

A Sermon of Repentance

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish

— Luke 13:5.

The occasion of these words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was, because there were certain that showed Him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their own sacrifices. That is, murdered them as they were sacrificing; and so their blood was mingled with the blood of the beasts which were sacrificed. Those men, therefore, thought that those Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they had suffered such things; and yet, those eighteen also, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem. Wherein they did utter a secret corruption, naturally engendered in all men, that is, very sharply, to see into the sins of others, and severely to censure them; but in the meanwhile to flatter themselves, and to be blindfolded in seeing their own sins. For these men thought because the like judgments did not fall upon them, therefore, they were safe enough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the favor of God. According as many do falsely suppose, that those are always the worst sort of people, whom God doth most strike, and press with His punishing hand, having forgotten that God doth not keep an ordinary rate here below, to punish every man as he is worst, or to favor and cocker him as he is best, but only taketh some examples as He thinketh

good, for the instruction and advertisement of all others, and to be as it were looking glasses, wherein every man may see his own face, yea, and his own cause handled, and that God is a severe revenger of sin, that all men may learn by the example of some to tremble and beware, least peradventure they be worthily constrained to keep their own turns, and to know what they have deserved. These men which brought this news to our Savior Christ had taken forth this lesson; whereupon our Savior is justly occasioned to correct their erroneous and sinister judgment, and to teach them that they must not rejoice at the just punishments of others, but rather to be instructed thereby to repentance.

And further to signify, that God doth not always most punish the most notorious offenders, as murderers, thieves, robbers, whoremasters, blasphemers, quarrelers, scoffers, and suchlike, but reserveth them unto the judgment of the great day, and as it were fatteth them against the day of slaughter, and therefore, He answereth them negatively, and saith, "Nay, or not so, but except ye repent, you shall all likewise perish"; as if He should say, Are you all of this opinion indeed, that only monstrous sinners are punished in this world, and others let alone? Or that the Galileans and those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, were greater sinners than all others? Or do you think because the same judgments have not light upon you, therefore, you shall steal away in the dark, and escape the judgment of God? No, no, you are deceived! For I say unto you, that except you mourn and lament for your sins, and fall to some agreement with God in time (you I say, even you which are so ready to condemn others, and justify yourselves), shall not only perish with the like judgments in this present world, but be everlastingly condemned in the world to come. So that our Savior in so saying, doth thunder down a most dreadful sentence upon all our heads; for He concludeth and setteth it down, that all men living upon the face of the earth, whether they be high or low,

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rich or poor, young or old, noble or un noble, learned or unlearned, simple or politic, of what estate, degree, and condition soever they be, living and dying without repentance, shall perish and be damned in hell fire forever. The Scriptures are full of such thunderbolts: "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18); and "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5). Where the apostle flatly setteth down that all those which have not Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, which is the household sister of repentance, are no better than reprobates, castaways, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these days are grossly deceived in repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets* and hindrances, and also why, when, and wherefore we should repent. Therefore, I have in present intent to teach: First, What is repentance. Second, Which be his qualities and effects. Third, When we should repent. Fourth, Wherefore we should repent. And last of all, What letteth us from repentance. Which order and method of teaching, although some may dislike (as indeed with me it is not ordinary) yet considering the matter I have in hand, I think it not inconvenient. But to the matter.

Repentance is an inward sorrowing, and continual mourning of the heart and conscience for sin, joined with faith, and both inward and outward amendment. Inward, I say, in changing the thoughts and affections of the heart; and outward, in changing the words, and works, from evil to good. This repentance no doubt was in David, who when he was covertly reproved by the Prophet Nathan, and his sins laid before his eyes did not stubbornly defend them, and so justly against God; nor yet secretly excuse them, and daub them over, but

*Obstacles

cried out in the bitterness of his heart, "I have sinned," and thereupon made the fifty-first Psalm, a Psalm indeed full of dolor and heaviness; wherein the Psalmist bewaileth his falls, lamenteth his sins, and prayeth even for a new heart and a new spirit, new thoughts, new affections, new purposes of amendment of life. So that in David we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting grief (as the Book of Psalms doth everywhere declare, which layeth him out as it were in an anatomy), yea, and great reformation, both in inward and outward sins. Here, therefore, behold what is repentance. Likewise, St. Peter through infirmity having denied his Lord and Master Christ, and being pinched of his own conscience, and wakened with the alarm of a poor cock's crowing, went out of the court of Pilate with a heavy heart, weeping bitterly, and ever after stoutly professing Christ even unto the death. See then what is repentance. The prophets in the Old Testament, exhorting the rebellious Jews unto repentance, use commonly a Hebrew verb, which signifieth, turn ye, or return ye and come back again; by the which metaphor is meant, that like as a man that is strayed far out of his way, must return quite back again the contrary way. So those that have strayed from the ways of godliness to the way of sin, must come back again as fast as ever they went forward, and altogether to change the course of their life; so that repentance is an earnest turning unto God with all our heart, soul, and mind. St. John the Baptist, and the apostles in the New Testament exhorting unto repentance, use a Greek word which signifieth a changing of the mind afterward, or after wit, so that those which through their folly, and want of former wit, have slipped into the deep pit and dangerous gulf of sin, when they come unto themselves, and have recovered their wits, will be wise afterward, and take heed they never come there again, according to the proverb, "The burnt child will take heed of the fire." By this time I hope you see what is repentance. It is not every sorrow, but sorrow for sin; not for

some sin, but for all sin; not for an hour, but forever; not for a day, but continually; not for a week, but as long as we live. Some think every sorrow is repentance, but so should worldlings repent. Some think every little pant for sin is repentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some think all weeping and lamenting for sin is repentance; so should Esau, Judas, and Cain repent. Some think every little humbling of ourselves is repentance, but so should Achan repent. Some think that good words and good purposes is repentance; but so should every sick man repent. Some think that reformation of words and deeds is repentance; but so should evil men repent. Some think that cry, "God have mercy!" is repentance, and so should every fool repent. You see, therefore, how many are deceived in repentance. But if you will see what it is indeed, look back to that which hath been said afore. For he that will repent in good earnest, must not hang down his head like a bulrush for a day only, and so have done, nor cry from the teeth forward, "Lord have mercy on me!" and so away; but he must make a back reckoning with diligent consideration of his former life, as did the Psalmist David, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies" (Ps. 119:59). So must everyone that meaneth to repent, slink aside into some corner or out place, that there he may have room enough to beat his own conscience, and to make his heart smart for his sins, by aggravation thereof, and weighing all the circumstances, as in the ninth chapter of Daniel. The Church of God confesseth her sin, not lightly, but with wonderful great exaggeration and heaping of one thing to another. So that it is not enough to say, "I have sinned," but to say, "I have most traitorously sinned, I have most obstinately, carelessly, and rebelliously sinned; I have monstrously offended in such a place, in such a house, in such company, in such a day. In such a corner in the dark I committed adultery closely, when I thought none had seen me; in such a chamber I defiled my neighbor's wife; mine own conscience doth ac-

cuse me of it; in such and such company I have been drunk, I have spoken and railed against God's Word, I have mocked the preachers, I have spared no oaths nor filthy speech, and now, O Lord, what an ugly monster and wretched villain am I. Here I stand before Thy presence all naked, blind, wounded, poor, wretched and miserable, having deserved a thousand damnations, if Thou wouldest enter into judgment, and try the law with me. Therefore, I beseech Thee show pity and compassion upon me. Anoint my wounds with the oil of mercy; restore me my sight; clothe my nakedness; enrich me that am poor; strengthen me that am weak; help me that am fallen; oh, bid me not farewell!" The infant overcometh his mother with crying; the child his father with weeping; and the servant his master by entreaty; and wilt Thou not be entreated, O Lord? Thus I say, if every man would speak in his conscience to God, and thus narrowly or more narrowly examine himself, undoubtedly he were in the way to repentance.

But alas, it is a world to see how the blind buzzards and crooked cankerworms of this world go awry from this rule, deceiving themselves with the bare title and naked name of repentance. Many indeed can talk of it, but few walk in it; many speak of it, but few feel it. Many describe it, but few know it. It is hid and locked up from the world, and revealed only to God's children. Many think they have caught it, when they have but the shadow of it. It is so high that few can reach it. It is so deep that few can come to the bottom of it. It is so narrow, that few can enter into it. So wide, that few can comprehend it. So slippery, that few can hold it. So secret, that few can find it. Therefore, my dear brethren, I beseech you, let us pray unto our God, that He would reveal unto us this mystery which is hid from the world, that we may truly see it, and know it, find it, and feel it to our endless comfort, through Christ Jesus, which grace He grant us.

But now to the second point concerning the qualities and

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fruits of repentance. One special quality of repentance is always to bring with it remission of sins; for where true repentance goeth before, there remission of sins must necessarily follow after; not that repentance deserveth remission of sin, but because where God worketh repentance, there He pardoneth sin because of His promise. As in Ezekiel 18:27: “When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.” And again, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord; and He will have mercy upon him” (Isa. 55:7). So here we see, to whom forgiveness of sins, and the mercy of God belongeth; namely, to the penitent sinners, to those that leave sin, and embrace godliness; to those that forsake their own ways and imaginations, and turn unto the Lord. And as for such as walk on, in their own ways, and follow the delights of sin, without any sorrow or purpose to leave them, they having nothing to do with the mercy of God, and though Jesus Christ had suffered a hundred deaths (which could not be) yet shall no unpenitent sinner have remission of his sins by His death, nor any other benefits of His passion; for they belong only to His Church and chosen people here upon the earth. He, therefore, that is not of the Church, he that is not grafted into Christ by faith, he that is not a member of His mystical body, can enjoy nothing by Christ’s death. “If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:6). We read in the twenty-ninth chapter of Deuteronomy, how God barreth all stubborn sinners from His mercy, and doth most terribly shoot out against them. “...He heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that

man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him” (vv. 19–20). So that God saith plainly, He hath no mercy for such as walk in the vain delights of sin, and in the stubbornness of their own heart; adding drunkenness to thirst, that is, joining one horrible sin to another, yet for all this it is a wonder to see how the blind worms of the earth deceive themselves. For they think whatsoever they say, whatsoever they do, be it good, be it evil, whether they repent or not repent, yet they shall be saved by Christ’s death, as though they would make it a bawdy* to their sins, and so work that villainy against Christ. “I hope to be saved by Christ’s death, as well as the best of them all,” saith some. But where is thy repentance, thou miserable wretch? Dost thou think that God’s mercy is common to all? And Christ’s death a bawdy for our sins? No, no! When it cometh to the upshot, thou shalt stop short. For it will prove far otherwise: for thou shalt find God’s mercy turned into justice; and Christ’s death into wormwood, because thou hated knowledge, and choseth not the fear of the Lord. Thus you see, my dear brethren, that repentance must needs go before forgiveness of sins, and where it leadeth not the way, there the gates of God’s mercy are shut up, and this is the first quality of repentance. It hath also another condition, and that is to alter and change men from that they were before, not in substance and proportion of the body, but in the qualities and conditions of the mind. For whosoever hath truly repented, you shall, by and by, see a most marvelous and wonderful change in him, so that he will not do as he hath done, nor speak as he hath spoken, nor company as he hath companied, nor play the good fellow (as they term it) as he was wont to do, nor run to the same excess of riot he was wont. And this is it that amazeth the world, and causeth them to bristle and foam at the mouth like wild boars, and to speak evil of them that turned unto God; for the world loveth his own, and cannot abide that God should pluck one

*A coarse and obscene conversation

feather from his wings. But repentance doth violently pull men out of the claws of Satan, and change them from the conditions of the world; for it maketh of proud, humble; of hurtful, harmless; of cruel, meek; of wolves, lambs; of lions, sheep; of adulterers, chaste livers; of drunkards, sober men; of swearers, reverent speakers; of haters, lovers; of despisers, embracers; of scoffers, followers; of earthly, heavenly; of devils, saints. All this worketh repentance. Paul traveled towards Damascus, a wolf, a persecutor, a bloodsucker, an hater, a despiser; but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and clean of another mind; so mighty was He that met him by the way. When Jesus Christ sent down the Holy Ghost upon His disciples, according to His promise, there were some scoffers at Jerusalem, which mocked and said, they are full of new wine. But the same men cried out by and by after, Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?

Here was a most wonderful, and sudden change. See then the force of repentance when God striketh it into the heart of man, and driveth the nail to the head, as they say, it effecteth that which all the wisdom and policy of man is not able to bring to pass, and when they have prodded* hither and thither, and laid their heads together, and sought all the corners of their wits, yet can they not tell which way to turn their hand, or where to begin to change the heart of a man, and to convert him to God. Therefore, repentance is stronger than all the whole world, and worketh that which all men with their natural wits, fine heads, and deep devils cannot compass; for the conversion of a sinner is a work supernatural. Here then we have a glass, to behold ourselves in, whether ever we have repented, or no. For if we find not this change and alteration in us, we have not repented, and so consequently remain under damnation. Therefore, let every man look unto himself, for mark how much he is changed and altered from his former evil ways, so much hath he repented. And he that is

*Prodded

the same man, he was three, four, eight, nay thirty years ago surely, surely he hath not repented, and therefore, abideth in damnation. I marvel then how those men which never felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose consciences tell them, that they are not changed, he know what it meaneth, can have any hope of salvation, unless peradventure they believe not His doctrine, or think it to be false. I will send over those men to such as have been in the like case they now are, and yet thought they might do well enough for all that, although both blind in judgment and corrupt in conversation. I have known and do know men, which before their conversion an inward change, were counted as honest men as ever break bread, and as substantial men as they could be, as true dealers, upright livers, and good housekeepers as any of their neighbors; yea, and they had the same opinion of themselves too. And yet notwithstanding when they have felt repentance working this change and alteration in them, through the power of the Spirit at the preaching of the Word, and when they have had new hearts, given them to discern better, and new eyes to see better, as men come out of a damp, have wondered and marveled at the palpable and gross darkness they were in before, and have burst forth into these words, that they would not be in the same case they were afore, no, not for all the world's goods, for if they should have died in that case, they were sure they should have been damned. But I pray you what case were they in before, were they not good, honest men and well accounted of, and honest livers, and well taken wheresoever they came? Surely they were so taken in the world, but now they think far otherwise of themselves, their eyes being opened, and their judgments enlightened, for now they see that they saw not before, now they understand that God condemneth many whom the world justifieth. He thinketh this example should make civil and worldly men see and suspect themselves, and know their own misery before God. For these men were as good as they before the conver-

sion, and yet afterward, confessed that they were plunged to the bottom of hell, and drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, and he that hath eyes to see, let him see; for if men will still sooth themselves for all this, that they shall be saved without feeling any change or work of repentance, it will cost them full dear in the end. For Christ's words will prove true, that whosoever repenteth not, shall be damned. That is, whosoever doth not feel in himself what is repentance, and find in himself the qualities thereof, shall be condemned. For where repentance is, there be the qualities of repentance, and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ sayeth, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish," it is all one as if He had said, except ye know the truth of repentance, except ye can prove unto your consciences the forgiveness of your sins, except you feel a change and alteration in the bottom of your heart, of all your former lewd ways and misdemeanor, you shall surely perish and be damned. But let us yet a little further search out the qualities of repentance.

The apostle in the seventh chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians setteth down seven notable qualities and effects of repentance. The first of them he nameth carefulness.* "For behold," say he, "this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you" (v. 11); that is an earnest study, and as it were a taking thought to please God. For where true repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great carefulness afterward; carefulness I say to live in the obedience of God. Carefulness to keep a good conscience. Carefulness to reform our households; carefulness to instruct our wives, children and servants in the knowledge of God; carefulness to pray with them morning and evening. And generally, carefulness to perform all duties belonging to God. So that repentance is not a careless, but a careful thing. Let not men think, therefore, that although they

*The original version uses "care"

welter in carelessness of the flesh, and sleep in security all the days of their life, yet their repentance is good enough, yea, and though they spend whole days, nights, months, and years in vanities, plays, and pastimes, in idleness, fond delights, pleasure and voluptuousness, in negligence of all duty, forgetfulness of God, and contempt of all good things; yet for all this they repent for their sins, and hope to be saved as well as any other. But alas, how can these things stand together, to repent for sin, and to delight in sin; to hate sin, to love sin; to fly from sin, and to follow after sin? But these men I perceive would fain make St. Paul a liar, for he saith a man hath never repented except he be careful afterward to please God; they say they do repent and have repented, although they live never so wretchedly, and carelessly. But when all licentious and lewd livers, filthy whoremongers, beastly belly-gods, and careless caitiffs,* come to the kingdom of God and are saved, then shall these men also come with them to be saved by careless repentance.

The next quality and effect of repentance is named clearing of ourselves, that is, discharging of ourselves, when sin doth accuse us, and lay things to our charge; for when sin and Satan doth terrify the conscience of the poor penitent sinner, by and by he flieth unto God, and asketh forgiveness through Jesus Christ, and so cleareth himself, and maketh his apology against sin and Satan, like as a man that is presented into the court, upon suspicion of whoredom, or any other notorious crime, must clear himself by witness of that which is laid to his charge. So the conscience that is cited by Satan before the justice and judgment seat of God, cleareth itself by repentance, and asketh forgiveness through Jesus Christ. So that here we may see a wonderful fruit of a penitent conscience, it cannot abide the accusation of sin. It cannot be quiet till it be reconciled unto God, and so have peace with itself. For this is to be noted in the godly man, that when he hath committed

*Mean, evil or cowardly persons

any sin, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeleth lead within him, and is all heavy, and cannot sleep quietly, till he has gotten into some corner where he may mourn and lament to the full, and confess and lay open himself unto God, and so clear himself through Jesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witness that his sin is forgiven. Whereas, contrariwise, the ungodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sin, he dispatcheth away all such thoughts, and treadeth them under foot, and by and by calleth for a pair of cards or tables, and some merry companion to drive away the time, and to put out all such thoughts out of his head, and so indeed he increaseth them more and more, and causeth them to rankle inwardly.

The third quality is called indignation, that is, a mortal and deadly hatred against sin; as when a man doth shudder and shake, and, as it were, grind his teeth at the remembrance of his sins. For this is always in the penitent person to loath and abhor all sin from his heart, both his own sins and the sins of others, and to hate it as the devil himself, which is the author of it, and to fly from it, as from the very cutthroat and hangman of his soul, and to know it to be the only thing that blindeth, that hardeneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases both of body and soul against us. Therefore, he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stink of it, wheresoever he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is fear, which is a certain awe of God, when a man is afraid to displease Him. For the penitent person feareth always, and being privy to his own infirmity and weakness (when God never so little withdraweth His grace, and leaveth him alone) worketh his salvation with fear and trembling. He will not presume upon former grace to commit any sin, or flatter himself in the mercy of God, and in the things that he hath already tasted of God, to yield to some little sin, thinking he may do that, and be the child of God

well enough, because some of God's children have fallen into greater; but rather he trembleth at the least motion of sin, and is afraid of the temptations which Satan trumpeth in his way, and is afraid when the temptations of sin are upon him, to satisfy the hunger of sin, but rather he fighteth against sin, when sin fighteth against him, and presenteth the fear of God before his eyes (as godly Joseph in the assault of Potiphar's wife) to be as it were a tower of defense and wellspring of life, to avoid the snares of death.

The fifth thing is desire, that is, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness. For the penitent man is ravished with desire of good things. He desireth to be every day better than the other. He desireth to leave every day some sin. He desireth to pray. He desireth new knowledge and new understanding of heavenly things. He desireth to hear sermons, and will strain himself to hear them. He desireth the company of the godly; he thinketh himself in heaven, when he is amongst them. He desireth the salvation of his very enemies, and prayeth for them. All these and many other suchlike desires are in the penitent man.

The sixth quality is zeal, which consisteth in the earnest embracing of virtue, and hatred of vice, so that the penitent person is zealous of every good thing. Zealous of God's glory in all places, in all companies, and amongst all persons. He cannot abide that God's honor should be impeached, or His name blasphemed, or His glory trampled under foot by wicked men, but he will open his mouth to reprove the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defense of God's glory. He is not like the atheists and dissemblers, which are always as is the company; that is, godly amongst the godly; a Protestant amongst Protestants; wicked amongst the wicked; a Papist amongst Papists; a worldling amongst worldlings; and a swearer amongst swearers; a weathercock that turneth with every wind. The penitent man, I say, is not of this stamp, but he is constant and zealous in all good things. He is zealous

both against the pleasures and profits of sin, though he might win a whole world, or pleasure himself never so much, by committing a sin against God, yet will he refuse it; for he hath learned from Christ's mouth, that it shall not profit a man to win the whole world, and to lose his own soul.

The last thing is revenge, that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sin he hath committed, that he will be revenged of himself for it. As for example, if he has offended in gluttony, he will revenge himself by fasting two or three days after. If he has offended in whoredom, he will be revenged of his lusts, by haltering and bridling of them ever after; if he has offended in covetous catching and pooling of other men's goods, he will be revenged on himself by restitution, as was godly and penitent Zaccheus, and this indeed is a special fruit of repentance, to reform ourselves in those things, wherein we have most offended. Now, then you see, my dear brethren, what lieth in the belly of repentance, and which be her inwards, so that we must needs now come to the unlacing and unboweling of Christ's words: "Except ye repent (saith He) ye shall all perish"; that is, except ye have this forenamed care, you shall all be damned; except you have this clearing of yourselves, you shall all be damned; except you have this indignation, you shall all be damned; except you have this fear, you shall all be damned; except you have this desire, you shall all be damned; except you have this zeal, you shall all be damned; except you have this revenge, you shall all be damned. For our Savior Christ doth not speak of the bare name of repentance, but of repentance with all her furniture and appurtenances; so that whosoever hath not repentance with all her qualities and effects, or at the least some measure of them, he hath no repentance indeed, and therefore, shall be damned: For except ye repent, ye shall all perish. But me thinketh that I hear some men say: "Here is nothing but damnation, damnation; You preach nothing but the law; Let us hear of the gospel!" My brethren, I protest

unto you, that I speak of love, whatsoever I speak. I desire the salvation of you all. If I could win but two in all this congregation, I would count myself happy, and think that God had greatly blessed my labors. And undoubtedly, if I knew any nearer way to bring you unto God, than by preaching the law, to make you know yourselves, surely, surely, I would use it. Or if I could be persuaded that the preaching of the gospel, and mercy would do you more good; you should hear of nothing but gospel, gospel, mercy, mercy. But alas, I see that every careless and ignorant man presumeth upon God's mercy. I see that every filthy liver, and notorious blasphemer, abuseth God's mercy, in applying it to himself without repentance, so that they would make God's mercy a cloak for their sins. I see that every man would fain be flattered in sin, and hear of it no more, but have the gospel preached, which indeed belongeth not unto them, continuing in their stubbornness, but only to the penitent sinner, which forsaketh himself, and groaneth and panteth under the burden of his sin. Therefore, when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sins, and groan and pant under the burden of them; when I see your faces blubbered with weeping, and your hearts mollified and sorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and cease to preach the law. But I pray you, will you steal, murder, and commit adultery, and yet hear of mercy? Will ye mock, swear, blaspheme, and rail, and yet hear of mercy? Will you serve sin, hate virtue, and follow your own lusts, and yet hear of mercy? Would you have plasters before you have wounds? Would you have physic before you be sick? Would you be let blood before you have need? Would you not account him a foolish physician that will minister physic to a whole man? Would you not think him an unskillful chirurgeon* that will apply a gentle salve to an old festered sore, and not rather corzie† it? Then know you, my brethren, that because you are full of gross humors, you must have

*Surgeon †Cauterize

strong purgations; because you are full of old festered wounds, you must have corrosive salves, for that is the best for you, and the speediest way to recover your health; and forasmuch as you be rough horses, you must have a rough rider; and hard knobby timber must have hard wedges, and hard strokes with a beetle. We preach the law to drive you to Christ; we preach judgment to make you seek mercy; we preach damnation to bring you to salvation. But to preach mercy and forgiveness before men see their sins, or know their miseries by the preaching of the law, is to preach the gospel unprofitably. For he that is ignorant of the law, knoweth not what misery is in himself, nor what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who if his child should play the stubborn boy and disobey him in everything he commanded, would stroke his head, and say he were a good boy, and not rather severely correct him, and whip him with a rod? What master will commend his servant for doing what he list, and not what he commandeth him? Even so we may not disobey, and do evil, and look to be flattered to, and not rather chidden. Let us know then, that although God uses searing, lancing, corzing, and searching of the bones, and other violent remedies, yet in the meanwhile He procureth our health by them. And let us further understand, that forasmuch as there is no other means to draw us to salvation, but by cleansing of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence, when we be warned by the doctrine of the law, so as our own conscience accuse us, although we like well to be now and then flattered and soothed, yet let us seek to be spoken unto earnestly, to have our faults told us, and to be made ashamed of them, and to have our dishonesty discovered, and not desire to be pleased. For it was the next way to make us rot in our own filthiness, if we should hold it in so secret; and it would cost us so dear the setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, and in the mean season the heavenly Judge shall thunder down upon us.

Therefore, when any man cometh to a sermon, let him first and foremost make his reckoning to be rebuked, as meet is, and let him understand, that it is for his profit, that he is not soothed. And if he have itching ears, let him lay them away from him, assuring himself that else he is foreclosed, so as he shall never receive the doctrine to his profit and instruction. And let him be content to have his sores rubbed and bewrayed, that he may be brought to that, which is for his welfare. If a man please a sick body, what shall become of him, shall he give him drink every minute of an hour? Shall he give him wine, whereas he should give him water? Shall he give him sallets?* It were the next way to poison him. To be short, it is certain that a man doth always seek his own death, when he would have men to sooth him. But now which is better, either that he which hath the ordering of a sick man, should yield to all his desires, or that he should bridle him, notwithstanding that he chafe and gnash his teeth, because he may not have his own will in his desires? You see, therefore, how dangerous a thing it is to flatter and raise up men with the preaching of mercy, before they have been cast down with the sense of God's judgments. Cease, therefore, to open your mouths to make hue and cry over the country, saying: "They preach nothing but the law, the law, damnation, damnation!" unless ye will take in Christ too, and make Him one of the number, and accuse Him of want of wisdom, because He preacheth and crieth out that "Whosoever repenteth not shall be condemned!" For my part, I preach the gospel to whom the gospel belongeth, and the law to whom the law belongeth. I preach mercy to whom mercy belongeth, and judgment to whom judgment appertaineth. And therefore, hold your peace and be content to be ruled by the wisdom of God. But now let us proceed to the third general point, which is the time when we should repent.

The Holy Ghost in the Scriptures pointeth us to the present

*Archaic for salads

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time, and exhorteth us to make that the time of our repentance. "Therefore, also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). Likewise, in Hebrews 3:13, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And in the same chapter: "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation" (v. 15). So that now, even now, even now, is the time of our repentance.

Now whilst He calleth, now whilst He speaketh, now whilst He knocketh, let us now, therefore, hear; let us now, therefore, obey. Let us now, therefore, redeem this day, this present Wednesday, which have foreslowed* so many days, which have so long hardened our hearts, which have let so many good things run out, and spill besides, let us take up this day, and make it the day of our repentance. Although we could never be moved with any sermon hitherto, yet let us now be moved once at last. Let us now say, "This shall be my day of repentance, I will defer it no longer; but now will I turn unto my God, and forsake all my former wicked ways, and mine own imaginations; I will now change the course of my life, and begin all new again; I will be acquainted with God's Word, and take counsel there how to do, and how to behave myself in every action. I will not only reform myself, but also my whole household, wife, children, and servants, according unto the same." Thus my dear brethren, I beseech you, purpose in your hearts without any further delay, and be not like to epicures and slake graces, which say, "Youth will be youthful, and youth will have a course, and what should we make it so holy when we are young: tush, there needs but a sigh an hour before death, let us be merry now, we shall never be younger, we will repent when we are old." As though poor souls, they had repentance in their sleeves, and at their commandment, and that they could repent when they list. No,

*Delayed, postponed

no, these fellows shall pay for their presumption. For God will give them over to hardness of heart, and impenitence, because they took so much upon them, and made so long delays that in the mean season they might enjoy the profits and pleasures of sin. Therefore, good brethren, let us not put it off from day to day, but let us now seek the Lord whilst He may be found, and call upon Him whilst He is near; let us take time while time is, for time and tide tarrieth for no man. Let us know this to be the time of our visitation. Our Savior Christ wept over Jerusalem, because they knew not the time of their visitation. He reproveth the Jews because they could discern the face of the sky, but could not discern the signs of the times. And surely in the end it will turn to our destruction, if he will not know this to be the day of mercy, the time of grace, wherein God stretcheth forth His hand unto us, and wisdom crieth out in the streets. Therefore, now whilst we have the light, let us walk as children of the light; the night cometh when no man can work. It shall be too late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut up, and repentance will be too late. O dear Christians, let us remember the five foolish virgins, which because they foreslowed the time, had heaven's gates barred up against them. Let us also remember the fearful and doleful example of the rich glutton, which being in hell's torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease and help that might be, and could not have it. A hundred thousand times, therefore, better it is for us to leave our sins now, to mourn for them now, and now to repent, than hereafter, alas, when it will be too late. Better now a great deal to take some pains, to strain ourselves to leave our sins, and to make our heart smart for them, than to be condemned forever, and to cry in the bottom of hell. We have wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction, and we have gone through dangerous ways; but we have not known the way of the Lord. What hath pride profited us? Or what profit hath the pomp of riches brought us? All those things

are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that passeth by. We have set ourselves against the children of God, we have had them in derision, and in a parable of reproach, we fools thought their life madness, and their end with dishonor, but lo, they are counted amongst the children of God, and their portion is among the saints. Therefore, let us know the time of our calling, and let us not be worse than the fowls of the air. The turtle,* the crane, and the swallow, observe the times of their coming, the husbandman taketh his times, the mariner watcheth his tides; therefore, let us also take the time and turn unto the Lord, whilst it is said Today, which grace God grant us.

Now let us return unto the fourth point concerning the causes, which may move us unto repentance. Herein I have observed nine especial things.

First, the great mercy of God, leadeth us unto repentance, as in Romans 2:4: "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," saith the apostle. God doth continually follow us, with His mercies and benefits, both concerning our souls and bodies, we have no good thing, which we have not received at His hands, we hold all that we have of Him, and to Him are we beholding for all; great is His mercy towards our bodies, but much greater towards our souls; and every mercy and benefit, either toward soul or body, calleth us to repentance. He giveth us meat, drink, and clothing, these call us to repentance; He keepeth us at His own costs and charges here below, this calleth us to repentance; the sun, the moon, and the stars call us to repentance. The birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and the fruits of the earth cry out upon us both loud and shrill: Repent! Repent! All creatures move us to repentance. Our creation calleth, our redemption crieth, our sanctification knocketh, and our election moveth to repentance! What could God do more for His vineyard that He hath not done? Therefore, let us repent.

*Turtledove

Second, the judgments of God move us unto repentance, for all the thunderbolts, plagues, and punishments, which God hath thrown down upon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world, are so many warning pieces unto us to awake us out of the dead sleep of sin, and to prick us to repentance. As in I Corinthians 10:11, when the apostle had cited divers great judgments of God, against the old Israelites; for divers sins, he concludeth: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." So that all the judgments we read of in the Scriptures, are so many admonitions, and as it were cart ropes to draw us to repentance. All the judgments we read of, heard of, do see, and hear of everyday knock with main strokes, beat down right upon our consciences to repentance. The ugly monsters, strange births, fiery constellations, unknown comets, sudden death, marvelous droughts, unwonted snows, horrible inundations, foreign wonders, strange apparitions, threatening of heaven above, with streaming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth under our feet, and our houses over our heads, as of late day. What are all these, but as it were great cranes with beams, and cable ropes, to draw us up to the Lord by repentance.

Third, the Word of God haileth us to repentance. For, as God in old time sent His prophets, both early and late, to call the rebellious Jews to repentance; so He sendeth abroad His preachers, and messengers in these days, to sound up the trumpet of His Word, and to ring the sweet bell of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repentance, but alas, how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth their voice? But surely this is the last remedy that God hath appointed, and if this will not move us to repentance, if this will not cure us, then are we altogether incurable?

Fourth, the infinite number of sins we have committed ought to be so many spurs in our sides, to prick us to repen-

tance. "For the time past," saith St. Peter, "of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (I Pet. 4:3). Therefore, it is time now to repent! Oh, that men would look back to themselves, as they were forty, thirty, twenty, or ten years ago. Oh, that they would call to mind, their open and secret sins, and me thinketh it should make their heart bleed within their belly, to think upon them. Oh, that they would consider how much time they have misspent, and how many good things they have neglected, and altogether omitted.

Fifth, the shortness of our life, calleth earnestly upon us to repent. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength, labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away," saith the Psalmist David (Ps. 90:10), we have spent our years as a thought. Therefore, he addeth: "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (v. 12). Our life for the shortness, and inconstancy of it in the Scriptures is compared to grass, to a vapor, to smoke, to a weavers shuttle which glideth away swiftly. Even so, the days of man pass away, no man knoweth how. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days," saith Job, "and full of trouble" (14:1). Experience teacheth that today a man, tomorrow none. Hence away we must all, here is no abiding place for us, how soon we know not. Therefore, let us repent.

Sixth, the small number of those which shall be saved, ought to thrust us forward to repentance. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," saith Christ (Luke 13:24). And in another place He saith, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14). If men would consider of this, it would make them look better about them, and try with themselves whether they be of that small number or no.

Seventh, death threateneth us, who is very terrible to the flesh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is sensed and soked in the pleasures of this world. It flattereth no man, it regardeth no persons, it weigheth not friendship, it careth not for rewards, it is very grim, ugly, and cruel, and killeth downright where it hitteth. Therefore, let us repent.

Eighth, the day of judgment and second appearing of the Son of Man, "...will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness," saith St. Peter (II Pet. 3:10–11). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," saith the apostle (II Thess. 1:7–8). "I saw," saith St. John, "a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:11–12). In these places we see, both the suddenness, the fearfulness, and the glory of Christ's coming. For He shall not come poorly, and contemptuously, as in the first visitation, but He shall come very princely, royally, and triumphantly to the great terror of all His enemies, when a consuming fire shall go before Him, and ten thousand thousands of angels wait upon Him; at what time "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks: Fall on us,

and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15–17). Therefore, let us repent.

The last thing is hell's torments than the which nothing is more intolerable. Therefore, saith Christ, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43–44). The Scripture speaketh terrible to our senses, concerning the estate of the damned persons, calling it hell fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever. In the thirtieth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, it is called Tophet, and it "is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (v. 33). These speeches are terrible to our senses, and may marvelously amaze us. But if I had the tongue of a hundred men, nay, of a hundred angels, yet were I not able to utter them, as some shall one day feel them, much less were you able to conceive them! If all the tortures and cruel torments that can be devised by the wit of man, were executed upon someone, yet were it nothing to this! We poor wretches think there is no pain to a colic, or a cruel ague! But if all colics, agues, and all other strange diseases could possibly light upon one man, it were but a flea biting to that which is to come! The pain is endless, easeless, and remediless! The days of their hellish torments shall never wear out, nor their years come to an end, the longer they continue, the less hope have they. When as many years are expired as there be men in the world, and stars in the heavens; when as many thousand years are ended, as there be stones and sand by the sea shore; yet still there be ten hundred thousand times so many more to come! Those that will not now be moved in hearing, shall then be crushed

to pieces in feeling! All drunkards, swearers, whoremongers, usurers, extortioners, liars, mockers, contemners, secure persons, jolly fellows, roisting ruffians, lusty bloods, the brave lads of this world, and all other unbelievers, shall one day be apprehended, and arraigned before the bar of God's tribunal seat, where the majesty of God shall stand above them, with a naked sword of vengeance, and a scepter of justice! The devil that old Satan shall stand on the one side to accuse them, and their own consciences on the other side to condemn them, and the gasping gulf of hell underneath them ready to swallow them up forevermore! Then shall the dreadful sentence of eternal woe and damnation proceed against them: "Go ye cursed into hell fire!" etc. There they shall drink as a just recompense of their iniquity, the bitter cup of God's eternal wrath and indignation, in the kingdom of darkness, and in the fearful presence of Satan, and all the cursed enemies of God's grace, where the doleful drum of God's anger shall ever sound through their ears, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, where shall be confusion, woe, and endless lamentation. Their gripes shall be great, their groans so deep, and their garboils* so intolerable, that they shall grin like a dog in their infernal convulsions, and with howling and yelling cry out, woe, and alas, that ever I was born! Oh, that I had never been born, or that my mother had born me a toad, for then my condition should have been better than it is! Cursed was the time I was begot in, the hour I was conceived in, and the day that I sucked my mother's paps! Cursed I was always, cursed I am, and cursed I shall be forevermore! Woe, woe, how great is my torment, whose heart doth not melt, whose ears do not glow, whose hairs do not stand upon his head to hear these things? Therefore, dear brethren, let us repent. If the mercy of God cannot allure us, let His judgments scare us. If His judgments cannot scare us, let His Word move us. If His Word cannot move us, let our sins amaze us. If our sins can-

*Tumults, uproars

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not amaze us, let the shortness of our life damp us. If the shortness of our life cannot damp us, let the small number of those that shall be saved, affray* us. If that cannot affray us, let death terrify us. If death cannot terrify us, let the day of judgment shake us. If that cannot shake us, yet let hell's torments shudder us, and rent us in pieces. For verily, my brethren, if none of all these can prevail, if he will not for all this repent, but be obstinate, then we shall all perish and be damned, according to Christ's words. Now let us proceed to speak of those things which let and hinder us from repentance, which indeed although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seven special lets and hindrances unto repentance.

The first is unbelief, that is, when men will not believe those things which are spoken and proved unto them out of the Word of God. This is it that vomiteth up all good things, and poisoneth the very entrails of a man, and keepeth all good graces from us. As appeareth in Matthew 13:58: "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." And in Hebrews 4:2: "Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." So that here we may see, although we hear never so much, yet if we bring not faith with us, we shall never profit unto repentance. For unbelief taketh up our hearts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholesome doctrine of salvation, and doth so harden them in the ways of sin, that in the end they become past feeling, and cannot be touched one whit, either with the judgments or mercies of God; but count the one as blasts of wind, and make the other a covert for their filthiness. You shall note some men, who, when they have heard their sins straightly ripped up by the Word of God, and their just damnation proved by the same, without speedy and earnest repentance, will break out into these words of unbelief: If it be as he saith,

*Frighten

God help us, I hope it is not so, I trust I shall do well enough for all this, as long as I have a good faith in God, and do nobody no harm. Shall I leave my pleasures and my profits for their sayings? What? Do they think none shall be saved, but such as read the Scriptures, and hear sermons; God forbid but those which do not go to hear sermons, should be saved as well as they? Why may not one serve God as well at home in his house having good books, and good prayers, as by coming to the church to hear sermons and service? Alas, these men stand too much in their own light, and bewray what folly and ignorance is in them. For do they think to be saved by any other means than God hath appointed; or when God hath avouched anything in His Word, will they except against it, and so make God a liar? When God hath once set down a thing, and proved it to their faces, will they yet reply? When God hath told us that the preaching of the Word is the ordinary means of our salvation, shall we hope to be saved, although we contemn it, and never or very seldom hear it? Is not this plain infidelity and unbelief, that when God saith one thing we will say another; when God saith yea, we will say no? I hope not so. Yes, surely that is it that stoppeth the way unto God's graces, and barreth us out from repentance.

The second let is this presumption of God's mercy, for if men be sharply reprov'd for their sins, and exhorted unto repentance, by and by they take covert, saying: "God is merciful, God is merciful"; as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no justice in Him at all; and thus the wicked make God's mercy an occasion to sin, which thing the Prophet Nahum in the first of his prophecy doth sharply reprove: "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked" (1:3). But because I have spoken afore of this presuming and misapplying of God's mercy, I will here pass it over, willing you to note it as one special let unto repentance.

The third hindrance is the example of the multitude, for

that doth harden and embolden men unto sin. As when many birds flicker and flock together, they fall upon the net without any fear; but one or two alone will be afraid. Even so the examples of many, and many sin-companions do embolden men to run through the snares of Satan without any mistrust. Therefore, it is said in Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." This is the thing that hindereth a great number from God; for they never look up unto God or to His Word, but stare upon the common doings of most men, and examples of the world, thinking if they do as the most men do, as their forefathers have done before them, they are cocksure, and of an even ground. And hereupon ariseth their devilish proverb: "Do as most men do, and the fewest will speak of you"; but they have forgotten St. Paul's rule, "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). These fellows that stand upon multitude, will reason thus: "We see none of the great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wise and prudent, receive this doctrine, but only a few shack-rags and beggarly rascals, and therefore, it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtful, and not for us to meddle withal." Lo, what thoughts may creep into our heads, and how slyly Satan may trump in our way, and blindfold us, and lead us away in the dark, by doting us with the example of the multitude. Therefore, let us take heed of those pitfalls, which Satan layeth in our way, and not be carried away with these thoughts and reasons. The wicked bear themselves in hand that they shall win the game, and that the goal goeth on their side, and there is nothing but crowing long before it be day, and great triumphing amongst them before any stroke be stricken, and that because we be but a handful of people, and they a great multitude, and that in a manner the whole world agreeth with them to practice our death. Thus the devil doth cast a mist before their eyes and closely lead them away from repentance. Therefore, dear brethren, let us stand fast in the Word of the Lord, and not be carried

away, or bowed quite down with this raging stream of the multitude; but let us know it to be one special engine of Satan, whereby he driveth us from repentance.

The fourth let unto repentance, is long custom of sin. For that taketh away all sense and feeling of sin, and maketh it as it were another nature unto us; so that we may as well alter nature, as shake it off when it is once thus soldered unto us through long custom. Therefore, it is said, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23). Here the prophet affirmeth that it is as hard to cure an old disease that is bred in the bones, and to remedy a sin that hath been hatched and brought up with us, as to wash a black Moore white, or to change the spots of a leopard, which cannot be without destroying of nature. And surely try it who will, he shall find it as hard a matter to leave an old custom, whether it be of swearing, of gaming, of lying, of whoring, of evil company, or of any other sin, as to wash an Ethiopian. Therefore, it is written, "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him" (Prov. 27:22). So that as long as we are in custom with sin, the door of repentance is barred up against us.

The fifth hindrance, is long escaping of punishment, for the wicked thereby are starkened in sin, and driven off from repentance, even as an old thief that hath stolen a long time, and escapeth both prison and gallows, is animated more boldly to proceed in his wickedness, thinking he shall so always escape. So many filthy and loose livers go forward in their abominations without repentance, thinking that because God doth not incontinently punish them, and show some manifest judgment and sign of His wrath upon them, therefore, they shall be acquitted for altogether. Where as, contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them down as soon as they had sinned, by thundering upon one, and lightning

upon another, and raining fire and brimstone upon the third, it would make them afraid. Hereupon it is said in II Peter 3:3-4: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." But let these men well know that when God hath delayed a long time, and prolonged the term of the wicked, at length He will show, that although He waited for their repentance, yet He forgot not their misdeeds, but registered them before Him, and packed them up upon a great heap, to increase the terror of His wrath.

The sixth hindrance, is the beholding of other men's ends. For when some men that have lived a wicked and an ungracious life, and have been notorious sinners even to the worldward, so that every man could point at them; yet if upon their deathbed they can say a few good words and cry, "God have mercy!" and say their prayers, and forgive all the world, and so die quietly; it is marvelous to hear, how foolish people of the world will exalt them, and justify them, saying: "He made a very good end as any man could make, he died as quiet as a lamb, and set all things in good order before he died." Hereupon another wicked and monstrous varlet* is encouraged to sin. For thinketh he, such a man lived as loosely as I, or any man else, and yet he made a very good end, and why may not I do so too? But alas, these men's eyes are blurred. For to die quietly, is not to die godly; to cry "God have mercy!" for fashion, is not to have God merciful; to say a few prayers from teeth outward, is not to die in the faith of Christ; for many do all this and yet die miserably.

The last let, is hope of long life, for while men feed, and besot themselves in this hope they are drunken in sin, and defer the day of repentance. As the rich man in the twelfth chapter of Luke, dreaming of his long life, cast off all thought

*Knave, rogue, rascal

of God, and of the other life, and of Christ's coming, and of repentance, and all good things, and said within himself: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (v. 19). Thus the blurred men of the world choke up repentance, and quite smother it, by doting themselves with hope of long life.

Therefore, my dear brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God in the bowels of Jesus Christ, that none of all these common lets may stay you from speedy and unfeigned repentance. But that you may overslide them all, least unhappily you being found without repentance, and taken tardy in your sins, should all perish and be damned, according to Christ's sentence. Wherefore in conclusion, let us with godly Ezekiel be afraid of God's threatenings, sorrow afore hand, stand in awe of God, examine our conscience, mourn for our sins, and lament inwardly, that when the wicked which have swimmied in pleasures here below, shall enter into their eternal pains, we may then, I say there, have everlasting peace and rest, that when Jesus Christ shall appear from heaven with all His holy angels, we may have crowns of glory, and reign with our God, and our Savior His Son, and all His saints and angels, in the midst of all joy, in the heavens forevermore. To the which joy He bring us all, which hath so dearly bought us, Jesus Christ the righteous; to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honor, glory, praise, power, empire, and dominion now and forevermore. Amen.