



Articles and Sermons :: a penitent heart by George Whitfield

a penitent heart by George Whitfield, on: 2010/3/31 3:55

A Penitent Heart, the best New Year's Gift. (Luke 13:3) / Print Version

Luke 13:3, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

When we consider how heinous and aggravating our offenses are, in the sight of a just and holy God, that they bring down his wrath upon our heads, and occasion us to live under his indignation; how ought we thereby to be deterred from evil, or at least engaged to study to repent thereof, and not commit the same again; but man is so thoughtless of an eternal state, and has so little consideration of the welfare of his immortal soul, that he can sin without any thought that he must give an account of his actions at the day of judgment; or if he, at times, has any reflections on his behavior, they do not drive him to true repentance: he may, for a short time, refrain from falling into some gross sins which he had lately committed; but then, when the temptation comes again with power, he is carried away with the lust; and thus he goes on promising and resolving, and in breaking both his resolutions and his promises, as fast almost as he has made them. This is highly offensive to God, it is mocking of him. My brethren, when grace is given us to repent truly, we shall turn wholly unto God; and let me beseech you to repent of your sins, for the time is hastening when you will have neither time nor call to repent; there is none in the grave, whither we are going; but do not be afraid, for God often receives the greatest sinner to mercy through the merits of Christ Jesus; this magnifies the riches of his free grace; and should be an encouragement for you, who are great and notorious sinners, to repent, for he shall have mercy upon you, if you through Christ return unto him.

St. Paul was an eminent instance of this; he speaks of himself as "the chief of sinners," and he declareth how God showed mercy unto him. Christ loves to show mercy unto sinners, and if you repent, he will have mercy upon you. But as no word is more mistaken than that of repentance, I shall

I. Show you what the nature of repentance is.

II. Consider the several parts and causes of repentance.

III. I shall give you some reasons, why repentance is necessary to salvation. And

IV. Exhort all of you, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to endeavor after repentance.

I. Repentance, my brethren, in the first place, as to its nature, is the carnal and corrupt disposition of men being changed into a renewed and sanctified disposition. A man that has truly repented, is truly regenerated: it is a different word for one and the same thing; the motley mixture of the beast and devil is gone; there is, as it were, a new creation wrought in your hearts. If your repentance is true, you are renewed throughout, both in soul and body; your understandings are enlightened with the knowledge of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ; and your wills, which were stubborn, obstinate, and hated all good, are obedient and conformable to the will of God. Indeed, our deists tell us, that man now has a free will to do good, to love God, and to repent when he will; but indeed, there is no free will in any of you, but to sin; nay, your free-will leads you so far, that you would, if possible, pull God from his throne. This may, perhaps, offend the Pharisees; but (it is the truth in Christ which I speak, I lie not) every man by his own natural will hates God; but when he is turned unto the Lord, by evangelical repentance, then his will is changed; then your consciences, nor hardened and benumbed, shall be quickened and awakened; then your hard hearts shall be melted, and your unruly affections shall be crucified. Thus, by that repentance, the whole soul will be changed, you will have new inclinations, new desires, and new habits.

You may see how vile we are by nature, that it requires so great a change to be made upon us, to recover us from this state of sin, and therefore the consideration of our dreadful state should make us earnest with God to change our condition, and that change, true repentance implies; therefore, my brethren, consider how hateful your ways are to God, while you continue in sin; how abominable you are unto him, while you run into evil: you cannot be said to be Christians while you are hating Christ, and his people; true repentance will entirely change you, the bias of your souls will be changed, then you will delight in God, in Christ, in his law, and in his people; you will then believe that there is such a thing as inward feeling, though now you may esteem it madness and enthusiasm; you will not then be ashamed of becoming fools for Christ's sake; you will not regard being scoffed at; it is not then their pointing after you and crying, "Here comes another tr

oop of his followers," will dismay you; no, your soul will abhor such proceedings, the ways of Christ and his people will be your whole delight.

It is the nature of such repentance to make a change, and the greatest change as can be made here in the soul. Thus you see what repentance implies in its own nature; it denotes an abhorrence of all evil, and a forsaking of it. I shall now proceed

SECONDLY, To show you the parts of it, and the causes concurring thereto.

The parts are, sorrow, hatred, and an entire forsaking of sin.

Our sorrow and grief for sin, must not spring merely from a fear of wrath; for if we have no other ground but that, it proceeds from self-love, and not from any love to God; and if love to God is not the chief motive of your repentance, your repentance is in vain, and not to be esteemed true.

Many, in our days, think their crying, God forgive me! or, Lord have mercy upon me! or, I am sorry for it! Is repentance, and that God will esteem it as such; but, indeed, they are mistaken; it is not the drawing near to God with our lips, while our hearts are far from him, which he regards. Repentance does not come by fits and starts; no, it is one continued act of our lives; for as we daily commit sin, so we need a daily repentance before God, to obtain forgiveness for those sins we commit.

It is not your confessing yourselves to be sinners, it is not knowing your condition to be sad and deplorable, so long as you continue in your sins; your care and endeavors should be, to get the heart thoroughly affected therewith, that you may feel yourselves to be lost and undone creatures, for Christ came to save such as are lost; and if you are enabled to groan under the weight and burden of your sins, then Christ will ease you and give you rest.

And till you are thus sensible of your misery and lost condition, you are a servant to sin and to your lusts, under the bondage and command of Satan, doing his drudgery: thou art under the curse of God, and liable to his judgment. Consider how dreadful thy state will be at death, and after the day of judgment, when thou wilt be exposed to such miseries which the ear hath not heard, neither can the heart conceive, and that to all eternity, if you die impenitent.

But I hope better things of you, my brethren, though I thus speak, and things which accompany salvation; go to God in prayer, and be earnest with him, that by his Spirit he would convince you of your miserable condition by nature, and make you truly sensible thereof. O be humbled, be humbled, I beseech you, for your sins. Having spent so many years in sinning, what canst thou do less, than be concerned to spend some hours in mourning and sorrowing for the same, and be humbled before God.

Look back into your lives, call to mind thy sins, as many as possible thou canst, the sins of thy youth, as well as of thy ripper years; see how you have departed from a gracious Father, and wandered in the way of wickedness, in which you have lost yourselves, the favor of God, the comforts of his Spirit, and the peace of your own consciences; then go and beg pardon of the Lord, through the blood of the Lamb, for the evil thou hast committed, and for the good thou hast omitted. Consider, likewise, the heinousness of thy sins; see what very aggravating circumstances thy sins are attended with, how you have abused the patience of God, which should have led you to repentance; and when thou findest thy heart hard, beg of God to soften it, cry mightily unto him, and he will take away thy stony heart, and give thee a heart of flesh.

Resolve to leave all thy sinful lusts and pleasures; renounce, forsake, and abhor thy old sinful course of life, and serve God in holiness and righteousness all the remaining part of life. If you lament and bewail past sins, and do not forsake them, your repentance is in vain, you are mocking of God, and deceiving your own soul; you must put off the old man with his deeds, before you can put on the new man, Christ Jesus.

You, therefore, who have been swearers and cursers, you, who have been harlots and drunkards, you, who have been thieves and robbers, you, who have hitherto followed the sinful pleasures and diversions of life, let me beseech you, by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, that you would no longer continue therein, but that you would forsake your evil ways, and turn unto the Lord, for he waiteth to be gracious unto you, he is ready, he is willing to pardon you of all your sins; but do not expect Christ to pardon you of sin, when you run into it, and will not abstain from complying with the temptations; but if you will be persuaded to abstain from evil and choose the good, to return unto the Lord, and repent of your wickedness, he hath promised he will abundantly pardon you, he will heal your back-slidings, and will love you freely. Resolve now this day to have done with your sins for ever; let your old ways and you be separated; you must resolve against it, if

or there can be no true repentance without a resolution to forsake it. Resolve for Christ, resolve against the devil and his works, and go on fighting the Lord's battles against the devil and his emissaries; attack him in the strongest holds he has, fight him as men, as Christians, and you will soon find him to be a coward; resist him and he will fly from you. Resolve, through grace, to do this, and your repentance is half done; but then take care that you do not ground your resolutions on your own strength, but in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the way, he is the truth, and he is the life; without his assistance you can do nothing, but through his grace strengthening thee, thou wilt be enabled to do all things; and the more ready Christ will be to help thee; and what can all the men of the world do to thee when Christ is for thee? Thou wilt not regard what they say against thee, for you will have the testimony of a good conscience.

Resolve to cast thyself at the feet of Christ in subjection to him, and throw thyself into the arms of Christ for salvation by him. Consider, my dear brethren, the many invitations he has given you to come unto him, to be saved by him; "God has laid on him the iniquity of us all." O let me prevail with you, above all things, to make choice of the Lord Jesus Christ; resign yourselves unto him, take him, O take him, upon his own terms, and whosoever thou art, how great a sinner soever you have been, this evening, in the name of the great God, do I offer Jesus Christ unto thee; as thou valuest thy life and soul refuse him not, but stir up thyself to accept of the Lord Jesus, take him wholly as he is, for he will be applied wholly unto you, or else not at all. Jesus Christ must be your whole wisdom, Jesus Christ must be your whole righteousness, Jesus Christ must be your whole sanctification, or he will never be your eternal redemption.

What though you have been ever so wicked and profligate, yet, if you will not abandon your sins, and turn unto the Lord Jesus Christ, thou shalt have him given to thee, and all thy sins shall be freely forgiven. O why will you neglect the great work of your repentance? Do not defer the doing of it one day longer, but today, even now, take that Christ who is freely offered to you.

Now as to the causes hereof, the first cause is God; he is the author, "we are born of God," God hath begotten us, even God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is he that stirs us up to will and to do of his own good pleasure: and another cause is, God's free grace; it is owing to the "riches of his free grace," my brethren, that we have been prevented from going down to hell long ago; it is because the compassions of the Lord fail not, they are new every morning, and fresh every evening.

Sometimes the instruments are very unlikely: a poor despised minister, or member of Jesus Christ, may, by the power of God, be made an instrument in the hands of God, of bringing you to true evangelical repentance; and this may be done to show, that the power is not in men, but that it is entirely owing to the good pleasure of God; and if there has been any good done among many of you, by preaching the word, as I trust there has, though it was preached in a field, if God has met and owned us, and blessed his word, though preached by an enthusiastic babbler, a boy, a madman; I do rejoice, ye, and will rejoice, let foes say what they will. I shall now

THIRDLY, Show the reasons why repentance is necessary to salvation.

And this, my brethren, is plainly revealed to us in the word of God, "The soul that does not repent and turn unto the Lord, shall die in its sins, and their blood shall be required at their own heads." It is necessary, as we have sinned, we should repent; for a holy God could not, nor ever can, or will, admit any thing that is unholy into his presence: this is the beginning of grace in the soul; there must be a change in heart and life, before there can be a dwelling with a holy God. You can not love sin and God too, you cannot love God and mammon; no unclean person can stand in the presence of God, it is contrary to the holiness of his nature; there is a contrariety between the holy nature of God, and the unholy nature of carnal and unregenerate men.

What communication can there be between a sinless God, and creatures full of sin, between a pure God and impure creatures? If you were to be admitted into heaven with your present tempers, in your impenitent condition, heaven itself would be a hell to you; the songs of angels would be as enthusiasm, and would be intolerable to you; therefore you must have these tempers changed, you must be holy, as God is: he must be your God here, and you must be his people, or you will never dwell together to all eternity. If you hate the ways of God, and cannot spend an hour in his service, how will you think to be easy, to all eternity, in singing praises to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.

And this is to be the employment, my brethren, of all those who are admitted into this glorious place, where neither sinner nor sinner is admitted, where no scoffer ever can come, without repentance from his evil ways, a turning unto God, and a cleaving unto him: this must be done, before any can be admitted into the glorious mansions of God, which are prepared for all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth: repent ye then of all your sins. O my dear brethren, it makes my blood run cold, in thinking that any of you should not be admitted into the glorious mansions above. O that it was in

my power, I would place all of you, yea, you my scoffing brethren, and the greatest enemy I have on earth, at the right hand of Jesus; but this I cannot do: however, I advise and exhort you, with all love and tenderness, to make Jesus your refuge; fly to him for relief; Jesus died to save such as you; he is full of compassion; and if you go to him, as poor, lost, undone sinners, Jesus will give you his spirit; you shall live and reign, and reign and live, you shall love and live, and live and love with this Jesus to all eternity.

I am, FORTHLY, to exhort all of you, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, to repent of all your sins, and turn unto the Lord.

And I shall speak to each of you; for you have either repented, or you have not, you are believers in Christ Jesus, or unbelievers.

And first, you who never have truly repented of your sins, and never have truly forsaken your lusts, be not offended if I speak plain to you; for it is love, love to your souls, that constrains me to speak: I shall lay before you your danger, and the misery to which you are exposed, while you remain impenitent in sin. And O that this may be a means of making you fly to Christ for pardon and forgiveness.

While thy sins are not repented of, thou art in danger of death, and if you should die, you would perish for ever. There is no hope of any who live and die in their sins, but that they will dwell with devils and damned spirits to all eternity. And how do we know we shall live much longer: we are not sure of seeing our own habitations this night in safety. What mean ye then being at ease and pleasure while your sins are not pardoned. As sure as ever the word of God is true, if you die in that condition, you are shut out of all hope and mercy for ever, and shall pass into ceaseless and endless misery.

What is all thy pleasures and diversions worth? They last but for a moment, they are of no worth, and but of short continuance. And sure it must be gross folly, eagerly to pursue those sinful lusts and pleasures, which war against the soul, which tend to harden the heart, and keep us from closing with the Lord Jesus; indeed, these are destructive of our peace here, and without repentance, will be of our peace hereafter.

O the folly and madness of this sensual world; sure if there were nothing in sin but present slavery, it would keep an ingenious spirit from it. But to do the devils drudgery! And if we do that, we shall have his wages, which is eternal death and condemnation; O consider this, my guilty brethren, you that think it no crime to swear, whore, drink, or scoff and jeer at the people of God; consider how your voices will then be changed, and you that counted their lives madness, and their end without honor, shall howl and lament at your own madness and folly, that should bring you to so much woe and distress. Then you will lament and bemoan your own dreadful condition; but it will be of no signification: for he that is not your merciful Savior, will then become your inexorable Judge. Now he is easy to be entreated; but then, all your tears and prayers will be in vain: for God hath allotted to every man a day of grace, a time of repentance, which if he doth not improve, but neglects and despises the means which are offered to him, he cannot be saved.

Consider, therefore, while you are going on in a course of sin and unrighteousness, I beseech you, my brethren, to think of the consequence that will attend your thus mispending your precious time; your souls are worth being concerned about: for if you can enjoy all the pleasures and diversions of life, at death you must leave them; that will put an end to all your worldly concerns. And will it not be very deplorable, to have your good things here, all your earthly, sensual, devilish pleasures, which you have been so much taken up with, all over: and the thought for how trifling a concern thou hast lost eternal welfare, will gnaw thy very soul.

Thy wealth and grandeur will stand in no stead; thou canst carry nothing of it into the other world: then the consideration of thy uncharitableness to the poor, and the ways thou didst take to obtain thy wealth, will be a very hell unto thee.

Now you enjoy the means of grace, as the preaching of his word, prayer, and sacraments; and God has sent his ministers out into the fields and highways, to invite, to woo you to come in; but they are tiresome to thee, thou hadst rather be at thy pleasures: ere long, my brethren, they will be over, and you will be no more troubled with them; but then thou wouldst give ten thousand worlds for one moment of that merciful time of grace which thou hast abused; then you will cry for a drop of that precious blood which now you trample under your feet; then you will wish for one more offer of mercy, for Christ and his free grace to be offered to you again; but your crying will be in vain: for as you would not repent here, God will not give you an opportunity to repent hereafter: if you would not in Christ's time, you shall not in your own. In what a dreadful condition will you then be? What horror and astonishment will possess your souls? Then all thy lies and oaths, thy scoffs and jeers at the people of God, all thy filthy and unclean thoughts and actions, thy mispent time in balls, plays, and assemblies, thy spending whole evenings at cards, dice, and masquerades, thy frequenting of taverns and alehouses,

thy worldliness, covetousness, and thy uncharitableness, will be brought at once to thy remembrance, and at once charged upon thy guilty soul. And how can you bear the thoughts of these things? Indeed I am full of compassion towards you, to think that this should be the portion of any who now hear me. These are truths, though awful ones; my brethren, these are the truths of the gospel; and if there was not a necessity for thus speaking, I would willingly forbear: for it is no pleasing subject to me, any more than it is to you; but it is my duty to show you the dreadful consequences of continuing in sin. I am only now acting the part of a skillful surgeon, that searches a wound before he heals it: I would show you your danger first, that deliverance may be the more readily accepted by you.

Consider, that however you may be for putting the evil day away from you, and are now striving to hide your sins, at the day of judgment there shall be a full discovery of all; hidden things on that day shall be brought to light; and after all thy sins have been revealed to the whole world, then you must depart into everlasting fire in hell, which will not be quenched night and day; it will be without intermission, without end. O then, what stupidity and senselessness hath possessed your hearts, that you are not frightened from your sins. The fear of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, made men do any thing to avoid it; and shall not an everlasting fire make men, make you, do any thing to avoid it?

O that this would awaken and cause you to humble yourselves for your sins, and to beg pardon for them, that you might find mercy in the Lord.

Do not go away, let not the devil hurry you away before the sermon is over; but stay, and you shall have a Jesus offered to you, who has made full satisfaction for all your sins.

Let me beseech you to cast away your transgressions, to strive against sin, to watch against it, and to beg power and strength from Christ, to keep down the power of those lusts that hurry you on in your sinful ways.

But if you will not do any of these things, if you are resolved to sin on, you must expect eternal death to be the consequence; you must expect to be seized with horror and trembling, with horror and amazement, to hear the dreadful sentence of condemnation pronounced against you: and then you will run and call upon the mountains to fall on you, to hide you from the Lord, and from the fierce anger of his wrath.

Had you now a heart to turn from your sins unto the living God, by true and unfeigned repentance, and to pray unto him for mercy, in and through the merits of Jesus Christ, there were hope; but at the day of judgment, thy prayers and tears will be of no signification; they will be of no service to thee, the Judge will not be entreated by thee: as you would notarken to him when he called unto thee, but despised both him and his ministers, and would not leave your iniquities; therefore, on that day he will not be entreated, notwithstanding all thy cries and tears; for God himself hath said, "Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would have one of my reproof; I will also laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Now you may call this enthusiasm and madness; but at that great day, if you repent not of your sins here, you will find, by woeful experience, that your own ways were madness indeed; but God forbid it should be left undone till then: seek after the Lord while he is to be found; call upon him while he is near, and you shall find mercy: repent this hour, and Christ will joyfully receive you.

What say you? Must I go to my Master, and tell him you will not come unto him, and will have none of his counsels? No; do not send me on so unhappy an errand: I cannot, I will not tell him any such thing. Shall not I rather tell him, you are willing to repent and to be converted, to become new men, and take up a new course of life: this is the only wise resolution you can make. Let me tell my Master, that you will come unto, and will wait upon him: for if you do not, it will be your ruin in time, and to eternity.

You will at death wish you had lived the life of the righteous, that you might have died his death. Be advised then; consider what is before you, Christ and the world, holiness and sin, life and death: choose now for yourselves; let your choice be made immediately, and let that choice be your dying choice.

If you would not choose to die in your sins, to die drunkards, to die adulterers, to die swearers and scoffers, &c. live not out this night in the dreadful condition you are in. Some of you, it may be, may say, You have not power, you have no strength: but have not you been wanting to yourselves in such things that were within your power? Have you not as much power to go to hear a sermon, as to go into a playhouse, or to a ball, or masquerade? You have as much power to read

the Bible, as to read plays, novels, and romances; and you can associate as well with the godly, as with the wicked and profane: this is but an idle excuse, my brethren, to go on in your sins: and if you will be found in the means of grace, Christ hath promised he will give you strength. While Peter was preaching, the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard the word: how then should you be found in the way of your duty? Jesus Christ will then give thee strength; he will put his Spirit within thee; thou shalt find he will be thy wisdom, thy righteousness, thy sanctification, and thy redemption. Do but try what a gracious, a kind, and loving Master he is; he will be a help to thee in all thy burdens: and if the burden of sin is on thy soul, go to him as weary and heavy laden, and thou shalt find rest.

Do not say, that your sins are too many and too great to expect to find mercy! No, be they ever so many, or ever so great, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ will cleanse you from all sins. God's grace, my brethren, is free, rich, and sovereign. Manassah was a great sinner, and yet he was pardoned; Zaccheus was gone far from God, and went out to see Christ, with no other view but to satisfy his curiosity; and yet Jesus met him, and brought salvation to his house. Manassah was an idolater and murderer, yet he received mercy; the other was an oppressor and extortioner, who had gotten riches by fraud and deceit, and by grinding the faces of the poor: so did Matthew too, and yet they found mercy.

Have you been blasphemers and persecutors of the saints and servants of God? So was St. Paul, yet he received mercy: Have you been common harlots, filthy and unclean persons? So was Mary Magdalene, and yet she received mercy. Hast thou been a thief? The thief upon the cross found mercy. I despair of none of you, however vile and profligate you have been; I say, I despair of none of you, especially when God has had mercy on such a wretch as I am.

Remember the poor Publican, how he found favor with God, when the proud, self-conceited Pharisee, who, puffed up with his own righteousness, was rejected. And if you will go to Jesus, as the poor Publican did, under a sense of your own unworthiness, you shall find favor as he did: there is virtue enough in the blood of Jesus, to pardon greater sinners than he has yet pardoned. Then be not discouraged, but come unto Jesus, and you will find him ready to help in all thy distresses, to lead thee into all truth, to bring thee from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

Do not let the devil deceive you, by telling you, that then all your delights and pleasures will be over: No; this is so far from depriving you of all pleasure, that it is an inlet unto unspeakable delights, peculiar to all who are truly regenerated. The new birth is the very beginning of a life of peace and comfort; and the greatest pleasantness is to be found in the ways of holiness.

Solomon, who had experience of all other pleasures, yet saith of the ways of godliness, "That all her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace." Then sure you will not let the devil deceive you; it is all he wants, it is that he aims at, to make religion appear to be melancholy, miserable, and enthusiastic: but let him say what he will, give not ear to him, regard him not, for he always was and will be a liar.

What words, what entreaties shall I use, to make you come unto the Lord Jesus Christ? The little love I have experienced since I have been brought from sin to God, is so great, that I would not be in a natural state for ten thousand worlds; and what I have felt is but little to what I hope to feel; but that little love which I have experienced, is a sufficient buoy against all the storms and tempests of this boisterous world: and let men and devils do their worst, I rejoice in the Lord Jesus, yea, and I will rejoice.

And O if you repent and come to Jesus, I would rejoice on your accounts too; and we should rejoice together to all eternity, when once passed on the other side of the grave. O come to Jesus. The arms of Jesus Christ will embrace you; he will wash away all your sins in his blood, and will love you freely.

Come, I beseech you to come unto Jesus Christ. O that my words would pierce to the very soul! O that Jesus Christ was formed in you! O that you would turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, that he might have mercy upon you! I would speak till midnight, yea, I would speak till I could speak no more, so it might be a means to bring you to Jesus; let the Lord Jesus but enter your souls, and you shall find peace which the world can neither give nor take away. There is mercy for the greatest sinner amongst you; go unto the Lord as sinners, helpless and undone without it, and then you shall find comfort in your souls, and be admitted at last amongst those who sing praises unto the Lord to all eternity.

Now, my brethren, let me speak a word of exhortation to those of you, who are already brought to the Lord Jesus, who are born again, who do belong to God, to whom it has been given to repent of your sins, and are cleansed from their guilt; and that is, be thankful to God for his mercies towards you. O admire the grace of God, and bless his name forever! Are you made alive in Christ Jesus? Is the life of God begun in your souls, and have you the evidence thereof? Be thankful for this unspeakable mercy to you: never forget to speak of his mercy. And as your life was formerly devoted to sin, and t

o the pleasures of the world, let it now be spent wholly in the ways of God; and O embrace every opportunity of doing and of receiving good. Whatsoever opportunity you have, do it vigorously, do it speedily, do not defer it. If thou seest one hurrying on to destruction, use the utmost of thy endeavor to stop him in his course; show him the need he has of repentance, and that without it he is lost for ever; do not regard his despising of you; still go on to show him his danger: and if thy friends mock and despise, do not let that discourage you; hold on, hold out to the end, so you shall have a crown which is immutable, and that fadeth not away.

Let the love of Jesus to you, keep you also humble; do not be high-minded, keep close unto the Lord, observe the rules which the Lord Jesus Christ has given in his word, and let not the instructions be lost which you which you are capable of giving. O consider what reason you have to be thankful to the Lord Jesus Christ for giving you that repentance you yourselves had need of: a repentance which worketh by love. Now you find more pleasure in walking with God one hour, than in all your former carnal delights, and all the pleasures of sin. O! the joy you feel in your own souls, which all the men of the world, and all the devils in hell, though they were to combine together, could not destroy. Then fear not their wrath or malice, for through many tribulations we must enter into glory.

A few days, or weeks, or years more, and then you will be beyond their reach, you will be in the heavenly Jerusalem; there is all harmony and love, there is all joy and delight; there the weary soul is at rest.

Now we have many enemies, but at death they are all lost; they cannot follow us beyond the grave: and this is a great encouragement to us not to regard the scoffs and jeers of the men of this world.

O let the love of Jesus be in your thoughts continually. It was his dying that brought you life; it was his crucifixion that paid the satisfaction for your sins; his death, burial, and resurrection that completed the work; and he is now in heaven, interceding for you at the right hand of his Father. And can you do too much for the Lord Jesus Christ, who has done so much for you? His love to you is unfathomable. O the height, the depth, the length and breadth of this love, that brought the King of glory from his throne, to die for such rebels as we are, when we had acted so unkindly against him, and deserved nothing but eternal damnation. He came down and took our nature upon him; he was made of flesh and dwelt among us; he was put to death on our account; he paid our ransom: surely this should make us rejoice in him, and not do as too many do, and as we ourselves have too often, crucify this Jesus afresh. Let us do all we can, my dear brethren, to honor him.

Come, all of you, come, and behold him stretched out for you; see his hands and feet nailed to the cross. O come, come, my brethren, and nail your sins thereto; come, come and see his side pierced; there is a fountain open for sin, and for uncleanness: O wash, wash and be clean: come and see his head crowned with thorns, and all for you. Can you think of a panting, bleeding, dying Jesus, and not be filled with pity towards him? He underwent all this for you. Come unto him by faith; lay hold on him: there is mercy for every soul of you that will come unto him. Then do not delay; fly unto the arms of this Jesus, and you shall be made clean in his blood.

O what shall I say unto you to make you come to Jesus: I have showed you the dreadful consequence of not repenting of your sins: and if after all I have said, you are resolved to persist, your blood will be required at your own heads; but I hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation. Let me beg of you to pray in good earnest for the grace of repentance. I may never see your faces again; but at the day of judgment I will meet you: there you will either bless God that ever you were moved to repentance; or else this sermon, though in a field, will be as a swift witness against you. Repent, repent therefore, my dear brethren, as John the Baptist, and as our blessed Redeemer himself earnestly exhorted, and turn from your evil ways, and the Lord will have mercy on you.

Show them, O Father, wherein they have offended thee; make them to see their own vileness, and that they are lost and undone without true repentance; and O give them that repentance, we beseech of thee, that they may turn from sin unto thee the living and true God. These things, and whatever else thou seest needful for us, we entreat that thou wouldst bestow upon us, on account of what the dear Jesus Christ has done and suffered; to whom, with Thyself, and holy Spirit, three persons, and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all power, glory, might, majesty, and dominion, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.