with the scornors and mockers, and so confirm

them more and more in their malice. Others live most riotously in meat and drink and all kinds of pleasures. Some, as enemies of all peace and concord, covet nothing but discord, debate, and brawlings. And there be some families wherein the man and wife do brawl and strive like dogs and cats. And certain will seem young princes, increasing and amplifying their state without measure, given wholly to pomp, to costliness, and to excess of this world. And others are so idle, so dainty, so delicate, that they cannot tell what it is to labour, and yet no living can satisfy them. Finally, there be some slanderous backbiters who could find some fault even with the very angels; who, ready to burst with their manifold vices, set all their holiness only in this, that they require a straight account how their neighbours do live, supposing that God is much in their debt because they are come to Geneva, as though it had not been better for them, most filthily to have corrupted in their own dung, than to give such offences in the church of God.

Wherefore, if the life by past have been full of such vices and sins, now let every man take care and diligence that he convert and bestow all the residue of his time to a better, more sober, and more honest kind of life.

And if there be any so hardened in their vices that they can by no means be corrected nor amended, yet the children of God must confirm and arm themselves with this doctrine, that they be not corrupted or infected with the naughty and wicked life of others. Verily, we ought always to take it heavily and to lament when we do see the Church of God profaned and defiled with so many filthy blots and malicious wickedness. But seeing that we must here live conversant with the wicked as the corn is mixed with the chaff, let us suffer this confusion with all patience and

quietness while that God shall take us clean away from the company of the wicked. For it is no doubt but that this church (wherein we are) is like a touchstone appointed to try many men and to make them known.

However the matter be, let us now bend ourselves to this mind and purpose, seeing God by His wonderful and infinite mercy has gathered us home into His family from that miserable wandering, that we bestow all our diligence upon pureness of life, innocency, and holiness, abhorring from all pollution of the world which may spot or blemish the profession of a holy and Christian life, that after we have ended the course of this life, the Lord Jesus at that great and glorious day may acknowledge us and account us among that company that have called upon His name purely and truly without any untruth or hypocrisy.

**THE FOURTH SERMON WHEREIN IT
IS DECLARED WITH HOW GREAT
PAINS AND CARE THE LIBERTY TO
WORSHIP GOD PURELY IN SOME
CHRISTIAN CHURCH OUGHT TO BE
SOUGHT**

taken forth of this sentence of the 27th Psalm.

"My heart hath said of thee, seek ye my face. Thy face will I seek,
O Lord."

Like as men cast themselves into horrible confusion when they loose the bridle to their concupiscence and lusts, running at riot whither they lust, even so is it a rare and most high wisdom to search forth the commandments of God and to embrace and follow them with the whole heart and diligence. Whereof we have in this place an excellent example most worthy to be followed. For David was not free nor void altogether of those perturbations of the mind whereby we are sore enticed and driven the contrary way: but he doubtless was moved with such temptations whereby his spirit might wander and go astray from God.

Howbeit to find a remedy against all such occasions, whereby we fall from the fear of God and true holiness, and to keep the sure way, he does only regard that which God does declare unto him, that does he meditate and ponder in his mind. And to declare this precept and admonition in few words, God does stir all the faithful and exhort them to seek his face. Now David witnesses that he has so applied all his diligence in observing and keeping this commandment, that there is a goodly harmony, consent, and agreement betwixt God that thus speaks and commands: "Seek ye my face," and him that answers so, "My Lord, I will seek thee."

But here must we consider wherefore God puts this name "face" expressly. For if he had no face but as it were a show and shadow of a face wherein he would show himself unto us, he should deceive us, commanding us to seek that which could not be found or perceived in him. Yet am I not ignorant that there be

many which would show the sharpness of their wits in this place, saying that this is no more than if it had been simply spoken, "Seek me." Notwithstanding, those that have been diligently exercised in the holy scriptures shall easily perceive that God would note forth and declare a certain manner and order, which he always uses to show and offer himself unto men most familiarly. And certainly to name the sanctuary and the ark of the covenant the face of God, is a kind of speech so usual and common in the scripture as any can be.

And why so? Because God, who in his nature and majesty is incomprehensible, finds certain means meet for the weakness and rudeness of men whereby he may bring them unto him.

The world indeed does make to itself always false and vain images, counterfeiting the face of God corruptly and fondly.

For those that we invent by our wits are none other but false and deceivable visors whereby God is fantasied. Or to speak more plainly, what I do judge of that superstition when men do feign to themselves any form or image, that they may have God visible, they do nothing but make and worship an idol. But when God, by his goodwill and pleasure, does represent himself unto us and gives us such tokens and signs whereby he may be known of us, then remains he as it were a certain face wherein he may be known. Wherein he admonishes and commands us that every one of us should turn our eyes to that countenance and that we should behold it with great heed, care, and diligence. For this certainly is our felicity wherewith we must once be satiated and filled abundantly, that we may have the fruition of the sight and face of God with all abundance of all joys as was said in the 60th Psalm.

And because we cannot climb to so high a place without the aid and help, as it were, of ladders and stairs, this his benefit must be set and accounted in the second place because it offers those means whereby we may come to that principal and chief Goodness. Wherefore, let us note that this sentence wherein God commands us to seek his face has such power as though it did open the gate unto us, whereby he would bring us into eternal life.

It was no great matter as may appear in the time of David to come to the temple, that men might see so many ceremonies as there were done and celebrate. But if we rightly consider the spiritual exemplar and pattern which was showed unto Moses, we shall neither judge it strange nor without reason that God does call it his face. For doubtless seeing Christ was there revealed, what other thing can we say then that God offered himself to be beholden and seen? Now let us consider: Whether God do not order and set forth unto us some means whereby he may, after a sort, be seen and felt of us. It is very true that he has appeared in his son who is his lively image and in whom only he will be perfectly known. Yet, nevertheless, Saint Paul declares that the gospel is a certain glass wherein all men must behold and consider him. The sacraments have the same power and nature: finally, the whole order instituted in the church by him, does show the same sight unto us.

Therefore let the proud braggers of this world mock this order and contemplation of God as much as they will. Yet, seeing that God deals so lovingly and gently with us, that he does submit himself by this means unto us, let not us be ashamed to render this honour to his word and sacraments, that we behold and see him in them as it were in the face. Not that we are retained and

holden in the elements of this world subject to corruption like the Papists, who abuse these signs superstitiously to idolatry, which God has given unto us that we should be brought by them unto Jesus Christ. But if we will hereafter have the fruition fully and perfectly of that most comfortable presence of God which is most to be desired, we must even by this humble and low way and manner come unto him.

Howbeit, this that I say is not so strictly to be understood as though the faithful did never approach or come near unto God save then, when they come into the temple. For this opinion resting and sticking to any certain place were a superstition over foolish. But thus I do mean, that we may not set God above the clouds (as certain men do in their speculations), thinking they can see him when they shut their eyes, imagining of his divine Majesty, whatsoever comes into our brains, neglecting both the preaching of the Gospel and also others such like aids and helps necessarily required to the knowledge and contemplation thereof. For this is most true that those who despise the use of the sacraments whereof I speak and of all the order of the church, they disdain to see God at that time when he does offer himself to be seen and beheld.

Now let us see how necessary this grave and vehement exhortation and provocation is unto us whereby God calls us unto him.

We have already spoken what favour, love, and honour he does show unto us when he does call us so lovingly and gently unto him that he may work our salvation, and that he may bring us unto the true and perfect felicity from which we are so far away by nature. But this must we also mark and consider that God

does prick and move us by all means, to take heed that we fall not into misery. First of all, we have eyes so wandering and wanton that it seems a very miserable case. For in all this our life there is nothing but the vanities of this world which do keep all our senses occupied, and Satan has infinite delusions and those most crafty, whereby he continually does circumvent and beguile us. Although all his guiles and deceits are none other thing but certain foolish visors and shows, trifling and counterfeit pageants and jugglings of game players. But experience does teach plainly how foolish we are, how mad and destitute of all sense, seeing that we suffer ourselves so easily and so often times to be deluded and deceived. Wherefore if we were wise and well advised, this voice should sound continually in our ears: "Seek my face." And what seek we? The more careful and diligent that God is in procuring our salvation, we are the more careless and slow in following after it. And would to God we were not like kicking and resty horses, more ready to go backward than forward. Notwithstanding this example is not set forth unto us in vain. For this reverent answer and protestation of David that he did meditate this doctrine in his heart, whereby he and all the faithful are admonished to seek the face of God, does declare unto us to what thing we ought to apply our study and diligence, that God calling us unto him lose his labour altogether upon us. And in this doctrine there be two points most worthy to be marked. The first is that so soon as God had thus spoken and commanded, "Seek my face," he answers with most earnest affection unto this word. The second is, that after he has consented to the precept of God and affirmed it, he promises that he will seek the face of God in deed, in work, and diligence show the same. And surely this is the order that we must keep in worshipping of God, first of all to give access and entry to the word and commandment of God as we are taught in

another psalm: "If you do hear his voice this day, harden not your hearts." But very few are found which embraces the commandments of God of this mind, though the most part will say after this sort and use the like answer: "Truly it is our duty; we ought not nor can not speak against it." But that whereunto they agree with their mouths, is far away from entering and piercing into their minds. Therefore let us learn hereby to lay the beginning of our religion, that we do answer unto God truly and unfeignedly, that we do fully understand and feel his most excellent benefit when he calls us so mercifully to behold his face. When this sense and feeling have thus touched the heart and prepared it, it cannot be but that the other part of religion and duty shall straightways follow, which is, a power to perform that which we do know to be most justly commanded of God and to belong to our singular commodity.

For David had no cold nor dead meditation without any motion or application of the whole life to be bestowed in the seeking and beholding of the face of God. But so soon as he had determined that he ought to seek God, he goes forward with this protestation that he will prosecute this desire of his heart with all diligence. Wherein they must needs be much ashamed who profess themselves Christians and neither have that desire of heart nor good motion, neither yet apply nor exercise themselves in the duty of life which depends thereupon.

But some will say thus, that it is not lawful for them to forsake their country wherein they are born: although they be destitute of the food of life and nothing is seen there but a horrible desolation whereby the whole order of the church is deformed or rather destroyed. Why so? Lest they break their allegiance, they say, which they do owe to their natural and civil governor. I will

answer to this their excuse in few words: I do ask of them this thing only: if they were in such penury and want of living that they had nothing at home to eat and drink, would any such doubt stay them in those places? There is no man truly who would not ask pardon to forsake his country lest he starve not for hunger. I will also put this case which is of no necessity: if there should be offered unto them in a strange country six times so much riches as they have in their own, there should nothing stay them from that journey that they might attain such possessions. What need they then to bring such cloaks and coloured excuses, seeing that it is evident and plain that their talk is far away from what they do feel in their own conscience. We treat not this matter that they may be letted with nothing but that they may pray holily, purely, and profitably for this prince and all his subjects.

Now such a journey plainly taken to such a place can be no more criminal than others which are taken for the commodities and opportunities of this present life, which no man can blame in any point. But let us farther see if this necessity do sufficiently excuse them. Behold, it is the Lord who commands and says: "Seek you my face." The civil magistrates now fall from God and decline away most far and do compel others to the same desecration and rebellion, or at the least do deprive the miserable souls of their daily food and raise up the inventions of superstitious idolatries in the stead of the face of God. Is it right in this point to prefer mortal men to the living and immortal God? If God must be obeyed, they ought rather to travail into all the coasts of the world to seek his face where he does show it than to lie lurking and pining in their nests whatsoever the prince's command or enterprise anything prejudicial unto him who has the chief authority and power over them and upon

every one of them there is no injury done unto them though men do not obey them. Although, besides that which I have now spoken, such men do sufficiently declare that they never have considered nor pondered what is their state and condition, how miserable and filthy is that captivity wherein they are retained and oppressed? Unless their conscience were altogether brought asleep, it were not possible but that they should be in continual anguish and grief of mind as great as if their body were in pain and torment.

For what liberty have they to honour God in their families and houses by any means? As for an example, if any of them have a child born, his duty is to offer him to God with prayer and thanksgiving, and to require that his body may be signed with baptism which is the sign of salvation. Now we do know that baptism is so corrupt in the papistry and so defiled with such superstition and pollution, that the child cannot receive it but that he is straightway polluted and defiled. So that the father cannot baptize the infant without sin. And if he abstain, he sins likewise, although it were in nothing else yet in this point that he gives offence unto men omitting and neglecting the sacrament which the Son of God has instituted.

In what perplexity then stands his mind, that the matter can neither be done nor undone but that God must most grievously be offended? I do not rehearse their other inconveniences and miseries, for this only example is more than sufficient to declare their miserable state and condition. Now when a man has been in this miserable perplexity all his life long, uncertain whether to turn himself, yet at the death must he look for most grievous assaults and temptations, for then certainly Satan will heap together all his artillery. And of this miserable captive who was

letted before, that he could not serve God for the solicitude and care of his wife and family, then at the point of death his state is most miserable.

Wherefore they who doubt whether they may rid themselves forth of this mire or rather forth of this hellish pit, under a certain pretence of obedience unto worldly prince, do pervert all the order of nature. For that lawful prayer which God allows that we should make for our princes is agreeable and very convenient, both to their authority which he gives them and also to the office wherewith he has bound and charged us towards them. Thus Saint Paul does exhort unto prayers to be had and made for kings and magistrates, that we may lead a godly, quiet, and peaceable life with honesty and the fear of God. But this amplification and setting forth of the obedience unto earthly princes is too far above measure when it is joined with the departing from God and the diminishing of the honour and worship which is due to the heavenly King. The miserable Jews indeed were compelled to remain so long in the bondage of Babylon while the time was fulfilled which was appointed of God to suffer the miserable captivity; but let these men who talk so much of man's law and obedience, with whom I have to do, declare that we Christians are bound so far by like obedience that of our own accord we must deprive ourselves of those spiritual benefits which God gives most liberally to His children. They do feel a great necessity wherewith they are sore pressed, and they are greatly enticed by their own infirmity; but God shows them the remedy for these so great evils. What is the cause that they despise these so great helps and benefits for the obedience and service of them that take their bread forth of their hands?

The cause is greater of a man toward his wife or of the wife toward the husband. For seeing that God has joined them together into one flesh, the one cannot do well in any case to forsake the other under a certain colour to seek God. Not only that they may not depart far asunder to let the duty between man and wife, but that everyone ought rather by all means and with all diligence to labour that he may draw and bring the fellow and companion of that holy life to the worship of God. This then is the duty that the one owes to the other, that the husband may declare unto the wife how miserable and unhappy they are, because they want the holy company and fellowship of the faithful, because they are destitute of the sacraments and sermons (which are most sure signs, pledges, and testimonies and be fully assured whereby we may know that God dwelleth among us).

Again, he must exhort her that she do not despair nor distrust but trust in God's mercies. And if he cannot persuade her nor win her so soon as he would, let him never be weary whiles he has got his purpose. And although his wife do resist his purpose most earnestly, nevertheless let not the man cease importunately to attempt the matter with her, and to prove her mind by all means, until she do show herself wilful and obstinate in her wicked purpose. When he has assayed and attempted all that may be done by him, if he can tarry there no longer, then is he free, and utterly delivered from all the law of marriage and necessity of tarrying: because he has done all his duty and nothing wanted of his part but that his wife might have followed him as her duty required. Although yet this departing of the man from the wife is no divorce, but the husband goes before whither God calls, that he may show the way to his wife. And as touching the married woman, she is yet bound with a

more strait bond of marriage because she is the inferior, and must worthily acknowledge her husband as her head and reverence him. Therefore, she must, by all means possible, bring her husband into the mind and means that he will restore and set them both at liberty.

And when she has done all that ever she can, yet is she not at liberty and set free, that she may forsake him to whom she is bound and subject, unless some persecution be raised, wherein the danger is manifest, and especially if her own husband be most ready to pursue her unto death: for then she departs not from her husband, but she avoids that evil that is prepared for her and the furious rage of her enemies which God permits and allows. Finally, that great danger and violence which is intended towards her do discharge her and deliver her from the bond of such a bitter and dangerous life: notwithstanding, when all things are well weighed and considered, no worldly cause ought either to withdraw man or wife the one from the other, but only that mutual benevolence, love, and charity which the one owes of duty to procure the salvation of the other.

For if it is necessary that a man should so forget himself that he should have no regard of the things that pertain to this earthly life and to the body, he ought also likewise to forget and contemn those things which are about him.

Therefore let us return to that account which David makes, that the face of the Lord should be sought as also he says in the 84th Psalm, where he says it is better to live one day in the courts of the Lord, than a thousand being therefrom: whereby he declares that the life of the faithful cannot be too short so that God grant them this grace that while they live in this world they may

exercise themselves in his service and honour, and establish themselves with his promises celebrating his name with all godly confession and praise. If a man object that this may be done in some desert place or amongst the enemies of the faith. I answer that it is not without cause that David does speak namely of the courts of the temple. For he does consider how necessary the order of the church is unto mortal men, especially because he knows their rude and weak nature, but if this oration and admonition were so altogether fired in all men's hearts that all men would come at the least to some Christian church where they might die quietly, and peaceably there would be none which would not easily and quickly gather up their burden and prepare themselves. But what do we seek? Every man will live, and that with all ease and pleasure, every man in that kind of pleasure and lust wherewith he is led and drawn. This is cause wherefore the church of God so much is contemned and rejected today. Yea and there are many witty and subtle to invent and set before their eyes such lettes and hindrances as may bring them from that study of godliness that was in David.

Moreover, they bring this in, what shall we profit, say they, if we do change places? Wherever we go, we shall find the world no less than in our country. There is at this time a wonderful corruption of manners and of all things. All things are full of offences, temptations, and such corruptions whereby men's minds may easily fall from the true fear of God to the love of the world. I confess indeed that all things are as they both think and speak. But if their body were in danger and they were admonished where they might find both learned and meet physicians and also proper and healthful remedies and other helps either to restore or preserve their health then, I say, they would not say that they cared not for it or set light by it because

that in all places diseases may come unto men. I grant that in whatever place soever we be we shall find infinite occasions to do evil, corruptions, and enticements of the world but there is great difference whether we have aids? Helps where with we may either be kept in office or else having erred from our office may be restored or whether we be altogether deprived of them. Let it be agreed that vices now do reign and are of like force in the world so that by their poison the air is infected no less than with a pestilence: are we not in better condition than others in that we have such remedies as are given of God to his children, wherewith we may either drive away from us grievous diseases now coming and assaulting or else purge and put them away being now present?

Furthermore, I think that both the doctrine of the gospel when it is purely preached and also the sacraments when their lawful use is kept and also common prayers and other means besides are always very necessary to stir us up and to admonish us that we be not infected with the corruptions and temptations of the world as it were with certain poisons. Now all men do know that there is none of all these so great and so wholesome remedies and benefits in the papistry but contrariwise all wickedness and extreme danger of loss of life and salvation.

Wherefore let us take heed that we do not refuse the help that God most mercifully offers in this great necessity wherein we stand in need of great help toward our salvation. Yet there are some that vomit forth more evidently the filth and disease of their stomach. What say they, shall we go to that church wherein with our great grief we shall see those motions and offences, which now being unknown unto us, do not offend our eyes and minds? If there were such regiment and order of the church

those places where the gospel is preached which were to be required for our edification, if we were sure to find none there but angels which might lead us into paradise we would run thither with all haste and diligence. But when we shall come thither, we shall hear many things that shall sore offend us and see many more than were necessary: There will be many men prone to all manner of wickedness and impudence, which do defame and slander the gospel by their dissolute life, vanities, pomp, pride, and drunkenness will be more common than were convenient.

Moreover, which is most grievous and intolerable of all, many shall show themselves there so unruly and outrageous contemners of God, the more wickedness shall appear in their lives than among the papists; furthermore, among the magistrates and them that should execute judgment there will be found as much corruption, disorder, unrighteousness as in other places. And also in them that are appointed to preach the gospel many things shall appear which shall seem worthy of reproach and rebuke. For some of them will be negligent in the ministry, or so occupied in their private and domestical business, that the fidelity, diligence, and sincerity that they should show forth shall not be much regarded of them. And which is the worst of all, among this kind of men, there be some so given to pleasures, that they are prone to all lusts of the flesh and belly, cheer and care for nothing else but to live at ease and to pamper the flesh, and that they may do this at more liberty, they join themselves with wicked men and haunt their company in all mischief and villainy.

Well, let us grant so that there is ten times more evil there than there is indeed, or than men do fancy: yet must this excuse be

vain always unto them which make them lets and impediments unto them that they should not come to the church of God. And that we may prove this matter, let us mark the example of David that we have in hand with more deep consideration and diligence. Was there such justice and integrity observed in the days of Saul, I beseech you, in the judgment and other offices, as the state of the commonwealth and the dignity of the church required? Nay, contrariwise, we do hear the great complaints which David makes oftentimes of the malice, the frauds, and deceits, the fierceness, and the pride both of the king and of others that were in authority, in judgment, and in common offices. And for the priests and Levites, did they the office of the priesthood and ministry of holy things so purely and godly that they had just cause to rejoice for themselves and the church? Or may we not rather gather that the most part of them did follow the common vices and corruptions, yea and by their flattery fostered and nourished wickedness? And as touching the people and common multitude, they were full of hypocrisy and manifold sins and crimes most manifest. Yet for all that, David does not therefore abhor that assembly, neither refuses to come and enter into the church, neither yet quenches nor diminishes his desire that he had to see it. It is a very grievous and sore temptation, I do grant. For the more earnestly that a man is moved with the zeal and desire of the honor of God, the more great cause has he to sorrow and mourn when in the pollution of his church he does see him most greatly to be dishonored: but the means to overcome all these inconveniences and impediments is declared by David, to wit, that we seek the face of the Lord and that we set all our pleasure and felicity of life fully contented in the sight and beholding thereof, and that against all the grieves that Satan does raise against us, we determine and conclude that nothing is more pleasant nor

delectable than to dwell in the temple of God where his face may be seen: thus shall we remember as often as such offenses are offered unto us that Satan labours after his usual manner to dazzle our eyes and to trouble us.

But herein let us be wise and constant, that we be never drawn away from the contemplation thereof, but that we take our whole and full pleasure of the most comfortable beholding of the same. The miserable idolaters ought to make us ashamed. For if any of them, after he have consumed both his body in going a foolish pilgrimage, when he comes unto that place whither he purposed, do find a host which does ask money of him out of all reason, or varlets and cruel knaves which do him injury, or covetous priests that beguile him, and to be short find nothing there but confusion and disorder, yet are there no evils nor discommodities so great that can change his purpose from this religion or rather superstition once begun. For he will say that he is come thither for that cause that he may worship the body of some blessed saint, or some image of Our Lady as they term her, or some manner of relics.

And shall in very deed the only sight of some carcass, or vile idol, have more force to cause the miscreants that have no faith to continue obstinate in their superstitions, than the face and presence of God himself to confirm us and bring us such constancy as is necessary to follow after and attain so great goodness? If we do see this or that which may grieve or trouble our minds, God calls us again unto Him and wills us in the beholding and looking upon His face to receive that comfort and pleasure that we may bear patiently other discommodities. Wherefore let this be the shield and refuge to all godly and faithful men, that they cleave continually, looking upon the face

and countenance of God Himself, howsoever Satan labours and practises to carry them away. And surely, if we can verily and as we ought esteem the face of God, we shall never account any hurt or damage in the loss of other things whatsoever we suffer.

Though to say the truth, the greatest part of them is not so much hindered by doubtfulness of mind as by the want and discommodity of those things that pertain to the body: not but that the children of God have great and sore battles in their conscience when they find these offenses whereof we have spoken in those churches that are called reformed. Wherefore they that are determined to go unto such places where the gospel is preached must be admonished beforehand of many and grievous offenses and must prepare themselves to suffer and overcome them; and they that have already tasted and proved those discommodities and impediments ought to confirm themselves most of all, that in despite of Satan they may seek the face of God most constantly. But if all things shall be tried and considered aright, there shall be nothing found but very distrust and unbelief which hinders the multitude and greatest part of men.

And as men are very witty to find out excuses, the rich men have theirs of one sort, and the poor bring theirs also. "How can it be," says the rich man, "that I should leave all that I have? Should I thus spoil myself of all my riches and possessions? I have a wife and children; we have accustomed to live at ease without any travail."

What shall we do in a strange country where we shall have no rents nor revenues? But the poor allege of the contrary: I have indeed very little, but I am among my friends, by whose

liberality my poverty and necessity are relieved. My labour is so well known and cannot be wanted, that I can here live of my labour. What shall I do among strange and unknown men, having neither halfpenny nor farthing, and shall be helped by the acquaintance, friendship, favour, or relief of none? And it may be indeed that such excuses may be partly true. And to reason no more about the matter, that it is a thing very grievous and unpleasant not only to leave the country wherein you were born, but also that place wherein by long and familiar conversation there seems to be now gotten a certain disposition of nature.

But all these yet imagine how they may set before their eyes those impediments whereby they may stop the way whereby they should come unto God, that is to say: Though they do not find the matters so hard and intricate as they make them, yet will they cover themselves gladly with what cloaks they can. And when they have poured forth these grievous and miserable complaints, they think that they have stopped God's mouth, and that he does them great injury if he still charges them as though he would compel them to those things which were not possible to be done. Truly I have nothing to answer to these things but that which is written in the Psalm 84, that is, that the faithful, passing by the valleys and dry wildernesses that want all water, will dig themselves pits and cisterns. And I think this sufficient to overcome them that will not resist God of obstinate malice.

Wherefore they that see themselves so beset with so great discommodities and dangers that they can see no way nor path to go by, must remember that even the desert places, wherein there is no drop of water to be gotten, ought not to let their journey. And that we may understand this sentence more

sensibly and plainly, we must mark that God's purpose is to be sought of his children, not by the green meadows that may delight them with variety of sweet flowers, neither by the sweet trees and pleasant shades, but by rough and steep ways, by hills and dales, by ditches and sand pits, by barren countries and waste wildernesses; and all this is done for that purpose that their faith may be exercised and that their fervent zeal and desire to come unto him may be proved and tried.

Wherefore, though we cannot come unto God, but that we must pass by some wilderness and waste and wild desert by the way, let us know that this is not the first time that God deals so with his faithful, and let us prepare our minds and fully determine to follow them who have gone a long time before us.

Besides these, both the counsel of God and the notable example of the godly that ought to be followed, there ought to be in the children of God such a zeal and fervent mind that nothing draws them away from the right worshipping and serving of Him. This is seen in very few nowadays; all are almost so delicate and dainty that if there be but a mote in the way, it may hold them still, that they will not go forward. "We can go no further," say they. "Why so?" Because they will take no pain to wrestle out of a little impediment. Verily, the desire of the mind is very feeble that is weakened and overcome with such small matters. For we ought not only not to be discouraged and as it were standing in a stay and uncertain for the doubtfulness of the way so to perish, but we ought to be armed against all stays and impediments, be they never so great or many.

To attain hereunto, we must always keep this lesson in remembrance: that God acknowledges none for His children but

those that seek Him by dry and barren places, and dig them cisterns where not one drop of water appears. By which words is meant and signified unto us that no labour or grief ought to be so great, which we ought not to undertake and to suffer that we may have the fruition of the face of God. Must there needs be then a place sought out wherein we may have liberty to worship and serve God purely? What passage soever be offered, or how hard soever the voyage be, yet notwithstanding, the journey must be undertaken and accomplished. Shall we suffer hunger and thirst by the way? Yet may we not faint in courage in such want and necessity, but most cheerfully go forward.

But let no man look towards me and find cavillations, as though I did speak of this matter in my great quietness, feeling no grief myself. For it is the Holy Ghost that teaches us that we ought rather to delve and dig in the earth than to decline or turn away from the voyage towards the church of God that is most godly entered and begun. Now, if they that dwell in far countries and by worldly judgment are excluded from all these means whereby they may come to that place where the Gospel is preached, have none excuse, what must they look for, who have the Gospel within their gates and yet will not move one foot forward to enter into the church of God?

Sermons are preached daily, and public prayers are made also, and they need not pass only the breadth of a street. Yet lo, everyone will say that he has some business at home. And to be short, many set their felicity in this point, if they can withdraw themselves and hold them back altogether from God. For they think themselves then to have gained all if they have gotten some light and vain excuse whereby they may fly away from the company of the godly and the sight of God.

Now, because of nature, we do so abhor God that we would flee from Him and be absent as far as were possible, yea, and then would separate ourselves the furthest from Him when He comes most near unto us. Let us pray unto God that He would confirm us in that mind and desire, that we may so long continue and cheerfully go forward in the journey begun while that we may find there the lively fountains of salvation where before we could find nothing but extreme drought and want of waters.

And though all this should want, yet let us dig cisterns and wait for rain from heaven. If it be not God's pleasure that we should feel His comfort so soon, let us not yet cease to go forward with all diligence. But I am sure that this thing will seem very dark to many. But whence comes this darkness and difficulty but that it was never exercised, practised, nor put in experience? For we may be taught a thousand years and yet not perceive one word of this doctrine, until we have learned by experience what it is to make a journey by a dry and thirsty way when we should come to God. Therefore, this doctrine ought to be very familiar to all the faithful: to wit, that they should prepare and arm themselves diligently against all the temptations which Satan shall enterprise by any means to break off that journey by which they should be brought to God.

For surely whosoever bestow their whole diligence faithfully in this alone, to wit, to seek out God, although they stir not out of the place in which they are, yet they shall find many grievous discomforts which might turn them back and call them to the contrary part, unless they had their minds stable and ready to resist. But this is a thing to be lamented that the most part of them, as I have said, are weakened and overcome by these difficulties that are offered to them by the way. They will

confess, forsooth, that they ought thus to do. They shall seem to be ready and well-prepared for the journey, but when they should go forward and enter into the journey, then their heart faileth them, and those that are well-entered and well-forward also, oftentimes fail and are utterly given over even in the mid-way.

The more therefore ought this lesson to be committed to our memory, that we may dig pits, that is, that we may seek aids and helps even hid and unknown unto us, that we may still continually proceed and go forward. Let us labour, I say, and contend above all man's power. If things come not to pass as we would, yet let us not cease to follow still the good course wherein God has set us. It is most certain that He, if we call upon Him in faith, can turn the dry wilderness into fountains. But in the meantime, it is meet according to our duty that we not idled, nor lie still as though we lacked the sense and moving of arms and legs. Yea, verily, God commands us that we should rather dig pits. Let us then labour in this digging so long while we have finished our journey begun. Let us set before our eyes the miserable condition of soldiers which every month set forth their life to the sale. If they be in the camp, no man is able sufficiently to express what incommodities and miseries they suffer. If they be besieged in any place, then they endure yet much more grievous things. If a voyage be undertaken that they should go to any place, they can neither be let nor stayed by any cold or heat, wind or rain from the journey appointed and the enterprise begun.

And sometimes they are brought to such extremity that unless they dig the earth to get water, they have not a drop of water to drink. There is no labour, distress, nor misery so great which

they will not suffer to attain to that which they have purposed and undertaken. And yet when they have done and suffered all, whether they escape or be slain, they have lost all this their diligence and labour, because in the suffering of all these so great miseries they only serve Satan. The Son of God has chosen us that we should fight under His standard, and that we should be faithful soldiers unto Him and serve Him diligently.

And we know what reward of all our labours and dangers He promises to us. How much more courageous then ought we to be to do our duty unto Him than are these miserable and desperate men to pursue their own destruction? Neither is this only here treated that every man should count the number of the miles and measure all the space which is between his house and that place where he may freely worship God and make confession of his faith, and hear the pure preaching of the doctrine of the gospel. We must yet go farther and have a longer journey to make, wherein the whole course of our life must wholly be spent.

Have we haunted the church of God one year or more? If we continue and remain, we shall daily find new cares. For sometimes we shall be visited with sickness, sometimes with extreme poverty and want of all things necessary; moreover, our wives and children shall die, and also it may come to pass that we have not that liberty and freedom to worship God as we had at the first. Finally, there is no kind of troubles or grief wherefrom we may think ourselves free that we should not therewith be assailed. Wherefore, that constancy of mind and stability and patience is required of us, that unto the very end we have our hands ready to dig the pits, and our nails also to scratch the earth if necessity so require.

If a man says, "How then? Are we not in the temple of God?" I do answer that we are so in it that we must come more near and enter daily into it. Truth it is that we daily behold the face of God, but we are not fully satiated nor filled with His most beautiful countenance as we shall be when He shall take us unto Him. Therefore, must we all generally apply this to the practice of the life: and as Satan is ever busy to let and trouble all them which would go unto God, so let every man confirm himself, and give all diligence that he continues most constantly in doing and working the same tomorrow that he has done today. For if the enemy without fainting or weariness is so diligent to turn back our journey and to drive us from our course begun towards God, much less ought we to lose our courage, that we must more go forward always and draw nearer to God ever gathering new strength continually without ceasing.

But to do this thing and to continue in it is required of necessity to be imprinted in our hearts that judgment and fervent desire which was in David most excellent. "I had rather," says he, "to dwell at the threshold of the house of God than in the tents and tabernacles of the wicked," wherein he plainly declares that he will be content to be brought to a state most base, most low, and despised, to gain this benefit to dwell in the house of the Lord. I beseech you, let us consider a little what was his state. He was the king's son-in-law, one of the chief princes of Judea in most high honour and authority. Notwithstanding, he is content with all his heart to lose that high honour and dignity, and to be made as one of the base common people, so that he may have some little corner in the church of God. If this desire were so great and excellent in all, they would not spend so much time in devising and preparing for the exchange that they must make when they

forsake their house and their country to come to the church of God.

But there be found very few who can take in good part and will bear quietly the diminishing of their substance and the abasing of their state and degree. Every man greatly desires daintily to be carried in a horse litter to the place where he may worship God at liberty, and also that all the lands and possessions, all the gain and exchange that he has had with merchants, the estimation of men, the affinities and friendship, and such other commodities of life should also follow them.

But while they are only at this point, how small, I pray you, do they esteem Jesus Christ? For all that they will do for Him is no further but as it were at His desire, for pleasure and pastime to go for a walk: which thing is miserable and most unworthy and uncomely for a Christian. For though we are nothing worth indeed, yet has He so greatly esteemed us of His infinite goodness, that He has not spared Himself for our salvation, even He in whom the perfection of all good things is contained. And shall we grudge and repine at the loss of transitory things and count our condition worse if we are not so well handled and treated and have our pleasures as before? This is very far from that which S. Paul sets forth by his example for us to follow: that is, that we should count all things as filth and dung that hinder us that we cannot attain unto Christ and possess Him, and that we should cast that away as damage and loss knowing that all that leads us away from life must needs bring us unto death.

And this our desire of dainties and wealth is far from embracing that exhortation and from following that admonition that our Saviour Jesus Christ has given, that we should sell all that we

have in this world and forsake it for the kingdom of heaven, knowing that this is such a precious stone, as by His excellency passes far all those things that men so much desire and esteem. If any man will object that a man may come to the kingdom of heaven without this forsaking of his house: I do answer that it is not in vain that our Saviour thus names the preaching of the gospel, because they that want the doctrine of the Gospel and have no care nor regard to seek those means and occasions whereby they may enjoy this so great goodness, do declare that they do cleave to the things of this world more covetously and greedily than they should and are not yet prepared to that exchange which they ought to make with the kingdom of heaven.

Now if they might enjoy both, surely I would not envy their so great felicity. But if they cannot retain their possession nor lie still in their nest, unless they defraud themselves of the most wholesome and only food of the children of God, nor remain in that state wherein they now are, unless they cut off themselves from the church of God: it is their duty to consider the necessity that God lays upon them. They may bring whatever excuses they will, but all such cloaks and shifts will nothing avail them when the most High Judge shall thunder upon them all with His terrible voice which sets more by that earthly life that is common unto us with the brute beasts than the eternal heritage which He has appointed for His children.

And it is a very foolish thing and nothing to the purpose that many think to stop our mouths unless we do assign them some means and state whereby they may live in serving God. "My condition," say they, "is thus in my country, if I do forsake it what will come upon me? What hope is there to nourish and sustain me?" As though God had appointed them that preach the

gospel to be bailiffs and stewards to appoint to every man his state and his ordinary, and to pay every man a certain pension and wages according to his worthiness or dignity. If we can help any by counsel or by our direction we are so bound in that kind to our poor, that we ought by no means to deny our diligence and service but always to be ready though none require it. But if we be not able to help or to do any pleasure herein, shall therefore also the liberty be taken from us, that we may not teach that thing to everyone which is commanded unto him of God.

But if they had well learned this doctrine of David and keep it well in memory, that they should more desire a little corner at the door of the temple than any place of most high dignity wherein they might be placed among the unfaithful, they should never think it so hard and doubtful what they ought to do in this matter. Howbeit here is the mischief that they will keep their old state and trade of life and cannot suffer that their riches and honors be diminished in any point, neither that they should be deprived of those commodities, delights, and pleasures, wherein they now are settled, that is to say, they cannot ply their necks nor bend their backs to bear Christ Jesus.

Let them contend and strive about this as much as they lust, they must needs herein be condemned. As touching them which have left their country that they might come to that place where they might worship God at liberty and where the truth of the Gospel might be faithfully preached unto them, it is most necessary, that they call this sentence very often to remembrance, and that they exercise themselves in meditating and practising the same that their minds may be hardened and confirmed, by the continual use and long custom of the same.

For many things may come to pass and do so daily, which may feeble and weaken yea wholly break their minds which have been before of singular zeal and love of religion. They that join themselves to the church, are not always so handled and entreated as their dignity requires. The order many times is so perverted and troubled that they which were most worthy to be promoted are most neglected or set in the lowest degree: this same temptation truly might turn them back and call them away from their own salvation, unless they so rested in the bosom of the church that they had rather to be the least and most contemned in the house of God, than to live in most great honor being separate therefrom.

Thus the men that are faithful indeed which have not all the commodities that they were accustomed but contrariwise feel those discommodities and griefs which are very many in the forsaking of their country must learn to comfort and confirm themselves with these few words: "But we are in the house of God. Now let the worldlings deride us much as they list, yea and hurt us outrageously in their pride as abjects and outcasts, yet this must suffice us, that God does vouchsafe to give us this honor to keep us in His palace and sanctuary."

We see what labour and pains, the ambitious and vainglorious of the world do take, that they may be counted of the house and family of some prince. They think themselves most happy if they may come into the kitchen or the hall. Now whereas we by the opinion of the world are most abject and despised, yet so that we be of the church of God, we are led by Him to the most high and marvellous secrets of His wisdom with such familiarity as the father uses with his children. We are very churlish and unthankful unless this recompense content our minds. Though

the faithful in deed may be grievously tempted and moved also to a certain indignation and offence of mind, when their case seems worse and worse, and the wicked flourish still in all prosperity.

Yet if they, contrariwise, consider that they are chosen of God to be of His house, and to be entertained there as His children, this comfort hath little force, if it do not diminish and mitigate all the grievous thoughts of the inconveniences and also wipe clean away all the sorrow of heart that can come for the same. And certainly they that murmur and grudge that they are not entreated of God as they desire, or such as now repent that they have begun to live godly, do easily declare that they did not follow the counsel of our Lord and Master in any point, which is, that at what time a building is begun the count must diligently be cast what all the costs and charges will be which are required to accomplish the building, lest they repent after they have bestowed more than they should and so leave the work unfinished.

But this is yet worse and more shameful that many of them that thus are wearied in the midway, do leave off without any cause. Wherein they show themselves most impudent. For even they that neither had house nor lands and which had no discommodity but might as well live in the farthest part of the world as in their own country are not ashamed to upbraid God that they have left this and that for His sake. But let us grant that they have thus lost I cannot tell what of their goods and substance: Yet is it a foolish thing more to esteem a dandiprat than a crown or a gold noble. In the meantime nothing is heard but these murmurings and complaints. And would to God these careful complainers were far away from us that they might enjoy

their commodities and pleasures although neither poor nor rich have any just cause to depart from that holy and godly purpose, neither any excuse for those afflictions which the vocation of God and His obedience does bring them unto.

But because this is most hard unto us, therefore the remedy is declared in the Psalm 84. When David, after he had said that man is blessed that hopeth in God, adjoineth straightways, "and in whose heart are His ways," as though he should say, he that has his mind bent and wholly converted to enter into that way, to hold on and to finish it which God has commanded. Therefore there are two things that cannot be separate the one from the other that we have our hope in God, and that we walk in the straight way: therefore as our infirmity does let us that we cannot go forward or makes us so dainty and slow that we would turn aside from His most holy vocation and calling and turn another way: let us confirm ourselves in faith and hope, beseeching our God most liberal and merciful that He will turn our eyes unto Him that nothing may trouble us whiles we behold His face and trust in these His promises, whereby He has assured us that He will be with us forever both in life and in death.

SO BE IT.

**A SHORT DECLARATION OF MR.
JOHN CALVIN UPON THE 87TH
PSALM.**

When all things go well with the children of this world, we see how greatly their own state does please them, and how wonderfully with a proud contempt of the church they do extol the same. Yea, and although they be brought under with the plagues of God, yet do they not forget their carnal confidence wherewith they are drunken. But in the meantime, they carelessly despise religion and the true worship of God: for as much as they, being content with delicate and pleasant things such as riches and the brightness of dignity and honour, think themselves blessed without God. And it comes often to pass that God does as it were make such men fall with all kinds of good things, to the intent that at length He may punish them justly and in due time for their unthankfulness: and that His church may be oppressed or at the least kept under a low and humble degree, to the intent that it may seem miserable to itself and be subject to contempt.

Therefore, lest this vain show deceive the faithful, it is needful they be called to another consideration, to wit, that they do conclude that that is true which the 33rd Psalm doth teach: "Blessed is the people to whom the Lord is God." Therefore, let the effect of this Psalm be, that the church of God, though it be but one, yet does it excel all the kingdoms and commonwealths of this world because God is chief ruler of this commonwealth, and it is governed by His empire.

First, to the intent it may abide safe amongst the raging tumults and fearful tempests wherewith the whole world is often shaken. Secondly, and chiefly, that it being wonderfully kept by the help of the same God, may at length, after this long warfare, attain to the victorious crown of the heavenly vocation. And this is a special benefit of God and also a wonderful miracle that,

amongst so many changes of the kingdoms of the earth, He does spread His church from age to age and delivereth it from destruction, to the intent it alone should continually remain.

But because it is evident that whilst the wicked abound in riches and flourish in wealth and power, the poor church of God is tossed hither and thither amongst many dangers, yea, and almost overwhelmed with infinite shipwrecks, the blessedness of the same ought herein to be set especially, that it hath an everlasting state laid up for it in the heavens.

As for the circumstance of the time wherein it was made, it does not make little to the understanding of the Psalm. For although the people of Israel were come again from the banishment of Babylon, and the church of God gathered were now made one body after that long scattering, and the temple and the altar did stand, yea, and God's worship was restored; but because there was but a very little portion of men left of a great multitude, the state of the church was low and without honour, yea, and that little residue was daily made less and less by the enemies. The church also, their temple, was nothing so beautiful as the former temple, and finally, there was now almost no cause left wherefore they could conceive any good hope.

And surely it seemed impossible that they could ever have raised up themselves to the former state from which they were fallen. Wherefore it was dangerous lest they should be overcome either to the former misery or else, for the present calamities, should be oppressed and fall down, and so at length the minds of the faithful should fall into despair. Wherefore, lest they should faint and lie down under such calamities, the Lord does promise that they shall not only recover that which they had lost, but also

lifts them up into the hope of an incomparable glory, according to that prophecy of Haggai: "The glory of the second temple shall be greater than the glory of the first."

Now, last of all, it remains that we learn to apply this psalm also to our profit. And surely, this comfort ought to have been of such force to the godly men of that age that they should, in their afflictions, not only have stood upright, but also that they should have lifted themselves up to heaven, though they were in the grave. But unless at this present day our fathers' experience, joined with the words, do confirm our faith, so much the more, we are more than ingrate, since we know that all is fulfilled that whatsoever the Holy Ghost has spoken, for it cannot be enough expressed for the worthiness thereof, how beautifully she did deck the church at His coming.

For then, the true religion which before was shut up in the straits of Jewry was spread abroad through all the world. Then God, who before was known but of one family, began to be called upon of diverse tongues of all nations. Then the world, which before was torn in pieces miserably with innumerable sects of superstitions and errors, was united in the holy unity of faith. Then all gathered themselves to the Jews whom before they abhorred. The kings of the earth and nations did willingly obey Christ. The wolves and lions were changed into lambs. The gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured upon the faithful, which did excel all the glory of this world, all beautiful things, and all riches. The body of the church, being wonderfully gathered out of countries far distant, increased and preserved. The spreading of the gospel in so short time was incredible, especially being joined with the fruit thereof no less notable.

Wherefore, if the dignity of the church had never been declared by this prophet, yet that notable and incomparable condition of that Golden age does evidently declare that it is truly the heavenly kingdom of God.

But it was necessary that the faithful should have a higher taste than by the judgment of the flesh in esteeming the dignity of the church. For when it did most flourish, it did not shine with purple, gold, or pearls, but with the blood of martyrs. Rich she was with the Holy Ghost, nevertheless she was poor and lacked the earthly goods; she was noble and honourable both before God and angels by holiness, but she was contemptible in the world. There were many outward and open enemies which did either cruelly rage against her or else did by subtle crafts invent wicked things against her. And within there was nothing but terrors and privy trains; finally, under the cross of Christ, there lay yet hid an honourable dignity, but it was spiritual.

Wherefore, the consolation which is in this psalm was then also in due time, that the faithful might rise up in their minds to a more perfect state of the church. But our cause is diverse. Therefore, it has come to pass by the fault of our fathers that that fair form of the church has lain under the feet of the wicked, deformed and filthy. And at this time, being overloaded with our sins, does mourn under miserable destruction, under the derision and mocking of the devil and the world, under the cruelty of tyrants, under the unjust slander of her enemies, so that there is nothing less desired of the children of the world, which would that all went well with them, than to be counted the people of God. Whereby the profit of this psalm is better perceived, and also how necessary the continual meditation

thereof is. To the sons of Korah, a psalm or song. The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains.

The inscription does not so much declare the authors as the chief musicians appointed to sing the psalm. However, it might come to pass that some man of that stock, being a Levite, did compose it.

The foundations thereof:

Since the relative is of the masculine gender, methinks they are deceived who understand it of Jerusalem, as though he should say that it was founded in the holy hills. Neither am I ignorant, however, that certain learned men do excuse this thing, to wit, that the name of the people must be understood though he speaks of the chief city. But how hard an exposition it were, though I should hold my peace, yet everyone may see. Some of the Jews also thought nothing more likely than to refer it to the psalm. And so, by a metaphor, they expound it, the foundations of the matter (of the psalm), because he treats of the holy city of Jerusalem, which was set in the mountains. But methinks the true and right meaning is that God has chosen the holy mountains in which he should found his own city. For it follows a little after in the text, "The Most High shall establish it." He is also the builder of other cities, but we never read that he said of any other city, "This is my resting place for ever, I will dwell here, because I have chosen it," in the Psalm 132.

For we must always put this difference, that though other cities as touching the outward policy were made by the power and providence of God, yet Jerusalem was his peculiar holy place and kingly seat. After the same fashion does Isaiah speak in Chapter 14. Yea, and though all Jewry was holy unto God, yet it

is said that he, having cast all others aside, has chosen this to himself, in which he might reign, which is expressed in the second verse.

"The Lord loves the gates of Zion above all the dwellings of Jacob." To which that answers which is written in the Psalm 78. That God has forsaken Shiloh, the Tribe of Ephraim, the tabernacle of Joseph, that he might dwell in Zion which he had loved. Furthermore, the Prophet declares the cause wherefore God does prefer one place to another, and he sets the cause not in the worthiness of the place, but in the only love of God without merits. Therefore, if anyone asks why Jerusalem does excel the rest, let a brief answer be enough, because it so pleased God. And this was the beginning of the love of God; but the end was that there might be a certain place in which true religion might remain until the coming of Christ, to the intent that the unity of faith might be nourished, and from whence afterward true religion should flow to all the coasts of the world.

Wherefore the Prophet praises Jerusalem with this title, that it has God for a chief builder and chief governor. Secondly, he ascribes all the dignity which it has before other places to the grace and adoption of God. As for that which he has put Zion for Jerusalem, and the gates for the whole compass of the city, it is a double Synecdoche.

Commonly, they take the hills for Zion and Moriah: which I do not reject, though it may be drawn further, because the country was full of mountains roundabout, and the City was set in a high place.

Wonderful things are spoken of you, O city of the Lord.

Word for word, it is that that is said in there are wonderful things.

But we must consider the counsel of the prophet or rather the purpose of the Holy Ghost speaking by the mouth of his prophet. When the state of the people was low and contemptible, and many grievous adversaries did rise against them on every side, and but few had the courage to overcome the lets, and day by day some new alteration did arise unlooked for, and it was dangerous lest things waxing worse and worse by little and little at length should utterly perish, and when there was almost no hope that the city could be restored, lest the hearts of the faithful being overcome with desperation should faint.

Here is a mete prop set under it, that is to say, that God has spoken otherwise of the state thereof which is to come. For it is not to be doubted but that they are called from the sight of things present unto the promises which did minister hope of an incredible glory. Therefore, though nothing appear whereof one may much rejoice, yet the prophet bids the children of God to stand up as it were in a watchtower and patiently wait for the things that are promised. On this manner were the faithful admonished, first, that they might give ear to the old oracles, and call them to mind, especially those which are written in Isaiah, from the 40th chapter unto the end of the book, and secondly, that they might hearken to the servants of God who then did preach of the kingdom of Christ: whereby it follows that we cannot judge aright of the felicity of the church unless we judge of it after the word of God.

"I will rehearse Rahab and Babylon among them that know me; behold the Philistines, Tyre, and Ethiopia; he was born there."

The name of Rahab is taken for Egypt in many places of the scripture, which signification does well agree to this place: for the prophet's mind is to describe that wonderful greatness of the church which was as yet hid in itself. Therefore, he says that they which afore were grievous enemies or altogether strangers should not only be familiar friends but also should be grafted in one body so that they should be counted citizens of Jerusalem. And in the first clause he says: "I will rehearse Egypt and Babylon among them of my household." In the second, he adds the Philistines, the Tyrians, and the Ethiopians, who were hitherto at such variance with the people of God shall now agree as well as if they were inhabitants. It is a wonderful dignity of the church that they shall gather themselves to it round about which did contemn it and that they which did wish it utterly razed out and destroyed should count it a chief honor to be the citizens thereof, and so to be counted; and all shall willingly refuse the name of their country of which before they were so proud. Therefore, wherever they were born, either in Palestina, either in Ethiopia or in Tyre, they shall profess themselves to be citizens of the holy city. The Jews do expound this place thus that few should come out of other nations which excelled the others in wit and virtues but that there should be great abundance in Israel.

Scarcely, they say, shall there be among the Tyrians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, or any other particular men worthy of praise, so that if there be any such, he may be pointed out with the finger for the scarcity:

but in Zion, man and man shall be born, that is to say, there shall be great abundance. The Christians almost with one accord refer it to Christ and think that the prophet renders the cause

why they should be counted among the citizens of Jerusalem who hitherto were strangers and sore enemies: because Christ should be born there, whose duty it is to gather men scattered as members torn asunder into the unity of faith and hope of everlasting life. As for the first interpretation, because it is altogether wasted, it needs no refutation. As for the second, because it is more subtle than sound, I do not receive.

"And of Zion it shall be said, 'A man and a man is born in it,' and the Most High shall establish it."

He continues the same sentence that new citizens shall be gathered into the church of God out of diverse parts of the world. However, he uses another figure that strangers shall be counted among the holy people as though they had been born of Father Abraham. He said in the former verse, "The Chaldeans and Egyptians shall become of the household of the church. The Ethiopians, Philistines, and the men of Tyre shall be counted among his children." Now he adds in stead of a confirmation that there shall be an infinite multitude of new seed so that the city shall be filled with a great people which was desolate for a time and afterward was but half full with a little number of men. And this which is here shortly promised is declared more at large by Isaiah: "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labour! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," and "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities." Likewise, "Your offspring shall come from afar,

and your children shall be carried on the hip of their nurses." And in the 43rd chapter, almost the same manner of speech is used, or at least one which draws near to this which is here. "This one shall say, 'I am the Lord's,' another shall call on the name of Jacob, and another shall write on his hand, 'The Lord's,' and name himself by the name of Israel." Neither does the prophet without cause signify by the word "bearing" that the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and such like should be of the flock of God's people.

For although by nature they were not born of Zion but ought to be grafted in by adoption into the body of the holy people, yet because our entry into the church is the second birth, this manner of speaking does agree very well. For Christ does take the faithful to him in marriage with this condition, that they forget their own people and their father's house (Psalm 45), and being fashioned and born anew of incorruptible seed into new creatures, may begin to be the sons both of God and of the church (Galatians 4). And surely, we are born anew into the heavenly life none other way than by the ministry of the church. But in the meantime, we must mark the difference that the apostle puts between the earthly Jerusalem, which as it is a servant, so engenders children to subjection, and the heavenly which brings forth free children by the gospel.

In the second part of the verse, the long enduring of the same is declared: for oftentimes it comes to pass that the sooner cities creep up into a wonderful height, the shorter while does their prosperous state endure. And lest that the felicity of the church should seem after this sort to be unstable, the prophet pronounces that her stability shall be of the Lord, as though he should say that it were no marvel though other cities did shake

and were subject to diverse inclinations because they are tossed with the world and have not everlasting keepers. But new Jerusalem is of another sort, whose eternity being grounded in the power of God shall stand though heaven and earth fall.

"God shall count his people by writing; he was born there." Selah. The prophet means that the name of Zion shall be so famous that all shall with most fervent desire go about to be counted in the number and degree of the citizens thereof. For he speaks of a most honourable degree: as though he should say, when God shall make a count of the nations, those whom he will chiefly honour he will account rather to Zion than to Babylon or any other cities. For this shall be a greater dignity to be in the lowest degree amongst the citizens of Zion than anywhere to be of the chief. Yet in the meantime, he admonishes us from whence men who are strangers get such honour so suddenly: to wit, of the free gift of God. And surely, they who are the servants of the devil and of sin can never get by their own diligence the freedom of the heavenly city. It is the Lord alone who places the people in their several degrees as it seemed good to him, and whereas the condition of men is alike, he puts difference between one and another. As for the writing whereof he makes here mention, it pertains to the calling, for although he has written his children in the book of life before the creation of the world, yet he then counts them at length in the number of his children when he does seal them, being regenerated with the mark of the Spirit of adoption. As well the singers as the players on instruments, all my fountains are of thee.

Partly the great shortness, partly the doubtful signification of one word makes the sentence dark. As for the word "fountains," there is no doubt but that it is translated from the right

signification and used here by a metaphor. But although the interpreters differ in the declaration of the metaphor, some expound it as hope, some as affections, some as the inward thoughts. However, I would gladly agree with their sentence, which interprets it as songs, if the propriety of the tongue would suffer it. But because it may seem too far-fetched, I do receive that which is most agreeable to reason, namely, that countenance is signified, for the root from which it is derived signifies an eye. Now, we must see what that other member signifies. "As well the singers as the players on instruments." It is an abrupt manner of speaking, but all men do agree on the sense thereof, namely, that there shall be such cause of joy that the praise of God shall be set forth with singing, both without instruments and also with instruments of music.

Therefore, he establishes what he said before of that great, glorious restoration of Zion: for by the greatness of the joy and manifold singing of praise, he declares how great the felicity thereof should be. But in the meantime, he describes the end of all the gifts which God so liberally pours on his church, namely, that the faithful do witness their thankful mind towards him with hymns and songs. Moreover, the prophet declares that he embraces the church with a singular love, care, and study, to the intent he might exhort and kindle all faithful by his example to the same affection. According to this saying, "Let my right hand be forgotten if I do not remember thee, Jerusalem, in the beginning of my joy." For then, finally, are all our affections in the church, when as we gather ourselves from the wandering and vain destruction of the mind, and despise the dignities, delicate things, riches, and pomp of this world, and are content with that only spiritual glory of the kingdom of Christ.

Originally Printed at London by Rouland Hall dwelling in
Golding Lane at the sign of the three arrows.

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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions May 2024 Requests for information
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