



THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

R.C. SPROUL

MINTS STUDY GUIDE

By

MINTS STAFF

Miami International Seminary
14401 Old Cutler Rd.
Miami, Florida, 33158, USA
786-753-7000 (office)
305-238-2045 (fax)
mints@ocpc.org (office)
hejkm@aol.com (home)

INDEX

1. COURSE PERSPECTIVES
 - 1.1. DISTANCE EDUCATION VISION.
 - 1.2. VISION FOR THE COURSE.
 - 1.3. COURSE OBJECTIVES
 - 1.4. COURSE EVALUATION
 - 1.5. COURSE MATERIALS
 - 1.6. COURSE STRUCTURE

2. COURSE PARTICIPANTS
 - 2.1. INSTRUCTIONS FOR BACHELOR LEVEL STUDENTS.
 - 2.2. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MASTER LEVEL STUDENTS.
 - 2.3. CLASS LEADERS

3. COURSE STRUCTURE
 - 3.1. CLASS ROOM
 - 3.2. ORIENTATION
 - 3.3. FOLLOW UP CLASES
 - 3.4. COURSE ACTIVITIES
 1. ATTENDANCE
 2. QUESTION AND ANSWER HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
 3. READINGS, ORAL REPORTS AND WRITTEN REPORTS
 4. WRITTEN ACCADEMIC SSIGNMENTS
 5. FINAL EXAM
 6. REPORTING

4. GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN ESSAY

5. BOOK REPORT FORM

6. MASTER LEVEL EVALUATION FORMS

7. MINTS RESOURCES

8. APPENDICES.
 - 8.1. Readings in Institute of Christian Religion by John Calvin
 - 8.2. Readings in Calvin's Commentaries

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

R.C. SPROUL

1. COURSE PERSPECTIVES

1.1. **DISTANCE EDUCATION VISION.** The distance education course combines class room experience with programmed homework, discussion groups, assigned readings and reports, writing assignments related to ministry and a final exam in order to facilitate training of Christian leaders for teaching ministries.

1.2. **VISION FOR THE COURSE.** The student is presented an introductory theology course to the divine person of the Holy Spirit.

1.3. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will interact and dialogue with course materials, class leaders and fellow students.
2. Basic concepts will be studied and reflected upon
3. Students will share their insights into extra readings
4. Students will express in writing a theme related to the course
5. Students will show comprehension of the course's basic concepts.

1. COURSE EVALUATION

1. For each hour of class one point
2. For each lesson's homework completed on time, three points.
3. For completion, reporting and oral presentation of extra readings, 25 points
4. For writing of academic essay, 25 points
5. For completion of final exam, 10 points.

2. COURSE MATERIALS

1. Book, DVD or audio cassette of R.C. Sproul's, THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
2. The Ligonier Study Guide for THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
3. The MINTS Study Guide for THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
4. Appendix. Readings in John Calvin's INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION, book 3.

1.6. COURSE STRUCTURE

R.C. Sproul's, THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT is divided into 10 lessons. The MINTS courses are organized into 8 lessons.

Lesson One	Chapters 1,2
Lesson Two	Chapter 3
Lesson Three	Chapter 4
Lesson Four	Chapter 5
Lesson Five	Chapter 6
Lesson Six	Chapter 7

Lesson Seven Chapter 8
Lesson Eight Chapters 9, 10

2 COURSE PARTICIPANTS

2.1. INSTRUCTIONS FOR BACHELOR LEVEL STUDENTS. The Bachelor level student will concentrate on acquiring knowledge, understanding and application as relates to the theme of study.

2.2. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE MASTER LEVEL STUDENTS. Besides acquiring knowledge, understanding and application the Master level student will teach or be a student facilitator of the course.

2.3. CLASS LEADERS

1. The distance education professor is responsible for the class activities. The professor has completed the degree at the level he/she is teaching. Normally, the professor gives the orientation for the class and supervises the class facilitator in the fulfillment of the class requirements. He receives the class record from the class facilitator, signs off and gives class record to Academic Dean.

2. The facilitator(s) is (are) normally one or two master level students, or students with distance education experience who lead the students in answering homework questions, facilitate discussion as to the questions and answers at the end of each lesson, organize reading reports and discussion, grade the essays, oversee the giving and marking of final exam, fills in the class record and gives class record to class professor.

3. COURSE STRUCTURE

4.1. CLASS ROOM.

1. 15 hours of class room participation

2. The purpose of the class room participation is to explain the course content and method; to foster interaction among the participants and to give opportunities for students to develop both presentation and teaching skills.

3. 4 hours of orientation (professors may choose to do 8 hours and adjust the follow up classes)

4. 11 hours of follow up class with facilitator. Normally, these are five 2 hour sessions with one hour added to the final class for the final exam.

5. The 4 hours orientation typically includes: (one educational hr is 50 min.)

4.2. ORIENTATION

1. First hour: introduction to methodology of course, review lessons one and two

2. Second hour: review lessons three and four, organize the readings so that students will report during the follow up classes.

a. List of readings from John Calvin's INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION and JOHN CALVIN'S COMMENTARY to the students and when they will give their 10 minute report. The students will do all the readings and report on the section that is assigned to them. At this time the assignments are made (see appendice).

3. Third hour: review lessons five and six. Explain how essay (or another type of writing assignment) will be conducted. Have student come to first follow up class with bibliography, title page and index for essay, to be reviewed by facilitator and other students.

a. List of themes for students to write on. The professor provides this list.

4. Fourth hour: review lessons seven and eight. Explain how exam works. The exam consist of 10 questions from the Q/A. Prepare the class for the first follow up class (questions and answers, who gives reading report)

4.3. FOLLOW UP CLASES

11 hours of follow up class typically are two hours each with last class being 3 hours.

1. Follow up class one: Discuss Q/A for lessons one and two. Hear the reading reports of 25% of the students; review bibliography, title page and index of essay. Prepare student for next class: Q/A for lessons 3 and 4; reading reports, bring corrected copy of bibliography, title page, index and first draft of body of essay.

2. Follow up class two. Discuss Q/A of lessons 3 and 4. Hear the reading reports. Review rough draft of essay. Prepare for next class. Q/A 5 and 6, more reading reports, hand in finished essay.

3. Follow up class three. Discuss Q/A of 5 and 6. Hear reading reports. Review final draft of essay. Prepare for next class: Q/A of lessons 7 and 8. Prepare for taking final exam, which is a review of all Q and A's. Go through practice run for fun.

4. Follow up class four. Discuss Q/A of 7 and 8. Hear final reading reports. Hand in books reports. Hand in final copy of essay. In hour three, take the final exam.

3.4. COURSE ACTIVITIES

1. ATTENDANCE

1. One academic hour is 50 minutes
2. One percentage point is given for each class hour attended.
3. A student loses a point for coming late or leaving early. Like the passing of time, attendance points are not recuperable.

2. QUESTION AND ANSWER HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

1. At the end of each lesson there are a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 15 questions. For the course there will be a minimum of 80 to a maximum of 100 questions.
2. The answers are in the Teacher's Manual. The student is expected to write out the questions and answers without consulting the Teacher's Manual. Upon completion, the student will correct his own answers. The corrections will be written or typed in different color.
3. The corrected answers that correspond to the assigned class will be reviewed by the facilitator. If complete, three points are recorded in Class Record. If all 8 lessons were completed on time, extra point is given for a total of 25 points.
4. The comprehension of the Q and A is measured in the final exam.

3. READINGS, ORAL REPORTS AND WRITTEN REPORTS

1. The purpose of the reading is to introduce the student to examples of classical readings and/or reading helpful to understand course material.
2. Since we are distance education, readings can be placed in the appendix or linked to the internet.

3. At the BA level the student will read 300 extra pages and at the MA level 500 pages.
4. Each student will be assigned to report on their reading (or a portion of their readings) in class. BA students, 5 minute report; MA students, 10 minutes.
5. At end of course a written report of reading will be handed in. BA students a three page report and MA students a five page report.
5. Grading: 15% for reading, 5% for oral report, 5% for written report, total 25%.

3.5. WRITTEN ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS

1. The purpose of the writing assignment is to develop themes related to ministry and express them in an academic and educational format. (See, essay format)
2. Students are assigned a written project such as an essay, survey, interview or other written assignment.
3. Students will present their essay in typed format.
4. Value: 25 %

3.6. FINAL EXAM

1. The purpose of the final exam is to show dominance of the main course concepts
2. This is a review of the Q and A. If different, be sure to explain that to the student
3. Value is 10%

3.7. REPORTING: Class Record

Students name	Course of study	Att.	Q/A	Readings reporting	Written assign	Final exam	Final Grade
		15%	25%	25%	25%	10%	100%

In order for the student's grade to be registered at MINTS-Miami office, the student needs to be properly registered and the course record needs to be sent to Academic Dean at MINTS-Miami.

Dr. Cornelius (Neal) Hegeman, Academic Dean, Miami International Seminary (MINTS)

4. GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN ESSAY

Introduction

An essay is a literary form that analyzes a specific topic in order to inform, explain, persuade, defend an opinion, or to stir interest. It is a more serious style, formal and academic. It is not fiction or comedy. Neither is it poetry, but prose. It should make a contribution to the reader in terms of new concepts or information.

The following guidelines will help you edit an essay:

1. Decide on a unique and specific idea

An essay should express the idea of you, the author, instead of simply repeating the ideas of others. It is not simply a research report, but personal reflection. Of course, you may take into account the ideas of others, but you should utilize these ideas to support your own point, or maybe to make a contrast with your view.

The author should have something in mind that he wants to communicate and focus on one main point. For example, the essay could have the purpose of convincing the reader that Christ is sufficient for our salvation, or that Augustine was the most important theologian of his time, or that Genesis 3 explains all the problems of humanity. The different parts of the essay present evidence or arguments that either support the central idea, illustrate the idea, or show contrasting views. However, the content of the different parts of the essay should not stray away from the main point of the essay as a whole.

2. Do careful research

The student should reflect on the topic that he or she wishes to study, and begin reading and collecting information and quotes. He should write down the bibliographical data for the quote or idea, including author, title, place of publication, publishing company, and year. Use cards, a notebook, or even better, write notes in a computer word processor. Afterwards, organize the notes into groups according to topic. You should begin focusing on what you consider important and discard things that are not related to your topic, even though they may be interesting. Concentrate on a few ideas that are related to the central theme of the essay.

3. Write an appropriate title

The title of the essay should clearly communicate the main theme. It should not be too *general*, but rather point to a specific topic. For example, if you want to write about the physical consequences of the Fall in Genesis 3, the title should *not* be, “Man’s Problem,” or “Genesis 3,” but “The Physical Consequences of the Fall According to Genesis 3.” Neither should the title be too *specific*, pointing only to one aspect of the essay. For example, if the author wishes to write about all the physical consequences of the Fall, the title should *not* be “Why Women Give Birth in Pain” but rather as mentioned before, “The Physical Consequences of the Fall According to Genesis 3.”

4. Organize your ideas in a good outline

An essay should have at least three main sections: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. The introduction stirs interest in the essay and explains what it is about. The body is the main development of the theme, and normally has several subdivisions. The conclusion summarizes the argument of the essay and shows what the author considers to be most important.

If the essay is well organized, the ideas are easy to follow. The writer should imagine that he is dialoguing with the reader, anticipating his questions and presenting answers. The reader should be able to follow the thread of thought even with a quick glance at the introduction, the titles of the sections, and the conclusion.

There are various ways to organize an essay. 1) If the purpose of the essay is to inform about something historical, it may be organized in chronological order. 2) If the purpose is to analyze a philosophical concept, the writer may want to first give the historical background, then explain how the concept is expressed in our day, then give a biblical analysis of the thought. 3) If the author wishes to persuade the reader of his point of view of some issue, he may use logical order, first presenting a premise, then a second premise, and the logical conclusion. 4) If the purpose is to arouse interest in a cause, he may present different dimensions of the problem in order of increasing seriousness. 5) Some people like to use illustrations to demonstrate a truth, organizing them to point toward the central idea, like the hands of a clock that meet in the center. 6) If the author wants to present a new idea, he may first show how it is similar to other ideas, then show how it is different from those ideas. 7) One might analyze an event, showing first the causes, then the effects. 8) New information may be presented by giving definitions and classifications. There are many ways to organize a paragraph, but the writer should decide how to organize it and be consistent with the plan.

Make a good outline to assure good organization. The body of the essay (all but the introduction and conclusion) normally has at least two main divisions, each with at least two subdivisions. If there is only one subdivision, it is not really a subdivision but the main point. The main divisions should contain ideas that are equal in importance, but distinct in content. The subdivisions should contain ideas that are subordinate to the main division, and equal in importance among each other.

The traditional system of numbering is to use roman numbers for the main divisions, capital letters for the subdivisions, numbers for the next subdivisions, and small letters for the next, as follows:

The Letter to the Romans

I. Doctrine

A. Sin

1. The wrath of God against sin

2. All men are sinners

B. Justification by faith

C. Sanctification by faith

D. Eternal security

II. Practical exhortations

A. Love

B. Submission to authorities

etc.

The introduction of the essay does not have a number or letter. Neither does the conclusion.

Introduction

I.

A.

1.

2.

B.

II.

III.

Conclusion

Alternative classifications systems are acceptable. The student needs to be consistent and not mix classifications systems. For example, the numerical system is also acceptable.

INTRODUCTION

- 1.
- 1.1.
- 1.2
- 2.
- 2.1.
- 2.2.
- 3.
- 3.1.
- 3.1.1.
- 3.1.2
- 3.2

CONCLUSION BIBLIOGRAPHY

5. Write coherent paragraphs

A paragraph is the key unit of the essay. Review each paragraph to make sure that:

- 1) All the sentences of the paragraph deal with the same subject.
- 2) The paragraph has normally from 3-10 sentences. If there is only one sentence, it should become part of another paragraph, or maybe other sentences can be added to complete the paragraph.
- 3) The central idea of the paragraph is expressed in the first or last sentence (normally).
- 4) The other sentences contribute to the point of the paragraph, supporting, showing contrast, or giving illustrations.
- 5) The paragraph is well organized. The paragraphs may follow any of the same organization styles that were mentioned in point 4 regarding the essay as whole.
- 6) The sentences are clearly readable. Long sentences should be divided into two or more sentences. Avoid incomplete sentences without a main verb.
- 7) Transition words and phrases are included when there is a change in thought (such as “however,” “furthermore,” and “on the other hand.”) The reader needs to see the relationship between different points. Try reading the paragraph out loud. If it is not smooth, you probably need to modify it.

Do not hesitate to eliminate sentences that are not related to the main theme of the paragraph. They might belong better in another paragraph, they might be material for a whole new paragraph, or they might be completely unnecessary.

6. Use footnotes properly

You must indicate all sources of ideas with footnotes, even if it is not a direct quote. You may use one of the two possible formats. However, you must be consistent within the essay, always using the same format.

A. MLA Style (Modern Language Association)

NOTE: This is the preferred style of MINTS.

This style puts the minimum information in parentheses, and takes advantage of the full information given in the bibliography at the back of the book, article, or essay.

For example, if the book in the bibliography is the following, ...

Marcuse, Sybyl. *A Survey of Musical Instruments*. New York: Harper, 1975.

...then within the text, only the author's name and the page number are necessary. For example, if the quote is taken from page 197, after the quote within the essay there should be a parenthesis as follows:

(Marcuse 197)

If there is more than one book by the same author, a short version of the title should be included, as follows:

(Marcuse, *Survey* 197)

If the author's name is mentioned within the essay, only the page number is necessary:

(197)

B. Chicago Manual of Style

This style gives more information in the notes. You should put a number in the text, after the quote or information used, in superscript, as seen here⁸. Then at the bottom of the page, put the footnote. (The footnotes may also be put at the end of each chapter, or at the end of the book, but we prefer them at the bottom of the page.)

If you do *not* have full information in the bibliography, use the following pattern:

8 Author [first name, then last name], *Title of the book* [in italics] (city of publication: publishing company, year) [between parentheses, with a colon between city and publisher, then a comma before the year, just as it appears here], page or pages cited.

Here is an example:

8 Federico García Lorca, *Bodas de Sangre* (Barcelona: Ayma, S.A., 1971), 95.

On the other hand, if you *do* have full information in the bibliography, you may simply put the author, title, and page number. The reader can find the rest of the information in the bibliography at the back.

Here is an example:

8 Federico García Lorca, *Bodas de Sangre*, 95.

7. Include a bibliography

At the end of the essay, you should include a bibliography, listing all the books, articles, and web sites that you used for the essay. The format for the bibliography is slightly different from the footnote. The last name goes first in this case. There are no parentheses and no page number. The author's last name should not be indented, but if the entry uses more than one line, the other lines are all indented. Look at the following examples.

García Lorca, Federico. *Bodas de Sangre*. Barcelona: Ayma, S.A., 1971.

Marcuse, Sybil. *A Survey of Musical Instruments*. New York: Harper, 1975.

8. Resources

Use the following sources for other help with editing and style:

1. Joseph Gibaldi, ed., *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1999. (Currently the 6th edition is the latest.) NOTE: This is the official guideline for MINTS.

Some web sites contain portions of the MLS standards:

<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/cite5.html>

http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/p04_c08_o.html

2. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press.)

See online Manual: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

See the following web site for information about this book and about electronic resources: <http://www.docstyles.com/cmsguide.htm>

See also the following web site for exercises to improve your grammar and writing style.

<http://go.hrw.com/hhb/>

You may also use the following books for reference:

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, latest edition.

Kirszner, Laurie G., and Mandell, Stephen, *The Holt Handbook*. Philadelphia: Harcourt Brace.

9. Essay Evaluation

1. CONTENT

Identification of theme/thesis
 Development of theme/thesis
 Conclusion to theme/thesis
 Educational content
 Theological content

2. STYLE

Title page
 Index
 Titles
 References
 General presentation

3. GRAMMAR

Grammar in general
 Vocabulary
 Paragraph structure
 Sentence structure
 Punctuation

4. VERIFICATION

Argumentation
 Use of resources
 Quotations
 Footnotes
 Bibliography

5. APPLICATION

Faithfulness to the Biblical revelation
 Helpful for obeying the Great Commission
 Identification of spiritual needs
 Presentation of Biblical solutions to the spiritual needs that were presented
 Motivation for future studies

10. ESSAY STYLE

TITLE PAGE

<p><i>TITLE OF THE ESSAY</i></p> <p>NAME OF THE AUTHOR</p> <p>NAME AND CODE OF THE COURSE</p> <p>Name of the Professor</p> <p>Name of the Educational Institution</p> <p>Date</p>

INDEX (Classical style)

<p><i>TITLE OF THE ESSAY</i></p>
<p>INTRODUCTON</p> <p>I.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">A.</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">1.</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">2.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">B.</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">1.</p> <p style="padding-left: 4em;">2.</p> <p>II.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">A.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">B.</p> <p>CONCLUSION</p> <p>BIBLIOGRAPHY</p>

INDEX (Numerical style)

TITLE OF THE ESSAY**INTRODUCTION**

- 1.
- 1.1.
- 1.2
- 2.
- 2.1.
- 2.1.1.
- 2.1.2.
- 2.2.
- 3.
- 3.1.
- 3.2.

CONCLUSION**BIBLIOGRAPHY****Conclusion**

There are many ways to write a good essay, and creativity is welcome. However, there are certain guidelines that help you communicate better. Probably the greatest challenge is to make your writing clear and easy to understand. It should be pleasant to read, and not hard work. Read your essay over and over until you are satisfied. The more you work on it, the easier it will be to understand. Have a friend or family member read your essay before you send it in. Also, read the essay aloud to see if the sentences communicate what you want to say and how you want to say it. Your essay should be so good that others want to publish it!

5. Form For Reading Reports

<p><u>Bibliographical Data</u></p> <p>Title:Chapter:..... Pages:</p> <p>Author:</p> <p>If article, name of magazine or web site:.....</p> <p>Editorial:.....</p> <p>City Year of publication</p>
--

<p><u>Outline:</u></p>	<p><u>Brief Summary</u></p> <p>(Write a synthesis of what the author says, without your own comments)</p>
-------------------------------	---

Critical Evaluation

(Elaborate your own opinion about what the author says. Is it clear, precise, confusing, well-documented, out of context, too simple, too complicated, biblical, too technical? Did you like it? Defend your opinion.)

Personal Application to Your Life and Ministry

(What impact did this reading have on my life and ministry? Was it helpful? How did it help? Be specific.)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS THAT COME FROM THE READING

TEACHER EVALUATION BY THE STUDENTS

Name of the course _____ Course time schedule _____
Name of the teacher being evaluated _____
Place where the course was given _____

Please evaluate according to the following criteria.

1. Was the teacher prepared to teach the course?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
2. Where the course requirements clearly explained to you?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
3. Is this course important for your service to the Lord?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
4. Did the teacher listen to your questions and seek to answer them?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
5. Where course materials made available to you on time?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
6. Was this course taught from a Biblical and Christian perspective?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
7. Was the course material relevant for your life's context?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
8. What was the class room conditions like?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
9. The costs of the course.
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____
10. Is this course worth teaching to others?
 not good Comments:
 regular _____
 good _____
 excellent _____

PEDAGOGICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEACHER

Name of the teacher _____

Course _____ Place _____ Date _____

1. Where you able to observe that the teacher, as well as the students, were learning?
Yes No I do not know
2. In your opinion, what did the teacher learn during the course?
3. How did you notice that the teacher came to the class room well prepared to teach this course?
4. Did the teacher adjust his/her teaching method to the learning style of the students?
Yes No I do not know
5. Make a list of five things you have learned during this course
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
6. Is the teacher involved in the subject matter he/she is teaching about?
Yes No I do not know
7. In what way has this course caused you to become more involved in the service of Christ?
8. Did the teacher establish good communication contact with the students?
Yes No I do not know
9. Identify these points of communication.
10. Has the teacher shown that his teaching is not only “head knowledge” but that it has reached his heart?
Yes No I do not know
11. How has the teacher shown that his teachings come from the heart?
12. Where the teachings motivational?
Yes No I do not know
13. What were you motivated to do as a result of taking this course?

14. Where both the teachers and students prepared to take this course?
Yes No I do not know
15. How much time in class do you have in this course? _____ hrs.
16. How much time did it take you to do the homework? _____ hrs.(not counting special project or extra readings)
17. How much time did you spend in doing the extra readings? _____ hrs. How many pages did you read? _____
18. How much time did it take to do the special project? _____ hrs.
19. At what educational level did you take the course?
Certificate Bachelor Master
20. What tuition did you pay for the course? _____ How much for books and materials? _____
21. Would you recommend this course to another student?
Yes No I do not know
22. Where you prepared to teach this course to others?
Yes No I do not know
23. Mention five ways in which you were prepared to teach others.
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
24. What suggestions would you give in order to improve this course?
-
-
-

25. If you were to teach this course, where and when would you do?

Thank-you

THE ESTABLISHMENT

C. SELF EVALUATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF A CLASS

NAME _____ DATE _____ COURSE _____

Give yourself 2 points for completion, one point for partial completion, o points for non completion.

1. PREPARATION FOR THE COURSE

- 1.1. Advertisement in order to promote course enrollment
- 1.2. Organization of the class room
- 1.3. Personal communication with the students ahead of time
- 1.4. Have on hand the course requirements and the course materials
- 1.5. Prepared a class activity schedule for each hour of class.

2. CLASS PRESENTATION

- 2.1. Student work book was made available
- 2.2. Good sound system
- 2.3. Ample time give to complete the assignments
- 2.4. Physical dress for class room
- 2.5. Spoke the language of the students in a comprehensible way.

3. COURSE CONTENT

- 3.1. The purpose of the course is clearly stated
- 3.2. The course's development is logical and doable.
- 3.3. The course has helpful theological content
- 3.4. The course is educationally challenging
- 3.5. The course is applicable to our church and community.

4. COURSE REFERENCES

- 4.1. The course gives plenty of bibliography to refer to.
- 4.2. The course makes good use of the Bible
- 4.3. The course is enriched with good quotes
- 4.4. The course also used internet-web page references and tools.
- 4.5. The course is properly documented as far as quotes and bibliography.

5. RELEVANCY

- 5.1. The course deals with real life challenges
- 5.2. The course is applicable to ministry situations.
- 5.3. The course is useful for the student to teach others.
- 5.4. The course is given in a place and at a time that is accessible to the student
- 5.5. The course motivates the teacher to continue to learn and teach.

Total _____

Observations.

7. MINTS RESOURCES

You can email hegjk@aol for the following MINTS resources

MINTS CATALOG

HOW TO SET UP A MINTS STUDY CENTER

HOW TO WRITE A MINTS COURSE

ACADEMIC PROGRAM COURSES AVAILABLE

- Associate in Theological Studies
- Bachelor in Theological Studies
- Master in Theological Studies
- Master of Divinity
- Doctor of Ministry
- Ph.D. in Theological Studies

CONVALIDATION OF CREDITS

ABBREVIATED FORM FOR DEVELOPING A MINTS COURSE

COURSES AVAILABLE IN LANGUAGE GROUPS

- Chinese (in development)
- Dutch (to be initiated)
- English
- Farsi (in development)
- French
- Haitian Creole
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Turkish
- Ukrainian

8. APPENDICES

8.1. JOHN CALVIN, INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION¹

Book I, Chapter 13, Section 14., 15.

CHAPTER 13. THE UNITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE IN THREE PERSONS TAUGHT, IN SCRIPTURE, FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.

This chapter consists of two parts. The former delivers the orthodox doctrine concerning the Holy Trinity. This occupies from sec. 1-21, and may be divided into four heads; the first, treating of the meaning of Person, including both the term and the thing meant by it, sec. 2-6; the second, proving the deity of the Son, sec. 7-13; the third, the deity of the Holy Spirit, sec. 14 and 15; and the fourth, explaining what is to be held concerning the Holy Trinity. The second part of the chapter refutes certain heresies which have arisen, particularly in our age, in opposition to this orthodox doctrine. This occupies from sec. 21 to the end [We cite only 14,15]²

[Sections]

14. The Divinity of the Spirit proved. I. He is the Creator and Preserver of the world. II. He sent the Prophets. III. He quickeneth all things. IV. He is everywhere present. V. He renews the saints, and fits them for eternal life. VI. All the offices of Deity belong to him.

15. The Divinity of the Spirit continued. VII. He is called God. VIII. Blasphemy against him is not forgiven.

[Explanation]

14. In asserting the divinity of the Spirit, the proof must be derived from the same sources. And it is by no means an obscure testimony which Moses bears in the history of the creation, when he says that the Spirit of God was expanded over the abyss or shapeless matter; for it shows not only that the beauty which the world displays is maintained by the invigorating power of the Spirit, but that even before this beauty existed the Spirit was at work cherishing the confused mass. Again, no cavils can explain away the force of what Isaiah says, "And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, has sent me," (Isa. 48:16), thus ascribing a share in the sovereign power of sending the prophets to the Holy Spirit. (Calvin in Acts 20:28). In this his divine majesty is clear.

But, as I observed, the best proof to us is our familiar experience. For nothing can be more alien from a creature, than the office which the Scriptures ascribe to him, and which the pious actually feel him discharging,--his being diffused over all space, sustaining, invigorating, and quickening all things, both in heaven and on the earth. The mere fact of his not being circumscribed by any limits raises him above the rank of creatures, while his transfusing vigour into all things, breathing into them being, life, and motion, is plainly divine. Again, if regeneration to incorruptible life is higher, and much more excellent than any present quickening, what must be

¹ Copied from CCEL.org. Translator is Henry Beveridge. Victorian grammar is replaced by contemporary grammar, especially for reading and translation purposes.

² [] indicates MINTS editor notes.

thought of him by whose energy it is produced? Now, many passages of Scripture show that he is the author of regeneration, not by a borrowed, but by an intrinsic energy; and not only so, but that he is also the author of future immortality. In short, all the peculiar attributes of the Godhead are ascribed to him in the same way as to the Son. He searches the deep things of Gods and has no counsellor among the creatures; he bestows wisdom and the faculty of speech, though God declares to Moses (Exod. 4:11) that this is his own peculiar province. In like manner, by means of him we become partakers of the divine nature, so as in a manner to feel his quickening energy within us. Our justification is his work; from him is power, sanctification, truth, grace, and every good thought, since it is from the Spirit alone that all good gifts proceed. Particular attention is due to Paul's expression, that though there are diversities of gifts, "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit," (1 Cor. 12:11), he being not only the beginning or origin, but also the author; as is even more clearly expressed immediately after in these words "dividing to every man severally as he will." For were he not something subsisting in God, will and arbitrary disposal would never be ascribed to him. Most clearly, therefore does Paul ascribe divine power to the Spirit, and demonstrate that he dwells hypostatically in God.

15. Nor does the Scripture, in speaking of him, withhold the name of God. Paul infers that we are the temple of God, from the fact that "the Spirit of God dwells in us," (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; and 2 Cor. 6:16). Now it ought not to be slightly overlooked, that all the promises which God makes of choosing us to himself as a temple, receive their only fulfilment by his Spirit dwelling in us. Surely, as it is admirably expressed by Augustine (Ad Maximinum, Ep. 66), "were we ordered to make a temple of wood and stone to the Spirit, inasmuch as such worship is due to God alone, it would be a clear proof of the Spirit's divinity; how much clearer a proof in that we are not to make a temple to him, but to be ourselves that temple." And the Apostle says at one time that we are the temple of God, and at another time, in the same sense, that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Peter, when he rebuked Ananias for having lied to the Holy Spirit, said, that he had not lied unto men, but unto God. And when Isaiah had introduced the Lord of Hosts as speaking, Paul says, it was the Holy Spirit that spoke (Acts 28:25, 26). No, words uniformly said by the prophets to have been spoken by the Lord of Hosts, are by Christ and his apostles ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Hence it follows that the Spirit is the true Jehovah who dictated the prophecies. Again, when God complains that he was provoked to anger by the stubbornness of the people, in place of Him, Isaiah says that his Holy Spirit was grieved (Isa. 63:10). Lastly, while blasphemy against the Spirit is not forgiven, either in the present life or that which is to come, whereas he who has blasphemed against the Son may obtain pardon, that majesty must certainly be divine which it is an inexpressible crime to offend or impair. I designedly omit several passages which the ancient fathers adduced. They thought it plausible to quote from David, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath (Spirit) of his mouth," (Ps. 33:6), in order to prove that the world was not less the work of the Holy Spirit than of the Son. But seeing it is usual in the Psalms to repeat the same thing twice, and in Isaiah the spirit (breath) of the mouth is equivalent to word, that proof was weak; and, accordingly, my wish has been to advert briefly to those proofs on which pious minds may securely rest.

Book III, Chapters 1-2³

THE MODE OF OBTAINING THE GRACE OF CHRIST. THE BENEFITS IT CONFERS, AND THE EFFECTS RESULTING FROM IT.

 ARGUMENT.

The two former Books treated of God the Creator and Redeemer. This Book, which contains a full exposition of the Third Part of the Apostles' Creed, treats of the mode of procuring the grace of Christ, the benefits which we derive and the effects which follow from it, or of the operations of the Holy Spirit in regard to our salvation.

The subject is comprehended under seven principal heads, which almost all point to the same end, namely, the doctrine of faith.

I. As it is by the secret and special operation of the Holy Spirit that we enjoy Christ and all his benefits, the First Chapter treats of this operation, which is the foundation of faith, new life, and all holy exercises.

II. Faith being, as it were, the hand by which we embrace Christ the Redeemer, offered to us by the Holy Spirit, Faith is fully considered in the Second Chapter.

III. In further explanation of Saving Faith, and the benefits derived from it, it is mentioned that true repentance always flows from true faith. The doctrine of Repentance is considered generally in the Third Chapter, Popish Repentance in the Fourth Chapter, Indulgences and Purgatory in the Fifth Chapter. Chapters Sixth to Tenth are devoted to a special consideration of the different parts of true Repentance--viz. mortification of the flesh, and quickening of the Spirit.

IV. More clearly to show the utility of this Faith, and the effects resulting from it, the doctrine of Justification by Faith is explained in the Eleventh Chapter, and certain questions connected with it explained from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Chapter. Christian liberty a kind of accessory to Justification, is considered in the Nineteenth Chapter.

V. The Twentieth Chapter is devoted to Prayer, the principal exercise of faith, and, as it were, the medium or instrument through which we daily procure blessings from God.

VI. As all do not indiscriminately embrace the fellowship of Christ offered in the Gospel, but those only whom the Lord favors with the effectual and special grace of his Spirit, lest any should impugn this arrangement, Chapters Twenty-First to Twenty-Fourth are occupied with a necessary and apposite discussion of the subject of Election.

VII. Lastly, As the hard warfare which the Christian is obliged constantly to wage may have the effect of disheartening him, it is shown how it may be alleviated by meditating on the final resurrection. Hence the subject of the Resurrection is considered in the Twenty-Fifth Chapter.

³ Copied from Ccel.org, public domain.

CHAPTER 1.

THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST MADE AVAILABLE TO US BY THE SECRET OPERATION OF THE SPIRIT.

The three divisions of this chapter are,--I. The secret operation of the Holy Spirit, which seals our salvation, should be considered first in Christ the Mediator as our Head, sec. 1 and 2. II. The titles given to the Holy Spirit show that we become members of Christ by his grace and energy, sec. 3. III. As the special influence of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the gift of faith, the former is a proper introduction to the latter, and thus prepares for the second chapter, sec. 4.

Sections.

1. The Holy Spirit, the bond which unites us with Christ. This the result of faith produced by the secret operation of the Holy Spirit. This obvious from Scripture.

2. In Christ the Mediator, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be seen in all their fulness. To what end. Why the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

3. Titles of the Spirit,--1. The Spirit of adoption. 2. An earnest and seal. 3. Water. 4. Life. 5. Oil and unction. 6. Fire. 7. A fountain. 8. The word of God. Use of these titles.

4. Faith being the special work of the Holy Spirit, the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit usually ascribed to it.

1. We must now see in what way we become possessed of the blessings which God has bestowed on his only-begotten Son, not for private use, but to enrich the poor and needy. And the first thing to be attended to is, that so long as we are without Christ and separated from him, nothing which he suffered and did for the salvation of the human race is of the least benefit to us. To communicate to us the blessings which he received from the Father, he must become ours and dwell in us. Accordingly, he is called our Head, and the first-born among many brethren, while, on the other hand, we are said to be ingrafted into him and clothed with him, all which he possesses being, as said, nothing to us until we become one with him. And although it is true that we obtain this by faith, yet since we see that all do not indiscriminately embrace the offer of Christ which is made by the gospel, the very nature of the case teaches us to ascend higher, and inquire into the secret efficacy of the Spirit, to which it is owing that we enjoy Christ and all his blessings. I have already treated of the eternal essence and divinity of the Spirit (Book 1 chap. 13 sect. 14, 15); let us at present attend to the special point, that Christ came by water and blood, as the Spirit testifies concerning him, that we might not lose the benefits of the salvation which he has purchased. For as there are said to be three witnesses in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, so there are also three on the earth, namely, water, blood, and Spirit. It is not without cause that the testimony of the Spirit is twice mentioned, a testimony which is engraven on our hearts by way of seal, and thus seals the cleansing and sacrifice of Christ. For which reason, also, Peter says, that believers are "elect" "through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. 1:2). By these words he reminds us, that if the

shedding of his sacred blood is not to be in vain, our souls must be washed in it by the secret cleansing of the Holy Spirit. For which reason, also, Paul, speaking of cleansing and purification, says, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Cor. 6:11). The whole comes to this that the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually binds us to himself. Here we may refer to what was said in the last Book concerning his anointing.

2. But in order to have a clearer view of this most important subjects we must remember that Christ came provided with the Holy Spirit after a peculiar manner, namely, that he might separate us from the world, and unite us in the hope of an eternal inheritance. Hence the Spirit is called the Spirit of sanctification, because he quickens and cherishes us, not merely by the general energy which is seen in the human race, as well as other animals, but because he is the seed and root of heavenly life in us. Accordingly, one of the highest commendations which the prophets give to the kingdom of Christ is, that under it the Spirit would be poured out in richer abundance. One of the most remarkable passages is that of Joel, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," (Joel 2:28). For although the prophet seems to confine the gifts of the Spirit to the office of prophesying, he yet intimates under a figure, that God will, by the illumination of his Spirit, provide himself with disciples who had previously been altogether ignorant of heavenly doctrine. Moreover as it is for the sake of his Son that God bestows the Holy Spirit upon us, and yet has deposited him in all his fulness with the Son, to be the minister and dispenser of his liberality, he is called at one time the Spirit of the Father, at another the Spirit of the Son: "Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," (Rom. 8:9); and hence he encourages us to hope for complete renovation: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you," (Rom. 8:11). There is no inconsistency in ascribing the glory of those gifts to the Father, inasmuch as he is the author of them, and, at the same time, ascribing them to Christ, with whom they have been deposited, that he may bestow them on his people. Hence he invites all the thirsty to come unto him and drink (John 7:37). And Paul teaches, that "unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ," (Eph. 4:7). And we must remember, that the Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ, not only inasmuch as the eternal Word of God is with the Father united with the Spirit, but also in respect of his office of Mediator; because, had he not been endued with the energy of the Spirit, he had come to us in vain. In this sense he is called the "last Adam," and said to have been sent from heaven "a quickening Spirit," (1 Cor. 15:45), where Paul contrasts the special life which Christ breathes into his people, that they may be one with him with the natural life which is common even to the reprobate. In like manner, when he prays that believers may have "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God," he at the same time adds, "the communion of the Holy Spirit," without which no man shall ever taste the paternal favor of God, or the benefits of Christ. Thus, also, in another passage he says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," (Rom. 5:5).

3. Here it will be proper to point out the titles which the Scripture bestows on the Spirit, when it treats of the commencement and entire renewal of our salvation. First, he is called the "Spirit of adoption," because he is witness to us of the free favor with which God the Father embraced us in his well-beloved and only-begotten Son, so as to become our Fathers and give us boldness of

access to him; in that he dictates the very words, so that we can boldly cry, "Abba, Father." For the same reason, he is said to have "sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," because, as pilgrims in the world, and persons in a manner dead, he so quickens us from above as to assure us that our salvation is safe in the keeping of a faithful God. Hence, also, the Spirit is said to be "life because of righteousness." But since it is his secret irrigation that makes us bud forth and produce the fruits of righteousness, he is repeatedly described as water. Thus in Isaiah "Ho, every one that thirst, come to the waters." Again, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Corresponding to this are the words of our Savior, to which I lately referred, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Sometimes, indeed, he receives this name from his energy in cleansing and purifying, as in Ezekiel, where the Lord promises, "Then will I sprinkle you with clean water, and ye shall be clean." As those sprinkled with the Spirit are restored to the full vigor of life, he hence obtains the names of "Oil" and "Unction." On the other hand, as he is constantly employed in subduing and destroying the vices of our concupiscence, and inflaming our hearts with the love of God and piety, he therefore receives the name of Fire. In fine, he is described to us as a Fountain, from which all heavenly riches flow to us; or as the Hand by which God exerts his power, because by his divine inspiration he so breathes divine life into us, that we are no longer acted upon by ourselves, but ruled by his motion and agency, so that everything good in us is the fruit of his grace, while our own endowments without him are mere darkness of mind and perverseness of heart. Already, indeed, it has been clearly shown, that until our minds are intent on the Spirit, Christ is in a manner unemployed, because we view him coldly without us, and so at a distance from us. Now we know that he is of no avail save only to those to whom he is a head and the first-born among the brethren, to those, in fine, who are clothed with him. To this union alone it is owing that, in regard to us, the Savior has not come in vain. To this is to be referred that sacred marriage, by which we become bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and so one with him (Eph. 5:30), for it is by the Spirit alone that he unites himself to us. By the same grace and energy of the Spirit we become his members, so that he keeps us under him, and we in our turn possess him.

4. But as faith is his principal work, all those passages which express his power and operations are, in a great measure, referred to it, as it is, only by faith that he brings us to the light of the Gospel, as John teaches, that to those who believe in Christ is given the privilege "to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," (John 1:12). Opposing God to flesh and blood, he declares it to be a supernatural gift, that those who would otherwise remain in unbelief, receive Christ by faith. Similar to this is our Savior's reply to Peter, "Flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven," (Matt. 16:17). These things I now briefly advert to, as I have fully considered them elsewhere. To the same effect Paul says to the Ephesians, "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," (Eph. 1:13); thus showing that he is the internal teacher, by whose agency the promise of salvation, which would otherwise only strike the air or our ears, penetrates into our minds. In like manner, he says to the Thessalonians, "God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," (2 Thess. 2:13); by this passage briefly reminding us, that faith itself is produced only by the Spirit. This John explains more distinctly, "We know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us;" again, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit," (1 John 3:24; 4:13). Accordingly to make his disciples capable of heavenly wisdom, Christ promised them "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot

receive," (John 14:17). And he assigns it to him, as his proper office, to bring to remembrance the things which he had verbally taught; for in vain were light offered to the blind, did not that Spirit of understanding open the intellectual eye; so that he himself may be properly termed the key by which the treasures of the heavenly kingdom are unlocked, and his illumination, the eye of the mind by which we are enabled to see: hence Paul so highly commends the ministry of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6), since teachers would cry aloud to no purpose, did not Christ, the internal teacher, by means of his Spirit, draw to himself those who are given him of the Father. Therefore, as we have said that salvation is perfected in the person of Christ, so, in order to make us partakers of it, he baptizes us "with the Holy Spirit and with fire," (Luke 3:16), enlightening us into the faith of his Gospel, and so regenerating us to be new creatures. Thus cleansed from all pollution, he dedicates us as holy temples to the Lord.

CHAPTER 2

OF FAITH. THE DEFINITION OF IT. ITS PECULIAR PROPERTIES

This chapter consists of three principal parts.--I. A brief explanation of certain matters pertaining to the doctrine of Faith, sec. 1-14. First, of the object of faith, sec. 1. Second, of Implicit Faith, sec. 2-6. Third, Definition of Faith, sec. 7. Fourth, the various meanings of the term Faith, sec. 8-13. II. A full exposition of the definition given in the seventh section, sec. 14-40. III. A brief confirmation of the definition by the authority of an Apostle. The mutual relation between faith, hope, and charity, sec. 41-43.

Sections

1. A brief recapitulation of the leading points of the whole discussion. The scope of this chapter. The necessity of the doctrine of faith. This doctrine obscured by the Schoolmen, who make God the object of faith, without referring to Christ. The Schoolmen refuted by various passages.
2. The dogma of implicit faith refuted. It destroys faith, which consists in a knowledge of the divine will. What this will is, and how necessary the knowledge of it.
3. Many things are and will continue to be implicitly believed. Faith, however, consists in the knowledge of God and Christ, not in a reverence for the Church. Another refutation from the absurdities to which this dogma leads.
4. In what sense our faith may be said to be implicit. Examples in the Apostles, in the holy women, and in all believers.
5. In some, faith is implicit, as being a preparation for faith. This, however, widely different from the implicit faith of the Schoolmen.
6. The word of God has a similar relation to faith, the word being, as it were, the source and basis of faith, and the mirror in which it beholds God. Confirmation from various passages of Scripture. Without the knowledge of the word there can be no faith. Sum of the discussion of the Scholastic doctrine of implicit faith.
7. What faith properly has respect to in the word of God, namely, the promise of grace offered in Christ, provided it be embraced with faith. Proper definition of faith.
8. Scholastic distinction between faith formed and unformed, refuted by a consideration of the nature of faith, which, as the gift of the Spirit, cannot possibly be disjoined from pious affection.

9. Objection from a passage of Paul. Answer to it. Error of the Schoolmen in giving only one meaning to faith, whereas it has many meanings. The testimony of faith improperly ascribed to two classes of men.
10. View to be taken of this. Who those are that believe for a time. The faith of hypocrites. With whom they may be compared.
11. Why faith attributed to the reprobate. Objection. Answer. What perception of grace in the reprobate. How the elect are distinguished from the reprobate.
12. Why faith is temporary in the reprobate, firm and perpetual in the elect. Reason in the case of the reprobate. Example. Why God is angry with his children. In what sense many are said to fall from faith.
13. Various meanings of the term faith. 1. Taken for soundness in the faith. 2. Sometimes restricted to a particular object. 3. Signifies the ministry or testimony by which we are instructed in the faith.
14. Definition of faith explained under six principal heads. 1. What meant by Knowledge in the definition.
15. Why this knowledge must be sure and firm. Reason drawn from the consideration of our weakness. Another reason from the certainty of the promises of God.
16. The leading point in this certainty. Its fruits. A description of the true believer.
17. An objection to this certainty. Answer. Confirmation of the answer from the example of David. This enlarged upon from the opposite example of Ahab. Also from the uniform experience and the prayers of believers.
18. For this reason the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit in the soul of the believer described. The issue of this conflict, the victory of faith.
19. On the whole, the faith of the elect certain and indubitable. Confirmation from analogy.
20. Another confirmation from the testimony of an Apostle, making it apparent, that, though the faith of the elect is as yet imperfect, it is nevertheless firm and sure.
21. A fuller explanation of the nature of faith. 1. When the believer is shaken with fear, he retakes himself to the bosom of a merciful God. 2. He does not even shun God when angry, but hopes in him. 3. He does not suffer unbelief to reign in his heart. 4. He opposes unbelief, and is never finally lost. 5. Faith, however often assailed, at length comes off victorious.
22. Another species of fear, arising from a consideration of the judgment of God against the wicked. This also faith overcomes. Examples of this description, placed before the eyes of believers, repress presumption, and fix their faith in God.
23. Nothing contrary to this in the exhortation of the Apostle to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Fear and faith mutually connected. Confirmation from the words of a Prophet.
24. This doctrine gives no countenance to the error of those who dream of a confidence mingled with incredulity. Refutation of this error, from a consideration of the dignity of Christ dwelling in us. The argument retorted. Refutation confirmed by the authority of an Apostle. What we ought to hold on this question.
25. Confirmation of the preceding conclusion by a passage from Bernard.
26. True fear caused in two ways--viz. when we are required to reverence God as a Father, and also to fear him as Lord.
27. Objection from a passage in the Apostle John. Answer founded on the distinction between filial and servile fear.
28. How faith is said to have respect to the divine benevolence. What comprehended under this benevolence. Confirmation from David and Paul.

29. Of the Free Promise which is the foundation of Faith. Reason. Confirmation.
30. Faith not divided in thus seeking a Free Promise in the Gospel. Reason. Conclusion confirmed by another reason.
31. The word of God the prop and root of faith. The word attests the divine goodness and mercy. In what sense faith has respect to the power of God. Various passages of Isaiah, inviting the godly to behold the power of God, explained. Other passages from David. We must beware of going beyond the limits prescribed by the word, lest false zeal lead us astray, as it did Sarah, Rebekah, and Isaac. In this way faith is obscured, though not extinguished. We must not depart one iota from the word of God.
32. All the promises included in Christ. Two objections answered. A third objection drawn from example. Answer explaining the faith of Naaman, Cornelius, and the Eunuch.
33. Faith revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit. 1. The mind is purified so as to have a relish for divine truth. 2. The mind is thus established in the truth by the agency of the Holy Spirit.
34. Proof of the former. 1. By reason. 2. By Scripture. 3. By example. 4. By analogy.
35. 5. By the excellent qualities of faith. 6. By a celebrated passage from Augustine.
36. Proof of the latter by the argument a minore ad majus. Why the Spirit is called a seal, an earnest, and the Spirit of promise.
37. Believers sometimes shaken, but not so as to perish finally. They ultimately overcome their trials, and remain steadfast. Proofs from Scripture.
38. Objection of the Schoolmen. Answer. Attempt to support the objection by a passage in Ecclesiastes. Answer, explaining the meaning of the passage.
39. Another objection, charging the elect in Christ with rashness and presumption. Answer. Answer confirmed by various passages from the Apostle Paul. Also from John and Isaiah.
40. A third objection, impugning the final perseverance of the elect. Answer by an Apostle. Summary of the refutation.
41. The definition of faith accords with that given by the Apostle in the Hebrews. Explanation of this definition. Refutation of the scholastic error, that charity is prior to faith and hope.
42. Hope the inseparable attendant of true faith. Reason. Connection between faith and hope. Mutually support each other. Obvious from the various forms of temptation, that the aid of hope necessary to establish faith.
43. The terms faith and hope sometimes confounded. Refutation of the Schoolmen, who attribute a twofold foundation to hope--viz. the grace of God and the merit of works.

1. All these things will be easily understood after we have given a clearer definition of faith, so as to enable the readers to apprehend its nature and power. Here it is of importance to call to mind what was formerly taught, first, That since God by his Law prescribes what we ought to do, failure in any one respect subjects us to the dreadful judgment of eternal death, which it denounces. Secondly, Because it is not only difficult, but altogether beyond our strength and ability, to fulfill the demands of the Law, if we look only to ourselves and consider what is due to our merits, no ground of hope remains, but we lie forsaken of God under eternal death. Thirdly, That there is only one method of deliverance which can rescue us from this miserable calamity--viz. when Christ the Redeemer appears, by whose hand our heavenly Father, out of his infinite goodness and mercy, has been pleased to succor us, if we with true faith embrace this mercy, and with firm hope rest in it. It is now proper to consider the nature of this faith, by means of which, those who are adopted into the family of God obtain possession of the heavenly

kingdom. For the accomplishment of so great an end, it is obvious that no mere opinion or persuasion is adequate. And the greater care and diligence is necessary in discussing the true nature of faith, from the pernicious delusions which many, in the present day, labour under with regard to it. Great numbers, on hearing the term, think that nothing more is meant than a certain common assent to the Gospel History; nay, when the subject of faith is discussed in the Schools, by simply representing God as its object, they by empty speculation, as we have elsewhere said (Book 2, chap. 6, sec. 4), hurry wretched souls away from the right mark instead of directing them to it. For seeing that God dwells in light that is inaccessible, Christ must intervene. Hence he calls himself "the light of the world;" and in another passage, "the way, the truth, and the life." None cometh to the Father (who is the fountain of life) except by him; for "no man knows who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." For this reason, Paul declares, "I count all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." In the twentieth chapter of the Acts, he states that he preached "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;" and in another passage, he introduces Christ as thus addressing him: "I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness;" "delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send you,"--"that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified through faith which is in me." Paul further declares, that in the person of Christ the glory of God is visibly manifested to us, or, which is the same thing, we have "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It is true, indeed, that faith has respect to God only; but to this we should add, that it acknowledges Jesus Christ whom he has sent. God would remain far off, concealed from us, were we not irradiated by the brightness of Christ. All that the Father had, he deposited with his only begotten Son, in order that he might manifest himself in him, and thus by the communication of blessings express the true image of his glory. Since, as has been said, we must be led by the Spirit, and thus stimulated to seek Christ, so must we also remember that the invisible Father is to be sought nowhere but in this image. For which reason Augustine treating of the object of faith (*De Civitate Dei*, lib. 11, ch. 2), elegantly says, "The thing to be known is, where we are to go, and by what way;" and immediately after infers, that "the surest way to avoid all errors is to know him who is both God and man. It is to God we tend, and it is by man we go, and both of these are found only in Christ." Paul, when he preaches faith towards God, surely does not intend to overthrow what he so often inculcates--viz. that faith has all its stability in Christ. Peter most appropriately connects both, saying, that by him "we believe in God," (1 Pet. 1:21).

2. This evil, therefore, must, like innumerable others, be attributed to the Schoolmen, who have in a manner drawn a veil over Christ, to whom, if our eye is not directly turned, we must always wander through many labyrinths. But besides impairing, and almost annihilating, faith by their obscure definition, they have invented the fiction of implicit faith, with which name decking the grossest ignorance, they delude the wretched populace to their great destruction. No, to state the fact more truly and plainly, this fiction not only buries true faith, but entirely destroys it. Is it faith to understand nothing, and merely submit your convictions implicitly to the Church? Faith consists not in ignorance, but in knowledge--knowledge not of God merely, but of the divine will. We do not obtain salvation either because we are prepared to embrace every dictate of the Church as true, or leave to the Church the province of inquiring and determining; but when we recognize God as a propitious Father through the reconciliation made by Christ, and Christ as given to us for righteousness, sanctification, and life. By this knowledge, I say, not by the

submission of our understanding, we obtain an entrance into the kingdom of heaven. For when the Apostle says, "With the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," (Rom. 10:10); he intimates, that it is not enough to believe implicitly without understanding, or even inquiring. The thing requisite is an explicit recognition of the divine goodness, in which our righteousness consists.

3. I indeed deny not (so wrapped up are we in ignorance), that to us very many things now are and will continue to be completely involved until we lay aside this weight of flesh, and approach nearer to the presence of God. In such cases the fittest course is to suspend our judgment, and resolve to maintain unity with the Church. But under this pretext, to honor ignorance tempered with humility with the name of faith, is most absurd. Faith consists in the knowledge of God and Christ (John 17:3), not in reverence for the Church. And we see what a labyrinth they have formed out of this implicit faith--every thing, sometimes even the most monstrous errors, being received by the ignorant as oracles without any discrimination, provided they are prescribed to them under the name of the Church. This inconsiderate facility, though the surest way to destruction, is, however, excused on the ground that it believes nothing definitely, but only with the appended condition, if such is the faith of the Church. Thus they pretend to find truth in error, light in darkness, true knowledge in ignorance. Not to dwell longer in refuting these views, we simply advise the reader to compare them with ours. The clearness of truth will itself furnish a sufficient refutation. For the question they raise is not, whether there may be an implicit faith with many remains of ignorance, but they maintain, that persons living and even indulging in a stupid ignorance duly believe, provided, in regard to things unknown, they assent to the authority and judgment of the Church: as if Scripture did not uniformly teach, that with faith understanding is conjoined.

4. We grant, indeed, that so long as we are pilgrims in the world faith is implicit, not only because as yet many things are hidden from us, but because, involved in the mists of error, we attain not to all. The highest wisdom, even of him who has attained the greatest perfection, is to go forward, and endeavor in a calm and teachable spirit to make further progress. Hence Paul exhorts believers to wait for further illumination in any matter in which they differ from each other, (Phil.3:15). And certainly experience teaches, that so long as we are in the flesh, our attainments are less than is to be desired. In our daily reading we fall in with many obscure passages which convict us of ignorance. With this curb God keeps us modest, assigning to each a measure of faith, that every teacher, however excellent, may still be disposed to learn. Striking examples of this implicit faith may be observed in the disciples of Christ before they were fully illuminated. We see with what difficulty they take in the first rudiments, how they hesitate in the minutest matters, how, though hanging on the lips of their Master, they make no great progress; no, even after running to the sepulchre on the report of the women, the resurrection of their Master appears to them a dream. As Christ previously bore testimony to their faith, we cannot say that they were altogether devoid of it; no, had they not been persuaded that Christ would rise again, all their zeal would have been extinguished. Nor was it superstition that led the women to prepare spices to embalm a dead body of whose revival they had no expectation; but, although they gave credit to the words of one whom they knew to be true, yet the ignorance which still possessed their minds involved their faith in darkness, and left them in amazement. Therefore they are said to have believed only when, by the reality, they perceive the truth of what Christ had spoken; not that they then began to believe, but the seed of a hidden faith, which lay as it

were dead in their hearts, then burst forth in vigor. They had, therefore, a true but implicit faith, having reverently embraced Christ as the only teacher. Then, being taught by him, they felt assured that he was the author of salvation: in fine, believed that he had come from heaven to gather disciples, and take them thither through the grace of the Father. There cannot be a more familiar proof of this, than that in all men faith is always mingled with incredulity.

5. We may also call their faith implicit, as being properly nothing else than a preparation for faith. The Evangelists describe many as having believed, although they were only roused to admiration by the miracles, and went no farther than to believe that Christ was the promised Messiah, without being at all imbued with Evangelical doctrine. The reverence which subdued them, and made them willingly submit to Christ, is honored with the name of faith, though it was nothing but the commencement of it. Therefore the nobleman who believed in the promised cure of his son, on returning home, is said by the Evangelist (John 4:53) to have again believed; that is, he had first received the words which fell from the lips of Christ as an oracular response, and thereafter submitted to his authority and received his doctrine. Although it is to be observed that he was docile and disposed to learn, yet the word "believed" in the former passage denotes a particular faith, and in the latter gives him a place among those disciples who had devoted themselves to Christ. Not unlike this is the example which John gives of the Samaritans who believed the women, and eagerly hastened to Christ; but, after they had heard him, thus express themselves, "Now we believe, not because of your saying, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world," (John 4:42). From these passages it is obvious, that even those who are not yet imbued with the first principles, provided they are disposed to obey, are called believers, not properly indeed, but inasmuch as God is pleased in kindness so highly to honor their pious feeling. But this docility, with a desire of further progress, is widely different from the gross ignorance in which those sluggishly indulge who are contented with the implicit faith of the Papists. If Paul severely condemns those who are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," how much more sharply ought those to be rebuked who avowedly affect to know nothing?

6. The true knowledge of Christ consists in receiving him as he is offered by the Father, namely, as invested with his Gospel. For, as he is appointed as the end of our faith, so we cannot directly tend towards him except under the guidance of the Gospel. Therein are certainly unfolded to us treasures of grace. Did these continue shut, Christ would profit us little. Hence Paul makes faith the inseparable attendant of doctrine in these words, "Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus," (Eph. 4:20, 21). Still I do not confine faith to the Gospel in such a sense as not to admit that enough was delivered to Moses and the Prophets to form a foundation of faith; but as the Gospel exhibits a fuller manifestation of Christ, Paul justly terms it the doctrine of faith (1 Tim. 4:6). For which reason, also he elsewhere says, that, by the coming of faith, the Law was abolished (Rom. 10:4), including under the expression a new and unwonted mode of teaching, by which Christ, from the period of his appearance as the great Master, gave a fuller illustration of the Father's mercy, and testified more surely of our salvation. But an easier and more appropriate method will be to descend from the general to the particular. First, we must remember, that there is an inseparable relation between faith and the word, and that these can no more be disconnected from each other than rays of light from the sun. Hence in Isaiah the Lord exclaims, "Hear, and your soul shall live," (Is. 4:3). And John points to this same fountain of faith in the following words, "These are

written that you may believe," (John 20:31). The Psalmist also exhorting the people to faith says, "Today, if ye will hear his voice," (Ps. 95:7), to hear being uniformly taken for to believe. In fine, in Isaiah the Lord distinguishes the members of the Church from strangers by this mark, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord," (Is. 54:13); for if the benefit was indiscriminate, why should he address his words only to a few? Corresponding with this, the Evangelists uniformly employ the terms believers and disciples as synonymous. This is done especially by Luke in several passages of the Acts. He even applies the term disciple to a woman (Acts 9:36). Wherefore, if faith declines in the least degree from the mark at which it ought to aim, it does not retain its nature, but becomes uncertain credulity and vague wandering of mind. The same word is the basis on which it rests and is sustained. Declining from it, it falls. Take away the word, therefore, and no faith will remain. We are not here discussing, whether, in order to propagate the word of God by which faith is engendered, the ministry of man is necessary (this will be considered elsewhere); but we say that the word itself, whatever be the way in which it is conveyed to us, is a kind of mirror in which faith beholds God. In this, therefore, whether God uses the agency of man, or works immediately by his own power, it is always by his word that he manifests himself to those whom he designs to draw to himself. Hence Paul designates faith as the obedience which is given to the Gospel (Rom. 1:5); and writing to the Philippians, he commends them for the obedience of faith (Phil. 2:17). For faith includes not merely the knowledge that God is, but also, indeed chiefly, a perception of his will toward us. It concerns us to know not only what he is in himself, but also in what character he is pleased to manifest himself to us. We now see, therefore, that faith is the knowledge of the divine will in regard to us, as ascertained from his word. And the foundation of it is a previous persuasion of the truth of God. So long as your mind entertains any misgivings as to the certainty of the word, its authority will be weak and dubious, or rather it will have no authority at all. Nor is it sufficient to believe that God is true, and cannot lie or deceive, unless you feel firmly persuaded that every word which him is sacred, inviolable truth.

7. But since the heart of man is not brought to faith by every word of God, we must still consider what it is that faith properly has respect to in the word. The declaration of God to Adam was, "You will surely die," (Gen. 2:17); and to Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood cries unto me from the ground," (Gen. 4:10); but these, so far from being fitted to establish faith, tend only to shake it. At the same time, we deny not that it is the office of faith to assent to the truth of God whenever, whatever, and in whatever way he speaks: we are only inquiring what faith can find in the word of God to lean and rest upon. When conscience sees only wrath and indignation, how can it but tremble and be afraid? and how can it avoid shunning the God whom it thus dreads? But faith ought to seek God, not shun him. It is evident, therefore, that we have not yet obtained a full definition of faith, it being impossible to give the name to every kind of knowledge of the divine will. Shall we, then, for "will", which is often the messenger of bad news and the herald of terror, substitute the benevolence or mercy of God? In this way, doubtless, we make a nearer approach to the nature of faith. For we are allured to seek God when told that our safety is treasured up in him; and we are confirmed in this when he declares that he studies and takes an interest in our welfare. Hence there is need of the gracious promise, in which he testifies that he is a propitious Father; since there is no other way in which we can approach to him, the promise being the only thing on which the heart of man can recline. For this reason, the two things, mercy and truth, are uniformly conjoined in the Psalms as having a mutual connection with each other. For it were of no avail to us to know that God is true, did He not in mercy allure us to himself;

nor could we of ourselves embrace his mercy did not He expressly offer it. "I have declared your faithfulness and your salvation: I have not concealed your loving-kindness and your truth. Withhold not your tender mercies from me, O Lord: let your loving-kindness and your truth continually preserve me," (Ps. 40:10, 11). "Your mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and your faithfulness reaches unto the clouds," (Ps. 36:5). "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies," (Ps. 25:10). "His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endures for ever," (Ps. 117:2). "I will praise your name for your loving-kindness and your truth," (Ps. 138:2). I need not quote what is said in the Prophets, to the effect that God is merciful and faithful in his promises. It were presumptuous in us to hold that God is propitious to us, had we not his own testimony, and did he not prevent us by his invitation, which leaves no doubt or uncertainty as to his will. It has already been seen that Christ is the only pledge of love, for without him all things, both above and below speak of hatred and wrath. We have also seen, that since the knowledge of the divine goodness cannot be of much importance unless it leads us to confide in it, we must exclude a knowledge mingled with doubt,-a knowledge which, so far from being firm, is continually wavering. But the human mind, when blinded and darkened, is very far from being able to rise to a proper knowledge of the divine will; nor can the heart, fluctuating with perpetual doubt, rest secure in such knowledge. Hence, in order that the word of God may gain full credit, the mind must be enlightened, and the heart confirmed, from some other quarter. We shall now have a full definition of faith if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit.

8. But before I proceed farther, it will be necessary to make some preliminary observations for the purpose of removing difficulties which might otherwise obstruct the reader. And first, I must refute the nugatory distinction of the Schoolmen as to formed and unformed faith. For they imagine that persons who have no fear of God, and no sense of piety, may believe all that is necessary to be known for salvation; as if the Holy Spirit were not the witness of our adoption by enlightening our hearts unto faith. Still, however, though the whole Scripture is against them, they dogmatically give the name of faith to a persuasion devoid of the fear of God. It is unnecessary to go farther in refuting their definition, than simply to state the nature of faith as declared in the word of God. From this it will clearly appear how unskillfully and absurdly they babble, rather than discourse, on this subject. I have already done this in part, and will afterwards add the remainder in its proper place. At present, I say that nothing can be imagined more absurd than their fiction. They insist that faith is an assent with which any despiser of God may receive what is delivered by Scripture. But we must first see whether any one can by his own strength acquire faith, or whether the Holy Spirit, by means of it, becomes the witness of adoption. Hence it is childish trifling in them to inquire whether the faith formed by the supervening quality of love be the same, or a different and new faith. By talking in this style, they show plainly that they have never thought of the special gift of the Spirit; since one of the first elements of faith is reconciliation implied in man's drawing near to God. Did they duly ponder the saying of Paul, "With the heart man believes unto righteousness," (Rom. 10:10), they would cease to dream of that frigid quality. There is one consideration which ought at once to put an end to the debate--viz. that assent itself (as I have already observed, and will afterwards more fully illustrate) is more a matter of the heart than the head, of the affection than the intellect. For this reason, it is termed "the obedience of faith," (Rom. 1:5), which the Lord prefers to all other service, and justly, since nothing is more precious to him than his truth, which, as John Baptist declares, is in

a manner signed and sealed by believers (John 3:33). As there can be no doubt on the matter, we in one word conclude, that they talk absurdly when they maintain that faith is formed by the addition of pious affection as an accessory to assent, since assent itself, such at least as the Scriptures describe, consists in pious affection. But we are furnished with a still clearer argument. Since faith embraces Christ as he is offered by the Father, and he is offered not only for justification, for forgiveness of sins and peace, but also for sanctification, as the fountain of living waters, it is certain that no man will ever know him aright without at the same time receiving the sanctification of the Spirit; or, to express the matter more plainly, faith consists in the knowledge of Christ; Christ cannot be known without the sanctification of his Spirit: therefore faith cannot possibly be disjoined from pious affection.

9. In their attempt to mar faith by divesting it of love, they are wont to insist on the words of Paul, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing," (1 Cor.13:2). But they do not consider what the faith is of which the Apostle there speaks. Having, in the previous chapter, discoursed of the various gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:10), including diversity of tongues, miracles, and prophecy, and exhorted the Corinthians to follow the better gifts, in other words, those from which the whole body of the Church would derive greater benefit, he adds, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way," (1 Cor. 12:30). All other gifts, how excellent soever they may be in themselves, are of no value unless they are subservient to charity. They were given for the edification of the Church, and fail of their purpose if not so applied. To prove this he adopts a division, repeating the same gifts which he had mentioned before, but under different names. Miracles and faith are used to denote the same thing--viz. the power of working miracles. Seeing, then, that this miraculous power or faith is the particular gift of God, which a wicked man may possess and abuse, as the gift of tongues, prophecy, or other gifts, it is not strange that he separates it from charity. Their whole error lies in this, that while the term faith has a variety of meanings, overlooking this variety, they argue as if its meaning were invariably one and the same. The passage of James, by which they endeavor to defend their error, will be elsewhere discussed (*infra*, chap. 17, sec. 11). Although, in discoursing of faith, we admit that it has a variety of forms; yet, when our object is to show what knowledge of God the wicked possess, we hold and maintain, in accordance with Scripture, that the pious only have faith. Multitudes undoubtedly believe that God is, and admit the truth of the Gospel History, and the other parts of Scripture, in the same way in which they believe the records of past events, or events which they have actually witnessed. There are some who go even farther: they regard the Word of God as an infallible oracle; they do not altogether disregard its precepts, but are moved to some degree by its threatening and promises. To such the testimony of faith is attributed, but by catachresis; because they do not with open impiety impugn, reject, or condemn, the Word of God, but rather exhibit some semblance of obedience.

10. But as this shadow or image of faith is of no moment, so it is unworthy of the name. How far it differs from true faith will shortly be explained at length. Here, however, we may just indicate it in passing. Simon Magus is said to have believed, though he soon after gave proof of his unbelief (Acts 8:13-18). In regard to the faith attributed to him, we do not understand with some, that he merely pretended a belief which had no existence in his heart: we rather think that, overcome by the majesty of the Gospel, he yielded some kind of assent, and so far acknowledged Christ to be the author of life and salvation, as willingly to assume his name. In like manner, in the Gospel of Luke, those in whom the seed of the word is choked before it brings forth fruit, or

in whom, from having no depth of earth, it soon withereth away, are said to believe for a time. Such, we doubt not, eagerly receive the word with a kind of relish, and have some feeling of its divine power, so as not only to impose upon men by a false semblance of faith, but even to impose upon themselves. They imagine that the reverence which they give to the word is genuine piety, because they have no idea of any impiety but that which consists in open and avowed contempt. But whatever that assent may be, it by no means penetrates to the heart, so as to have a fixed seat there. Although it sometimes seems to have planted its roots, these have no life in them. The human heart has so many recesses for vanity, so many lurking places for falsehood, is so shrouded by fraud and hypocrisy, that it often deceives itself. Let those who glory in such semblances of faith know that, in this respect, they are not a whit superior to devils. The one class, indeed, is inferior to them, inasmuch as they are able without emotion to hear and understand things, the knowledge of which makes devils tremble (James 2:19). The other class equals them in this, that whatever be the impression made upon them, its only result is terror and consternation.

11. I am aware it seems unaccountable to some how faith is attributed to the reprobate, seeing that it is declared by Paul to be one of the fruits of election; and yet the difficulty is easily solved: for though none are enlightened into faith, and truly feel the efficacy of the Gospel, with the exception of those who are foreordained to salvation, yet experience shows that the reprobate are sometimes affected in a way so similar to the elect, that even in their own judgment there is no difference between them. Hence it is not strange, that by the Apostle a taste of heavenly gifts, and by Christ himself a temporary faith, is ascribed to them. Not that they truly perceive the power of spiritual grace and the sure light of faith; but the Lord, the better to convict them, and leave them without excuse, instills into their minds such a sense of his goodness as can be felt without the Spirit of adoption. Should it be objected, that believers have no stronger testimony to assure them of their adoption, I answer, that though there is a great resemblance and affinity between the elect of God and those who are impressed for a time with a fading faith, yet the elect alone have that full assurance which is extolled by Paul, and by which they are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. Therefore, as God regenerates the elect only for ever by incorruptible seed, as the seed of life once sown in their hearts never perishes, so he effectually seals in them the grace of his adoption, that it may be sure and steadfast. But in this there is nothing to prevent an inferior operation of the Spirit from taking its course in the reprobate.

Meanwhile, believers are taught to examine themselves carefully and humbly, lest carnal security creep in and take the place of assurance of faith. We may add, that the reprobate never have any other than a confused sense of grace, laying hold of the shadow rather than the substance, because the Spirit properly seals the forgiveness of sins in the elect only, applying it by special faith to their use. Still it is correctly said, that the reprobate believe God to be propitious to them, inasmuch as they accept the gift of reconciliation, though confusedly and without due discernment; not that they are partakers of the same faith or regeneration with the children of God; but because, under a covering of hypocrisy, they seem to have a principle of faith in common with them. Nor do I even deny that God illumines their minds to this extent, that they recognize his grace; but that conviction he distinguishes from the peculiar testimony which he gives to his elect in this respect, that the reprobate never attain to the full result or to fruition. When he shows himself propitious to them, it is not as if he had truly rescued them from death, and taken them under his protection. He only gives them a manifestation of his present mercy. In the elect alone he implants the living root of faith, so that they persevere even to the end. Thus

we dispose of the objection, that if God truly displays his grace, it must endure for ever. There is nothing inconsistent in this with the fact of his enlightening some with a present sense of grace, which afterwards proves evanescent.

12. Although faith is a knowledge of the divine favor towards us, and a full persuasion of its truth, it is not strange that the sense of the divine love, which though akin to faith differs much from it, vanishes in those who are temporarily impressed. The will of God is, I confess, immutable, and his truth is always consistent with itself; but I deny that the reprobate ever advance so far as to penetrate to that secret revelation which Scripture reserves for the elect only. I therefore deny that they either understand his will considered as immutable, or steadily embrace his truth, inasmuch as they rest satisfied with an evanescent impression; just as a tree not planted deep enough may take root, but will in process of time wither away, though it may for several years not only put forth leaves and flowers, but produce fruit.

In short, as by the revolt of the first man, the image of God could be effaced from his mind and soul, so there is nothing strange in His shedding some rays of grace on the reprobate, and afterwards allowing these to be extinguished. There is nothing to prevent His giving some slight knowledge of his Gospel, and imbuing others thoroughly. Meanwhile, we must remember that however feeble and slender the faith of the elect may be, yet as the Spirit of God is to them a sure earnest and seal of their adoption, the impression once engraven can never be effaced from their hearts, whereas the light which glimmers in the reprobate is afterwards quenched. Nor can it be said that the Spirit therefore deceives, because he does not quicken the seed which lies in their hearts so as to make it ever remain incorruptible as in the elect. I go farther: seeing it is evident, from the doctrine of Scripture and from daily experience, that the reprobate are occasionally impressed with a sense of divine grace, some desire of mutual love must necessarily be excited in their hearts. Thus for a time a pious affection prevailed in Saul, disposing him to love God.

Knowing that he was treated with paternal kindness, he was in some degree attracted by it. But as the reprobate have no rooted conviction of the paternal love of God, so they do not in return yield the love of sons, but are led by a kind of mercenary affection. The Spirit of love was given to Christ alone, for the express purpose of conferring this Spirit upon his members; and there can be no doubt that the following words of Paul apply to the elect only: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," (Rom. 5:5); namely, the love which begets that confidence in prayer to which I have above adverted. On the other hand, we see that God is mysteriously offended with his children, though he ceases not to love them. He certainly hates them not, but he alarms them with a sense of his anger, that he may humble the pride of the flesh, arouse them from lethargy, and urge them to repentance. Hence they, at the same instant, feel that he is angry with them or their sins, and also propitious to their persons. It is not from fictitious dread that they deprecate his anger, and yet they retake themselves to him with tranquil confidence. It hence appears that the faith of some, though not true faith, is not mere pretence. They are borne along by some sudden impulse of zeal, and erroneously impose upon themselves, sloth undoubtedly preventing them from examining their hearts with due care. Such probably was the case of those whom John describes as believing on Christ; but of whom he says, "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man," (John 2:24, 25). Were it not true that many fall away from the common faith (I call it common, because there is a great resemblance between temporary and living, everduring faith), Christ would not have said to his disciples, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the

truth shall make you free," (John 8:31, 32). He is addressing those who had embraced his doctrine, and urging them to progress in the faith, lest by their sluggishness they extinguish the light which they have received. Accordingly, Paul claims faith as the peculiar privilege of the elect, intimating that many, from not being properly rooted, fall away (Tit 1:1). In the same way, in Matthew, our Savior says, "Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up," (Mt. 16:13). Some who are not ashamed to insult God and man are more grossly false. Against this class of men, who profane the faith by impious and lying pretence, James inveighs (James 2:14). Nor would Paul require the faith of believers to be unfeigned (1 Tim. 1:5), were there not many who presumptuously arrogate to themselves what they have not, deceiving others, and sometimes even themselves, with empty show. Hence he compares a good conscience to the ark in which faith is preserved, because many, by falling away, have in regard to it made shipwreck.

13. It is necessary to attend to the ambiguous meaning of the term: for faith is often equivalent in meaning to sound doctrine, as in the passage which we lately quoted, and in the same epistle where Paul enjoins the deacons to hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience;" in like manner, when he denounces the defection of certain from the faith. The meaning again is the same, when he says that Timothy had been brought up in the faith; and in like manner, when he says that profane babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called, lead many away from the faith. Such persons he elsewhere calls reprobate as to the faith. On the other hand, when he enjoins Titus, "Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;" by soundness he means purity of doctrine, which is easily corrupted, and degenerates through the fickleness of men. And indeed, since in Christ, as possessed by faith, are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," (Col. 1:2, 3), the term faith is justly extended to the whole sum of heavenly doctrine, from which it cannot be separated. On the other hand, it is sometimes confined to a particular object, as when Matthew says of those who let down the paralytic through the roof, that Jesus saw their faith (Mt. 9:2); and Jesus himself exclaims in regard to the centurion, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," (Mt. 8:10). Now, it is probable that the centurion was thinking only of the cure of his son, by whom his whole soul was engrossed; but because he is satisfied with the simple answer and assurance of Christ, and does not request his bodily presence, this circumstance calls forth the eulogium on his faith. And we have lately shown how Paul uses the term faith for the gift of miracles--a gift possessed by persons who were neither regenerated by the Spirit of God, nor sincerely revered him. In another passage, he uses faith for the doctrine by which we are instructed in the faith. For when he says, that "that which is in part shall be done away," (1 Cor. 13:10), there can be no doubt that reference is made to the ministry of the Church, which is necessary in our present imperfect state; in these forms of expression the analogy is obvious. But when the name of faith is improperly transferred to a false profession or lying assumption, the catachresis ought not to seem harsher than when the fear of God is used for vicious and perverse worship; as when it is repeatedly said in sacred history, that the foreign nations which had been transported to Samaria and the neighbouring districts, feared false gods and the God of Israel: in other words, confounded heaven with earth. But we have now been inquiring what the faith is, which distinguishes the children of God from unbelievers, the faith by which we invoke God the Father, by which we pass from death unto life, and by which Christ our eternal salvation and life dwells in us. Its power and nature have, I trust, been briefly and clearly explained.

14. Let us now again go over the parts of the definition separately: I should think that, after a careful examination of them, no doubt will remain. By knowledge we do not mean comprehension, such as that which we have of things falling under human sense. For that knowledge is so much superior, that the human mind must far surpass and go beyond itself in order to reach it. Nor even when it has reached it does it comprehend what it feels, but persuaded of what it comprehends not, it understands more from mere certainty of persuasion than it could discern of any human matter by its own capacity. Hence it is elegantly described by Paul as ability "to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge," (Eph. 3:18, 19). His object was to intimate, that what our mind embraces by faith is every way infinite, that this kind of knowledge far surpasses all understanding. But because the "mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations" is now "made manifest to the saints," (Col. 1:26), faith is, for good reason, occasionally termed in Scripture understanding (Col. 2:2); and knowledge, as by John (1 John 3:2), when he declares that believers know themselves to be the sons of God. And certainly they do know, but rather as confirmed by a belief of the divine veracity than taught by any demonstration of reason. This is also indicated by Paul when he says, that "while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight)," (2 Cor. 5:6, 7) thus showing, that what we understand by faith is yet distant from us and escapes our view. Hence we conclude that the knowledge of faith consists more of certainty than discernment.

15. We add, that it is sure and firm, the better to express strength and constancy of persuasion. For as faith is not contented with a dubious and fickle opinion, so neither is it contented with an obscure and ill-defined conception. The certainty which it requires must be full and decisive, as is usual in regard to matters ascertained and proved. So deeply rooted in our hearts is unbelief, so prone are we to it, that while all confess with the lips that God is faithful, no man ever believes it without an arduous struggle. Especially when brought to the test, we by our wavering betray the vice which lurked within. Nor is it without cause that the Holy Spirit bears such distinguished testimony to the authority of God, in order that it may cure the disease of which I have spoken, and induce us to give full credit to the divine promises: "The words of the Lord" (says David, Ps. 12:6) "are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times:" "The word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him," (Ps. 18:30). And Solomon declares the same thing almost in the same words, "Every word of God is pure," (Prov. 30:5). But further quotation is superfluous, as the 119th Psalm is almost wholly occupied with this subject. Certainly, whenever God thus recommends his word, he indirectly rebukes our unbelief, the purport of all that is said being to eradicate perverse doubt from our hearts. There are very many also who form such an idea of the divine mercy as yields them very little comfort. For they are harassed by miserable anxiety while they doubt whether God will be merciful to them. They think, indeed, that they are most fully persuaded of the divine mercy, but they confine it within too narrow limits. The idea they entertain is, that this mercy is great and abundant, is shed upon many, is offered and ready to be bestowed upon all; but that it is uncertain whether it will reach to them individually, or rather whether they can reach to it. Thus their knowledge stopping short leaves them only mid-way; not so much confirming and tranquilizing the mind as harassing it with doubt and disquietude. Very different is that feeling of full assurance (plerophori'a) which the Scriptures uniformly attribute to faith--an assurance which leaves no doubt that the goodness of God is clearly offered to us. This assurance we cannot have without truly perceiving its sweetness, and experiencing it in ourselves. Hence from faith the Apostle deduces confidence,

and from confidence boldness. His words are, "In whom (Christ) we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him," (Eph. 3:12) thus undoubtedly showing that our faith is not true unless it enables us to appear calmly in the presence of God. Such boldness springs only from confidence in the divine favor and salvation. So true is this, that the term faith is often used as equivalent to confidence.

16. The principal hinge on which faith turns is this: We must not suppose that any promises of mercy which the Lord offers are only true out of us, and not at all in us: we should rather make them ours by inwardly embracing them. In this way only is engendered that confidence which he elsewhere terms peace (Rom. 5:1); though perhaps he rather means to make peace follow from it. This is the security which quiets and calms the conscience in the view of the judgment of God, and without which it is necessarily vexed and almost torn with tumultuous dread, unless when it happens to slumber for a moment, forgetful both of God and of itself. And verily it is but for a moment. It never long enjoys that miserable obliviousness, for the memory of the divine judgment, ever and anon recurring, stings it to the quick. In one word, he only is a true believer who, firmly persuaded that God is reconciled, and is a kind Father to him, hopes everything from his kindness, who, trusting to the promises of the divine favor, with undoubting confidence anticipates salvation; as the Apostle shows in these words, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," (Heb. 3:14). He thus holds, that none hope well in the Lord save those who confidently glory in being the heirs of the heavenly kingdom. No man, I say, is a believer but he who, trusting to the security of his salvation, confidently triumphs over the devil and death, as we are taught by the noble exclamation of Paul, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Rom. 8:38). In like manner, the same Apostle does not consider that the eyes of our understanding are enlightened unless we know what is the hope of the eternal inheritance to which we are called (Eph. 1:18). Thus he uniformly intimates throughout his writings, that the goodness of God is not properly comprehended when security does not follow as its fruit.

17. But it will be said that this differs widely from the experience of believers, who, in recognizing the grace of God toward them, not only feel disquietude (this often happens), but sometimes tremble, overcome with terror, so violent are the temptations which assail their minds. This scarcely seems consistent with certainty of faith. It is necessary to solve this difficulty, in order to maintain the doctrine above laid down. When we say that faith must be certain and secure, we certainly speak not of an assurance which is never affected by doubt, nor a security which anxiety never assails; we rather maintain that believers have a perpetual struggle with their own distrust, and are thus far from thinking that their consciences possess a placid quiet, uninterrupted by perturbation. On the other hand, whatever be the mode in which they are assailed, we deny that they fall off and abandon that sure confidence which they have formed in the mercy of God. Scripture does not set before us a brighter or more memorable example of faith than in David, especially if regard be had to the constant tenor of his life. And yet how far his mind was from being always at peace is declared by innumerable complaints, of which it will be sufficient to select a few. When he rebukes the turbulent movements of his soul, what else is it but a censure of his unbelief? "Why are you cast down, my soul? and why are you disquieted in me? Hope in God," (Psalm 42:6). His alarm was undoubtedly a manifest sign of distrust, as if

he thought that the Lord had forsaken him. In another passage we have a fuller confession: "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before your eyes," (Psalm 31:22). In another passage, in anxious and wretched perplexity, he debates with himself, no, raises a question as to the nature of God: "Has God forgotten to be gracious? has he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" (Psalm 77:9). What follows is still harsher: "I said this is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." As if desperate, he adjudges himself to destruction. He not only confesses that he is agitated by doubt, but as if he had fallen in the contest, leaves himself nothing in reserve,--God having deserted him, and made the hand which was wont to help him the instrument of his destruction. Wherefore, after having been tossed among tumultuous waves, it is not without reason he exhorts his soul to return to her quiet rest (Psalm 116:7). And yet (what is strange) amid those commotions, faith sustains the believer's heart, and truly acts the part of the palm tree, which supports any weights laid upon it, and rises above them; thus David, when he seemed to be overwhelmed, ceased not by urging himself forward to ascend to God. But he who anxiously contending with his own infirmity has recourse to faith, is already in a great measure victorious. This we may infer from the following passage, and others similar to it: "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord," (Psalm 27:14). He accuses himself of timidity, and repeating the same thing twice, confesses that he is ever and anon exposed to agitation. Still he is not only dissatisfied with himself for so feeling, but earnestly labors to correct it. Were we to take a nearer view of his case, and compare it with that of Ahaz, we should find a great difference between them. Isaiah is sent to relieve the anxiety of an impious and hypocritical king, and addresses him in these terms: "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not," (Isaiah 7:4). How did Ahab act? As has already been said, his heart was shaken as a tree is shaken by the wind: though he heard the promise, he ceased not to tremble. This, therefore, is the proper hire and punishment of unbelief, so to tremble as in the day of trial to turn away from God, who gives access to himself only by faith. On the other hand, believers, though weighed down and almost overwhelmed with the burden of temptation, constantly rise up, though not without toil and difficulty; hence, feeling conscious of their own weakness, they pray with the Prophet, "Take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouths" (Psalm 119:43). By these words, we are taught that they at times become dumb, as if their faith were overthrown, and yet that they do not withdraw or turn their backs, but persevere in the contest, and by prayer stimulate their sluggishness, so as not to fall into stupor by giving way to it. (See Calv. in Psalm 88:16).

18. To make this intelligible, we must return to the distinction between flesh and spirit, to which we have already adverted, and which here becomes most apparent. The believer finds within himself two principles: the one filling him with delight in recognizing the divine goodness, the other filling him with bitterness under a sense of his fallen state; the one leading him to recline on the promise of the Gospel, the other alarming him by the conviction of his iniquity; the one making him exult with the anticipation of life, the other making him tremble with the fear of death. This diversity is owing to imperfection of faith, since we are never so well in the course of the present life as to be entirely cured of the disease of distrust, and completely replenished and engrossed by faith. Hence those conflicts: the distrust cleaving to the remains of the flesh rising up to assail the faith enlisting in our hearts. But if in the believer's mind certainty is mingled with doubt, must we not always be carried back to the conclusion, that faith consists not of a sure and clear, but only of an obscure and confused, understanding of the divine will in regard to us? By no means. Though we are distracted by various thoughts, it does not follow that we are

immediately divested of faith. Though we are agitated and carried to and fro by distrust, we are not immediately plunged into the abyss; though we are shaken, we are not therefore driven from our place. The invariable issue of the contest is, that faith in the long run surmounts the difficulties by which it was beset and seemed to be endangered.

19. The whole, then, comes to this: As soon as the minutest particle of faith is instilled into our minds, we begin to behold the face of God placid, serene, and propitious; far off, indeed, but still so distinctly as to assure us that there is no delusion in it. In proportion to the progress we afterwards make (and the progress ought to be uninterrupted), we obtain a nearer and surer view, the very continuance making it more familiar to us. Thus we see that a mind illumined with the knowledge of God is at first involved in much ignorance,--ignorance, however, which is gradually removed. Still this partial ignorance or obscure discernment does not prevent that clear knowledge of the divine favor which holds the first and principal part in faith. For as one shut up in a prison, where from a narrow opening he receives the rays of the sun indirectly and in a manner divided, though deprived of a full view of the sun, has no doubt of the source from which the light comes, and is benefited by it; so believers, while bound with the fetters of an earthly body, though surrounded on all sides with much obscurity, are so far illumined by any slender light which beams upon them and displays the divine mercy as to feel secure.

20. The Apostle elegantly adverts to both in different passages. When he says, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part;" and "Now we see through a glass darkly," (1 Cor. 13:9, 12), he intimates how very minute a portion of divine wisdom is given to us in the present life. For although those expressions do not simply indicate that faith is imperfect so long as we groan under a height of flesh, but that the necessity of being constantly engaged in learning is owing to our imperfection, he at the same time reminds us, that a subject which is of boundless extent cannot be comprehended by our feeble and narrow capacities. This Paul affirms of the whole Church, each individual being held back and impeded by his own ignorance from making so near an approach as were to be wished. But that the foretaste which we obtain from any minute portion of faith is certain, and by no means fallacious, he elsewhere shows, when he affirms that "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," (2 Cor. 3:18). In such degrees of ignorance much doubt and trembling is necessarily implied, especially seeing that our heart is by its own natural bias prone to unbelief. To this we must add the temptations which, various in kind and infinite in number, are ever violently assailing us. In particular, conscience itself, burdened with an incumbent load of sins, at one time complains and groans, at another accuses itself; at one time murmurs in secret, at another openly rebels. Therefore, whether adverse circumstances betoken the wrath of God, or conscience finds the subject and matter within itself, unbelief thence draws weapons and engines to put faith to flight, the aim of all its efforts being to make us think that God is adverse and hostile to us, and thus, instead of hoping for any assistance from him, to make us dread him as a deadly foe.

21. To withstand these assaults, faith arms and fortifies itself with the word of God. When the temptation suggested is, that God is an enemy because he afflicts, faith replies, that while he afflicts he is merciful, his chastening proceeding more from love than anger. To the thought that God is the avenger of wickedness, it opposes the pardon ready to be bestowed on all offences whenever the sinner retakes himself to the divine mercy. Thus the pious mind, how much soever

it may be agitated and torn, at length rises superior to all difficulties, and allows not its confidence in the divine mercy to be destroyed. No, rather, the disputes which exercise and disturb it tend to establish this confidence. A proof of this is, that the saints, when the hand of God lies heaviest upon them, still lodge their complaints with him, and continue to invoke him, when to all appearance he is least disposed to hear. But of what use were it to lament before him if they had no hope of solace? They never would invoke him did they not believe that he is ready to assist them. Thus the disciples, while reprimanded by their Master for the weakness of their faith in crying out that they were perishing, still implored his aid (Mt. 8:25). And he, in rebuking them for their want of faith, does not disown them or class them with unbelievers, but urges them to shake off the vice. Therefore, as we have already said, we again maintain, that faith remaining fixed in the believer's breast never can be eradicated from it. However it may seem shaken and bent in this direction or in that, its flame is never so completely quenched as not at least to lurk under the embers. In this way, it appears that the word, which is an incorruptible seed, produces fruit similar to itself. Its germ never withers away utterly and perishes. The saints cannot have a stronger ground for despair than to feel, that, according to present appearances, the hand of God is armed for their destruction; and yet Job thus declares the strength of his confidence: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." The truth is, that unbelief reigns not in the hearts of believers, but only assails them from without; does not wound them mortally with its darts, but annoys them, or, at the utmost, gives them a wound which can be healed. Faith, as Paul declares (Eph. 6:16), is our shield, which receiving these darts, either wards them off entirely, or at least breaks their force, and prevents them from reaching the vitals. Hence when faith is shaken, it is just as when, by the violent blow of a javelin, a soldier standing firm is forced to step back and yield a little; and again when faith is wounded, it is as if the shield were pierced, but not perforated by the blow. The pious mind will always rise, and be able to say with David, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me," (Psalm 23:4). Doubtless it is a terrific thing to walk in the darkness of death, and it is impossible for believers, however great their strength may be, not to shudder at it; but since the prevailing thought is that God is present and providing for their safety, the feeling of security overcomes that of fear. As Augustine says,--whatever be the engines which the devil erects against us, as he cannot gain the heart where faith dwells, he is cast out. Thus, if we may judge by the event, not only do believers come off safe from every contest so as to be ready, after a short repose, to descend again into the arena, but the saying of John, in his Epistle, is fulfilled, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," (1 John 5:4). It is not said that it will be victorious in a single fight, or a few, or some one assault, but that it will be victorious over the whole world, though it should be a thousand times assailed.

22. There is another species of fear and trembling, which, so far from impairing the security of faith, tends rather to establish it; namely, when believers, reflecting that the examples of the divine vengeance on the ungodly are a kind of beacons warning them not to provoke the wrath of God by similar wickedness keep anxious watch, or, taking a view of their own inherent wretchedness, learn their entire dependence on God, without whom they feel themselves to be fleeting and evanescent as the wind. For when the Apostle sets before the Corinthians the scourges which the Lord in ancient times inflicted on the people of Israel, that they might be afraid of subjecting themselves to similar calamities, he does not in any degree destroy the ground of their confidence; he only shakes off their carnal torpor which suppresses faith, but does not strengthen it. Nor when he takes occasion from the case of the Israelites to exhort, "Let

him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall," (1 Cor. 10:12), he does not bid us waver, as if we had no security for our steadfastness: he only removes arrogance and rash confidence in our strength, telling the Gentiles not to presume because the Jews had been cast off, and they had been admitted to their place (Rom. 11:20). In that passage, indeed, he is not addressing believers only, but also comprehends hypocrites, who gloried merely in external appearance; nor is he addressing individuals, but contrasting the Jews and Gentiles, he first shows that the rejection of the former was a just punishment of their ingratitude and unbelief, and then exhorts the latter to beware lest pride and presumption deprive them of the grace of adoption which had lately been transferred to them. For as in that rejection of the Jews there still remained some who were not excluded from the covenant of adoptions so there might be some among the Gentiles who, possessing no true faith, were only puffed up with vain carnal confidence, and so abused the goodness of God to their own destruction. But though you should hold that the words were addressed to elect believers, no inconsistency will follow. It is one thing, in order to prevent believers from indulging vain confidence, to repress the temerity which, from the remains of the flesh, sometimes gains upon them, and it is another thing to strike terror into their consciences, and prevent them from feeling secure in the mercy of God.

23. Then, when he bids us work out our salvation with fear and trembling, all he requires is, that we accustom ourselves to think very meanly of our own strength, and confide in the strength of the Lord. For nothing stimulates us so strongly to place all our confidence and assurance on the Lord as self diffidence, and the anxiety produced by a consciousness of our calamitous condition. In this sense are we to understand the words of the Psalmist: "I will come into your house in the multitude of your mercy: and in your fear will I worship toward your holy temples" (Ps. 5:7). Here he appropriately unites confident faith leaning on the divine mercy with religious fear, which of necessity we must feel whenever coming into the presence of the divine majesty we are made aware by its splendor of the extent of our own impurity. Truly also does Solomon declare: "Happy is the man that fears always; but he that hardens his heart falls into mischief," (Prov. 28:14). The fear he speaks of is that which renders us more cautious, not that which produces despondency, the fear which is felt when the mind confounded in itself resumes its equanimity in God, downcast in itself, takes courage in God, distrusting itself, breathes confidence in God. Hence there is nothing inconsistent in believers being afraid, and at the same time possessing secure consolation as they alternately behold their own vanity, and direct their thoughts to the truth of God. How, it will be asked, can fear and faith dwell in the same mind? Just in the same way as sluggishness and anxiety can so dwell. The ungodly court a state of lethargy that the fear of God may not annoy them; and yet the judgment of God so urges that they cannot gain their desire. In the same way God can train his people to humility, and curb them by the bridle of modesty, while yet fighting bravely. And it is plain, from the context, that this was the Apostle's meaning, since he states, as the ground of fear and trembling, that it is God who worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. In the same sense must we understand the words of the Prophet, "The children of Israel" "shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days," (Hos. 3:5). For not only does piety beget reverence to God, but the sweet attractiveness of grace inspires a man, though desponding of himself, at once with fear and admiration, making him feel his dependence on God, and submit humbly to his power.

24. Here, however, we give no countenance to that most pestilential philosophy which some semi-papists are at present beginning to broach in corners. Unable to defend the gross doubt

inculcated by the Schoolmen, they have recourse to another fiction, that they may compound a mixture of faith and unbelief. They admit, that whenever we look to Christ we are furnished with full ground for hope; but as we are ever unworthy of all the blessings which are offered us in Christ, they will have us to fluctuate and hesitate in the view of our unworthiness. In short, they give conscience a position between hope and fear, making it alternate, by successive turns, to the one and the other. Hope and fear, again, they place in complete contrast,--the one falling as the other rises, and rising as the other falls. Thus Satan, finding the devices by which he was wont to destroy the certainty of faith too manifest to be now of any avail, is endeavoring, by indirect methods, to undermine it. But what kind of confidence is that which is ever and anon supplanted by despair? They tell you, if you look to Christ salvation is certain; if you return to yourself damnation is certain. Therefore, your mind must be alternately ruled by diffidence and hope; as if we were to imagine Christ standing at a distance, and not rather dwelling in us. We expect salvation from him--not because he stands aloof from us, but because ingrafting us into his body he not only makes us partakers of all his benefits, but also of himself. Therefore, I thus retort the argument, If you look to yourself damnation is certain: but since Christ has been communicated to you with all his benefits, so that all which is his is made yours, you become a member of him, and hence one with him. His righteousness covers your sins--his salvation extinguishes your condemnation; he interposes with his worthiness, and so prevents your unworthiness from coming into the view of God. Thus it truly is. It will never do to separate Christ from us, nor us from him; but we must, with both hands, keep firm hold of that alliance by which he has riveted us to himself. This the Apostle teaches us: "The body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness," (Rom. 8:10). According to the frivolous trifling of these objectors, he ought to have said, Christ indeed has life in himself, but you, as you are sinners, remain liable to death and condemnation. Very different is his language. He tells us that the condemnation which we of ourselves deserve is annihilated by the salvation of Christ; and to confirm this he employs the argument to which I have referred--viz. that Christ is not external to us, but dwells in us; and not only unites us to himself by an undivided bond of fellowship, but by a wondrous communion brings us daily into closer connection, until he becomes altogether one with us. And yet I deny not, as I lately said, that faith occasionally suffers certain interruptions when, by violent assault, its weakness is made to bend in this direction or in that; and its light is buried in the thick darkness of temptation. Still happen what may, faith ceases not to long after God.

25. The same doctrine is taught by Bernard when he treats professedly on this subject in his Fifth Homily on the Dedication of the Temple: "By the blessing of God, sometimes meditating on the soul, methinks, I find in it as it were two contraries. When I look at it as it is in itself and of itself, the truest thing I can say of it is, that it has been reduced to nothing. What need is there to enumerate each of its miseries? how burdened with sin, obscured with darkness, ensnared by allurements, teeming with lusts, ruled by passion, filled with delusions, ever prone to evil, inclined to every vice; lastly, full of ignominy and confusion. If all its righteousnesses, when examined by the light of truth, are but as filthy rags (Is. 64:6), what must we suppose its unrighteousness to be? 'If, therefore, the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness?' (Mt. 6:23). What then? man doubtless has been made subject to vanity--man here been reduced to nothing--man is nothing. And yet how is he whom God exalts utterly nothing? How is he nothing to whom a divine heart has been given? Let us breathe again, brethren. Although we are nothing in our hearts, perhaps something of us may lurk in the heart of God. O Father of mercies! O Father of the miserable! how do you plant your heart in us? Where your

heart is, there is your treasure also. But how are we your treasure if we are nothing? All nations before you are as nothing. Observe, before you; not within you. Such are they in the judgment of your truth, but not such in regard to your affection. You call the things which be not as though they were; and they are not, because you call them 'things that be not:' and yet they are because you call them. For though they are not as to themselves, yet they are with you according to the declaration of Paul: 'Not of works, but of him that calls,' " (Rom. 9:11). He then goes on to say that the connection is wonderful in both points of view. Certainly things which are connected together do not mutually destroy each other. This he explains more clearly in his conclusion in the following terms: "If, in both views, we diligently consider what we are,--in the one view our nothingness, in the other our greatness,--I presume our glorying will seem restrained; but perhaps it is rather increased and confirmed, because we glory not in ourselves, but in the Lord. Our thought is, if he determined to save us we shall be delivered; and here we begin again to breathe. But, ascending to a loftier height, let us seek the city of God, let us seek the temple, let us seek our home, let us seek our spouse. I have not forgotten myself when, with fear and reverence, I say, We are,--are in the heart of God. We are, by his dignifying, not by our own dignity."

26. Moreover, the fear of the Lord, which is uniformly attributed to all the saints, and which, in one passage, is called "the beginning of wisdom," in another wisdom itself, although it is one, proceeds from a twofold cause. God is entitled to the reverence of a Father and a Lord. Hence he who desires duly to worship him, will study to act the part both of an obedient son and a faithful servant. The obedience paid to God as a Father he by his prophet terms honor; the service performed to him as a master he terms fear. "A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is my honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear?" But while he thus distinguishes between the two, it is obvious that he at the same time confounds them. The fear of the Lord, therefore, may be defined reverence mingled with honor and fear. It is not strange that the same mind can entertain both feelings; for he who considers with himself what kind of a father God is to us, will see sufficient reason, even were there no hell, why the thought of offending him should seem more dreadful than any death. But so prone is our carnal nature to indulgence in sin, that, in order to curb it in every way, we must also give place to the thought that all iniquity is abomination to the Master under whom we live; that those who, by wicked lives, provoke his anger, will not escape his vengeance.

27. There is nothing repugnant to this in the observation of John: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment," (1 John 4:18). For he is speaking of the fear of unbelief, between which and the fear of believers there is a wide difference. The wicked do not fear God from any unwillingness to offend him, provided they could do so with impunity; but knowing that he is armed with power for vengeance, they tremble in dismay on hearing of his anger. And they thus dread his anger, because they think it is impending over them, and they every moment expect it to fall upon their heads. But believers, as has been said, dread the offense even more than the punishment. They are not alarmed by the fear of punishment, as if it were impending over them, but are rendered the more cautious of doing anything to provoke it. Thus the Apostle addressing believers says, "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience," (Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6). He does not threaten that wrath will descend upon them; but he admonishes them, while they think how the wrath of God is prepared for the wicked, on account of the crimes which he had enumerated, not to run the risk of provoking it. It seldom happens that mere threatening have the

effect of arousing the reprobate; no, becoming more callous and hardened when God thunders verbally from heaven, they obstinately persist in their rebellion. It is only when actually smitten by his hand that they are forced, whether they will or not, to fear. This fear the sacred writers term servile, and oppose to the free and voluntary fear which becomes sons. Some, by a subtle distinction, have introduced an intermediate species, holding that that forced and servile fear sometimes subdues the mind, and leads spontaneously to proper fear.

28. The divine favor to which faith is said to have respect, we understand to include in it the possession of salvation and eternal life. For if, when God is propitious, no good thing can be wanting to us, we have ample security for our salvation when assured of his love. "Turn us again, O God, and cause your face to shine," says the Prophet, "and we shall be saved," (Ps. 80:3). Hence the Scriptures make the sum of our salvation to consist in the removal of all enmity, and our admission into favor; thus intimating, that when God is reconciled all danger is past, and every thing good will befall us. Wherefore, faith apprehending the love of God has the promise both of the present and the future life, and ample security for all blessings (Eph. 2:14). The nature of this must be ascertained from the word. Faith does not promise us length of days, riches and honors (the Lord not having been pleased that any of these should be appointed us); but is contented with the assurance, that however poor we may be in regard to present comforts, God will never fail us. The chief security lies in the expectation of future life, which is placed beyond doubt by the word of God. Whatever be the miseries and calamities which await the children of God in this world, they cannot make his favor cease to be complete happiness. Hence, when we were desirous to express the sum of blessedness, we designated it by the favor of God, from which, as their source, all kinds of blessings flow. And we may observe throughout the Scriptures, that they refer us to the love of God, not only when they treat of our eternal salvation, but of any blessing whatever. For which reason David sings, that the loving-kindness of God experienced by the pious heart is sweeter and more to be desired than life itself (Ps. 63:3). In short, if we have every earthly comfort to a wish, but are uncertain whether we have the love or the hatred of God, our felicity will be cursed, and therefore miserable. But if God lift on us the light of his fatherly countenance, our very miseries will be blessed, inasmuch as they will become helps to our salvation. Thus Paul, after bringing together all kinds of adversity, boasts that they cannot separate us from the love of God: and in his prayers he uniformly begins with the grace of God as the source of all prosperity. In like manner, to all the terrors which assail us, David opposes merely the favor of God,—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me," (Ps. 23:4). And we feel that our minds always waver until, contented with the grace of God, we in it seek peace, and feel thoroughly persuaded of what is said in the psalm, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance," (Ps. 33:12).

29. Free promise we make the foundation of faith, because in it faith properly consists. For though it holds that God is always true, whether in ordering or forbidding, promising or threatening; though it obediently receive his commands, observe his prohibitions, and give heed to his threatening; yet it properly begins with promise, continues with it, and ends with it. It seeks life in God, life which is not found in commands or the denunciations of punishment, but in the promise of mercy. And this promise must be gratuitous; for a conditional promise, which throws us back upon our works, promises life only in so far as we find it existing in ourselves. Therefore, if we would not have faith to waver and tremble, we must support it with the promise

of salvation, which is offered by the Lord spontaneously and freely, from a regard to our misery rather than our worth. Hence the Apostle bears this testimony to the Gospel, that it is the word of faith (Rom. 10:8). This he concedes not either to the precepts or the promises of the Law, since there is nothing which can establish our faith, but that free embassy by which God reconciles the world to himself. Hence he often uses faith and the Gospel as correlative terms, as when he says, that the ministry of the Gospel was committed to him for "obedience to the faith;" that "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes;" that "therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith," (Rom. 1:5, 16, 17). No wonder: for seeing that the Gospel is "the ministry of reconciliation," (2 Cor. 5:18), there is no other sufficient evidence of the divine favor, such as faith requires to know. Therefore, when we say, that faith must rest on a free promise, we deny not that believers accept and embrace the word of God in all its parts, but we point to the promise of mercy as its special object. Believers, indeed, ought to recognize God as the judge and avenger of wickedness; and yet mercy is the object to which they properly look, since he is exhibited to their contemplation as "good and ready to forgive," "plenteous in mercy," "slow to anger," "good to all," and shedding "his tender mercies over all his works". (Ps. 86:5; 103:8; 145:8, 9).

30. I stay not to consider the rabid objections of Pighius, and others like-minded, who inveigh against this restriction, as rending faith, and laying hold of one of its fragments. I admit, as I have already said, that the general object of faith (as they express it) is the truth of God, whether he threatens or gives hope of his favor. Accordingly, the Apostle attributes it to faith in Noah, that he feared the destruction of the world, when as yet it was not seen (Heb. 11:17). If fear of impending punishment was a work of faith, threatening ought not to be excluded in defining it. This is indeed true; but we are unjustly and calumniously charged with denying that faith has respect to the whole word of God. We only mean to maintain these two points,--that faith is never decided until it attain to a free promise; and that the only way in which faith reconciles us to God is by uniting us with Christ. Both are deserving of notice. We are inquiring after a faith which separates the children of God from the reprobate, believers from unbelievers. Shall every man, then, who believes that God is just in what he commands, and true in what he threatens, be on that account classed with believers? Very far from it. Faith, then, has no firm footing until it stand in the mercy of God. Then what end have we in view in discoursing of faith? Is it not that we may understand the way of salvation? But how can faith be saving, unless in so far as it in grafts us into the body of Christ? There is no absurdity, therefore, when, in defining it, we thus press its special object, and, by way of distinction, add to the generic character the particular mark which distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever. In short, the malicious have nothing to carp at in this doctrine, unless they are to bring the same censure against the Apostle Paul, who specially designates the Gospel as "the word of faith," (Rom. 10:8).

31. Hence again we infer, as has already been explained, that faith has no less need of the word than the fruit of a tree has of a living root; because, as David testifies, none can hope in God but those who know his name (Ps. 9:10). This knowledge, however, is not left to ever man's imagination, but depends on the testimony which God himself gives to his goodness. This the same Psalmist confirms in another passage, "Your salvation according to your word," (Ps. 119:41). Again, "Save me," "I hoped in your word," (Ps. 119:146, 147). Here we must attend to the relation of faith to the word, and to salvation as its consequence. Still, however, we exclude not the power of God. If faith cannot support itself in the view of this power, it never will give

Him the honor which is due. Paul seems to relate a trivial or very ordinary circumstance with regard to Abraham, when he says, that he believed that God, who had given him the promise of a blessed seed, was able also to perform it (Rom. 4:21). And in like manner, in another passage, he says of himself, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," (2 Tim. 1:12). But let any one consider with himself, how he is ever assailed with doubts in regard to the power of God, and he will readily perceive, that those who duly magnify it have made no small progress in faith. We all acknowledge that God can do whatsoever he pleases; but while every temptation, even the most trivial, fills us with fear and dread, it is plain that we derogate from the power of God, by attaching less importance to his promises than to Satan's threatenings against them.

This is the reason why Isaiah, when he would impress on the hearts of the people the certainty of faith, discourses so magnificently of the boundless power of God. He often seems, after beginning to speak of the hope of pardon and reconciliation, to digress, and unnecessarily take a long circuitous course, describing how wonderfully God rules the fabric of heaven and earth, with the whole course of nature; and yet he introduces nothing which is not appropriate to the occasion; because unless the power of God, to which all things are possible is presented to our eye, our ears malignantly refuse admission to the word, or set no just value upon it. We may add, that an effectual power is here meant; for piety, as it has elsewhere been seen, always makes a practical application of the power of God; in particular, keeps those works in view in which he has declared himself to be a Father. Hence the frequent mention in Scripture of redemption; from which the Israelites might learn, that he who had once been the author of salvation would be its perpetual guardian. By his own example, also, David reminds us, that the benefits which God has bestowed privately on any individual, tend to confirm his faith for the time to come; nay, that when God seems to have forsaken us, we ought to extend our view farther, and take courage from his former favors, as is said in another psalm, "I remember the days of old: I meditate on all your works," (Ps. 143:5). Again "I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember your wonders of old," (Ps. 77:11). But because all our conceptions of the power and works of God are evanescent without the word, we are not rash in maintaining, that there is no faith until God present us with clear evidence of his grace.

Here, however, a question might be raised as to the view to be taken of Sarah and Rebekah, both of whom, impelled as it would seem by zeal for the faith, went beyond the limits of the word. Sarah, in her eager desire for the promised seed, gave her maid to her husband. That she sinned in many respects is not to be denied; but the only fault to which I now refer is her being carried away by zeal, and not confining herself within the limits prescribed by the word. It is certain, however, that her desire proceeded from faith. Rebekah, again, divinely informed of the election of her son Jacob, procures the blessing for him by a wicked stratagem; deceives her husband, who was a witness and minister of divine grace; forces her son to lie; by various frauds and impostures corrupts divine truth; in fine, by exposing his promise to scorn, does what in her lies to make it of no effect. And yet this conduct, however vicious and reprehensible, was not devoid of faith. She must have overcome many obstacles before she obtained so strong a desire of that which, without any hope of earthly advantage, was full of difficulty and danger. In the same way, we cannot say that the holy patriarch Isaac was altogether void of faith, in that, after he had been similarly informed of the honor transferred to the younger son, he still continues his predilection in favor of his first-born, Esau. These examples certainly show that error is often mingled with

faith; and yet that when faith is real, it always obtains the preeminence. For as the particular error of Rebekah did not render the blessing of no effect, neither did it nullify the faith which generally ruled in her mind, and was the principle and cause of that action. In this, nevertheless, Rebekah showed how prone the human mind is to turn aside whenever it gives itself the least indulgence. But though defect and infirmity obscure faith, they do not extinguish it. Still they admonish us how carefully we ought to cling to the word of God, and at the same time confirm what we have taught--viz. that faith gives way when not supported by the word, just as the minds of Sarah, Isaac, and Rebekah, would have lost themselves in devious paths, had not the secret restraint of Providence kept them obedient to the word.

32. On the other hand, we have good ground for comprehending all the promises in Christ, since the Apostle comprehends the whole Gospel under the knowledge of Christ, and declares that all the promises of God are in him yea, and amen. The reason for this is obvious. Every promise which God makes is evidence of his good will. This is invariably true, and is not inconsistent with the fact, that the large benefits which the divine liberality is constantly bestowing on the wicked are preparing them for heavier judgment. As they neither think that these proceed from the hand of the Lord, nor acknowledge them as his, or if they do so acknowledge them, never regard them as proofs of his favor, they are in no respect more instructed thereby in his mercy than brute beasts, which, according to their condition, enjoy the same liberality, and yet never look beyond it. Still it is true, that by rejecting the promises generally offered to them, they subject themselves to severer punishment. For though it is only when the promises are received in faith that their efficacy is manifested, still their reality and power are never extinguished by our infidelity or ingratitude. Therefore, when the Lord by his promises invites us not only to enjoy the fruits of his kindness, but also to meditate upon them, he at the same time declares his love. Thus we are brought back to our statement, that every promise is a manifestation of the divine favor toward us. Now, without controversy, God loves no man out of Christ. He is the beloved Son, in whom the love of the Father dwells, and from whom it afterwards extends to us. Thus Paul says "In whom he has made us accepted in the Beloved," (Eph. 1:6). It is by his intervention, therefore, that love is diffused so as to reach us. Accordingly, in another passage, the Apostle calls Christ "our peace," (Eph. 2:14), and also represents him as the bond by which the Father is united to us in paternal affection (Rom. 8:3). It follows, that whenever any promise is made to us, we must turn our eyes toward Christ. Hence, with good reasons Paul declares that in him all the promises of God are confirmed and completed (Rom. 15:8). Some examples are brought forward as repugnant to this view. When Naaman the Syrian made inquiry at the prophet as to the true mode of worshipping God, we cannot (it is said) suppose that he was informed of the Mediator, and yet he is commended for his piety (2 Kings 5:17-19). Nor could Cornelius, a Roman heathen, be acquainted with what was not known to all the Jews, and at best known obscurely. And yet his alms and prayers were acceptable to God (Acts 10:31), while the prophet by his answer approved of the sacrifices of Naaman. In both, this must have been the result of faith. In like manner, the eunuch to whom Philip was sent, had he not been endued with some degree of faith, never would have incurred the fatigue and expense of a long and difficult journey to obtain an opportunity of worship (Acts 8:27, 31); and yet we see how, when interrogated by Philip, he betrays his ignorance of the Mediator.

I admit that, in some respect, their faith was not explicit either as to the person of Christ, or the power and office assigned him by the Father. Still it is certain that they were imbued with principles which might give some, though a slender, foretaste of Christ. This should not be

thought strange; for the eunuch would not have hastened from a distant country to Jerusalem to an unknown God; nor could Cornelius, after having once embraced the Jewish religion, have lived so long in Judea without becoming acquainted with the rudiments of sound doctrine. In regard to Naaman, it is absurd to suppose that Elisha, while he gave him many minute precepts, said nothing of the principal matter. Therefore, although their knowledge of Christ may have been obscure, we cannot suppose that they had no such knowledge at all. They used the sacrifices of the Law, and must have distinguished them from the spurious sacrifices of the Gentiles, by the end to which they referred--viz. Christ.

33. A simple external manifestation of the word ought to be amply sufficient to produce faith, did not our blindness and perverseness prevent. But such is the proneness of our mind to vanity, that it can never adhere to the truth of God, and such its dullness, that it is always blind even in his light. Hence without the illumination of the Spirit the word has no effect; and hence also it is obvious that faith is something higher than human understanding. Nor were it sufficient for the mind to be illumined by the Spirit of God unless the heart also were strengthened and supported by his power. Here the Schoolmen go completely astray, dwelling entirely in their consideration of faith, on the bare simple assent of the understanding, and altogether overlooking confidence and security of heart. Faith is the special gift of God in both ways,--in purifying the mind so as to give it a relish for divine truth, and afterwards in establishing it therein. For the Spirit does not merely originate faith, but gradually increases it, until by its means he conducts us into the heavenly kingdom. "That good thing which was committed unto you," says Paul, "keep by the Holy Spirit which dwells in us," (2 Tim. 1:14). In what sense Paul says (Gal. 3:2), that the Spirit is given by the hearing of faith, may be easily explained. If there were only a single gift of the Spirit, he who is the author and cause of faith could not without absurdity be said to be its effect; but after celebrating the gifts with which God adorns his church, and by successive additions of faith leads it to perfection, there is nothing strange in his ascribing to faith the very gifts which faith prepares us for receiving. It seems to some paradoxical, when it is said that none can believe Christ save those to whom it is given; but this is partly because they do not observe how recondite and sublime heavenly wisdom is, or how dull the mind of man in discerning divine mysteries, and partly because they pay no regard to that firm and stable constancy of heart which is the chief part of faith.

34. But as Paul argues, "What man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man but the Spirit of God," (1 Cor. 2:11). If in regard to divine truth we hesitate even as to those things which we see with the bodily eye, how can we be firm and steadfast in regard to those divine promises which neither the eye sees nor the mind comprehends? Here human discernment is so defective and lost, that the first step of advancement in the school of Christ is to renounce it (Mt. 11:25; Luke 10:21). Like a veil interposed, it prevents us from beholding divine mysteries, which are revealed only to babes. "Flesh and blood" does not reveal them (Mt. 16:17). "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. 2:14). The supplies of the Holy Spirit are therefore necessary, or rather his agency is here the only strength. "For who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been his counselor?" (Rom. 11:34); but "The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God," (1 Cor. 2:10). Thus it is that we attain to the mind of Christ: "No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." "Every

man therefore that has heard, and learned of the Father, comes unto me. Not that any man has seen the Father, save he which is of God, he has seen the Father," (John 6:44, 45, 46). Therefore, as we cannot possibly come to Christ unless drawn by the Spirit, so when we are drawn we are both in mind and spirit exalted far above our own understanding. For the soul, when illumined by him, receives as it were a new eye, enabling it to contemplate heavenly mysteries, by the splendor of which it was previously dazzled. And thus, indeed, it is only when the human intellect is irradiated by the light of the Holy Spirit that it begins to have a taste of those things which pertain to the kingdom of God; previously it was too stupid and senseless to have any relish for them. Hence our Savior, when clearly declaring the mysteries of the kingdom to the two disciples, makes no impression till he opens their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:27, 45). Hence also, though he had taught the Apostles with his own divine lips, it was still necessary to send the Spirit of truth to instill into their minds the same doctrine which they had heard with their ears. The word is, in regard to those to whom it is preached, like the sun which shines upon all, but is of no use to the blind. In this matter we are all naturally blind; and hence the word cannot penetrate our mind unless the Spirit, that internal teacher, by his enlightening power make an entrance for it.

35. Having elsewhere shown more fully, when treating of the corruption of our nature, how little able men are to believe (Book 2, c. 2, 3), I will not fatigue the reader by again repeating it. Let it suffice to observe, that the spirit of faith is used by Paul as synonymous with the very faith which we receive from the Spirit, but which we have not naturally (2 Cor. 4:13). Accordingly, he prays for the Thessalonians, "that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power," (2 Thess. 1:2). Here, by designating faith the work of God, and distinguishing it by way of epithet, appropriately calling it his good pleasure, he declares that it is not of man's own nature; and not contented with this, he adds, that it is an illustration of divine power. In addressing the Corinthians, when he tells them that faith stands not "in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God," (1 Cor. 2:4), he is no doubt speaking of external miracles; but as the reprobate are blinded when they behold them, he also includes that internal seal of which he elsewhere makes mention. And the better to display his liberality in this most excellent gift, God does not bestow it upon all promiscuously, but, by special privilege, imparts it to whom he will. To this effect we have already quoted passages of Scripture, as to which Augustine, their faithful expositor, exclaims (De Verbo Apost. Serm. 2) "Our Savior, to teach that faith in him is a gift, not a merit, says, 'No man can come to me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him,' (John 6:44). It is strange when two persons hear, the one despises, the other ascends. Let him who despises impute it to himself; let him who ascends not arrogate it to himself" In another passage he asks, "Wherefore is it given to the one, and not to the other? I am not ashamed to say, This is one of the deep things of the cross. From some unknown depth of the judgments of God, which we cannot scrutinize, all our ability proceeds. I see that I am able; but how I am able I see not:--this far only I see, that it is of God. But why the one, and not the other? This is too great for me: it is an abyss a depth of the cross. I can cry out with wonder; not discuss and demonstrate." The whole comes to this, that Christ, when he produces faith in us by the agency of his Spirit, at the same time ingrafts us into his body, that we may become partakers of all blessings.

36. The next thing necessary is, that what the mind has taken in be transferred into the heart. The word is not received in faith when it merely flutters in the brain, but when it has taken deep root

in the heart, and become an invincible bulwark to withstand and repel all the assaults of temptation. But if the illumination of the Spirit is the true source of understanding in the intellect, much more manifest is his agency in the confirmation of the heart; inasmuch as there is more distrust in the heart than blindness in the mind; and it is more difficult to inspire the soul with security than to imbue it with knowledge. Hence the Spirit performs the part of a seal, sealing upon our hearts the very promises, the certainty of which was previously impressed upon our minds. It also serves as an earnest in establishing and confirming these promises. Thus the Apostle says, "In whom also, after that you believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance," (Eph. 1:13, 14). You see how he teaches that the hearts of believers are stamped with the Spirit as with a seal, and calls it the Spirit of promise, because it ratifies the gospel to us. In like manner he says to the Corinthians, "God has also sealed us, and given the guarantee of the Spirit in our hearts," (2 Cor. 1:22). And again, when speaking of a full and confident hope, he founds it on the "guarantee of the Spirit," (2 Cor. 5:5).

37. I am not forgetting what I formerly said, and experience brings daily to remembrance--viz. that faith is subject to various doubts, so that the minds of believers are seldom at rest, or at least are not always tranquil. Still, whatever be the engines by which they are shaken, they either escape from the whirlpool of temptation, or remain steadfast in their place. Faith finds security and protection in the words of the Psalm, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea," (Ps. 46:1, 2). This delightful tranquillity is elsewhere described: "I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustains me," (Ps. 3:5). Not that David was uniformly in this joyful frame; but in so far as the measure of his faith made him sensible of the divine favor, he glories in intrepidly despising every thing that could disturb his peace of mind. Hence the Scripture, when it exhorts us to faith, bids us be at peace. In Isaiah it is said, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," (Is. 30:15); and in the psalm, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Corresponding to this is the passage in the Hebrews, "You have need of patience," (Heb. 10:36).

38. Hence we may judge how pernicious is the scholastic dogma, that we can have no stronger evidence of the divine favor toward us than moral conjecture, according as each individual deems himself not unworthy of it. Doubtless, if we are to determine by our works in what way the Lord stands affected towards us, I admit that we cannot even get the length of a feeble conjecture: but since faith should accord with the free and simple promise, there is no room left for ambiguity. With what kind of confidence, pray, shall we be armed if we reason in this way--God is propitious to us, provided we deserve it by the purity of our lives? But since we have reserved this subject for discussion in its proper place, we shall not prosecute it farther at present, especially seeing it is already plain that nothing is more adverse to faith than conjecture, or any other feeling akin to doubt. Nothing can be worse than their perversion of the passage of Ecclesiastes, which is ever in their mouths: "No man knows either love or hatred by all that is before them," (Eccl. 9:1). For without insisting that the passage is erroneously rendered in the common version--even a child cannot fail to perceive what Solomon's meaning is--viz. that any one who would ascertain, from the present state of things, who are in the favor or under the displeasure of God, labors in vain, and torments himself to no useful purpose, since "All things come alike to all;" "to him that sacrifices, and to him that sacrifices not:" and hence God does not

always declare his love to those on whom he bestows uninterrupted prosperity, nor his hatred against those whom he afflicts. And it tends to prove the vanity of the human intellect, that it is so completely in the dark as to matters which it is of the highest importance to know. Thus Solomon had said a little before, "That which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: as the one dies, so dies the other," (Eccl. 3:19). Were any one thence to infer that we hold the immortality of the soul by conjecture merely, would he not justly be deemed insane? Are those then sane who cannot obtain any certainty of the divine favor, because the carnal eye is now unable to discern it from the present appearance of the world?

39. But, they say, it is rash and presumptuous to pretend to an undoubted knowledge of the divine will. I would grant this, did we hold that we were able to subject the incomprehensible counsel of God to our feeble intellect. But when we simply say with Paul, "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God," (1 Cor. 2:12), what can they oppose to this, without offering insult to the Spirit of God? But if it is idolatry to charge the revelation which he has given us with falsehood, or uncertainty, or ambiguity, how can we be wrong in maintaining its certainty? But they still exclaim, that there is great foolish boldness in our presuming to glory in possessing the Spirit of God. Who could believe that these men, who desire to be thought the masters of the world, could be so stupid as to err thus grossly in the very first principles of religion? To me, indeed, it would be incredible, did not their own writings make it manifest. Paul declares that those only are the sons of God who are led by his Spirit (Rom. 8:14); these men would have those who are the sons of God to be led by their own, and void of the divine Spirit. He tells us that we call God our Father in terms dictated by the Spirit, who alone bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God (Rom. 8:16); they, though they forbid us not to invoke God, withdraw the Spirit, by whose guidance he is duly invoked. He declares that those only are the servants of Christ who are led by the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9); they imagine a Christianity which has no need of the Spirit of Christ. He holds out the hope of a blessed resurrection to those only who feel His Spirit dwelling in them (Rom. 8:11); they imagine hope when there is no such feeling. But perhaps they will say, that they deny not the necessity of being endued with the Spirit, but only hold it to be the part of modesty and humility not to recognize it. What, then, does Paul mean, when he says to the Corinthians, "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know you not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. 13:5) John, moreover, says, "Hereby we know that he abides in us by the Spirit which he has given us," (1 John 3:24). And what else is it than to bring the promises of Christ into doubt, when we would be deemed servants of Christ without having his Spirit, whom he declared that he would pour out on all his people? (Isa. 44:3). What! do we not insult the Holy Spirit, when we separate faith, which is his peculiar work, from himself? These being the first basic principles of religion, it is the most wretched blindness to charge Christians with arrogance, for presuming to glory in the presence of the Holy Spirit; a glorying without which Christianity itself does not exist. The example of these men illustrates the truth of our Savior's declaration, that his Spirit "the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him; but ye know him, for he dwells with you, and shall be in you," (John 14:17).

40. That they may not attempt to undermine the certainty of faith in one direction only, they attack it in another--viz. that though it be lawful for the believer, from his actual state of righteousness, to form a judgment as to the favor of God, the knowledge of final perseverance

still remains in suspense. An admirable security, indeed, is left us, if, for the present moment only, we can judge from moral conjecture that we are in grace, but know not how we are to be tomorrow! Very different is the language of the Apostle, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," (Rom. 8:38). They endeavor to evade the force of this by frivolously pretending that the Apostle had this assurance by special revelation. They are too well caught thus to escape; for in that passage he is treating not of his individual experience, but of the blessings which all believers in common derive from faith. But then Paul in another passage alarms us by the mention of our weakness and inconstancy, "Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall," (1 Cor. 10:12). True; but this he says not to inspire us with terror, but that we may learn to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, as Peter explains (1 Pet. 5:6). Then how assuming is it to limit the certainty of faith to a point of time; seeing it is the property of faith to pass beyond the whole course of this life, and stretch forward to a future immortality? Therefore since believers owe it to the favor of God, that, enlightened by his Spirit, they, through faith, enjoy the prospect of heavenly life; there is so far from an approach to arrogance in each glorying, that any one ashamed to confess it, instead of testifying modesty or submission, rather betrays extreme ingratitude, by maliciously suppressing the divine goodness.

41. Since the nature of faith could not be better or more clearly shown than by the substance of the promise on which it leans as its proper foundation, and without which it immediately falls or rather vanishes away, we have derived our definition from it--a definition, however, not at all at variance with that definition, or rather description, which the Apostle accommodates to his discourse, when he says that faith is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," (Heb. 11:1). For by the term substance (upo'stasis), he means a kind of prop on which the pious mind rests and leans. As if he had said, that faith is a kind of certain and secure possession of those things which are promised to us by God; unless we prefer taking upo'stasis for confidence. I have no objection to this, though I am more inclined to adopt the other interpretation, which is more generally received. Again, to intimate that until the last day, when the books will be opened (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:12), the things pertaining to our salvation are too lofty to be perceived by our sense, seen by our eyes, or handled by our hands, and that in the meantime there is no possible way in which these can be possessed by us, unless we can transcend the reach of our own intellect, and raise our eye above all worldly objects; in short, surpass ourselves, he adds that this certainty of possession relates to things which are only hoped for, and therefore not seen. For as Paul says (Rom. 8:24), "A hope that is seen is not hope," that we "hope for that we see not." When he calls it the evidence or proof, or, as Augustine repeatedly renders it (see Hom. in Joann. 79 and 95), the conviction of things not present, the Greek term being e'lennchos, it is the same as if he had called it the appearance of things not apparent, the sight of things not seen, the clearness of things obscure, the presence of things absent, the manifestation of things hid. For the mysteries of God (and to this class belong the things which pertain to our salvation) cannot be discerned in themselves, or, as it is expressed, in their own nature; but we behold them only in his word, of the truth of which we ought to be as firmly persuaded as if we held that every thing which it says were done and completed. But how can the mind rise to such a perception and foretaste of the divine goodness, without being at the same time wholly inflamed with love to God? The abundance of joy which God has treasured up for those who fear him cannot be truly known without making a most powerful impression. He who

is thus once affected is raised and carried entirely towards him. Hence it is not strange that no sinister perverse heart ever experiences this feeling, by which, transported to heaven itself, we are admitted to the most hidden treasures of God, and the holiest recesses of his kingdom, which must not be profaned by the entrance of a heart that is impure. For what the Schoolmen say as to the priority of love to faith and hope is a mere dream (see Sent. Lib. 3 Dist. 25, &c.) since it is faith alone that first engenders love. How much better is Bernard, "The testimony of conscience, which Paul calls 'the rejoicing' of believers, I believe to consist in three things. It is necessary, first of all, to believe that you cannot have remission of sins except give by God; secondly, that you cannot have any good work at all unless he also give it; lastly, that you cannot by any works merit eternal life unless it also be freely given," (Bernard, Sermon 1 in Annuntiatione). Shortly after he adds, "These things are not sufficient, but are a kind of commencement of faith; for while believing that your sins can only be forgiven by God, you must also hold that they are not forgiven until persuaded by the testimony of the Holy Spirit that salvation is treasured up for us; that as God pardons sins, and gives merits, and after merits rewards, you cannot halt at that beginning." But these and other topics will be considered in their own place; let it suffice at present to understand what faith is.

42. Wherever this living faith exists, it must have the hope of eternal life as its inseparable companion, or rather must of itself beget and manifest it; where it is wanting, however clearly and elegantly we may discourse of faith, it is certain we have it not. For if faith is (as has been said) a firm persuasion of the truth of God--a persuasion that it can never be false, never deceive, never be in vain, those who have received this assurance must at the same time expect that God will perform his promises, which in their conviction are absolutely true; so that in one word hope is nothing more than the expectation of those things which faith previously believes to have been truly promised by God. Thus, faith believes that God is true; hope expects that in due season he will manifest his truth. Faith believes that he is our Father; hope expects that he will always act the part of a Father towards us. Faith believes that eternal life has been given to us; hope expects that it will one day be revealed. Faith is the foundation on which hope rests; hope nourishes and sustains faith. For as no man can expect any thing from God without previously believing his promises, so, on the other hand, the weakness of our faith, which might grow weary and fall away, must be supported and cherished by patient hope and expectation. For this reason Paul justly says, "We are saved by hope," (Rom. 8:24). For while hope silently waits for the Lord, it restrains faith from hastening on with too much precipitation, confirms it when it might waver in regard to the promises of God or begin to doubt of their truth, refreshes it when it might be fatigued, extends its view to the final goal, so as not to allow it to give up in the middle of the course, or at the very outset. In short, by constantly renovating and reviving, it is ever furnishing more vigor for perseverance. On the whole, how necessary the reinforcements of hope are to establish faith will better appear if we reflect on the numerous forms of temptation by which those who have embraced the word of God are assailed and shaken. First, the Lord often keeps us in suspense, by delaying the fulfillment of his promises much longer than we could wish. Here the office of hope is to perform what the prophet enjoins, "Though it does not come, wait for it," (Hab. 2:3). Sometimes he not only permits faith to grow weary, but even openly manifests his displeasure. Here there is still greater necessity for the aid of hope, that we may be able to say with another prophet, "I will wait upon the Lord that hides his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him," (Isaiah 8:17). Scoffers also rise up, as Peter tells us, and ask, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the

beginning of the creation," (2 Pet. 3:4). No, the world and the flesh suggest the same thing. Here faith must be supported by the patience of hope, and fixed on the contemplation of eternity, consider that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," (2 Pet. 3:8; Ps. 90:4).

43. On account of this connection and affinity Scripture sometimes confounds the two terms faith and hope. For when Peter says that we are "kept by the power of God through faith until salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times" (1 Pet. 1:5), he attributes to faith what more properly belongs to hope. And not without cause, since we have already shown that hope is nothing else than the food and strength of faith. Sometimes the two are joined together, as in the same Epistles "That your faith and hope might be in God," (1 Pet. 1:21). Paul, again, in the Epistle to the Philippians, from hope deduces expectation (Phil. 1:20), because in hoping patiently we suspend our wishes until God manifest his own time. The whole of this subject may be better understood from the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to which I have already made reference to. Paul, in another passage, though not in strict propriety of speech, expresses the same thing in these words, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," (Gal. 5:5); that is, after embracing the testimony of the Gospel as to free love, we wait till God openly manifest what is now only an object of hope. It is now obvious how absurdly Peter Lombard lays down a double foundation of hope--viz. the grace of God and the merit of works (Sent. Lib. 3, Dist. 26). Hope cannot have any other object than faith has. But we have already shown clearly that the only object of faith is the mercy of God, to which, to use the common expression, it must look with both eyes. But it is worth while to listen to the strange reason which he adduces. If you presume, says he, to hope for any thing without merit, it should be called not hope, but presumption. Who, dear reader, does not detest the gross stupidity which calls it rashness, and presumption to confide in the truth of God? The Lord desires us to expect every thing from his goodness and yet these men tell us, it is presumption to rest in it. O teacher, worthy of the pupils, whom you found in these insane raving schools! Seeing that, by the oracles of God, sinners are enjoined to entertain the hope of salvation, let us willingly presume so far on his truth as to cast away all confidence in our works, and trusting in his mercy, venture to hope. He who has said, "According to your faith be it unto you," (Mt. 9:29), will never deceive.

8.2. JOHN CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES ON THE HOLY SPIRIT⁴CALVIN COMMENTARIES ON GENESIS 1:2⁵

2. *And the earth was without form and void.* I shall not be very anxious about the exposition of these two epithets, תוהו, (*tohu*,) and בוהו, (*bohu*.) The Hebrews use them when they designate anything empty and confused, or vain, and nothing worth. Undoubtedly Moses placed them both in opposition to all those created objects which pertain to the form, the ornament and the perfection of the world. Were we now to take away, I say, from the earth all that God added after the time here alluded to, then we should have this rude and unpolished, or rather shapeless chaos. Therefore I regard what he immediately subjoins that “darkness was upon the face of the abyss,” as a part of that confused emptiness: because the light began to give some external appearance to the world. For the same reason he calls it the *abyss* and *waters*, since in that mass of matter nothing was solid or stable, nothing distinct.

And the Spirit of God. Interpreters have wrested this passage in various ways. The opinion of some that it means the wind, is too frigid to require refutation. They who understand by it the Eternal Spirit of God, do rightly; yet all do not attain the meaning of Moses in the connection of his discourse; hence arise the various interpretations of the participle מרחפת, (*merachpeth*). I will, in the first place, state what (in my judgment) Moses intended. We have already heard that before God had perfected the world it was an undigested mass; he now teaches that the power of the Spirit was necessary in order to sustain it. For this doubt might occur to the mind, how such a disorderly heap could stand; seeing that we now behold the world preserved by government, or order. He therefore asserts that this mass, however confused it might be, was made stable, for the time, by the secret efficacy of the Spirit. Now there are two meanings of the Hebrew word which suit the present place; either that the spirit moved and agitated itself over the waters, for the sake of putting forth vigor; or that He brooded over them to cherish them. Inasmuch as it makes little difference in the result, whichever of these explanations is preferred, let the reader's judgment be left free. But if that chaos required the secret inspiration of God to prevent its speedy dissolution; how could this order, so fair and distinct, subsist by itself, unless it derived strength elsewhere? Therefore, that Scripture must be fulfilled,

‘Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created, and you shalt renew the face of the earth,’ (Psalm 104:30), so, on the other hand, as soon as the Lord takes away his Spirit, all things return to their dust and vanish away, (Psalm 104:29).

⁴ Calvin's Commentaries are copied from CCEL.org.

⁵ Genesis translated by John King (Baker, 1996 edition). Word modifications made by Neal Hegeman.

CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON PSALM 139:1-16⁶

In this Psalm David, that he may dismiss the deceptive coverings under which most men take refuge, and rids himself of hypocrisy, insists at large upon the truth that nothing can elude the divine observation, a truth which he illustrates from the original formation of man, since he who fashioned us in our mother's womb, and imparted to every member its particular office and function, cannot possibly be ignorant of our actions. Quickened by this meditation to a due reverential fear of God, he declares himself to have no sympathy with the ungodly and profane, and asks God, in the confidence of conscious integrity, not to forsake him in this life.

To the chief Musician, a Psalm of David.

 Psalm 139:1-6

1. O Jehovah! you have searched me, and know me. 2. You have known my down sitting and mine uprising, you understand my thought afar off. 3. You know my path, and my lying clown, and are acquainted with all my ways. 4. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo! O Lord! you know it altogether. 5. You have shut me up behind and before, and have laid your hand upon me. 6. Your knowledge is wonderfully above me: it is high, I cannot attain to it.

1. "O Jehovah! you have searched me." David declares, in the outset of this Psalm, that he does not come before God with any idea of its being possible to succeed by deception, as hypocrites will take advantage of secret refuges to advance sinful desires, but that he voluntarily lays bare his innermost heart for inspection, as one convinced of the impossibility of deceiving God. It is yours, he says, O God! to discover every secret thought, nor is there anything which can escape your notice, He then insists upon particulars, to show that his whole life was known to God, who watched him in all his movements, when he slept, when he arose, or when he walked abroad. The word, *rea*, which we have rendered thought, also means, a friend or companion, on which account some read "you know what is near me afar off," a meaning more to the point than any other, if it could be supported by example. The reference would then be very appropriately to the fact that the most distant objects are contemplated as near by God. Some read, beforehand, in which meaning the Hebrew word is elsewhere taken, as if he had said, "O Lord, every thought which I conceive in my heart is already known to you beforehand." But I prefer the other meaning, that God is not confined to heaven, taking a rest and indifferent to human concerns, according to the Epicurean idea, and that however far away we may be from him, he is never far away from us.

The verb, *zarah*, means to winnow as well as to compass, so that we may very properly read the third verse "you winnow my ways," a figurative expression to denote the bringing of anything which is unknown to light. The reader is left to his own option, for the other rendering which I have adopted is also appropriate. There has been also a difference of opinion amongst interpreters as to the last clause of the verse. The verb, *sachan*, in the Hiphil conjugation, as here, signifies to render successful, which has led some to think that David here thanks God for favoring his actions with success; but this is a sense which does not at all go according to the scope

⁶ Taken from CCEL.org, translated by James Anderson. Modifications in word usage made by Neal Hegeman.

of the Psalmist in the context, for he is not speaking of thanksgiving. Equally forced is the meaning given to the words by others. You have made me to get acquainted or accustomed with your ways; as if he praised God for being endued with wisdom and counsel. Though the verb be in the Hiphil, I have therefore felt no hesitation in assigning it a neuter meaning, "Lord, you art accustomed to my ways, so that they are familiar to you."

4. "For there is not a word," etc. The words admit a double meaning. Accordingly some understand them to imply that God knows what, we are about to say before the words are formed on our tongue; others, that though we speak not a word, and try by silence to conceal our secret intentions, we cannot escape his notice. Either rendering amounts to the same thing, and it is of no consequence which we adopt. The idea meant to be conveyed is, that while the tongue is the index of thought to man, being the great medium of communication, God, who knows the heart, is independent of words. And use is made of the demonstrative particle lo! is to indicate emphatically that the innermost recesses of our spirit are accessible to his view.

In verse five some read, "behind and before you hast fashioned me"; but, tsur, often signifies to shut up, and David, there can be no doubt, means that he was surrounded on every side, and so kept in sight by God, that he could not escape anywhere.. One who finds the way blocked turns back; but David found himself hedged in behind as well as before. The other clause of the verse has the same meaning; for those put a very forced interpretation upon it who think that it refers to God's fashioning us, and applying his hand in the sense of an artizan to his work; nor does this suit with the context. And it is much better to understand it as asserting that God by his hand, laid as it were upon men, holds them strictly under his inspection, so that they cannot move a hair's width without his knowledge.

6. "Your knowledge is wonderful above me." Two meanings may be attached to: mimmenni. We may read, upon me, or, in relation to me, and understand David to mean that God's knowledge is seen to be wonderful in forming such a creature as man, who, to use an old saying, may be called a little world in himself; nor can we think without astonishment of the skilled craftsmanship apparent in the structure of the human body, and of the excellent endowments with which the human soul is invested. But the context demands another interpretation; and we are to suppose that David, following the same idea upon which he had already insisted, exclaims against the folly of measuring God's knowledge by our own, when it rises far above us. Many when they hear God spoken of conceive of him as like unto themselves, and such presumption is most condemnable. Very commonly they will not allow his knowledge to be greater than what comes up to their own apprehensions of things. David, on the contrary, confesses it to be beyond his comprehension, virtually declaring that words could not express this truth of the absoluteness with which all things stand patent to the eye of God, this being a knowledge having "neither bound nor measure."

Psalm 139:7-12

7. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Where shall I flee from your face? 8. If I ascend up into heavens, you are there; if I lie down in the sepulcher, lo! you are there. 9. Shall I take the wings of the morning, that I may dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea? 10. Even there shall your hand lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. 11. If I shall say; at least the darkness shall cover me,

and the night shall be light for me; 12. Even the darkness shall not hide from you, and the night shall be lightened up as day, and darkness as the light.

7. "Where shall I go from your Spirit?" I consider that David follows the same idea of it being impossible that men by any subterfuge should elude the eye of God. By the Spirit of God we are not here, as in several other parts of Scripture, to conceive of his power merely, but rather his understanding and knowledge. In man the spirit is the seat of intelligence, and so it is here in reference to God, as is plain from the second part of the sentence, where by the face of God is meant his knowledge of us or inspection. David means in short that he could not change from one place to another without God seeing him, and following him with his eyes as he moved. They misapply the passage who think it as a proof of the immensity of God's essence; for though it be an undoubted truth that the glory of the Lord fills heaven and earth, this was not at present in the view of the Psalmist, but the truth that God's eye penetrates heaven and hell, so that, hide in whatever obscure corner of the world he might hide, he must be discovered by him. Accordingly he tells us that though he should fly to heaven, or lurk in the lowest abysses, from above or from below all was naked and manifest before God. The wings of the morning, or of Lucifer, is a beautiful metaphor, for when the sun rises on the earth, it transmits its radiance suddenly to all regions of the world, as with the swiftness of flight. The same figure is employed in Malachi 4:2. And the idea is, that though one should fly with the speed of light, he could find no recess where he would be beyond the reach of divine power. For by hand we are to understand power, and the assertion is to the effect that should man attempt to withdraw from the observation of God, it were easy for him to arrest and draw back the fugitive.

11. "If I shall say," etc. David represents himself as a man using every possible method to make his escape from a situation of embarrassment. So having acknowledged that it was vain to dream of flight, he thinks of another remedy, and says, if no speed of mine can bear me out of the range of God's vision, yet, on the supposition of light being removed, the darkness might cover me, that I might have a short breath of relief. But this also he declares to be hopeless, as God sees equally well in the deepest darkness as at noon-day. It is a mistake in my opinion to consider, as some have done, that the two clauses of the verse are to be taken separately, and read, If I shall say the darkness will cover me, even the night shall be as light before me, meaning that darkness would be converted into light, and so though he saw nothing himself, he would stand manifest before the eye of God. David is rather to be considered as in both clauses expressing what he might be supposed to feel desirous of, and intimates that, could he only find any covert or hiding, he would avail himself of the license; if I shall say, at least the darkness will cover me, and the night be as light for me, that is, in the sense in which it is so to the robbers or wild beasts of the forest, who then range at greater liberty. That this is the proper construction of the words we may infer from the particle, gam. If any one should think it a very unnecessary observation to say that as concerns God there is no difference between light and darkness, it is enough to remind him that all observation proves with what reluctance and extreme difficulty men are brought to come forward openly and unreservedly into God's presence. In words we all grant that God is omniscient; still we do not take this into account, in so far as we do not mind mocking God, and lack even that reverence of him as we relate to our fellow-creatures. We are ashamed to let men know and witness our sins; but we are as indifferent to what God may think of us, as if our sins were covered and veiled from his inspection. This infatuation if not strongly condemned will soon change light, so far as we are concerned, into darkness, and therefore David insists upon the

subject at length in order to refute our false apprehensions. It should be our concern to apply the given reproofs, and stir ourselves up by them, when we get comfortable.

Psalm 139:13-16

13. For you have created my inner being; you have knit me together in my mother's womb, 14. I will praise you; for I have been made very wonderful; marvellous are your works, and my soul knows them well. 15. My frame was not hid from you, which you made in secret: I was woven together in the lowest parts of the earth. 16. Your eyes saw my unformed being; all my days are written in your book even before they came to be.

13. "For you have created my inner being." Apparently he pursues the same subject, although he carries it out somewhat farther, declaring that we need not be surprised at God's knowledge of the most secret thoughts of men, since he formed their hearts and their inner being. He thus represents God as sitting as king in the inner most being of man, as the center of his being, and shows that it should not surprise us all the windings and recesses of our hearts are known to him who, when we were inclosed in our mother's womb, saw us as clearly and perfectly as if we had stood before him in the light of mid-day. This allows us to understand the intention by which David continues to speak of man's original formation, its scope is the same in the verse which follows, where, with some ambiguity in the terms employed, it is sufficiently clear and obvious that David means that he had been fashioned in a wonderful way, and is calculated to motivate both fear and admiration, so that he breaks out into the praises of God. One great reason of the carnal security into which we fall, is our not considering how singularly we were fashioned at first by our Divine Maker. From this particular instance David is led to refer in general to all the works of God, which are likewise wonderful and meant to draw our attention to him. The true and proper view to take of the works of God, as I have observed elsewhere, is that which ends in wonder. His declaration to the effect that his soul should very well know these wonders, which far transcend human comprehension, means no more than that with humble and sober application he would give his attention and talents to obtaining such an apprehension of the wonderful works of God as might end in adoring the immensity of his glory. The knowledge he means, therefore, is not that which professes to comprehend what, under the name of wonders, he confesses to be incomprehensible, nor of that kind which philosophers presumptuously pretend to, as if they could solve every mystery of God, but simply to give religious attention to the works of God which motives us to the duty of thanksgiving.

15. My frame was not hid from you. Since nothing is hid from God David begins to prove from the way in which man is at first formed, and points out God's superiority to other artist in this, that while they must have their work set before their eyes before they can form it, he fashioned us in our mother's womb. It is of little importance whether we read my strength or my bone (firmae), though I prefer the latter reading. He next likens the womb of the mother to the lowest caverns or recesses of the earth. Should an artist intend to begin a work in some dark cave where there was no light to assist him, how would he set his hand to it? In what way would he proceed? and what kind of workmanship would it prove to be? But God makes the most perfect work of all in the dark, for as he fashions man in mother's womb. The verb, rakam, which means weave together, is employed to amplify and enhance what the Psalmist had just said. David no doubt means figuratively to express the inconceivable skill which appears in the formation of the

human body. When we examine it, even to the nails on our fingers, there is nothing which could be altered, without felt inconveniency, as at something disjointed or put out of place; and what, then, if we would examine each individual part? Where is the embroiderer who with all his industry and ingenuity could perform the hundredth part of this complicate and diversified structure? We need not then wonder if God, who formed man so perfectly in the womb, should have an exact knowledge of him after he is ushered into the world.

16. Your eyes saw by unformed being, etc. The embryo, when first conceived in the womb, has no form; and David speaks of God having known him when he was yet a shapeless mass, to *kuama*, as the Greeks term it; for *to embruon* is the name given to the foetus from the time of conception to birth inclusive. The argument is from the greater to the less. If he was known to God before he had grown to certain definite shape, much less could he now elude his observation. He adds, that all things were written in his book; that is, the whole process of his formation was well known to God. The term book is a figure taken from the practice common amongst men of helping their memory by means of books and commentaries. Whatever is an object of God's knowledge he is said to have registered in writing, for he needs no helps to remember. Interpreters are not agreed as to the second clause. Some read, *yamim*, in the nominative case, when days were made; the sense being, according to them "All my bones were written in your book, O God! from the beginning of the world, when days were first formed by you, and when as yet none of them actually existed." The other is the more natural meaning, That the different parts of the human body are formed in a succession of time; for in the first germ there is no arrangement of parts, or proportion of members, but it is developed, and takes its peculiar form progressively.

JOHN CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON JOEL 2:28-31⁷

28. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

We have explained why the prophet began with earthly blessings. One may indeed think that this order is not regular; for Christ does not in vain remind us, that the kingdom of God should be first sought, and that other things shall be added in its place, (Matthew 6;) for food, and every thing that belongs to this frail life, are, as it were, additions to the spiritual life. But the prophet intentionally mentioned first the evidence of God's favor in outward benefits; for we see how slow the perceptions of men are, and how lazy they are in seeking spiritual life. As, then, men rise to things above with so much difficulty, the prophet makes use of the best helps; and we must also be dealt with as we usually deal with children. For as there is not so much discernment in them as to be influenced by reasons, we set before them what is suitable to their weak and simple comprehension; so the prophet did; for he showed first that God would be kind to the Jews in food for the body, and having used this as a help, he then added, Afterwards I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh.

By these words the prophet reminds us, that people act absurdly when they are satisfied with vanishing things, when they ask of God nothing more excellent than to be pampered like brute animals; for in what do the children of God differ from asses and dogs, except they aspire after spiritual life? The prophet, then, after having set before them lower things, as though they were children, now brings before them a more solid doctrine, (for thus they were to be led,) and affords them a taste of the favor of God in its external signs. "Ascend, then, now," he says, "to spiritual life: for the fountain is one and the same; though when earthly benefits occupy and engross your attention, you undoubtedly pollute them. But God feeds you, not to fill and pamper you; for he would not have you to be like brute animals. Then know that your bodies are fed, and that God gives support to you, that ye may aspire after spiritual life; for he leads you to this as by the hand; be this then your object." We now, then, understand why the prophet did not at first speak of the spiritual grace of God; but he comes to it now. He began with temporal benefits, for it was needful that an untutored people should be thus led by degrees, that on account of their infirmity, sluggishness, and dullness, they might thus make better progress, until they understood that God would for this end be a Father to them.

Prayer.

Give us, Almighty God, that since we want so many helps while in this frail life, and as it is a shadowy life, we cannot pass a moment, except as you act at all times, supply through your bounty what is needful, -- O give, that we may so profit by your many benefits, that we may learn to raise our minds upwards, and ever aspire after celestial life, to which by your gospel you invites us so kindly and sweetly every day, that being gathered into your celestial kingdom, we may enjoy that perfect happiness, which has been procured for us by the blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

⁷ Taken from ccel.org. Translated by John Owen. Neal Hegeman modified word choice for contemporary readability and translation purposes.

Lecture Forty Five

“And it shall be, that I shall afterwards pour my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy and your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall see visions.” We mentioned in our last lecture why the prophet now at length speaks of the spiritual grace of God, having before spoken of earthly blessings. The order may seem indeed irregular; but it can be easily accounted for. The prophet said first that God, being reconciled to the people, would openly manifest this by external proofs, by restoring abundance of wine and corn; for the almost wearing out of the people by famine and want, being the evidence of God's vengeance, the prophet made the testimony of reconciliation to be in tokens of a contrary kind. But as the restoration of the Church consists not either in the fruitfulness of the land, or in the abundance of provisions, the Prophet now raises higher the thoughts of the godly, and makes them to look for the spiritual grace of God: therefore he says, I shall afterwards pour my Spirit upon all flesh

The prophet, no doubt, promises here something greater than what the fathers under the Law had experienced. The gift of the Spirit, we know, was enjoyed even by the ancients; but the prophet promises not what the faithful had before found; but, as we have said, something greater: and this may easily be gathered from the word here used, "pour out;" for "shephek" means not to distill, but to pour forth in great abundance; and God did not pour out his Holy Spirit so abundantly and so largely under the law as after the manifestation of Christ. Since, then, the gift of the Spirit was more copiously given to the Church after the advent of Christ, the prophet uses here an expression -- that God would pour out his Spirit.

Another circumstance is added, "upon all flesh." Though the prophets, as we know, had formerly their schools, yet they were but few in number. As then the gift of prophecy was rare among the Jews, the prophets in order to show that God would deal more bountifully to his new Church when restored, says, that he would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. He then intimates that all in common would be partakers of the gift of the Spirit, and of its rich abundance, while under the law a few had but a sparing taste of it. We now then perceive the design of the prophet; it was to make a manifest difference between the state of the ancient people and the state of the new Church, of the restoration of which he now speaks. The comparison is, that God would not only endow a few with his Spirit, but the whole mass of the people, and then that he would enrich his faithful with all kinds of gifts, so that the Spirit would seem to be poured forth in full abundance: I will then pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. We hence learn how absurdly the Greek interpreter has rendered this, "I will pour out from my Spirit:" for he diminishes this promise by saying, "From my Spirit," as though God promised here some small portion of his Spirit; while, on the contrary the prophet speaks of abundance, and intended to express it.

It follows, your sons and your daughters shall prophecy. The prophet now proceeds to explain what he had said, unfolding at large what he meant by the expression, "upon all flesh," which was this, -- that the whole people would prophesy, or that the gift of prophecy would be common and prevail every where among all the Jews, in a new and unusual manner. The ancients had also prophets though in number few; but now the prophet extends this gift and favor to all orders: your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, he says, so that he does not exclude women.

He afterwards mentions two kinds of prophesying, Your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see. "Young men" mean literally "chosen," "bechurim": but as in middle age strength prevails most in man, those who possess vigor and judgment, and as yet retain their strength, are called "chosen:" hence by "chosen" he means those of mature age. When God manifested himself to the prophets, it was usually done, we know, by dreams and visions, as it is said in Numbers 12: this was, as we may say, the ordinary method.

The Prophet now refers to these two modes of communication, and says, that the gift of prophecy would be common to men and women, to the old and those of middle age. We now perceive the import of this verse. There is then no difference between dreams and visions, only the prophet mentions these two kinds, that readers might better understand, that what the prophet had stated before generally would be common to all.

But I have already said that this prophecy must be referred to the advent of Christ; for we know that what is here described was not fulfilled until after Christ appeared in the world: and the Prophet now preaches of the new restoration of the Church, which we know, was suspended until the Gospel was proclaimed. Let us now then see whether God, after Christ was revealed, performed what he had spoken by his Prophet. Peter, in Acts 2, says, that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Spirit was sent. But it may be objected, that all were not endowed with the gift of prophecy, even when God opened all the treasures of his grace; and Paul says that they were not all prophets even when the Church especially flourished; and experience proves the same. How then could Peter say, that this -- that God would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, was fulfilled? To give a reply to this is not difficult: let us only remember, that the prophet speaks comparatively, as the Scripture is capable of doing. He affirms not in express terms that all would be partakers of this gift, but that in comparison with the ancient Church, this gift would be as it were common, and that it was so is well known: for if any one compares the ancient Church with that abundance which God promised to his people after Christ's advent, he will certainly find true what I say -- that the Spirit of God, who was given only to few under the law, was poured out upon all flesh. True then is what the prophet says, provided this contrast is to be understood -- that God was much more bountiful towards his new Church than formerly towards the fathers: for the prophets then were not many, but they were many under the gospel.

We must also remember that the prophet hyperbolically extols the grace of God; for such is our stupidity and dullness, that we can never sufficiently comprehend the grace of God, except it is set forth to us in hyperbolic language; nor is there indeed any excess in the thing itself, if we take a right view of it: but as we hardly understand the hundredth part of God's gifts, when he presents them before our eyes, it was needful to add a commendation, calculated to elevate our thoughts. The Spirit of God is then constrained to speak hyperbolically on account of our stubbornness or rather carelessness. We need not however to fear, lest our thoughts should go beyond the words; for when God would carry us above the heavens, we can hardly ascend two or three feet.

We now then perceive why the prophet mentions all flesh without exception: first, there were more prophets, as I have said, under the gospel than under the law; hence, the comparison is very suitable; --and, secondly the prophet speaks not here of the public office of teaching, for he calls those prophets who had not been called to teach, but who were endued with so much of the light

of truth, that they might be compared with the prophets; and certainly the knowledge which flourished in the primitive Church was such, that the least were in many respects equal to the ancient prophets; for what did God confer on the ancient prophets except the power of foretelling something to come? It was a special gift, and very limited. Besides these predictions are hardly worthy to be compared with the celestial wisdom made known in the gospel. Faith then after the coming of Christ, if rightly estimated according to its value, far excels the gift of prophecy. And so the prophet here, not without reason, dignifies with so honorable name those who were private men, and to whom was not intrusted the office of teaching among the people, but who were only illuminated; for their light was much superior to the gift of prophecy in many of those who lived under the law. We now understand what the prophet means when he makes the Spirit of God to be common, without distinction, to all the godly, so that they possess what excels the gift of prophesying.

Now as to the two kinds of gifts mentioned here, it must be observed, that the prophet spoke according to what was commonly known among the people: for as the Jews were accustomed to dreams and visions, the prophet therefore made use of these terms; and this manner of speaking occurs often in the prophets, and it ought to be borne in mind by us. When they speak of the worship of God, they mention sacrifices, 'They shall come and bring frankincense and gold; they shall lead camels laden with the wealth of the land.' In short, in their prophecies they raise altars and build a temple: and yet no such things were seen after Christ appeared: for the Gentiles came not to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices; no, shortly after the temple was destroyed, there was no altar among them, and the whole legal worship ceased. What then is to be understood by such expressions, as -- that people shall come from all places to sacrifice together? Even this -- They set forth under a visible form the spiritual worship of God. It is so in this place; as it was the usual way among the ancients that God manifested himself by dreams and visions to the prophets, so he says, your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see: but the prophet no doubt sets forth under these forms of speech that light of knowledge in which the new Church excelled after Christ appeared: he indeed compares the light of faith to prophecy, as we have already stated; but he accommodates his manner of speaking or his discourse to the comprehension of his people, for he knew whom he addressed. All the prophets have followed the same rule; 'There shall be offered a sacrifice,' says Malachi, 'from the rising to the setting of the sun.' What is this sacrifice? The Papists take this for the mass; "Then under the kingdom of Christ there is to be some sacrifice; and we do not now offer to God sheep and calves; it therefore follows, that there is to be the sacrifice of bread and wine:" and this is said, as though the prophet had thus refinedly philosophized on the word, sacrifice, while he was teaching a rude people according to what they could bear. But what he meant was, that the worship of God would be universal among all nations. The same thing is intended by Joel when he says, I shall pour forth my Spirit upon all flesh: your old men shall dreams dream, and your young men shall visions see. We now see the whole meaning of the prophet. Now it follows --

Joel 2:29

29. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.

As the particle *gam* amplifies in Hebrew, it seems singular that the prophet now limits to a few a gift common to all; for he had previously said, "Upon all flesh will I pour out my Spirit;" and now, "Upon servants and handmaids;" and he puts down "Also". If he had simply said "Upon servants and handmaids will I pour out my Spirit," there would have been no inconsistency, for it would have been the explanation of his former statement; for we know that what the prophet says of all men must be taken with exception, inasmuch as many who were unbelievers were without this gift, and even those who before excelled in some sort of divine knowledge; we indeed know that the Jews were blinded, and we also know that not all among the common people were partakers of this excellent gift. There is no doubt, therefore, but that this which is said of "all flesh," must be limited to the Church. It would not, then, have appeared strange, had the prophet now added, "Upon servants and handmaids;" but the particles, "And also," create difficulty: it is a way of speaking to enlarge on what has been said, but here it seems not to enlarge; for to pour out the Spirit upon all the people, is more than to pour it out on servants and handmaids. The solution is twofold: the particles are sometimes to be taken confirmatively. 'I have blessed him,' said Isaac of his son Jacob, 'and also blessed shall he be.' So in this place we may take the words of the prophet to be, yea surely, being a repetition serving to confirm what had been said: but I prefer another sense; for the prophet, I doubt not, meant here to add something more incredible than what he had previously said, "Upon servants and maid-servants will I pour out my Spirit," that is, even upon those who were before prophets; for they shall be enriched with a new gift, and shall gain increasing knowledge after the restoration of the Church, which is now approaching. We apprehend this to be the meaning of the Prophet. He had promised the grace of the Spirit to the whole body of the faithful, which appears, as I have said, from comparing the ancient state with our own: but now, after having spoken of the mass or the common people, he comes to the Prophets, who were superior to others who before performed the office of teaching, who attained rank and degree in the Church; these also shall gain accessions; that is, "My Spirit shall not only be conspicuous in the ignorant and the common people, but also in the prophets themselves."

Surely it is a greater thing when they are taught who were before superior to others, and whom the Lord had set over the Church, and when they appear as new men, after having received a gift which the Lord had not previously conferred on them. When, therefore, new light appears in such men, it is certainly a greater thing than when the Spirit is poured out on the common people. We now then see the prophet's meaning as to the servants and the handmaids.

He then repeats, "In those days," intimating that so sudden and incredible the change will be, that prophets will seem to have been before untaught men; for a much more excellent doctrine shall be given them. Then God shall so pour out his Spirits that all the ancient prophecies will appear obscure and of no value, compared with the great and extraordinary light which Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, will bring at his rising. And he mentions "handmaids", for there were, we know, prophetesses under the Law. Let us now go on –

Joel 2:30-31

30. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. 31. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord comes.

The prophet seems here to contradict himself; for he had hitherto promised that God would deal kindly and bountifully with his people; and every thing he has said tended to elevate the spirits of the people and fill them with joy: but now he seems again to threaten them with God's wrath and to strike miserable men with fear; who had not as yet a breathing time; for at the time the prophet spoke, the Jews, we know, were in the greatest sorrow. What then is his purpose in adding a new cause of grief, as though they had not sorrow and lamentation enough? But it is rather an admonition than a threatening. The prophet warns them of what would be, lest the faithful should promise themselves some happy condition in this world, and an exemption from all cares and troubles; for we know how prone men are to self-indulgence. When God promises any thing, they flatter themselves and harbor vain thoughts, as though they were beyond the reach of harm, and free from every grief and every evil. Such indulgence the flesh contrives for itself. Hence the prophet reminds us, that though God would bountifully feed his Church, supply his people with food, and testify by external tokens his paternal love, and though also he would pour out his Spirit, (a token far more remarkable,) yet the faithful would continue to be distressed with many troubles; for God designs not to deal too delicately with his Church on earth; but when he gives tokens of his kindness he at the same time mingles some exercises for patience, lest the faithful should become self-indulgent or sleep on earthly blessings, but that they may ever seek higher things.

We now then understand the prophet's design: he intends not to threaten the faithful, but rather to warn them, lest they should deceive themselves with empty dreams, or expect what is never to be, that is to enjoy a happy rest in this world. Besides, the prophet regards also another thing: we know indeed that men are hardly led to seek the grace of God, except when they are, as it were, forcibly drawn; hence spiritual life is neglected, and whatever belongs to the celestial kingdom, when we have all kinds of supplies on earth. The Prophet then commends here the spiritual grace of which he speaks, for this reason, -- that the condition of men would be miserable, were not the Lord to exhilarate their minds and refresh them with the comfort which we have already noticed. -- How so? There will be signs in heaven and on earth, the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and all things shall be in disorder and in horrible darkness. What then would become of men, were not God to shine on them by the grace of his Spirit, to support them under such a confusion in heaven and on earth, and to show himself to be their Father?

We then see that this was added for the fuller commendation of God's grace, that men might know, that they would be much more miserable if God called them not to himself by the shining light of his Spirit. And that this was the Prophet's design, we may learn from the discourse of Christ, which he made to his disciples a short time before his death. They asked what would be the sign of his coming, when he reminded them of the destruction of the temple, (Matthew 24:3-25:46). They thought that he would immediately accomplish that triumph of which they had heard, that they would be made participators of that eternal state of happiness of which Christ had so often spoken to them. Christ then warned them not to be deluded with so gross a notion. He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, and then declared that all these things would be only the presages of evils -- "These," he says, "shall be only the preludes; for tumults will arise, wars shall be, and all places will be full of calamities; in a word, there will be an immense mass of all evils." As Christ then corrected the mistake, with which the minds of the disciples were full off, so the prophet here checks vain imaginations, lest the faithful should think that Christ's kingdom

would be earthly, and fix their minds on corn and wine, on pleasures and quietness, on the conveniences of the present life: I will give you, he says, signs in heaven and on earth blood, fire, and dark clouds; the sun all be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before it shall come -- the day of Jehovah, great and terrible

We now see why the prophet adds here this sad catalogue, and how well these things harmonize together, -- that God would testify his paternal love by the manifestation of Christ, -- and that he would exhibit tokens of his wrath, which would fill the whole world with anxiety and fear.

What he says of blood and darkness is, no doubt, to be taken metaphorically for a disordered state of things; for we know that calamities are often compared to obscurity and darkness. It is the same as though he said, "So great will be the succession of evils, that the whole order of nature will seem to be subverted that the very elements will put on a new form; the sun, which illuminates the earth, will be turned into darkness, the moon into blood; the calamities which shall come will take away every token of God's kindness. Then nothing will remain, but that men, sunk, as it were, in the deepest abyss of all evils, will seek some spark of grace from God and never find it; for heaven will be dark, the earth will be covered with thick darkness." We then see that the prophet does not express what would be, word for word, nor is he to be understood as speaking, as they say, literally, but he uses a figurative mode of speaking, by which he sets forth such a dreadful state of things, that the very elements would put on a new appearance; for the sun would not any more perform its office, and the moon would refuse its light to the earth. As God, then, would take away all tokens of his favor, so the prophet, by blood, by darkness and by dark clouds, sets forth metaphorically that sorrows by which the minds of men would necessarily be possessed.

Now if any one asks, why by the coming of Christ was God's wrath more stirred up against men? for this may seem to be without reason. To this I answer, that it was, as it were accidental: for if Christ had been received as he ought to have been, if all embraced him with due reverence, he would have certainly been the giver, not only of spiritual grace, but also of earthly happiness. The happiness of all, then, would have in every respect been made complete by the coming of Christ, had not their wickedness and ingratitude kindled up anew the wrath of God; and we see what a flood of evils burst forth immediately after the preaching of the gospel. Now when we consider how formerly God severely afflicted his people, we cannot but say that much heavier have been the calamities inflicted on the world since the manifestation of Christ, -- whence this? Even because the world's ingratitude had arrived to its highest point, as indeed it is at this day: for the light of the gospel has gone forth again, and God has exhibited himself to the world as a Father, and we see how great is the wickedness and perversity of men in rejecting the gifts of God; we see some contemptuously rejecting the Gospel, and others impelled by satanic fury to resist the doctrine of Christ; we see them making a boast of their blasphemies, and we see them kindled with cruel rage and breathing slaughters against the children of God; we see the world full of ungodly men and of the despisers of God; we see an awful contempt of God's grace prevailing everywhere: we see such an unbridled licentiousness in wickedness, that it ought to make us ashamed of ourselves and weary of our life. Since, then, the world is so ungrateful for such a favor, is it a wonder that God should show more dreadful tokens of his vengeance? For certainly at this day, when we closely examine the condition of the world, we find that all are miserable, and even those who applaud themselves, and whom the world admire as semigods.

How can it be otherwise? The common people, doubtless, groan under their miseries, and that because God thus punishes the contempt of his grace, which he has again offered to us, and which is so unworthily rejected. Inasmuch, then, as so base an ingratitude on the part of men has provoked God's wrath, it is no wonder that the sound of his scourges is everywhere heard: for the servant who knows his lord's will and does it not, is worthy, as Christ declares, of heavier stripes, (Luke 12.) And what happens through the whole world is, that after God has shone by his gospel, after Christ has everywhere proclaimed reconciliation, they now openly fall away, and show that they prefer having God angry than propitious to them: for when the gospel is rejected, what else is it but to declare war against God, and to scorn and not to receive the reconciliation which God is ready to give, and of which he treats of his own accord with men?

It is then no wonder that the prophet says here, that the world would be full of darkness after the appearance of Christ, who is the Sun of Righteousness, and who has shone upon us with his salvation: but it was, as it were, accidental, that God exhibited himself with so much severity to the world, when yet it was the acceptable time, when it was the day of salvation and of goodwill; for the world suffered not that to be fulfilled which God had promised to us by the prophet Joel, nor received the Spirit of adoption, when they might have safely fled to God; no, when God was ready to cherish them in his own bosom. But since they were refractory and untractable, it was necessary for God to visit such perverseness in an unusual manner. It is no wonder then that the prophet says, that in those days there shall be signs in heaven and on earth, for the sun shall be turned into darkness, etc., before it shall come -- the day of Jehovah, great and terrible

It may be asked what day the prophet refers to: for he has until now spoken of the first coming of Christ; and there seems to be some inconsistency in this place. I answer, that the prophet includes the whole kingdom of Christ, from the beginning to the end; and this is well understood, and in other places we have stated that the prophets commonly speak in this manner: for when the discourse is concerning Christ's kingdom, they sometimes refer to its commencement only, and sometimes they speak of its termination; but they often mark out by one delineation the whole course of the kingdom of Christ, from its beginning to its end; and such is the case here. The prophet, by saying, 'After those days I will pour out my Spirit,' no doubt meant that this, as we have explained, would be fulfilled when Christ should commence his kingdom, and make it known through the teaching of the gospel: Christ poured out then his Spirit. But as the kingdom of Christ is not for a few days, or for a short time, but continues its course to the end of the world, the Prophet turns his attention to that day or that time, and says, "There shall, in the meanwhile, be the greatest calamities: and whosoever shall not flee to the grace of God shall be very miserable; they shall never find rest nor comfort, nor the light of life, for the world shall be sunk in darkness; and God shall take away from the sun, the moon, the elements, and all other aids, the tokens of his favor; and he will show himself everywhere to be angry and offended with men." The prophet further shows, that these evils of which he speaks would not be for a few days or a few years, but perpetual; 'Before,' he says, 'the day of Jehovah, great and terrible, shall come.' In short, he means that all the scourges of God, which he had hitherto mentioned, would be, as it were, preparations to subdue the hearts of men, that they might with reverence and submission receive Christ. As, therefore, men carry by nature a high spirit, and cannot bend their neck to recede the yoke of Christ, hence the prophet says here that they were to be subdued by severe scourges, when God would remove all evidences of his love, and fill heaven and earth with dread. Thus, then, he would in a manner change the hardness and contumacy which is

innate in men, that they might know that they had to do with God. And, at the same time, the prophet reminds them, that unless they were amended by these scourges, something more dreadful remained for them, -- the Judge would at last come from heaven, not only to clothe the sun and moon in darkness, but to turn life into death. It would, indeed, be far better for the reprobate to die a hundred times than always to live and thus to sustain eternal death in life itself.

The prophet then means, that men persisting in their obstinacy shall meet with something more grievous and more ruinous than the evils of this life, for they must all at last stand before the tribunal of the celestial Judge: for the day of Jehovah, great and terrible, will come. He refers, in this sentence, to unbelievers and rebels against God; for when Christ shall come, he will be a Redeemer to the godly; no day in their whole life will shine on them so pleasantly; so far will this day be from bringing terror and fear to them, that they are bidden, while expecting it, to lift up their heads, which is a token of cheerfulness and joy. But as the prophet Joel's object was to humble the confident pride of the flesh, and as he addressed the refractory and the rebellious, it is no wonder that he sets before them what is terrific and dreadful.

Prayer

Give, Almighty God, that as we are now surrounded on every side by so many miseries, and as our condition is such, that amidst groans and continual sorrows, our life could be hardly sustained without being supported by spiritual grace, -- O give, that we may learn to look on the face of your Anointed, and seek comfort from him, and such a comfort as may not engross our minds, or at least not retain us in the world, but raise our thoughts to heaven, and daily sell to our hearts the testimony of our adoption, and that though many evils must be borne by us in this world, we may yet continue to pursue our course, and to fight and to strive with invincible perseverance, until having at length finished all our struggles, we reach that blessed rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

JOHN CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON PORTIONS OF JOHN 14-16⁸

John 14:15-18

15. If you love me, keep my commandments. 16. And I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17. The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, and knoweth him not; but you know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18. I will not leave you orphans; I come to you.

15. If you love me. The love with which the disciples loved Christ was true and sincere, and yet there was some superstition mixed with it, as is frequently the case with ourselves; for it was very foolish in them to wish to keep him in the world. To correct this fault, he bids them direct their love to another end; and that is, to employ themselves in keeping the commandments which he had given them. This is undoubtedly a useful doctrine, for of those who think that they love Christ, there are very few who honor him as they ought to do; but, on the contrary, after having performed small and trivial services, they give themselves no farther concern. The true love of Christ, on the other hand, is regulated by the observation of his doctrine as the only rule. But we are likewise reminded how sinful our affections are, since even the love which we bear to Christ is not without fault, if it be not directed to a pure obedience.

16. And I will pray to the Father. This was given as a remedy for soothing the grief which they might feel on account of Christ's absence; but at the same time, Christ promises that he will give them strength to keep his commandments; For otherwise the exhortation would have had little effect. He therefore loses no time in informing them that, though he be absent from them in body, yet he will never allow them to remain destitute of assistance; for he will be present with them by his Spirit.

Here he calls the Spirit the gift of the Father, but a gift which he will obtain by his prayers; in another passage he promises that he will give the Spirit. If I depart, says he, I will send, Him to you, (John 16:7.) Both statements are true and correct; for in so far as Christ is our Mediator and Intercessor, he obtains from the Father the grace of the Spirit, but in so far as he is God, he bestows that grace from himself. The meaning of this passage therefore is: "I was given to you by the Father to be a Comforter, but only for a time; now, having discharged my office, I will pray to him to give another Comforter, who will not be for a short time, but will remain always with you."

And he will, give you another Comforter. The word Comforter is here applied both to Christ and to the Spirit, and justly; for it is an office which belongs equally to both of them, to comfort and exhort us, and to guard us by their protection. Christ was the Protector of his disciples, so long as he dwelt in the world: and afterwards he committed them to the protection and guardianship of the Spirit. It may be asked, are we not still under the protection of Christ? The answer is easy. Christ is a continual Protector, but not in a visible way. So long as he dwelt in the world, he openly manifested himself as their Protector; but now he guards us by his Spirit.

⁸ Copied from ccel.org. Translator is William Pringle. Neal Hegeman modified the language for contemporary readers and for the purpose of translation.

He calls the Spirit another Comforter, on account of the difference between the blessings which we obtain from both. The peculiar office of Christ was, to appease the wrath of God by atoning for the sins of the world, to redeem men from death, to procure righteousness and life; and the peculiar office of the Spirit is, to make us partakers not only of Christ himself, but of all his blessings. And yet there would be no impropriety in inferring from this passage a distinction of Persons; for there must be some peculiarity in which the Spirit differs from the Son so as to be another than the Son.

17. The Spirit of truth. Christ bestows on the Spirit another title, namely, that he is the Master or Teacher of truth. Hence it follows, that until we have been inwardly instructed by him, the understandings of all of us are seized with vanity and falsehood.

Whom the world cannot receive. This contrast shows the peculiar excellence of that grace which God bestows on none but his elect; for he means that it is no ordinary gift of which the world is deprived. In this sense, too, Isaiah says, "For, the darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise on you, O Jerusalem!" For the mercy of God towards the Church deserves so much the higher praise, when he exalts the Church, by a distinguished privilege, above the whole world. And yet Christ exhorts the disciples, that they must not be puffed up, as the world wants be, by carnal views, and thus drive away from themselves the grace of the Spirit. All that Scripture tells us about the Holy Spirit is regarded by earthly men as a dream; because, trusting to their own reason, they despise heavenly illumination. Now, though this pride abounds everywhere, which extinguishes, so far as lies in our power, the light of the Holy Spirit; yet, conscious of our own poverty, we ought to know, that whatever belongs to sound understanding proceeds from no other source. Yet Christ's words show that nothing which relates to the Holy Spirit can be learned by human reason, but that He is known only by the experience of faith.

The world, he says, cannot receive the Spirit, because it does not know him; but you know him, because he dwells with you. It is the Spirit alone therefore, who, by dwelling in us, makes himself to be known by us, for otherwise, he is unknown and incomprehensible.

18. I will not have you orphans. This passage shows what men are, and what they can do, when they have been deprived of the protection of the Spirit. They are orphans, exposed to every kind of fraud and injustice, incapable of governing themselves, and, in short, unable of themselves to do any thing. The only remedy for so great a defect is, if Christ govern us by his Spirit, which he promises that he will do. First then, the disciples are reminded of their weakness, that, distrusting themselves, they may rely on nothing else than the protection of Christ; and, secondly, having promised a remedy, he gives them good encouragement; for he declares that he will never leave them. When he says, I will come to you, he shows in what manner he dwells in his people, and in what manner he fills all things. It is, by the power of his Spirit; and hence it is evident, that the grace of the Spirit is a striking proof of his Divinity.

John 14:19-20

19. Yet a little while, and the world shall see me no more; but you see me: because I live, you also shall live. 20. At that day you shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.

19. Yet a little while. He continues the commendation of special grace, which ought to have been sufficient for alleviating, and even for removing the grief of the disciples. "When I shall have withdrawn," says he, "from the view of the world: still I shall be present with you." That we may enjoy this secret beholding of Christ, we must not judge of his presence or his absence according to carnal perception, but we must earnestly employ the eyes of faith for contemplating his power. Thus believers always have Christ present by his Spirit, and behold him, though they be distant from him in body.

Because I live. This statement may be explained in two ways. Either it may be viewed as a confirmation of the former clause, because I live, and you shall live; or, it may be read separately, because I live, you also shall live; and then the meaning will be, that believers will live, because Christ lives I willingly embrace the former opinion, and yet we may draw from it the other doctrine, that the life of Christ is the cause of our life. He begins by pointing out the cause of the difference, why he shall be seen by his disciples, and not by the world It isn't because Christ cannot be seen but according to the spiritual life, of which the world is deprived. The world does not see Christ; this is not wonderful, for the death of blindness is the cause; but as soon as any man begins to live by the Spirit, he is immediately endowed with eyes to see Christ. Now, the reason of this is, that our life is closely connected with the life of Christ, and proceeds from it as from its source; for we are dead in ourselves, and the life with which we flatter ourselves is a very bad death. Accordingly, when the question is, how we are to obtain life, our eyes must be directed to Christ, and his life must be conveyed to us by faith, that our consciences may be fully convinced, that, so long as Christ lives, we are free from all danger of destruction; for it is an undoubted truth, that his life would be nothing, when his members were dead.

20. At that day. Some refer this to the day of Pentecost; but it rather denotes the uninterrupted course, as it were, of a single day, from the time when Christ exerted the power of his Spirit till the last resurrection. From that time they began to know, but it was a sort of feeble beginning, because the Spirit had not yet wrought so powerfully in them. For the object of these words is, to show that we cannot, by insistent speculation, know what is the sacred and mystical union between us and him, and again, between him and the Father; but that the only way of knowing it is, when he diffuses his life in us by the secret means of the Spirit; and this is the trial of faith, which I mentioned before.

As to the manner in which this passage was formerly abused by the Arians, to prove that Christ is God only by participation and by grace, it is easy to refute their thought.. For Christ does not speak merely of his eternal essence, but of that Divine power which was manifested in him. As the Father has laid up in the Son all fullness of blessings, so, on the other hand, the Son has given himself entirely into us. He is said to be in us, because he plainly shows, by the means of his Spirit, that he is the Author and the cause of our life.

John 14:25-28

25. These things I have spoken to you, while I remain with you. 26. But the Comforter, (who is the Holy Spirit), whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you. 27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you: not as the world gives, give I it to you. Let not your heart be troubled, and let it not be afraid. 28. You heard that I said to you, I go away, and come to you. If you loved me, you would certainly rejoice that I said, I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I.

25. "These things I have spoken to you." He adds this, that they may not despair, though they may have profited less than they ought to have done; for at that time he scattered a seed of teaching good hopes, until fruit be yielded by the teaching which might now appear to be useless. In short, he testifies that in the doctrine which they had heard they have abundant ground of consolation, and that they ought not to seek it anywhere else. And if they do not immediately see it, he bids them be of good courage, until the Holy Spirit, who is the inward Teacher, speak the same thing in their hearts. This admonition is highly useful to all; for, if we do not immediately understand what Christ teaches, we begin to grow weary, and grudge to bestow unprofitable labor on what is obscure. But we must bring an eager desire to receive instruction; we must lend our ears and give attention, if we desire to make due proficiency in the school of God; and especially we need patience, until the Holy Spirit enable us to understand what we thought that we had often read or heard to no purpose. That the desire of learning may not be weakened in us, or that we may not fall into despair, when we do not immediately perceive the meaning of Christ speaking to us, let us know that this is spoken to us all.

The Holy Spirit will bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you. It is indeed a punishment threatened by Isaiah against unbelievers, that the Word of God shall be to them as a book that is sealed, (Isaiah 29:11) but in this manner, also, the Lord frequently humbles his people. We ought, therefore, to wait patiently and mildly for the time of revelation, and must not, on that account, reject the word. When Christ testifies that it is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit to teach the apostles what they had already learned from his mouth, it follows that the outward preaching will be vain and useless, if it be not accompanied by the teaching of the Spirit. God has therefore two ways of teaching; for, first, he sounds in our ears by the mouth of men; and, secondly, he addresses us inwardly by his Spirit; and he does this either at the same moment, or at different times, as he thinks fit.

But observe what are all these things which he promises that the Spirit will teach. He will suggest, he says, or bring to your remembrance, all that I have said. Hence it follows, that he will not be a builder of new revelations. By this single word we may refute all the inventions which Satan has brought into the Church from the beginning, under the pretense of the Spirit. Mahomet and the Pope agree in holding this as a principle of their religion, that Scripture does not contain a perfection of doctrine, but that something loftier has been revealed by the Spirit. From the same point the Anabaptists and Libertines, in our own time, have drawn their absurd notions. But the spirit that introduces any doctrine or invention apart from the Gospel is a deceiving spirit, and not the Spirit of Christ. What is meant by the Spirit being sent by the Father in the name of Christ, I have already explained.

27. Peace I leave with you. By the word peace he means prosperity, which men want to wish for each other when they meet or part; for such is the import of the word peace in the Hebrew language. He therefore alludes to the ordinary custom of his nation; as if he had said, I give you my Farewell. But he immediately adds, that this peace is of far greater value than that which is usually to be found among men, who generally have the word peace but coldly in their mouth, by way of ceremony, or, if they sincerely wish peace for any one, yet cannot actually bestow it. But Christ reminds them that his peace does not consist in an empty and unavailing wish, but is accompanied by the effect. In short, he says that he goes away from them in body, but that his peace remains with the disciples; that is, that they will be always happy through his blessing.

Let not your heart be troubled. He again corrects the alarm which the disciples had felt on account of his departure. It is no ground for alarm, he tells them; for they want only his bodily presence, but will enjoy his actual presence through the Spirit. Let us learn to be always satisfied with this kind of presence, and let us not give a loose reign to the flesh, which always binds God by its outward inventions.

28. If you loved me you would rejoice. The disciples unquestionably loved Christ, but not as they ought to have done; for some carnal affection was mixed with their love, so that they could not endure to be separated from him; but if they had loved him spiritually, there was nothing which they would have had more deeply at heart, than his return to the Father.

For the Father is greater than I. This passage has been tortured in various ways. The Arians, in order to prove that Christ is some sort of inferior God, argued that he is less than the Father. The orthodox Fathers, to remove all ground for such a calumny, said that this must have referred to his human nature; but as the Arians wickedly abused this testimony, so the reply given by the Fathers to their objection was neither correct nor appropriate; for Christ does not now speak either of his human nature, or of his eternal Divinity, but, accommodating himself to our weakness, places himself between God and us; and, indeed, as it has not been granted to us to reach the height of God, Christ descended to us, that he might raise us to it. You ought to have rejoiced, he says, because I return to the Father; for this is the ultimate object at which you ought to aim. By these words he does not show in what respect he differs in himself from the Father, but why he descended to us; and that was that he might unite us to God; for until we have reached that point, we are, as it were, in the middle of the course. We too imagine to ourselves but a half-Christ, and a mutilated Christ, if he do not lead us to God.

There is a similar passage in the writings of Paul, where he says that Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to God his Father, that God may be all in all, (1 Corinthians 15:24.)

Christ certainly reigns, not only in human nature, but as he is God manifested in the flesh. In what manner, therefore, will he lay aside the kingdom? It is, because the Divinity which is now beheld in Christ's face alone, will then be openly visible in him. The only point of difference is, that Paul there describes the highest perfection of the Divine brightness, the rays of which began to shine from the time when Christ ascended to heaven. To make the matter more clear, we must use still greater plainness of speech. Christ does not here make a comparison between the Divinity of the Father and his own, nor between his own human nature and the Divine essence of the Father, but rather between his present state and the heavenly glory, to which he would soon

afterwards be received; as if he had said, "You wish to detain me in the world, but it is better that I should ascend to heaven." Let us therefore learn to behold Christ humbled in the flesh, so that he may conduct us to the fountain of a blessed immortality; for he was not appointed to be our guide, merely to raise us to the sphere of the moon or of the sun, but to make us one with God the Father.

John 15:1-6

1. I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. 2. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he will take away, and every branch that bears fruit he will prune, that it may bear more fruit. 3. You are already clean, on account of the word which I have spoken to you. 4. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5. I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. 6. If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast out, and wither as a branch; and men shall gather it, and cast it into the fire, and it shall be burned.

1. I am the true Vine. The general meaning of this comparison is, that we are, by nature, barren and dry, except in so far as we have been engrafted into Christ, and draw from him a power which is new, and which does not proceed from ourselves. I have followed other commentators in rendering *ampelos* by *vitis*, (a vine,) and *klemata* by *palmites*, (branches.) Now, *vitis* (a vine) strictly denotes the plant itself, and not a field planted with vines, which the Latin writers call *vinea*, (a vineyard;) although it is sometimes taken for *vinea* a vineyard; as, for example, when Cicero mentions in the same breath, *pauperum agellos et vlticulas*, the small fields and small vineyards of the poor *Palmites* (branches) are what may be called the arms of the tree, which it sends out above the ground. But as the Greek word "kloma" sometimes denotes a vine, and *ampelos*, a vineyard, I am more disposed to adopt the opinion, that Christ compares himself to a field planted with vines, and compares us to the plants themselves. On that point, however, I will not enter into a debate with any person; only I wish to remind the reader, that he ought to adopt that view which appears to him to derive greater probability from the context.

First, let him remember the rule which ought to be observed in all parables; that we ought not to examine minutely every property of the vine, but only to take a general view of the object to which Christ applies that comparison. Now, there are three principal parts; first, that we have no power of doing good but what comes from himself; secondly, that we, having a root in him, are dressed and pruned by the Father; thirdly, that he removes the unfruitful branches, that they may be thrown into the fire and burned.

There is scarcely any one who is ashamed to acknowledge that every thing good which he possesses comes from God; but, after making this acknowledgment, they imagine that universal grace has been given to them, as if it had been implanted in them by nature. But Christ dwells principally on this, that the vital sap -- that is, all life and strength -- proceeds from himself alone. Hence it follows, that the nature of man is unfruitful and destitute of everything good; because no man has the nature of a vine, until he be implanted in him. But this is given to the elect alone by special grace. So then, the Father is the first Author of all blessings, who plants us with his hand; but the commencement of life is in Christ, since we begin to take root in him.

When he calls himself the true vine the meaning is, I am truly the vine, and therefore men labor to no purpose in seeking strength anywhere else, for from none will useful fruit proceed but from the branches which shall be produced by me.

2. "Every branch in me that does not bear fruit." As some men corrupt the grace of God, others suppress it with evil intent, and others choke it by carelessness, Christ intends by these words to awaken anxious inquiry, by declaring that all the branches which shall be unfruitful will be cut off from the vine. But here comes a question. Can any one who is engrafted into Christ be without fruit? I answer, many are supposed to be in the vine, according to the opinion of men, who actually have no root in the vine. Thus, in the writings of the prophets, the Lord calls the people of Israel his vine, because, by outward profession, they had the name of The Church.

And every branch that bears, fruit he prunes. By these words, he shows that believers need constant pruning that they may be prevented from degenerating; and that they produce nothing good, unless God continually apply his hand; for it will not be enough to have been once made partakers of adoption, if God do not continue the work of his grace in us. He speaks of pruning or cleansing, because our flesh abounds in wasteful and destructive vices, and is too fertile in producing them, and because they grow and multiply without end, if we are not cleansed or pruned by the hand of God. When he says that vines are pruned, that they may yield more abundant fruit, he shows what ought to be the progress of believers in the course of true religion?

3. You are already clean, on account of the word. He reminds them that they have already experienced in themselves what he had said; that they have been planted in him, and have also been cleansed or pruned. He points out the means of pruning, namely, doctrine; and there can be no doubt that he speaks of outward preaching, for he expressly mentions the word, which they had heard from his mouth. Not that the word proceeding from the mouth of a man has so great an effect, but, so far as Christ works in the heart by the Spirit, the word itself is the instrument of cleansing. Yet Christ does not mean that the apostles are pure from all sin, but he holds out to them their experience, that they may learn from it that the continuance of grace is absolutely necessary. Besides, he commends to them the doctrine of the gospel from the fruit which it produces, that they may be more powerfully motivated to meditate on it continually, since it resembles the vine-dresser's knife to take away what is useless.

4. Abide in me. He again exhorts them to be earnest and careful in keeping the grace which they had received, for the carelessness of the flesh can never be sufficiently aroused. And, indeed, Christ has no other object in view than to keep us as a hen keeps her chickens under her wings, (Matthew 23:37) unless our indifference should carry us away, and make us fly to our destruction. In order to prove that he did not begin the work of our salvation for the purpose of leaving it imperfect in the middle of the course, he promises that his Spirit will always have an effect in us, if we do not prevent him. Abide in me, says he; for I am ready to abide in you. And again, He who abides in me bears much fruit. By these words he declares that all who have a living root in him are fruit-bearing branches.

5. Without me you can do nothing. This is the conclusion and application of the whole parable. So long as we are separate from him, we bear no fruit that is good and acceptable to God, for we are unable to do anything good. The Papists not only over extend this statement, but destroy its

substance, and, indeed, they altogether evade it; for, though in words they acknowledge that we can do nothing without Christ, yet they foolishly imagine that they possess some power, which is not sufficient in itself, but, being aided by the grace of God, co-operates (as they say,) that is, works along with it; for they cannot endure that man should be so much annihilated as to do nothing of himself. But these words of Christ are too plain to be evaded so easily as they suppose. The doctrine invented by the Papists is, that we can do nothing without Christ, but that, aided by him, we have something of ourselves in addition to his grace. But Christ, on the other hand, declares that we can do nothing of ourselves. The branch, he says, does not bear fruit of itself; and, therefore, he not only extols the aid of his co-operating grace, but deprives us entirely of all power but what he imparts to us. Accordingly, this phrase, without me, must be explained as meaning, except from me.

Next follows another clever argument; for they allege that the branch has something from nature, for if another branch, which is not fruit-bearing, be engrafted in the vine, it will produce nothing. But this is easily answered; for Christ does not explain what the branch has naturally, before it become united to the vine, but rather means that we begin to become branches at the time when we are united to him. And, indeed, Scripture elsewhere shows that, before we are in him, we are dry and useless wood.

6. If any one abide not in me. He again lays before them the punishment of ingratitude, and, by doing so, excites and urges them to perseverance. It is indeed the gift of God, but the exhortation to fear is not uncalled for, lest our flesh, through too great indulgence, should root us out.

He is cast out, and withers, like a branch. Those who are cut off from Christ are said to wither like a dead branch; because, as the commencement of strength is from him, so also is its uninterrupted continuance. Not that it ever happens that any one of the elect is dried up, but because there are many hypocrites who, in outward appearance, flourish and are green for a time, but who afterwards, when they ought to yield fruit, show the very opposite of that which the Lord expects and demands from his people.

John 15:7-11

7. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done for you. 8. In this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and become my disciples. 9. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. 10. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, as I also have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may abide in you, and that your joy may be full.

7. If you abide in me. Believers often feel that they are starved, and are very far from that rich fatness which is necessary for yielding abundant fruit. For this reason it is expressly added, whatever those who are in Christ may need, there is a remedy provided for their poverty, as soon as they ask it from God. This is a very useful admonition; for the Lord often suffers us to hunger, in order to train us to earnestness in prayer. But if we fly to him, we shall never want what we ask, but, out of his inexhaustible abundance, he will supply us with every thing that we need, (1 Corinthians 1:5.)

If my words abide in you. He means that we take root in him by faith; for as soon as we have departed from the doctrine of the Gospel, we seek Christ separately from himself. When he promises that he will grant whatever we wish, he does not give us leave to form wishes according to our own fancy. God would do what was ill fitted to promote our welfare, if he were so indulgent and so ready to yield to us; for we know well that men often indulge in foolish and extravagant desires. But here he limits the wishes of his people to the rule of praying in a right manner, and that rule subjects, to the good pleasure of God, all our affections. This is confirmed by the connection in which the words stand; for he means that his people will or desire not riches, or honors, or any thing of that nature, which the flesh foolishly desires, but the vital sap of the Holy Spirit, who enables them to bear fruit.

8. In this my Father is glorified. This is a confirmation of the former statement; for he shows that we ought not to doubt that God will listen to the prayers of his people, when they desire to be rendered fruitful; for this contributes very greatly to his glory. But by this end or effect he likewise kindles in them the desire of doing good; for there is nothing which we ought to value more highly than that the name of God may be glorified by us. To the same effect is the latter clause, that you may become my disciples; for he declares that he has no one in his flock who does not bear fruit to the glory of God.

9. As the Father has loved me. He intended to express something far greater than is commonly supposed; for they who think that he now speaks of the sacred love of God the Father, which he always had towards the Son, philosophize away from the subject; for it was rather the design of Christ to lay, as it were, in our bosom a sure pledge of God's love towards us. That difficult inquiry, as to the manner in which the Father always loved himself in the Son, has nothing to do with the present passage. But the love which is here mentioned must be understood as referring to us, because Christ testifies that the Father loves him, as he is the Head of the Church. And this is highly necessary for us; for he who without a Mediator, inquires how he is loved by God, involves him in a labyrinth, in which he will neither discover the entrance, nor the means of freeing himself. We ought therefore to cast our eyes on Christ, in whom will be found the testimony and pledge of the love of God; for the love of God was fully poured out on him, that from him it might flow to his members. He is distinguished by this title, that he is the beloved Son, in whom the will of the Father is satisfied (Matthew 3:17.). But we ought to observe the end, which is, that God may accept us in him. So, then, we may see in him, as in a mirror, God's paternal love towards us all; because he is not loved apart, or for his own private advantage, but that he may unite us with him to the Father.

Abide in my love. Some explain this to mean, that Christ demands from his disciples mutual love; but others explain it better, who understand it to mean the love of Christ towards us. He means that we should continually enjoy that love with which he once loved us, and, therefore, that we ought to take care not to deprive ourselves of it; for many reject the grace which is offered to them, and many throw away what they once had in their hands. So, then, since we have been once received into the grace of Christ, we must see that we do not fall from it through our own fault.

The conclusion which some draw from these words, that there is no effect in the grace of God, unless it be aided by our steadfastness, is frivolous. For I do not admit that the Spirit demands from us no more than what is in our own power, but he shows us what we ought to do, that, if our strength be deficient, we may seek it from some other quarter. In like manner, when Christ exhorts us, in this passage, to perseverance, we must; not rely on our own strength and industry, but we ought to pray to him who commands us, that he would confirm us in his love.

10. If you keep my commandments. He points out to us the method of perseverance. his, to follow where he calls, for, as Paul says, They who are in Christ walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, (Romans 8:1.).

For these two things are continually united, that faith which perceives the undeserved love of Christ toward us, and a good conscience and newness of life. And, indeed, Christ does not reconcile believers to the Father, that they may indulge in wickedness without reserve, and without punishment; but that, governing them by his Spirit, he may keep them under the authority and dominion of his Father. Hence it follows, that the love of Christ is rejected by those who do not prove, by true obedience, that they are his disciples.

If any one object that, in that case, the security of our salvation depends on ourselves, I reply, it is wrong to give such a meaning to Christ's words; for the obedience which believers render to him is not the cause why he continues his love toward us, but is rather the effect of his love. For where does it come that they answer to their calling, but because they are led by the Spirit of adoption of free grace?

But again, it may be thought that the condition imposed on us is too difficult, that we should keep the commandments of Christ, which contain the absolute perfection of righteousness, -- a perfection which far exceeds our capacity, -- for hence it follows, that the love of Christ will be useless, if we be not endued with angelical purity. The answer is easy; for when Christ speaks of the desire of living a good and holy life, he does not exclude what is the chief article in his doctrine, namely, that which alludes to righteousness being freely imputed, in consequence of which, through a free pardon, our duties are acceptable to God, which in themselves deserved to be rejected as imperfect and unholy. Believers, therefore, are reckoned as keeping the commandments of Christ when they apply their earnest attention to them, though they be far distant from the object at which they aim; for they are delivered from that rigorous sentence of the law. Cursed be he that hath not confirmed all the words of this law to do them, (Deuteronomy 27:26).

As I also have kept my Father's commandments. As we have been elected in Christ, so in him the image of our calling is exhibited to us in a lively manner; and therefore he justly holds himself out to us as a pattern, to the imitation of which all the godly ought to be conformed. "In me," says he, "is brightly displayed the resemblance of those things which I demand from you; for you see how sincerely I am devoted to obedience to my Father, and how I persevere in this course. My Father, too, hath loved me, not for a moment, or for a short time, but his love toward me is constant." This conformity between the Head and the members ought to be always placed before our eyes, not only that believers may form themselves after the example of Christ, but that, they

may entertain a confident hope that his Spirit will every day form them anew to be better and better, that they may walk to the end in newness of life.

11. These things I have spoken to you. He adds, that his love is far from being unknown to the godly, but that it is perceived by faith, so that they enjoy blessed peace of conscience; for the joy which he mentions springs from that peace with God which is possessed by all that have been justified by free grace. As often, then, as God's fatherly love towards us is preached, let us know that there is given to us ground for true joy, that, with peaceable consciences, we may be certain of our salvation.

My joy and your joy. It is called Christ's joy and our joy in various respects. It is Christ's, because it is given to us by him; for he is both the Author and the Cause of it. I say that he is the Cause of it, because we were freed from guilt, when the chastisement of our peace was laid on him (Isaiah 53:5).

I call him also the Author of it, because by his Spirit he drives away dread and anxiety in our hearts, and then arises that calm cheerfulness. It is said to be ours for a different reason; because we enjoy it since it has been given to us. Now since Christ declares that he spoke these things, that the disciples might have joy, we conclude from these words, that all who have duly profited by this sermon have something on which they can rest.

That my joy may abide in you. By the word abide he means, that it is not a fleeting or temporary joy of which he speaks, but a joy which never fails or passes away. Let us therefore learn that we ought to seek in the doctrine of Christ the assurance of salvation, which retains its vigor both in life and in death.

That your joy may be full. He adds, that this joy will be solid and full; not that believers will be entirely free from all sadness, but that the ground for joy will be far greater, so that no dread, no anxiety, no grief, will swallow them up; for those to whom it has been given to glory in Christ will not be prevented, either by life, or by death, or by any distresses, from bidding defiance to sadness.

John 15:22-27

22. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23. He who hates me hates my Father also. 24. If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they would not have had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25. But that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law. They have hated me without a cause. 26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, will testify of me: 27. And you also will bear testimony, (or, are witnesses) because from the beginning you are with me.

22. "If I had not come." He had said that the Jews regarded the Gospel with hatred, because they did not know God. Lest any one should think that this tended to alleviate their guilt, he adds, that it is through malice that they are blind, just as if one were to shut his eyes, that he might not be

compelled to see the light. For otherwise it might have been brought as an objection against Christ. "If they do not know your Father, how comes it that you dost not cure their ignorance? Why did you not at least make trial whether they were altogether incapable of being taught, or not?" He replies, that he has performed the duty of a good and faithful Teacher, but without success, because their malice would not suffer them to acquire soundness of mind. In the person of those men he intended to strike terror into all who reject the truth of God, when it is offered to them, or intentionally fight against it, when it is known. And though a dreadful vengeance awaits them, still Christ, in this passage, looks chiefly to his own disciples, to animate them by the confident and well-grounded expectation of victory, lest, at any time, they should yield to the malice of wicked men; for when we learn that such will be the issue, we may already triumph, as if we were in the midst of the battle.

They would not have sin. It may be thought that Christ intended by these words to say, that there is no other sin but unbelief; and there are some who think so. Augustine speaks more soberly, but he approaches to that opinion; for, since faith forgives and blots out all sins, he says, that the only sin that damns a man is unbelief. This is true, for unbelief not only hinders men from being delivered from the condemnation of death, but is the source and cause of all evils. But the whole of that reasoning is inapplicable to the present passage; for the word sin is not taken in a general sense, but as related to the subject which is now under consideration; as if Christ had said, that their ignorance is utterly inexcusable, because in his person they maliciously rejected God; just as if we were to pronounce a person to be innocent, just, and pure, when we wished merely to acquit him of a single crime of which he had been accused. Christ's acquittal of them, therefore, is confined to one kind of sin, because it takes away from the Jews every pretense of ignorance in this sin, of despising and hating the Gospel.

But there is still another question that arises: "Was not unbelief sufficient to condemn men before the coming of Christ?" There are fanatics who reason inconclusively from this passage, that all who died before the coming of Christ died without faith, and remained in a state of doubt and suspense till Christ manifested himself to them; as if there were not many passages of Scripture which testify that their conscience alone was sufficient to condemn them. Death, says Paul, reigned in the world even to Moses, (Romans 5:14.) And again he declares, that they who have sinned without law shall perish without law, (Romans 2:12).

What, then, does Christ mean? There is undoubtedly an admission made in these words, by which he means that the Jews have nothing more to offer in trying to lessen their guilt, since they knowingly and willfully rejected the life which was offered to them. Thus the excuse which hemakes for them does not free them from all blame, but only shows the heinousness of their crime, according to that saying, The servant, who knows the will of his master, and despises it, shall be severely punished? For it was not the intention of Christ here to promise pardon to any, but to hold his enemies convicted, who had obstinately rejected the grace of God, that it might be fully evident that they were unworthy of all pardon and mercy.

If I had not come and SPOKEN TO THEM. It ought to be observed, that he does not speak of his coming, as viewed by itself, but as connected with his doctrine, for they would not have been held guilty of so great a crime on account of his bodily presence alone, but the contempt of the doctrine made them utterly inexcusable.

23. He who hates me hates my Father also. This is a remarkable passage, which teaches us that no man can hate the doctrine of the Gospel without manifesting his impiety against God. There are many indeed, who profess differently in words; for, though they abhor the Gospel, still they wish to be thought very good servants of God; but it is false, for a contempt of God is concealed within. In this manner Christ discovers the hypocrisy of many by the light of his doctrine; and on this subject we have spoken more largely under that passage, "Whosoever doeth what is evil hates the light." (John 3:20,) and under that passage, "He who honours not the Son honours not the Father, (John 5:23).

24. If I had not done among them the works. Under the word works he includes, in my opinion, all the proofs which he gave of his Divine glory; for by miracles, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, and by other demonstrations, he clearly proved that he was the Son of God, so that in him was plainly seen the majesty of the Only-begotten Son, as we have seen under John 1:14. It is commonly objected, that he did not perform more miracles or greater miracles than Moses and the prophets. The answer is well known, that Christ is more eminent in miracles in this respect, that he was not merely a minister, like the rest, but was strictly the Author of them; for he employed his own name, his own authority, and his own power, in performing miracles. But, as I have said, he includes in general all the testimonies of heavenly and spiritual power by which his Divinity was displayed.

They have seen and hated. He concludes that his enemies cannot escape by any shifts to which they may have recourse, since they despised his power, which evidently was altogether Divine; for God had openly manifested his Divinity in the Son; and therefore it would serve no purpose for them to say that they had only to do with a mortal man.

This passage reminds us to consider attentively the works of God, in which, by displaying his power, he wishes us to render the honor which is due to him. Hence it follows, that all who obscure the gifts of God, or who contemptuously overlook them, are ungrateful to God, and malicious.

25. But that the word may be fulfilled. What is contrary to nature appears to be incredible. But nothing is more contrary to reason than to hate God; and, therefore, Christ says that so great was the malice with which their minds were poisoned, that they hated him without a cause. Christ quotes a passage from Psalm 35:19, which, he says, is now fulfilled. Not that the same thing did not happen, formerly, to David, but to reprove the obstinate malice of the nation, which reigned perpetually from age to age, being continued from grandfathers to grandchildren in unbroken succession; as if he had said, that they were in no respect better than their fathers, who hated David without a cause.

Which is written in their Law. By the word Law, he means the Psalms; for the whole doctrine of the Prophets was nothing else than an appendage to the Law; and we know that the ministry of Moses lasted till the time of Christ. He calls it their Law, not as an expression of respect for them, but to wound them more deeply by a designation which was well known among them; as if he had said, "They have a Law transmitted to them by hereditary right, in which they see their morals painted to the life."

26. But when the Comforter is come. After having explained to the apostles that the Gospel ought not to be less highly valued by them, because it has many adversaries, even within the Church itself; Christ now, in opposition to the wicked fury of those men, produces the testimony of the Spirit, and if their consciences rest on this testimony, they will never be shaken; as if he had said, "True, the world will rage against you; some will mock, and others will curse your doctrine; but none of their attacks will be so violent as to shake the firmness of your faith, when the Holy Spirit shall have been given to you to establish you by his testimony." And, indeed, when the world rages on all sides, our only protection is, that the truth of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit on our hearts, despises and defies all that is in the world; for, if it were subject to the opinions of men, our faith would be overwhelmed a hundred times in a day.

We ought, therefore, to observe carefully in what manner we ought to remain firm among so many storms. It is because we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which have been given to us by God, (1 Corinthians 2:12.).

This single witness powerfully drives away, scatters, and overturns, all that the world rears up to obscure or crush the truth of God. All who are endued with this Spirit are so far from being in danger of falling into despondency on account of the hatred or contempt of the world, that every one of them will obtain glorious victory over the whole world. Yet we must beware of relying on the good opinion of men; for so long as faith shall wonder in this manner, or rather, as soon as it shall have gone out of the sanctuary of God, it must become involved in miserable uncertainty. It must, therefore, be brought back to the inward and secret testimony of the Spirit, which, believers know, has been given to them from heaven.

The Spirit is said to testify of Christ, because he retains and fixes our faith on him alone, that we may not seek elsewhere any part of our salvation. He calls him also the Comforter, that, relying on his protection, we may never be alarmed; for by this title Christ intended to fortify our faith, that it may not yield to any temptations. When he calls him the Spirit of truth, we must apply the term to the matter in hand; for we must presuppose a contrast to this effect, that, when they have not this Witness, men are carried about in various ways, and have no firm resting-place, but, wherever he speaks, he delivers the minds of men from all doubt and fear of being deceived.

When he says that he will send him from the Father, and, again, that he proceeds from the Father, he does so in order to increase the weight of his authority; for the testimony of the Spirit would not be sufficient against attacks so powerful, and against efforts so numerous and fierce, if we were not convinced that he proceeds from God. So then it is Christ who sends the Spirit, but it is from the heavenly glory, that we may know that it is not a gift of men, but a sure pledge of Divine grace. Hence it appears how idle was the subtlety of the Greeks, when they argued, on the ground of these words, that the Spirit does not proceed from the Son; for here Christ, according to his custom, mentions the Father in order to raise our eyes to the contemplation of his Divinity.

27. And you also bear testimony. Christ means that the testimony of the Spirit will not be of such a nature that the apostles shall have it for their private advantage, or that they alone shall enjoy it, but that by them it will be widely diffused, because they will be organs of the Holy Spirit, as

indeed, he spoke by their mouth. We now see in what way faith is by hearing, (Romans 10:17,) and yet it derives its certainty from the seal and earnest of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13, 14.). Those who do not sufficiently know the darkness of the human mind imagine that faith is formed naturally by hearing and preaching alone; and there are many fanatics who disdain the outward preaching, and talk in lofty terms about secret revelations and inspirations, (enthusiastic). But we see how Christ joins these two things together; and, therefore, though there is no faith till the Spirit of God seal our minds and hearts, still we must not go to seek visions or oracles in the clouds; but the word, which is near us, in our mouth and heart, (Romans 10:8) must keep all our senses bound and fixed on itself, as Isaiah says beautifully:

My Spirit that is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed says the Lord, from henceforth and for ever, (Isaiah 59:21.)

Because you are with me from the beginning. This clause was added in order to inform us that so much the greater credit is due to the apostles on this ground, that they were eye-witnesses of what they relate; as John says, what we have heard, what we have seen, what our hands have handled, we declare to you; (1 John 1:1) for thus the Lord intended to provide for our welfare in every possible way, that nothing might be wanting for a full confirmation of the Gospel.

John 16:1-7

1. These things I have spoken to you, that you may not be offended. 2. They will drive you out of the synagogues; yes, the time cometh, that whosoever shall kill you will think that he offers service to God. 3. And they will do these things to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4. But these things I have spoken to you, that, when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you of them. And I told you not these things at the beginning, because I was with you. 5. And now I go to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, Where are going? 6. But because I have told you these things, sorrow has filled your hearts. 7. But I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but shall go away, I will send him to you.

1. These things I have spoken to you. He again states that none of those things which he has spoken are superfluous; for, since wars and contests await them, it is necessary that they should be provided beforehand with the necessary arms. Yet he also means that, if they meditate deeply on this doctrine, they will be fully prepared for resistance. Let us remember that what he then said to the disciples is also spoken to us. And, first, we ought to understand that Christ does not send his followers into the field unarmed, and, therefore, that, if any man fail in this warfare, his own laziness alone is to blame. And yet we ought not to wait till the struggle be actually commenced, but ought rather to endeavor to become well acquainted with these discourses of Christ, and to render them familiar to our minds, so that we may march into the field of battle, as soon as it is necessary; for we must not doubt that the victory is in our hands, so long as those admonitions of Christ shall be deeply imprinted on our minds. For, when he says THAT YOU MAY NOT be offended, he means that there is no danger, lest anything turn us aside from the right course. But how few there are that learn this doctrine in a proper manner, is evident from this fact, that they who think that they know it by heart when they are beyond arrow-shot, are no

sooner obliged to enter into actual combat than they give way, as if they were utterly ignorant, and had never received any instruction. Let us, therefore accustom ourselves to use this armor in such a manner that it may never drop out of our hands.

2. They will drive you out of the synagogues. This was no light offense to disturb their minds, that they were to be banished like wicked men from the assembly of the godly, or, at least, of those who boasted that they were the people of God, and gloried in the title of The Church; for believers are subject not only to persecutions, but to dishonor and rejections, as Paul tells us, (1 Corinthians 4:12, 18.). But Christ bids them stand firm against this attack; because, though they be banished from the synagogues, still they remain within the kingdom of God. His statement amounts to this, that we ought not to be dismayed by the perverse judgments of men, but ought to endure boldly the reproach of the cross of Christ, satisfied with this single consideration, that our cause which men unjustly and wickedly condemn, is approved by God.

Hence too we infer, that the ministers of the Gospel not only are ill treated by the avowed enemies of the faith, but sometimes also endure the greatest reproaches from those who appear to belong to the Church, and who are even regarded as its pillars. The scribes and priests, by whom the apostles were condemned, boasted that they were appointed by God to be judges of the Church; and, indeed, the ordinary government of the Church was in their hands, and the office of judging was from God, and not from men. But by their tyranny, they had corrupted the whole of that order which God had appointed. The consequence was, that the power which had been given to them for edification, was nothing else a thorn of cruel oppression of the servants of God; and excommunication, which ought to have been a medicine for purifying the Church, was turned to an opposite purpose, for driving away from it the fear of God.

Since the apostles knew this by experience, in their own age, we have no reason to be greatly alarmed at the Pope's excommunications, with which he thunders against us on account of the testimony of the Gospel; for we ought not to fear that they will do us any more injury than those ancient excommunications which were made against the apostles. But more, nothing is more desirable than to be driven out of that assembly from which Christ is banished. Yet let us observe that, though the abuse of excommunication was so gross, still it did not effect the destruction of that discipline which God had appointed in his Church from the beginning; for, though Satan devotes his utmost efforts to corrupt all the ordinances of God, we must not yield to him, so as to take away, on account of corruptions, what God has appointed to be perpetual. Excommunication, therefore, not less than Baptism and the Lord's Supper, must be brought back, by the correction of abuses, to its pure and lawful use.

But the hour comes. Christ dwells still more largely on this offense, that the enemies of the Gospel lay claim to so much authority, that they think they are offering sacrifices to God where they slay believers. It is sufficiently hard in itself, that innocent people should be cruelly tormented, but it is far more grievous and distressing that those outrages, which wicked men commit against the children of God, should be reckoned punishments justly due to them on account of their crimes. But we ought to be so fully assured of the protection of a good conscience, as to endure patiently to be oppressed for a time, till Christ appear from heaven, to defend his cause and ours.

It may be thought strange, however, that the enemies of the truth, though they are conscious of their own wickedness, not only impose on men, but even in the presence of God lay claim to praise for their unjust cruelty. I reply, hypocrites, though their conscience accuses them, always resort to flatteries to deceive themselves. They are ambitious, cruel, and proud, but they cover all these vices with the cloak of zeal, that they may indulge in them without restraint. To this is added what may be called a furious drunkenness, after having tasted the blood of martyrs.

3. And they will do these things. Not without good reason does Christ frequently remind the apostles of this consideration, that there is only one reason why unbelievers are so greatly enraged against them. It is, because they do not know God. And yet this is not said for the purpose of lessening their guilt, but that the apostles may boldly despise their blind fury; for it often happens that the authority which wicked men possess, and the luster which shines in them, shake modest and pious minds. But Christ, on the other hand, enjoins his followers to rise with holy magnanimity, to despise their adversaries, who are impelled by nothing else than error and blindness; for this is our wall of brass, when we are fully persuaded that God is on our side, and that they who oppose us are destitute of reason. Again, these words remind us, what a serious evil it is not to know God, since it leads even those who have murdered their own parents to expect praise and approbation for their wickedness.

4. That when the hour cometh, you may remember. He repeats what he had already said, that this is not a philosophy fitted only for a season of leisure, but that it is adapted to practice and use, and that he now discourses on these matters, that they may actually demonstrate that they have not been taught in vain. When he says, that you may remember, he enjoins them, first, to lay up in their minds what they have heard; secondly, to remember them, when they shall be required to put them in practice; and, lastly, he declares that no small importance attaches to the fact, that he utters predictions of future events.

And I told you not these things at the beginning. As the apostles were still weak and tender, so long as Christ conversed with them in the flesh, their singularly good and indulgent Master spared them, and did not suffer them to be urged beyond what they were able to bear. At that time, therefore, they had no great need of confirmation, while they enjoyed leisure and freedom from persecution; but now he tells them that they must change their mode of life, and as a new condition awaits them, he likewise exhorts them to prepare for a conflict.

5. And now I go to him who sent me. By a very excellent consolation he calms their grief which they might feel on account of his departure, and this was highly necessary. They who had hitherto been allowed to remain at their ease, were called to severe and arduous battles for the future. What then, would have become of them, if they had not known that Christ was in heaven, as the guardian of their salvation? For to go to the Father is nothing else than to be received into the heavenly glory, in order to possess the highest authority. This is held out to them, therefore, as a solace and remedy of grief, that, though Christ be absent from them in body, yet he will sit at the right hand of the Father, to protect believers by his power.

Here Christ reproves the apostles for two faults; first, that they were too much attached to the visible presence of his flesh; and, secondly, that, when this had been taken away, they were seized with grief, and did not lift their eyes to a higher region. The same thing happens to us; for

we always hold Christ bound by our senses, and then, if he do not appear to us according: to our desire, we contrive for ourselves a ground of despair.

And none of you ask me, where are you going? It may appear to be an unfounded charge against the apostles, that they did not ask whether their Master was going; for they had formerly inquired at him on this subject with great earnestness. But the answer is easy. When they inquired, they did not raise their minds to confidence, and this was the chief duty which they were bound to perform. The meaning therefore is, as soon as you hear of my departure, you become alarmed, and do not consider whither I am going, or for what purpose I go away."

7. Yet I tell you the truth. That they may no longer wish to have him present before their eyes, he testifies that his absence will be advantageous, and makes use of a sort of oath; for we are carnal, and consequently nothing is more difficult than to tear from our minds this foolish inclination, by which we attempt to draw down Christ from heaven to us. He explains where the advantage lies, by saying that the Holy Spirit could not be given to them, if he did not leave the world. But far more advantageous and far more desirable is that presence of Christ, by which he communicates himself to us through the grace and power of his Spirit, than if he were present before our eyes. And here we must not put the question, "Could not Christ have drawn down the Holy Spirit while he dwelt on earth?" For Christ takes for granted all that had been decreed by the Father and, indeed, when the Lord has once pointed out what he wishes to be done, to dispute about what is possible would be foolish and destructive.

John 16:8-15

8. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment 9. Of sin, because they believe not in me 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and you see me no more. 11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. 12. I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will lead you into all truth; for he will not speak from himself, but will speak all that he has heard, and will declare to you the things that are to come. 14. He will glorify me, for he will take of what is mine, and will declare it to you. 15. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore I said to you, He will take of what is mine, and will declare it to you.

8. And when he is come. Passing by the diversity of expositions, which we have received in consequence of the obscurity of the passage, I shall only state what appears to me to be in accordance with Christ's true meaning. He had promised his Spirit to the disciples; and now he praises the excellence of the gift from its effect, because this Spirit will not only guide, support, and protect them in private, but will extend more widely his power and efficacy.

He will convince the world; that is, he will not remain shut up in you, but; his power will go forth from you to be displayed to the whole world. He therefore promises to them a Spirit, who will be the Judge of the world, and by whom their preaching will be so powerful and efficacious, that it will bring into subjection those who formerly indulged in unbounded licentiousness, and were restrained by no fear or reverence.

It ought to be observed, that in this passage Christ does not speak of secret revelations, but of the power of the Spirit, which appears in the outward doctrine of the Gospel, and in the voice of men. For how comes it that the voice proceeding from the mouth of a man penetrates into the hearts, takes root there, and at length yields fruit, changing hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, and renewing men, but because the Spirit of Christ quickens it? Otherwise it would be a dead letter and a useless sound, as Paul says in that beautiful passage, in which he boasts of being a minister of the Spirit, (2 Corinthians 3:6,) because God wrought powerfully in his doctrine. The meaning therefore is, that, though the Spirit had been given to the apostles, they would be endued with a heavenly and Divine power, by which they would exercise jurisdiction over the whole world. Now, this is ascribed to the Spirit rather than to themselves, because they will have no power of their own, but will be only ministers and organs, and the Holy Spirit will be their director and governor.

Under the term world are, I think, included not only those who would be truly converted to Christ, but hypocrites and reprobates. For there are two ways in which the Spirit convinces men by the preaching of the Gospel. Some are moved in good earnest, so as to bow down willingly, and to assent willingly to the judgment by which they are condemned. Others, though they are convinced of guilt and cannot escape, yet do not sincerely yield, or submit themselves to the authority and jurisdiction of the Holy Spirit, but, on the contrary, being subdued they groan inwardly, and, being overwhelmed with confusion, still do not cease to cherish obstinacy within their hearts.

We now perceive in what manner the Spirit was to convince the world by the apostles. It was, because God revealed his judgment in the Gospel, by which their consciences were struck, and began to perceive their evils and the grace of God. for the verb *elenchein* here signifies to convince or convict; and, for understanding this passage, not a little light will be obtained from the words of the Apostle Paul, when he says,

If all shall prophesy, and an unbeliever or unlearned man enter, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all, and thus shall the secrets of his heart be made manifest, (1 Corinthians 14:23).

In that passage Paul speaks particularly of one kind of conviction, that is; when the Lord brings his elect to repentance by the Gospel; but this plainly shows in what manner the Spirit of God, by the sound of the human voice, constrains men, who formerly were not accustomed to his yoke, to acknowledge and submit to his authority.

A question now arises, For what purpose did Christ say this? Some think that he points out the cause of the hatred which he had mentioned; as if he had said, that the reason why they will be hated by the world is, that the Spirit, on the other hand, will earnestly solicit the world by means of them. But I rather agree with those who tell us that the design of Christ was different, as I stated briefly at the commencement of the exposition of this verse; for it was of great importance that the apostles should know that the gift of the Spirit, which had been promised to them, was of no ordinary value. He therefore describes its uncommon excellence, by saying that God will, in this way, erect his tribunal for judging the whole world.

9. Of sin. It now remains that we see what it is to convince of sin Christ appears to make unbelief the only cause of sin, and this is tortured by commentators in various ways; but, as I have already said, I do not intend to detail the opinions which have been held and advanced. First, it ought to be observed, that the judgment of the Spirit commences with the demonstration of sin; for the commencement of spiritual instruction is, that men born in sin have nothing in them but what leads to sin. Again, Christ mentioned unbelief, in order to show what is the nature of men in itself for, since faith is the bond by which he is united to us, until we believe in him, we are out of him and separated from him. The import of these words is as if he had said, "When the Spirit is come, he will produce full conviction that, apart from me, sin reigns in the world;" and, therefore, unbelief is here mentioned, because it separates us from Christ, in consequence of which nothing is left to us but sin In short, by these words he condemns the corruption and depravity of human nature, that we may not suppose that a single drop of integrity is in us without Christ.

10. Of righteousness. We must attend to the succession of steps which Christ lays down. He now says that the world must be convinced of righteousness; for men will never hunger and thirst for righteousness, but, on the contrary, will disdainfully reject all that is said concerning it, if they have not been moved by a conviction of sin As to believers particularly, we ought to understand that they cannot make progress in the Gospel till they have first been humbled; and this cannot take place, till they have acknowledged their sins. It is undoubtedly the peculiar office of the Law to summon consciences to the judgment-seat of God, and to strike them with terror; but the Gospel cannot be preached in a proper manner, till it lead men from sin to righteousness, and from death to life; and, therefore, it is necessary to borrow from the Law that first clause of which Christ spoke.

By righteousness must here be understood that which is imparted to us through the grace of Christ. Christ makes it to consist in his ascension to the Father, and not without good reason; for, as Paul declares that he rose for our justification, (Romans 4:25) so he now sits at the right hand of the Father in such a manner as to exercise all the authority that has been given to him, and thus to fill all things, (Ephesians 4:10.) In short, from the heavenly glory he fills the world with the sweet savor of his righteousness Now the Spirit declares, by the Gospel, that this is the only way in which we are accounted righteous Next to the conviction of sin, this is the second step, that the Spirit should convince the world what true righteousness is, namely, that Christ, by his ascension to heaven, has established the kingdom of life, and now sits at the right hand of the Father, to confirm true righteousness

11. Of judgment. Those who understand the word (kriseos) judgment as signifying condemnation, have some argument on their side; for Christ immediately adds, that the prince of this world hath been judged But I prefer a different opinion, namely, that, the light of the Gospel having been kindled, the Spirit manifests that the world has been brought into a state of good order by the victory of Christ, by which he overturned the authority of Satan; as if he had said, that this is a true restoration, by which all things are reformed, when Christ alone holds the kingdom, having subdued and triumphed over Satan. Judgment, therefore, is contrasted with what is confused and disordered, or, to express it briefly, it is the opposite (tos ataxias) of confusion, or, we might call it righteousness, a sense which it often bears in Scripture. The meaning therefore is, that Satan, so long as he retains the government, perplexes and disturbs all

things, so that there is an unseemly and disgraceful confusion in the works of God; but when he is stripped of his tyranny by Christ, then the world is restored, and good order is seen to reign. Thus the Spirit convinces the world of judgment; that is, having vanquished the prince of wickedness, Christ restores to order those things which formerly were torn and decayed.

12. I have still many things to say to you. Christ's discourse could not have so much influence over his disciples, as to prevent their ignorance from still keeping them in perplexity about many things; an not only so, but they scarcely obtained a slight taste of those things which ought to have imparted to them full satisfaction, had it not been for the obstruction arising from the weakness of the flesh. It was, therefore, impossible but that the consciousness of their poverty should oppress them with fear and anxiety. But Christ meets it by this consolation, that, when they have received the Spirit, they will be new men, and altogether different from what they were before.

But you are not able to bear them now. When he says that, were he to tell them anything more, or what was loftier, they would not be able to bear it, his object is to encourage them by the hope of better progress, that they may not lose courage; for the grace which he was to bestow on them ought not to be estimated by their present feelings, since they were at so great a distance from heaven. In short, he bids them be cheerful and courageous, whatever may be their present weakness. But as there was nothing else than doctrine on which they could rely, Christ reminds them that he had accommodated it to their capacity, yet so as to lead them to expect that they would soon afterwards obtain loftier and more abundant instruction; as if he had said, "If what you have heard from me is not yet sufficient to confirm you, have patience for a little; for ere long, having enjoyed the teaching of the Spirit, you will need nothing more; he will remove all the ignorance that now remains in you."

Now arises a question, what were those things which the apostles were not yet able to learn? The Papists, for the purpose of putting forward their inventions as the oracles of God, wickedly abuse this passage. "Christ," they tell us, "promised to the apostles new revelations; and, therefore, we must not abide solely by Scripture, for something beyond Scripture is here promised by him to his followers." In the first place, if they choose to talk with Augustine, the solution will be easily obtained. His words are, "Since Christ is silent, which of us shall say that it was this or that? Or, if he shall venture to say so, how shall he prove it? Who is so rash and insolent, even though he say what is true, as to affirm, without any Divine testimony, that those are the things which the Lord at that time did not choose to say?" But we have a surer way of refuting them, taken from Christ's own words, which follow.

13. But when he is come, the Spirit of truth. The Spirit, whom Christ promised to the apostles, is declared to be perfect Master or Teacher of truth. And why was he promised, but that they might deliver from hand to hand the wisdom which they had received from him? The Spirit was given to them, and under his guidance and direction they discharged the office to which they had been appointed.

He will lead you into all truth. That very Spirit had lead them into all truth, when they committed to writing the substance of their doctrine. Whoever imagines that anything must be added to their

doctrine, as if it were imperfect and but half-finished, not only accuses the apostles of dishonesty, but blasphemes against the Spirit. If the doctrine which they committed to writing had proceeded from mere learners or persons imperfectly taught, an addition to it would not have been superfluous; but now that their writings may be regarded as perpetual records of that revelation which was promised and given to them, nothing can be added to them without doing grievous injury to the Holy Spirit.

When they come to determine what those things actually were, the Papists act a highly ridiculous part, for they define those mysteries, which the apostles were unable to bear, to be certain childish fooleries, the most absurd and stupid things that can be imagined. Was it necessary that the Spirit should come down from heaven that the apostles might learn what ceremony must be used in consecrating cups with their altars, in baptizing church-bells, in blessing the holy water, and in celebrating Mass? Whence then do fools and children obtain their learning, who understand all those matters most thoroughly? Nothing is more evident than that the Papists mock God, when they pretend that those things came from heaven, which resemble as much the mysteries of Ceres or Proserpine as they are at variance with the pure wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

If we do not wish to be ungrateful to God, let us rest satisfied with that doctrine of which the writings of the apostles declare them to be the authors, since in it the highest perfection of heavenly wisdom is made known to us, fitted to make the man of God perfect (2 Timothy 3:17.) Beyond this let us not reckon ourselves at liberty to go; for our height, and breadth, and depth, consist in knowing the love of God, which is manifested to us in Christ. This knowledge, as Paul informs us, far exceeds all learning, (Ephesians 3:18;) and when he declares that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ, (Colossians 2:3,) he does not contrive some unknown Christ, but one whom by his preaching he painted to the life, so that, as he tells the Galatians, we see him, as it were, crucified before our eyes, (Galatians 3:1.)

But that no ambiguity may remain, Christ himself afterwards explains by his own words what those things are which the apostles were not yet able to bear.

He will tell you things which are to come. Some indeed limit this to the Spirit of prophecy; but, in my opinion, it denotes rather the future condition of his spiritual kingdom, such as the apostles, soon after his resurrection, saw it to be, but were at that time utterly unable to comprehend. He does not therefore promise them prophecies of things that would happen after their death, but means only that the nature of his kingdom will be widely different, and its glory far greater than their minds are now able to conceive. The Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, from the first chapter to the close of the fourth, explains the treasures of this hidden wisdom, which the heavenly angels learn with astonishment from the Church; and therefore we need not go to seek them from the archives or repositories of the Pope.

For he will not speak from himself. This is a confirmation of the clause, He will lead you into all truth. We know that God is the fountain of truth, and that out of Him there is nothing that is firm or sure; and, therefore, that the apostles may safely place full confidence in the oracles of the Spirit, Christ declares that they will be divine oracles; as if he had said, that every thing which the Holy Spirit shall bring proceeds from God himself. And yet these words take nothing away from the majesty of the Spirit, as if he were not God, or as if he were inferior to the Father, but

are accommodated to the capacity of our understanding; for the reason why his Divinity is expressly mentioned is, because, on account of the veil that is between us, we do not sufficiently understand with what reverence we ought to receive what the Spirit reveals to us. In like manner, he is elsewhere called the earnest, by which God ratifies to us our salvation, and the seal, by which he seals to us its certainty, (Ephesians 1:13, 14). In short, Christ intended to teach that the doctrine of the Spirit would not be of this world, as if it were produced in the air, but that it would proceed from the secret places of the heavenly sanctuary.

14. He will glorify me Christ now reminds them that the Spirit will not come to erect any new kingdom, but rather to confirm the glory which has been given to him by the Father. For many foolishly imagine that Christ taught only so as to lay down the first lessons, and then to send the disciples to a higher school. In this way they make the Gospel to be of no greater value than the Law, of which it is said that it was a schoolmaster of the ancient people, (Galatians 3:24).

This error is followed by another equally intolerable, that, having bid goodbye to Christ, as if his reign were terminated, and he were now nothing at all, they substitute the Spirit in his place. From this source the sacrileges of Popery and Mahometanism have flowed; for, though those two Antichrists differ from each other in many respects, still they agree in holding a common principle; and that is, that in the Gospel we receive the earliest instructions to lead us into the right faith, but that we must seek elsewhere the perfection of doctrine, that it may complete the course of our education. If Scripture is quoted against the Pope, he maintains that we ought not to confine ourselves to it, because the Spirit is come, and has carried us above Scripture by many additions. Mahomet asserts that, without his Koran, men always re-main children. Thus, by a false pretense of the Spirit, the world was bewitched to depart from the simple purity of Christ; for, as soon as the Spirit is separated from the word of Christ, the door is open to all kinds of delusions and impostures. A similar method of deceiving has been attempted, in the present age, by many fanatics. The written doctrine appeared to them to be literal, and, therefore, they chose to contrive a new theology that would consist of revelations.

We now see that the information given by Christ, that he would be glorified by the Spirit whom he should send, is far from being superfluous; for it was intended to inform us, that the office of the Holy Spirit was nothing else than to establish the kingdom of Christ, and to maintain and confirm for ever all that was given him by the Father. Why then does he speak of the Spirit's teaching? Not to withdraw us from the school of Christ, but rather to ratify that word by which we are commanded to listen to him, otherwise he would diminish the glory of Christ. The reason is added, Christ says,

For he will take of what is mine. By these words he means that we receive the Spirit in order that we may enjoy Christ's blessings. For what does he bestow on us? That we may be washed by the blood of Christ, that sin may be blotted out in us by his death, that our old man may be crucified, (Romans 6:6,) that his resurrection may have the effect of forming us again to newness of life, (Romans 6:4;) and, in short, that we may become partakers of his benefits. Nothing, therefore, is bestowed on us by the Spirit apart from Christ, but he takes it from Christ, that he may communicate it to us. We ought to take the same view of his doctrine; for he does not enlighten us, in order to draw us away in the smallest degree from Christ, but to fulfill what Paul says, that Christ is made to us wisdom, (1 Corinthians 1:30,) and likewise to display those treasures which

are hidden in Christ, (Colossians 2:3). In a word, the Spirit enriches us with no other than the riches of Christ, that he may display his glory in all things.

15. All things that the Father has are mine. As it might be thought that Christ took away from the Father what he claimed for himself, he acknowledges that he has received from the Father all that he communicates to us by the Spirit. When he says that all things that the Father has are his, he speaks in the person of the Mediator, for we must draw out of his fullness, (John 1:16.) He always keeps his eye on us, as we have said. We see, on the other hand, how the greater part of men deceive themselves; for they pass by Christ, and go out of the way to seek God by roundabout ways.

Other commentators explain these words to mean, that all that the Father has belongs equally to the Son, because he is the same God. But here he does not speak of his hidden and intrinsic power, as it is called, but of that office which he has been appointed to exercise toward us. In short, he speaks of his riches, that he may invite us to enjoy them, and reckons the Spirit among the gifts which we receive from the rather by his hand.

JOHN CALVIN'S COMMENTARY ON I CORINTHIANS 12⁹

1 Corinthians 12:1-7

1. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2. You know that you were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as you were led. 3. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit. 4. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit thereby.

1. Now concerning spiritual things. He goes on to correct another fault. As the Corinthians abused the gifts of God for pomp and show, and love was little, if at all, regarded, he shows them for what purpose believers are adorned by God with spiritual gifts for the edification of their brethren. This proposition, however, he divides into two parts; for, in the first place, he teaches, that God is the author of those gifts, and, secondly, having established this, he reasons as to their design. He proves from their own experience, that those things in which they gloried, are bestowed upon men through the exercise of God's favor; for he reminds them how ignorant they were, and stupid, and destitute of all spiritual light, previously to Gods calling them. Hence it appears, that they had been furnished with them not by nature, but through God's unmerited goodness.

As to the words; when he says I would not that you should be ignorant, we must supply the expression as to what is right, or as to what is your duty, or some similar expression; and by spiritual things he means spiritual gifts, as to which we shall have occasion to see afterwards. In what follows there is a twofold reading; for some manuscripts have simply "hoti" others add "hote." The former means because assigning a reason: the latter means when; and this latter reading suits much better. But besides this diversity, the construction is in other respects confused; but still, the meaning is evident. Literally, it is this "You know, that when you were Gentiles, after dumb idols, according as you were led, following.' I have, however, faithfully given Paul's meaning. By dumb idols he means having neither feeling nor motion.

Let us learn from this passage how great is the blindness of the human mind: when it is without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as it stands in amazement at dumb idols, and cannot rise higher in searching after God; no evenmore, it is led by Satan as if it were a brute. He makes use of the term Gentiles here, in the same sense as in Ephesians 2:12.

Ye were at one time Gentiles, says he, without God, strangers to the hope of salvation, etc.

Perhaps, too, he reasons by way of contrast. What if they should now show themselves to be less submissive to God, after his having taken them under his care, to be governed by his word and Spirit, than they formerly discovered themselves to be forward and compliant, in following the suggestions of Satan!

⁹ Copied from ccel.org. Translator is John Pringle. Word modifications are made by Neal Hegeman.

3. "Wherefore I have you to know." Having admonished them from their own experience, he sets before them a general doctrine, which he deduces from it; for what the Corinthians had experienced in themselves is common to all mankind, to wander on in error, previously to their being brought back, through the kindness of God, into the way of truth. Hence it is necessary that we should be directed by the Spirit of God, or we shall wander on for ever. From this, too, it follows, that all things that pertain to the true knowledge of God, are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He at the same time derives an argument from opposite causes to opposite effects. No one, speaking by the Spirit of God, can revile Christ; so, on the other hand, no one can speak well of Christ, but by the Spirit of Christ. To say that Jesus is accursed is utter blasphemy against him. To say that Jesus is the Lord, is to speak of him in honorable terms and with reverence, and to extol his majesty.

Here it is asked, as the wicked sometimes speak of Christ in honorable and magnificent terms, is this an indication that they have the Spirit of God? I answer, "They undoubtedly have, so far as that effect is concerned; but the gift of regeneration is one thing, and the gift of bare intelligence, with which Judas himself was endowed, when he preached the gospel, is quite another." Hence, too, we perceive how great our weakness is, as we cannot so much as move our tongue for the celebration of God's praise, unless it be governed by his Spirit. Of this the Scripture, also, frequently reminds us, and the saints everywhere acknowledge that unless the Lord open their mouths, they are not fit to be the heralds of his praise. Among others, Isaiah says, "I am a man of unclean lips," etc. (Isaiah 6:5).

4. Now there are diversities of gifts. The symmetry of the Church consists, so to speak, of a manifold unity, that is, when the variety of gifts is directed to the same object, as in music there are different sounds, but suited to each other with such an adaptation, as to produce harmony. Hence it is befitting that there should be a distinction of gifts as well as of offices, and yet all harmonize in one. Paul, accordingly, in the 12th chapter of Romans, commends this variety, that no one may, by rashly intruding himself into another's place, confuse the distinction which the Lord has established. Hence he orders every one to be content with his own gifts, and cultivate the particular department that has been assigned to him. He prohibits them from going beyond their own limits by a foolish ambition. He exhorts that every one should consider how much has been given him, what measure has been allotted to him, and to what he has been called. Here, on the other hand, he orders every one to bring what he has to the common heap, and not keep back the gifts of God in the way of enjoying every one his own, apart from the others, but aim unitedly at the edification of all in common. In both passages, he brings forward the similarities of the human body, but, as may be observed, on different accounts. The sum of what he states amounts to this, that gifts are not distributed differently among believers, in order that they may be used apart, but that in the division there is a unity, inasmuch as one Spirit is the source of all those gifts, one God is the Lord of all administrations, and the author of all exercises of power. Now God, who is the beginning, ought also to be the end.

"One Spirit." This passage ought to be carefully observed in opposition to fanatics, who think that the name Spirit means nothing essential, but merely the gifts or actions of divine power. Here, however, Paul plainly testifies, that there is one essential power of God, from where all his works proceed. The term Spirit, it is true, is sometimes transferred by figure of speech to the gifts themselves. Hence we read of the Spirit of knowledge, of judgment, of fortitude, of modesty.

Paul, however, here plainly testifies that judgment, and knowledge, and gentleness, and all other gifts, proceed from one source. For it is the office of the Holy Spirit to put forth and exercise the power of God by conferring these gifts upon men, and distributing them among them.

“One Lord.” The ancients made use of this testimony in opposition to the Arians, for the purpose of maintaining a Trinity of persons. For there is mention made here of the Spirit, secondly of the Lord, and lastly of God, and to these Three, one and the same operation is ascribed. Thus, by the name Lord, they understood Christ. But for my part, though I have no objection to its being understood in this way, I perceive, at the same time, that it is a weak argument for stopping the mouths of Arians; for there is a correspondence between the word administrations and the word Lord. The administrations, says Paul, are different, but there is only one God whom we must serve, whatever administration we discharge. This antithesis, then, shows what is the simple meaning, so that to confine it to Christ is rather forced.

6. One God that works. The Greek term for works is, *energata*, a term which contains an allusion to the verb *workes*, as in Latin *effectus* (an effect) corresponds with the verb *effectus* (to effect.) Paul’s meaning is, that although believers may be endowed with different powers, they all take their rise from one and the same power on the part of God. Hence the expression employed here works all things in all. It does not refer to the general providence of God, but to the liberality that he exercises towards us, in bestowing upon every one some gift. The sum is this—that there is nothing in mankind that is good or praiseworthy but what comes from God alone. Hence it is out of place here to bother with the question in what manner God acts in Satan and in reprobates.

7. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man. He now points out the purpose for which God has appointed his gifts, for he does not confer them upon us in vain, nor does he intend that they shall serve the purpose of pretense. Hence we must inquire as to the purpose for which they are conferred. As to this Paul answers (with a view to utility), *pros to sumpheron*; that is, that the Church may receive advantage thereby. The manifestation of the Spirit may be taken in a passive as well as in an active sense, in a passive sense, because wherever there is prophecy, or knowledge, or any other gift, the Spirit of God does there manifest himself - in an active sense, because the Spirit of God, when he enriches us with any gift, unlocks his treasures, for the purpose of manifesting to us those things that would otherwise have been concealed and shut up. The second interpretation suits better. The view taken by Chrysostom is rather harsh and forced, that this term is used, because unbelievers do not recognize God, except by visible miracles.

1 Corinthians 12:8-13

8. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9. To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10. To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11. But all these work by that one and the selfsame Spirit, distributing to every man as many as he will. 12. For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,

whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

8. To one is given. He now subjoins an enumeration, or, in other words, specifies particular kinds, not indeed all of them, but such as are sufficient for his present purpose. Believers, says he, are endowed with different gifts, but let every one acknowledge, that he is indebted for whatever he has to the Spirit of God, for he pours forth his gifts as the sun scatters his rays in every direction. As to the difference between these gifts, knowledge (or understanding) and wisdom are taken in different senses in the Scriptures, but here I take them in the way of less and greater, as in Colossians 2:3, where they are also joined together, when Paul says, that in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge, therefore, in my opinion, means acquaintance with sacred things. Wisdom, on the other hand, means the perfection of it. Sometimes prudence is put, as it were, in the middle place between these two, and in that case it denotes skill in applying knowledge to some useful purpose. They are, it is true, very nearly allied; but still you observe a difference when they are put together. Let us then take knowledge as meaning ordinary information, and wisdom, as including revelations that are of a more secret and sublime order.

The term faith is employed here to mean a special faith, as we shall afterwards see from the context. A special faith is of such a kind as does not apprehend Christ wholly, for redemption, righteousness, and sanctification, but only in so far as miracles are performed in his name. Judas had a faith of this kind, and he wrought miracles too by means of it. Chrysostom distinguishes it in a somewhat different manner, calling it the faith of miracles, not of doctrine. This, however, does not differ much from the interpretation previously mentioned. By the gift of healings every one knows what is meant.

As to the workings of powers, or, as some render it, the operations of influences, there is more occasion for doubt. I am inclined, however, to think, that what is meant is the influence which is exercised against devils, and also against hypocrites. When, therefore, Christ and his Apostles by authority restrained devils, or put them to flight, that was *energama*, (powerful working,) and, in like manner, when Paul smote the sorcerer with blindness, (Acts 13:11,) and when Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead upon the spot with a single word. The gifts of healing and of miracles, therefore, serve to manifest the goodness of God, but this last, his severity for the destruction of Satan.

By prophecy, I understand the singular and choice endowment of unfolding the secret will of God, so that a Prophet is a messenger, as it were, between God and man. My reason for taking this view will be explained more fully afterwards.

The discerning of spirits, was a clearness of perception in forming a judgment as to those who professed to be something. (Acts 5:36.) I speak not of that natural wisdom, by which we are regulated in judging. It was a special illumination, with which some were endowed by the gift of God. The use of it was this: that they might not be imposed upon by masks, of mere pretences, but might by that spiritual judgment distinguish, as by a particular mark, the true ministers of Christ from the false.

There was a difference between the knowledge of tongues, and the interpretation of them, for those who were endowed with the former were, in many cases, not acquainted with the language of the nation with which they had to deal. The interpreters rendered foreign tongues into the native language. These endowments they did not at that time acquire by labor or study, but were put in possession of them by a wonderful revelation of the Spirit.

11. One and the same spirit distributing. Hence it follows that those act amiss who, having no concern as to participation, break asunder that holy harmony, that is fitly adjusted in all its parts, only when under the guidance of the same Spirit, all conspire toward one and the same object. He again calls the Corinthians to unity, by reminding them that all have derived from one fountain whatever they possess, while he instructs them, at the same time, that no one has so much as to have enough within himself, so as not to require help from others. For this is what he means by these words “distributing to every one as many as he willed.” The Spirit of God, therefore, distributes them among us, in order that we may make all contribute to the common advantage. To no one does he give all, lest any one, satisfied with his particular portion, should separate himself from others, and live solely for himself. The same idea is intended in the adverb severally, as it is of great importance to understand accurately that diversity by which God unites us mutually to one another. Now, when will is ascribed to the Spirit, and that, too, in connection with power, we may conclude from this, that the Spirit is truly and properly God.

12. For as the body is one. He now refers to a similarity with the human body, which he makes use of also in Romans 12:4; but it is for a different purpose, as I have already stated above. In that passage, he exhorts every one to be satisfied with his own calling, and not to invade another’s territory; as ambition, curiosity, or some other disposition, induces many to take in hand more than is expedient. Here, however, he exhorts believers to be united with each other in a mutual distribution of gifts, as they were not conferred upon them by God that every one should enjoy his own separately, but that one should help another. It is usual, however, for any society of men, or congregation, to be called a body, as one city constitutes a body, and so, in like manner, one senate, and one people. Monenius Agrippa, too, in ancient times, when desirous to conciliate the Roman people, when at variance with the senate, made use of an apologue, not very unlike the doctrine of Paul here. Among Christians, however, the case is very different; for they do not constitute a mere political body, but are the spiritual and mystical body of Christ, as Paul himself afterwards adds (1 Corinthians 12:27). The meaning therefore is that the members of the body are various, and have different functions, they are, nevertheless, linked together in such a manner that they become one. We, accordingly, who are members of Christ, although we are endowed with various gifts, ought, notwithstanding, to have an eye to that connection which we have in Christ.

So also is Christ. The name of Christ is used here instead of the Church, because the similitude was intended to apply not to God’s only-begotten Son, but to us. It is a passage that is full of great comfort, inasmuch as he calls the Church Christ; for Christ confers upon us this honor, that he is willing to be esteemed and recognised, not in himself merely, but also in his members. Hence the same Apostle says elsewhere, (Ephesians 1:23,) that the Church is his completion, as though he would, if separated from his members, be incomplete. And certainly, as Augustine elegantly expresses himself in one part of his writings. Since we are in Christ a fruit-bearing

vine, what are we out of him but dry twigs? (John 15:4.) In this, then, our comfort lies that, as he and the Father are one, so we are one with him. Hence it is that his name is applied to us.

13. For we are all baptized by one Spirit. Here there is a proof brought forward from the effect of baptism. We are,” says he, “engrafted by baptism into Christ’s body, so that we are by a mutual link bound together as members, and live one and the same life. Hence every one, that would remain in the Church of Christ, must necessarily cultivate this fellowship.” He speaks, however, of the baptism of believers, which is made effective through the grace of the Spirit, for, in the case of many, baptism is merely in the letter, the symbol without the reality; but believers, along with the sacrament, receive the reality. Hence, with respect to God, this invariably holds good that baptism is an engrafting into the body of Christ, for God in that ordinance does not represent anything but what he is prepared to accomplish, provided we are on our part capable of it. The Apostle, also, observes here a most admirable medium, in teaching that the nature of baptism is to connect us with Christ’s body. Lest any one, however, should imagine, that this is effected by the outward symbol, he adds that it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Whether Jews or Greeks. He specifies these instances, to point out, that no diversity of condition obstructs that holy unity which he recommends. This clause, too, is added suitably and appropriately, for envy might at that time arise from two sources, because the Jews were not willing that the Gentiles should be put upon a level with them; and, where one had some excellence above others, with the view of maintaining his superiority, withdraw himself from his brethren.

We have all drunk in one Spirit. It is literally, “We have drunk into one Spirit,” but it would seem that, in order that the two words en (in) and hen (one) might not immediately follow each other, Paul intentionally changed en (in) into eis (into,) as he is often accustomed to do. Hence his meaning seems rather to be, that we are made to drink through the influence, as he had said before, of the Spirit of Christ, than that we have drunk into the same Spirit. It is uncertain, however, whether he speaks here of Baptism or of the Supper. I am rather inclined, however, to understand him as referring to the Supper, as he makes mention of drinking, for I have no doubt that he intended to make an allusion to the similitude of the sign. There is, however, no correspondence between drinking and baptism. Now, though the cup forms but the half of the Supper, there is no difficulty arising from that, for it is a common thing in Scripture to speak of the sacraments by synecdoche. Thus he mentioned above in the tenth chapter (1 Corinthians 10:17) simply the bread, making no mention of the cup. The meaning, therefore, will be this that participation in the cup has an eye to this that we drink, all of us, of the same cup. For in that ordinance we drink of the life-giving blood of Christ, that we may have life in common with him which we truly have, when he lives in us by his Spirit. He teaches, therefore, that believers, so soon as they are initiated by the baptism of Christ, are already imbued with a desire of cultivating mutual unity, and then afterwards, when they receive the sacred Supper, they are again conducted by degrees to the same unity, as they are all refreshed at the same time with the same drink.

1 Corinthians 12:14-27

14. For the body is not one member, but many.
15. If the foot should say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?
16. And if the ear should say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?
17. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?
18. But now God has set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it pleased him.
19. And if they were all one member, where were the body be?
20. But now are they many members, yet one body.
21. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.
22. No, much more those members of the body, which seem to be weaker, are necessary:
23. And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow greater honour; and our less presentable parts have greater modesty.
24. For our presentable parts have no need: but God composed the body, having given greater honour to that part which lacks it.
25. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.
26. And when one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it.
27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

15. This is a bringing out still farther (epexergasia) of the preceding statement, or in other words, an exposition of it, with some amplification, with the view of placing in a clearer light, what he had previously stated in a few words. Now all this agrees with the apologue of Menenius Agrippa. Should a dissension break out in the body, so that the feet would refuse to discharge their office to the rest of the body, and the belly in like manner, and the eyes, and the hands, what would be the effect? Would not the result be the destruction of the whole body? At the same time Paul here insists more particularly on this one point—that each member ought to be satisfied with its own place and station, and not envy the others, for he makes a comparison between the more distinguished members, and those that have less dignity. For the eye has a more honorable place in the body than the hand, and the hand than the foot. But if our hands were, from a feeling of envy, to refuse to discharge their office, would nature endure this? Would the hand be listened to, when wishing to be separated from the body?

To be not of the body, means here to have no communication with the other members, but to live for itself, and to seek only its own advantage. “Would it then,” says Paul, “be allowable for the hand to refuse to do its office to the other members, on the ground of its bearing envy to the eyes?” These things are said of the natural body, but they must be applied to the members of the Church, lest ambition or misdirected jealousy and envy should be the occasion of bad feeling among us, so as to lead one that occupies an inferior station to grudge to afford his services to those above him.

17. If the whole body were an eye. He sets aside a foolish aiming at equality, by showing the impossibility of it. "If all the members," says he, "desire the honor that belongs to the eye, the consequence will be, that the whole body will perish; for it is impossible that the body should remain safe and sound, if the members have not different functions, and a mutual correspondence between them. Hence equality interferes with the welfare of the body, because it produces a confusion that entails present ruin. What madness, then, would it be, should one member, instead of giving way to another, conspire for its own ruin and that of the body!"

18. But now God has placed. Here we have another argument, taken from the appointment of God. It has pleased God, that the body should consist of various members, and that the members should be endowed with various offices and gifts. That member, therefore, which will not be satisfied with its own station, will wage war with God after the manner of the giants. Let us, therefore, be subject to the arrangement which God has appointed, that we may not, to no purpose, resist his will.

19. If all were one member. He means, that God has not acted at random, or without good reason, in assigning different gifts to the members of the body; but because it was necessary that it should be so, for the preservation of the body; for if this symmetry were taken away, there would be utter confusion and derangement. Hence we ought to submit ourselves the more carefully to the providence of God, which has so suitably arranged everything for our common advantage. One member is taken here to mean a mass, that is all of one shape, and not distinguished by any variety; for if God were to fashion our body into a mass of this kind, it would be a useless heap.

20. Many members, one body. He repeats this quite often because the stress of the whole question lies here that the unity of the body is of such a nature as cannot be maintained but by a diversity of members; and that, while the members differ from each other in offices and functions, it is in such a way as to have a mutual connection with each other for the preservation of the one body. Hence no body can retain its standing without a diversified symmetry of the members, that we may know to consult public as well as private advantage, by discharging, every one, the duty of his own station.

21. And the eye cannot say to the hand. Up to now, he has been showing, what is the office of the less honorable members to discharge their duty to the body, and not envy the more distinguished members. Now, on the other hand, he enjoins it upon the more honorable members, not to despise the inferior members, which they cannot dispense with. The eye excels the hand, and yet cannot despise it, or insult over it, as though it were useless; and he draws an argument from utility, to show that it ought to be thus. Those members, that are less esteemed, are the more necessary: hence, with a view to the safety of the body, they must not be despised. He makes use of the term weaker here, to mean despised, as in another passage, when he says that he glories in his infirmities, (2 Corinthians 12:9) he expresses, under this term, those things which rendered him contemptible and abject.

23. Which are less honorable. Here we have a second argument, that the dishonor of one member turns out to the common disgrace of the whole body, as appears from the care that we take to cover the parts that are less honorable. "Those parts that are not presentable," says he, "do

not require adventitious ornament; but the parts that involve shame, or are less comely, are cared for by us with greater concern. Why so? but because their shame would be the common disgrace of the whole body.” To invest with honor is to put on a covering for the sake of ornament, in order that those members may be honorably concealed, which would involve shame if uncovered.

24. But God has woven the body together. He again repeats, what he had stated once before, (1 Corinthians 12:18,) but more explicitly, that God has appointed this symmetry, and that with a view to the advantage of the whole body, because it cannot otherwise maintain its standing. For whence comes it, that all the members are of their own accord concerned for the honor of a less comely member, and agree together to conceal its shame? This inclination has been implanted in them by God, because without this adjustment a schism in the body would quickly break out. Hence it appears that the body is not merely shattered, and the order of nature perverted, but the authority of God is openly set at naught, whenever any one assumes more than belongs to him.

26. Whether one member suffers. Such a measure of fellow-feeling. (*sumpatheia*,) says he, is to be seen in the human body, that, if any inconvenience is felt by any member, all the others grieve along with it, and, on the other hand, rejoice along with it, in its prosperity. Hence there is no room there for envy or contempt. To be honored, here, is taken in a large sense, as meaning, to be in prosperity and happiness. Nothing, however, is better fitted to promote harmony than this community of interest, when every one feels that, by the prosperity of others, he is proportionally enriched, and, by their penury, impoverished.

27. But you are the body of Christ. Hence what has been said respecting the nature and condition of the human body must be applied to us; for we are not a mere civil society, but, being ingrafted into Christ’s body, are truly members one of another. Whatever, therefore, any one of us has, let him know that it has been given him for the edification of his brethren in common; and let him, accordingly, bring it forward, and not keep it back buried, as it were, within himself, or make use of it as his own. Let not the man, who is endowed with superior gifts, be puffed up with pride, and despise others; but let him consider that there is nothing so diminutive as to be of no use as, in truth, even the least among the pious brings forth fruit, according to his slender capacity, so that there is no useless member in the Church. Let not those who are not endowed with so much honor, envy those above them, or refuse to do their duty to them, but let them maintain the station in which they have been placed. Let there be mutual affection, mutual fellow-feeling, (*sumpatheia*,) mutual concern. Let us have a regard to the common advantage, in order that we may not destroy the Church by malignity, or envy, or pride, or any disagreement; but may, on the contrary, every one of us, strive to the utmost of his power to preserve it. Here is a large subject, and a magnificent one; but I content myself with having pointed out the way in which the above similitude must be applied to the Church.

Members severally {individually}. Chrysostom is of opinion, that this clause is added, because the Corinthians were not the universal Church; but this appears to me rather forced. I have sometimes thought that it was expressive of impropriety, as the Latins say *Quodammodo*, (in a manner.) When, however, I view the whole matter more narrowly, I am rather disposed to refer it to that division of members of which he had made mention. They are then individual (severally) members, according as each one has had his portion and definite work assigned him. The context

itself leads us to this meaning. In this way {individually} severally, and as a whole, will be opposite terms. 1 Corinthians 12:28-31

28. And God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30. Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31. But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet I shows you a more excellent way.

He has in the beginning of the chapter spoken of gifts: now he begins to treat of offices, and this order it is proper that we should carefully observe. For the Lord did not appoint ministers, by without first endowing them with the requisite gifts, and qualifying them for discharging their duty. Hence we must infer, that those are fanatics, and actuated by an evil spirit, who intrude themselves into the Church, while destitute of the necessary qualifications, as many boast that they are under the influence of the Spirit, and glory in a secret call from God, while in the meantime they are unlearned and utterly ignorant. The natural order, on the other hand, is this, that gifts come before the office to be discharged. As, then, he has taught above, that everything that an individual has received from God, should be made subservient to the common good, so now he declares that offices are distributed in such a manner, that all may together, by united efforts, edify the Church, and each individual according to his measure.

28. First, Apostles. He does not enumerate all the particular kinds, and there was no need of this, for he merely intended to bring forward some examples. In the fourth Chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, (Ephesians 4:11,) there is a fuller enumeration of the offices, that are required for the continued government of the Church. The reason of this I shall assign there, if the Lord shall permit me to advance so far, though even there he does not make mention of them all. As to the passage before us, we must observe, that of the offices which Paul makes mention of, some are perpetual, others temporary. Those that are perpetual, are such as are necessary for the government of the Church; those that are temporary, are such as were appointed at the beginning for the founding of the Church, and the raising up of Christ's kingdom; and these, in a short time afterwards, ceased.

To the first class belongs the office of Teacher, to the second the office of Apostle; for the Lord created the Apostles, that they might spread the gospel throughout the whole world, and he did not assign to each of them certain limits or parishes, but would have them, wherever they went, to discharge the office of ambassadors among all nations and languages. In this respect there is a difference between them and Pastors, who are, in a manner, tied to their particular churches. For the Pastor has not a commission to preach the gospel over the whole world, but to take care of the Church that has been committed to his charge. In his Epistle to the Ephesians he places Evangelists after the Apostles, but here he passes them over; for from the highest order, he passes immediately to Prophets

By this term he means, (in my opinion,) not those who were endowed with the gift of prophesying, but those who were endowed with a peculiar gift, not merely for interpreting Scripture, but also for applying it wisely for present use. My reason for thinking so is this, that he prefers prophecy to all other gifts, on the ground of its yielding more edification, a

commendation that would not be applicable to the predicting of future events. Farther, when he describes the office of Prophet, or at least treats of what he ought principally to do, he says that he must devote himself to consolation, exhortation, and doctrine. Now these are things that are distinct from prophesyings. Let us, then, by Prophets in this passage understand, first of all, eminent interpreters of Scripture, and farther, persons who are endowed with no common wisdom and skillfulness in taking a right view of the present necessity of the Church, that they may speak suitably to it, and in this way be, in a manner, ambassadors to communicate the divine will.

Between them and Teachers this difference may be pointed out, that the office of Teacher consists in taking care that sound doctrines be maintained and propagated, in order that the purity of religion may be kept up in the Church. At the same time, even this term is taken in different senses, and here perhaps it is used rather in the sense of Pastor, unless you prefer, it may be, to take it in a general way for all that are endowed with the gift of teaching, as in Acts 13:1, where also Luke joins them with Prophets. My reason for not agreeing with those who make the whole of the office of Prophet consist in the interpretation of Scripture, is this, that Paul restricts the number of those who ought to speak, to two or three; (1 Corinthians 14:29,) which would not accord with a bare interpretation of Scripture. In fine, my opinion is this, that the Prophets here spoken of are those who make known the will of God, by applying with skill, prophecies, threatenings, promises, and the whole doctrine of Scripture, to the present use of the Church. If any one is of a different opinion, I have no objection to his being so, and will not raise any quarrel on that account. For it is difficult to form a judgment as to gifts and offices of which the Church has been so long deprived, excepting only that there are some traces, or shadows of them still to be seen.

As to powers and gift of healings, I have spoken when commenting on the 12th Chapter of the Romans. Only it must be observed that here he makes mention, not so much of the gifts themselves, as of the administration of them. As the Apostle is here enumerating offices, I do not approve of what Chrysostom says, that is, helps or aids, consist in supporting the weak. What is it then? Undoubtedly, it is either an office, as well as gift, that was exercised in ancient times, but of which we have at this day no knowledge whatever; or it is connected with the office of Deacon, or in other words, the care of the poor; and this latter idea pleases me better. In Romans 12:7, he makes mention of two kinds of deacons. Of these I have treated when commenting upon that passage.

By Governments I understand Elders, who had the charge of discipline. For the primitive Church had its Senate, for the purpose of keeping the people behaving properly, as Paul shows elsewhere, when he makes mention of two kinds of Presbyters. (1 Timothy 5:17.) Hence government consisted of those Presbyters who excelled others in seriousness, experience, and authority.

Under different kinds of tongues he comprehends both the knowledge of languages, and the gift of interpretation. They were, however, two distinct gifts; because in some cases an individual spoke in different languages, and yet did not understand the language of the Church with which he had to do. This defect was supplied by interpreters.

29. Are all Apostles? It may indeed have happened, that one individual was endowed with many gifts, and sustained two of the offices which he has enumerated; nor was there in this any inconsistency. Paul's object, however, is to show in the first place, that no one has such a fullness in everything as to have a sufficiency within himself, and not require the aid of others; and secondly, that offices as well as gifts are distributed in such a manner that no one member constitutes the whole body, but each contributing his portion to the common advantage, they then altogether constitute an entire and perfect body. For Paul means here to take away every occasion of proud boasting, base envyings, haughtiness, and contempt of the brethren, malignity, ambition, and everything of that nature.

31. Seek after the more excellent gifts. It might also be rendered, Value highly; and it would not suit in with the passage, though it makes little difference as to the meaning; for Paul exhorts the Corinthians to esteem and desire those gifts especially, which are most conducive to edification. For this fault prevailed among them- that they aimed at show, rather than usefulness. Hence prophecy was neglected, while languages sounded forth among them, with great show, indeed, but with little profit. He does not, however, address individuals, as though he wished that every one should aspire at prophecy, or the office of teacher; but simply recommends to them a desire to promote edification, that they may apply themselves the more diligently to those things that are most conducive to edification.

JOHN CALVIN COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS 4:11-12¹⁰

Ephesians 4:11-14

11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

He returns to explain the distribution of gifts, and illustrates at greater length what he had slightly hinted, that out of this variety arises unity in the church, as the various tones in music produce sweet melody. The meaning may be thus summed up. "The external ministry of the word is also commended, on account of the advantages which it yields. Certain men appointed to that office, are employed in preaching the gospel. This is the arrangement by which the Lord is pleased to govern his church, to maintain its existence, and ultimately to secure its highest perfection."

It may be a surprise, that, when the gifts of the Holy Spirit form the subject of discussion, Paul should enumerate offices instead of gifts. I reply, when men are called by God, gifts are necessarily connected with offices. God does not confer on men the mere name of Apostles or Pastors, but also endows them with gifts, without which they cannot properly discharge their office. He whom God has appointed to be an apostle does not bear an empty and useless title; for the divine command, and the ability to perform it, go together. Let us now examine the words in detail.

11. And he gave. The government of the church, by the preaching of the word, is first of all declared to be no human invention, but a most sacred ordinance of Christ. The apostles did not appoint themselves, but were chosen by Christ; and, at the present day, true pastors do not rashly thrust themselves forward by their own judgment, but are raised up by the Lord. In short, the government of the church, by the ministry of the word, is not an invention of men, but an appointment made by the Son of God. As his own unalterable law, it demands our assent. They who reject or despise this ministry offer insult and rebellion to Christ its Author. It is himself who gave them; for, if he does not raise them up, there will be none. Another inference is, that no man will be fit or qualified for so distinguished an office who has not been formed and moulded by the hand of Christ himself. To Christ we owe it that we have ministers of the gospel, that they abound in necessary qualifications, that they execute the trust committed to them. All, all is his gift.

Some, apostles. The different names and offices assigned to different persons take their rise from that diversity of the members which goes to form the completeness of the whole body, -- every ground of emulation, and envy, and ambition, being thus removed. If every person shall display a

¹⁰ Copied from ccel.org. Translator is William Pringle. Word modification are made by Neal Hegeman.

selfish character, shall strive to outshine his neighbor, and shall disregard all concerns but his own, -- or, if more eminent persons shall be the object of envy to those who occupy a lower place, -- in each, and in all of these cases, gifts are not applied to their proper use. He therefore reminds them, that the gifts bestowed on individuals are intended, not to be held for their personal and separate interests, but to be employed for the benefit of the whole. Of the offices which are here enumerated, we have already spoken at considerable length, and shall now say nothing more than the exposition of the passage seems to demand. Five classes of office-bearers are mentioned, though on this point, I am aware, there is a diversity of opinion; for some consider the two last to make but one office. Leaving out of view the opinions of others, I shall proceed to state my own.

I take the word apostles not in that general sense which the derivation of the term might warrant, but in its own peculiar signification, for those highly favored persons whom Christ exalted to the highest honor. Such were the twelve, to whose number Paul was afterwards added. Their office was to spread the doctrine of the gospel throughout the whole world, to plant churches, and to erect the kingdom of Christ. They had not churches of their own committed to them; but the injunction given to all of them was, to preach the gospel wherever they went.

Next to them come the Evangelists, who were closely allied in the nature of their office, but held an inferior rank. To this class belonged Timothy and others; for, while Paul mentions them along with himself in the salutations of his epistles, he does not speak of them as his companions in the apostleship, but claims this name as peculiarly his own. The services in which the Lord employed them were auxiliary to those of the apostles, to whom they were next in rank.

To these two classes the apostle adds Prophets. By this name some understand those persons who possessed the gift of predicting future events, among whom was Agabus (Acts 11:28; 21:10). But, for my own part, as doctrine is the present subject, I would rather define the word prophets, as on a former occasion, to mean distinguished interpreters of prophecies, who, by a remarkable gift of revelation, applied them to the subjects which they had occasion to handle; not excluding, however, the gift of prophecy, by which their doctrinal instruction was usually accompanied.

Pastors and Teachers are supposed by some to denote one office, because the apostle does not, as in the other parts of the verse, say, and some, pastors; and some, teachers; but, *tous de, poimenas kai didaskalous*, and some, pastors and teachers Chrysostom and Augustine are of this opinion; not to mention the commentaries of Ambrose, whose observations on the subject are truly childish and unworthy of himself. I partly agree with them, that Paul speaks indiscriminately of pastors and teachers as belonging to one and the same class, and that the name teacher does, to some extent, apply to all pastors. But this does not appear to me a sufficient reason why two offices, which I find to differ from each other, should be confounded. Teaching is, no doubt, the duty of all pastors; but to maintain sound doctrine requires a talent for interpreting Scripture, and a man may be a teacher who is not qualified to preach.

Pastors, in my opinion, are those who have the charge of a particular flock; though I have no objection to their receiving the name of teachers, if it be understood that there is a distinct class of teachers, who preside both in the education of pastors and in the instruction of the whole

church. It may sometimes happen, that the same person is both a pastor and a teacher, but the duties to be performed are entirely different.

It deserves attention, also, that, of the five offices which are here enumerated, not more than the last two are intended to be perpetual. Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets were bestowed on the church for a limited time only, -- except in those cases where religion has fallen into decay, and evangelists are raised up in an extraordinary manner, to restore the pure doctrine which had been lost. But without Pastors and Teachers there can be no government of the church.

Papists have some reason to complain, that their primacy, of which they boast so much, is openly insulted in this passage. The subject of discussion is the unity of the church. Paul inquires into the means by which its continuance is secured, and the outward expressions by which it is promoted, and comes at length to the government of the church. If he knew a primacy which had a fixed residence, was it not his duty, for the benefit of the whole church, to exhibit one ministerial head placed over all the members, under whose government we are collected into one body? We must either charge Paul with inexcusable neglect and foolishness, in leaving out the most appropriate and powerful argument, or we must acknowledge that this primacy is at variance with the appointment of Christ. In truth, he plainly rejects it as without foundation, when he ascribes superiority to Christ alone, and represents the apostles, and all the pastors, as indeed inferior to Him, but associated on an equal level with each other. There is no passage of Scripture by which that tyrannical hierarchy, regulated by one earthly head, is more completely overturned. Paul has been followed by Cyprian, who gives a short and clear definition of what forms the only lawful monarchy in the church. There is, he says, one bishoprick, which unites the various parts into one whole. This bishoprick he claims for Christ alone, leaving the administration of it to individuals, but in a united capacity, no one being permitted to exalt himself above others.

12. For the renewing of the saints. In this version I follow Erasmus, not because I prefer his view, but to allow the reader an opportunity of comparing his version with the Vulgate and with mine, and then choose for himself. The old translation was, (*ad consummationem*,) for the completeness. The Greek word employed by Paul is *katartismos*, which signifies literally the adaptation of things possessing symmetry and proportion; just as, in the human body, the members are united in a proper and regular manner; so that the word comes to signify perfection. But as Paul intended to express here a just and orderly arrangement, I prefer the word (*constitutio*) settlement or constitution, taking it in that sense in which a commonwealth, or kingdom, or province, is said to be settled, when confusion gives place to the regular administration of law.

For the work of the ministry. God might himself have performed this work, if he had chosen; but he has committed it to the ministry of men. This is intended to anticipate an objection. "Cannot the church be constituted and properly arranged, without the instrumentality of men?" Paul asserts that a ministry is required, because such is the will of God.

For the edifying of the body of Christ. This is the same thing with what he had formerly denominated the settlement or perfecting of the saints. Our true completeness and perfection consist in our being united in the one body of Christ. No language more highly commendatory of

the ministry of the word could have been employed, than to ascribe to it this effect. What is more excellent than to produce the true and complete perfection of the church? And yet this work, so admirable and divine, is here declared by the apostle to be accomplished by the external ministry of the word. That those who neglect this instrument should hope to become perfect in Christ is utter madness. Yet such are the fanatics, on the one hand, who pretend to be favored with secret revelations of the Spirit, -- and proud men, on the other, who imagine that to them the private reading of the Scriptures is enough, and that they have no need of the ordinary ministry of the church.

If the edification of the church proceeds from Christ alone, he has surely a right to prescribe in what manner it shall be edified. But Paul expressly states, that, according to the command of Christ, no real union or perfection is attained, but by the outward preaching. We must allow ourselves to be ruled and taught by men. This is the universal rule, which extends equally to the highest and to the lowest. The church is the common mother of all the godly, which bears, nourishes, and brings up children to God, kings and peasants alike; and this is done by the ministry. Those who neglect or despise this order choose to be wiser than Christ. Woe to the pride of such men! It is, no doubt, a thing in itself possible that divine influence alone should make us perfect without human assistance. But the present inquiry is not what the power of God can accomplish, but what is the will of God and the appointment of Christ. In employing human instruments for accomplishing their salvation, God has conferred on men no ordinary favor. Nor can any exercise be found better adapted to promote unity than to gather around the common doctrine -- the standard of our General.

13. Till we all come. Paul had already said, that by the ministry of men the church is regulated and governed, so as to attain the highest perfection. But his commendation of the ministry is now carried farther. The necessity for which he had pleaded is not confined to a single day, but continues to the end. Or, to speak more plainly, he reminds his readers that the use of the ministry is not temporal, like that of a school for children, (*paidagogia*, Galatians 3:24,) but constant, so long as we remain in the world. Enthusiasts dream that the use of the ministry ceases as soon as we have been led to Christ. Proud men, who carry their desire of knowledge beyond what is proper, look down with contempt on the elementary instruction of childhood. But Paul maintains that we must persevere in this course till all our deficiencies are supplied; that we must make progress till death, under the teaching of Christ alone; and that we must not be ashamed to be the scholars of the church, to which Christ has committed our education.

In the unity of the faith. But ought not the unity of the faith to reign among us from the very commencement? It does reign, I acknowledge, among the sons of God, but not so perfectly as to make them come together. Such is the weakness of our nature, that it is enough if every day brings some nearer to others, and all nearer to Christ. The expression, coming together, denotes that closest union to which we still aspire, and which we shall never reach, until this garment of the flesh, which is always accompanied by some remains of ignorance and weakness, shall have been laid aside.

And of the knowledge of the Son of God. This clause appears to be added for the sake of explanation. It was the apostle's intention to explain what is the nature of true faith, and in what it consists; that is, when the Son of God is known. To the Son of God alone faith ought to look;

on him it relies; in him it rests and terminates. If it proceed farther, it will disappear, and will no longer be faith, but a delusion. Let us remember, that true faith confines its view so entirely to Christ, that it neither knows, nor desires to know, anything else.

Into a perfect man. This must be read in immediate connection with what goes before; as if he had said, "What is the highest perfection of Christians? How is that perfection attained?" Full manhood is found in Christ; for foolish men do not, in a proper manner, seek their perfection in Christ. It ought to be held as a fixed principle among us, that all that is out of Christ is hurtful and destructive. Whoever is a man in Christ, is, in every respect, a perfect man.

The AGE of fullness means -- full or mature age. No mention is made of old age, for in the Christian progress no place for it is found. Whatever becomes old has a tendency to decay; but the vigor of this spiritual life is continually advancing.

14. That we may be no more children. Having spoken of that perfect manhood, towards which we are proceeding throughout the whole course of our life, he reminds us that, during such a progress, we ought not to resemble children. An intervening period is thus pointed out between childhood and man's estate. Those are "children" who have not yet advanced a step in the way of the Lord, but who still hesitate, -- who have not yet determined what road they ought to choose, but move sometimes in one direction and sometimes in another, always doubtful, always wavering. Those, again, who are thoroughly founded in the doctrine of Christ, though not yet perfect, have so much wisdom and vigor as to choose properly, and proceed steadily, in the right course. Thus we find that the life of believers, marked by a constant desire and progress towards those attainments which they shall ultimately reach, bears a resemblance to youth. At no period of this life are we men. But let not such a statement be carried to the other extreme, as if there were no progress beyond childhood. After being born to Christ, we ought to grow, so as "not to be children in understanding" (1 Corinthians 14:20.). Hence it appears what kind of Christianity the Popish system must be, when the pastors labor, to the utmost of their power, to keep the people in absolute infancy.

Tossed to and fro, and carried about. The distressing hesitation of those who do not place absolute reliance on the word of the Lord, is illustrated by two striking metaphors. The first is taken from small ships, exposed to the fury of the billows in the open sea, holding no fixed course, guided neither by skill nor design, but hurried along by the violence of the tempest. The next is taken from straws, or other light substances, which are carried hither and thither as the wind drives them, and often in opposite directions. Such must be the changeable and unsteady character of all who do not rest on the foundation of God's eternal truth. It is their just punishment for looking, not to God, but to men. Paul declares, on the other hand, that faith, which rests on the word of God, stands unshaken against all the attacks of Satan.

By every wind of doctrine. By a beautiful metaphor, all the doctrines of men, by which we are drawn away from the simplicity of the gospel, are called winds God gave us his word, by which we might have placed ourselves beyond the possibility of being moved; but, giving way to the contrivances of men, we are carried about in all directions.

By the cunning of men. There will always be impostors, who make insidious attacks upon our faith; but, if we are fortified by the truth of God, their efforts will be unavailing. Both parts of this statement deserve our careful attention. When new sects, or wicked tenets, spring up, many persons become alarmed. But the attempts of Satan to darken, by his falsehoods, the pure doctrine of Christ, are at no time interrupted; and it is the will of God that these struggles should be the trial of our faith. When we are informed, on the other hand, that the best and readiest defense against every kind of error is to bring forward that doctrine which we have learned from Christ and his apostles, this surely is no ordinary consolation.

With what awful wickedness, then, are Papists chargeable, who take away from the certainty of the word of God and maintain that there is no steadiness of faith, but what depends on the authority of men! If a man entertain any doubt, it is in vain to bid him consult the word of God: he must abide by their decrees. But we have embraced the law, the prophets, and the gospel. Let us therefore confidently expect that we shall reap the advantage which is here promised, -- that all the impostures of men will do us no harm. They will attack us, indeed, but they will not prevail. We are entitled, I acknowledge, to look for the dispensation of sound doctrine from the church, for God has committed it to her charge; but when Papists avail themselves of the disguise of the church for burying doctrine, they give sufficient proof that they have a diabolical synagogue.

The Greek word *kubeia*, which I have translated cunning, is taken from players at dice, who are accustomed to practice many arts of deception. The words, *en panourgiaj3*, by craftiness, intimate that the ministers of Satan are deeply skilled in imposture; and it is added, that they keep watch, in order to insnare, (*pros ten methodeian tos planes.*) All this should rouse and sharpen our minds to profit by the word of God. If we neglect to do so, we may fall into the snares of our enemies, and endure the severe punishment of our sloth.