

THE LAST SERMON—THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS:

7 November, 2021

20th Sunday after Pentecost, Luke 16:19–31

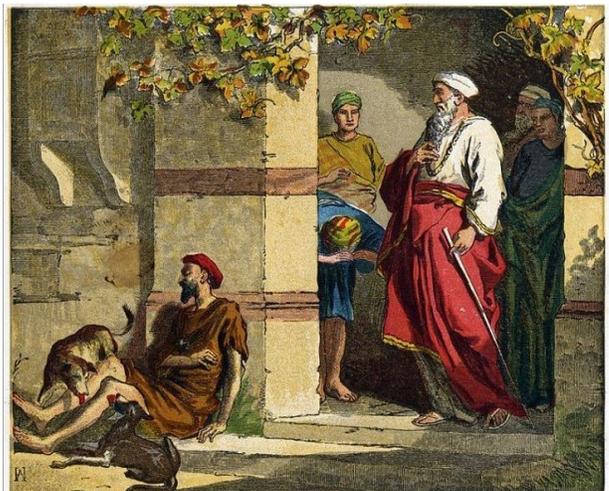


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Let us attend! At that time, Jesus said: ¹⁹ There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ Then he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. ²⁵ But Abraham said: Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us. ²⁷ Then he said: I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment. ²⁹ Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰ And he said: No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent. ³¹ But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.

✠ In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. In preface to today's lesson: "An innumerable multitude had gathered around Jesus in Galilee [drawn by His encounter with the scribes and Pharisees], so that the crowds were trampling upon one another. And Jesus [disregarding the noise, tumult, and commotion] said to His disciples: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees [that is, their pervasive, pernicious, and corrupting doctrine, teaching, and influence], which is hypocrisy [and produces self-righteousness]. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that



will not be known. Therefore, whatsoever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken into the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. And I say to you... do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that can do no more. But I will show you Whom you should fear. Fear Him Who, after He has killed, has power to cast [your soul] into hell. Yes, I say to you, fear Him... Also, I say to you, whosoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit [and rejects God's means of grace], it will not be forgiven" [Luke 12:1–11]. And after Jesus had said these things to His disciples, He then directed Himself to 'all the tax collectors and sinners who had drawn near to Him to hear His words' [Luke 14:25]. And finally, Jesus even spoke directly to the Scribes and Pharisees [Luke 15:1–2]. In His great love for mankind, He taught and ministered to all in accordance with their divers and several needs. Notwithstanding the modes of deliveries and styles, the purpose of His teaching was consistent—and is succinctly summarized in Luke [13:1–5]: "There were present at that time some who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them: Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no! [For you are also sinners, and] unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! [For you are also sinners, and] unless you repent you will all likewise perish." Jesus therefore calls all men to repentance [and the transformation-of-the-*nous*]. Furthermore, He says: "And whosoever does not [carefully consider the cost and then for My sake] renounce [and give up] all that he has cannot be My disciple" [Luke 14:33]. But Jesus also encourages those present, saying: "Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who [responds to God's love and] repents" [Luke 15:10]. Ultimately, an encounter with the love of God that engenders repentance can transform the heart of man and can radically change his perspective regarding sin and the allure of the transitory comforts and pleasures of this world [Luke 15:11–32]. The Apostle and Evangelist John writes: "Do not love the world [of sin that opposes God and His precepts], nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" [I John 2:15].

And in order to give a further check to the maliciousness of the Pharisees, and the obstinacy with which they opposed everything that was good, Jesus delivered to His disciples—in the presence of these same Scribes and Pharisees—the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward. Jesus presented this steward as an example of the dexterous improvement with which worldly men make of any and all opportunities for the advancement of their own interest. By this parable, Jesus designed to excite His disciples to improvement. In contrast to worldly men, the benefits of advancement in spiritual treasures through the expenditure vs. the hoarding of mammon [that is, money or worldly goods] in the promotion of the conversion of sinners—is most acceptable to God and most beneficial to man—and will be rewarded in the everlasting Kingdom. For "I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least, is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least, is unjust also in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" [Luke 16:9–11]. Ultimately, Jesus proclaims: "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other" [Luke 16:13].

“Now the Pharisees also heard all these things, and they derided Him for they were lovers of money [in Greek, *filárgiri*—or lovers of silver]” [Luke 16:13]. Now this latter term referred to all those who are avaricious, greedy of gain, and hoarders of riches. Such evil affections are equated to many other sins in II Timothy [3:2–7]: “for men will be lovers of themselves, [narcissistic, and self-focused], lovers of silver [and impelled by greed], [and therefore] boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, and profane. [And they will be] unloving, [devoid of natural human affection, calloused, and inhumane], unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong and reckless, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having an outward form of godliness [and religion] but denying its power [for their conduct nullifies their claim of faith]. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible, [morally weak, and spiritually dwarfed] women loaded down by [the burden of their] sins, and led away by various lusts, always [asking questions and learning] but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” As many Churchmen today, the Pharisees desired wealth from unrighteousness in order to fulfill their own personal and evil desires. They sought short-term gain in this ephemeral life instead of looking to eternity. Their religious piety was a façade. Their true master was Mammon [or the God of this world]—which St. Gregory Nazianzen identifies as Beelzebub [or the Devil himself].

And Jesus said to the Pharisees: “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts, [your thoughts, your desires, and your secrets]. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God” [Luke 16:15]. He rebuked and exposed the hypocrisy in the hearts of the Scribes and Pharisees. The words of the Apostle Paul provide us with insight into the hearts of the selfsame Pharisees as he breaks out into indignant and vehement apostrophe: “Indeed you are called Jews, and rest upon the law [and the orthodoxy of your doctrine for your salvation]. You make your boast in God, and [claim to] know His will, and [claim to be able to] approve the things that are [good and] excellent [based upon your knowledge] of the law. And you are confident that you yourself are a [qualified] guide to the blind [or the heterodox who are untaught in theology]. You [claim to be] a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having a form of knowledge and truth [falsely based upon] the law. You, therefore, who teach another, why do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you [secretly] steal? You who say: Do not commit adultery, do you [secretly] commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob the temples of your [own] idols? You who make your boast in the [orthodoxy of the] law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For the Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles [in Greek, *éthnesin*—or nations] because of you, as it is written. For [the Old Testament] circumcision [which corresponds to Baptism in the New Testament] is indeed only profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is an Israelite who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God” [Romans 2:17–29]. These words of the Apostle are applicable to many Christians today. And we need only interject the token ‘Christian’ in place of ‘Jew’ and ‘baptism’ in place of ‘circumcision’ to see the importance and relevance of the Apostle’s apostrophe to the Jews in our own lives. Then, “cut to the heart” [Acts 2:37], we must cry out to the Holy Spirit and beseech Him to come and convict us that we might fully apperceive the gravity and veracity of the

terrible indictment against us—which exposes the inner misery of our *psyche*'s dereliction, malice, and vileness [John 16:8]. In heartfelt repentance, we must confess our sins and the burdens of our heart to God [I John 1:9].

In parenthetical comment—and in the words of the Prophet Jeremiah: “The heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked, [and incurably sick]. Who can know it? The Lord searches the heart, [and] tests the mind, and gives to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” [Jeremiah 17:9–10]. Because of the inherent deceitfulness of the heart in fallen man—the Pharisees were blind to their own sins. Their self-righteousness was an abomination before God. Fallen man values fame, wealth, and positions of importance but God finds these to be detestable, abhorrent, disgusting, and loathsome—for “everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord, and though they join hand to hand, none will go unpunished” [Proverbs 16:5]. And again: “God scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble” [Proverbs 3:34]. The Prophet warns us, saying: “The proud looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” [Isaiah 2:11]. No man will be proud when he stands in judgement before God for “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” [Romans 3:23]. And again: “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” [Hebrews 10:31].

Returning to our focus in today's lesson, Jesus then issues the strongest possible warning in regard to the destiny awaiting the Pharisees and like ilk. He tells the frightening narrative of the ‘Rich Man and Lazarus’ with concern to the future state of the unrighteous. The account begins with a description of the life of a certain unnamed rich man to whom tradition refers to as *Néfis* [in Latin, Dives—or Rich], and a poor man named Lazarus [in Hebrew *El-azar*, meaning ‘God has helped’] [Luke 16:19-21]. From the beginning, this account contravenes the conventions of this world in which the names of the rich and powerful are manifest, and the names of the poor and trodden are left unknown and unspoken. This rich man donned expensive clothes—dyed purple and made of fine linen—and he ate or “fared sumptuously” every day. He loved the ‘good life.’ By contrast, Lazarus was totally impoverished. He was crippled and had to be brought to [and laid at] the gate of the rich man where he could beg. The licking of Lazarus' sores by feral dogs is a graphic description of his inability to care for himself. These feral dogs showed more compassion than the rich man. The conditions of the rich man and Lazarus are radically reversed after death, and Jesus begins to reveal some specific and disturbing aspects regarding the continued existence of the human soul after death [Luke 16:22–24]. Lazarus died and his soul is carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom—that is, the angels assist in the transfer of his soul from this world to a spiritual dimension. His body remains on earth—for the resurrection of the body will occur only at the Last Judgement [I Thessalonians 4:1–18; Revelation 20:1–15]. After so much hardship, Lazarus goes to a place of comfort—he is in the bosom of Abraham.

Next, we see the terrible fate of the rich man who died and is buried. No angels are mentioned or involved, but his soul is taken to Hades—the holding place of the dead. This ‘Hades’ or ‘hell’ is not his final destination for he will be sentenced at the Terrible Judgement Seat [in Greek, *víma*—tribune—by metonymy the place of judgement] and afterwards sent to the Lake of Fire—Gehenna [Revelation 10:7; 11:15–18; 20:1–15; Matthew 24:29–31; I Corinthians 15:51–52; I Thessalonians 4:17–18]. Gehenna [or place of everlasting punishment] had received its name from *Gehinnom*—the cursed place in which infants were once sacrificed by fire [Jeremiah 7:31, 19:2–6]. The rich man's temporary hell [that is, the temporary holding place for the wicked] is marked by torment—especially in the ‘flame’ that causes him much agony. Such is his agony that he desires a drop of water to cool his tongue. The agony is apparently worsened by his ability to see that Lazarus is with Abraham and comforted, while he is in torment. His request demonstrates that his selfish and proud nature has

not changed—it continues in the afterlife. He who showed no mercy to Lazarus in life cries out to Abraham for mercy—showing no remorse or thought for Lazarus. He demonstrates the truthfulness of the ancient Illyrian proverb: ‘Mercy to the cruel is cruelty to the merciful.’

From this account, we learn something of the conditions in the afterlife. First of all, ‘between the righteous and the unrighteous there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who want to pass from one side to the other cannot pass’ [Luke 16:26]. Secondly, we also learn that once a man dies—his eternal destiny is immutable. Finally, there appears to be some mutual awareness between the righteous and unrighteous in the afterlife. For “the rich man died and was buried, and being in torments in Hades, lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom” [Luke 16:22–23]. Such awareness would certainly add to the torment of those in the agonies of hell. Tertullian, Augustine of Hippo, and others develop this notion further, and Thomas Aquinas conceives an even more fantasied and outlandish notion, saying: “that the saints may give more abundant thanks for it to God, a perfect sight of the punishment of the damned is granted unto them.” Notwithstanding, such concept cannot be verified or authenticated in the Holy Scriptures or the ancient Church Fathers.

The rich man makes a desperate plea saying: “I beg you therefore, father, that you would send [Lazarus] to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment” [Luke 16:27]. In entering his plea, the rich man appears to show some signs and vestiges of human compassion. Notwithstanding, his character remains unchanged—since the concern of his urgent and emotional request is for his family—and moreover, for his five brothers. He shows no concern for the rest of humanity. Therefore, he confirms his own condemnation. For Jesus said: “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same” [Matthew 6:32]. And Abraham responded: “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” [Luke 16:29]. This statement is particularly poignant. His brothers have been versed in the Scripture from their childhood. Like the Pharisees [who purported to be defenders of the Law], they have refused until now [and will continue to refuse] to hear and submit to Moses and the Prophets. The present state of affairs among Christians is even worse! We have Moses and the Prophets! We have the New Covenant in Christ’s Blood! We have the teachings of the Apostles! We have the examples of the Saints! But we refuse to ‘hear them.’ Hardness of heart [which reigns everywhere today] is the principle reason for refusing to submit to the Lordship of Christ. For “they made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit” [Zechariah 7:12]. The rich man then said: “No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent” [Luke 16:30]. His use of the word ‘repent’ shows that he understands that his present sufferings are the consequence of his own failure to repent. The rich man calls Abraham his ‘Father,’ but religious heritage cannot by itself gain us salvation [Luke 3:8]. Living a life characterized by repentance and active compassion to others is a sign that we are responding to God’s covenant. John the Baptist tells the crowds: “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves: We have Abraham as our father [and so our heritage assures us of salvation]. For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones” [Luke 3:8]. Abraham said: “if they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead” [Luke 16:31]. Prophet Abraham then explained the reality to him. If the rich man’s brothers will not heed the Word of God, they will not heed a man [whom they had known only as a beggar] even if he returns from the dead to warn them. Those who are hard-hearted will not believe in spite of any miracles that may take place. Jesus had already done miracle after miracle and the

Jews did not repent and believe. The Evangelist Luke will himself bear witness to the response of the Jews to the resurrection of another Lazarus—after which the Jews plotted to kill Jesus [John 11:1–53]. After the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the same Jews—instead of repenting—plotted to conceal the truth. For “when the elders had taken counsel, they gave a large sum of money unto the soldiers, saying: Say that, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So, they took the money, and did as they were taught [by the Jews]: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day” [Matthew 28:11–15]. Abraham’s words: “neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead” not only foretold the response of the rich man’s brothers, but foreshadowed things to come. Ultimately, the great failure of the rich man is not simply that he did not contribute to charity—but rather that he was cold-hearted, indifferent, high-minded, and proud. Like the Pharisees, he could not see his own sin—and therefore had no broken heart or weeping eye for his sin. His way of life had hardened his heart and blinded his eye to compassion and mercy. For “I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me. . . . Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me. And these will go away into everlasting punishment” [Matthew 25:41–46].

The Apostle Paul declares: “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness” [Ephesians 4:17–19]. ‘Hardening of the heart’ is symptomatic of unbelievers and nonbelievers: “whose minds the god of this age [that is, Satan] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” [II Corinthians 4:4.]. Notwithstanding, beware—for a man can also cause his own heart to be irreversibly hardened—as did Pharaoh: “For when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them” [Exodus 8:15, 32]. Ultimately, ‘hardening of the heart’ can also be punishment for repeated disobedience to God. The Evangelist John says: “But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore, they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them” [John 12:37–40].

Today’s narrative speaks of the revelation of God’s Kingdom in Jesus Christ our Lord. It does not invite speculation about the nature of life after death—but rather calls for repentance. It invites us to go forth and to live in a new way—seeking to be bearers of God’s mercy. It calls for us to invite God to remove the ‘heart of stone from our flesh’ [Ezekiel 36:26]. It invites us to turn away from the hardness of our hearts and to seek a new heart full of compassion that intercedes for all those who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. It invites us to perform the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, which are the classic expressions of Christian compassion. Such works of mercy are an antidote to pride and are also a means of blessing and hope to the world. The narrative of the Rich Man and Lazarus brings news of a great eschatological reversal—it is a solemn and terrifying warning. Yes! This narrative should disturb us! This narrative should keep us awake at night! This narrative describes the sufferings of the poor Lazarus—who lived a tragic, joyless life. But it is also the story of a thoughtless, self-absorbed man of wealth and privilege

—a man who lived well but cared little. Now why should this narrative trouble us? It is the story of a man whose material goods gradually ushered him into an incurable state of insensitivity.

The description of the suffering in Hades—which occurs before the Second Death [that is, the Casting into the Lake of Fire]—should frighten any rational man, and cause him to flee from sin and repent. The Apostle Paul admonishes us: “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you do not stand the test” [II Corinthians 13:5]. Unfortunately, most men are high-minded. We are touchy—and tenacious of old habits. We are easily provoked. We are quick to vindicate ourselves and refuse correction and rebuke. There is no softness in our tone or comforting delicacy in our fraternal touch. We ‘pour no oil on the troubled waters.’ We do not have a broken heart or weeping eye for sin. We parade our experience as did Eliphaz [Job 31:1–40]. We indulge in a legal spirit like Zophar [Job 32:1–22]. We introduce human authority like Bildad [Job 33:1–33]. We do not manifest the Spirit of Christ in our dealings [Romans 8:9] nor the Mind of Christ in our judgements [I Corinthians 2:16]. Therefore, in words of Dr. Vernon McGee:

“Confess your cold indifference—and then confess your pride.

Hie, go back—repent again—your vanity may still abide.”

Heed the warning of the rich man’s suffering in Hades. Moreover, heed Jesus’ warnings in regard to Gehenna [and the Lake of Fire]: “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off [that is, remove yourself from the source of temptation]. For it is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to Gehenna, into that [hell] fire that shall never be quenched—where the [never-dying] worm [of remorse of conscience and intense self-condemnation] does not die and the fire [from whence you shall never be delivered] is never extinguished. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into Gehenna, into that [hell] fire that shall never be quenched—where the [never-dying] worm [of remorse of conscience and intense self-condemnation] does not die and the fire [from whence you shall never be delivered] is never extinguished. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into Gehenna—where the [never-dying] worm [of remorse of conscience and intense self-condemnation] does not die and the fire [from whence you shall never be delivered] is never extinguished” [Mark 9:43–48].

In the words of the Holy Prophet and God-Seer Moses: “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you—life and death, blessing and cursing—therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” [Deuteronomy 30:19] Are you now in a state of impending wrath because of your sin? Repent of your sins and be transformed in your heart of hearts [or *nous*]. Regret, reflect, repent for the missed moment! For even Philo [the Jew] of Alexandria speaking in allegory, said: “*Metania* [repentance] is the beautiful and especially good daughter of the [Most High] God.” Therefore, if you are lost in your sins and trespasses, come now [as did those in the Orthodox Church of old] to the bench of those who mourn their sins [in Greek, *sigkléondes*—or weepers]. Fall down and prostrate yourself with those who prostrate themselves [in Greek, *ipopiptondes*] at the door of repentance. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” surrender to His Lordship in your life, “and you will be saved, you and your household” [Acts 16:31]. Your waiting and groaning will not bring you any nearer. Do you say you need more conviction? I tell you: “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” [II Corinthians 6:2]. Do you say that you are unworthy? Exactly! But “while we were [still] sinners, Christ died for us” [Romans 5:8]. He comes to you now! Jesus says: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to

him and dine with him, and he with Me” [Revelation 3:20]. You need not wait. You need not continue in your sins—with that heavy load on your heart. Hear the Word of God: “if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” [Romans 10:9]. Will you then “submit yourself unto God” in Jesus Christ our Lord? [James 4:7]. For He says: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest [and renewal for your soul]” [Matthew 11:29]. In a similar manner, perchance you have already made that great and primary existential choice, and have received Christ [as Lord and Savior] and now live as a child of God [John 1:12], yet you still find another law [lingering and] at work in your members [Romans 7:23]. Perhaps you have fallen short of your calling as a true disciple and need to seek a closer walk [or another grace]. Come now also: “Cast the whole of your care—all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all upon Him—for He cares for you affectionately with all watchfulness” [I Peter 5:7]. And forbye, whether you are in desperate need of rebirth and salvation [or simply in need of another grace]—come and ‘fall down at His feet!’ [Revelation 1:17]. And if you have been stung [or cut] to the heart [by Christ’s word], and ask ‘What can I do?’ — Come now to the mercy seat, “repent... receive the remission of sins... and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” [Acts 2:38–39]. Once again, the Lord calls you to repentance [and the transformation of your *nous*]! † Now to that same Christ—Who is able to save to the uttermost, belong glory, might, honor, and worship, together with His Father Who is without beginning, and with the Holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.