

AN HOMILY FOR GOOD FRIDAY  
CONCERNING THE DEATH AND PASSION  
OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

It should not become us, well beloved in Christ,<sup>a</sup> being that people which be<sup>b</sup> redeemed from the devil, from sin and death, and from everlasting damnation by Christ, to suffer this time to pass forth without any meditation and remembrance of that excellent work of our redemption, wrought as about this time, thorough<sup>c</sup> the great mercy and charity of our Saviour Jesu<sup>d</sup> Christ, for us wretched sinners and his mortal enemies. For, if a mortal man's deed done to the behoof of the commonwealth be had in remembrance of us, with thanks for the benefit and profit which we receive thereby, how much more readily should we have in memory this excellent act and benefit of Christ's death; whereby he hath purchased for us the undoubted pardon and forgiveness of our sins; whereby he made at one the Father of heaven with us, in such wise that he taketh us now for his loving children, and for the true *inheritors with Christ* [Rom. 8:17.], his natural Son, of the kingdom of heaven!

And verily so much more doth Christ's kindness appear unto us, in that it pleased him to deliver himself [Phil 2:[6–7].] of all his godly<sup>e</sup> honour, which he was equally in with his Father in heaven, and to come down into this vale of misery, to be made mortal man, and to be in the state of a most low servant, serving us for our wealth and profit, us, I say, which were his sworn enemies, and which renounced his holy law and commandments, and followed the lusts and sinful pleasures of our corrupt nature; and yet, I say, did Christ put himself between God's deserved wrath and our sin, and rent that *obligation*<sup>1</sup> [Col. 2:[14].] wherein we were in danger to God, and paid our debt. Our debt was a great deal too great for us to have paid; and without payment God the Father could never be at one with us: neither was it possible to be loosed

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<sup>a</sup> in Christ] brothers and sisters TAV. <sup>b</sup> which be] which he *from* 1563 D, *except* 1563 H. <sup>c</sup> thorough] through *from* 1563 G. <sup>d</sup> Jesu] Jesus *from* 1563 G. <sup>e</sup> godly] goodly 1623.

<sup>1</sup> Χειρόγραφον.

from this debt by our own ability. It pleased therefore him<sup>f</sup> to be the payer thereof, and to discharge us quite.

Who can now consider the grievous debt of sin which could none otherwise be paid but by the death of an innocent, and will not hate sin in his heart? If God hateth sin so much, that he would allow neither man nor angel for the redemption thereof, but only the death of his only and wellbeloved Son, who will not stand in fear thereof? If we, my friends, consider this, that for our sins this most innocent Lamb was driven to death, we shall have much more cause to bewail ourselves, that we were the cause of his death, than to cry out of the malice and cruelty of the Jews, which pursued him to his death. We did the deeds wherefore he was thus stricken and wounded: they were only the ministers of our wickedness.

It is meet then we should step low down into our hearts, and bewail our own wretchedness and sinful living. Let us know for a certainty, that, if the most dearly beloved Son of God was thus punished and stricken for the sin which he had not done himself, how much more ought we sore to be stricken for our daily and manifold sins which we commit against God, if we earnestly repent us not, and be not sorry for them. No man can love sin, which God heateth so much, and be in his favour. No man can say that he loveth Christ truly, and have his great enemy (sin, I mean, the author of his death) familiar and in friendship with him. So much do we love God and Christ, as we hate sin. We ought therefore to take great heed that we be not favourers thereof, lest we be found enemies to God and traitors to Christ. For not only they which nailed Christ upon the cross are his tormentors and crucifiers, but all they, saith St. Paul, [Heb. 6:[6].] *crucify again the Son of God*, as much as is in them, which do<sup>g</sup> commit vice and sin, which brought him to his death.

If *the wages of sin be death*, [Rom. 6:[23].] and death be everlasting, surely it is no small danger to be in service thereof. If *we live after the flesh* [Rom 8:13.] and after the sinful lusts thereof, St. Paul threateneth, yea Almighty God in St. Paul threateneth, that *we shall surely die*. We can none otherwise [Rom 6:11.] live to God but by dying to sin. If *Christ be in us, then is sin dead in us: and if the Spirit of God be in us, which raised Christ from death to life, so shall the same Spirit raise us to the resurrection of everlasting life*. [Rom. 8:[10–11].] But, if sin rule and reign in us, then is God, which is the fountain of all grace and virtue, departed from us; then hath the devil and his

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<sup>f</sup> therefore him] him therefore *from* 1571. <sup>g</sup> which do] who do 1623.

ungracious spirit rule and dominion in us. And surely, if in such miserable state we die, we shall not rise to life, but fall down to death and damnation, and that without end.

For Christ hath not so redeemed us from sin, that we may safely return thereto again; but he hath redeemed us [Tit. 2:14.], that we should forsake and motions thereof, and live to righteousness. Yea, we be therefore washed in our baptism from the filthiness of sin, that we should live afterward in the pureness of life. In baptism we promised to renounce the devil and his suggestions, we promised to be, *as obedient children*, [1 Pet. 1:14.] always following God's will and pleasure. Then, if he be our Father [Mal. 1:[6].] indeed, let us give him his due honour. If we be his children, let us shew him our obedience, like as Christ openly declared his obedience to his Father, which, as St. Paul writeth [Phil. 2:[8].], was *obedient even to the very death, the death of the cross*.

And this he did for us all that believe in him. For himself he was not punished; for he was pure and undefiled of all manner of sin. *He was wounded*, saith Esay [Isa. 53:[4–5].], *for our wickedness, and striped<sup>d</sup> for our sins*: he suffered the penalty of them himself, to deliver us from danger. *He bare*, saith Esay, *all our sores and infirmities upon his own back*: no pain did he refuse to suffer in his own body, that he might deliver us from pain everlasting. His pleasure it was thus to do for us: we deserved it not. Wherefore, the more we see ourselves bound unto him, the more he ought to be thanked for us; yea, and the more hope may we take, that we shall receive all other good things of his hand, in that we have received the gift of his only Son through his liberality. For, *if God*, saith St. Paul [Rom. 8:[32].], *hath not spared his own Son* from pain and punishment, *but delivered him for us all* unto the death, *how should he not give us all other things with him?* If we want any thing either for body or soul, we may lawfully and boldly approach to God as to our merciful Father, to ask that we desire, and we shall obtain it. For such power is given us [John 1:[12].], *to be the children of God, so many as believe in Christ's name*. In his name whatsoever we ask,<sup>u</sup> we shall have it granted. For so well pleased is the Father, Almighty God, with Christ his Son, that for his sake he favoureth us, and will deny us nothing. So pleasant was this sacrifice and oblation of his Son's death, which he so obediently and innocently suffered, that he would<sup>k</sup> take it for the only and full amends

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*Margin Note:* By 1st indent: Christ hath not so redeemed<sup>h</sup> us from sin, that we should live in sin. μ Matt. 21:[22; John 16:23–27].

<sup>h</sup> not so redeemed (*in the margin*)] not redeemed *from* 1563 D. <sup>i</sup> striped] stripped *from* 1582. <sup>k</sup> that he would] that we should *from* 1582.

for all the sins of the world. And such favour did he purchase by his death of his heavenly Father for us, that for the merit thereof, (if we be true Christians indeed, and not in word only,) we be now fully in God's grace again, and clearly discharged from our sin.

No tongue surely is able to express the worthiness of this so precious a death. For in this standeth the continual pardon of our daily offences, in this resteth our justification, in this we be allowed, in this is purchased the everlasting health of all our souls; yea [Acts 4:[12].], *there is none other thing that can be named under heaven to save our souls*, but this only work of Christ's precious offering of his body upon the altar of the cross. Certes there can be no work of any mortal man, be he never so holy, that shall be coupled in merits with Christ's most holy act. For no doubt all our thoughts and deeds were of no value, if they were not allowed in the merits of Christ's death. All our righteousness is<sup>l</sup> far unperfect, if it be compared with Christ's righteousness. For in his acts and deeds there was no spot of sin or of any unperfectness; (and for this cause they were the more able to be the true amends of our unrighteousness;<sup>m</sup>) where our acts and deeds be full of imperfection and infirmities, and therefore nothing worthy of themselves to stir God to any favour, much less to challenge the glory that<sup>n</sup> is due to Christ's act and merit: for *not to us*, saith David, *not to us, but to thy Name give the glory, O Lord*. [Ps. 113 [115:1]].

Let us therefore, good friends, with all reverence glorify his Name; let us magnify and praise him for ever. For he hath dealt with us according to his great mercy; by himself hath he purchased our redemption. He thought it not enough to spare himself and to send his angel to do this deed; but he would do it himself [Heb. 1:[3].], that he might do it the better, and make it the more perfect redemption. He was nothing moved with the intolerable<sup>o</sup> pains that he suffered in the whole course of his long passion, to repent him thus to do good to his enemies; but he opened his heart for us, and bestowed himself wholly for the ransoming of us. Let us therefore now open our hearts again to him, and study in our lives to be thankful to such a Lord, and evermore to be mindful of so great a benefit.

Yea, let us take up our cross with Christ, and follow him.

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*Margin Note:* By parentheses in 2d ¶: Our deeds be full of imperfection.

<sup>l</sup> righteousness is] unrighteousness is 1563 A–F.   <sup>m</sup> our unrighteousness] our righteousness *from* 1582.   <sup>n</sup> the glory that] that glory that 1623.   <sup>o</sup> intolerable] unsufferable TAV., *but unspeakable in other copies*.

His passion is not only the ransom and whole amends for our sin, but it is also a most perfect example of all patience and sufferance. For, if<sup>ε</sup> *it behoved Christ thus to suffer, and to enter into the glory of his Father*, how should<sup>p</sup> it not become us to bear patiently our small crosses of adversity and the troubles of this world? For surely, as saith St. Peter,<sup>ο</sup> *Christ therefore suffered to leave us an example to follow his steps*. And,<sup>π</sup> *if we suffer with him, we shall be sure also to reign with him in heaven*. Not that<sup>ρ</sup> *the sufferance of this transitory life should be worthy of that glory to come*; but gladly should we be content<sup>q</sup> to suffer,<sup>σ</sup> to be like Christ in our life, that so by our works we may *glorify our Father which is in heaven*. And, as it is painful and grievous to bear the cross of Christ in the griefs and displeasures of this life, so it bringeth forth<sup>τ</sup> the joyful fruit of hope in all them that be exercised therewith. Let us not so much<sup>υ</sup> behold the pain, as the reward that shall follow that labour.

Nay, let us rather endeavour ourselves in our sufferance to endure innocently and guiltless, as our Saviour Christ did. For, if we suffer for our deservings, then hath not *patience*<sup>φ</sup> *his perfect work* in us; *but, if*<sup>χ</sup> *undeservingly*<sup>ψ</sup> *we suffer* loss of goods and life, if we suffer to be evil spoken of, for the love of Christ, *this is thankful afore God*; for so did Christ suffer. *He never did sin, neither was there*<sup>ς</sup> *any guile found in his mouth*. *Yea, when he was reviled with taunts, he reviled not again; when he was wrongfully dealt with, he threatened not again, nor revenged his quarrel, but delivered his cause to him that judgeth rightly*. Perfect patience careth not what or how<sup>t</sup> much it suffereth, nor of whom it suffereth, whether of friend or foe; but studieth to suffer innocently and without deserving. Yea, he in whom perfect charity is careth so little to revenge, that he rather studieth to *do good for evil*,<sup>ψ</sup> *to bless and say well of them that curse him, to pray for them that pursue him*, according to the example of our Saviour Christ, who is the most perfect example and pattern of all meekness and sufferance. Which, hanging upon his cross in most fervent anguish, bleeding in every part of his blessed body, being set in the middes<sup>υ</sup> of his enemies and crucifiers, and, notwithstanding<sup>x</sup> the intolerable pains which they saw him in,<sup>y</sup> being of them mocked and

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*Margin Notes:* ξ Acts 17:[3; Luke 24:26, 46]. ο 1 Pet. 2:[21]. π 2 Tim. 2:[12]. ρ Rom. 8:[18]. σ Matt. 5:[10–12, 16]. τ Heb. 12:[11]. υ [Heb. 12:1–2]. φ James 1:[4]. χ 1 Pet. 2:[19–23]. ψ Matt. 5:[44]. 2d ¶: The patience of Christ. Perfect patience. The meekness of Christ.

<sup>p</sup> how should] why should *from* 1582. <sup>q</sup> content] contented *from* 1570. <sup>r</sup> undeservingly] undeservedly 1623. <sup>s</sup> there] omitted after 1574. <sup>t</sup> or how] nor how *from* 1563 G. <sup>u</sup> middes] midst 1587, 1595, 1623. <sup>x</sup> and, notwithstanding] And he, notwithstanding *from* 1563 B. <sup>y</sup> him in] in him 1563 G–1574.

scorned despitefully without all favour and compassion, had yet towards them such compassion in heart, that he prayed to his Father of heaven for them, and said [Luke 23:[34].], *O Father, forgive them, for they wote not what they do*. What patience was it also which he shewed when one of his own Apostles and servants, which was put in trust of him, came to betray him unto his enemies to the death! He said nothing worse to him but, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* [Matt. 26:[50].]

Thus, good people, should we call to mind the great examples of charity which Christ shewed in his passion, if we will fruitfully remember his passion. Such charity and love should we bear one to another, if we will be the true servants of Christ. [Matt. 5:[45–48] *For, if we love but them which love and say well by us, what great thing is it that we do?* saith Christ: *do not the paynims and open sinners so?* We must be more perfect in our charity than thus, *even as our Father in heaven is perfect; which maketh the light of his sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and sendeth his rain upon the kind and unkind*. After this manner should we shew our charity indifferently, as well to one as to another, as well to freind as foe, *like obedient children*, [1 Pet. 1:14.] after the example of our good Father<sup>z</sup> in heaven. For, if Christ was *obedient* [Phil. 2:8] to his Father *even to the death*, and that the most shameful death (as the Jews esteemed it), *the death of the cross*, why should not we<sup>a</sup> be obedient to God in lower points of charity and patience?

Let us forgive then our neighbours their small faults, [Eph. 4:32] *as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us* our great. It is not meet<sup>e</sup> that we should crave forgiveness of our great offences at God's hands, and yet will not forgive the small trespasses of our neighbours against us. We do call for mercy in vain, if we will not shew mercy to our neighbours. For, if we will not put wrath and displeasure forth of our hearts to our Christian brother, no more will God forgive the displeasure and wrath that our sins have deserved afore him. For under this condition [Matt. 6:14–15.] doth God forgive us, if we forgive other. It becometh not Christian men to be hard one to another, nor yet to think their neighbour unworthy to be forgiven. For, howsoever unworthy he is, yet is Christ worthy to have thee do thus much for his sake: he hath deserved it of thee, that thou shouldest forgive thy neighbour. And God is also to be obeyed, which

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*Margin Note:* <sup>e</sup> Ecclus. 28:[1–5]; Matt. 18:[35].

<sup>z</sup> our good Father] our Father *from* 1582.    <sup>a</sup> not we] we not *from* 1563 EF.    <sup>b</sup> put wrath] put out wrath TAV.

command<sup>c</sup> us to forgive, if we will have any part of the pardon which our Saviour Christ purchased once of God the Father by shedding of his precious blood. Nothing becometh Christ's servants so much as mercy and compassion.

Let us then be favourable one to another: [James 5:[16].] *and pray we one for another, that we may be healed* from all frailties of our life, the less to offend one the other; and that we may be *of one mind<sup>d</sup> and one<sup>d</sup> spirit*, agreeing together in brotherly love and concord, even *like the dear children of God*. By these means shall we move God to be merciful to our sins.<sup>c</sup> Yea, and we shall be hereby the more ready to receive our Saviour and Maker in his blessed Sacrament to our everlasting comfort and health of soul. Christ delighteth to enter and to dwell<sup>f</sup> in that soul where love and charity ruleth, and where peace and concord is seen. For thus writeth St. John [1 John 4:[16].]: *God is charity; he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him. And by this, saith he,<sup>k</sup> we shall know that we be of God, if we love our brothers.<sup>g</sup> Yea, and by this shall we know that we be shifted<sup>h</sup> from death to life, if we love one another. But he which hateth his brother, saith the same Apostle, abideth in death*, even in the danger of everlasting death; and is moreover the child of damnation and of the devil, cursed of God, and hated (so long as he so remain<sup>i</sup>) of God and of all<sup>k</sup> his heavenly company. For, as peace and charity make us the blessed children of Almighty God, so doth hatred and envy make us the cursed children of the devil.

God give us all grace to follow Christ's example<sup>l</sup> in peace and charity, in patience and sufference; that we now may have him our guest to enter and dwell within us, so as we may be in full surety, having such a pledge of our salvation. If we have him and his favour, we may be sure that we have the favour of God by his means. For he sitteth on the right hand [Rom. 8:[34].] of his<sup>m</sup> Father, as our proctor and attorney, pleading and suing for us in all our needs and necessities. Wherefore, if we want any gift of godly wisdom, we may ask it of God for Christ's sake, and we shall have it.

Let us consider and examine ourself,<sup>n</sup> in what want we be concerning this virtue of charity and patience. If we see that

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*Margin Notes:* θ [Phil. 1:27, 2:2]; Eph. 5:[1–2]. κ 1 John 3:[19, 14–15], 2:[11].

<sup>c</sup> command] commandeth *from* 1563 B. <sup>d</sup> and one] and of one TAV. <sup>e</sup> to our sins] unto our sins 1623. <sup>f</sup> and to dwell] and dwell *from* 1563 G. <sup>g</sup> brothers] brethren *from* 1563 G. <sup>h</sup> shifted] delivered 1623. <sup>i</sup> remain] remaineth *from* 1563 EF. <sup>k</sup> and of all] and all *from* 1563 EF. <sup>l</sup> example] examples *from* 1574. <sup>m</sup> of his] of God his *from* 1582. <sup>n</sup> examine ourself] examine ourselves *from* 1582.

our hearts be nothing inclined thereunto in forgiving them that have offended against us, then let us knowledge our want, and wish of<sup>o</sup> God to have it. But, if we want it and see in ourself<sup>p</sup> no desire thereunto, verily we be in a dangerous case afore<sup>q</sup> God, and have need to make much earnest prayer to God, that we may have such an heart changed, to the graffing<sup>r</sup> in of a new. For, unless we forgive other, we shall never be forgiven of God. No, not all the prayers and merits<sup>s</sup> of other can pacify God unto us, unless we be at peace and at one with our neighbour: nor all our deeds and good works can move God to forgive us our debts to him, except we forgive to other. He setteth more<sup>u</sup> by mercy than by sacrifice. Mercy moved our Saviour Christ to suffer for his enemies: it becometh us then to follow his example. For it shall little avail us to have in meditation the fruits and price of his passion, to magnify them, and to delight or trust to<sup>t</sup> them, except we have in mind his examples in passion, to follow them. If we thus therefore consider Christ's death, and will stick thereto with fast faith for the merit and deserving thereof, and will also frame ourself<sup>u</sup> in such wise to bestow our selves and all that we have by charity to the behoof of our neighbour, as Christ spent himself wholly for our profit, then do we truly remember Christ's death; and, being thus followers of Christ's steps, we shall be sure to follow him thither where he sitteth now with the Father and the Holy Ghost. To whom be all honour and glory. Amen.

*Margin Note:* μ [Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:6–8; Matt. 9:13].

<sup>o</sup> wish of] wish to *from* 1570. <sup>p</sup> in ourself] in ourselves *from* 1582. <sup>q</sup> afore] before *from* 1570. <sup>r</sup> graffing] grafting TAV., and 1623. <sup>s</sup> merits] good works 1623. <sup>t</sup> trust to] trust in *from* 1582. <sup>u</sup> frame ourself] frame ourselves 1623.

THE SECOND HOMILY CONCERNING THE  
DEATH AND PASSION OF OUR SAVIOUR CHRIST.

That we may the better conceive the great mercy and goodness of our Saviour Christ in suffering death universally for all men, it behoveth us to descend into the bottom of our conscience, and deeply to consider the first and principal cause wherefore he was compelled so to do.

When our great-grandfather Adam had broken [Gen 3:[17–19].] God's commandment in eating the apple forbidden him in Paradise at the motion and suggestion of his wife, he purchased thereby, not only to himself, but also to his posterity for ever, the just wrath and indignation of God; who, according to his former sentence pronounced at the giving of the commandment, condemned both him and all his to everlasting death, both of body and soul. For it was said unto him [Gen. 2:[16–17].]: *Thou shalt eat freely of every tree in the garden: but as touching the tree of knowledge of good and ill, thou shalt in no wise eat of it; for in what hour soever thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death.* Now, as the Lord had spoken, so it came to pass. Adam took upon him to eat thereof, and in so doing he died the death; that is to say, he became mortal, he lost the favour of God, he was cast out of Paradise, he was no longer a citizen of heaven, but a firebrand of hell and a bondslave to the devil. To this doth our Saviour bear witness in the Gospel, calling us [Luke 15:[4].] *lost sheep*, which have *gone astray* and wandered from *the true Shepherd of our souls*. [1 Pet. 2:25] To this also doth St. Paul bear witness [Rom. 5:[17–18].], saying that *by the offence of only Adam death came upon all men to condemnation*. So that now neither he nor any<sup>a</sup> of his had any right or interest at all in the kingdom of heaven, but were become plain reprobates and castaways, being perpetually damned to the everlasting pains of hell fire.

In this so great misery and wretchedness, if mankind could have recovered himself again, and obtained forgiveness at God's hands, then had his case been somewhat tolerable; because he

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<sup>a</sup> nor any] or any *from* 1582.

might have attempted some way how to deliver himself from eternal death. But there was no way left unto him; he could do nothing that might please<sup>b</sup> God's wrath; he was altogether *unprofitable* in that behalf; *there was none<sup>e</sup> that did good, no not one.* [Ps. 53:3; Rom. 3:12] And how then could he work his own salvation? Should he go about to pacify God's heavy displeasure by offering up [Heb. 9:[9, 12].] burnt<sup>d</sup> sacrifices, sacrifices, according as it was ordained in the old Law? by offering up the blood of oxen, the blood of calves, the blood of goats, the blood of lambs, and so forth? O these things were or no force nor strength to take away sins; they could not put away the anger of God; they could not cool the heat of his wrath, nor yet bring mankind into favour again: they were but only figures and shadows of things to come, and nothing else. Read the Epistle to the Hebrews, [Heb. 10:[1–4, 11].] there shall you find this matter largely discussed: there shall you learn in most plain words, that the bloody sacrifice of the old Law was unperfect, and not able to deliver man from the state of damnation by any means: so that mankind in trusting thereunto should trust to a broken staff, and in the end deceive himself. What should he then do? Should he go about to observe<sup>e</sup> and keep the law of God divided into two tables, and so purchase to himself eternal life? Indeed, if Adam and his posterity had been able to satisfy and fulfil the law perfectly in loving God above all things and their neighbour as themselves, then should they have easily quenched the Lord's wrath, and escaped the terrible sentence of eternal death pronounced against them by the mouth of Almighty God. For it is written [Luke 10:[28].], *Do this,<sup>f</sup> and thou shall live*; that is to say, Fulfil my commandments, keep thyself upright and perfect in them according to my will; then shalt thou live and not die. Here is eternal life promised with this condition, so<sup>g</sup> that they keep and observe the law. But such was the frailty of mankind after his fall, such was his weakness and imbecility, that he could not walk uprightly in God's commandments, though he would never

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<sup>b</sup> please] pacify *from* 1567. <sup>c</sup> none] not one 1623. <sup>d</sup> burnt] burnt *from* 1582. <sup>e</sup> observe] serve *from* 1582. <sup>f</sup> Do this] Do thus *from* 1582. <sup>g</sup> condition, so] condition, and so 1623.

<sup>1</sup> Although Wycliffe uses forms and inflections of the verb *to please* in the sense of *appease* or *pacify* (as in *Gen.* 43:14, *Ps* 48:8, 77:38, *Is.* 60:7, 1 *Macc.* 1:47), yet for the most part they are replaced by some other word in Purvey's recension of his translation. And it seems very likely that in this place the Homilist did not write *please*, but *pease*, the old form of *appease*, of which Richardson gives several instances under "Peace", and which occurs five times in the short section headed "Prayer peaseth God's wrath" in *Marshall's Primer*, the first of the *Three Primers put forth in the Reign of Henry VIII*, which have been reprinted at the University Press, p. 231.

so fain; but daily and hourly fell from his bounden duty, offending the Lord his God divers ways to the great increase of his condemnation, insomuch that the Prophet David crieth out on this wise [Ps.53:[3].]: *All have gone astray, all are become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one.* In this case what profit could he have by the law? None at all. For, as St. James saith [James 2:[10].], *he that shall observe the whole law, and yet faileth in one point, is become guilty of all.* And in the book of Deuteronomy it is written [Deut. 27:[26; Gal. 3:10].], *Cursed be he, saith God, which abideth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.* Behold the law bringeth a curse with it, and maketh us<sup>h</sup> guilty, not because [Rom. 7:12–23] it is of itself naught or unholy, (God forbid we should so think) but because the frailty of our sinful flesh is such that we can never fulfil it according to the perfection that the Lord requireth. Could Adam then, think you, hope or trust to be saved by the law? No, he could not: but, the more he looked on the law, the more he saw his own damnation set before his eyes, as it were in a most clear<sup>i</sup> glass. So that now of himself he was most wretched and miserable, destitute of all hope, and never able to pacify God's heavy displeasure, nor yet to escape the terrible judgment of God, whereinto<sup>j</sup> he and all his posterity were fallen by disobeying the strait commandment of the Lord their God.

But [Rom. 11:[33].] O the abundant riches of God's great mercy! O the unspeakable goodness of his heavenly wisdom! When all hope of righteousness was past on our part; when we had nothing in ourselves whereby we might quench his burning wrath, and work the salvation or our own souls, and rise out of the miserable estate wherein we lay; then, even then, did Christ the Son of God, by the appointment of his Father, come down from heaven, to be wounded for our sakes, to be *reputed with the wicked* [Isa. 53:12], to be condemned unto death, to take upon him the reward of our sins, and to give his body to be broken on the cross for our offences. *He*, saith the Prophet Esay [Isa. 53:[4–5].], meaning Christ, *hath borne our infirmities, and hath carried our sorrows; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes are we<sup>k</sup> made whole.* St. Paul likewise saith [2 Cor. 5:[21].], *God made him a sacrifice for our sins which knew not sin, that we should be made the righteousness of God by him.* And St. Peter most agreeably writing in this behalf saith [1 Pet. 3:[18].]: *Christ hath once died and suffered*

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<sup>h</sup> maketh us] maketh it 1623.    <sup>i</sup> a most clear] a clear 1623.    <sup>j</sup> whereinto] whereunto 1623.    <sup>k</sup> are we] we were 1623.

*for our sins, the just for the unjust, &c.* To these might be added an infinite number of other places to the same effect; but these few shall be sufficient for this time.

Now then, as it was said at the beginning, let us ponder and weigh the cause of his death, that thereby we may be the more moved to glorify him in our whole life. Which if you will have comprehended briefly in one word, it was nothing else on our part but only the transgression and sin of mankind. When the angel came to warn Joseph that he should not fear to take Mary to his wife [Matt. 1:[20–21].], did he not therefore will the child's name to be called *Jesus*, because he should *save his people from their sins*? When John the Baptist preached Christ, and shewed him unto the<sup>l</sup> people with his finger, did he not plainly say unto them [John 1:[29].], *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*? When the woman of Cananie<sup>m</sup> besought Christ to help her daughter, which was possessed with a devil, did he not openly confess that [Matt 15:[22, 24].] he was *sent to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel* by giving his life for their sins? It was sin then, O man, even thy sin, that caused Christ, the only Son of God, to be crucified in the flesh, and to suffer the most vile and slanderous death of the cross. If thou haddest kept thyself upright, if thou haddest observed the commandments, if thou haddest not presumed to transgress [Rom. 5:[18–19].] the will of God in thy first father Adam, then Christ,<sup>o</sup> *being in form of God*, needed not *to have taken upon him the shape of a servant*; being immortal in heaven, he needed not to become mortal on earth; being *the true bread* of the soul, he needed not to hunger; being *the healthful water of life*, he needed not to thirst; being *life* itself, he needed not to have suffered death. But to these and many other such extremities was he driven by thy sin, which was so manifold and great, that God could be only pleased in him and no<sup>n</sup> other.

Canst thou think of this, O sinful man, and not tremble within thyself? Canst thou hear it quietly, without remorse of conscience and sorrow of heart? Did Christ suffer his passion for thee, and wilt thou shew no compassion towards him? While Christ was yet hanging on the cross and yielding up the ghost, the Scripture witnesseth [Matt. 27:[51–52].] that *the veil of the temple did rent in twain*, that *the earth<sup>o</sup> did quake*, that *the stones clave asunder*, that *the graves did open*, and *the dead bodies rise*; and shall the heart of man be nothing moved to remember how grievously

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*Margin Notes:* θ [Phil. 2:6–7; John 6:32, 35, 4:10, 7:37; Rev. 21:6; John 11:25].

<sup>l</sup> unto the] to the *from* 1570.   <sup>m</sup> Cananie] Canane 1563 G–1570, Cannan *from* 1571.   <sup>n</sup> and no] and none *from* 1563 G.   <sup>o</sup> that the earth] and the earth *from* 1563 G.

and cruelly he was handled of the Jews for our sins? shall man shew himself to be more hardhearted than stones? to have less compassion than dead bodies? Call to mind, O sinful creature, and set before thine eyes, Christ crucified; think thou seest his body stretched out in length upon the cross, his head crowned with sharp thorn, his<sup>p</sup> hands and his feet pierced with nails, his heart opened with a long spear, his flesh rent and torn with whips, his brows sweating water and blood; think thou hearest him now crying in an intolerable agony to his Father, and saying, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* [Matt. 27:46.] Couldst thou behold this woful sight or hear this mournful voice without tears, considering that he suffered all this, not for any desert of his own, but only for the grievousness of thy sins? O that mankind should put the everlasting Son of God to such pains! O that we should be the occasion of his death, and the only cause of his condemnation! May we not justly cry, Woe worth<sup>2</sup> the time that ever we sinned?

O my brethren, let this image of Christ crucified be always \*printed in our hearts; let it stir us up to the hatred of sin, and\* provoke our minds to the earnest love of Almighty God. For why,<sup>3</sup> is not sin, think you, a grievous thing in his sight, seeing for the transgressing of God's precept in eating of one apple he condemned all the world to perpetual death, and would not be pacified but only with the blood of his own Son? True, yea, most true is that saying of David [Ps. 5:[4].]: *Thou, O Lord, hatest all them that work iniquity; neither shall the wicked and evil man dwell with thee.* By the mouth of his Prophet<sup>q</sup> Esay he crieth manily out against sinners, and saith [Is. 5:[18].]: *Woe be unto you that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sins as it were with cart ropes.* Did not God give<sup>r</sup> a plain token how greatly he hated and abhorred sin, when he drowned [Gen. 7] all the world save only eight persons? when he destroyed [Gen. 19:[24].] Sodom and Gomorre with fire and brimstone? when in the three days' space he killed [2 Sam. 24:[13, 15].] with pestilence threescore and ten thousand for David's offence? when he drowned [Exod. 14:[28].] Pharao and all his host in the Red Sea? when he turned [Dan. 4:[33].] Nabuchodonozor the king into the form of a brute beast, creeping upon all four? when he suffered Achitophel [2 Sam. 17:[23]; Acts 1:[18; Matth. 27:5].

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\*former line 19\*

<sup>p</sup> thorn, his] thorns, his 1587, 1595; thorns, and his 1623.   <sup>q</sup> his Prophet] his holy Prophet 1623.   <sup>r</sup> Did not God give] Did not give 1582; Did he not give 1587, 1595; Did not he give 1623.

<sup>2</sup> Woe worth: Woe be unto; from the Anglo-Saxon *weorthan*, to be or to become. The phrase was very common when the Homilies were written, and remains in *Ezek.* 30:2

<sup>3</sup> For why: see before p. 343, note 3.

and Judas to hang themselves upon the remorse of sin, which was so terrible to their eyes? A thousand such examples are to be found in Scripture, if a man would stand to seek them out. But what need we? This one example which we have now in hand is of more force, and ought more to move us, than all the rest. Christ, being the Son of God and perfect God himself, who never committed sin, was compelled to come down from heaven, and to<sup>s</sup> give his body to be bruised and broken on the cross for our sins. Was not this a manifest token of God's great wrath and displeasure towards sin, that he could be pacified by no other means but only by the sweet and precious blood of his dear Son? O sin, sin, that ever thou shouldst drive Christ to such extremity! Woe worth the time that ever thou camest into the world. But what booteth it now to bewail? Sin is come, and so come that it cannot be avoided. There is no man living, no, not the justest man on the earth, but he *falleth seven times a day*,<sup>4</sup> as Salomon saith. [Prov. 24:[16].] And our Saviour Christ, although he hath delivered us from sin, yet not so that we shall be free from committing sin, but so that it shall not be imputed [Rom 8:1.] to our condemnation. He hath taken upon him *the just reward of sin*, [Rom. 6:[23].] which was *death*, and by death hath overthrown death, that we believing in him might live for ever and not die. Ought not this to engender extreme hatred of sin in us, to consider that it did violently, as it were, pluck God out of heaven, and make<sup>t</sup> him feel the horrors and pains of death? O that we would sometimes consider this in the midst of our pomps and pleasures: it would bridle the outrageousness of the flesh; it would abate and assuage our carnal affects;<sup>u</sup> it would restrain our fleshly appetites, that we should not run at random,<sup>5</sup> as we commonly do. To commit sin wilfully and desperately, without fear of God, is nothing else but to crucify Christ anew, as we are expressly taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews. [Heb. 6:[6].] Which thing if it were deeply printed in all man's hearts, then should not sin reign every where so much as it doth, to the great grief and torment of Christ now sitting in heaven.

Let us therefore remember and always bear in mind Christ crucified, that thereby we may be inwardly moved both to abhor sin throughly, and also with an earnest and zealous heart to

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<sup>s</sup> heaven, and to] heaven, to *from* 1582.    <sup>t</sup> and make] to make *from* 1563 G.    <sup>u</sup> affects] affections 1623.

<sup>4</sup> Septies enim cadet [*al. enim in die cadet*] justus. *Vulg.*

<sup>5</sup> random: an old French or perhaps Anglo-Norman word, now written random. See *Todd on Spenser, Shepherds Calender, May*, 46.

love God. For this is another fruit which the memorial of Christ's death ought to work in us, an earnest and unfeigned love towards God. *So God loved the world*, saith St. John [John 3:[16].], *that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed<sup>x</sup> in him should not perish, but have life everlasting*. If God declared so great love towards us his seely creatures, how can we of right but love him again? Was not this sure pledge of his love, to give us his own Son from heaven? He might have given us an angel if he would, or some other creature, and yet should his love have been far above our deserts. Now he gave us, not an angel, but his Son. And what Son? His only Son, his natural Son, his wellbeloved Son, even that Son whom he had made Lord and Ruler over<sup>y</sup> all things. Was not this a singular token of great love? But to whom did he give him? He gave him to the whole world, that is to say, to Adam and all that should come after him. O Lord, what had Adam or any other man deserved at God's hands, that he should give us his own Son? We were<sup>z</sup> all miserable persons, sinful persons, damnable persons, justly driven out of paradise, justly excluded from heaven, justly condemned to hell fire: and yet (see a wonderful token of God's love) he gave us his only begotten Son, us, I say, that were his extreme and deadly enemies; that we, by virtue of his blood shed upon the cross, might be clean purged from our sins, and made righteous again in his sight. Who can choose but marvel, to hear that God should shew such unspeakable love towards us, that were his deadly enemies? Indeed, O mortal man, thou oughtest of right to marvel at it, and to acknowledge therein God's great goodness and mercy towards mankind; which is so wonderful, that no flesh, be it never so worldly wise, may well conceive it or express it. For, as St. Paul testifieth [Rom. 5:[8].], *God greatly commendeth and setteth out his love towards us, in that he sent his Son Christ to die for us, when we were yet sinners and open enemies of his Name*. If we had in any manner of wise deserved it at his hands, then had it been no marvel at all; but there was no desert on our part, wherefore he should do it. Therefore, thou sinful creature, when thou hearest that God gave his Son to die for the sins of the world, think not he did it for any desert or goodness that was in thee, for thou wast then the bondslave of the devil; but fall down upon thy knees, and cry with the Prophet David [Ps. 8:[4].], *O Lord, what is man, that thou art so mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou so regardest him?*

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<sup>x</sup> believed] believeth *from* 1582.    <sup>y</sup> over] of *from* 1571.    <sup>z</sup> We were] We are *from* 1571.

And, seeing he hath so greatly loved thee, endeavour thyself to love him again [Luke 10:27] *with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength*, that therein thou mayest appear not to be unworthy of his love. I report me to thy own<sup>a</sup> conscience, whether thou wouldest not think thy love ill bestowed upon him that could not find in his heart to love thee again? If this be true, as it is most true, then think how greatly it belongeth<sup>b</sup> to thy duty<sup>c</sup> to love God, which hath so greatly loved thee, that he hath not spared his own only Son from so cruel and shameful a death for thy sake.

And hitherto concerning the cause of Christ's death and passion, which as it was on our part most horrible and grievous sin, so on the other side it was the free gift of God, proceeding of his mere and tender love towards mankind, without any merit or desert of our part. The Lord for his mercies' sake grant that we never forget this great benefit of our salvation in Christ Jesu, but that we always shew ourselves thankful for it, abhorring all kind of wickedness and sin, and applying our minds wholly to the service of God and the diligent keeping of his commandments.

Now resteth to<sup>d</sup> shew unto you how to apply Christ's death and passion to our comfort, as a medicine to our wounds, so that it may work the same effect in us wherefore it was given, namely, the health and salvation of our souls. For, as it profiteth a man nothing to have salve, unless it be well applied to the part affected,<sup>e</sup> so the death of Christ shall stand us in no force, unless we apply it to ourselves in such sort as God hath appointed. Almighty God commonly worketh by means, and in this thing he hath also ordained a certain mean whereby we may take fruit and profit to our souls' health. What mean is that? Forsooth it is faith; not an unconstant or wavering faith, but a sure, steadfast, grounded, and unfeigned faith. [John 3:[16].] *God sent his Son into the world*, saith St. John. To what end? *That whosoever \*believed<sup>f</sup> in him should not perish, but have life everlasting*. Mark these words, *That whosoever believed<sup>g</sup> in him*. Here is the mean\* whereby we must obtain eternal life; namely, faith. *For*, as St. Paul teacheth [Rom. 10:[10].] in his Epistle to the Romans, *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and*

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\*former lines 34 & 35\*

<sup>a</sup> thy own] thine own *from* 1563 EF, *except* 1595. <sup>b</sup> belongeth] behoveth *from* 1563 G. <sup>c</sup> thy duty] thee in duty 1623. <sup>d</sup> Now resteth to] Now it remaineth that I 1623. <sup>e</sup> affected] infected *from* 1574. <sup>f</sup> believed (*line* 34)] believeth 1563 F *and all from* 1567. <sup>g</sup> believed (*line* 35)] believeth *from* 1563 B.

*with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Paul, being demanded of the keeper of the prison [Acts 16:[30–31].] *what he should do to be saved*, made this answer: *Believe in the Lord Jesus; so shalt thou and thine house be both<sup>h</sup> saved.* After the Evangelist had described and set forth unto us at large the life and the death of the Lord Jesus, in the end he concludeth with these words [John 20:[31].]: *These things are written, that we may believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and through faith obtain eternal life.* To conclude with the words of St. Paul, which are these [Rom. 10:[4].]: *Christ is the end of the law unto salvation for every one that doth believe.*<sup>5</sup> By this then you may well perceive that the only mean and instrument of salvation required of our parts is faith, that is to say, a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God, whereby we persuade ourselves, that God both hath and will forgive our sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favour, that he hath released us from the bonds of damnation, and received us again into the number of his elect people, not for our merits or deserts, but only and solely for the merits of Christ's death and passion, who became man for our sakes, and humbled himself to sustain the reproach of the cross, that we thereby might be saved, and made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. This faith is required at our hands; and this if we keep steadfastly in our<sup>i</sup> hearts, there is no doubt but we shall obtain salvation at God's hands, as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of whom the Scripture saith, that *they believed, and it was imputed unto them for righteousness.* [Gen 15:[6].; Rom. 4:[3, 9, 22, 24].] Was it imputed unto them?<sup>k</sup> and shall it not be imputed unto us?<sup>l</sup> Yes, *if we have the same faith as they had, it shall be as truly imputed unto us* for righteousness, as it was unto them. For it is one faith that must save both us and them, even a sure and steadfast faith in Christ Jesu;<sup>m</sup> who, as ye have heard, came into the world for this end [John 3:[16].], *that whosoever believed<sup>n</sup> in him should not perish, but have life everlasting.*

But here we must take heed that we do not halt with God through an unconstant and wavering faith, but that it be strong and steadfast to our lives' end. *He that wavereth*, saith St. James [James 1:[6–7].], *is like a wave of the sea; neither let that man think that he shall obtain any thing at God's hands.* Peter coming to Christ upon the water [Matt. 14:[28–31].], because he fainted in faith, was in danger of drowning. So we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be

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<sup>h</sup> be both] both be *from* 1570.    <sup>i</sup> in our] at our 1623.    <sup>k</sup> them?] them only? *from* 1563 B.    <sup>l</sup> us?] us also? *from* 1563 B.  
<sup>m</sup> Jesu] Jesus 1623.    <sup>n</sup> believed] believe *from* 1567.

<sup>5</sup> Τέλος γὰρ νόμον Χριστοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι.

feared lest we shall sink as Peter did, not into the water, but into the bottomless pit of hell fire. Therefore I say unto you, that we must apprehend the merits of Christ's death and passion by faith; and that with a strong and steadfast faith, nothing doubting but that Christ [Heb. 10:10–18], by his one<sup>o</sup> oblation and once offering of himself upon the cross, hath taken away our sins, and hath restored us again into God's favour, so fully and perfectly that no other sacrifice for sin shall hereafter be requisite or needful in all the world.

Thus have ye heard<sup>p</sup> in a few the mean whereby we must apply the fruits and merits of Christ's death unto us, so that it may work the salvation of our souls, namely, a sure, steadfast, perfect, and grounded faith. For, as all they which beheld steadfastly<sup>r</sup> the brasen serpent were healed and delivered, at the very sight thereof, from their corporal diseases and bodily stings, even so all they which behold Christ crucified with a true and lively faith shall undoubtedly be delivered from the grievous wounds<sup>q</sup> of the soul, be they never so deadly or many in number. Therefore, dearly beloved, if we chance at any time, through frailty of the flesh, to fall into sin, as it cannot be chosen but we must needs fall often; and if we feel the heavy burden thereof to press our souls, tormenting us with the fear of death, hell, and damnation; let us then use that mean which God hath appointed in his word, to wit, the mean of faith, which is the only instrument of salvation now left unto us. Let us steadfastly behold Christ crucified with the eyes of our heart. Let us only trust to be saved by his death and passion, and to have our sins clean washed away through his most precious blood; that in the end of the world, when he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead, he may receive us into his heavenly kingdom, and place us in the number of his elect and chosen people, there to be partakers of that immortal and everlasting life which he hath purchased unto us by virtue of his bloody wounds. To him therefore with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory world without end. Amen.

*Margin Note:* τ Numb. 21:[9]; John 3:[14–15].

<sup>o</sup> his own *from* 1570.    <sup>p</sup> ye] you *from* 1582.    <sup>q</sup> wounds] wound 1623.