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**THE NATURE AND PRACTICE
OF REPENTANCE**

UPDATED TO MODERN ENGLISH

WILLIAM PERKINS



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The Nature and Practice of Repentance

by William Perkins

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TO THE READER, whoever you may be,

God has blessed us with great prosperity and peace, along with an abundance of all the material blessings one could desire, for many years in this land.

However, this prosperity has been misused and has led to numerous grievous sins against both God's commandments and teachings. Specifically, there has been a rise in atheism, neglect of worship, contempt for the Scriptures, desecration of the Sabbath, and misuse of the sacraments, among other things.

These sins, along with others of similar nature, have provoked divine judgment upon us for quite some time. Moreover, the preaching of the word of God has had little impact in bringing about any positive change in our lives.

As a result, God has now started to bring His judgments upon us, particularly through plagues and epidemics. These afflictions have struck even the most prominent regions of our land. In this way, God is warning and calling upon us to repent, as Job stated, speaking loudly in our ears.

Therefore, it is crucial that we take immediate action and assess our current situation. If we haven't repented thus far, it is high time we do so. And if we have repented in the past, we should do so even more earnestly.

If we stubbornly continue to harden our hearts against God's word and His judgments, attempting to push away the imminent day of reckoning, then we can undoubtedly expect far more terrifying punishments than we have ever experienced before. In fact, we may face eternal destruction. Let us learn from the examples of the past: the people of the old world who disregarded Noah's warning and perished in the flood, Lot's sons-in-law who mocked their father's advice and were consumed by heavenly fire and brimstone, and the foolish virgins who were found sleeping instead of preparing their lamps and were shut out from the marriage feast of the lamb.

And to guide you somewhat in the practice of repentance, I have written this short treatise. Use it for your own benefit and make sure to put it into action, unless you want to willfully murder and destroy your own soul.

In the past, two sermons on Repentance have been published in English, one by M. Bradford Martyr and the other by M. Arthur Dent. These sermons have indeed been very beneficial. My intention is not to add anything new or teach different doctrines, but rather to refresh and revive the teachings they have imparted.

Do not be troubled by the fact that the prominent theologians of this age, whom I follow in this treatise, may seem to have different approaches to the subject of repentance. Some consider it as a fruit of faith consisting of two parts: mortification and vivification. Others include faith as a part of repentance, dividing it into contrition, faith, and new obedience. The difference lies not in the essence of the doctrine but in the logical manner of presenting it. The variation in presentation arises from the diverse understandings of repentance. Repentance is generally understood in two ways: in a comprehensive

sense, referring to the complete conversion of a sinner, which may include contrition, faith, and new obedience; and in a specific sense, pertaining to the renewal of one's life and behavior, which is a fruit of faith. In this treatise, I only follow the latter sense.

Additionally, I have included a few lines depicting the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, as repentance and this internal struggle are interconnected. One cannot be practiced without the other, as evident in the interpretation of Psalm 51.

Spirit: Have mercy on me, O God, in accordance with your unfailing love.

Flesh: Yes, but your adultery encompasses countless sins. Therefore, do not expect any forgiveness.

Spirit: In your great compassion, remove my iniquities.

Flesh: This sin has deeply rooted itself within you, making it difficult to be pardoned.

Spirit: Cleanse me thoroughly from my iniquity and wash away my sins.

Flesh: Your major transgression is against humanity.

Spirit: Against you, and you alone, have I sinned, etc.

Flesh: Apart from this one sin, your life is blameless.

Spirit: Behold, I was born in sin, etc.

Yes, even the most righteous person, in their pursuit of godliness, often appears to deviate from their true nature. The reason behind this is the ongoing spiritual struggle. At times, the flesh causes them to lament, mourn, and walk with a heavy heart. However, shortly thereafter, the spirit fills them with renewed strength and enables

them to triumph over the desires of the flesh, the temptations of the devil, and the allure of the world. Moses displayed courage at the Red Sea, but faltered at the Waters of Meribah. Job initially praised God, only to later utter blasphemies. David frequently experienced moments of despair, yet soon found revival. Therefore, it is fitting that the contemplation of repentance and the spiritual struggle go hand in hand. This ensures that no one, once they have embarked on the path of repentance, would entertain the notion of comfort for their flesh, as if they could enter heaven while lying on beds of ease. Rather, we should be resolved that whenever we undertake actions that please God, we should expect nothing but continuous challenges from our corrupt and sinful nature.

Written in the year 1593, on November 17, which marks the Coronation Day of our esteemed Queen Elizabeth, may her reign be long-lasting by God's grace.

William Perkins.

CHAPTER I:

WHAT REPENTANCE IS

Repentance is an act of grace that arises from a godly sorrow. It involves a person turning away from all their sins and directing themselves towards God, bringing forth fruits that demonstrate a genuine desire for a changed life.

I refer to repentance as an act because it appears to be not merely a quality, virtue, or habit, but an action performed by a repentant sinner. This is evident in the sermons of the Prophets and Apostles, which consistently urge people to repent, turn to God, and amend their lives. This indicates that repentance is a task to be carried out.

Furthermore, repentance is not just any kind of work, but a work of grace. It can only be practiced by those who are in a state of grace. Here are the reasons for this: First, no one can genuinely repent unless they first develop a hatred for sin and a love for righteousness. However, one can only hate sin if they are sanctified, and those who are sanctified are justified. Moreover, those who are justified must possess the faith that unites them to Christ, making them a part of His body. Therefore, a person who repents is justified, sanctified, and has become a member of Christ through faith. Second, for someone to turn to God, they must first experience a turning by God. After this divine turning, true repentance follows. As the Scripture says, "Surely after I was converted, I repented; and after I was instructed, I struck upon my thigh. I was ashamed, even confounded, because I bore the reproach of my youth."

Some may object by stating that repentance comes before all grace since it is preached first. The first sermon ever delivered was by God Himself in paradise, preaching repentance to our first parents. Since then, repentance has been the beginning and purpose of the sermons given by all the prophets, apostles, and faithful ministers. The response to this objection is as follows: If we consider the order of nature, there are other graces of God that precede repentance, as a person's conscience must be somewhat settled regarding their reconciliation with God in Christ before they can begin to repent. Therefore, justification and sanctification naturally precede repentance. However, if we consider time, grace and repentance occur together. As soon as there is fire, it is hot, and as soon as a person is regenerated, they repent. If we examine the outward manifestation of these two, repentance precedes all other graces because it is the first to become apparent outwardly. Regeneration is

like the sap of a tree hidden within the bark, while repentance is like the bud that quickly emerges before blossoms, leaves, or fruits appear. In fact, all other inward graces necessary for salvation are revealed through repentance. For this reason, repentance is preached first (as I understand it).

I would like to add that repentance arises from a godly sorrow in the heart, as taught by Paul. This godly sorrow leads to repentance that brings salvation, never to be regretted. It is called a godly sorrow or a sorrow according to God, to distinguish it from worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow stems from the apprehension of God's wrath and other miseries, such as fear of people, loss of reputation, and various afflictions that occur as punishments for sin in this life. On the other hand, godly sorrow brings grief for sin itself, recognizing it as sin. It instills in an individual the disposition and mindset that even if there were no conscience to accuse, no devil to terrify, no judge to condemn, and no hell to torment, they would still humble themselves and fall to their knees for their sins because they have offended a loving, merciful, and patient God.

Furthermore, I state that repentance involves turning back to God. Initially, man was created as a glorious being in the image of God, having fellowship with Him, dwelling in God and God in him. However, sin created a division between God and humanity. We became alienated and estranged from God, becoming children of wrath, resembling firebrands of hell, prodigal children who went far away from their father, and straying, even lost sheep. Now, when individuals receive the grace to repent, they begin to restore this fellowship and turn back to God. The very essence and nature of repentance lie in this act of turning, as Paul seems to imply when he states that he proclaimed to both Jews and Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God, demonstrating works worthy of a changed life. These words provide us with a comprehensive description of repentance.

I also affirm that repentance involves turning away from sin. It does not abolish or change the essence of our bodies, souls, or any of their faculties, whether in whole or in part. Instead, it rectifies and amends them by removing corruption. It transforms the sorrow of melancholy into godly sorrow, anger into righteous zeal, softness of character into meekness of spirit, and foolishness and frivolity into Christian joy. Repentance reforms each person according to their natural constitution, not by abolishing it but by correcting its faults.

Additionally, I emphasize that repentance involves a complete turning away from all sin and turning towards God, in order to exclude various false turnings. Firstly, there is a false turning when someone turns from God to sin, such as when a Protestant converts to Catholicism, Arianism, or Familism. Secondly, there is a false turning when a person turns from one sin to another, like when a reckless individual abandons their wastefulness only to indulge in greed. This cannot be considered true repentance because it involves moving from one extreme to another, whereas repentance requires forsaking the extremes and embracing the middle ground. Thirdly, there is no genuine repentance when sin turns away from a person and leaves them, rather than the person intentionally turning away from sin. For instance, when a drunkard stops drinking due to a decayed stomach, a fornicator ceases their immoral behavior due to waning physical strength, or a brawler refrains from fighting because of an injury to a leg or arm. Lastly, there is a false repentance when individuals turn away from many sins but refuse to let go of certain sins. An example of this is seen in Herod, who did many things prompted by John the Baptist's advice but could not bring himself to abandon the sin of incest by having his brother Philip's wife. This kind of repentance amounts to nothing. Just as a person who is truly regenerated is transformed in body, soul, and spirit, so a genuine repentance entails turning away from all sin and completely redirecting oneself towards God.

Furthermore, let it not trouble anyone that they may not be aware of all their sins. Genuine repentance for one specific sin encompasses

repentance for all sins. While God requires repentance for known sins, He also accepts a general repentance for those sins that may be unknown.

To proceed further, the conversion of a sinner through repentance consists of three parts. Firstly, there is a purpose and determination in the mind. Secondly, there is a change in the will and affections, inclining towards righteousness. Thirdly, there is a practical effort in one's life and conduct to forsake and abandon all former sins, while actively engaging in obedience to God's commandments.

Lastly, it is essential for this repentance to produce fruits that demonstrate a genuine change in one's life. It is through these fruits that the sincerity of repentance is made evident. Repentant sinners are like trees of righteousness, planted by God Himself. They are nourished by the waters that flow from the sanctuary, and therefore, they are expected to bear fruit that can provide sustenance and leaves that can bring healing. Otherwise, the judgment of God's axe will be aimed at their roots, ready to uproot them entirely.

CHAPTER II:

THE CAUSES OF REPENTANCE

The primary cause of repentance is the Spirit of God, as stated by Paul, who instructs those who are opposed, with gentleness, in the hope that God may grant them repentance. Jeremiah also expresses this when he says, "Turn me, and I shall be turned."

The instrument used by the Holy Spirit in working repentance is solely the ministry of the Gospel, not the Law. Here are the reasons for this assertion: Firstly, faith is generated through the preaching of

the Gospel, not the Law. As Paul states, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes." Therefore, since repentance follows faith as its fruit, it must necessarily come through the preaching of the Gospel alone. Secondly, the Law serves as the ministry of death and condemnation. While it reveals a person's wretched condition, it does not offer a remedy. Thus, it cannot be an instrumental cause of repentance that leads to salvation. Thirdly, the doctrine of repentance is a part of the Gospel. This is evident in the fact that the preaching of repentance and the preaching of the Gospel are used interchangeably. Moreover, our Savior Jesus Christ divides the Gospel into two parts: the preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in His name. Fourthly, the part of the Word that produces repentance must reveal its nature and present the promise of life that accompanies it. However, the Law does not reveal faith or repentance; these are distinct works of the Gospel. If it is argued that the Law serves as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, the response is that it brings people to Christ not by teaching the way or enticing them, but by compelling and urging them.

We do not abolish the Law by attributing the work of repentance solely to the Gospel. Although the Law is not a cause, it does serve as an occasion for true repentance. It reveals to the soul's eye our condemned state and strikes the conscience with sorrowful terrors and fears. While these terrors and fears are not signs of grace themselves (as they are, by nature, the very gates and descent into the pit of hell), they do provide certain opportunities for receiving grace. Sometimes, a physician is compelled to restore a patient's health by subjecting them to bouts of fever. Similarly, because humanity is gravely ill with the disease of sin, individuals must experience episodes of legal terrors through the ministry of the Law. This is done so that they may regain their former state and attain eternal life.

Furthermore, repentance is often facilitated by calamities. When Joseph's brothers were in distress in Egypt, they acknowledged their

sin against Joseph and attributed their troubles to it. The Lord also declares in Hosea that He will go and withdraw until people acknowledge their faults and seek Him diligently in their affliction. The Israelites said, "My soul remembers them" (referring to afflictions) "and is humbled within me." The example of Manasseh demonstrates this as well. When he faced tribulation, he prayed to the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly. David also declares, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes."

CHAPTER III:

THE PARTS OF REPENTANCE

Repentance consists of two parts: Mortification and Rising to newness of life.

Mortification is the initial part of repentance that involves turning away from sin.

When individuals turn from sin, it means they not only refrain from committing actual sins but also employ all means to weaken and suppress the corruption of their nature. Surgeons, when they must amputate a part of the body, often apply plasters to it to numb and deaden the area so that it can be removed with less pain. Similarly, we are to utilize all the aids and remedies prescribed in the Word that help weaken or eliminate sin, so that it may be abolished in its death.

It may not appear strange that I mention the use of means to mortify our own sins. Although by our nature, we cannot do anything that is pleasing to God, when we are quickened and moved by the Holy

Spirit, we are stirred and motivated to do what is truly good. Therefore, repentant sinners possess the grace within them to mortify their own sins. Paul declares, "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection." He also states, "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Additionally, he instructs, "Therefore, put to death your earthly members: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness." Furthermore, S. John affirms, "Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure." And, "He who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him."

Mortification has three parts: a purpose in mind, an inclination in the will, and an effort in one's life and conduct to forsake all sin.

Rising to newness of life is the second part of repentance, which pertains to genuine obedience to God.

Similarly, it has three parts. The first two involve a firm determination in the mind and a desire or longing in the will to obey God in all things. Barnabas exhorts the people of Antioch to "with purpose of heart, cling to the Lord." Numerous examples of these can be found in the Scriptures. Joshua said, "If it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." David declares, "O Lord, You are my portion; I have resolved to keep Your commandments." He also states, "I have sworn and confirmed it, that I will keep Your righteous judgments." Moreover, when God said, "Seek My face," David's heart responded, "Your face, Lord, I will seek." Furthermore, he affirms, "I have set my heart to fulfill Your statutes always, even to the end."

The third part is the effort made in one's life and conduct to obey God. An example of this is seen in the life of Paul.

And in this regard, I strive to always maintain a clear conscience towards God and towards others. Like David, I have regard for all

your commandments. I have chosen the path of truth, and I hold your judgments before me. I have clung to your testimonies, and I delight in following the path of your commandments.

However, no one should assume that a repentant sinner fulfills the law through their obedience, as even their best works are flawed before God. When the faithful in the Scriptures are described as "perfect," we must understand that there are two levels of perfection: perfection in substance and perfection in the highest degree. Perfection in substance occurs when a person sincerely strives to offer perfect obedience to God, not just in some, but in all His commandments. This is the only form of perfection attainable in this earthly life. A Christian's perfection lies in lamenting their imperfections. Their obedience is based more on the willingness of the heart than on the outward actions, and it is to be measured more by the sincerity of their affections than by the results achieved.

CHAPTER IV:

THE DEGREES OF REPENTANCE

Repentance has two degrees: ordinary and extraordinary.

Ordinary repentance is something that every Christian is required to practice daily. Since individuals fall into sin to varying degrees every day, the graces of God within them are gradually weakened. Therefore, there must be a continual restoration through the daily renewal of repentance. A Christian is the temple and dwelling place of God's Spirit, and thus it is necessary to cleanse it daily so that it may be suitable to receive such a worthy guest.

Extraordinary repentance is essentially the same in nature as ordinary repentance, but it differs in terms of the intensity and measure of grace involved.

This form of repentance is to be exercised when individuals commit severe, major, or grievous offenses that deeply wound their own consciences and cause great offense to the Church. Examples of such repentance can be seen in Peter's repentance when he went out and wept bitterly, as well as in David's repentance after he committed adultery and had Uriah killed.

CHAPTER V:

THE PERSONS WHO MUST REPENT

There are two kinds of people: the natural man and the regenerate. Repentance is necessary for both. For the natural man, it is needed to bring him from his sins and to renew the image of God within him. Some may argue that many natural men live morally, refraining from outwardly sinful behavior, and therefore do not need repentance. I acknowledge that they may live in such a manner, but repentance is still necessary. In the sight of God, a civil life without grace in Christ is nothing but a beautiful abomination. The Pharisees were outwardly moral, yet Jesus said of them, "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Repentance is also required for the regenerate because they still have many known and hidden corruptions within them that need to be mortified. At times, they also fall into grievous sins, and therefore, in order to rise again, they must continually engage in the spiritual practice of repentance.

CHAPTER VI:

THE PRACTICE OF REPENTANCE

In the practice of repentance, four specific duties are required. The first is a diligent and serious examination of one's conscience according to the laws and commandments of God, considering all kinds of sins, both original and actual. The example of the children of Israel comes to mind: "Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the Lord." David also said, "I considered my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies."

Regarding original sin, it is important to remember that each person does not possess only a portion of it while another has a different portion. Rather, every individual, just as they inherit the complete human nature from Adam, also inherits original sin in its entirety. Therefore, every person (except for Christ, who was exceptionally sanctified by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin) carries within them the corruption and seed of all sin, which is a natural inclination and predisposition to commit any sin whatsoever. Consider all the horrendous sins that are committed in any part of the world, whether against the first or second table of the commandments; the origins and seeds of all those sins reside even in those individuals who are thought to be naturally well-disposed. Some may argue that experience shows the opposite, pointing out that among irreligious people, some are more civil and orderly while others are more inclined towards wickedness. My response is that this occurs not because some individuals are inherently less wicked than others, but because God, in His providence, limits and restrains the corruption within individuals to varying degrees for the well-being of mankind. If people were left entirely to themselves, corruption would burst

forth in such an extreme manner, resulting in all sorts of sins, making it impossible to live in this world.

As for actual sins, upon examination, they will be found to be countless, like the hairs on a person's head or the sands on the seashore. Anyone who takes a moment to search themselves against the Ten Commandments of the Decalogue will discover their multitude of sinful thoughts, words, and actions committed against both God and fellow human beings.

A Guide for Examining the Conscience

I. COMMANDMENT: Thou shalt have none other gods, &c.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who do not acknowledge the true God (Jeremiah 4:22).
- Those who deny God in their hearts by denying His presence, justice, mercy, etc. (Psalm 14:1).
- Those who hate God and show it through disobedience (Exodus 20:5, Romans 1:30).
- Those who do not fear God and show no reverence towards Him.
- Those who fear humans or other creatures more than God (Matthew 10:31, Revelation 21:8).
- Those who live openly in sin without fearing God's word or judgments (1 Thessalonians 5:6-7).
- Those who are only sorry for their sins in light of the punishment (2 Corinthians 7:10).
- Those who fear God based on human traditions (Isaiah 29:13).
- Those who do not believe God's word and question the authority of the canonical scriptures.
- Those who despair of God's mercy.

- Those who have a dead faith without works (James 2).
- Those who put their faith in the devil and his works, like seekers of sorcery do.
- Those who love creatures, such as riches, honor, and their own sinful pleasures, more than God (Ephesians 5:5).
- Those who put their confidence in their own strength, wisdom, wealth, or physicians (2 Chronicles 16:9, 16:11).
- Those who are impatient under the burden of the cross (Matthew 10:38).
- Those who tempt God (Matthew 4:7).
- Those who prioritize worldly pursuits over seeking God's kingdom (Matthew 6:33).
- Those who murmur against God (1 Corinthians 10:10).
- Those who argue and deny the existence of God.
- Those who hold and promote opinions contrary to the ancient faith as taught by the Prophets and Apostles, like the Manichees, Donatists, Arians, Anabaptists, etc.
- Those who hold one religion while being ready to follow another (1 Kings 18:21).
- Those who are presumptuous about God's mercy (Isaiah 7:12).
- Those who turn away from the truth they once knew (2 Peter 2:20).
- Those who add to the canonical scriptures (Deuteronomy 12: last verse).

II. COMMANDMENT. Thou shalt make to thyself no graven Image. &c.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who represent God in an image (Exodus 32:6, 32:8).
- Those who worship God through images, such as crucifixes and the like (2 Kings 18:4).
- Those who kneel down before an image.

- Those who are physically present at Mass while their hearts are not focused on God (1 Corinthians 8:9).
- Those who retain the symbols or artifacts of idolatry (Exodus 23:13).
- Those who marry unbelievers or similar individuals (Genesis 6:2).
- Those who form alliances or friendships with such individuals (2 Chronicles 19:1).
- Those who worship God according to their own fantasies (Colossians 2:23).
- Those who offer lip-service in their worship of God (Isaiah 29:13).
- Those who possess the outward appearance of godliness but deny its power (2 Timothy 3:5).
- Those who give God's worship to creatures, such as saints and angels (Psalm 115:8).
- Those who refuse to listen to the preaching of the Gospel (Luke 14:19).
- Those who worship God negligently (Revelation 3:16).
- Those who neglect the invocation of God's name (Isaiah 64:7).
- Those who listen to sermons but respond with railing, rage, and gain no benefit from them (Amos 5:10).
- Those who alter or change the worship of God either in whole or in part (Deuteronomy 12:32).
- Those who openly or secretly enter into a pact with the devil (Psalm 58).
- Those who engage in witchcraft, sorcery, or enchantments (Deuteronomy 18:11, Leviticus 19:26).
- Those who consult with wizards (Leviticus 20:6).
- Those who wear amulets or charms around their necks and place their trust in them.
- Those who hinder schools of religion and the pursuit of knowledge.
- Those who do not seek the well-being of God's Church within the scope of their calling, but instead seek their own interests

(Psalm 132:3-4).

III. COMMANDMENT. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, &c.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who irreverently use God's titles in their speech (Philippians 2:10).
- Those who make a sworn promise to do something lawful and good, but fail to fulfill it (Matthew 5:23).
- Those who swear thoughtlessly or rashly (Jeremiah 4:2).
- Those who engage in habitual swearing in their everyday conversations (Matthew 5:37).
- Those who blaspheme the name of God (Leviticus 24:16).
- Those who swear falsely (John 8:44).
- Those who swear against piety and honesty.
- Those who curse and use profane language.
- Those who find fault with God's creation (1 Corinthians 10:3).
- Those who swear by created things (Matthew 5:34-35).
- Those who use lots or engage in divination for amusement (Proverbs 16:33, 18:18).
- Those who create and use charms or talismans made from herbs or other objects (Deuteronomy 18:11).
- Those who make jokes or mock the sentences and phrases of Scripture (Isaiah 66:2).
- Those who practice divination through the casting of figures or symbols (Isaiah 47:13).
- Those who disregard God's judgments and take them lightly (Hebrews 3:16).
- Those who live in religious dissoluteness and bring disgrace to the name of God (2 Samuel 12:13, 1 Peter 3:15).
- Those who make a vow of chastity or any other vow they are unable to keep.

- Those who make a lawful vow but fail to keep it (Deuteronomy 23:21).
- Those who receive blessings from God but are ungrateful (Luke 17:8).
- Those who teach the truth but do not practice it (Matthew 23:2).

IV. COMMANDMENT. Remember the Sabbath day to &c.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who engage in the ordinary work of their occupation on the Sabbath day (Nehemiah 13:15).
- Those who travel for their regular business on this day (Exodus 16:24).
- Those who participate in fairs and markets on this day (Nehemiah 13:15).
- Those who work in the fields during harvest on this day (Exodus 34:21).
- Those who engage in sports and recreational activities that cause distraction (1 Corinthians 10:7).
- Those who spend the day in idleness (Isaiah 58:13).
- Those who observe the Sabbath only outwardly, without true reverence and devotion (Isaiah 1:13).
- Those who profane the day through gluttony and drunkenness.
- Those who allow their servants to do as they please on the Sabbath.
- Those who do not bring their family to the congregation to hear God's word and receive the sacraments on the Sabbath.
- Those who do not privately sanctify the Sabbath in their family.

V. COMMANDMENT. Honor thy father, &c.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who mock, revile, or physically harm their superiors (Genesis 9:22).
- Those who disobey their lawful commands (Romans 13:1).
- Those who are unthankful to their parents and refuse to believe them when necessary (2 Timothy 3:3).
- Those who disobey God in order to obey their parents (Acts 4:19).
- Those who exalt themselves above authority figures (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
- Those who serve their masters only when they are being watched (Colossians 3:22).
- Those who neglect the proper governance of their family and those under their care (1 Timothy 3:4).
- Those who are lax in punishing wrongdoing (1 Samuel 2:22).
- Those who are excessively harsh in their words and punishments (Ephesians 6:9).
- Those who marry without their parents' consent.
- Those who choose a profession without their parents' consent (Numbers 30).
- Those who think more highly of themselves than of others (Romans 12:10).
- Those who despise elderly individuals (Leviticus 19:32).

VI. COMMANDMENT. Thou shalt not kill.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who bear malice towards others (1 John 3:15).
- Those who are prone to anger and hastiness (Matthew 5:22).
- Those who inwardly harbor fretting and grudging (James 3:14).
- Those who have a difficult and unpleasing nature, hard to satisfy (Romans 1:31).
- Those who are filled with rancor and bitterness (Ephesians 4:31).

- Those who ridicule and scorn others (Genesis 21:9, Galatians 4:29).
- Those who use harsh and insulting words (Proverbs 12:18).
- Those who engage in contentious words or actions (Galatians 5:20).
- Those who engage in quarrelling and shouting (Ephesians 4:31).
- Those who make complaints about their neighbors in all places (James 5:9).
- Those who are prone to fighting (James 4:1).
- Those who harm or injure their neighbor's body (Exodus 21:24).
- Those who refuse to forgive an offense (Matthew 5:23).
- Those who claim to forgive but do not forget.
- Those who live in abundance themselves but do not give alms to help the poor (Luke 16:19).
- Those who use cruelty in punishing wrongdoers (Deuteronomy 22:6).
- Those who deny wages to servants or laborers (James 5:4).
- Those who withhold pledged items (Ezekiel 18:7).
- Those who engage in fraudulent practices using different weights and measures.
- Those who remove boundary markers (Proverbs 22:18).
- Those who engage in usury, demanding both principal and interest (Ezekiel 18:8).
- Those whose loose behavior becomes an occasion for others to sin.
- Those who stir up contention and debate (Romans 1:29).
- Those who, as ministers, teach erroneously.
- Those who teach lazily (Jeremiah 48:10).
- Those who do not teach at all (1 Timothy 3:2).
- Those who hinder others' salvation in any way (Matthew 23:13).
- Those who seek personal revenge.

VII. COMMANDMENT. Thou shalt not commit adultery, &c.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who look at a woman with lustful intent (Matthew 5:28).
- Those who commit incest (Leviticus 18:22).
- Those who engage in sodomy (1 Corinthians 6:9).
- Those who commit fornication with married or unmarried individuals, or those who are betrothed (Deuteronomy 22:22).
- Those who engage in excessive indulgence in the marriage bed.
- Those who have sexual relations with a menstruating woman (Ezekiel 18:6).
- Those who engage in wantonness (1 Corinthians 6:9).
- Those who seek out opportunities and stimuli to incite lust (Galatians 5:9).
- Those who are idle and lazy.
- Those who wear provocative and immodest clothing (1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 3:3).
- Those who engage in frivolous and lascivious talk and read love stories (1 Corinthians 15:35).
- Those who frequent places of lustful indulgence (Ephesians 5:3).
- Those who take pleasure in explicit and suggestive images (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- Those who participate in mixed dancing between men and women (Mark 6:22).
- Those who associate with promiscuous and suspicious individuals (Proverbs 7:22).
- Those who neglect to arrange suitable marriages for their children in a timely manner (1 Corinthians 7:37).
- Those who arrange marriages for young children.
- Those who impose lenient punishments for adultery.
- Those who marry multiple wives simultaneously (Genesis 2:24).
- Those who love their pleasures more than God (2 Timothy 3:4).
- Those who prioritize fulfilling their fleshly desires (Romans 13:14).
- Those who support and visit brothels (Deuteronomy 23:17).
- Those who indulge in drunkenness and excessive eating (Ephesians 5:18).

- Those who dedicate themselves to wine, sleep, and ease (Proverbs 20:13).
- Those who avoid marriage to prevent fornication (1 Corinthians 7:2).
- Those who divorce their spouse for reasons other than fornication (Matthew 19:9).

VIII. COMMANDMENT. Thou shalt not steal.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who do not engage in any productive occupation (1 Thessalonians 3:11).
- Those who neglect their occupation (Jeremiah 48:10).
- Those who squander their wealth in reckless living and fail to provide for their family (1 Timothy 5:8).
- Those who are not content with their own possessions and constantly seek to become rich (1 Timothy 6:10).
- Those who sell the goods of the Church or purchase them (Malachi 3:8).
- Those who sell items that promote idolatry or other sinful activities.
- Those who use deceptive practices such as powdering, starching, blowing, or dim lighting to enhance the appearance and marketability of their goods.
- Those who conceal the faults of their merchandise.
- Those who use false weights and measures (Leviticus 19:35).
- Those who employ deceitful words in their business dealings (Proverbs 20:14).
- Those who charge more than a just price for their goods (Matthew 7:12).
- Those who oppress their tenants by excessively raising rents (Habakkuk 2:11).
- Those who engage in hoarding of goods.

- Those who increase prices solely based on the payment terms.
- Those who either give or accept bribes (Isaiah 1:33, Psalm 82).
- Those who write false letters of recommendation in legal matters.
- Those who fail to return borrowed items (Ezekiel 18:7).
- Those who withhold or profit from found or pawned items (Leviticus 6:3).
- Those who are physically capable but live by begging.
- Those who provide assistance to such individuals (2 Thessalonians 3:10).
- Those who defend unjust causes for the sake of personal gain.
- Those who burden the people with excessive taxes or demands without just cause (Isaiah 1:23, Ezekiel 22:27).
- Those who squander Church resources in indulgent living (1 Timothy 6:9).
- Those who exploit God's word and sacraments for personal gain (Micah 3:11, 2 Corinthians 2:17).
- Those who acquire wealth through gambling.
- Those who make a living through divination or performances (Ephesians 4:28).
- Those who are careless in becoming a surety for others (Proverbs 11:15, 17:18).
- Those who steal children to arrange their marriages (1 Timothy 1:10).
- Those who steal even the smallest item for supposedly noble purposes.
- Those who receive stolen goods and participate in the act (Romans 1:29).
- Those who engage in deceitful practices in trade (1 Thessalonians 4:6).
- Those who do not restore ill-gotten gains (Ezekiel 33:15).
- Those who withhold goods that were intended for the Church (Acts 5:3).
- Those who wait for times of scarcity to sell their goods at higher prices (Amos 8:5).

IX. COMMANDMENT. Thou shalt not bear false witness, &c.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who envy their neighbor's prosperity (1 Timothy 6:4).
- Those who only seek to promote their own reputation.
- Those who are suspicious of others (1 Corinthians 13:5).
- Those who pass hasty or harsh judgments against others (Matthew 7:1).
- Those who interpret other people's words and actions in a negative light (Matthew 26:60).
- Those who falsely accuse others (1 Kings 21).
- Those who engage in spreading rumors openly or in a whispering manner (Leviticus 19:16).
- Those who willingly listen to and accept rumors and gossip (Exodus 23:1).
- Those who speak the truth with malicious intent (Psalm 52:1, 2).
- Those who publicly disclose others' weaknesses or faults (Matthew 18:17).
- Those who engage in mocking and taunting (Ephesians 5:4).
- Those who use flattery to deceive or manipulate (Proverbs 26:19).
- Those who lie, even if it is for a seemingly good cause (Zechariah 13:3).
- Those who defend an evil cause and attack the opposite side.
- Those who write or spread libelous statements.

X. COMMANDMENT. Thou shalt not covet.

He breaks this commandment:

- Those who entertain evil thoughts against their neighbor, even if they have no intention of acting upon them.

- Those who derive inner pleasure from evil desires, even if they do not consent to act on them.

He sins against the Gospel:

- Those who deny, directly or indirectly, that Christ has come in the flesh.
- Those who treat the blood of Christ as insignificant or unimportant.
- Those who do not believe in the forgiveness of their own sins and acceptance of eternal life.
- Those who refuse to repent and instead harden themselves in their sinful ways.

Now, let us move on to the second duty, which is the confession of sins to God. This confession is essential because the proper way to have our sins forgiven by God is to acknowledge and uncover them before Him. When we condemn ourselves, God justifies us. When we accuse ourselves as our own enemies, He pardons us. He forgets our sins when we remember them. When we consider ourselves unworthy, we become precious in His sight. When we are lost to ourselves, we are found by Him.

To perform confession correctly, a significant aspect is the self-judgment of a repentant sinner. By judging ourselves, we seek to avoid being judged by the Lord.

This arraignment has three specific points. Firstly, the individual must present themselves before the judgment of God. They do this by placing themselves in the presence of God as if the day of judgment were happening at that very moment. It is like what Saint Jerome did, always imagining that he heard the voice saying, "Rise, you dead, and come to judgment."

Secondly, they must bring charges against themselves. They do this by confessing their sins before God, acknowledging both their known

sins in detail and their unknown sins in general, without making any excuses, minimizing, defending, or hiding any of them. For example, David said, "I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight... I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. And I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing. But now, please forgive the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly." Similarly, Ezra said, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens."

Thirdly, with a heavy heart, they must pass judgment on themselves, acknowledging that they deserve eternal hell, death, and damnation. Like the prodigal child who said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son." And Daniel said, "We have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules... Righteousness belongs to you, O Lord, but to us, open shame." Job declared, "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth... I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes." And the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

Regarding the confession of sins to other people, it should only be done in two cases. First, when we have offended our neighbour, and second, when we seek comfort and relief from a troubled conscience.

The third duty in the practice of repentance is supplication, where we pray to God for the forgiveness of the sins we have confessed with a contrite heart. We should pray earnestly and persistently, considering it the most important matter in the world. In this regard, we should approach God like a poor prisoner at the bar who, as the judge is about to pass sentence, cries out for mercy as if their life

depended on it. We should behave like a cripple or a leper on the road, sitting down, uncovering our wounds of sin, and constantly crying out to God, saying, "Look upon us with your eyes and have compassion in your heart," just as they seek alms from passersby. This is what the prophet Hosea teaches the people, saying, "O Israel, return to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take with you words and return to the Lord, saying, 'Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips.'" Daniel also prays, "We do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God." David, in his prayer, implores, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions."

The final duty is to pray to God for grace and strength so that we may walk in newness of life. Like David, we should express our desire for God's commandments and ask to be revived in His righteousness. We should request His guidance in doing His will, for He is our God, and ask for His good Spirit to lead us on the path of righteousness.

CHAPTER VII:

LEGAL MOTIVES TO REPENTANCE

Motives to repentance can be categorized as either legal or evangelical. Legal motives are derived from the law, and there are three primary ones.

The first motive is the wretched and cursed state of every unrepentant sinner in this life due to their sins.

This misery can be understood in seven ways, so as to be grasped by even the simplest mind:

1. It resides within the sinner, affecting their inner being.
2. It looms ahead of them, casting a shadow on their future.
3. It follows behind them, leaving a trail of guilt and shame.
4. It surrounds them on their right hand, leaving no escape.
5. It envelops them on their left hand, restricting their options.
6. It hovers over their head, a constant reminder of their transgressions.
7. It lies beneath their feet, as a foundation of despair and spiritual emptiness.

His inner misery is twofold. The first is a guilty conscience, which is a true hell for the ungodly person. They are like a helpless prisoner, and the conscience acts as their jailer, constantly following and tracking their every move, observing their words and actions. It is like a recording clerk, always ready with a pen in hand, documenting and recording all their wickedness for eternal remembrance. It serves as a judge within, residing in the depths of their heart, bringing accusations in this life for their sins, just as they will be accused in the final judgment. Therefore, the anguish, terror, and fears experienced by impenitent individuals are like flashes of hellfire. A guilty conscience makes a person restless, like someone lying on a narrow bed with a short covering, desperately wanting to sleep but unable to find rest. When Belshazzar was reveling in his merriment and saw the handwriting on the wall, he was overcome with great fear, his face turned pale, and his knees trembled.

The second evil within a person is the dreadful slavery and bondage under the power of Satan, the Prince of darkness. Their mind, will, and affections are so tightly bound and attached to the will of the devil that they can do nothing but obey him and rebel against God. This is why Satan is referred to as the ruler of this world, as he maintains a stronghold in the heart, like an armed captain guarding a fortress or castle with constant vigilance.

The misery before a person is a dangerous snare that the devil sets to destroy their soul. It is indeed dangerous because he sets it up twenty

or forty years before striking, when people least expect it. It consists of three elements. Firstly, the devil lures individuals into his snare by concealing the misery and poison of sin, while presenting its deceitful profits and pleasures to the mind's eye. Secondly, he ensnares them by sweetening the sin they are drawn into with enticing delights, causing them to live and remain entangled in it. Lastly, he tightens the snare and exerts all his might to break the neck of the soul. When a suitable opportunity arises, especially in times of great calamity or during the hour of death, he removes the mask of sin and reveals its true and ugly form, terrifying and accusing the soul, aiming to engulf it in the depths of final despair.

The misery behind a person is the weight of past sins. The Lord said to Cain, "If you do not do well, sin lies at the door," comparing sin to a wild beast that follows a person wherever they go, lurking at their heels. Though it may appear harmless for a time while it lies dormant, unless people repent, it will eventually rise up, seize them, and tear at the very core of their souls. Job, in his affliction, said, "You write bitter things against me and make me possess the sins of my youth." David prayed, "Forgive me the sins of my youth." If the memory of past sins is a burden to the righteous person, imagine the torment it will be for the heart of someone devoid of grace.

The misery on the right hand is prosperity and ease, which, due to man's sin, becomes an occasion for many judgments. In such times, people engage in the abominable sins of Sodom. It inflates the heart with devilish pride, leading individuals to think of themselves as equal to God, as Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, Alexander, Herod, and Domitian did. It draws people's hearts away from God and extinguishes the sparks of grace, as the Lord laments about the Israelites who refused to listen when they were in prosperity. It is like ivy that embraces a tree, but drains its sap and life. Consequently, many turn prosperity into a pathway to their own destruction. Solomon says, "Prosperity of fools destroys them." When the spleen swells, the rest of the body wastes away, and when the heart is swollen with pride, the whole person is in danger of

destruction. The sheep that grazes in the best pasture quickly heads to the slaughterhouse, and the ungodly person fattens themselves with continuous prosperity, hastening their own damnation.

The misery on the left hand is adversity, encompassing all sorts of losses and calamities such as loss of goods, friends, good reputation, and so on. Read more about this in Deuteronomy 28.

The misery over his head is the wrath of God, which is manifested in various heavenly judgments. Every impenitent sinner is under constant threat from this wrath. The danger is immense. The Scripture says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." God has storehouses full of all kinds of judgments, and they await secure sinners who cannot escape. God's wrath is like a devastating fire that destroys everything it touches. In fact, its terribleness is heightened by God's slowness to anger. It is as if a man restrains his hand for a while, only to strike with greater force. When dumb creatures melt like wax and vanish in His presence, frail humans should never expect to stand. If the roar of a lion instills fear and the voice of thunder is terrifying, then all should be greatly astonished at the threats of God.

The misery under his feet is Hellfire. Until a person repents, they are in as much danger of damnation as a captured traitor is of hanging, drawing, and quartering. Imagine a man walking along a path who suddenly falls into a deep dungeon filled with hideous serpents and noxious beasts. As he falls, he manages to grab onto a twig of a tree growing at the dungeon's entrance and hangs onto it. However, a lean and famished beast approaches and starts nibbling at the twig he's holding onto. What is the danger for this man? Surely he is at risk of falling into the pit beneath him. Well, this man represents every impenitent sinner. The pit is hell, prepared for the devil and his angels. The twig is the fragile and brittle life of a person. The hungry beast is death, ready to snap our lives apart at any moment. The danger is terrifying because if a person is hanging over the mouth of

hell when their life ends and they haven't taken proper measures before dying, they will fall straight into its depths.

If this is the misery surrounding the careless person on all sides due to their sins, why do people remain in the dead sleep of complacency? Oh, they should strongly lament and howl like dragons for their offenses. Even if they could weep tears of blood for their sins or die a thousand deaths in one day due to sheer grief, it would never be enough to express their remorse for their sins.

The second motive to prompt people to repentance is the consideration of the wretched state of an impenitent sinner in death. Death is nothing but the wages and recompense one receives for their sin, and it serves as the very outskirts, or rather the gates, of hell. Saint Paul compares death to a scorpion, carrying a sting in its tail, which is sin. So when impenitent and profane individuals die, this scorpion comes and grasps them with its legs and stabs them at the heart with its sting. Therefore, the best course of action is to remove the sting of death before it arrives. And nothing can do it except the blood of Christ. Thus, people must abandon their sins through repentance, approach the throne of grace, and cry out for mercy. They should fill heaven and earth with their pleas for forgiveness. Oh, pray, pray, pray for the pardon of your sins. If you obtain even a drop of God's special mercy in Christ, all danger is past. Death has lost its sting, and then a person can embrace an ugly serpent in their bosom without any danger.

The third motive is the consideration of one's state after death. When the day of the last judgment arrives, the person must be brought and placed before the judgment seat of Christ. They will be unable to escape or hide themselves. At that time, the books will be brought out, and all their sins will be revealed before God's saints and angels. The devil and their own conscience will accuse them, and there will be no advocate to plead their case. They themselves will be speechless. Finally, they will hear the dreadful sentence of damnation: "Go, you cursed, into hell prepared for the devil and his

angels." This realization should compel even the vilest atheist in the world to abandon their wicked ways and seek to amend their life. We observe that even the strongest thief, when being led from prison to the courtroom, ceases their thieving and behaves orderly. And indeed, if they were to pick a pocket at that moment, it would be high time for them to be hanged. By nature, all human beings are traitors and wrongdoers against God. As long as we live in this world, we are on a journey toward the judgment seat of God. The wheel of the heavens turns every day, slowly winding up the thread of our lives. Whether we sleep or wake, we are continually drawing closer to our end. Therefore, let all people humble themselves daily for their sins and pray to God for reconciliation in Christ. Let them strive to obey all of God's commandments in their lives and vocations.

After the last judgment, there awaits him the eternal death, which consists of three things. First, a separation from all joy and comfort in the presence of God. Second, an eternal companionship with the devil and his angels. Third, the dreadful wrath of God, which will seize the body, soul, and conscience, consuming them like fire does to pitch and brimstone. It will torment them like a worm crawling in the body and gnawing at the heart. They will be in a constant state of dying, without ever experiencing death, in perpetual suffering without respite. And this death is all the more grievous because it is everlasting.

Imagine the entire world as a mountain of sand, and a bird must carry away a mouthful of sand from it every thousand years. Countless thousands of years would pass before the bird could remove the entire mountain. Now, if a person were to endure torment for so long and then have an end to their misery, it would offer some comfort. But when the bird has carried away the mountain a thousand times, alas, a person will be just as far from the end of their anguish and torment as they were before. This contemplation should serve as a stern whip to drive people away from their wicked lives. Chrysostom suggested that during

gatherings in taverns and feasts, people should discuss hell so that frequent thoughts of it may help them avoid it.

There is a story of a grave and virtuous woman who was tempted to commit a foolish act with a wicked ruffian. After a long conversation, she asked him to hold his finger in a pan of burning coals for just one hour for her sake. He replied that it was an unkind request. To this, she responded that since he would not endure even holding one finger in a few coals for a short hour, she could not consent to do something for which she would be tormented body and soul in hellfire forever. All people should reason in a similar manner against themselves. No one would willingly do something that causes even the slightest pain to their finger or tooth. Therefore, we should be extremely cautious in abandoning our sins, which bring endless torment to both body and soul in hell.

Chapter VIII:

EVANGELICAL MOTIVES

Evangelical motives are particularly twofold. The first is derived from the contemplation of man's redemption. The one who redeemed humanity is God Himself. As Paul states, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. Man's sin is so vile and abominable in the sight of God that no angel or creature could appease His wrath for even the smallest offense. Instead, the Son of God had to descend from heaven and assume human nature. Not only that, but He also had to endure the accursed death of the cross and shed His precious blood to satisfy the justice of His Father on our behalf. If a father were afflicted with a disease that could only be healed by the lifeblood of his own child, he would immediately consider his condition perilous. He would also vow to do everything possible to avoid that disease if he ever recovered. In the same way, since

nothing could heal the deadly wound of our sin except the remedy of Christ's heartblood, it should make us recognize our pitiful state, acknowledge the grievousness of even our smallest sins, and motivate us to live a new life.

Furthermore, considering that the purpose of Christ's redemption was to deliver us from our sinful and unrighteous way of life, we should not persist in continuing and indulging ourselves in sin. It would be akin to a prisoner who, after being ransomed and having their shackles removed, is released from the prison to go wherever they please but chooses to return and lie in the dungeon again.

The second motive is that God has made a promise to those who truly repent.

I. The promise of forgiveness of sins: "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil... though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool." And, "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

II. The promise of eternal life: "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." And, "Seek me, and live."

III. The promise of mitigating or removing temporal calamities: "Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah... It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds."

As God has made these merciful promises to repentant sinners, He has faithfully fulfilled them as soon as they have begun to repent. Examples include David, who confessed his sin and received

forgiveness; Manasseh, who prayed and humbled himself before God, and God heard his prayer; the publican who acknowledged his sinfulness and departed justified; and the thief who repented on the cross and was promised to be with Jesus in paradise.

Having such remarkable promises made to repentance, no one should refrain from practicing it due to the multitude of their sins. On the contrary, they should embrace it. When the Pharisees questioned why Jesus dined with tax collectors and sinners, he responded, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." And truly I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you.

Chapter IX:

THE TIME OF REPENTANCE

The time of repentance is the present moment, without any delay whatsoever. As the Holy Ghost says, "Today, if you will hear his voice." And, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." The reasons for this are as follows:

I. Life is uncertain, as no one knows at what hour or moment, and in what manner they will depart from this world. Therefore, be prepared, for the Son of Man will come at an unexpected hour. This should prompt a person to hasten their repentance, especially because many have died without repenting, despite intending to do so in the future.

II. The longer a person remains in sin, the greater the danger, as sin becomes ingrained and stronger through practice. Custom holds such power that people continue to act and speak as they did in their lifetime even when they are dying. For example, if someone had a debt of three pounds to be paid over three years, when they are dying, they can only think of three years and three pounds. Furthermore, by delaying repentance, people accumulate divine wrath that will be unleashed on the day of judgment. It is as if a criminal, as part of their punishment, is required to carry a piece of wood to a pile every day for twenty years, only to be burned on that heap later.

III. The longer repentance is postponed, the harder it becomes. Just as the longer a person remains in sickness without medicine, the more difficult it is to recover. And where the devil dwells for a long time, he is unlikely to be driven out. The best way to kill a snake is to crush its head when it is young.

IV. It brings great satisfaction to the devil to see people living in their sins and delaying repentance, while there is great joy among the angels of God in heaven when a sinner repents.

V. Late repentance is seldom or never true repentance. If a person repents only when they are no longer able to sin, such as on their deathbed, it is not that they are leaving sin, but rather that sin is leaving them. Therefore, the repentance that individuals attempt when they are dying may be feared to die with them. It is just that God should scorn those who scorned Him in their lives. Chrysostom says that the wicked person is punished by forgetting themselves in death, who, when they were alive, forgot God.

VI. We are to offer to God the best of what we have, just as Abel offered the fat of his flock in sacrifice. On the contrary, those who postpone repentance until the end do the opposite. Late repenters offer the prime of their youth to the devil, and they bring the maimed and broken sacrifice of their old age to God.

Chapter X:

CERTAIN CASES OF REPENTANCE

I. Case of Apostasy Whether a person who has professed Christ and the Christian faith, but later denies Christ and renounces the religion under persecution, can repent and be saved. Answer: It is a grave situation, but a person can still come to repentance afterward. Manasseh turned to idolatry and witchcraft, yet he received mercy. The wise Solomon also strayed, but undoubtedly repented and obtained eternal life. My reason is that God allowed him to be a writer of certain parts of holy scripture. The scriptures were written not only by men of God but also by holy men of God. Peter denied Christ knowingly against his own conscience, even with cursing and swearing, yet he later repented, as evidenced by Christ's testimony: "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Objection I: Matthew 10:33 states, "But whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." Answer: This passage refers to a final denial of Christ.

Objection II: Hebrews 6:4 states, "For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit..." And Hebrews 10:26 states, "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins." Answer: These passages must be understood in the context of the sin unto death, in which individuals, out of desperate malice against Christ, completely and universally turn away from the faith. The Holy Spirit does not say "if they fall," but rather "if they fall away." It is further described

that they crucify the Son of God, mock Him, trample underfoot the Son of God, regard the blood of the new covenant as unholy, and despise the Spirit of God. The word translated as "deliberately" implies something more, namely, sinning because a person wills it, that is, willfully.

II. Case of Relapse

Whether a child of God, after repenting of a grievous sin, falls into the same sin again and comes to repentance a second time. Answer: The case is dangerous, as we can see through a comparison with the body. If someone relapses into a recurring fever or any other serious illness, it may cost them their life, and recovery will be very difficult. Jesus said to the man who had been sick for 38 years, after healing him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." And when an unclean spirit returns, it brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself. While we do not find specific examples of recovery after a relapse in the Scriptures, there is no doubt that it is possible. The reasons are as follows:

I. The promise of forgiveness of sins in Christ is made without any time limit, without any restriction to a specific number or type of sin, except for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Therefore, repentance and salvation can occur after a relapse.

II. Jesus tells Peter that forgiveness should not be limited to seven times only (which Peter may have thought was generous), but to seventy-seven times, even in one day, if someone repeatedly returns and says, "I repent." If we, who have far less mercy compared to God, are expected to do this, then He will undoubtedly forgive, even for one sin, if people repent and say, "I am sorry." This is because abundant redemption is found in Him, and He is rich in mercy.

III. Case of Restitution

Whether a person who repents is required to make restitution if they have wrongfully taken something from their neighbour. Answer: Yes,

indeed. When Zacchaeus repented and received Christ, he gave half of his goods to the poor, and if he had taken anything through fraudulent means, he restored it fourfold. It is a poor practice when a person on their deathbed devoutly bequeaths their soul to God, but leaves their ill-gotten wealth (as their conscience often whispers in their ear) to their children and friends without making restitution or amends.

Question: But what if a person is unable to restore? Answer: Let them acknowledge the fault, and God will accept the intention even if they lack the ability. As Paul said in a similar case, "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

Question: When making restitution may harm a person's reputation, how can they both restore and maintain their credibility? Answer: If the item to be restored is of little value, they can choose a trustworthy and honest friend to deliver it on their behalf, keeping their identity concealed.

IV. Case of Tears

Does repentance always involve tears or not? Answer: No, not necessarily. For pride and hypocrisy can bring forth tears, as some are capable of weeping for their sins in the presence of others, but when alone, they neither will nor can. Some individuals have a bodily disposition that allows them to shed tears at will. A godly person can mourn to God for their sins and plead for forgiveness even with dry cheeks. However, in cases of deep grief for sin, tears often follow, unless a person has a hardened and unfeeling heart. Yet, even the softest heart may not shed tears immediately when faced with the greatest cause of sorrow. Tears may come later after some reflection and contemplation, just as a deep wound initially shows only a white mark on the skin without any blood. With time, blood begins to flow abundantly from the wound. Similarly, in the beginning, the mind

may be stunned and not produce tears, but with some respite and consideration, tears will eventually come.

V. Case of Death

Can a repentant sinner always find comfort on their deathbed? Answer: Although the comfort of God's Spirit will never be taken away from their heart, they may not always be able to express it. They may die from a severe fever, experiencing extreme bouts of delirium, leading to incoherent speech and even blasphemy. Similarly, they may suffer from a brain illness, accompanied by severe convulsions, causing their mouth to contort to their ears, their neck to twist backwards, and their trembling to shake the very place where they lie. This is a testimony supported by daily experiences. There is no need for anyone to find this strange, for as Solomon said, "All things come alike to all in outward matters." The same conditions apply to the just and the wicked, the good and the impure, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not.

Chapter XI:

CONTRARIES TO REPENTANCE

Contrary to Repentance is Impenitence, wherein people persist in their current state without sorrowing for sin or turning away from it.

It is one of the most severe judgments, especially if it becomes final. Just as a sick person is at their worst when they feel the least sickness and claim to be well, similarly, a wretched person is in the greatest misery when they feel no misery and believe themselves to be in a good condition.

This sin befalls those who consider themselves righteous and believe they have no need for repentance. Examples include the Pharisees

during the time of Christ, the Catharists in the early Church, and the Anabaptists in our present age. Additionally, it includes those whose hearts have become hardened to the point where they can no longer distinguish between good and evil, nor tremble at God's judgments, but instead, become agitated and furious against them. Such individuals may eventually face God's wrath, leading to their destruction or final despair. This was the fate of Julian the Apostate, who died blaspheming and even threw his own blood into the air.

Between the two extremes of Repentance and Impenitence lies counterfeit repentance. The wicked nature of humans allows for dissembling and imitating God's grace. As the Lord laments concerning the Jews, "Her rebellious sister Judah has not returned to me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the Lord (Jeremiah 3:10).

Counterfeit repentance can be classified into two types: Ceremonial and Desperate.

Ceremonial repentance occurs when individuals display outward signs of repentance but lack sincerity in their hearts. Examples include Saul, who said to Samuel, "I have sinned against the Lord and your words... please forgive my sin and return with me, so that I may worship the Lord," and Ahab, who humbled himself before Elijah after hearing the word of the Lord.

Dissembled repentance can be identified when individuals eventually return to their former ways. For instance, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, would plead for relief from plagues and acknowledge his sins, but once the affliction was removed, he would harden his heart and not heed the warnings.

Desperate repentance occurs when a person, faced with the judgment of God and overwhelmed by a guilty conscience, despairs without hope of God's mercy. An example of this is Judas, who, after

returning the thirty pieces of silver and confessing his wrongdoing, went and hanged himself.

Chapter XII:

CORRUPTIONS IN THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

The ancient doctrine of repentance, which is a crucial aspect of religion, has been corrupted by the present-day Roman Church. There are six specific corruptions:

First, they declare that repentance or penance is a sacrament, which is not possible because it lacks an outward sign. Some argue that the words spoken by the priest in absolution serve as the sign, but that cannot be true since a sign must not only be audible but also visible.

Second, they assert that a sinner possesses a natural disposition within them, which, when awakened by God's grace, allows them to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in their own repentance. However, in reality, all our repentance is entirely attributed to God's grace. The soul of a person is not merely weak but spiritually dead in sin, and therefore, it cannot prepare itself for repentance any more than a lifeless body in a grave can prepare itself for resurrection.

The third corruption is the belief that contrition in repentance must be sufficient. This is an impossible task because sin greatly offends the majesty of God, and no amount of mourning can ever be enough.

The fourth corruption is the notion that contrition merits the forgiveness of sins. Such a belief diminishes the all-sufficient merits of Christ.

The fifth corruption is the requirement that a repentant person must confess all their sins, along with every detail and circumstance, to

their own priest or a designated representative in order to receive pardon. This type of confession is a mere invention of human imagination. Firstly, there is no command or example of it in Scripture. Secondly, individuals like David and others have repented and received forgiveness of their sins without confessing each sin in detail to another person.

The final corruption is the belief that a sinner must satisfy God through their works and sufferings for the temporal punishment of their sins. This is a blatant blasphemy. The Scriptures mention no satisfaction other than that of Christ's, and if His satisfaction is sufficient, then ours is unnecessary. If ours is necessary, then His is imperfect. Papists argue that both can coexist, claiming that Christ's satisfaction is like an unapplied plaster in a box, and human satisfaction serves as a means to apply it by preparing us to receive it. This is flawed reasoning, for even in common sense, Christ's satisfaction must first be applied to the individual before any works (which they call satisfactions) can be acceptable to God.

In conclusion, the Roman doctrine of repentance leads straight to hell. When a sinner is taught that they must have sufficient sorrow for their sin without being able to believe in the specific remission of their own sins, they will fall into despair without finding true comfort in God's mercy. Hence, we have observed that Papists, in the hour of death, gladly abandon the illusion of human satisfactions and rely solely on the obedience of Christ for their justification.

Praise be to God.

BOOK II

THE COMBAT OF THE FLESH AND SPIRIT

"For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want." -Gal. 5:17

The Apostle Paul, in this chapter, begins by exhorting the Galatians to uphold their Christian liberty, and then proceeds to urge them towards various specific godly duties. From verse 13 onwards, he encourages them to serve one another in love and warns against contentions and causing harm to others. In verse 16, he presents walking according to the spirit as the remedy for these sins. In the seventeenth verse, he provides the reason for this remedy, which is as follows: the flesh and the spirit are in opposition to each other. Therefore, if you walk according to the spirit, it will hinder the flesh from leading you towards causing harm and engaging in contentions, which would otherwise be the case.

In this verse, we need to observe five points. Firstly, there is a struggle between the flesh and the spirit, expressed by the words, "The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." Secondly, the nature of this struggle lies in the opposing desires of the flesh and the spirit. Thirdly, the cause of this struggle is described as being their inherent opposition. Fourthly, the subject of this struggle is identified as the Galatians themselves. Lastly, the effect of this struggle is indicated by the statement that they are unable to do whatever they want.

Regarding the nature of the combat itself, several points should be considered. Firstly, it is important to understand what the flesh and

the spirit, the two combatants, represent. They have various meanings. Firstly, the spirit can refer to the soul, and the flesh to the body. However, in this context, that is not the intended meaning. There is no conflict between the body and the soul, as they work together to form an individual. Secondly, the spirit can signify natural reason, while the flesh represents the natural appetite or desires. But this interpretation does not fit here either, as the spirit mentioned here fights even against natural reason, although reason serves to hold a person accountable. Thirdly, the spirit can represent the divine nature of Christ, and the flesh the human nature. However, that is not the intended meaning in this passage, as it would imply that every regenerated person is deified. Lastly, the spirit can denote a created quality of holiness that is worked in the mind, will, and affections by the Holy Spirit, while the flesh represents the natural corruption or inclination of the mind, will, and affections towards that which is against the law. This is the intended meaning of these terms in this context.

Secondly, it is worth considering how these two, the flesh and the spirit, can engage in combat when they are merely qualities. It is important to note that they are not separated from each other, as if the flesh were located in one part of the soul and the spirit in another. Instead, they are joined and intertwined in all aspects of the soul. The mind or understanding is not divided into flesh and spirit, but rather the entire mind consists of both flesh and spirit, each present to a certain extent. The same applies to the will, which is partly influenced by the flesh and partly by the spirit, with grace and corruption being distinct but not physically separated. It is similar to the air at dawn, which is neither completely light nor completely dark like midnight or noon. The air is not light in one part and dark in another; rather, it is a mixture of light and dark throughout. Likewise, in a vessel of lukewarm water, the water is not solely hot or cold, nor is it hot in one part and cold in another. Heat and cold are blended together in every part of the water. Similarly, the flesh and the spirit are intertwined in the soul of a person, which is why these opposing qualities engage in combat.

Thirdly, in this combat, we should consider the balance between the flesh and the spirit, the two combatants. It is important to note that the flesh usually has a greater presence than the spirit. The flesh can be likened to the mighty giant Goliath, while the spirit is small and humble like young David. This is why Paul refers to the Corinthians, who were justified and sanctified, as "carnal." He says, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ." It is only after this life that individuals can become mature in Christ, according to the fullness of Christ's age. The notion sometimes expressed by theologians that the regenerate person has only remnants of sin in them must be understood cautiously, as it can lead to falsehood. In terms of the measure of grace, it remains relatively small since we receive only the first fruits of the Spirit in this life and must await the completion of our redemption in the life to come. Nonetheless, the power and efficacy of the Spirit are such that it can typically prevail against the flesh. The flesh receives its mortal wound at the moment of a person's conversion and continues to die gradually. Therefore, it fights as a disabled soldier. On the other hand, the Spirit is continually confirmed and increased by the Holy Spirit. It is lively, active, and its virtue is like musk—a small amount of which produces a stronger fragrance than many ounces of other perfumes. Some may argue that the godly individual feels the flesh more than the spirit, concluding that the flesh is therefore more prevalent. In response, I would say that we should not assess our condition solely based on feelings, as they can easily deceive us. A person may feel pain in the tip of their finger more acutely than the overall health of their body, yet the health of the body surpasses the pain in a finger. Furthermore, we feel corruption not because of corruption itself, but because of grace. Therefore, the more individuals perceive their inward corruptions, the greater the indication of their possession of grace.

This is what we can gather about the nature of the fight itself. Now, let us turn to the manner in which this fight takes place.

The fight is carried out through lusting. In this context, to lust means to generate and provoke inclinations and impulses in the heart, whether towards good or evil.

Lusting can be divided into two categories: the lusting of the flesh and the lusting of the spirit.

The lusting of the flesh has two actions. The first is to generate evil thoughts and passions such as self-love, envy, pride, unbelief, anger, and so on. James says that people are enticed and drawn away by their own desires. This enticement occurs through the suggestion of negative thoughts and desires. It is this action of the flesh that led Paul to say that he was carnal, sold under sin.

The second action of the flesh is to hinder, suppress, and overpower all the good impulses of the spirit. Paul experienced this in himself when he said, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." Because of this action of the flesh, a regenerated person is like someone in a slumber who is troubled by sleep paralysis or "the mare." They feel something heavy lying on their chest, as if it were a mountain, and they desperately try to remove it with their hands and voice, but they are unable to do so.

On the other hand, the lusting of the spirit entails two other actions. The first is to generate good thoughts, inclinations, and desires in the mind, will, and affections. David speaks of this when he says, "My reins also instruct me in the night seasons." It means that his mind, affections, will, and entire soul, sanctified and guided by the Spirit of God, provide him with considerations of the path he should walk. Isaiah prophesies about the Church of the New Testament, saying, "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." This voice is not only the outward preaching of ministers but also the inward voice of the Spirit.

The second action of the spirit is to hinder and suppress the bad impulses and suggestions of the flesh. John says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him," referring to the grace wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, which resists the rebellious desires of the flesh.

To have a clearer understanding of the manner of this fight, we must examine it more closely, particularly within the two special parts of the soul: the mind and the will.

In the mind, there is a double combat. The first is between the knowledge of God's Word and natural ignorance or blindness. Since our knowledge in this life is partial, the knowledge of truth must necessarily coexist with ignorance in those who are enlightened. These two, being contrary to each other, strive to overshadow and prevail over one another.

This explains why excellent theologians may differ in various points of religion. It is because, in this combat, natural blindness still remains to a greater or lesser extent. Just as people with impaired vision cannot discern things clearly without glasses, and therefore would have different opinions about something seen from afar, so too those enlightened and regenerated in this life only see "in a mirror, dimly." This should also prompt all students of theology to be cautious about their opinions and defenses, recognizing that even those with the soundest judgment have a mixture of light and darkness in their understanding. They can only see partially, like the man in the Gospel who, when Jesus partially opened his eyes, saw people walking as trees. Furthermore, this should remind all who read the Scriptures to invoke and call upon the name of God, asking Him to enlighten them with His Spirit and dispel the fog of natural blindness. The prophet David, who was profoundly enlightened with the knowledge of God's Word and surpassed the ancients and his own teachers in wisdom, still acknowledged his own blindness and frequently prayed in the Psalms, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Due to this ongoing battle, when natural blindness prevails, a child of God who is truly enlightened with knowledge of everlasting life may err not only in minor matters but even in the very foundations of religion, as the Corinthians and the Galatians did. Just as one person can err, so can a hundred people, even a whole specific church. And just as one church can err, so can a hundred more. In light of this combat, the condition of all individuals is the same. Hence, it is evident that the earthly Church in its struggle is susceptible to error. However, just as bodily ailments can be of two kinds—one curable and the other incurable, leading to death—so can errors. Although the Church may experience various falls, it cannot err in foundational matters leading to spiritual death. The errors of God's children are curable. Some may argue, "If all individuals and churches are prone to error, then it is not advisable to align with any of them, but rather to separate from all." I reply, even though they may and do err, we must not separate from them as long as they do not separate from Christ.

The second combat in the mind is between faith and unbelief. For faith is imperfect and mixed with contrary elements of unbelief, such as presumption and doubt. As the man in the Gospel says, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."

As a result of this struggle, when unbelief prevails, even the child of God may experience fits and bouts of despair, as Job and David did in their trials. David, at one point, contemplated the prosperity of the wicked and exclaimed, "Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence." This despair can become so intense that it weakens and consumes the body more than any illness. It should not be considered strange for a child of God to experience this. Although they may despair of their election and salvation in Christ, their despair is neither total nor final. It is not total because they do not despair with their entire heart, as faith still contends against despair in that very moment. It is not final because they will recover before the end of their earthly life.

To continue, the combat in the will is as follows. The will partly desires and partly rejects what is good in the same moment. Likewise, it desires and rejects what is evil because it is partly regenerated and partly unregenerate. The affections, which reside in the will, also partly embrace and partly avoid their objects. For example, love partly loves and partly does not love God and things that should be loved. Fear is mixed and not pure, contrary to what some scholars have believed. It is partly filial and partly servile, causing the child of God to stand in awe of God not only for His mercies but also for His judgments and punishments. The will of a regenerated person is like someone with one sound leg and one lame leg. In every step they take, they do not fully limp or fully walk upright but partly walk upright and partly limp. It can also be likened to a person in a boat on water. They move upward because the vessel carries them upward, but at the same time, they move downward because they walk downward within the same vessel simultaneously. If anyone argues that opposites cannot coexist in the same subject, the answer is that they cannot if one of them is in its full strength at the highest degree. However, if the force of both is delayed and weakened, they can be joined together.

Due to this combat, when corruption prevails against grace in the will and affections, a certain deadness or hardness of heart arises in the godly, which is simply a lack of sense or feeling. Some may view this as a fearful judgment, but the answer is that there are two kinds of hardness of heart. One kind possesses the heart and is never felt. It pertains to those whose consciences are seared with a hot iron, who, due to habitual sin, have become unfeeling and also despise the means of softening their hearts. Indeed, this is a fearful judgment. The other kind of hardness of heart is felt, and it is not as dangerous as the former. Just as we feel our sickness through the contrasting experience of life and health, the felt hardness of heart indicates the presence of grace and a tender heart. David frequently lamented about this in the Psalms, and the children of Israel spoke of it when they said, "Why have you hardened our hearts from your ways?"

This concludes the discussion of the particular manner of combat. Before we proceed further, let us consider the outcome, which is as follows: the spirit prevails against the flesh at two times—during a person's life and at their end. However, there may be some setbacks along the way.

I affirm that the spirit prevails not in a single moment but throughout a person's entire life. As Saint John says, "He who is born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him," indicating that the grace of God in the heart typically prevails. Paul also describes it as the characteristic of a regenerated individual to walk according to the spirit, which entails maintaining a consistent course of godliness. Just as someone traveling from Berwick to London may occasionally veer off track but quickly returns to the right path, the overall trajectory is correct.

Furthermore, the spirit prevails at the end of a person's life. At that point, the flesh is completely abolished, and sanctification is accomplished, for no unclean thing can enter the kingdom of heaven.

It must be understood that when the spirit prevails, it does not do so without resistance and striving. As Paul testifies, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing." This passage should not be understood solely in terms of thoughts and inner motions, as some suggest, nor does it refer only to specific transgressions. It encompasses the general practice of fulfilling one's duty or calling throughout the entire course of life. It is comparable to a sick person who, having recovered from a severe illness, takes a few steps around their room, saying, "Ah, I would like to walk freely, but I am unable to." The statement does not imply an inability to walk at all but signifies that the person cannot walk as they would wish due to weakness and fatigue.

I added further that this prevailing is accompanied by foils. A foil occurs when the flesh momentarily overcomes and subdues the spirit. In such a case, a regenerate person is like a soldier whose skull

has been cracked by a blow, leaving them lying bewildered and unable to fight. They are also similar to someone experiencing an epileptic seizure, who temporarily lies motionless like a lifeless body. This raises the question of whether the prevailing flesh extinguishes the spirit and thus cuts off a person from Christ until they are grafted back in. The answer is as follows: There are two types of Christians. The first merely professes Christ in appearance and name, and such a person is no more a member of Christ's mystical body than a wooden leg attached to the body is a true member. If they fall, they cannot be said to be cut off because they were never grafted in. The second type is the one who, in name and deed, is a living and active part and member of Christ. If they fall, they may be and are cut off from Christ, but it is important to note how. They are not entirely severed but only in certain aspects, particularly with regards to their inward fellowship and communion with Christ, though not their connection to Him. It is akin to a person's arm affected by severe paralysis, hanging without receiving heat, life, or sensation from the rest of the body or the head. Nevertheless, it remains united and connected to the body, and can be restored through treatments and remedies. Similarly, after a grievous fall, a child of God may experience a lack of internal peace and comfort, being plagued in conscience with the tremors of spiritual paralysis due to their offense. However, before God, they still remain a member of Christ and will be restored to their former state through sincere repentance.

God permits these foils for weighty reasons. First, it is so that individuals may be humbled and confounded within themselves, considering their own wretched nature, and learn not to swell with pride because of God's grace. Paul mentioned that after being caught up to the third heaven, a messenger of Satan was sent to afflict and beat him, preventing him from being excessively exalted. Second, it is to teach us to deny ourselves and cleave to the Lord wholeheartedly. Paul said that he was afflicted with a severe illness so that he would not trust in himself but in God, who raises the dead.

This concludes the discussion on the manner of the combat. Now, let us turn to the cause of it.

The cause is the inherent opposition between the flesh and the spirit, as Paul states, "The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God."

Hence, we are taught that since the fall, there is no free will in human beings when it comes to spiritual matters concerning the worship of God or attaining eternal life. The flesh represents our natural disposition, and by nature, human beings are nothing but flesh. The spirit, on the other hand, comes later through grace, and yet the flesh is completely contrary to the spirit, which leads us to do what pleases God. Therefore, the will, by nature, is a complete slave to sin.

Furthermore, we can learn from this that practicing religion is not an easy task. It involves living according to the spirit, which is as contrary to our natural disposition as fire is to water. Therefore, if we desire to obey God, we must learn to overcome our nature and exert effort in performing godly duties. It may require us to exert ourselves, sweat, and work hard in this pursuit.

Lastly, we can understand the nature of sin from this. The spirit is not a substance but a quality, and therefore, the flesh, which is nothing but original sin and is contrary to the spirit, must also be a quality. This is because one contrary is of the same nature as the other. In every person, there is the substance of body and soul, and neither of them can be sin. Otherwise, the spirit would also be the substance of a person. In the substance, there are the faculties of body and soul, and they cannot be sin either. Otherwise, every person would have lost the faculties of their soul due to Adam's fall. Lastly, within the faculties, there is a contagion or corruption that inclines them to go against the law, and that is what sin and the flesh truly are—contrary to the spirit.

The fourth point concerns the individuals in whom this combat takes place. Paul indicates who they are when he says, "So that you cannot, etc.," revealing that those who experience this struggle must be like the Galatians, individuals who are justified and sanctified. However, not all who are justified and sanctified experience this combat, but only those who have reached the age of maturity. Infants of the faithful, though we consider them to belong to the kingdom of heaven and thus be justified and sanctified, do not engage in this combat of the flesh and spirit, which involves action. As for the unregenerate, they have never felt this fight. If anyone claims that even the worst person in the world, when about to commit a sin, experiences a struggle and fight within them, it is indeed true. However, that is a different kind of combat, one between the conscience and the heart. The conscience terrifies the individual from sinning, while the will and affections urge and pull them towards it. The will and affections wish and desire that sin were not sin and that God's commandments were abolished, whereas the conscience, with a clear voice, proclaims sin to be sin. This fight was present in Pilate, who, due to the force of his conscience, feared condemning Christ, yet was willing and yielded to condemn him in order to please the people.

Furthermore, this combat is experienced by the regenerate only during this earthly life. Those who are perfectly sanctified do not feel this strife. If anyone argues that this combat was present in Christ when he said, "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me; yet not my will but thine be done," indeed, there was a struggle, but of a different kind. It was the fight between two different desires. One desire was to fulfill his father's will by accepting the death of the cross, while the other was a natural desire (not a sin but a mere weakness of human nature) through which, in his humanity, he desired (as is the inclination of nature to seek self-preservation) to have the cursed death of the cross removed from him.

The fifth point is the effect of this combat, which is that the regenerate person cannot do the things they would, both in good and

evil matters.

Firstly, he cannot do the evil that he would for two reasons. First, because he cannot commit sin whenever he pleases. As S. John says, "He that is born of God does not sin, nor can he sin, because he is born of God." In other words, he cannot sin at his own will or whenever he desires. When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife to commit adultery, the abundance of God's grace in him prevented him from sinning. He responded, saying, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Similarly, Lot, with his righteous heart grieved by the abominations of Sodom, could not sin as the people of Sodom did. From this, it becomes evident that individuals who live in the continual practice of sin against their own consciences, even if they profess the true religion of Christ, lack genuine grace within them.

Secondly, the regenerate person cannot sin in the manner they would, and there are two reasons for this. First, they cannot sin with full consent of the will or with their whole heart, because the regenerated will resists and draws back. Even when a person is driven by the passions of the flesh, they experience contrary motions of a regenerated conscience. It is a true principle that sin does not reign in the regenerate. The more grace is present in the mind, will, and affections, the weaker the strength of the flesh becomes proportionally. Therefore, when they commit any sin, they do it partly willingly and partly against their will. It is comparable to the sailors who willingly cast Jonah into the sea during the tempest, for they would not have done so otherwise. However, it was also against their will, as evidenced by their prayers, casting their goods out of the ship, and their efforts in rowing against the tempest, all of which occurred long before they cast him out. This difference can be seen between two individuals committing the same sin, one being regenerate and the other unregenerate. The latter sins with their whole heart and full consent, while the former does not. Secondly, even if the regenerate person falls into sin, they do not remain in it

for long but quickly recover themselves due to the presence of grace in their hearts.

Therefore, it is evident that sins of weakness are committed only by those who are regenerate. As for the unregenerate person, they cannot commit sins of weakness, contrary to what some falsely believe. This is because they are not weak but completely dead in sin. Sins of weakness, on the other hand, arise from constraint, fear, hastiness, and similar sudden passions in the regenerate. Although they often sin due to the struggle within their spirit, it is not always the case. They may also sin knowingly and presumptuously against their own knowledge and conscience.

Moving on to the second point: the regenerate person cannot do the good that they would because they cannot do it perfectly and completely according to God's will as they desire. As Paul says, "For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out." In this aspect, the godly person is like a prisoner who has escaped from jail and desires with all their heart to run a hundred miles in a day to avoid the grasp of the keeper. However, due to the heavy and restrictive chains on their legs, they cannot crawl past a mile or two, even with great effort that results in chafing their flesh and tormenting themselves. Similarly, the servants of God wholeheartedly desire and strive to obey God in all His commandments, just as it is said of King Josiah that he turned to God with all his heart, soul, and might, following all the laws of Moses, and so on. Yet, because they are burdened by the limitations of the flesh, their obedience is performed slowly and weakly, with various stumbles and falls.

This concludes the discussion of the combat. Now, let us consider the practical implications of this understanding.

First and foremost, we learn from this that the state of a Christian in this life is not one devoid of evil thoughts, rebellious inclinations,

and movements of the will and affections, or free from all manner of mistakes in their life and conduct. Anyone claiming to be such a person is merely an invention of human imagination and cannot be found on earth. Instead, a true Christian is one who, feeling burdened by the corruptions of their sinful and rebellious nature, laments them from the depths of their heart and vigorously fights against them by the grace of God's Spirit. Additionally, this refutes the erroneous Catholic belief in merit and justification through works of grace. It is as follows: Works correspond to their cause. The cause of works in a person is their sanctified mind, will, and affections, in which the flesh and the spirit are mixed, as previously explained. Therefore, even the best works of grace are mixed works, partly holy and partly sinful. This clearly shows that they do not meet the requirements of the righteous law and, therefore, cannot merit eternal life or justify a person before God. If someone argues that good works are works of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, perfectly righteous, I respond that it is indeed true that they originate from the Holy Spirit, who cannot sin. However, they also stem from the corrupt mind and will of humans, and in that regard, they become sinful, just as water from a pure fountain can become corrupted when flowing through a filthy channel.

Thirdly, we learn from this that concupiscence or original sin is truly and properly sin even after baptism, despite the contrary decree of the Council of Trent. After baptism, it is in direct opposition to the Spirit and rebels against it. Some Catholics argue that it is removed through baptism. I reply that original sin or the flesh is removed in the following manner for the regenerate: It consists of three aspects—the guilt, the punishment, and the corruption. The first two are completely abolished through the merits of Christ's death in baptism, while the third, the corruption, still remains. However, take note of how it remains: it remains weakened and is no longer imputed to the believer's person.

Lastly, we are taught by this to be vigilant in prayer. "Watch and pray," as Christ said, "for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

When Rebecca experienced the strife of two twins in her womb, she was troubled and sought the Lord's guidance, likely through a prophet. Similarly, when we feel this internal conflict, the best course of action is to turn to God in prayer and seek strength for the spirit against the flesh. Just as the Israelites, by circling the city of Jericho for seven days and blowing rams' horns, caused its walls to crumble, so through earnest invocation of God's name, the spirit is fortified and the strongholds of rebellious flesh are demolished.

The voice of a person:

1. Carnal:

- Evil: "I do what is evil, and I want to do it."
- Good: "I do not do what is good, and I do not want to do it."

2. Regenerate:

- Evil: "I do the evil that I do not want to do."
- Good: "I do not do the good that I want to do."

3. Glorified:

- Evil: "I do not do what is evil, and I do not want to do it."
- Good: "I do what is good, and I want to do it."

Praise be to God.

MONERGISM BOOKS

The Nature and Practice of Repentance by William Perkins,
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