

The Benefit of Christ Crucified

by Don Benedetto (d. 1544)

The following treatise was arguably the most popular book of the short lived Italian Reformation. It is estimated that 40,000 - 80,000 copies were printed between 1541-1548, of which very few remain today due to the fact that most were burned once the title was placed on the list of prohibited books during the Inquisition. The treatise was originally published anonymously under the title *Trattato Utilissimo Del Beneficio Di Geisu Christo Crocifisso*, and was for a few hundred years mistakenly attributed to Aonio Paleario (1503-1570), a martyr for the Reformation cause in Italy. But most scholars now agree, based on records from the Inquisition itself, that the "*Trattato*" was written by Don Benedetto, a student of the Spanish Reformer Juan de Valdes (1498?-1541) and friend of Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562). This online edition makes use of a translation from the original Italian into English by Edward Courtenay (1548), later edited and modernized in 1855 by Rev. R. W. Johnson (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, & Co., 1855). It is therefore in the public domain and may be freely copied and distributed. The text was scanned and edited by Shane Rosenthal. Original pagination has been retained for purposes of reference. p. i, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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CHAPTER I

Of original sin, and of the misery of man.

THE Holy Scripture saith that God created man to his own similitude and likeness (Gen. 1), making him as concerning the body impassible, and as touching the soul, righteous, true, godly, merciful, and holy: but after that he, being overcome with desire of knowledge of good and evil, did eat of the apple that God had forbidden him, he lost that image and likeness of God, and became like unto beasts and the devil that had deceived him; and therefore, as concerning the soul he became unrighteous, a liar, and cruel, ungodly, and the enemy of God; and as concerning the body he became passible, and subject unto a thousand evils and infirmities, being not only like but also inferior to the most brute beasts. And, as if our first parents had obeyed God, they had left us, as of inheritance, their righteousness and holiness, so now, in that they were disobedient unto him, they have left us of inheritance their unrighteousness, ungodliness, and hatred towards God, in such sort that it is impossible that by our own strength we can love God and conform ourselves unto his will. We are so become very enemies unto him, as to him p. 97, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

that (insomuch as he is a righteous Judge) will punish our faults, neither can we any more trust unto his mercy. And to be short, this our nature by the sin of Adam is wholly corrupt, which nature, being before superior to all creatures, is now become subject to all, yea the bondservant of the devil, sin, and death, and is condemned to the pains of hell, having lost the right judgment or discerning of all things, and beginneth to call good evil and evil good, counting false things true and true things false. Whereupon the prophet considering this, saith that every man is a liar, and that there is not one that doth good (Ps. 14), insomuch that the devil reigneth peaceably as one strongly armed in his own palace, which is this world, whereof he is become prince and governor. p. 98, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

There is no tongue that can express the thousandth part of our miseries, forsomuch that after we were made of God as with his own hands, we have lost that image of God, and are become like unto the devil, and are made also naturally one self [same] thing with him, both willing all that he willeth and also refusing all that displeaseth him. And forsomuch as we be thus given to

[a] prey to so wicked a spirit, there is no sin so great that every one of us is not ready to do, when we are not let by the grace of God. This privation or want of righteousness, and this inclination and readiness to all unrighteousness p. 98, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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and ungodliness, is called original sin; the which we bring with us from our mother's womb, being born the children of wrath, and yet took beginning of our first parents, and is the occasion and well-head of all the sins and iniquity that we commit, from the which if we will be delivered, and return to this first innocency, recovering the likeness of God, it is necessary that we know first our miseries. And for this cause, even as no man at any time seeketh after a physician if he know not himself to be sick, neither knoweth the excellency of the physician, nor the bounden goodwill that he ought to bear towards him in that behalf, nor if he know not his sickness to be very dangerous, and threatening death, even so no man knoweth Christ the only healer of our souls if he know not his soul to be sick, nor can know the excellency of Christ, nor the bounden goodwill that he ought to bear to him, if he do not go down into the knowledge of his most grievous sins, and of the most dangerous sickness that we have caught by the infection of our first parents. p. 99, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

CHAPTER II

That the law was given of God to the intent that we might first know our sin; and then that distrusting to be justified by our own works, we might run unto the mercy of God, and the righteousness of faith.

~~And Therefore, minding of his infinite goodness and mercy to send his only-~~
begotten Son p. 99, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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to deliver the miserable children of Adam, and knowing that it was needful first to make them know their own misery, God (I say) chose Abraham, in whose seed he did promise to bless all the generations of the earth, and to accept for his peculiar and chosen people all that descended of him, to whom, after they were gone out of Egypt and delivered from the bondage of Pharaoh, he gave by Moses the law, the which forbade concupiscences or lusts, and commanded that we should love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our power; in such wise that all our hope should be put in God, and that we should be ready to depart from our own lives for the same our good God's sake, to suffer all torments in all parts of our bodies, to deprive ourselves of all our goods, dignities, and honours, to honour the same our God

with all, choosing rather to die than to commit a thing never so little that should not please the same our good God. And to do all those things with all joyfulness and promptness of heart. The law commandeth farther that we love our neighbour as ourself, understanding by our neighbour all states of men, as well our enemies as friends, commanding that we be ready to do [to] all men that which we should be done to us, and to love all things that appertain to others as that that pertaineth properly to ourselves. A man then looking (as in a bright glass) in this holy law knoweth forthwith his own likeness and his unableness to obey unto the commandment of God, and to give due honour and love again unto his p. 100, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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Maker. Then the first office that the law doth is this, it maketh sin to be known, as affirmeth Saint Paul. I knew not (saith he) what sin meant but by the law. The second office of the law is that it maketh sin to increase; for we being separate from the obedience of God, and made servants of the devil, and full of vicious affections and appetites, cannot suffer that God do forbid us concupiscences or lusts, the which the more they be forbidden the more they do increase. Whereupon Saint Paul saith, that above measure he became a sinner; sin (as he himself saith) was dead, but the law once coming it then rose up on and grew. The third office is that it openly declareth the wrath and justice of God, the which threateneth death and pain everlasting to them that doth not fully keep his law. And therefore the Holy Scripture saith, Accursed is he that keepeth not thoroughly all things that are written in the book of the law. Therefore Saint Paul saith, that the law is the administration of death, and that it worketh ire. Then the law having discovered and shewed sin and increased the same, having also shewed the wrath and fury of God, that threateneth death, it doth the fourth office, that is to say, it feareth the man, who then becometh desperate, and would satisfy the law, but he saith plainly that he cannot; and forsomuch as he cannot he is angry with God, and would that there were no God at all, because he feareth to be sharply chastened and punished of him: as Saint Paul p. 101, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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saith, The wisdom of the flesh is the enemy of God. Wherefore it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be. The fifth office of the law, and his proper and most excellent and necessary end and effect, is that it causeth a man even of necessity to go unto Christ; as the Hebrews, being afraid, were necessarily constrained to desire Moses, saying, Let not God talk with us lest we die; speak thou to us, and we will obey thee, and do anything. The Lord answered,

They have spoken very well; and for none other thing were they praised,' but only because they demanded a mediator between them and God, the which was Moses, who signified Jesus Christ, who should be the Advocate and Mediator between them and God. And therefore God said unto Moses, I will raise to them a prophet from the midst of their own brethren like to thee, and will put my word in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I will command; and I will punish every one that will not obey my word, the which he shall speak in my name. p. 102, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

CHAPTER III

That the forgiveness of our sins, our justification, and all our salvation dependeth on Christ.

FORSOMUCH now as our Lord God hath thus sent that great prophet whom He promised, which is His only-begotten Son, to the intent that p. 102, par. 3, [BENEFIT]

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he should deliver us from the malediction or curse of the law, and should reconcile us unto God, and make able our will to do good works, healing our freewill, and restoring to us that likeness of God which we had lost by the sin of our first parents; and forsomuch as we know that under heaven there is given none other name to mankind whereby we may be saved besides the name of Jesus Christ, let us therefore run with the paces or steps of our lively faith in him, into his arms that calleth us crying, Come to me, all ye that labour and are laden, and I will ease you. What consolation, what joyfulness of heart in this life, may be compared to [his] joy and comfort that having felt himself first oppressed with the intolerable weight of his sins, heareth afterward so sweet and pleasant a saying of the Son of God, who promised him so mercifully thoroughly to ease and to deliver him of so great a burden? But all consisteth in this, that we know from whence our sickness and misery cometh: for no man tasteth or truly discerneth that that is good, unless first he have felt that that is evil; and therefore saith Christ, If any man thirst let him come to me and drink; as he might say, except a man know himself a sinner, and thirst for righteousness, he cannot taste how sweet this our Jesus Christ is, nor how pleasant it is to think and speak of Him, and to follow his most holy life and conversation. If then we know our sickness by the office of the law, behold then Saint John Baptist sheweth p. 103, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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with his finger unto us our merciful healer and Saviour, saying, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The which (I say) delivered us from the grievous yoke of the law, abrogating and making of none effect the maledictions or cursings, and sharp threatenings thereof; healing all our sicknesses, reforming our freewill, and restoring us unto our first innocency, and bringing to us again the likeness of God. And therefore, as Saint Paul saith, As by Adam we are all dead, even so by Christ we all are revived. Then let not us believe that the sin of Adam, which we have inherited, is of greater efficacy than the righteousness of Christ, which we have in like manner by faith inherited. p. 104, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

It might have seemed that a man might have been sorry that without his occasion he should be born and conceived in sin, through the iniquity of his parents, whereby death reigned over all men; but now is taken away all lamentation, forasmuch as in the selfsame manner, without our occasion, the righteousness of Christ, and life everlasting by Christ, is come unto us, death being by him slain; Whereupon Saint Paul maketh a very goodly discourse, which I will hereunder write: As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by the means of sin, and so death went over all men, insomuch that all men sinned; for even unto the time of the law was sin in the world, but sin was not regarded as long as there was no law: nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, p. 104, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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even over them all that sinned not with like transgression as Adam did, which is the similitude of him that is to come. But the gift is not like as the sin. For if through the sin of one many be dead, much more plenteous upon many was the grace of God and gift by grace, which grace was given by one man, Jesus Christ: and the gift is not over one sin, as death came through one sin of one that sinned; for damnation came of one sin unto condemnation, but the gift came to justify from many sins. For if by the sin of one death reigned by the means of one, much more shall they that receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by means of one, that is to say, Jesus Christ. Likewise then as by the sin of one condemnation came on all men, even so by the justifying of one cometh the righteousness that bringeth life upon all men. For as by one man's disobedience many became sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. But the law in the meantime entered in, that sin should increase; never the less, where abundance of sin was, there was more plenteousness of grace, that as sin had reigned unto

death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by the help of Jesus Christ. p. 105, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

By these words of Saint Paul we know that is above said, that is to say, that the law was given to the intent that sin might be known, and that thereby we might know that it is not of greater p. 105, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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efficacy than is the righteousness of Christ, by the which we are justified before God. Therefore as Christ is of more power than Adam, even so the righteousness of Christ is of more efficacy than the sin of Adam. And if the sin of Adam were sufficient to make us sinners, and the children of wrath, without any sin actually done of us, much more shall be sufficient the righteousness of Christ to make us righteous, and the children of grace, without any of our good works. Neither can they be good except that before we do them we our own selves be made good and righteous by faith, as affirmed in like manner Saint Augustine. Hereby a man may know in how much error they be which for any sin, be it never so great, do despair of the mercy of God, and do think that he is not able to forgive, take away and pardon every sin, be it never so grievous, when he hath in his only-begotten Son already chastened all our faults and iniquities, and therefore consequently hath given a general pardon to all mankind, whereof every one hath benefit and fruition that believeth the gospel, that is to say, the most happy news which the apostles have published throughout the world, saying, We even in Christ's stead pray you that ye be reconciled unto God; for he hath made him which knew no sin to be sin for us, that we by his means might be that righteousness that before God is allowed. And say, who evidently setteth forth so well the passion of Jesus Christ and the cause of it, that in the writing of the p. 106, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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apostles there is not found a better description or a plainer setting forth; he (I say), foreseeing this great benefit of the mercy of God, writeth this most godly sentence, Who giveth credence unto our preaching, or to whom is the arm of the Lord known? he shall grow before the Lord like as a branch, and as a root in a dry ground: he shall have neither beauty nor favour: when we look on him there shall be no fairness, we shall have no lust unto him; he shall be the most simple and despised of all: which yet hath good experience of sorrows and infirmities; we shall reckon him so simple and so vile, that we shall hide our faces from him. Howbeit (of a truth) he taketh only away our infirmity, and beareth our pain, yet we shall judge him as though he were plagued and

cast down of God; whereas he (notwithstanding) shall be wounded for our offences and smitten for our wickedness; for the pain of our punishment shall be laid on him, and with his stripes shall we be healed. As for us, we go all astray like sheep, every one turneth his own way; but through him the Lord pardoneth all our sins. He shall be pained and troubled, and shall not open his mouth; he shall be led as a sheep to be slain, yet shall he be still as a lamb before the shearer, and not open his mouth. O great ingratitude and abominable thing it is if we, professing ourselves to be Christians, and knowing that the Son of God hath taken upon him all our sins, and has also cancelled p. 107, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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them with his own most precious blood, having suffered himself to be chastened for us on the cross, if we (I say) nevertheless go about to justify ourselves, and to obtain the forgiveness of our sins by our own works, as though the merits, the righteousness, and the blood of Christ were not sufficient to do it unless we put thereunto our foolish righteousness, spotted with the love of ourselves and with the respect to rewards, and with a thousand vanities; for the which we ought rather to ask of God pardon than reward: and we remember not Saint Paul's threatening of the Galatians, who being beguiled by false preachers, not believing that justification by faith was of itself sufficient, did pretend that they would be justified still by the law, to whom Saint Paul said, Christ nothing helpeth you that will justify yourselves by the law; ye are fallen from grace; we therefore look for and hope in the Spirit, to be justified through faith. p. 108, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

And now if the seeking of righteousness and forgiveness of sins be by the keeping of the law, that the Lord with so great glory and open miracles gave in the hill of Sinai, be a losing of Christ and his grace, what shall we say then of them that pretend and endeavour to justify themselves before God with their own law and observations? Let those persons make the comparison, and after give their judgment. Insomuch as God will not give that honour and glory to his own law, will they then that he give it to their laws and constitutions? p. 108, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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This honour he giveth alonely to his only-begotten Son: he only with the sacrifice of his passion hath made satisfaction for all our sins, past, present, and to come, as Saint Paul saith to the Hebrews, 7, 9, 10 chapters, and Saint John in his first epistle, 1, 2 chapters. Through which--as oft as we--apply by

faith this satisfaction of Christ to our souls, we obtain undoubtedly forgiveness of sins, and by his righteousness we become good and righteous before God. And therefore Saint Paul saith in the third [chapter of his] epistle to the Philippians, after that he had said that as touching the righteousness which is in the law he was unrebukeable, he joineth, But the things that were vantage unto me I counted loss for Christ's sake: yea, I think all things but loss for that excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have counted all things loss, and do judge them but dung, that I might win Christ, and might be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which springeth of the faith which is in Jesus Christ; I mean the righteousness which cometh of God through faith in knowing him. O words most notable, the which every Christian man should engrave in his heart, beseeching God to make him taste the same perfectly! Behold how Saint Paul sheweth clearly that whosoever knoweth Christ truly judgeth the works of the law loss, insomuch as they draw a man from trusting in Christ (in whom we ought p. 109, par. 1, [BENEFIT])

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to settle our health), and causeth him to trust in himself; and aggravating this sentence he joineth therewith, that he judged all things dung, that he might win Christ, and might be found incorporate in him, shewing that whosoever trusteth in works, and goeth about to be justified by them, he winneth not Christ, neither is by any means incorporate in him, and therefore in this truth consisteth the whole mystery of faith; and to the intent that they should the better understand that he said, he joineth to it and affirmeth boldly that he refused all outward justification, all righteousness founded in the observing of the law, trusting only and assuredly unto the righteousness that God giveth by faith to them that believe that he hath chastened in Christ [all our sins, who] (as saith the same Saint Paul) was made of him our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption, or forgiveness of sins; and therefore (as it is written) he that rejoiceth let him rejoice in the Lord, and not in his own works. p. 110, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

Truth it is that there are found some authorities of the Holy Scripture, which being evil-understood seem to gainsay this holy doctrine of Saint Paul, and that they should attribute the justification and forgiveness of sins to works and charity; but those authorities are declared wondrous well by some others who have evidently proved that they that understand them in that sense understand them not. Let us then (most dearly beloved brethren) follow not the foolish p. 110, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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opinion of the bewitched Galatians, but the verity that Saint Paul teacheth, and let us give all the praise of our justification to the mercy of God, and the merits of his Son, who with his blood hath delivered us from the dominion or danger of the law, from the tyranny of sin, and from death, and hath conducted us into the kingdom of God, by giving to us eternal felicity. I say he hath delivered us from the dominion of the law, for he hath given unto us his Spirit that sheweth us all truth, and he hath made perfect satisfaction for us to the law, and hath given the same satisfaction to all his members, that is to say, to all true Christians, so that they may safely come to the judgment-seat of God, being apparelled with the righteousness of Christ, and delivered by him from the curse of the law [which] cannot any more accuse or condemn us, nor any more stir up our affections and appetites, nor augment sin in us. And therefore saith Saint Paul, The handwriting that was against us was cancelled by Christ, and disannulled in the wooden cross, our Christ having delivered us from the dominion of the law; consequently he hath delivered us from the tyranny of sin and of death, the which cannot hold us any more oppressed, being overcome first of Christ by his resurrection, and then consequently of us that be his members, on such wise, that we may say with St. Paul [and with] Hosea the prophet, Death is overcome p. 111, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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and destroyed. O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be given to God, who hath given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is that most happy seed which hath trodden down the head of the most venomous serpent, that is to say the devil; and therefore all those that believe in Christ, putting all their hope and confidence in his mercy, do overcome with Christ sin, death, the devil, and hell. This is that blessed seed of Abraham, in the which God did promise to bless all nations. p. 112, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

Every man ought to have trodden down severally that horrible serpent, and to have delivered himself from the malediction or curse; but that enterprise was so great that the force or power of the whole world gathered together was not sufficient to bear it. Our God then being the Father of all mercy, moved with compassion of our miseries, gave us his only-begotten Son, who hath delivered us from the venom of the serpent, and is made our blessing and justification. Let us embrace, most dearly beloved brethren, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, let us make it ours through faith, let us have a sure confidence to be

righteous, not by our own works, but by the merits of Christ, and let us live with quiet conscience towards God, and with assured trust that the righteousness of Christ doth annihilate all our unrighteousness, and maketh us righteous and holy in the sight p. 112, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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of God, who forsomuch as he seeth us made by faith one body in his Son, doth not now any more take us as the children of Adam, but as his children, and maketh us heirs with his own legitimate Son of all his riches. p. 113, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

CHAPTER IV

Of the effects of the lively faith, and of the unity or agreement of the soul with Christ.

THIS holy and lively faith worketh so much, that it bringeth to pass that whosoever believeth that Christ hath taken upon him his sins becometh like unto Christ, and overcometh sin, death, the devil, and hell; and this is the cause that the Church (that is to say every faithful soul,) is the wife of Christ, and Christ is her husband. We know that the custom of marriage is that of two there become one self [same] thing, they being two in one flesh, and the goods of both become common to either of them, so that the husband saith the dowry of the wife is his, and in like manner the wife saith that the house and all the riches of the husband are hers; and so truly they be, otherwise they should not be one flesh, as the Holy Scripture saith. Even in the self-same manner God hath married his most dearly-beloved Son with the faithful soul, who having nothing of her own but only sin, the Son of God nevertheless hath not disdained to take her for his well-beloved spouse p. 113, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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with her own dowry which is sin. And by the uniting and knitting together which is wrought in this most holy matrimony, the thing that appertaineth to the one is also the other's, so that Christ saith then, the dowry of the soul, my dearly-beloved spouse, that is to say, her sins, the transgression of the law, the wrath of God against her, [the] malapertness and boldness of the devil against her, the prison of hell and all her other evils, are come into my power, and are in mine own ordering, and unto me it pertaineth to do with the same dowry even as it pleaseth me, and therefore I will cast it upon the altar of my cross, and make it of none effect.

God then seeing his Son all befilled with the sin of his spouse, scourged him, and killed him upon a wooden cross; but yet because he was his most dearly-

beloved and obedient Son, he raised him again from death to life, and gave unto him all power in heaven and in earth, and hath set him on his right hand. The spouse in like manner saith with most hearty rejoicing, The realms and emperies of my well-beloved husband are mine. I am queen and empress of heaven and earth, my husband's riches, (that is to say) his holiness, his innocency, his righteousness, his Godhead, with all his virtue and power, are my riches; and therefore I am holy, innocent, righteous, and godly; there is no spot in me; I am fair and well-favoured, because my dearly-beloved husband is not spotted, but fair and well-favoured; and he being altogether p. 114, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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mine, consequently all that is his is mine; and because he is holy and pure, I also am become holy and pure. Beginning then with his most innocent nativity, he hath with the same sanctified the filthy nativity of his spouse, conceived in sin. The innocent childhood and youth of the husband hath justified the life of the childhood, the youth, and the imperfect working of his beloved wife; and therefore the love and union that the soul of a true Christian man hath with her husband Christ is so great that the work of both are common to both; so that when it is said Christ did fast, Christ did pray, and was heard by his Father, did raise the dead, delivered men from evil spirits, healed the sick, died, rose again, and ascended to heaven; even in like manner it is said, that the Christian man hath done the selfsame work, because the works of Christ are the work of the Christian man, and by him he hath done them all. Truly it may be said that the Christian man was fastened to the cross, buried, raised again, ascended to heaven, and was made partaker of the nature of God. On the other side, all the works that a Christian man doth are the works of Christ, because he accepteth them as his own, and because they are imperfect and he perfect, and that he willeth not to have any imperfect thing, therefore with his virtue he maketh them perfect, to the intent that [the] wife should be always merry and content, and not be afeard; and therefore how much soever her works be imperfect, yet are they accept- p. 115, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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able before God for his Son's sake, whom continually he beholdeth. O most great bountifulness of God, how much is the Christian man bound to God! There is no human love that may be compared to the love of God, the dearly-beloved Spouse of the soul of every Christian man. Wherefore Saint Paul saith, that Christ loved his church, (that is to say every soul) his beloved spouse, and offered himself for her to the death of the cross, to sanctify her

and purify her with the fountain of water, through the word; to make it to himself a glorious congregation, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be wholly without blame, (that is to say) like unto himself in holiness and innocency, and the true and lawful daughter of God, who loved so the world (as John saith) that he gave his only Son, to the end that every one that believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Wherefore God sent his Son into the world not to judge it, but because the world should be saved by him, so that he that trusteth in him is not condemned.

A man might say to me, in what manner is made the union of this godly matrimony? how is made this copulation of the soul the wife with her husband Christ? what certainty may I have that my soul is united with Christ and made his wife? how may I assuredly glory of his riches as above the wife hath done of her husband's riches ? It is easy to me to believe that others receive this honour and glory; but that I am p. 116, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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one of them to whom God hath given so great grace, I cannot persuade myself; I know mine own misery and imperfection. Most dearly beloved brother, I answer thee, that thy certainty consisteth in true and lively faith, with the which, as Saint Peter saith, God purifieth the heart. This faith consisteth in giving credence to the Gospel, (that is to say) to the happy news that is published on God's behalf throughout all the world, which is, that God hath used the rigour of his righteousness against Christ, chastening in him all our sins. Whosoever receiveth this good news and believeth it certainly hath the true faith, and broketh the remission of his sins, and is reconciled with God, and of [a] child of wrath becometh the child of grace, and recovereth the image of God, entereth into the kingdom of God, and maketh himself the temple of God; who marrieth the soul with his only-begotten Son through this faith, the which is the work and gift of God (as Saint Paul oftentimes saith), and God giveth it to them that calleth for the same to justify themselves and to give them life everlasting, as Christ testified, saying, This is the will of him that sent me, that every man that seeth the Son and believeth on him, have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. In like manner he saith, As Moses lift up on [high] the serpent in the wilderness, p. 117, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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even so must the Son of Man be lift up, that none that believeth in him perish, but have eternal life. And to Martha he said, He that believeth on me, yea though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. And he said to the multitude of the Jews, I am come a light

into the world, that whosoever believeth in me should not hide in darkness. And Saint [John] in his Epistle saith, In this appeared the love of God to us-ward, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into this world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to make agreement for our sins. And to that end he made him partaker of our flesh and blood, as St. Paul saith, because that by death he should destroy him that had lordship over death, that is to say, the devil: and that he might deliver them which through fear of death were all their lifetime in danger of bondage. Having then the testimony of the holy scripture upon these promises which are above recited, and upon many other that are in divers places thereof spread abroad, we in nowise may doubt that the same promises should not be true. And insomuch as the scripture speaketh generally, no man ought to doubt that that which it speaketh should not appertain unto him; which thing, because it may the better be understood, and p. 118, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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the whole mystery of faith consisteth in it, let us put the case that a good and holy king causeth a proclamation to be made that all such as have at any time rebelled against him should return safely into his realm, because that he by the desert or merits of one of their kin hath pardoned them all, verily none of these rebels ought to doubt that he hath not assuredly obtained pardon and forgiveness for his rebellion, but ought rather with a sure trust return to his house, and to live under the shadow and defence of that holy king; and if he return not, he should bear the pains, and because of his incredulity die a banished man, and in the displeasure of his king. This holy king is the Lord of heaven and earth, the which through the obedience and merits of Christ our kinsman hath pardoned all our rebellion, and (as we have said above) hath caused to be made a proclamation throughout the whole world that safely we may return to his kingdom. Whosoever then trusteth this promise returneth to the kingdom of God. (from the which we were cast forth by the offence of our first parents), and is governed most happily of the Spirit of God. He that trusteth not to this proclamation, broketh or enjoyeth not this general pardon, but through his mistrust remaineth still in exile and banishment under the tyranny of the devil, and liveth and dieth in extreme misery; for he liveth and dieth in the displeasure of the King of heaven and earth; and that worthily; for we cannot greater offend God p. 119, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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than to make him a liar and a deceiver; and that do we when we trust not to his promise. p. 120, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

O how grievous is this sin of incredulity, the which (as much as in it lieth) doth deprive and spoil God of his glory and of his perfection, besides that it bringeth to itself the hurt of everlasting damnation, and continual vexation of mind that in this life the miserable conscience doth feel; but to the contrary, he that approacheth to God with an unfeigned heart and strong faith, trusting to his promises, without any manner of doubting, believing assuredly that all that God promiseth he shall obtain, that man (I say) giveth glory unto God, that man liveth in continual peace and joyfulness of conscience, always praising and thanking God, who hath chosen him to the glory of everlasting life, having a gage most sure and certain, that is to say, the Son of the same God for his most dearly-beloved spouse, whose blood hath made his heart as it were ghostly drunken and merry. And this most holy faith engendereth a lively hope and an assured trust or belief in the mercy of God towards us; which faith liveth and worketh in the heart, and by the same we altogether put our whole trust in God, committing unto him wholly the care and charge of us, and that in such sort and manner that being sure of the benevolence and mercy of God towards us, we are not afraid neither of the devil, neither of his ministers, neither of death itself. And this so p. 120, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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stedfast and comfortable a belief in the mercy of God once brought into the heart sticketh it up, and with certain most sweet affections directeth it towards God, and filleth it with most ardent charity or love. Wherefore Saint Paul exhorteth us that we go with faith to the throne of grace, and he comforteth us not to cast away our faith and confidence which hath great reward. This holy faith and trust is gendered in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given us through faith, that never is void of the love of God; and hereof it cometh that by this lively efficacy or strength we are stirred to do good works; and we get so great an ability and inclination or readiness thereto, that we are very ready to do and suffer all things, be they never so intolerable, for the love and glory of God our most benign Father, who by Christ hath made us so rich of his so abundant grace or favour and good mind, and hath made us of enemies most dear children. p. 121, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

This true faith is not so soon given to man by God but that he is forthwith stirred with a most strong zeal and desire to do good works, and to bring forth

most pleasant fruits to the Lord, and to his neighbour, as a very good tree; even as it is impossible but that a fagot of fire being kindled must give forth light. This is the faith without the which it is impossible that any man can p. 121, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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please God, and by the which all the saints, both of the Old and New Testament, be saved, as Saint Paul testified of Abraham, of whom the Scripture saith, Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness; and therefore he saith a little before, Let us believe then that man is justified by faith, without the works of the law. And in another place he saith, Even so at this time there is a remnant left through the election of grace; if it be of grace, then it is not of works: for then were grace no more grace. And to the Galatians he saith, that it is a manifest thing that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God; for the just shall live by faith. The law is not of faith, but the man that fulfilleth the things contained in the law shall live by them. And a little above he saith, A man is not justified by the deeds of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ: and a little after saith, that if righteousness come by the law, Christ then died in vain, or for nought. And [to] the Romans, comparing the righteousness of the Gospel, he saith, that that consisteth in working and this in believing; for if thou shalt knowledge with thy mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and shalt believe with thine heart that God raised him up from death, thou shalt be safe; for to believe with the heart justifieth, and to knowledge p. 122, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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with the mouth maketh a man safe. See how plainly Saint Paul sheweth that faith without any help of works maketh a man righteous. p. 123, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

And not only Saint Paul, but also the holy doctors that came after him have likewise confirmed and approved this most holy verity of justification by faith, amongst the which is principal Saint Augustine, in his Book of Faith and Works, and Of [the] Spirit and the Letter, and of the Eighty-three Questions, and in that he writeth to the Bishop of Rome, Bonifacius, and in his Tract on the thirty-first Psalm, and in many other places he defendeth this opinion; the which Origen also defendeth in, his Fourth Book upon the Epistle to the Romans, affirming that Saint Paul would have that faith only be sufficient to justify the world in such manner, that he saith the man only by believing becometh righteous, although he have done no works: like as the thief was justified without the works of the law; for the Lord did not seek that which he before had wrought, nor tarried that he should work anything after that he

had believed; but having justified him by his confession only, took him for his companion when he entered into Paradise. And in like manner that woman so celebrated in the Gospel of Saint Luke, at the feet of Jesus Christ heard add unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee; and a little after: p. 123, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace. And after that Origen adjoineth: In many places of the Scripture it is seen that the Lord spake in such manner that he shewed that faith is the occasion of the health and salvation of him that believeth. Then the man is justified by faith, to the which the works of the law help nothing; and on the contrary part, where the faith is not which justified him that believeth, although a man have the works that the law commandeth, nevertheless because they be not builded upon the foundation of faith, although in outward appearance they appear never so good, they nevertheless cannot justify him that doth them, he wanting faith, which is the mark of them that are justified of God. And who is he that may glory in his own righteousness, hearing God say by the prophet that all our righteousness is like the clothes stained with the flowers of a woman. Then to glory in the faith of the cross of Jesus Christ is the true glorying. Saint Basil, in his homily Of humility, expressly willeth that the Christian man account himself righteous only by faith in Christ; his words be these: The apostle saith, he that glorieth, let him [glory] in the Lord, saying that Christ was made by God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and therefore as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. Therefore the perfect and entire glorying is in God, when a man doth not enhance himself by his own righteousness, but knoweth that he p. 124, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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lacketh the true righteousness, and that by the only faith in Christ he is justified. Paul also glorieth in not esteeming his own righteousness, and in seeking by faith in Christ the righteousness that cometh from God. Saint Hilarius, upon Saint Matthew in the ninth canon, saith these words: The scribes were troubled because that sin should be remitted of man, for they esteemed Jesus Christ only as man, and that he had remitted that which the law could not remit, and therefore faith only justified. Saint Ambrose, expounding these words of Saint Paul (To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, is faith counted for righteousness; even as David describeth the blessedfulness of the man to whom God ascribeth righteousness without deeds) Saint Ambrose (I say) writeth this upon these words: Saint Paul saith, that to him that believeth in Christ, that is to say, to

the Gentile, is his faith imputed for righteousness, even as it was to Abraham? In what manner then did the Jews think to be justified by the works of the law after the justification of Abraham, when Abraham was not justified by the works of the law, but only by faith? Then the law is not necessary, since the wicked man only by faith is justified before God, according to the purpose of the mercy of God. So he saith that it is determined of God, that, not meddling with the law, the unrighteous for his health and salvation should seek only the faith of the mercy of God, as David also saith. The apostle verifieth p. 125, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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that that he spake after the example of the prophet, The blessedfulness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works. David understandeth that they are blessed of whom God hath determined, that without weariness and without any observations by faith only they be made righteous before God. Then he setteth forth the blessedness of the time in which Christ was born, even as saith the same Lord, Many righteous men and prophets have desired to see the things that you [see, and to hear the things that you] hear, and have not heard them. The same Ambrose, expounding the first chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, saith very plainly, that whosoever believeth in Christ is justified without works and without any of his merits, receiving by faith only the remission of sins. He also affirmeth the same in an epistle to Inrenaeus with these words, Let no man glory or boast of his works, for no man is justified by his own works; but he that is righteous hath his righteousness by gift; for he is justified by Christ. Then faith is the thing that delivereth us through the blood of Christ; for he is blessed to whom sin is remitted and pardon given. And Saint Bernard, upon Cantica Salomonis, in the seventy-seventh sermon, confirmeth the same, affirming that our merits have no part in our justification; the which should all wholly be attributed unto mercy, which maketh us just freely, and in this manner delivereth us from the servitude or bondage of p. 126, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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sin. And further, Saint Bernard saith, That Christ espouseth the soul and uniteth it with him by faith, not mingling therewith any merits of our works. But not to be too long, I will make an end of allegations as soon as I have told a very good saying of Saint Ambrose, in the book that is entitled, Of Jacob, and of the blessed life. This holy man saith, that as Jacob, not having merited through himself the being first born, hid him under the habit of his brother, and apparelled himself with his garments, the which cast out a most sweet smell, and in that manner presented himself to his father, to receive to his own

behoof the blessing under the similitude or likeness of another. So it [is] necessary that we apparel ourselves with the righteousness of Christ by faith, and that we hide us under the precious purity of our eldest brother, if we will be received as righteous in the sight of God. And surely this is true. Inasmuch that if we come into the presence of God not apparelled with the righteousness of Christ, without doubt we shall be all judged unrighteous, and worthy of all punishment; but, on the other side, if God see us apparelled with the righteousness of Christ, no fail he will accept us as just, holy, and worthy eternal life. p. 127, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

And, verily, great is the foolish rashness of them that pretend to come to righteousness by the observation of the commandments of God, which are all comprehended in loving God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, p. 127, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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and thy neighbour as thyself. Who shall be then so arrogant, or presumptuous and mad, that dare believe to keep truly these two commandments, and seeth not that the law of God in requiring of man a perfect love condemneth all imperfectness? Let every man consider then his own works which partly appeareth good to him, and he shall find that his works rather should be called a transgressing of the holy law, forsomuch as they are unclean and imperfect works. Whereupon concluded the words of David, Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man be justified. And Solomon saith, p. 128, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

Who may say my heart is clean? And Job crieth out, How can he be clean that is born of a woman? behold, that amongst his saints there is none stedfast, nor the heavens are clear in his sight. How much more is he then abominable, the which drinketh iniquity as water! And Saint John saith, That if we will say that we are without sin, we deceive ourselves. And the Lord taught that we should say always when we pray, Forgive us our debts. By this may be gathered the foolishness of them that make merchandise of their works, presuming with those works to be of power to save not only themselves, but also others, as though the Lord had not said, When ye have done all those things which ye are commanded, say, We are unprofitable servants all, and that we have but done that was our duty to do. Behold, that although we keep perfectly the law of God, p. 128, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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we may judge and call ourselves unprofitable servants. Now all men being very far off from this perfect fulfilling of the law, dare any man glory that he hath put together so great a heap of merits to the just measure, that he hath to give to others? p. 129, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

But now return to our purpose. Let the arrogant sinner consider, the which (doing some works in the sight of the world laudable) pretendeth to justify himself in the sight of God, let him (I say) consider that all the works that come from a corrupt and unclean heart are themselves in like manner corrupt and unclean, and consequently cannot be acceptable to God, nor of effect or power to justify. It is needful then, first, to purify the heart, if we would that our works please God; and that purifying consisteth in faith, as affirmeth the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Saint Peter. We may not then say that the unrighteous man and sinner by his works becometh just, good, and acceptable to God; but we must say that faith purifieth our hearts from all sin, maketh us good, just, and acceptable to God, and consequently causeth that our works (although they be never so imperfect and weak) do nevertheless please his majesty. For when by faith we are become the children of God, he then considereth our works as a father most merciful, and not as a strait judge: for he hath compassion of our frailty, and considereth us as a member of his first-begotten Son, whose righteousness p. 129, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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and perfection supplieth our uncleanness and imperfection, the which being covered under the purity and innocency of Christ, be not imputed unto us, nor come [under] the judgment of God. p. 130, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

Whereof it cometh that the works proceeding from true faith (be they of themselves never so impure and imperfect), yet shall they be greatly praised and commended of Christ in the universal judgment, forasmuch as they shall be the fruit and testimony of our faith, by the which we are saved. For insomuch as we have loved the brethren of Christ we shall shew plainly that we again be made faithful, and the brethren of Christ, and by faith we shall be brought into the perfect possession of the everlasting kingdom, the which God our heavenly Father prepared for us from the beginning of the world: not because of our merits, but through his mercy, by the which he hath chosen and called us to the grace of the Gospel, and hath justified us, that we may glory for ever with his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, our justification and righteousness; but not for them that will not confess and knowledge that the same his mercy is of itself sufficient to make a man just

and acceptable to God, who through his fatherly kindness offereth and giveth unto us Christ with his righteousness, without any merits of our works. And what thing may man work that might deserve so great a reward and treasure as Christ is? This treasure is given only by the grace, favour, and mercy of God, and faith only is p. 130, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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the thing which receiveth such a gift, and maketh us have fruition of the forgiveness of our sins; and therefore when Saint Paul and the doctors say that faith only justifieth without the works, they understand that it only maketh us have fruition of the general pardon and maketh us receive Christ; who (Saint Paul saith) dwelleth in our hearts by faith; who hath overcome the terror of our conscience, made satisfaction to the justice of God for our sins, appeased and quenched the wrath of God against us, and the fire of hell, into the which our natural corruption did throw us headlong, and hath vanquished and destroyed the devil with his power and tyranny. The which things all the works that all men together might do could not attain unto nor bring to pass. p. 131, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

This glory and this power is reserved only to the Son of God, that is to say, unto blessed Christ, who is most mighty above all the powers of heaven and earth and hell, and giveth himself with all his merits to those, that despairing of themselves, put all their hope of salvation in him and his merits. And therefore let no man beguile himself when he heareth say, that only faith without works justifieth, (believing as doth the false Christians, which draweth all things to a fleshly living) that the true faith consisteth in believing the story of Jesus Christ, in like manner as they that believe the histories of Caesar and Alexander. This manner of believing is an historical faith, founded on the very report of man, and of writing, p. 131, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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and is printed slightly in the mind by a certain use or custom; and is like to the faith of the Turks, who by the selfsame occasions believeth in the fables of Alcoran. This faith (so made) is an imagination of man, which reneweth nothing the heart of man, nor heateth him with godly love, neither doth there follow it any works of faith, nor new life; and therefore they say falsely, both against the holy Scripture and also the holy doctors of the true Church, that only faith justifieth not, but that the works are needful; to the which I answer, that this historical and very vain faith, with the works that follow it, not alonely not justifieth, but also casteth a man down headlong into hell, as those

that have no oil in their lamps, that is to say, no true faith in their hearts. p. 132, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

The faith that justifieth is a work of God in us by the which our old man is crucified, and we being altogether transformed into Christ do become a new creature, and dearly-beloved sons of God: this godly faith is such that it graffeth us in the death and resurrection of Christ, and consequently mortifieth the flesh with her affections and concupiscences; for we know ourselves by the efficacy of faith to be dead with Christ, and do therefore determine with ourselves and with the world, and also do understand, that it appertaineth to those that are dead with Christ, to mortify their worldly members, that is to say, the sinful affections of the mind, and the appetites or lusts of the flesh; and knowing ourselves p. 132, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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raised with Christ, we diligently endeavour to lead a spiritual and holy life, and like that which we shall live in heaven after our resurrection. This most holy faith causeth us to broke or enjoy the general pardon that the Gospel publisheth, yea, it leadeth us into the kingdom of God, and maketh peace in our conscience, and maintaineth in it a perpetual and holy joyfulness and mirth. This same self faith uniteth us with God, and causeth that God dwelleth in our hearts, and clotheth our soul with himself; and consequently his Holy Spirit moveth us to those things to the which it moved Christ, when he was conversant amongst men: I say, to humility, meekness and obedience of God, charity, and to other perfections, by the which we recover the image of God. p. 133, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

Then worthily Christ doth attribute blessedfulness to this inspired faith, the which blessedness cannot stand without good works and holiness; and how may it be true that the Christian man is not holy if by faith Christ is become his sanctification? Then by faith we become just and holy, and therefore almost always Saint Paul calleth those saints which we call Christian men, who if they have not the Spirit of Christ are not Christian men; and if they have the Spirit of Christ which ruleth and governeth them, we should not doubt that those, how well soever they know themselves justified by faith only, should become slothful to do good works; for the Spirit of Christ is the spirit of charity or love, and charity p. 133, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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cannot be idle nor easy from doing good works; and so if we will say the truth, a man can never do good works if first he do not know himself justified

through the merits and righteousness of Christ, which he maketh his through faith. [Then and not before he] worketh only for the love and glory of God and of Christ, and not for the love he beareth to himself, nor yet for that he would be thereby justified; whereupon it cometh that the true Christian man (that is to say) he that counteth himself righteous through the righteousness of Christ, asketh not whether good works be commanded or not, but being moved and stirred through the strength of God's love towards him, he again offereth himself most ready to holy Christian works, and never ceaseth to work well. p. 134, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

And he that by his faith feeleth not the marvellous effects that we have spoken of, which the inspired faith doth in a Christian man, let him know that he hath not yet the true Christian faith, and let him make instant prayer to God, to give it him, saying, Lord, help my incredulity or unbelief; and hearing say, that faith only justifieth, let him not deceive himself, saying, What needeth it that I weary myself in doing good works? Faith sufficeth to send me to Paradise; but let him mark that the devils believeth also and trembleth. Now wilt thou go with them into Paradise through this false conclusion or reasoning? Brother, thou p. 134, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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mayest know how great an error thou art in thou thinkest that thou hast the faith that justifieth, and hast it not; thou sayest, I am rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, poor, blind, and naked. I persuade thee to buy of God gold fined in the fire, that is to say, true faith fined through good works, to the intent thou mayest become rich and apparelled with white clothes, that is to say, with the innocency of Christ, to the intent that the shamefulness of thy nakedness appear not, that is to say the filthiness of thy sins.

Then the faith that justifieth is like a flame of fire, which cannot but shine; and as it is true that the flame only burneth the wood without the help of the light, so it is true that faith only putteth out and burneth the sin without help of works; and nevertheless this faith cannot be without good works; for as when we see a flame of fire that shineth not, we know that it is painted and vain, so likewise when we see not in any man the light of good works, it is a sign that such a one hath not the true inspired faith the which God giveth to his elects, to justify and glorify them. And I think assuredly that Saint James understood this by his words when he said, Shew me thy faith without thy deeds, and I will shew thee my faith by my deeds; meaning that he who

attendeth to the ambition and pleasures of the world, how much soever he saith he p. 135, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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believeth, he believeth not; since he sheweth not in him the effects of faith. We may yet liken this most holy faith that justifieth, to the divinity or Godhead that was in Jesus Christ, who being very man (but without sin) wrought things wonderful, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, going upon the waters, and raising the dead. But these miraculous works were not the cause that Christ was God; for afore that he wrought any of these works he was God, and the lawful and only-begotten Son of God; and it was not to him needful to work such miracles that thereby he might become God, but contrariwise, because he was God he wrought them: wherefore these miracles were not the cause that Christ was God, but they shewed that he was very God. So the true living faith is a divinity in the soul of a Christian man, which worketh marvellously, and is never weary of doing good works; but these works are not the cause that the Christian man is a Christian, (that is to say) just, good, holy, and very acceptable unto God; and to him it was not needful to do such works that thereby he might become such an one; but he, because he is a Christian man by faith (as Christ being a man by his divinity was God) doth all those works. So that these good works do not make the Christian man righteous and good, but doth shew that he is good and righteous. Then even as the divinity or Godhead of Christ was the cause of his miracles, so faith working by love is the cause of the good works of the Christian man. And even p. 136, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

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as they said of Christ, he hath done this and that miracle; and such miracles, besides that they glorified and gave honour unto God, were also very greatly to Christ's honour as man; who being obedient even to the death, was of God rewarded in the resurrection, and had given to him all power in heaven and in earth, the which before, as man, he then had not; and this he deserved by the agreement and unity that the Word of God had with the manhood of Christ: even so doth faith in the Christian man. For by the agreement and unity that it hath with the soul it attributeth that which appertaineth to the one unto the other; so that many times the holy Scriptures promiseth to a Christian man life everlasting for his good works, because that good works are fruits and testimony of the living faith, and proceedeth from it its the light from the flame of fire, as we have already above said; and this most holy faith embraceth Christ, and uniteth him [with] the soul; and all three, (that is to say faith, Christ, and the soul), do become one self-[same]thing, on such manner

that the thing which Christ meriteth the soul in like manner meriteth. And therefore Saint Augustine saith, that God crowneth in us his gifts. p. 137, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

Of this union of the soul with Christ by faith, giveth testimony Christ himself in Saint John, making prayer to the Father for his Apostles and for them that should believe in him by their preaching, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be also one p. 137, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And that glory that thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, as we are one. Then when we believe the words of the Apostles who preached Christ to have died for our sins, and to have risen again for our justification, and to make us righteous, we become one thing with Christ, who being one only thing with God, we also by Christ be one only thing with God. O glory to be marvelled at of a Christian man, to whom by faith is granted to possess these things which are not able to be expressed, which the angels do desire to see. p. 138, par. 1, [BENEFIT]

By these arguments may plainly be known the difference that is between us and them that doth defend the justification of faith and works together: in this we agree, that we also establish works, and we affirm that the faith that justifieth cannot be without good works, and we say that the justified by faith be those that do the works that truly may be called good; but in this we differ and vary, that we say that faith without the help of the works justifieth, and the reason is at hand, for we by faith clothe ourselves with Christ, making his righteousness and holiness ours; and insomuch as it is true that by faith the righteousness of Christ is given unto us, we cannot be so unthankful, blind, and wicked, to believe that the same righteousness of Christ without our works is not sufficient to make us acceptable and righteous in the sight of God. And we say with p. 138, par. 2, [BENEFIT]

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the Apostle, If the blood of oxen and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer when it was sprinkled, purified the unclean, as touching the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, which through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Now let a good Christian man judge which of these two opinions is more true, more holy, and more worthy to be preached or taught, either ours that doth illustrate the benefit of Christ, and abateth the pride of

the man that would exalt his works against the glory of Christ, or the other, which saying, that faith only justifieth not, doth darken the glory and benefit of Christ, and stirreth up the pride of man, who cannot suffer nor abide to be justified and made righteous freely by Jesus Christ our Lord. Some will say, it is a great instigation to do good works when we say that a man by them is made righteous before God. I answer, that we also knowe that good works are acceptable to God, and that he rewardeth them through his mere liberality in Paradise; but we say that those only are good works (as Saint Augustine saith) which are done by those that are justified through faith; for if the tree be not good it cannot bear good fruits. p. 139, par. 1, [BENEFIT]