

Handwritten Latin text in Gothic script, partially legible: "Hoc est in nomine..."

A FAITHFUL ADMONITION

JOHN KNOX



MADE BY JOHN KNOX UNTO THE PROFESSORS OF GOD'S TRUTH IN ENGLAND,
WHEREBY THOU MAYEST LEARN HOW GOD WILL HAVE HIS CHURCH EXERCISED
WITH TROUBLES AND HOW HE DEFENDS IT IN THE SAME.



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with troubles and how he defends it in the same.

Isaiah ix.

After all this, shall not the Lord's wrath cease, but yet shall his hand
be stretched out still.

Ibidem.

Take heed that the Lord root thee not out, both head and tail, in one
day.

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THE EPISTLE OF A Banished man out of Leicestershire,

sometime one of the Preachers of God's word there, to the Christian reader, wishes health, deliverance, and felicity.

There has been no time since the first fashioning of man which has not had its manifold miseries and great troubles, by which God chastened and punished all men for their evil life and unthankfulness to him, continually refusing his calling and warning. The righteous and just had their parts in this, although it was for their benefit and profit (but to the utter destruction of the wicked and ungodly). For judgment begins with the faithful, who are called the household of God in the Scripture, and the punishment by which God chastens them always comes for their best, either to bring patience, acknowledge their sins, or avoid eternal condemnation. When they

perceive the hand of the Lord upon them or others through any kind of trouble, such as poverty, sickness, banishment, loss of faithful friends, an increase in foes, or any other similar trouble, they immediately turn to God. They are heartily sorry for their sins and unthankfulness, confess themselves guilty, and earnestly call for mercy, which God grants to them in Jesus Christ out of His great goodness, according to His promise. In the midst of their troubles, God uses various ways to comfort, help, and deliver them, as seen in Noah, Abraham, Lot, the patriarchs, David, Hezekiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Susanna, Peter, Paul, and other good persons in all times and ages. They found relief, help, comfort, and deliverance in these and similar miserable situations after they turned to God, from whom those plagues came. This was their only remedy and defense, their chief refuge, and their hope. They continually called upon Him until they obtained their requests or what was most for God's glory and their own benefit and profit.

Contrarily, the perverse and ungodly react differently. When they are plagued or punished, they grumble against God, hate Him, speak spitefully against Him, attribute their plagues to bad luck or misfortune, and are not moved to acknowledge their great sins. They do not call upon Him but either fall into despair or contempt of God. In such cases, it cannot be thought that their punishments are signs of the rest and peace they may have after this life. Rather, these punishments are seen as the beginning of the torments they will suffer. Examples of this can be found in holy Scriptures, such as Cain, the Jews before and after Christ's ascension, wicked Jezebel, Judas the traitor, and the thief hanged on the left side of our Lord Jesus Christ. They grumbled, forsook, or spoke spiteful words against God and His prophets or fell into despair or contempt of Him, all of which are causes of God's further displeasure and the sending of even greater plagues to hasten their destruction.

Yet, we should observe the order of God's punishments, in which He demonstrates His merciful nature. He does not commonly plague all offenders with the same kind of plagues and at the same time, even if they are all equally guilty. He may strike some harder than others and may begin with one country or city so that the rest may be moved by the example of their punishments and have time and opportunity to turn to Him. God seeks not the death of a sinner but their amendment and life, as seen in the story of Ahab after his wife Jezebel caused Naboth to be put to death. Nevertheless, when He threatens to punish the land with a particular plague, such as famine, noxious beasts, the sword, or pestilence, He threatens all at once, especially upon Jerusalem, which bears the name of His people but disobeys Him. This should make us fear even more, for we, the people of England, are in a similar condition. Among us, God has already sent the devouring sword and a great number of slow, cruel, and ravenous beasts to destroy.

But let us follow the examples of all good men: in doing as the Lord our God commands us, even in these our plagues, which is to turn to Him with all our hearts and call upon Him. It is He alone who may, can, and will deliver us. Let the vain trust in man's help be forgotten; stop seeking sweet water in filthy puddles. What comfort can the sick man have from one who is much sicker than himself and expects nothing but death? Let the noble men of England abandon inconstancy, lust, and covetousness and turn to God rightly. Let the people do the same. Just as there is no man who doesn't feel or fear some great plague to come upon him because of his sin, so let every man repent, turn to God, and call for help in time. Since the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, there has been no time when there have been greater plagues than there are now in our time. Besides bloody war, sudden death, great untruth, open perjury, division, strange consuming fires, changes in great estates and

commonwealths, the overflowing of great cities and lands by water, hunger, and poverty without pity. It appears that God causes the very elements to fight against the world, which He once used to defend His people. He has also allowed the truth of His word and the true manner of worshipping Him according to the Scriptures to be completely taken away, as Christ threatened to the Jews in the Gospel of St. Matthew. As a sign of His further indignation, the hunger and thirst for Him and His kingdom have been taken away from the majority of the entire realm, making it completely void of the blessedness that Jesus Christ our Lord spoke of in the Gospel of St. Matthew, saying: "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness," etc. He has allowed false teachers to be a burden to you, O England, because of your unthankfulness. If you receive and accept their doctrine, be assured that His great wrath will come shortly after to your destruction. This is the customary order of God when He intends to destroy. First, He sends lying spirits into the mouths of their priests or prophets who delight in lies. Then He allows them to be deceived by the same, leading to their destruction, as He did with Ahab. Be warned by this and other such good and true books, gentle reader. Thus, you shall be sure to be kept safe in the time of the impending plague, where you will also find much comfort. It will inspire you to hold fast to the truth of God's Word and to flee from the wicked idolatry of the abominable Mass, which does no more to save you from harm than the painting of devilish Jezebel saved her from death when she was hurled headlong out of a window at Jehu's command.

A Faithful Admonition

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the perpetual comfort of the Holy Ghost, be with you forever and ever. So be it.

Having no less desire to comfort those who are currently in trouble within the realm of England (and especially you, who are most dear to me, for many reasons) than a natural father has to ease the grief and pain of his dearest child, I have considered what argument or portion of God's Scriptures would be most suitable and appropriate for your consolation in these dark and dolorous days. As I was searching my book for this purpose, I happened to see a note in the margin written in Latin: "Videat Anglia. Let England beware." When I considered this note, I found that the matter written in my book in Latin was as follows:

It is seldom that God works any notable work to the comfort of His Church without trouble, fear, and labor coming upon those whom God has used as His servants and workmen. Moreover, tribulation most commonly follows the Church where Christ Jesus is most truly preached.

This note was made based on a passage of Scripture found in the fourteenth Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. This passage tells us that after Christ Jesus had used the Apostles as ministers and servants to feed, as if by their hands, five thousand men besides women and children with five barley loaves and two fishes, He sent them to the sea, instructing them to go ahead of Him to the other side. As they attempted to obey and rowed forth into the sea for that purpose, night fell, the wind became contrary, a violent and raging storm arose, and it seemed their poor boat and themselves were about to be overwhelmed.

Upon considering (as my grief and simplicity would allow) the circumstances of the text, I began to reflect and question myself (not without sorrow and tears, as God knows) whether I had ever been as clear in expressing with my tongue what God had revealed to me in His holy will and wisdom regarding this matter, as my own pen and note bore witness to my conscience. It came to my mind that I had indeed discussed this very passage of Scripture in your presence, at a time when God provided the opportunity and space for you to hear, and His messenger to speak the words of eternal life. Therefore, I found it most expedient to bring to mind again those things that I hope were mentioned then, although perhaps not as clearly articulated by me, nor as clearly perceived by you, as these most dolorous days now make evident to us.

It shall not be necessary to treat the text word by word, but to gather certain notes and observations from the whole, which shall not greatly differ from the state of these days; it shall be sufficient.

First, it is to be observed that after this great miracle that Christ had performed, He neither retained with Himself the multitude of people whom He had fed nor His disciples. Instead, He sent each man back to his accustomed residence, and He sent the disciples to the danger of the seas. He did this not as someone who was ignorant of what would happen to them but knowing and foreseeing the tempest, yes, and even appointing it to trouble them.

It should not be judged that the only true Shepherd would remove and send away from Him the wandering and weak sheep, nor that the only wise governor and guide would send out His followers to such great jeopardy without sufficient and most just cause.

Why Christ removed and sent away the people, the Evangelist Saint John explains, saying: "When Jesus knew that they were about to

come and take Him by force to make Him king, He withdrew Himself to the mountain alone." It is clear what mainly prompted Christ to send the people away from Him: because they sought from Him a carnal and worldly liberty, paying no heed to His heavenly teaching about the kingdom of God the Father. He had plainly taught them that those who followed Him must endure persecution for His name's sake, be hated by all men, deny themselves, and be sent forth as sheep among wolves. But none of this doctrine pleased them or entered their hearts. Their entire focus was on their stomachs, and to satisfy their hunger, they devised and imagined that they would appoint and choose Christ Jesus to be their worldly King because He had the power to multiply bread at His pleasure. When Christ Jesus perceived this vain opinion and imagination, He withdrew Himself from their company to avoid any such suspicion. He wanted them to understand that such honors did not align with His calling, for He came to serve, not to be served. When the same people sought Him again, He sharply rebuked them because they sought Him more to have their bellies filled with perishable food than to have their souls nourished with the living bread from heaven. In the people, there were justifiable reasons why Christ should withdraw Himself from them for a time.

As for why the disciples should suffer such great danger, fear, and anguish, Saint Mark in his Gospel plainly explains that their hearts were hardened, and they neither remembered nor considered the miracle of the loaves. Even though they had touched the bread by which such a great multitude had been fed and had gathered twelve baskets full of the remnants, which a boy could have easily borne before the miracle, they did not properly grasp the infinite power of Christ Jesus through this remarkable miracle. Therefore, it was necessary for them to experience trouble in their own bodies for their better instruction.

When I deeply consider, dearly beloved in our Saviour Christ, how abundantly and miraculously the poor and small flock of Christ Jesus was fed within the realm of England under that chosen vessel of God, Edward the Sixth, to glory and honour, and now I behold not only the dispersion and scattering, but also the impending destruction of the same under these cursed, cruel, and abominable idolaters, it seems to me that the same causes have moved God not only to withdraw His presence from the multitude but also to send His beloved servants to the trials of the seas, where they are sorely tossed and troubled, and apparently most likely to perish.

What were the affections of the greatest multitude that followed the Gospel in this former rest and abundance is easy to judge if the lives and conduct of every person were thoroughly examined. For who lived (during that time) as if they had denied themselves? Who lived as if they had been crucified with Christ? Who lived as if they had genuinely expected trouble to come upon them? Rather, who did not live in indulgence and joy, seeking the world and its pleasures, caring for the flesh and carnal desires as though death and sin had been completely vanquished? What was this, if not making Christ an earthly King? The word we professed daily rang in our ears, that our kingdom, joy, rest, and happiness were neither in the present nor in any transient thing on Earth but in heaven, to which we must enter through many tribulations. But alas, we slept in such complacency that the sound of this trumpet could never be fully understood by many among us. We persuaded ourselves of a certain tranquility, as though the troubles mentioned in the Scriptures of God did not pertain at all to this age but to those who had long passed before us. Consequently, our Heavenly Father was compelled to withdraw the presence of His truth from us (whose voice we could not believe in those days) so that we might thirst more earnestly for it and receive

it with greater obedience if, in His infinite goodness, He should choose to restore it to us in abundance.

I am not referring to those who followed Christ only for their own desires. Such individuals, realizing that they could not obtain their heart's desires from Christ, grumbled and abandoned Him both in body and spirit. Their blasphemous words against His eternal truth bear witness to this. Brother, do not be troubled by such people, for during their profession, they were not truly part of us but were dissemblers and hypocrites.

Therefore, God justly permits them to blaspheme the truth, which they never loved. I do not mean that such hypocrites will ever embrace the truth, but I speak of those who, due to the weakness of the flesh and natural blindness (which is never entirely removed in this life), could not then give the complete obedience that God's Word required, nor now, in the weakness of faith, dare openly and boldly confess what their hearts know to be most true. They lament and mourn for their past and present imperfections. The amiable presence of Christ Jesus will not be forever withdrawn from such individuals. Again, the eyes of their troubled hearts will behold the light of Christ's Gospel, which they so deeply cherish.

The ministers who distributed this bread (the true Word of God) with which the multitude in England was fed were not without their offenses. These offenses were also reasons why God sent us to the sea.

Since the offenses of no one are as clear to me as my own, I shall accuse only myself.

Many are aware that I (the most wretched) was one of those whom God appointed to receive that bread (as it was broken by Christ

Jesus) and to distribute it to those whom He had called to this banquet, at the part of His table where He had appointed me to serve. It is not within my knowledge or judgment to determine the portion or quantity that each person received of this bread or how well it suited their appetites. However, I am certain that the blessing of Christ Jesus multiplied the portion I received from His hands, to the praise of His name and to the indictment of my ingratitude. During that banquet, the bread never ran out when hungry souls sought food. At the end of the meal, my conscience bears witness that my hands gathered the abundant crumbs left behind, filling my basket among the rest.

To be plain, my own conscience bears witness to myself how limited my learning was and how weak my judgment when Christ Jesus called me to be His steward. Day by day, and time by time, He greatly multiplied His grace upon me. If I were to conceal this, I would be most wicked and ungrateful.

But alas, how blind was my heart, and how little I considered the dignity of that office and the power of God that then multiplied and blessed the bread received by the people from my hands. Today, my own conscience bears witness to myself. I solemnly affirm in my conscience that I delivered the same bread I received from Christ's hands, and I mixed no poison with it, meaning I taught Christ's Gospel without any mixture of human dreams, inventions, or fantasies. However, I did not do it with the fervency, indifference, and diligence that my duty required.

Some complained in those days that the preachers were indiscreet persons, and some even called them slanderers and worse because they spoke against the manifest wickedness of men, especially those in authority, both in the court and in other offices throughout the

realm, including cities, towns, and villages. Perhaps my own plainness displeased some, and they complained that I spoke rashly about men's faults, making it clear who I meant. But today, my conscience accuses me that I did not speak as plainly as my duty required. I should have named the wicked man explicitly by his name and said, "You shall surely die," just as I find Jeremiah the prophet did to Pashur the high priest and to King Zedekiah. Not only him but also Elijah, Elisha, Micah, Amos, Daniel, Christ Jesus Himself, and His apostles explicitly named the bloodthirsty tyrants, abominable idolaters, and hypocrites of their days. If we, the preachers within the realm of England, were appointed by God to be the salt of the earth, as His other messengers were before us, why did we hold back the salt when manifest corruption was evident? (I accuse no one but myself.) The blind affection I had for my sinful self was the main reason I was not fervent and faithful enough in that regard. I did not want to incur the hatred of all men against me. Therefore, I rebuked the vices of men in the presence of the greatest, making them see themselves as offenders (though I dare not claim that I was the greatest flatterer). Yet, I did not openly wage war against the manifest wicked. For this, I sincerely ask God for mercy.

As I was not as fervent in rebuking manifest iniquity as I should have been, I was not as impartial a feeder as Christ's steward should be. When preaching Christ's Gospel, though my focus (as God knows) was not much on worldly promotion, the love of friends and the worldly affection of some individuals with whom I was most familiar enticed me to remain longer in one place than in another. I had more regard for the pleasure of a few than for the needs of many. At the time, I believed I had not sinned as long as I was not idle. But today, I know it was my duty to consider how long I had stayed in one place and how many hungry souls were in other places, to whom, alas, no one took the trouble to break and distribute the bread of life.

Furthermore, staying in one place, I was not as diligent as my office required. Sometimes, influenced by the counsel of worldly friends, I spared the body. Other times, I engaged in the worldly affairs of particular friends, and occasionally, I indulged in recreation and pastimes through physical exercise.

And although men may consider these to be light and minor transgressions, I acknowledge and confess that unless forgiveness is granted to me through Christ's blood, each of these three offenses mentioned earlier – the lack of fervency in reproving sin, the lack of impartiality in feeding the hungry, and the lack of diligence in the execution of my office – deserved damnation.

Besides these, I was assailed, even infected and corrupted by more grievous sins. My wicked nature desired the favors, esteem, and praise of men. Though at times the Spirit of God moved me to resist and earnestly stirred me (God knows I do not lie) to lament and grieve over these imperfections, they never ceased to trouble me whenever an opportunity arose. They crept into my heart so secretly and cunningly that I could not perceive myself wounded until vanity had nearly gained the upper hand.

Oh Lord, be merciful for my great offense, and do not deal with me according to my great iniquity, but according to the multitude of your mercies. Remove from me the burden of my sin. Out of a desire to avoid the vain displeasure of man, I spared little to offend your Godly majesty.

Beloved of the Lord, do not think that I accuse myself without just cause, as if by doing so, I might appear holier, or that I do it intentionally to accuse others of my brethren, the true preachers of Christ, of similar or greater offenses. No, God is the judge of my conscience, and I do it with an unfeigned and deeply troubled heart.

I know that I grievously offended the majesty of my God during the time when Christ's Gospel had free passage in England. I do this to let you understand that the withdrawal of the heavenly bread and the great tempest now raging against the poor disciples of Christ within the realm of England (as it concerns our part) comes from the great mercy of our heavenly Father. It is meant to provoke us to sincere repentance because neither preachers nor professors rightly considered the time of God's merciful visitation. We spent the time as though God's word had been preached to satisfy our desires rather than reform our evil ways. If we earnestly repent, then Jesus Christ will appear to comfort us, no matter how great the storm. Hasten, O Lord, for the sake of Your name.

The second thing I find to be noted is the intensity of fear that the disciples endured during this great danger, which lasted longer than any they had experienced before.

In Saint Matthew's Gospel, it appears that another time a great storm arose and tossed the boat in which Christ's disciples were laboring. But that was during daylight, and they had Christ with them in the boat, whom they awakened and cried to for help (for at that time, He was sleeping in the boat). They were quickly delivered from their sudden fear. However, now they were in the midst of the raging sea, it was night, Christ their comforter was absent, and He did not come to them during the first, second, or third watch. What fear do you think they were in then? What thoughts arose from their troubled hearts during that storm? Those in similar danger within the realm of England today understand this storm better than my pen can express. One thing I am certain of is that Christ's presence would have been more comforting to them in that great perplexity than ever before, and they would have patiently borne their unbelief being rebuked, if it meant escaping imminent death.

But it shall be profitable and somewhat comforting for us to consider every aspect of their peril. First, you should understand that when the disciples set out to sea to obey Christ's command, the weather was fair, and there was no such tempest in sight. But suddenly, the storm arose with a contrary gust of wind when they were in the middle of their journey. If the tempest had been as severe at the beginning of their voyage as it was later, when they were about halfway through, they would neither have ventured into such great danger nor would it have been possible for them to reach the middle of the sea. Therefore, it can be reasonably deduced that the sea was calm when they initially embarked on their journey.

Secondly, it's important to note by what means and instruments this great storm was set in motion. Were the paddles and the force of their small boat enough to stir up the waves of that vast sea? Certainly not. The Holy Spirit reveals that the seas were stirred by a vehement and opposing wind that blew against their boat in the darkness. However, since the wind neither commands nor moves itself, we must inquire into the underlying cause, which we will touch upon later.

Lastly, we must consider what the disciples did amidst this raging tempest. They did not turn back to be driven towards the land or shore by the force of the contrary wind, for that would have likely led to shipwreck and death. Instead, they persevered in rowing against the wind, awaiting the cessation of that dreadful tempest.

Beloved in the Lord, consider and reflect upon what we read here happening to Christ's disciples and their humble boat. You will discern that the same has occurred, is happening, and will continue to happen to the true church and congregation of Christ, which in this miserable life is nothing more than a humble boat, navigating

the tumultuous and unstable waters of this troublesome world, journeying towards the heavenly port and haven of eternal bliss, as appointed by Christ Jesus for His chosen ones.

I could prove this by citing examples from the descendants of Jacob in Egypt, the Israelites during their captivity, and the early church during the time when Christ Himself preached (and sometimes after His Resurrection and Ascension). The vehement storm did not immediately rage against them upon entering the boat of their toil and tribulation. The bloody decree of Pharaoh was not issued against the seed of Jacob when they first entered Egypt, and the cruel counsel and devilish plot of proud Haman did not arise as soon as Israel and Judah were removed from their lands. Even during the time when Christ Jesus walked among His Apostles in the flesh, there was no such tyranny inflicted upon the saints of God as occurred shortly after in the persecution of Saint Stephen and other disciples. Instead, in the beginning of their journey amidst contrary winds, there was always some calm – meaning they faced trouble but not extreme persecution.

Similarly, my beloved, what has now befallen the afflicted Church of God within the realm of England is a reflection of this pattern. Throughout history, the true Word of God faced contradiction and opposition. The winds blew against us from the outset of the Gospel's resurgence in England, but it could not hinder our progress until these recent days when the raging tempest rages unrestrained over the unstable seas. We find ourselves in the midst of this darkness.

To express my thoughts clearly to you, beloved brethren, this wind that has always blown against the Church of God is the malice and hatred of the devil, which can rightly be compared to the wind.

Just as the wind is invisible, yet the poor disciples feel its disturbance and hindrance in their boat, so is the pestilent envy of the devil constantly at work in the hearts of the reprobate. It is so subtle and crafty that it cannot be perceived by God's elect or His messengers until they feel the blasts pushing their boat backward. Just as the strong wind causes the sea's waves to rage, and the calm water itself is unaware of what's happening and cannot cease or resist, in the same way, the wicked and cruel, both subjects and rulers, who have hearts like the raging sea, are compelled by the envy and malice of the devil to persecute and trouble the true Church of Christ. Yet they are so blinded and bound by the devil's bondage that they neither recognize their many festering iniquities nor stop rushing towards their own destruction. England, you have clear experience of this. During the time of King Henry VIII, how the wicked Bishop Winchester and others, driven by the vehement wind of six bloody articles devised by the devil, sought to overthrow the poor boat and Christ's disciples, is already well known. But at that time, we had Christ Jesus with us, sleeping in the boat, who did not ignore the faithful cries of those in distress. Through His mighty power, gracious goodness, and the invincible force of His holy Word, He compelled those wicked winds to cease, and the raging seas were stilled and calmed. The hearts of God's elect in England marveled at this sudden change, as the fearful edge of that devouring sword was lifted from the necks of the faithful. The tyranny of those ravenous and bloodthirsty wolves, such as the cunning Winchester and some of his fellow brethren who were the devil's sons, was restrained for a time. Yet, the devil did not cease to blow his wind, and he found ways, through his wicked instruments, for even brothers to consent to the death of one another. This did not hinder the course of the voyaging boat, which continued despite the devil's fury. Recognizing that his own honor and service, namely, his detestable Mass, were being revealed as damnable idolatry and assured damnation for

those who trusted in it, the devil began to work even more cunningly. He incited such intense hatred between two men who appeared to be the chief supporters of the king. That wretched and miserable Northumberland could not be satisfied until Somerset, unjustly, was deprived of his life. God compelled me to speak openly about what the devil and his members, the pestilent Papists, intended by this act. God granted that my words reached many places, including before you and in the Newcastle incident, as Sir Robert Brandling would not forget for a long time afterward. I pray that he may remember all other matters spoken before him and at other times as truly as he did my interpretation of the vineyard, whose hedges, ditches, towers, and winepress God destroyed because it failed to produce good fruit. May he also remember that everything spoken by my mouth that day has now come to pass, except for the final destruction and vengeance of God, which has not yet fallen upon the greatest offenders. It will surely come unless he and others of his kind, who were enemies of God's truth at that time, quickly repent of their stubborn disobedience. I was compelled by my conscience to affirm more than once that those who devised the means to take away one man would also find the means to take away the other. This whole ordeal was devised by the devil and his instruments to obstruct and hinder Christ's disciples and their poor boat. But it was not able to do so because the boat had not yet reached the middle of the sea.

Transubstantiation (the burden that the devil hatched by Pope Nicolas and, since that time, fostered and nurtured by all his followers, priests, friars, monks, and other sworn soldiers, and especially in these last days by Stephen Gardiner and his supporters in England) was not clearly refuted and mightily overthrown at that time. Therefore, God granted wisdom to His ministers and messengers to expose that empty fallacy. He especially empowered the pen of that revered father in God, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop

of Canterbury, to unravel the devilish sophistry woven by Gardiner and his blind followers, who sought to keep God's truth in bondage. I think they will be more inclined to condemn his works (which will continue to exist and stand, despite their efforts) rather than attempt to refute them.

Furthermore, God gave courage and knowledge to the Parliament to remove the round, clipped god (referring to the consecrated host in the Roman Catholic tradition), upon which Papists base their holiness, and ordered common bread to be used at the Lord's table. They also abolished most of the superstitions that had previously tainted Christ's true religion, with the exception of kneeling during the Lord's Supper.

Then, dear brethren, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and suddenly, a dreadful and sorrowful tempest arose. Our King was taken from us, and the devil stirred those instruments who had always been obedient to his commands. By inflaming the heart of that wretched and unhappy man (whom I judge more deserving of pity than hatred), they drove him to desire the imperial Crown of England for his posterity. What followed from this need not be written here.

From this brief account, beloved in the Lord, you may discern two important points:

The first is that the entire malice of the devil ultimately aims to oppose and overthrow Christ's afflicted Church. During the time when Christ's gospel was preached in England, what else did the devil and his servants, the pestilent Papists, intend with their crafty schemes, but the subversion of the Gospel and the regaining of power to persecute God's saints, which they have achieved to their own eventual destruction in this hour of darkness.

Do not be surprised that I say that the crafty schemes of the pestilent Papists brought about all this mischief. For who could work mischief more effectively than those who held authority and rule? Under King Edward, who was it that ruled with courage and pride, but Northumberland? Who, under King Edward's reign, governed through counsel and wisdom? Shall I name the man? I will not state it more plainly now than I did in my last sermon, which God allowed me to deliver before that innocent and godly King Edward the Sixth and his Council at Westminster, even to the faces of those I meant to address. I referred to the following Scripture passage: "He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me" (John 13:18). I made the assertion that it was commonly observed that the most godly princes often had officers and chief counselors who were the most ungodly, sworn enemies of God's true religion, and traitors to their rulers. It wasn't that their wickedness and ungodliness were quickly discerned by these godly princes and men. Rather, these crafty deceivers managed to hide their malice against God and His truth and their deceitful hearts towards their beloved masters, so that by worldly wisdom and cunning, they eventually attained high positions. As evidence of my claim, I recounted the stories of Ahithophel, Shebna, and Judas. The first two held high offices and wielded great authority under godly kings David and Hezekiah, while Judas was the treasurer in Christ Jesus's company. After discussing this matter, I posed a question:

Why did such godly princes allow wicked men to be on their councils and hold positions of authority under them?

To this, I answered: either these men possessed an abundance of worldly wisdom, foresight, and experience regarding the governance of a commonwealth, making their counsel appear indispensable, and thus, in order to maintain tranquility and peace in realms, they were

retained in authority; or they concealed the malice they harbored against their masters and God's true religion so secretly in their hearts that no one could discern it until, by God's permission, they seized upon the right opportunity to reveal their wickedness so plainly that the whole world could see it. This was most evident in the cases of Ahithophel and Shebna.

Concerning Ahithophel, it is recorded that he was King David's most confidential counselor, and his counsel was considered as valuable as the Oracle of God in those days.

As for Shebna, he served as Controller, Secretary, and, eventually, Treasurer under the good King Hezekiah. He would not have ascended to such positions under a godly prince if his treachery and malice towards the king and God's true religion had been openly known. No, Sobna was a crafty deceiver who could maintain a pleasant appearance towards the king, concealing both his malice and treason from the king and his council. However, the prophet Isaiah was commanded by God to go to him and reveal his treacherous heart and woeful end.

I asked, "Were David and Hezekiah, both princes of great godliness, deceived by crafty counselors and hypocrites? Is it any wonder then that a young and innocent king would be deceived by cunning, covetous, wicked, and ungodly advisers? I greatly fear that Achitophel may have been the counselor, Judas the treasurer, and Sobna the scribe, controller, and treasurer."

This is what I declared on that day, not in secret (as many can attest) but before those whom my conscience deemed worthy of accusation. And today, I write no more (although I could justly do so because they have revealed themselves more openly), but I affirm that under that innocent King, the pestilent Papists held the greatest authority.

Oh, who was considered the soul and life of the council in matters of great importance? None other than Sobna. Who could efficiently manage affairs, allowing the rest of the council to pursue their pleasures and amusements? No one surpassed Sobna. Who displayed the most eagerness to destroy Somerset and elevate Northumberland? Was it not Sobna? Who boldly proclaimed, "Bastard, Bastard! The incestuous bastard Mary shall never reign over us. She is a notorious papist. She will undermine the true religion and bring in foreigners to the detriment of this commonwealth." Which council member made these and even more persuasive arguments against Mary, to whom he now bows and kneels? It was Sobna, the Treasurer. What were the intentions of such traitorous and deceitful hypocrites with all these crafty plots and disguises? Without a doubt, it was the overthrow of Christ's true religion, which was flourishing in England at the time. Its freedom irritated the guts of such pestilent papists, who have now achieved the days they longed for, albeit to their own destruction and disgrace. In spite of their leaders, God's plagues shall strike them, and they will be ensnared by the traps they set for others. Their own counsel shall make them slaves to a proud, mischievous, unfaithful, and vile nation.

Now, on to the second point of our discourse:

Although the tyrants of this world have learned through long experience that they cannot prevail against God's truth, they are bound as slaves to their master, the devil. Thus, they cannot cease persecuting the members of Christ when the devil unleashes his forces in the darkness of the night, meaning when the light of Christ's Gospel is extinguished, and the devil reigns through idolatry, superstition, and tyranny. This is clearly seen from the beginning of the world to the time of Christ and from then until today. Ishmael

should have realized that he could not triumph over Isaac because God had made His promise to him, just as there is no doubt that Abraham, their father, taught this to his entire household. Esau, too, understood that Jacob had the same promise. Pharaoh should have seen from the many miracles that Israel was God's chosen people, whom he could not utterly destroy. Similarly, the scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests knew in their consciences that Christ's entire doctrine was from God and that His miracles and works were done by the power of God for the benefit of mankind. They knew He was innocent, and yet, goaded on by the devil, none of them refrained from persecuting Him.

This I write so that you should not be surprised, my beloved brethren, even though you witness the wicked Bishop Winchester, the delusional Bishop Durham, and the rest of their faction (who were once so confounded that they dared neither to speak nor write in defense of their heresies) now raging and triumphing against the eternal truth of God, as if they had never tried the power of God spoken through His true messengers.

Do not be surprised (I say), my beloved brethren, that the tyrants of this world are so obedient and eager to follow the cruel counsels of such disguised monsters. Neither can either group refrain because both are as subject to obey the devil, their prince and father, as the unstable sea is to raise its waves when the vehement wind blows upon it.

It is frightening to hear that the devil has such power over any person, but the Word of God has instructed us in this. So, even if it contradicts our preferences, we must believe it. For the devil is called the prince and god of this world because he reigns and is honored through tyranny and idolatry within it.

He is called the prince of darkness, having power in the air. It is said that he works in the children of unbelief because he stirs them to trouble God's elect, just as he invaded Saul and compelled him to persecute David. Likewise, he entered into the heart of Judas and moved him to betray his master. He is called the prince over the sons of pride and the father of all those who are liars and enemies of God's truth. He has no less power over them today than he had over Annas and Caiaphas, who are not denied to have been led and moved by the devil to persecute Christ Jesus and His most true doctrine. Therefore, do not be surprised (I say) that the devil now rages in his obedient servants, such as wily Winchester, delusional Durham, and bloody Bonner, along with the rest of their bloody, murderous brood. For this is their hour and power granted to them. They cannot cease or assuage their furious rage, for the devil, their sire, stirs, moves, and carries them at his will.

But by this, I do not declare that the devil and these cruel tyrants have power at their discretion. No, not so, not so. For just as the devil has no power to trouble the elements except as God allows, worldly tyrants (though the devil may have fully possessed their hearts) have no power at all to trouble the saints of God except as their reins are loosened by God's hands.

And in this, my dear brethren, lies my singular comfort today when I hear that these bloody tyrants within the realm of England kill, murder, destroy, and devour men and women like ravenous lions set loose from their bonds. Therefore, I lift up the eyes of my heart (as much as my iniquity and present sorrow will allow), and to my heavenly Father, I will say:

O Lord, those cruel tyrants have been released by Your hand to punish our former ingratitude. We trust that You will not allow them

to prevail forever. But when You have corrected us a little and have revealed to the world the tyranny that lurked in their deceitful hearts, then You will break their lawless bones and confine them in their caves again. In that generation and among the posterity that follows, may they praise Your holy name before Your congregation. Amen.

When I feel any taste or inkling of these promises, I consider myself most fortunate. I believe I have received fair compensation, even if I and all that belongs to me on this earth should suffer death, knowing that God will yet show mercy to His afflicted church in England. He will repress the pride of these present tyrants, just as He has done with those who came before our time.

Therefore, beloved brother in our Saviour Jesus Christ, raise your hands to God, though they are weary from fear. Let your hearts, which have endured sorrow in these distressing days, awaken and heed the voice of your God. He swears by Himself that He will not allow His church to be oppressed forever. Nor will He despise our supplications to the end if we row and strive against this vehement wind. By that, I mean if we do not turn back recklessly to idolatry, then this storm will be calmed, despite the devil's fury. Christ Jesus will come quickly to your deliverance. He will pierce through the wind, and the raging seas will obey and bear His feet and body, like solid, stable, and dry land. Do not waver from the sure foundation of your faith.

Even though Christ Jesus is absent from you in bodily presence, just as He was from His disciples in that great storm, He is present through His mighty power and grace. He stands upon the mountain in security and rest. His flesh and entire humanity are now in heaven, beyond suffering such troubles as He once did. Yet He is full of pity and compassion and takes heed of all our toil, anguish, and

labours. Therefore, there is no doubt that He will suddenly appear for our great comfort. The tyrants of this world cannot prevent His coming any more than the howling wind and raging seas could stop Him from reaching His disciples when they expected nothing but imminent death. So, once again, I say, my beloved in the Lord, let your hearts cling to the promises that God has made to truly repentant sinners. Be firmly convinced, with unwavering faith, that God is always faithful and just in fulfilling His promises. You have heard of these days very clearly, when your hearts could fear no danger because you were close to the shore, and the storm had not yet arisen. That is, you were young scholars of Christ when no persecution was seen or felt. But now you have come into the midst of the sea, for what part of England has not heard of your profession? The vehement storm, which we spoke of in almost every exhortation, has now suddenly arisen. But what then? Has God brought you this far, only to have everyone perish, body and soul? No, my entire trust in God's mercy and truth is quite the opposite. God did not bring His people into Egypt and through the Red Sea so that they should perish there. Instead, He intended to display a most glorious deliverance through them. Likewise, Christ did not send His Apostles into the midst of the sea and allow the raging storm to assail them and their boat in order for them to perish. Instead, He desired that His great goodness towards them should be felt and perceived even more powerfully as He delivered them mightily from the fear of perishing. He set an example for us, that He would do the same for us if we remain steadfast in our profession and faith, turning away from superstition and idolatry. We warned you of these days long ago. For the sake of Christ's blood, let these words be heeded. The same truth that spoke before of these most grievous days also foretold the everlasting joy prepared for those who continue to the end. The trouble has come. O dear brethren, look for the comfort, and,

following the example of the Apostles, endure in resisting this vehement storm for a little while longer.

The third watch is not yet over. Remember that Christ Jesus did not come to His disciples until it was the fourth watch, and they were then in no less danger than you are now. Their faith faltered, and their bodies were in peril. But Christ Jesus came when they least expected Him, and He shall do the same for you if you continue in the profession you have made.

I dare to be confident in the name of Him whose eternal truth and glorious gospel you have heard and received. He also stirs within my heart a strong desire (God knows, I do not lie) for your salvation, and some concern for your bodies, which I will not express at this moment.

I have now briefly passed through the tumultuous tempest, similar to the one the disciples of Christ faced after He had fed the great multitude in the desert. I have omitted many valuable lessons that could have been gleaned from the text because my current purpose is not to be tedious or overly detailed, but rather to highlight those things pertinent to these most distressing days.

So, let us now discuss the end of this storm and trouble, in which I find four chief points to be noted.

First, the disciples were more frightened in the presence of Christ than they were before. Second, Christ used only His word as an instrument to calm their hearts. Third, Peter, in his fervour, left the boat, but later became afraid. Fourth, Christ did not allow Peter or the other disciples to perish in their fear but gloriously delivered them and calmed the storm.

Their great fear and the reason for it are expressed in the text with these words: "When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were afraid, saying that He was a spirit. And they cried out in fear."

It is not my intention in this discourse to speak about spirits or to debate whether spirits, whether good or bad, can appear and trouble people. Nor do I aim to inquire why human nature is fearful of spirits and vehemently recoils from their presence and company. My purpose is solely to address matters relevant to this time.

First, let us consider three reasons why the disciples did not recognize Christ but mistook Him for a spirit.

The first reason was the darkness of the night.

The second was the unusual sight that appeared. And the third was the danger and tempest in which they so earnestly struggled for their safety.

The darkness, I say, of the night prevented their eyes from seeing Him. And it was beyond nature that a massive, heavy, and weighty body of a man (such as they understood their Master Christ to be) could walk upon or be supported by the water of the raging sea without sinking. Lastly, the horror of the tempest and the great danger they were in convinced them that they were facing certain drowning.

So, all these three factors combined to reinforce their belief that Christ Jesus, who came for their great comfort and deliverance, was a terrifying and malevolent spirit appearing to bring about their destruction.

What happened to Christ Jesus Himself in this instance, I could prove to have happened and continues to happen daily to the truth of His blessed Word throughout all ages from the beginning.

Just as Christ Himself, during their distress, was initially perceived and deemed by His disciples to be a spirit or a phantasmic being, the truth and pure preaching of His glorious gospel, sent by God for humanity's greatest comfort, deliverance from sin, and peace of conscience, is judged to be nothing less than heresy and deceptive doctrine sent by the devil for man's destruction when it is first offered and faithfully proclaimed.

The reason for this is the profound ignorance of God that has persistently clouded the world throughout every age since the beginning. Sometimes, God's very elect were, in their ignorance and error, no different from the reprobate. Abraham was once an idolater; Moses was well-versed in all the Egyptian arts; Paul, a proud Pharisee, stood against Christ and His doctrine. Even in our own age, when the truth of God was presented to some, they were greatly alarmed and cried out against it, solely because the dark clouds of ignorance had previously troubled them. However, I shall leave this matter aside for now, to address it later when there is a better opportunity.

The key point I wish you to observe and remember in this irrational fear of the disciples is this:

The closer deliverance and salvation draw near, the stronger and more intense the temptation of the Church of God becomes. Conversely, as God's vengeance approaches the reprobate, they become more proud, cruel, and arrogant. This commonly leads to the true messengers of life being judged and held responsible for all misfortunes. This pattern is evident in many historical accounts.

When God had ordained to free the oppressed Israelites from the tyranny of the Egyptians through the hand of Moses, and Moses was sent to Pharaoh for that purpose, the affliction and anguish caused by the recent cruelty they endured were so great that they openly cursed Moses (and undoubtedly harboured hatred for God who sent him). They claimed that Moses and Aaron were the sole cause of their recent extreme suffering.

The same life is to be seen in the books of Kings, both under the Prophets Elisha and Isaiah. During the reign of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, Samaria was besieged by the king of Syria. In Samaria, undoubtedly, although the king and the majority of the people were wicked, there were still some members of God's elect church who were brought to such extreme famine that not only were common commodities sold at exorbitant prices, but women were driven to commit the unnatural act of eating their own children. During this period, the Prophet Elisha frequently resided in the city and had a significant role in its preservation. This is evident because the king, in response to a pitiful complaint from a woman who had eaten her own son due to hunger, blamed Elisha for the dire situation. Elisha, upon hearing this, reacted by tearing his clothes and pronouncing a solemn oath and vow that day that the head of Elisha would not remain on his body. If Elisha had not been involved in the city's defense, why would the king have become so furious with him rather than with others? However, whether he was the architect of the city's defense or not, it serves my purpose, for the church was in such dire straits before deliverance that the chief shepherd of the time was sought to be killed by those who should have protected him.

A similar account is found in the case of Hezekiah, who defended his city, Jerusalem, and resisted the haughty Sennacherib. Hezekiah, undoubtedly following the counsel of Isaiah, became so overwhelmed

with sorrow and humiliation due to the blasphemous words of Sennacherib that he had no recourse but to take refuge in the Temple of the Lord, where he opened the disdainful letters sent to him by the proud and arrogant tyrant.

By these and numerous other historical accounts, it becomes abundantly clear that the closer salvation and deliverance draw near, the more intense the temptation and trouble.

I write this to remind you that even though you may witness tribulation to such an extent that it seems nothing but extreme misery without any hope of comfort, you should not turn away from God. And even if at times you are moved to detest the messengers of life, you should not assume that God will never show mercy again. No, dear brethren, as He has dealt with others before you, He will also deal with you.

God will allow tribulation and anguish to abound in such a way that no source of comfort can be seen in man, so that when deliverance arrives, all glory will belong to Him, whose Word alone can calm the most violent tempests. He drowned Pharaoh and his army, scattered the great multitude of Midianites, and by His angel slew Sennacherib's host, delivering His afflicted people when nothing but utter destruction seemed imminent. He will do the same for you, beloved brethren, if you patiently await His consolation and guidance. May God open your eyes to rightly understand the meaning of my writing. Amen.

Perhaps you are wondering why God permits such bloodthirsty tyrants to torment and afflict His chosen Church. I have mentioned some reasons earlier, and there are more I could enumerate, but for now, I will suffice with one.

The justice of God is such that He will not pour forth His extreme vengeance upon the reprobate until their iniquity is so evident that even their own flatterers cannot excuse it. Pharaoh was not destroyed until his own household servants and subjects abhorred and condemned his stubborn disobedience.

Jezebel and Athaliah were not consigned to hell during their lifetimes until all of Israel and Judah had borne witness to their cruelty and abominations. Judas was not hanged until the high priests had testified to his treacherous actions and wickedness. Without delving into the ancient tyrants whom God has plagued, let us turn our attention to the tyrants currently within the realm of England, whom God will not spare much longer.

If Stephen Gardiner, Cuthbert Tunstall, and the bloodthirsty Bonner, false bishops of Winchester, Durham, and London, had met their rightful end for their false doctrines and treacherous deeds, then errant Papists would have argued (as I and others have heard them do) that they were men capable of reform, suitable instruments for the commonwealth, not as obstinate and malicious as they were judged, and not thirsting for the blood of anyone. And what of Lady Mary? Who has not heard claims that she was temperate, merciful, and concerned for the welfare of England? Had she (I repeat) and those of her pernicious counsel been condemned to hell before these days, their wickedness and cruelty might not have been so glaringly evident to the world. For who could have imagined that such cruelty could reside in the heart of a woman, especially one who is called a virgin? Would she thirst for the blood of innocents and those who, by just laws and honest witnesses, cannot be proven guilty?

I recall that Athaliah, driven by a lust for power, murdered the descendants of the kings of Judah. And at the behest of her wicked

mother, Herodias' daughter obtained the head of John the Baptist. However, I believe that in Scripture or history, it would be rare to find a woman who, while allowing herself to be called the most blessed virgin, caused so much bloodshed to establish usurped authority.

Jezebel, a cursed idolater, caused the blood of God's prophets to be shed and unjustly murdered Naboth for his vineyard. But even she, I think, did not erect half as many gallows in all of Israel as pernicious Mary has done within London alone.

Papists, you may excuse your "Mary the virgin." Well, let her be your "virgin" and a tool to maintain such idolaters. Nevertheless, I shall rightly lay to her charge that which I believe no Papist within England would justify or defend. Therefore, O you seed of the Serpent, answer this question: Would any of you have confessed two years ago that Mary, your "mirror," was false, deceitful, fickle, proud, and a promise-breaker (except for promises made to your god, the Pope, to the great shame and dishonour of her noble father)? I am certain that you would have thought little of such qualities in her. And yet does she not openly reveal herself to be a flagrant traitor to the imperial crown of England, in violation of the just laws of the realm, by intending to bring in a foreigner and make a proud Spaniard king? This will bring shame and dishonour upon the nobility, result in the confiscation of their honours, lands, possessions, chief offices, and promotions, lead to the complete depletion of the nation's wealth, resources, and fortifications, bring about the degradation of the yeomanry, the enslavement of the commonalty, the overthrow of Christianity and God's true religion, and ultimately lead to the complete destruction of the entire public estate and commonwealth of England. Let Kent and Suffolk, her own promises and proclamations, her father's will, the city of London,

and the ancient laws and Acts of Parliament established in England be the judges between my accusations and her most treacherous iniquity.

First, her declaration and proclamation clearly stated that she would neither marry nor entertain any foreigner. Kent and Suffolk, along with the city of London, bear witness to this. Ancient laws and Acts of Parliament define it as treason to transfer the English crown into the hands of a foreign nation. The oath taken to uphold these statutes condemns anyone who consents to her traitorous actions. Speak now, O you Papists, and defend your monstrous mistress, and deny if you can, for shame, that she has not revealed herself to be bent on the ruin and destruction of noble England. Oh, who would have ever believed (I write now in bitterness of heart) that such unnatural cruelty would have dominion over any reasonable being? But the saying is too true: that the usurped rule of an affectionate woman is a madness without reason.

Who would have thought that the love for that realm which has borne, nurtured, and so nobly sustained that wicked woman would not have moved her heart with compassion?

Now, it is clear to all that in all her actions, she manifests most clearly that under an English name, she harbors a Spaniard's heart. If God (I say) had not allowed her and her cruel council to rise to power as our scourge, then these abominations, cruelty, and treason against God, against His saints, and against the Realm, whose liberties they are sworn to defend, would never have been so openly revealed.

And who could have believed that glorious Gardiner and treacherous Tunstal (whom all papists praised for their supposed love of their country) would have become such manifest traitors? They not only

went against their solemn oaths, swearing never to consent or agree that a foreigner should rule over England, but also adjudged the Imperial crown to belong to a Spaniard by inheritance and lineage. O traitors, traitors, how can you even show your faces?

It brings to mind Christmas Day in the year 1552 when I was preaching in Newcastle upon Tyne and speaking against the obstinacy of the Papists. I made this assertion: Whoever, in his heart, is an enemy of Christ's gospel and doctrine, which was then preached in the realm of England, is also an enemy of God and a secret traitor to the crown and commonwealth of England. Just as they desired nothing more than the King's death, which their wickedness would bring about, they did not care who would reign over them as long as their idolatry could be reestablished. Let my very enemies now testify whether those words of mine have not proven true. What is the reason that Winchester and the rest of his pestilent sect so eagerly desired a Spaniard to rule over England? The cause is evident. Just as that nation surpasses all others in pride and debauchery, they can rightfully be called the true sons of superstition when it comes to idolatry and worthless papistical and devilish ceremonies. Hence, they found and considered Spaniards as the most suitable instruments to uphold, establish, and defend the kingdom of that cruel beast, whose deadly wound has recently been healed in England. (Alas, for pity!) England must now be brought into bondage and servitude so that pestilent Papists can rule without punishment.

But, O you beast, I speak to you, Winchester, more cruel than any tiger, will neither shame, nor fear, nor the benefits received restrain your tyrannous cruelty? Do you not feel ashamed, you bloodthirsty creature, to betray your native country and its liberties? Do you not fear to open the door to such iniquity that all of England will become a common den for Spaniards? Will you repay the benefits you've

received from that noble realm with such ingratitude? Don't you remember that England has given you birth, nurtured you, and promoted you to riches, honor, and high positions? And will you now, oh wretched wretch, for all these manifold benefits received, be the cause that England will cease to be England? Yes, indeed. In doing so, you will gratify your father, the devil, and his lieutenant, the Pope, with all his baggage, with whom you now labor incessantly to flourish again in England. Although, like a hypocrite and double-faced wretch, you, compelled by the invincible truth of God's holy word, wrote your book long ago titled "True Obedience" against that monstrous whore of Babylon and her falsely usurped power and authority. But now, to your everlasting shame, you return to your vomit and become an open arch-Papist again.

Furthermore, why do you seek the blood of Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury? What about the good father, Hugh Latimer, and that most learned and prudent man, Doctor Ridley, the true Bishop of London? Do you not consider that their leniency, sound doctrine, pure lives, godly conduct, and wise counsel are well-known in more realms than just England? Do you not feel ashamed to seek the destruction of those who worked for the preservation of your life and obtained it when you rightly deserved death? But, O you son of Satan, you clearly demonstrate that nothing can soften your cruel malice or purge the deadly venom in the heart where the devil reigns.

You are a brother to Cain and a fellow to Judas the traitor, and hence, you can do nothing but thirst for the blood of Abel and betray Christ Jesus and His eternal truth.

But, dear brethren, this is how the children of the devil reveal their own wickedness and ungodliness. When God's vengeance, which shall not sleep, is poured out upon them, every tongue will confess,

acknowledge, and declare that God is righteous in all His judgments. And this is why cruel tyrants are permitted and allowed for a time not only to live in wealth and prosperity but also to prevail and gain victory over the true saints of God and those who resist their fury at God's command. Now, let's turn to what follows.

The instrument and means that Christ Jesus used to dispel and alleviate the terrible fear and anguish of His disciples was His word alone. As it is written: "But straightway Jesus spoke unto them, saying: 'Be of good comfort, it is I; be not afraid.'"

The natural man, unable to comprehend the power of God, might have desired some other immediate comfort in such great danger, such as having the heavens open up and revealing a bright light that would fully display Christ's face, or the winds and raging sea suddenly ceasing. They might have expected another miracle that engaged all their senses, showing that they were delivered from danger. And truly, it would have been equally possible for Christ Jesus to have done any of these things, or even a greater work, as to have said, "It is I; be not afraid." Yet, in His wisdom, He sought to teach us the dignity and powerful effect of His most holy word by using no other means to quell the great and terrible fear of His disciples than His comforting word and living voice. This is not done only on one occasion but whenever His church finds itself in dire perplexity, with nothing but extreme calamity, desolation, and ruin in sight, the first comfort it ever receives comes through His word and promise. This can be seen in the troubles and temptations of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Paul.

To Abraham, after he had defeated four kings, he received no other defense (for he surely feared their posterity and lineage as a foreigner) than this promise of God, conveyed by His holy word:

"Fear not, Abraham, I am thy buckler," meaning your protection and defense.

Likewise, Isaac, when fleeing from his usual dwelling place due to hunger, had no other comfort or guidance than this promise: "I shall be with thee."

Throughout Jacob's journeys and trials, we see the same pattern. Whether he fled from his father's house in fear of his brother Esau, or when returning from Laban, or when he was apprehensive about the inhabitants of the regions of the Canaanites and the Perizzites, or when his sons slew the Shechemites, he found no other defense than God's word and promise. This pattern is most evident in the case of Moses and the afflicted church under his leadership. When Moses himself was in such despair that he chided with God, saying, "Why hast thou sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath oppressed this people, neither hast thou delivered thy people."

Moses's reproachful questioning of God reveals the depth of his temptation and the doubts he harbored concerning God's power – either that God was powerless to rescue His people from the tyrant's grip, or that He was mutable and unfaithful to His promises. The people faced similar and even more severe temptations, as we have mentioned before. They, in their anguish of heart, both rejected God and Moses. How did God console them in this dire extremity? Did He immediately strike down Pharaoh, the great tyrant? No. Did He send them a legion of angels to defend and deliver them? Not at all. He simply reiterated His previous promises to them, which they had heard many times before. Yet, the mere recitation of these promises had such a powerful effect on Moses that it not only dispelled bitterness and despair but also filled him with such courage that he

fearlessly returned to the king's presence after being threatened and rebuffed.

I write this, beloved in the Lord, so that you may recognize the Word of God as not only the means by which heaven and earth were created but also as God's power for the salvation of all who believe. It is the bright lantern to the feet of those who naturally walk in darkness, the life for those dead in sin, a comfort to those in tribulation, a tower of defense for the weakest, the wisdom and great happiness of those who delight in it. In short, you know that God's Word is so effective and powerful that it purges sin, conquers death, suppresses tyrants, and ultimately overthrows and confounds the devil, the author of all misery. I write this to assure you that, knowing all this about the holy Word and the blessed Gospel and voice of God (which you have heard before, to your comfort), you may, in this hour of darkness and raging tempest, yearn and pray to hear once more the lovely voice of your Saviour, Christ: "Be of good comfort, it is I, fear not." Furthermore, you may find consolation in that blessed Gospel, which you have previously professed, knowing with certainty that God will be no less merciful to you than He has been to others afflicted for His name's sake before you. Even if God does not immediately dispel this terrible darkness or suddenly calm this storm, He will not allow His troubled boat to be drowned.

Remember, brethren, that God's vengeance did not immediately punish Pharaoh in the first year of his tyranny. Likewise, the dogs did not devour and consume both the flesh and bones of wicked Jezebel when she first established and promoted her idolatry. However, as none of them escaped the punishment they deserved, God will also preserve His afflicted church, despite Satan and his blind and wretched followers, in the midst of this great tempest and darkness in the realm of England. Therefore, beloved in the Lord, let

the comfort of God's promises revive your dulled spirits once again. Exercise yourselves privately by meditating on what you have heard proclaimed openly. Let each one become a faithful preacher to his brother. If your conversation is about Christ, rest assured that He will be present before you realize it. His word is like fragrant ointment or flowers whose scent cannot be confined but wafts out to comfort those nearby. It is not as delightful if the ointment remains in its container, or the flowers remain untouched and motionless.

Consider well, dear brethren, that before Christ spoke, His disciples took Him for some wicked spirit, and His presence brought them no delectable scent. But when He spoke, the sweet fragrance of His voice penetrated their hearts. What comfort resided in the hearts of the disciples upon hearing these words: "Be of good comfort, it is I"? In other words, "Do not think I am a spirit come to harm you. I have come to deliver you. It is I, your Master, indeed your most familiar Master. It is I, whose voice and teachings you know, for you are My sheep. It is I, whose works you have witnessed, even if you have not fully comprehended them. It is I, who commanded you to embark on this journey, and therefore, I have come to you now in your hour of trouble, so do not be afraid. This storm will subside, and you will be delivered."

What comfort, dear brethren, could be found in the hearts of the disciples upon hearing Christ's voice, and recognising Him by it? This can only be known and declared by those who have experienced long conflict and struggle – the battle between the flesh and the spirit during times of extreme trouble when Christ seems absent. Only they can bear witness to the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

Peter, in particular, externally demonstrated the effect of Christ's words on his heart. Immediately after hearing his Master's voice, he

said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the waters." This reveals what Christ's voice had accomplished in Peter's heart – not only a disregard for and contempt of the great tempest but also such boldness and love that he feared no impending danger. He firmly believed that his Master, Christ, possessed such power and might that nothing could resist His word and command. Therefore, he said, "Command me to come." It was as if he meant, "I desire nothing more than the assurance of Your command. If You command, I am ready to obey. I know with certainty that the waters cannot overcome me if You speak the word." Christ, to teach Peter and us by His example, condescended to his request and commanded him to come. Peter promptly left the boat and stepped onto the waters to approach Christ.

This concludes the discussion of Peter's actions, which provides a wealth of teaching, but I will now skip over all that does not specifically pertain to the present situation in the realm of England.

Before discussing it further, dear brethren, it is worth noting that sometimes the messengers of life are mistakenly regarded as messengers of death. This is true not only among the reprobate but also among God's elect. Moses was such a messenger to the Israelites, Jeremiah to the people of Jerusalem, and Christ Himself to His apostles. However, this error is not a permanent sin that endures forever among God's elect. Instead, it dissipates in such a way that they not only recognise the voice of their shepherd but also earnestly strive to obey and follow it, even at the risk of their own lives. This is the key distinction between the children of God and the reprobate:

The former obey God when He speaks through His messengers, whom they embrace with genuine love. They do this even against all

worldly appearances and human laws and ordinances. Therefore, they receive comfort beyond expectations in their greatest times of need.

On the other hand, the latter consistently resist God's messengers and hate His word. Consequently, in their times of great adversity, God either withdraws the presence of His word from them or they fall into such profound despair that, even when God's messengers are sent to them, they cannot find comfort in God's promises or follow the counsel of His true messengers, no matter how perfect and fruitful it may be. There are numerous clear testimonies of this within the Scriptures.

For instance, it is evident in the case of Saul that God abandoned him to the extent that He would not answer him through prophets, dreams, or visions.

In the case of King Ahaz of Judah, who was consumed by anguish and fear due to the multitude of those conspiring against him, the prophet Isaiah was sent to assure him through God's promise that his enemies would not prevail against him. Isaiah even asked Ahaz to request a sign from God, either from heaven or below, to confirm this promise. However, Ahaz, who had consistently despised God's prophets and practised abominable idolatry, was so entrenched in his deadly despair that he could not accept any consolation. He rejected all of God's offers with feigned excuses.

Although God temporarily engaged with this hypocrite at that time (which was not for his sake but for the safety of His afflicted Church), he did not escape God's vengeance later.

A similar story is found in the case of Zedekiah, the wretched and final king of Judah before the destruction of Jerusalem. In his

profound fear and extreme distress, he summoned the prophet Jeremiah and secretly asked him how he could escape the great danger posed by the Chaldeans besieging the city. The prophet fearlessly advised the king that, to save his life and the city, he should surrender himself into the hands of the king of Babylon. However, the miserable king could not bring himself to follow the prophet's counsel because he had never embraced the prophet's teachings and had never shown him any favour. He ultimately heeded the demands of God's enemies, the chief priests and false prophets. This good prophet, Samuel, suffered persecution, imprisonment, and even a death sentence. The most blatant example of the deliberate blindness of wicked idolaters is recorded in the same prophet Jeremiah, as follows:

After the city of Jerusalem was burned and destroyed, the king was taken prisoner, his sons and chief nobles were killed, and God's full vengeance was poured out upon the disobedient. Yet, there remained a remnant in the land who sought guidance from the prophet Jeremiah concerning whether they should stay in the land of Judea as permitted by the Chaldeans or flee to Egypt. To resolve their uncertainty, they asked the prophet to pray to God on their behalf. In response to their petition, God promised not to withhold any revelation granted to Him and would reveal His will to Jeremiah. In turn, they solemnly vowed to obey whatever the Lord revealed through him.

When Jeremiah, inspired by the Spirit of God and with full knowledge of His will, commanded them to remain in the land, promising that God would establish them there and repent of the plagues brought upon them, they reacted contrarily. They believed that by going to Egypt, they could live in peace and abundance without the fear of war and scarcity of provisions. However,

Jeremiah warned them that the very plagues they feared would befall them if they disobeyed the Lord and ventured to Egypt, leading to death by the sword, famine, or pestilence. Their response to the prophet's clear message is recorded in the text:

"You are lying; the Lord our God has not sent you to say, 'You must not go to Egypt to settle there.' Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you against us to hand us over to the Babylonians, so they may kill us or carry us into exile to Babylon."

In this people's response, we observe great obstinacy and blindness. Despite witnessing the fulfillment of every threat that the Lord had spoken through the godly prophet Jeremiah, with the recent destruction of Jerusalem still fresh in their memory, they refused to believe his warnings or follow his wise counsel offered for their welfare. Why did they react this way? Because they had never embraced God's truth, nor had they repented of their past idolatry. They continued to take pleasure in idolatry and rejoiced in it, as evident in the forty-third chapter of the same prophet. They desired to be in Egypt, where all forms of idolatry and superstition abounded, so they could openly indulge in their practices, disregarding God's holy laws and the admonitions of His prophets.

In writing about this, it comes to mind that after the death of that innocent and godly King Edward the Sixth, during the great tumult in England over the establishment of the authority of that unfortunate and wicked woman (referring to the current reigning queen, I believe) by treating this subject in a town in Buckinghamshire named Amersham before a large congregation, with a sorrowful heart and tearful eyes, I exclaimed: "England, England, now is God's wrath kindled against you. Now has He begun to punish as He has threatened for a long time through His true

Prophets and messengers. He has taken from you the crown of your glory and left you without honor, like a body without a head. This appears to be only the beginning of sorrows, which seem to be increasing. For I perceive that the hearts, tongues, and hands of one Englishman are turned against another, and division prevails throughout the entire realm, which is a sure sign of impending desolation. O England, England, do you not consider that your commonwealth is like a ship sailing on the sea? If your mariners and governors consume one another, will you not suffer shipwreck in a short time? O England, England (alas), these plagues are poured upon you because you did not recognize the most blessed time of your gentle visitation. But if you will now obey the voice of your God and submit to His holy words, truly, you shall find mercy in His sight, and the stability of your commonwealth shall be preserved. But, O England, England, if you obstinately return to Egypt (that is, if you contract marriages, alliances, or leagues with such princes who maintain and advance idolatry, such as the Emperor, who is no less an enemy to Christ than ever was Pharaoh), if, for the pleasure and friendship (I say) of such princes, you return to your old abominations practiced under the Papists, then assuredly, O England, you shall be plagued and brought to desolation by those whose favors you seek, and by whom you are encouraged to turn away from Christ and serve idols.

On that day, in the presence of those who can still bear witness, God willed that I should utter these and many more things with a sorrowful heart. The very thing that I then most feared, and which my tongue spoke (the subversion of the true religion and the introduction of strangers to rule over that realm) I see happening today in the counsels and determinations of men. If they proceed and come to fruition, then, as surely as my God lives, and as the Israelites who obstinately returned to Egypt were plagued to death, England

shall experience what the Lord has forewarned through His prophets. May God grant us true and unfeigned repentance for our past offenses.

May God, for His great mercy's sake, raise up someone like Phinehas, Elijah, or Jehu, so that the blood of abominable idolaters may appease God's wrath and prevent it from consuming the entire multitude. Amen.

But returning to our subject: From the foregoing, it is clear that those who despise God's eternal truth and grace cannot, in their troubles, receive comfort from God's messengers, nor can they follow God's counsel, however beneficial it may be. Instead, God abandons them to wander in their own vanities, leading to their own perdition. Conversely, those who hold God's most holy word in reverence are drawn by its power and virtue to believe, follow, and obey what God commands, even when it appears difficult, unclear, or contrary to their affections. Thus, as God always keeps His appointments with them, they are wonderfully preserved when God's punishments are unleashed upon the disobedient. This is most evident in Abraham, who, at God's command, left his homeland and journeyed without knowing his destination, a task far more challenging to execute than to speak or read about. The same is seen in Abraham's belief in God's promises against all odds and in his willingness to offer his beloved son Isaac, despite natural fatherly love and affection. Similarly, it is evident in Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Micah, and other prophets who boldly confronted tyrants and delivered their messages as commanded by God's word.

But in case someone should argue that these examples do not apply to a multitude because they involve singular individuals, let us

consider what the power of God's word has accomplished in many at once.

After the Israelites had crafted the golden calf and fallen into idolatry, Moses, upon descending from the mountain and witnessing their abominations (the honor they bestowed upon an idol), and seeing the people stripped of their earrings and jewels to their great disgrace and shame, was filled with such zeal, indignation, and wrath. First, he broke the tablets of the commandments. Then he ground their calf into powder, giving it to them to drink, making them understand that their filthy guts would receive that which they worshipped as God. Finally, he commanded that every man who stood with God should approach and come near to him. All the sons of Levi (as the text says) came to him, to whom he said, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Let every man put his sword upon his thigh, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, his companion, and his neighbor." The sons of Levi did as Moses commanded, and about three thousand people fell that day. This history makes it clear that the power of God's word, spoken by the mouth of a man, prevailed at one time over a great number against the course of nature, compelling them to execute God's vengeance, without regard for kinship or blood ties. Moreover, Moses was so pleased with their actions, as God's ambassador, that he told them to consecrate their hands that day, saying that a fortunate blessing would be bestowed upon them. It is as if Moses were saying, "Your father Levi polluted and defiled his hands when he killed the Shechemites in his blind rage, an act that moved his father Jacob to curse his vehement and ungodly zeal in his last testament. But because, in this work, you have chosen to obey God's commandment over blood, nature, and affection, you have earned blessing and praise in place of rebuke and curse."

A similar power and effectiveness of God's word working in a multitude can be seen in the prophet Jeremiah. Recognizing that the time of God's vengeance was drawing near and that the city of Jerusalem was under siege, he boldly proclaimed in his public sermon, "He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, or by pestilence; but he who goes out to the Chaldeans shall live, and his life shall be as a prize to him." This might have appeared as a deceitful, seditious, and ungodly sermon, commanding subjects to depart from their allegiance and the defense of their native ruler, persuading wealthy citizens and valiant soldiers to abandon their possessions and strongholds, and urging them to surrender themselves without resistance into the hands of foreign enemies. To carnal men, these exhortations might have seemed foolish and false. Yet, in the hearts of those whom God had chosen for life, this sermon worked so effectively that a considerable number in Jerusalem left their city, riches, and friends, and obeyed the prophet's counsel. This can be seen through the words of King Zedekiah when Jeremiah advised him to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah expressed his fear of the Jews who had fled to the Chaldeans, dreading that they might hand him over. From this, it is clear that many had departed from him, and he feared them more than his enemies.

Many more testimonies could be provided to demonstrate how mightily God's word, spoken by man, has worked in the hearts of great multitudes. Consider the case of the Ninevites, who, upon hearing Jonah preach, condemned their former religion, way of life, and conduct. Likewise, think of the 3,000 individuals who, at Peter's first sermon after Christ's ascension, openly acknowledged their offenses, repented, and were immediately baptized. These examples are sufficient to prove that God's word draws His elect towards it, against worldly appearances, natural affections, and civil statutes and regulations. It also demonstrates that those who obey God's

message, as delivered by His messengers, never lack just rewards and recompense. Only those who obeyed the voice of the prophet found favor and grace, to the praise and glory of God's name, while His righteous judgments avenged the disobedient. Now, let us proceed to examine the remainder of Peter's actions and Christ's merciful deliverance of those who are part of God's elect.

Firstly, it is evident that Peter became afraid when he saw a mighty wind. When he began to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me." Three primary aspects should be noted: the source of the fear of God's elect, the reason for their weakness and stumbling in adversity, and the comfort that accompanies them during this fear and sinking.

First and foremost, it is clear that as long as Peter kept his eyes fixed on Christ, focusing solely on His voice, he remained bold and unafraid. However, when he observed the violent wind (not that the wind itself was visible, but the raging storm and the turbulent waves of the sea, driven by the wind, were visible), he began to fear. He probably reasoned in his heart that it would have been better for him to stay in the boat, allowing Christ to come to him. Now, with the storm and violent wind so fierce, he feared that he could never reach Christ. This demonstrates that the primary cause of our fear, when we leave our "boats" and attempt to approach Christ as Peter did, is that we tend to focus more on the dangers and obstacles on our journey than on the Almighty power of Him who commanded us to come to Him. This is a common sin among all the elect and chosen children of God. Whenever they see a formidable trouble emerging to hinder and deter them from obeying God, they begin to fear and doubt God's power and goodwill.

This fear overcame Abraham when he denied his wife. Moses experienced it when he refused to be God's messenger. Hezekiah's

strong complaint revealed that he placed more trust, consideration, and attention on the proud threats and immense power of Sennacherib than he did on the promises of the prophet.

I emphasize this point to reassure you that, although this recent and most violent storm within the realm of England temporarily took Christ's presence from you, making you doubt whether the figure you saw before was Christ or not, and although the intensity of this contrary wind that tried to drive you away from Christ has so occupied your ears that you have almost forgotten the one who commanded you to come to Him when He cried, "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Depart from Babylon, O My people," although this raging tempest has instilled such fear in your hearts that you have nearly forgotten all of it, do not despair, dear brethren. Such stumbling blocks have happened to God's elect before you. Even if you do not persist obstinately, you will still find mercy and grace. It would have been your duty indeed and in line with your profession to look only to Christ and to disregard all obstacles. However, such perfection is not always attainable for a man. Nonetheless, happy is he who recognizes his need and feels himself sinking.

The reason why God's elect begin to faint and sink down in times of great adversity is fear and unbelief, as is evident in Peter's case. As long as Peter did not fear danger and did not mistrust Christ's word, the waters, contrary to their nature, obeyed and supported him as if they were solid ground. However, as soon as he began to despair and fear, he started to sink. This instructs us that living faith makes a person bold and can carry them through insurmountable perils that are beyond the capabilities of nature. But when faith begins to weaken, a person starts to sink in every danger, as seen in the previously mentioned stories. The same is true in the case of the

prophets. For example, when Elijah, in the fervency of his faith, called down fire from heaven at God's command and slew the false prophets, he was bold in the presence of the king. But when he heard the threats of Jezebel and considered that the wrath of a wicked woman could not be appeased reasonably, he saw a storm and became afraid. He prepared to flee, which he did not do without some sinking down, for he began to reason and dispute with God, something that cannot be done by a creature without foolishness and offense. Similar experiences can be found in the stories of Jeremiah and many others.

However, one may question why, since Christ knew in advance what would happen to Peter, He did not prevent him from leaving the boat or strengthen his faith to prevent doubt. To this, the following answer can be given:

Even if we were unable to provide a reason for Christ's actions, the actions themselves would be a sufficient reason. It would be enough to say that it pleased Him, and He is not obliged to justify all His actions. Nevertheless, if we carefully consider the role to which Peter was called and the sins that clung to him, we will find just and necessary causes for Christ's actions and Peter's sinking. Peter possessed notable virtues, such as zeal for Christ's glory and a readiness to obey His commandments. However, he also harbored a desire for honor and worldly rest for a long time, as evidenced by his attempt to dissuade Christ from dying. Pride, presumption, and self-reliance were also present in him. These sinful traits needed correction and partial removal, for Peter to be qualified and suitable to feed Christ's flock. Such sins cannot be fully corrected and reformed until they are recognized, acknowledged, and confessed.

Our human nature is so arrogant that it refuses to acknowledge its own weakness until it experiences it firsthand. This is evident in Peter's subsequent actions. When Christ told His disciples that they would all be offended because of Him, Peter boldly declared that even if everyone else was offended and forsook Him, he would not. He stated that he was ready to go to prison and even to die with Christ. This was a presumptuous and arrogant promise made in contempt of his brethren, and he could not be dissuaded by Christ's admonition. The more Christ warned him about denying Him, the more resolute Peter became in affirming the opposite, as though the author of all truth, Christ Himself, were uttering a falsehood. Therefore, it was necessary for him to experience and feel the frailty of human nature and the weakness of faith, even among the chief Apostles. Peter's understanding of this weakness was crucial for him to rightly praise God's infinite goodness and embrace His free mercy. It also made him suitable to be a shepherd to the weak sheep and tender lambs of Christ. Without experiencing this frailty and weakness in himself, Peter could have been as presumptuous as those who boast about their own strength, as many Papists do. He might have been as proud a contemner and despiser of his weaker brethren as the arrogant Papists who despise godly and highly learned men, even when they are a thousand times more excellent than they are.

To correct and reform both presumptuous arrogance and frailty, Peter was permitted to sink once and, more shamefully, to deny his master three times. This was done with the intent that, by knowing his own weakness, he might be better equipped to instruct others in the same condition. Moreover, he could more greatly magnify God's free grace and mighty deliverance. Christ had already taught him before his fall, saying, "When you are converted, strengthen your brethren." It was as though Christ had said, "Peter, you are still too

proud to be a shepherd. You cannot stoop or humble yourself to care for the weak ones, and you do not yet recognize your own infirmity and weakness. Therefore, you do nothing but despise the weak. But when you learn through personal experience about the hidden sin within human nature, then you will learn humility and how to associate with other sinners. You will also be an example to others who may fall as you did. So, if they repent as you did, they need not despair of mercy but can most assuredly trust in Christ to obtain grace, mercy, and forgiveness of their sins, as you did."

The fruit we gather from Peter's sinking in the sea (which was a hidden knowledge and private warning that he would later deny Christ) is this: we are assured by the voice of Christ that, in times of trouble and extreme danger, if we cry out as Peter did, we will be delivered as he was. And if we mourn for our denial of Christ as he did, we will find the same grace and favor from Christ that he found. Now, let us move to the third point, which is as follows:

In the greatest fear and danger of God's elect, there remains a small spark of faith that somehow reveals itself, even if the afflicted person in fear or danger does not immediately perceive it. Peter is the clearest example of this. When he felt himself sinking, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me." These words were a declaration of a living and active faith hidden within his afflicted and terrified heart. Faith's nature is to hope against hope, meaning it looks for help and deliverance even against all appearance or likelihood, as Peter's words attest. He saw nothing but the raging sea ready to swallow him up, and he felt nothing but himself sinking down in body and greatly troubled in heart. Yet he cried out, "Lord, save me." These words first declare that he knew the power of Christ to be able to deliver him. It would have been foolish to call for help from someone he believed to be impotent and unable to assist.

Calling for Christ's help through prayer in this extreme danger also indicated that Peter had some hope through Christ's gracious goodness of obtaining deliverance. In situations of extreme peril, it is impossible for the human heart to cry out for God's help without some hope of His mercy.

It is also to be noted that in his great jeopardy, Peter did not murmur against Christ, nor did he impute or lay any blame upon Christ, even though he had left his boat at His command. He did not say, "Why do you let me sink, since I have obeyed your command?" Furthermore, Peter asked for help only from Christ, whom he believed both could and would help in a pinch. He did not cry out to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, or any other patriarchs, prophets, or departed saints, nor did he call out to his companions in the boat. He called upon Christ, at whose command he had left the boat. Considering all these factors, it becomes clear that Peter, in his extreme fear and danger, still had some spark of faith, even though he did not feel consolation or comfort in that moment. These premises are undeniable signs that he possessed faith.

Now, let's proceed to the main point:

Immediately, Jesus stretched forth His hand, caught Peter, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they had come back into the ship, the wind ceased. Those who were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, "Truly, You are the Son of God." Immediately, the ship was at the land to which they were going.

First and foremost, it should be noted that God is always near to those who call upon Him faithfully. He is so willing to deliver them that neither fear nor extreme danger can hinder His divine intervention. Peter was sinking and expected nothing but imminent death, yet the hand of Christ saved him. What was visibly and openly

done for Peter in his dire peril is invisibly and secretly done for Christ's holy Church and the chosen members of Christ's mystical body in all ages. The Scriptures bear witness to how near and ready God was to deliver His people, such as Israel in the days of Moses and Esther. God was close to Daniel among the lions, to Jonah in the whale's belly, and to Peter in prison, as the holy Scriptures clearly show.

How suddenly and beyond all expectations was David delivered from Saul's tyranny many times; David himself confessed and expressed this with his pen and tongue, saying, "He has sent from above and has delivered me; He has drawn me out of many waters." Pay attention, dear brethren, and understand this: as our God is unchangeable, His gracious hand is not shortened today. Our fear and trouble are great, the storm blowing against us is fierce, and we seem to be drowning in deep waters. However, if we truly recognize the danger and call for deliverance, the Lord's hand is nearer than the sword of our enemies.

The sharp rebuke that Jesus gave to Peter teaches us that God does not flatter or conceal the faults of His elect. Instead, He makes them manifest so that the offenders may repent and others may avoid similar offenses.

That Christ called Peter "of little faith" argues and demonstrates (as we have noted before) that Peter was not completely faithless but rather faltered or was uncertain in his faith. This term, "of little faith" (as per the original Greek *ὀλιγόπιστε*), should remind us that in our journey towards Christ through the storms of this world, not only is fervent faith required at the beginning but also steadfastness until the end. As Christ says, "he who endures to the end shall be saved," and as Paul states, "unless one competes according to the rules, he

will not be crowned." We should bear in mind that even the most fervent person who has professed Christ for a long time is not guaranteed to stand firm at all times. Such individuals are subject to many dangers, and they should fear their own frailty, as the Apostle teaches when he says, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." If Peter, who began so fervently, faltered before reaching Christ, how much more should we, in whom such fervency was never found, tremble and fear the worst? We ought to acknowledge our own weakness and, like the Apostles, continually pray, "O Lord, increase our faith."

Christ's question to Peter, "Why did you doubt?" carries a sense of vehemence. It is as if Christ is asking, "Did you doubt my power? My presence? My promises? My goodwill?" If my power were insufficient to save you, then I could not have come to you through the stormy sea or made the waters obey you as you approached me. If my goodwill were not to deliver you and your brethren, I would not have appeared to you, nor would I have called upon you, but I would have allowed the tempest to devour you. Considering that your eyes saw me present, your ears heard my voice, and you, Peter, especially knew this and obeyed my command, why did you doubt? Beloved brethren, if this same question were posed to us, we would have even less excuse than Peter. He could have argued that he was not forewarned of the great storm that would arise between him and Christ, but we cannot make that claim. Since the time Christ Jesus has revealed Himself to us through the brilliance of His Word and called us with His living voice, He has continuously warned us that persecution and trouble would follow the Word we profess. These days are now upon us. So why do we doubt in the midst of this storm as we strive to reach Christ? Strengthen us, O Lord, and do not let us sink further.

Even though Peter faltered in faith and deserved a sharp rebuke, Christ did not leave him in the sea, nor did He allow the fear and tempest to persist. First, they both entered the boat, and then the wind ceased. Finally, without further delay, their boat reached the destination they had been striving for.

Blessed and happy are those who patiently await the deliverance of the Lord. The raging sea will not engulf them. Even though they faltered, Christ Jesus will not leave them behind in the stormy sea. Suddenly, He will stretch out His mighty hand and place them in the boat among their brethren, meaning He will gather them with His elect and afflicted Church, with whom He will remain until the end of the world.

The majesty of His presence will silence the boisterous wind—the malice and envy of the devil, which rages in the hearts of Princes, Prelates, Kings, and earthly tyrants, all united against the Lord and His anointed Christ. Despite this, He will safely guide, lead, and carry His deeply troubled flock towards the life and rest for which they strive.

Even though they may have faltered in their journey, even though the weakness of their faith allowed them to sink, they cannot be torn from the hand of Christ. He will not allow them to drown, nor will the deep devour them. For the glory of His own name, He must deliver them because they are entrusted to His care, protection, and safekeeping. Therefore, He will guard and defend those whom He has received from His Father—guard them from sin, death, the devil, and hell.

The recollection of these promises is, to my own heart, a source of comfort beyond what any tongue or pen can express. However, perhaps there are some among God's elect who cannot find

consolation in these meditations on God's election and protection. Instead, they may be troubled by the sight of those who once boldly professed Christ's truth but have now returned to their former abominations. They themselves may be overtaken by fear, causing them to compromise with an idol against their knowledge and conscience. In this state, they begin to question whether it is possible for the members of Christ's body to fall so terribly in denial of their Head, and to remain in such a state for an extended period. This line of reasoning leads them to sorrow, and from sorrow, they start sinking towards the gates of hell and the abyss of despair.

I acknowledge that the grief and fear experienced by such individuals are entirely justifiable. Indeed, how fearful it is, for the sake of this transient life and in the presence of people, to deny Christ Jesus and His known and indisputable truth!

However, for those who are not obstinate despisers of God and all godliness, I would offer this feeble counsel: rather than condemning themselves with the severe judgments of God, they should appeal to His mercy. They should remember that God has consigned all to disobedience so that He may have mercy on all. The Lord kills and gives life; He leads down to hell and yet lifts up again. By giving this counsel, I do not seek to justify those who have horribly returned to their former ways or to flatter those who continue to support abominable idols with their daily presence. Far from it, for then I would be a blind guide leading the blind into perdition. I am well aware of the sorrow and tears that I witness daily due to such turnings back. However, the reason for my counsel is that I understand that some consciences are so tender that whenever they feel troubled by fear, wounded by anguish, or have slipped back in any way, they believe their faith is extinguished, and they deem themselves unworthy of God's mercy forever. It is to such individuals

that I direct my counsel, those who offend more out of weakness and frailty than out of malice and deliberate intent. I wish for them to understand and consider that even the Apostles themselves fled from Christ and denied Him in their hearts. Furthermore, they should contemplate that no one from the beginning experienced greater fear, danger, or doubt than Peter when Christ's presence was withdrawn. He felt minimal comfort and saw little hope of deliverance, yet the disciples were not rejected forever, and Peter was not left to drown in that deep.

Nevertheless, some may object, arguing that faith was not entirely extinguished in them, and that's why they received deliverance and were restored to comfort.

I respond that this is precisely what I want the troubled consciences of this age to understand: neither fear, nor danger, nor doubt, nor backsliding can completely extinguish or quench the faith of God's elect. Always, some root and spark of faith remain with them, although in their distress, they may neither feel it nor recognize it. Someone may ask, "How can we know in whom the spark and root of faith remains and in whom it does not, given that everyone seems to flee from Christ and bow down to idols?" It is indeed a difficult and nearly impossible task for one person to knowingly judge another in this matter, as the Prophet Elijah could not do with the Israelites of his time. However, every individual can easily judge themselves. For the root of faith is such that it will not remain dormant for long. Over time, it will inevitably produce some visible and tangible outward evidence if it remains alive in the heart. As you have heard, this was the case with Peter, compelling him to cry out to Christ when he was in dire need. If you wish to test whether the root of faith remains within you, I address those who are weak and not proud despisers of God.

Do you feel your soul fainting in faith, just as Peter felt his body sinking into the waters?

Are you as greatly afraid that your soul might drown in hell if you consent to or obey idolatry, as Peter was that his body would drown in the waters?

Do you desire the deliverance of your soul as earnestly as Peter desired the deliverance of his body?

Do you believe that Christ is able to deliver your soul and that He will do so according to His promise?

Are you calling upon Him sincerely in this time of trouble?

Do you thirst for His presence and for the liberty of His word once more?

Are you mourning for the great abominations that are now overflowing the realm of England?

If these premises, I say, still remain in your heart, then you are not entirely devoid of faith, and you shall not descend into perdition forever. Rather, the Lord shall mercifully stretch forth His mighty hand and deliver you from the very depths of hell. However, it is not for you to demand or for me to define the means by which He shall accomplish this merciful work. What is required of us is that we do not refuse the means that our Lord's hand offers to avoid idolatry, but rather, willingly embrace them, even if they partly go against our inclinations. I do not believe that all the faithful in England will suddenly and uniformly be delivered from idolatry by a single means. No, it may be that God will strengthen the hearts of some who had previously faltered so that they will resist idolatry unto death, which

would be a glorious and triumphant deliverance. For others, God may touch their hearts in such a way that they would rather choose to wander as pilgrims from realm to realm, enduring hunger, cold, heat, thirst, weariness, and poverty than to remain in subjection to idolatry, even if they have plenty. Some, God may offer such opportunities that, in defiance of idolaters, whether they be rulers or prelates, they can stay within their own dominions without bowing their knees to Baal or lacking the living sustenance of God's most holy word. If God offers us any such means, let us know with certainty that Christ Jesus has extended His hand to us, willing to deliver us from the danger in which many are likely to perish. Therefore, let us not refuse it, but rather, with joy, let us seize it, knowing that God has a thousand means (beyond human judgment) by which He will deliver, support, and comfort His afflicted church. Therefore, my most beloved in our Savior Jesus Christ, considering that the memory of Christ's banquet (of which I doubt not some of you tasted with comfort and joy) has not been entirely erased from your minds and that we have embarked on this journey at Christ's commandments, considering that we feel the sea winds blowing against us, as was foretold to us, and that we see the same tempest raging against us as has always raged against Christ's chosen Church, and also considering that we feel ourselves on the verge of fainting and likely to be overwhelmed by these stormy seas, let us prostrate ourselves before the throne of grace in the presence of our heavenly Father. In the bitterness of our hearts, let us confess our offenses and, for Christ Jesus' sake, seek deliverance and mercy with sobs and groans from our troubled hearts.

O God, the heathen have entered into Your inheritance. They have defiled Your holy temple and profaned Your blessed ordinances. Instead of Your joyful signs, they have erected their abominable

idols. The deadly cup of blasphemy is once again in the hands of their harlots. Your prophets are persecuted, and none are allowed to speak Your word freely. The poor sheep of Your poor pasture are commanded to drink the venomous waters of men's traditions.

But, O Lord, You know how greatly they grieve us. Yet, such is the tyranny of these most cruel beasts that they plainly say, "They shall root us out at once, so that no remembrance shall remain of us on earth."

O Lord, You know that we are but flesh and that we have no power of ourselves to withstand their tyranny. Therefore, O Father, open the eyes of Your mercy upon us and confirm the work that Your own mercy has begun in us. We acknowledge and confess, O Lord, that we are justly punished because we lightly regarded the time of Your merciful visitation. Your blessed Gospel was in our ears like a lover's song, it pleased us for the rhyme, but alas, our lives did not agree with Your statutes and holy commandments. We acknowledge that our own iniquity compelled Your justice to take the light of Your word from the whole realm of England. But be mindful, O Lord, that it is Your truth which we have professed, and that Your enemies blaspheme Your holy name and our possession without cause. Your holy Gospel is called heresy, and we are accused as traitors for professing the same. Be merciful, therefore, O Lord, and be salvation to us in this time of our anguish. Although our sins accuse and condemn us, do according to Your own name. We have offended against You. Our sins and iniquities are without number, and yet You are in our midst, O Lord. Although tyrants bear rule over our bodies, sustain our souls with the comfort of Your word. Correct us, but not in Your hot displeasure; spare Your people and do not let Your inheritance be a reproach forever.

Let those who are most afflicted yet once again praise Your holy name before Your congregation, O Lord. Repress the pride of these bloodthirsty tyrants; consume them in Your anger according to the reproach they have laid against Your holy name. Pour forth Your vengeance upon them, and let our eyes behold the blood of Your saints required of their hands. Do not delay Your vengeance, O Lord, but let death devour them in haste, let the earth swallow them up, and let them go down alive into hell. For there is no hope of their amendment; the fear and reverence of Your holy name are completely banished from their hearts. Therefore, yet again, O Lord, consume them, consume them in Your anger, and let them never bring their wicked counsels to effect. But, according to the godly powers, let them be taken in the snare which they have prepared for Your elect. Look upon us, O Lord, with the eyes of Your mercy and show pity upon us, Your weak and sorely oppressed flock. Gather us yet once again to the wholesome treasures of Your most holy word, that openly we may confess Your blessed gospel within the realm of England. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Christ Jesus, Your Son's sake. Amen.

If, in this manner or otherwise, as God shall put in our hearts, without hypocrisy in the presence of our God, respecting more His glory than our private wealth, we continually pour forth our complaint, confession, and prayers, then, as assuredly as our God lives, and as we feel these present troubles, our God Himself shall rise to our defense. He shall confound the counsels of our enemies and trouble the wits of those who wrongfully trouble us. He shall send Jehu to execute His just judgments against idolaters and those who obstinately defend them. Jezebel herself shall not escape the vengeance and plagues prepared for her portion. The flatterers and maintainers of her abominations shall drink the cup of God's wrath with her. And in spite of the devil, the glory of Christ Jesus and the

brightness of His countenance shall shine in our hearts by the presence of His grace and before our eyes by the true preaching of His gospel. We shall all fall before Him and say,

O Lord, You are our God; we shall extol You and confess Your name, for You have brought wondrous things to pass according to Your counsels. Although they may appear far off, they are true and most assured. You have brought to ruin the palaces of tyrants, and therefore the afflicted shall magnify You, and the city of tyrannical nations shall fear You. You have been, O Lord, a strong defense to the poor, a sure place of refuge to the afflicted in the time of their anguish.

This, no doubt, dear brethren, shall one day be the song of God's elect within the realm of England after God has poured forth His vengeance upon these disobedient and bloodthirsty tyrants who now triumph in all abominations. Therefore, yet again, beloved in the Lord, patiently await the Lord's deliverance, avoiding and fleeing from offenses that may separate and divide you from the blessed fellowship of the Lord Jesus at His second coming. Watch and pray, resist the devil, and row against this vehement tempest. Shortly, the Lord shall come to the comfort of your hearts, which are now oppressed with anguish and care. Then you shall rejoice so greatly that through gladness you shall say, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited upon Him, and He has saved us. This is our Lord; we have longed for His coming, and now we shall rejoice and be glad in His salvation." So be it. The great Bishop of our souls, Jesus our Lord, strengthen and assist your troubled hearts with the mighty comfort of His Holy Spirit, so that earthly tyrants and worldly torments have no power to drive you from the hope and expectation of that kingdom prepared from the beginning by our heavenly Father, to whom be all praise and honor now and forever. Amen.

Remember me, dear brethren, in your daily prayers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Yours with a sorrowful heart, John Knox.

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