

# The faith of Primož Trubar

Trubar's sermon on faith – from the *Catechism* (1550)

*Modern Slovene version translated into English*



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## Introduction

The influence of Primož Trubar on the history and development of the Slovene language and nation cannot be overstated. In school we Slovenes learned about his main achievements and about Trubar himself as the "father of the Slovene nation". Thus the Slovenes are mostly well acquainted with the following facts: that Trubar printed the first books in the Slovene language; that as far as we know he was the first to address his people with the term *Slovenci* (Slovenes); that he helped to found the Provincial Estate school; that he demanded Slovene elementary schools in each parish and education for all children, girls as well as boys; that he was the first to translate the New Testament and Psalms into Slovene and did many other things for Slovene language and literature.

Trubar indeed made an enormous contribution to the history, development and national consciousness of the Slovenes, so that he is justly regarded as one of the greatest Slovene "cultural workers" (Ivan Cankar). But ironically, despite his numerous achievements, the general public is not well acquainted with him as a writer. Everyone knows what he did; but what he thought and what spurred him on in his life's work is largely not known. What did he believe? What drove him to do what he did?

The answers to such questions will be most easily found if we listen to Trubar himself. He left us a rich legacy of almost thirty books, in which he clearly explained and decisively defended his faith. Most of them are extant today at least in original copies, though the most important are also available in new editions. In 2002 the *Collected Works of Primož Trubar (Zbrana dela Primoža Trubarja)* began to be published. The four extensive volumes of his works which have been published so far are available in libraries throughout Slovenia. But the problem remains that apart from specialists most people cannot read them, as more than 400 years of language development lies between them and Trubar, so his archaic style of expression is difficult if not impossible to understand nowadays. Although in some new editions, as is the case in the *Collected Works*, the script is modernized and so easier to read, Trubar's language has generally remained everywhere just as he wrote it. Thus those who know Slovene can recognize the letters used in Trubar's texts, but unfortunately this doesn't ensure that the meaning of his words can be understood.

So, what did Trubar believe? Sources exist which help us to figure this out but for those not used to reading 16th-century Slovene, they are almost incomprehensible; so Slovenes can have his words in their hands but not know how to read them. Editions such as the *Collected Works* or reprints of individual books by Trubar renew the availability of his writings and so ensure that they will be preserved in facsimiles in the future as well. In this sense these editions are irreplaceable, but they still do not fill the gap that is felt in Slovene culture because we lack translations of Trubar's most important writings into modern Slovene.

This booklet is meant as a first step towards solving this problem. It contains one of Trubar's earliest works, his sermon on faith, found at the end of his first *Catechism* of 1550. Here we can clearly see what Trubar believed and what was the guiding principle and the driving force in all his activity.

To facilitate understanding, the sermon has been translated into modern Slovene. Subheadings were added which summarize the content and so emphasize the key ideas running through the text. For the purpose of comparison, a copy of the original transcribed from Gothic script into the Roman alphabet is given parallel to the translation. (Technical details about the modernization of the text are explained in the Slovene edition.)

The basic aim in this translation is faithfulness to Trubar and his principles. Trubar did not consider himself so much the founder of Slovene literature as a worker in the service of Christ's gospel, who wanted to pass on an authentic presentation of the original Christian faith even to the simplest Slovenes. He deliberately avoided pretentiously lofty words and new expressions so that the message would be as accessible as possible to everybody. Similarly we as translators did not wish to imprison Trubar artificially "in his period" by

preserving an archaic style to give "patina". We think this would be the opposite of Trubar's goal; we believe that he is best understood when heard in today's language. Our hope is that, through this booklet, the voice of one of the first Slovene "workers" in both faith and culture might ring out again.

### Passage from Matthew 15:21-28 on which the sermon is based

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire."

And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

## A Sermon on Faith

*A sermon<sup>1</sup> on Christ's words, "O woman, great is your faith" (Matthew 15:28). How we should correctly understand the word "faith" in the Bible and all sermons, and what kind of habits or way of thinking true faith should produce in a person. Primož Trubar frequently preaches this sermon and all his other sermons are connected to it and in harmony with it.*

### What faith is<sup>2</sup>

The word "faith", my dear Christians, we sometimes understand as everything by which God is served, whether rightly or wrongly, whether pleasing to God or not. So we speak about Christian, pagan and Turkish<sup>3</sup> faith.

The word "faith" is also used for each individual thing we are acquainted with and know that it exists: just as we all know and believe that God, who created earth and heaven, exists<sup>4</sup> and that we must serve him.

Then we also call it "faith" when a person promises someone something and keeps to this – which we could call human or practical<sup>5</sup> faith.

But true faith, which Christ speaks about everywhere in the gospels and which saint<sup>6</sup> Paul, the apostles and prophets write about, is possessed only by one who not only knows and believes that God exists, but also personally knows the true God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the faith by which a person receives the forgiveness of sins and by which he will be made godly and righteous before God, so that he can come into heaven. This person also knows what God's will is for people and firmly believes God's word. By faith he correctly honours God, regarding him as almighty and true. Although at present he doesn't see or feel or can't properly understand what God says or promises him, nevertheless he believes that it is and will be just as God says.

Faith is thus a bold, certain and steadfast trust in the things of God, which we don't see or feel or enjoy or understand properly, and which are quite difficult for us to believe in. Saint Paul says, "Faith is the basis<sup>7</sup> or firm foundation of the things we trust in and the comprehensible and certain evidence of things we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1),<sup>8</sup> as we can see in the following promises: the Lord God, the heavenly Father and his Son together with the Holy Spirit promises all of us who believe in Jesus that we will never die, but will have

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<sup>1</sup> The original Latin title translates as: A sermon on the word "faith" and on the habits or perceptions which true faith arouses in a person at Christ's words, "O woman, great is your faith".

<sup>2</sup> There are no subheadings in Trubar's text; the editors decided to use them in this edition to give a clearer view of the contents and make orientation easier for the reader.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Muslim. Little was known about Islam in this time, but Europe was very much in fear of the invasions of the Ottoman Turks.

<sup>4</sup> Or *that there is one God*.

<sup>5</sup> Or *everyday, businesslike*; lit. *trading*.

<sup>6</sup> Trubar and other Protestant writers generally used the word "saint" with a different meaning to that familiar to a contemporary Slovene under the influence of Catholic interpretation. According to Reformation understanding and also in present-day biblical Christianity, a person is a saint when he believes and is sanctified through Jesus Christ, which has nothing to do with the catalogue of dead people proclaimed to be saints such as the Orthodox and Catholic churches have. The word is also used in this way by the apostle Paul, when he addresses those he writes to: "to the saints in ..."

<sup>7</sup> Or *support*.

<sup>8</sup> The Scripture passages in the text are an English rendering of the modern Slovene version of Trubar's translation of the New Testament, and thus may have slight variations from modern English translations.

eternal life, although we must all first die. He promises us that he wants to raise us from death, yet we must all first turn to dust. Because of faith in Jesus he promises us that we can be free of sin and God's wrath now, although we can feel how sin dwells deep within us and that in this body we cannot be without sin. God calls us who believe holy and blessed, because our situation is sure with God and because God holds on to us and protects us, although we are more subject to all kinds of misfortune and trouble than unbelievers. God promises us that we believers will never suffer any lack but will have enough of everything, although we are often barefoot, naked, hungry and thirsty. God promises that he always hears us even now and gives us what we ask him for although it often seems that he doesn't care about us, doesn't hear us and that we ask and call in vain. If I summarize: God promises us an abundance of great things, spiritually and physically, even if seemingly he doesn't give us anything.

If we should want to comprehend and contemplate these and other comforting words and promises of God with our own understanding and wisdom, especially when things are difficult or we're lying on our death-bed (and whenever we can't feel or cling to anything that God has promised us), we would start to doubt God's promises, we would take no notice of them and would completely fall away from God and his word.

So in these troubles we need true faith. This makes us rely firmly on God's simple promise and keep his words until death and willingly and humbly wait for what God has promised us. It makes us believe without any doubt that the time will certainly come when God will fulfil his word and his promise, for God is true and almighty: with him nothing is impossible – what he wants to do, he can do (see Luke 1:37; Mark 9:23; Psalm 115:3). If we don't receive everything God has promised us now in this life, we will certainly receive it in heaven after this life.

With such faith a Christian can stand and withstand in troubles and temptations and resist the unbelief that is in our flesh. With it he can withstand his own foolish wisdom and understanding, this world and the devil, so that all these things would not turn us aside from God's word and that we would not have doubts regarding God and his word.

Such faith doesn't come from us but is poured into us from heaven. True faith is a gift from God, as Christ himself testifies, when he said to saint Peter, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father, who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). God gives this faith to us through the word of his holy gospel, whenever we listen to it with a true heart, receiving it and believing it (see Romans 10:9-10). And he gives it to us through the sacraments of holy baptism and Christ's supper, so that such faith grows in us from day to day; through the power of the Holy Spirit he changes our hearts to good and makes us lean completely on God's word as on a firm rock or on a good foundation.

In this matter we must also know that true faith stands only upon the pure, true word of God, and relies on it. Faith always looks only to God's word as to a true goal. But if someone's faith looks to human regulations or to established customs and stands on man's word, then such faith is not true but is simply a wrong opinion, which seems to that person to be true faith but is not. Without God's word there cannot be true faith. God's word and true faith must always be together; the word is the foundation on which faith builds. For a person can rely with certainty on God's word as on something true and steadfast. Whoever firmly trusts it will never be led astray or put to shame.

But everyone must know that a person's faith is also not true if he appeals to God's word but doesn't understand it correctly and distorts its content, because this word doesn't contain what it appears to him to contain. So a believing person must understand God's word correctly.

If we sum this up: faith is a heartfelt assent to God's word and unshakable reliance upon it. When God speaks or commands or warns or comforts or promises –in every case, faith believes that it is and will be so.

## The habits and way of thinking of a person who believes: the believer loves God's word

Now we will speak about the habits and way of thinking of a believer.

First of all, a believer has this good habit and way of thinking that he loves God's word, loves to listen to it or read it himself, considers it true and believes it. What people say, teach or do, whether the saints, the fathers of the church, old or new faiths, the false Christian church, church councils, tradition, popes, bishops, priests, monks, or whoever – the believer considers whether their teaching and actions agree with God's words, which are written in the Bible. And if they don't agree, then he doesn't believe them and doesn't act according to their teaching. Thus the believer is a wise, judicious, rich and happy person, although other people consider him foolish and poor, as David testifies when he says, "O God, how greatly I love your words and commandments, every day I speak only of them. With your commandment you make me wiser than all my enemies, therefore your commandment is my eternal treasure. I am more learned than those who teach me, for your words are my sayings. I am more sensible than the old, for I keep your commandments. The commandment from your mouth is better than many gold or silver coins. Therefore I love your commandment more than pure gold and precious stones", etc. (Psalm 119:97-100, 72, 127). Thus the believer who loves God's word, loves to listen to it and believes it, cannot come to a better, more useful wisdom or have a greater, more precious possession<sup>9</sup> than God's word. This wisdom and precious possession are valuable in God's sight and bring a person from present poverty into heaven, because through God's word he personally knows the true God in the Trinity. He is also knows the hidden, steadfast will of God, that he desires to be good and merciful to believers because of Jesus Christ, to forgive them their sins, to help them out of all their troubles and to give them eternal life. Today's Jews, Gentiles, Turks<sup>10</sup> and the great men of the whole world and all who do not love God's word, don't listen to it and don't believe it, don't know anything about the true God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or of his goodness to people (see 1 Corinthians 2). Thus only those who believe are truly wise, learned, rich and happy before God. Those who don't believe, who don't have the habit of loving God's word, listening to it and believing it – although all consider them religious, wise, learned, capable, very powerful, rich and happy people – are in fact before God foolish, poor and unhappy people (see 1 Corinthians 1:18ff; Jeremiah 9:22-23).

## The believer fears God's wrath because of his sin

From this first good habit, which arises from the wisdom of a person who believes, who knows God, who loves his word, who loves to listen to it or read it himself and firmly believes it, arises also the second good, useful habit and way of thinking: that this person now begins to truly fear God's wrath from a true heart. For the believer recognizes correctly from God's word what a person is in his nature and how he behaves as a consequence of that. He recognizes that he is evil, inclined to all that is evil, a sinner – that nothing he thinks, says or does is good before God and that in this life he cannot by himself satisfy God's commandments or his will. He also correctly understands and recognizes what sin is, how strongly it opposes God, and how God's righteousness right from the beginning of the world has punished people because of sin. It punished Adam and Eve with physical death along with all of us, who are Adam's children and have inherited sin from him. And if we do not

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<sup>9</sup> Lit. *goods*; i.e. wealth, fortune, treasure; similarly elsewhere in the text.

<sup>10</sup> i.e. Muslims.

believe in Jesus, God's righteousness will punish us with eternal death. God often showed his wrath against sin with other punishments as well: when he flooded the whole world, when he destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with sulphur and fire and when he drowned the Egyptians in the sea. Even more, although the Jews then were his people and his church, he often punished them because of their unbelief and disobedience with fire, the sword and serpents. The earth swallowed up some of the people, later he handed over the whole nation to pagans to be broken (see Numbers 16; 21; 25). Similarly he still chastises his church, Christians, now with many things - for example, with the Turks, with inflation, with the plague, with fatal illnesses, with corrupt nobility, family and neighbourhood, with corrupt bishops, priests, monks and with other misfortune. So God allows all this to befall people on account of their sin.

Such great divine punishments go to the heart of a believer, so he greatly fears sinning and God's wrath. Then from such good fear arises true repentance so that a believer now begins to really repent of his sins and to hate them, then he forsakes them and binds himself to arrange his state<sup>11</sup> and life according to God's will. In this he also, before God, repents of his sins, his depraved nature and disastrous failure and always asks him humbly for mercy and the forgiveness of his sins. In short: the one who believes truly repents, is converted, turns from evil and begins to do good.

#### The believer seeks how to become free of sin and God's wrath

Thirdly, the believer also has this habit and way of thinking: when he understands that God hates sin so strongly that because of it he punishes people even with eternal damnation, he begins to ask himself how he could be released from such terrible things as sin and God's wrath, that he might again come into God's mercy. Thus the believer would never go to Rome for indulgences, to Aachen,<sup>12</sup> to hilltop churches or to any monastery, but keeps only to the pure, true word of God in the holy gospel, believes it and lives according to it. For God's word, which God spoke through angels, the patriarchs, prophets, through his Son Christ and the apostles and which is written in the Bible, speaks to all people about the true, strong and reliable remedy and good antidote with which we can banish poison, sin and God's wrath. Even before he created the world, the Lord God prepared this remedy himself and intended it for all people and commanded them to take it. The poison of sin will do no harm at all to the one who takes the remedy. That remedy is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom the heavenly Father destined in eternity for salvation, the offering and payment for the sins of the entire human race. And the eternal, steadfast will of God is to forgive the sins of the one who believes in Jesus Christ and completely abandon his wrath against him.

#### The believer eats the body of Jesus and drinks his blood, which means that he believes in him

Moreover, we believing Christians must be well aware: if we wish to be healed in our souls before God and to be set free from our sins, so that we do not die, we must eat the body of Jesus and drink his blood, as Jesus himself often says when he declares, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day; whoever does not eat my flesh and drink my blood will not have eternal life" (John 6:53-54). And how should we eat his body and drink his blood? Jesus himself explains that to eat and drink means nothing else than to believe that Jesus is the true Son of God,

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<sup>11</sup> A broad term that covers one's marital, social, occupational status; similarly later in the text.

<sup>12</sup> Lit. *Ah*, most probably modern Aachen in Germany, which was then an important pilgrimage city.

from eternity having the same glory<sup>13</sup>, power and authority as God, and that Jesus has paid for our sins by his death, has reconciled us who believe with God and gained for us eternal life. Whoever firmly believes this, eats the body of Jesus and drinks his blood. The Bible speaks everywhere of this spiritual food; saint John the Evangelist writes the most precisely about this and says very clearly that we will partake of all Jesus' good gifts - namely, the forgiveness of sins and heavenly good gifts - only through faith in Jesus. Jesus says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that no-one who believes in him will perish but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save it through him; whoever believes in him will not perish; but whoever does not believe is condemned even now, because he does not believe in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:16-18).

### By faith the believer clings to Jesus' riches

And all of us must be fully aware that faith is like a hand, with which we grasp Jesus' property and receive it. Jesus Christ himself is God's wisdom, righteousness and holiness, our salvation and the payment for our sins (see 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30). The fact that we are and will be before God wise, holy, righteous and free of sin is something we receive only through faith in Jesus. Jesus himself clothes us in his riches and holiness so that for the sake of him in whom we believe, the heavenly Father considers us righteous, wise and holy, he loves us and considers us his beloved children.

We want to speak about the fact that only through faith in Jesus will we become whole and free from the poison of sin and only through faith also participants in all Jesus' riches - that is, the forgiveness of sins, God's mercy and righteousness, holiness and eternal life - and to attest this with Scripture, for every Christian must know this and understand it well.

Jesus Christ himself tells us a wonderful parable about this, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must also be lifted up, so that no-one who believes in him will perish, but will have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). The Jews, who because of their sins had been bitten by serpents, fell ill and died, since no remedy could help against the poison and death which followed. Only if someone looked at the hanging bronze serpent was he healed by looking at it and remained alive. Similarly, nothing can cure us from severe illness and eternal death because of our poisoned, sinful souls except faith in Jesus Christ.

Everywhere in his letters and sermons Saint Paul also testifies about this, that we become godly and righteous before God only through faith in Jesus; for example, "God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ to all and above all who believe" (Romans 3:22). Further he says, "We have become righteous through faith, therefore we have peace with God through Jesus Christ, our Lord; through him we are also brought into the grace in which we now stand" (Romans 5:1-2). "The Lord God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin (that is, the offering or payment) that in him we shall be the righteousness that has validity before God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "Men and brothers, you know that through Jesus Christ is declared to you the forgiveness of sins and of all that you could not get pardon for in God's sight through the law of Moses, and that everyone who believes in Jesus will be righteous" (Acts 13:38-39). Saint John the Evangelist says that Jesus did many more signs, which are not written in his book, but what is written is written so that they might believe that Jesus is the true Christ, God's Son, and that by believing in him they might have eternal life through his name (see John 20:30-31). Saint Paul says the same: the fact that Abraham became righteous

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<sup>13</sup> Lit. *honour*.



before God by faith was not written only for his sake but also for us who believe, for such righteousness will be credited to us as well (see Romans 4:23-24).

If I summarize: all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and saints and all Jesus' words and signs point to Jesus Christ himself as the real remedy for our souls. Saint Peter says that only one name is given to us by God under heaven, by which we can be saved (see Acts 4:12). In Acts 10:43 we also read that all the prophets bear witness concerning Jesus that everyone who believes in him will receive the forgiveness of all sins. Saint Paul also speaks about this, "This word is reliable and worthy that we receive it and cling to it: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). "He died for our sins and rose from death for our righteousness" (Romans 4:25). Although we are all sinners and nobody can become righteous before God by his own works, so that we are all subject to perdition, Jesus had mercy on us and came into the world to us and sacrificed himself on the cross as an offering and payment. Thus by his suffering he saved us from sins, death, the devil and hell, and so we all can be healed by his wounds before God (see Isaiah 53:5).

From the beginning of the world all who believe have sought with faith the health of their soul, the forgiveness of sins and God's mercy only in Jesus Christ, and have obtained that. So it was with Adam and Eve, who believed in the seed that would be born of a woman and thus returned into God's mercy. So it was also with Adam's son Abel and his righteous children and grandchildren. So it was with Abraham, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and all the saints. So it was also with the Gentile woman in today's gospel,<sup>14</sup> who correctly recognized Jesus Christ by his words and signs and firmly believed in him that he was both able and willing to help her daughter. With such trust she went to him and persisted in faith to the end; she didn't doubt and didn't allow her reason (or even Jesus himself with his sharp answer) to turn her back from such faith. Because of such good, steadfast, strong faith she pleased Jesus greatly, so that he praised her before all the people. Therefore she also obtained from him what she had asked him for. In the same way, at the right time, we also will get from Jesus everything that he has promised us, if we only believe and expect this to the end in faith and firm trust. Because of Jesus we will certainly receive eternal life after this life.

### The believer completely relies upon God

Thus a believer already knows personally and knows from the gospels God's good, merciful will towards him. He firmly believes God's beautiful, good promises and comfort and doesn't doubt in his heart that God, the heavenly Father, will forgive all his sins because of his Son Jesus Christ, and will make him beloved, righteous and holy, and that he wants to give him eternal life. In short, he believes that God always wants to be a merciful God and Father to him and to protect him from all misfortune. When he firmly believes this, the gift of the Holy Spirit is also definitely given to him (see Romans 5:5). The Spirit changes the heart, way of thinking and all the actions of the believer to good, and implants in him the fourth good habit and way of thinking, namely, that because of Jesus Christ, the person begins to trust completely in the Lord God and entirely relies on him for all that is good. He no longer fears God as a wrathful lord, but loves him as his faithful, merciful father. Now he calls to him from true faith and from complete love; he no longer asks the saints to pray for him, but boldly and joyfully comes himself before God and says to him, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15), that is "My Daddy, my beloved father, help me, or give me this or that". For the Holy Spirit has firmly convinced the believer through God's word that because of Jesus, God is a greater and better friend to him than he is to his children or his physical father is to him. The heavenly Father clearly demonstrated this great love to all humankind when he sent his

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<sup>14</sup> i.e. in Matthew 15:21-28.

greatest, best and most beloved possession, that is, his only Son, to death rather than abandon man. Therefore the one who truly believes never doubts God's mercy or goodness; he is convinced in his heart and conscience that he is dear to God and that God loves to give him what he asks for. But he doesn't ask for anything except what is appropriate and what God has promised in his word.

### The believer begins to keep God's word

From such trust and true love towards God, which come from faith and a true knowledge of God, the believer also acquires the fifth good habit and way of thinking. Now he begins to correctly love all God's commandments and laws and starts to behave according to them in his faith, life and state.<sup>15</sup> He serves God only as God's word shows him and as God himself or Christ commanded or set down. He loves to listen to God's word, he always calls upon God and prays, he loves to speak about God and about his word; he teaches others – especially his own family – to correctly know God and to serve him. He publicly acknowledges his faith when people ask him about it; he no longer goes to false, idolatrous masses<sup>16</sup> and false church services, because God strictly forbade all this to believers in the first commandment. For the prophets and apostles cry out and write against such false services: Exodus 20:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:7, 14; 1 John 5:21; 1 Samuel 15:22-23. The believer holds to God's true Church, that is, the community and people who have God's word, who love it, listen to it, believe it and live according to it, who also receive and share the sacraments as Jesus set them down. According to God's will the believer loves his neighbour from his heart and does good to him as much as he can. He does evil to no-one, he keeps only God's and the apostles' teaching regarding everything, he doesn't live a disorderly life, he does no harm to anyone, but works for his own bread. He helps true preachers and teachers so that they too will be able to preach correctly, he stands by the side of poor orphans and widows and gives them wise advice, he visits the sick, comforts the sorrowing with God's word, is hospitable to strangers, helps poor neighbours and lends to them, gladly shares his bread with anyone who needs it. And whenever God gives him or sends him some trouble, because of such faith on his part or for any other reason, he is humble and willing, prepared to suffer and commends himself to God, always faithfully calling to him and asking him to keep him in true faith in the temptation, to make him strong and to help him to bear the cross. He quietly accepts that what is happening to him is God's will. He doesn't seek help from saints or magicians, but only from the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ. On top of all this he presents his life and his body to God (see Romans 12:1). To this end he puts to death evil desires (pride, wrath, envy, impurity, avarice, drunkenness and similar sins) which dwell in the corrupt flesh<sup>17</sup> of our body, so they wouldn't come out into the open. He always keeps his life on a rein, he doesn't surrender it to his own will but spurs it on to act according to God's word. But if out of weakness, in spite of his will and thinking, he falls into some great sin, he laments it from his heart and is ashamed before God and people. He is sorry and this drives him to lament before God his evil, corrupt nature, he asks him for grace and the forgiveness of sins. In addition, as long as he lives, he always recognizes that in this life he cannot be completely without sin, so every day he asks God, as in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our debts", etc.

And whatever good he does according to God's will before God or people, he always says from his heart, "This is nothing. I am only an unworthy servant" (Luke 17: 10). He doesn't serve God in order to merit heaven with his good deeds or to gain greater honour

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<sup>15</sup> A broad term that covers one's marital, social, occupational status; see footnote 11.

<sup>16</sup> Or *to idols, false masses*.

<sup>17</sup> Lit. *the evil corpse*.

with God than other people for he knows that he has all this free from God because of Christ – Jesus himself earned heaven and eternal life for him by his suffering. What good he does, he does all for the honour and praise of God. The believer knows well from God's commandments, Christ's explanations (see Matthew 5) and Paul's teaching (see Romans 7-8) that in this life he cannot completely keep God's commandments, as the self-righteousness and hypocrites think, who pride themselves on their good deeds and trade with them. For the believer always stands before God in repentance and humility and by no means boasts of his godliness or good works before God and people.

### Conclusion: from hell to heaven

True Christian faith in a person creates such good habits and thinking and completely changes him. From a foolish person he becomes wise, from a sinner faith makes him a saint, in short, it takes him from hell and puts him in heaven. Now remember this well and see to it that you get this faith by obeying God's word and with daily prayer. And live an honest life. May the heavenly Father grant us such faith because of his beloved Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit! To him be all honour and praise, always and for ever. Amen.

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