

Twenty Sixth Sunday after Trinity;

Matthew 25:31-46

Judgment Day

MATTHEW 25:31-46

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

1. The words of this Gospel are in themselves clear and lucid. They have been given both for the comfort and encouragement of believing Christians, and for the warning and terror of others, if perchance, they might be of help to them. While most lessons almost

exclusively teach and inculcate faith, this one treats only of the works, which Christ will examine at the last day, that it may be seen that he wishes them to be remembered and performed by those who wish to be Christians and be found in his kingdom.

2. And Christ himself gives this admonition here in the strongest terms that can be given, both in the consoling promise of a glorious, eternal reward, and in the most terrible threatenings of eternal wrath and punishment upon all who despise the admonition; so that whoever is not moved and aroused by these words can certainly never be moved by anything. For Christ says, he will himself come visibly in his majesty, at the last day, with all the angels, and that he will transplant all who have believed in him and have exercised love toward his followers, into his father's kingdom of eternal glory all who believe in him and love his saints; and that he will also cast into hell forever all who live not as Christians, and who separate themselves from him and all his saints.

3. Now, had it not been told us we should be inquisitive beyond measure to know what would happen on the last day, and what Jesus would say and do on that day. Here we are now told, and have set before us first of all, death, which no one can escape; but after that the day of judgment. Then it shall come to pass that Christ will bring together by means of the resurrection all who have ever lived upon earth; and at the same time he will descend in great inexpressible majesty, sitting upon the throne of judgment, with all the heavenly host hovering around him; and all the good and bad will appear, so that we shall all stand exposed before him, and no one will be able to conceal himself.

4. The appearance of this glory and majesty will immediately become a great terror and pain to the condemned, as we read in today's Epistle lesson, lest they shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, 2 Thess. 1, 9-10. For even if there were no more than a single angel present, there would not remain in his presence one fickle, wicked conscience, were it possible to escape, any more than a thief and a rascal can bear to come before a human judge. If he could escape, he would much prefer it, if only for the purpose that he might escape public disgrace, to say nothing of his being compelled to hear the judgment passed upon him. What a terrible sight this will be, when the ungodly shall see not only all God's angels and creatures, but also the Judge in his divine majesty, and shall hear the verdict of eternal destruction and hell fire pronounced upon them forever! This ought surely to be a strong, powerful admonition for us to live as Christians, so that we may stand in honor and without fear at the right hand of this majestic Lord, where there will be no fear nor terror, but pure comfort and everlasting joy.

5. For he will then, as he says here himself, immediately separate the goats from the sheep. And this will take place publicly in the presence of all angels, men, and creatures, and before the whole rabble of an ungodly world, that it may be seen who have been pious, honest Christians, as well as who have been false hypocrites. This separation

cannot take place in the world until that day, not even in the assembly that constitutes the Christian Church. The good and the bad must remain together in this world, as the parable of the wedding guests says, Mat. 22, 10; or as Christ himself had to tolerate Judas among his Apostles. Christians are even now grieved that they must remain here in the midst of a crooked, perverse, ungodly people, which is the kingdom of Satan, Phil. 2, 15.

6. While they have their sufferings here upon earth, they will have also their comfort on the coming day of judgment, when Christ will separate them from the other flock, so that after that day no false, ungodly men, nor death, nor devil can ever touch them or offend them.

7. Then he will pronounce the verdict in the very words in which he has already prepared it and set it forth, and he will certainly not change it. And the words are peculiar in this that he makes them depend upon the deeds and works here mentioned, which they have or have not done, and which are the basis and cause of his judgment. And all these words set forth at length the works which have been done as well as those which have been neglected. And all this shall happen in the twinkling of an eye, when the hearts of all men shall be revealed before all creatures; and as it is preached here, so there all will be forthwith executed.

8. You may ask why Christ there especially examines works called deeds Of mercy, or the neglect of such works? Six different kinds are mentioned in the text, although many more might be given; yet were one to judge critically in the matter, there are no more works than those implied in the fifth commandment: Thou shalt not kill; in which we are commanded in general, as Christ himself explains it, not to be angry with our neighbor, but to be kind to him and ready to serve and assist him, supply his wants in times of need, whether in hunger, thirst, nakedness, suffering, imprisonment, sickness or other troubles, and to do this even to those who may have given us occasion for anger or for unmerciful acts, and thus do not appear to be worthy of our love and benevolence. For that is a poor virtue which does good only to those we love, or from whom we hope to receive kindness and thanks in return.

But one might, as has been said, add to those works of mercy many more from other commandments; for example from the sixth, that one is to assist his neighbor, to protect his wife, children and domestics, and to keep them under proper restraint and in honor; also from the seventh, eighth and last commandments, that is, to help save and maintain the goods and property, house, home and good report of his neighbor; also to help protect and defend the poor, the oppressed and the down-trodden.

9. Now Christ says also in Mat. 12,36, that men must give an account on the day of judgment not only of the transgressions of these commandments, but also of every idle word they have spoken. Then where shall the works of the first table, the greatest commandment, as right teaching, faith, prayer, hearing and preaching of God's Word, and the like, find their place? Why does he pronounce such a harsh and severe judgment only

upon those who have omitted to do the works of the fifth commandment? Because these works appear almost the same as those which the heathen do. For the Turks do more works of this kind and boast more of them than we who are called Christians. Among them each one regards his neighbor as his brother and shares with him whatever he has. Nay, they regard it the greatest unfaithfulness and most shameful vice not to share bread with a neighbor in times of hunger. Why does he so highly extol these works which shine so brightly also among the Turks and among the heathen? Certainly he does not mean to say that those also who are not Christians merit eternal life by reason of such works?

10. For Christ himself shows that he is speaking of the works of believing Christians, when he says: "I was hungry and ye gave me to eat," etc.; "what ye have done unto the least of these my brethren ye have done unto me." For there is no doubt that he who performs such works of mercy to Christians, must himself be a Christian and a believer; but he who does not believe in Christ, will certainly never be so kind toward a Christian, much less toward Christ, so that for his sake he would show mercy to the poor, and needy; therefore he will refer to these works at the judgment, and accordingly pronounce the verdict to both parties, to those who have done, and those who have not done these works, as a public testimony of the fruits of their faith or of their unbelief.

11. It seems as though he meant hereby to show that many Christians, after receiving the preaching of the Gospel, of the forgiveness of sins and grace through Christ, become even worse than the heathen. For he also says in, Mat. 19, 30, "Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Thus it will also be at the end of the world; those who should be honest Christians, because they heard the Gospel, are much worse and more unmerciful than they were before, as we see too many examples of this even now. Aforetime when we were to do good works under the seduction and false worship of the Papacy, every one was ready and willing; a prince, for example, or a city, could give more alms and a greater endowment than now all the kings and emperors are able to give. But now all the world seems to be learning nothing else than how to estimate values, to rake and scrape, to rob and steal by lying, deceiving, usury, overcharging, overrating, and the like; and every man treats his neighbor, not as though he were his friend, much less as his brother in Christ, but as his mortal enemy, and as though he intended to snatch all things to himself and begrudge everything to others.

12. This goes on daily, is constantly increasing, is a very common practice and custom. among all classes of people, among princes, the nobility, burghers, peasants, in all courts, cities, villages, yes in almost every home. Tell me, what city is now so strong and pious as to be able to raise an amount sufficient to support a schoolmaster or a preacher? Yes, if we did not already have the liberal alms and endowments of our forefathers, the Gospel would long ago have disappeared in the cities on account of the burghers, and in the country because of the nobility and peasants, and poor preachers would have nothing to eat nor to drink. For we do not love to give, but would rather take even by force what others have given and endowed. Therefore it is no credit to us that a single pulpit or

school is still maintained. Yea, how many there are among the great, the powerful, and the rich, especially in the Papacy, who would like to see nothing better than all preachers, schools, and arts exterminated.

13. Such are the thanks to the blessed Gospel, by which men have been freed from the bondage and plagues of the Pope, that they must become so shamefully wicked in these last times. They are now no more unmerciful, no more in a human, but in a satanic way; they are not satisfied with being allowed to enjoy the Gospel, and grow fat by robbing and stealing the revenues of the church, but they must also be scheming with all their power how they may completely starve out the Gospel. One can easily count upon his fingers, what they who enjoy the Gospel are doing and giving, here and elsewhere; and, were it only for us now living, there would long since have been no preacher or student from whom our children and descendants might know what we had taught and believed.

14. In short, what do you think Christ will say on that day, seated on his judgment throne, to such unmerciful Christianity? "Dear Sir, listen, you have also pretended to be a Christian and boasted of the Gospel; did you not also hear this sermon, that I myself preached, in which I told you what my verdict and decision would be: 'Depart from me, ye cursed?' I was hungry and thirsty, naked and sick, poor and in prison, and ye gave me no meat, no drink, clothed me not, took me not in, and visited me not. Why have ye neglected this, and have been more shameless and unmerciful toward your own brethren than the Turk or heathen?" Will you excuse yourself by pleading: "Lord, when saw we thee hungry or thirsty?" etc. Then he will answer you again through your own conscience: Dear Sir, were there no people who preached to you; or perhaps poor students who should have at the time been studying and learning God's Word, or were there no poor, persecuted Christians whom you ought to have fed, clothed and visited?

15, We ought really to be ashamed of ourselves, having had the example of parents, ancestors, lords and kings, princes and others, who gave so liberally and charitably, even in profusion, to churches, ministers, schools, endowments, hospitals and the like; and by such liberal giving neither they nor their descendants were made poorer. What would they have done, had they had the light of the Gospel, that is given unto us? How did the Apostles and their followers in the beginning bring all they had for their poor widows, or for those who had nothing, or who were banished and persecuted, in order that no one among them might suffer for the necessities of life! In this way poor Christians should at all times support one another. Otherwise, as I have said, the Gospel, the pulpit, churches and schools would already be completely exterminated, no matter how much the rest of the world did.

Were it not for the grace of God, by which he gives us here and there a pious prince, or godly government, which preserves the fragments still left, that all may not be destroyed by the graspers and vultures, thieves and robbers; were it not for this grace, I say, the poor pastors and preachers would not only be starved, but also murdered. Nor are there now any other poor people than those who serve, or are being trained to serve the church;

and these can obtain no support elsewhere, and must leave their poor wives and children die of hunger because of an indifferent world; on the other hand the world is full of useless, unfaithful, wicked fellows among day-laborers, lazy mechanics, servants, maids, and idle, greedy beggars, who everywhere by lying, deceiving, robbing and stealing, take away the hard-earned bread and butter from those who are really poor, and yet go unpunished in the midst of their wantonness and insolence.

16. This I say, that we may see how Christ will upbraid the false liars and hypocrites among Christians, on the day of judgment, and having convicted them before all creatures will condemn them, because they have done none of the works which even the heathen do to their fellows; who did much more in their false and erroneous religion, and would have done it even more willingly had they known better.

17. Since now this terrible condemnation is justly pronounced over those who neglected these works, what will happen to those who have not only neglected the same, have given nothing to the poor Christians, nor served them; but robbed them of what they had, drove them to hunger, thirst and nakedness, furthermore persecuted, scattered, imprisoned, and murdered them? These are so unutterably wicked, so utterly condemned to the bottomless pit with the devil and his angels, that Christ will not think or speak of them. But he will assuredly not forget these robbers, tyrants, and bloodhounds any more than he will forget or pass over unrewarded those who have suffered hunger thirst, nakedness, persecution and the like, especially for his and his Word's sake. He will not forget those to whom mercy has been shown, even though he speaks only to those who have shown mercy and have lent their aid; for he highly and nobly commends them, when he says. *"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."*

18. On account of this judgment fear and trembling might well seize our great spiritual prelates, as they call themselves, the popes, cardinals, bishops, canons, priests, and then whole diabolical rabble of the anti-christian crowd at Rome, and everywhere, in their monasteries and brothels, if they were not altogether hardened and deliberately given to Satan, body and soul. They think and act as though they were especially appointed to snatch to themselves every thing that belongs to the poor church, and in their own wantonness to consume, spend, waste, squander, in dissipation, gambling and debauchery, in the most shameful and scandalous manner, whatever has been given for the maintenance of students, schools and the poor people. They mock God and man, 2 Pet. 2, 13; yea, they publicly murder innocent, pious people.

19. Yea, woe, another and eternal woe, to them and to all who side with them. For it had been, better for them, had they never been born, as Christ says of Judas. Therefore they ought rather to wish that their mothers had drowned them in their first bath, or that they had never come forth from the womb, than that one of them should have become pope or cardinal or a popish priest. For they are nothing else than merely desperate and select ones, not highway robbers, but public country-thieves, who take, not the goods of the

mighty and the powerful that really have something, but of the poor and wretched, of the parish churches, schools, and hospitals, whose morsels are snatched from their teeth, and whose drink is torn from their mouths, so that they are unable to maintain life.

20. Therefore let every man beware of the Pope, the bishops, and the priesthood, as he would beware of those who have already been condemned alive to the abyss of perdition. Truly Paul did not prophesy in vain, 2 Tim. 3, 1, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Yet all the world moves along indifferently and gives no heed to this terrible judgment that has already been decided against such unmerciful robbers, thieves, and murderers of poor Christians, but especially against those who pretend to be Christians, who after having received grace slide back again, and like a dog eat their own vomit, or as the swine wallow in their own

21. The second reason why Christ especially mentions these works of mercy and their omission, from the fifth commandment, is, that he wishes to remind us, who have been called to be Christians, have received mercy through our Lord, have been redeemed from the wrath of God and the guilt of the fifth commandment and from eternal death, and on the contrary have a gracious God, who is good to us in time and in eternity, to remind us, I say, to look upon all this and regard it as having been done not only for our salvation but also for an example. For, since he has shown us such mercy as to save us, we are also to act toward our neighbor in a manner as not to transgress against the fifth fifth commandment, which especially demands love and mercy. And we are not to do these things simply because of the commandment and of the threatening of judgment, but for the sake of the example of the excellent and great goodness God has shown. For this example cannot be without blessed results, as God's work of redemption is not without power and good fruit. Although most people become worse from having heard the Gospel, there must nevertheless be some who rightly understand it and remain faithful to it; for he says that he will separate them into two flocks; therefore there must also be pious ones who have kept this commandment.

22. Therefore see to it that you are among those who are kind and merciful here upon earth for Christ's sake, or who even suffer for his sake, then you may joyfully await the last day, and need not be afraid of the judgment; for he has already selected you and placed you among those who shall stand at his right hand.

23. For we, who are Christians, should hope for the coming of this judgment and desire it with our whole heart; as we pray for it in the words: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, deliver us from evil; so that we may also hear the glad and welcome words: Come, ye blessed, into the kingdom of my Father. This is the verdict we await; for this reason we are Christians, and just for the sake of this hope we are so severely oppressed, first by Satan and by our own flesh, which would not have us believe this and rejoice over it; then by the tyranny and enmity of the world. For we must constantly see and hear the maliciousness which Satan and the world practice against the Gospel. There is so much

misery upon earth that we ought to be tired of this life and cry aloud: Come, dear Lord, and deliver us.

24. For there are certainly souls who are joyfully and with a good conscience awaiting the judgement of Christ; for they are in the rank and fellowship of those who believe in Christ, and who show fruits of faith through charity and beneficence toward the poor, or through patience in suffering with them. For, as I have said, he who does not have faith will not do works of mercy to Christians, but he who does them, will do them because he believes that he has a faithful Savior and Redeemer in Christ, who has reconciled him to God. Therefore he must have also a kind, loving heart toward his neighbors, even toward his enemies, and serve them in every time of need. Yea, he endures also, as I have just said, those things which come upon him from the world and the devil on account of his faith.

Whosoever is thus minded, I say, let him be joyful and of good courage; for he has already the blessed and joyful verdict: Come, thou blessed one, for thou hast also been one of the least of my brethren, who hast thyself suffered hunger and thirst, or who hast served the other hungry and thirsty ones, and hast shown mercy, as I have done.

25. Behold, therefore, the separation of the sheep and goats is already made in this life, so that every one can experience it internally and must indicate and show it also externally. For they who have not faith will surely do none of these things - they will neither comfort themselves with the grace of Christ, nor think of exercising mercy; they pass by the Word of God and their neighbor, as though they neither saw nor heard anything; they do not care to know that there is a Lord whom they are to serve and who will demand such service from them. For if they would consider that they must die, and appear before this judgment seat, they would not at the time defraud any one of a farthing. But, on the contrary, they think best to turn their eyes away from death and to keep the heart from thinking of it.

26. The world is so blind and hardened, that it can see before its eyes the great mass of men of all kinds who have passed away, and who are daily passing away, but is unwilling to behold it with seeing eyes, and to heed it, but continues securely and gaily in its wickedness. Furthermore, when it hears of the terrible judgment and condemnation that shall come upon it, it gives no heed to the consolation and example offered through Christ, but practices all kinds of unmercifulness, strives to hear and will have nothing else than the terrible, irrevocable verdict pronounced upon it from the judgment seat of Christ, and immediately after be cast from his presence into eternal hell-fire.

27. Wherefore he who may yet be converted and is ready to listen, will have enough, both to frighten and warn him, and to animate and persuade him to accommodate himself to the Word and example of Christ, while there is time and opportunity, so that he need not hear with the world this dreadful judgment, but may have joy and comfort in mercy with

all Christians. Nor did Christ spare his Apostles, but earnestly admonished them, when he said in Luke 21, 34-36: *"Take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life,"* which, he shows, will be most prevalent at the end of the world, *"and that day come on you suddenly as a snare; but watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man,"* etc.

28. Notice, however, as I said, that he wishes to distinguish the good works of the Christians from the works of the Turks and the heathen. For he speaks of the works done unto him, of which both parties claim to be ignorant, the wicked excusing themselves, because they had not seen him, etc. But herewith he has most beautifully explained the fifth commandment, that it means, he who fulfills it can be none else than a believing Christian, who did it unto Christ. Thus the woman who anointed his head and feet, Mat. 26, 10-13, fulfilled this commandment and is praised by him when he says: *"She has wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you, and if ye wish ye can always do good unto them, but me ye have not always. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."* Again in Mat. 10, 42: *"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, who believe in me, a cup of cold water, he shall in no wise lose his reward."*

29. We should therefore impress the fact upon our hearts and consider that it is a great and fine thing to do good to a Christian; but on the contrary also, what it is to do evil to him, as I said of the Pope, the bishops, the tyrants, and feudal nobility, who take from the feet of Christ what they have not given him the food, the drink, the lodging and the support of the poor, who are poor for Christ's sake, because they are not in the position, as ministers, sextons and school masters, to rule the world; nor are they able to engage, in any other business in which they might gain a livelihood; for then they would also have been made the partakers of power and would receive enough. But since they have no part in the government, the world gives them nothing for their services. As they receive nothing for God's nor Christ's sake, they can have nothing, and must leave behind them poor, wretched widows and orphans.

30. Those in other positions and offices, who have plenty in all respects, do not wish and cannot attend to the duties and the services of the church, neither do they know how. And when ministers and pastors engage in worldly trades and pursuits, they step outside of their proper calling. Therefore they must be supported, if they are to have anything to eat, from beggary, of which Christ here speaks; but he makes it so precious that whosoever gives meat or drink to the least of his members on earth, he recognizes the same as though it had been done and given to himself. Do we wish then to be Christians, and expect from Christ the honor to be praised and rewarded in the presence of all creatures, we must, indeed, cheerfully and gratuitously give to those who are to perform the duties of their office gratuitously, because they can have no share in secular matters. This we

are to do in order to escape the curse and wrath that will come upon those who would not have mercy on their poor brethren, who had to suffer hunger, thirst, misery, and imprisonment in the world in order to bring us to Christ.

31. But how does it happen that the righteous do not recognize and know that they have done their works unto Christ? They say: Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, etc.? The reason is, that to give something to a poor minister, chaplain, teacher, sexton is regarded as a matter altogether of too small significance to be so precious in the sight of God. Yea, the world looks upon it as so much money thrown away. Yet will any one say that the world would be so much richer, were there no pupils, schools, hospitals? Or that it is on their account any poorer, unless it were entirely heathen, or it were, as heretofore, compelled to give enough for the devil's sake, and allow itself to be flayed to the bone by those who have cheated it of body and soul. In short, the churches and schools receive the very least from the world; yet it is jealous, complains bitterly, and makes a great cry about what they already have, although it gives nothing, and claims to make much better use of its means, when at other times it gives a hundred times as much to shameless, dissolute villains and jugglers; it soon forgets of how much it allows brother Guy to be robbed, and then even it takes a beating in the bargain. It never enters the brain of the world to think and believe that this means to give to Christ; nor is it easy for us to see it ourselves.

32. But Christ is able to speak and judge rightly in this matter, and he knows how much depends upon it. For it is truly impossible to bring up the young in the kingdom of God in any other way than by means of schools; nor is it possible to maintain the Word of God without pulpits. Where these are allowed to fall into disuse, there will be a second Sodom and Gomorrah, which will fare as those of old, who despised the Word of God, and would not listen to nor endure pious Lot. Thus also Ezekiel, 16, 48-50, prophesies of Jerusalem: "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and prosperous ease was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me; therefore I took them away as I saw good," etc.

33. The same conditions now exist everywhere. Every peasant, burgher, nobleman is simply gathering dollars, waits and saves, eats and drinks, is insolent and mischievous as though God were nothing at all. No one cares for the despised Jesus in his poverty; nay, he is even tread under foot, until all obedience, discipline and honor are destroyed among us, as they were in Sodom and Gomorrah, and matters become so bad, as to become unbearable, because all admonition and preaching seem to be of no avail.

34. Right unwillingly do I prophesy; for I have often experienced how it came true; but the same conditions, alas, prevail now everywhere; and I fear and must almost resign

myself that Germany may have the same experience as Sodom and Jerusalem, and will be a thing of the past; it will either be destroyed by the Turks or it will crumble by its own hand, unless the last day overtake it soon. For the present conditions are altogether unbearable and so exceedingly bad that they cannot become worse; and if there be still a God, he cannot thus let matters go on unpunished.

35. And now the world will not take heed, nor recognize that it must die and stand before God in judgment, but it rages against recognized truth. Let us give heed and take it to heart, that the wrath of God may not also sweep us away. For what else would God need to do to that end, than let loose both the Turks and Satan against us. The Turk would be compelled to cease doing what he has done and is still doing, were we not so hardened in blindness and impenitence, and so completely ripe for judgment. The reason is that we rage so blasphemously against God's Word and his proffered help, and then in addition make our boast against the Turk.

36. And I hold that, if we Lutherans, as they call us, were only dead, the whole world would immediately cry, "Victory," as though they had already devoured every single Turk. But it shall happen to them also that a hundred shall be slain by one Turk. And when the cry of murder is once heard, how unmercifully the Turks will cut in pieces all people, men, women, and children. Then shall we also begin to cry and lament. It shall come to pass that we shall do as did the Jews, put Christ out of the way. When he has been crucified, we shall be able to take care of the Turk, as Squire Caiaphas and the Jews took care of the Romans; thus the youngers at Jerusalem thought, if they could only put the prophet Jeremiah out of the way, they would surely be safe from the king of Babylon. What happened? After they had cast Jeremiah into the dungeon, the king came and led them all into captivity.

Thus I can also see that God has spun a web over Germany as it is determined to be guilty in the same manner of wilful blindness, defiance, wickedness, contempt, and ungratefulness in opposing the precious Gospel. It is determined to be guilty of foolishness before God, for which it will have to pay dearly. May God preserve us, and grant us and our little flock that we may escape this terrible wrath, and be found among those who honor and serve our dear Christ, and await the judgment at his right hand joyously and blissfully. Amen.

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