

Title: **TREACHERY**
Text: Malachi 2:1-17
Subject: *The Treachery of False Prophets*
Date: Sunday Evening — August 23, 2009
Tape: Malachi #9
Readings: *Lindsay Campbell and Frank Hall*
Introduction:

My subject is **TREACHERY**. The 2nd chapter of Malachi's prophecy is a scathing denunciation of treachery. Here the Lord God denounces the treacherous deeds of men and emphatically declares that he will turn their treachery upon their own heads. The treachery spoken of in these 17 verses, that are boiling with the anger of God, is far worse than...

- The civil treachery of a traitor,
- The political treachery of self-serving politicians,
- Or the domestic treachery of a husband or wife who destroys the lives of their family to gratify their own lusts.

The treachery here denounced by our God is treachery in the pulpit, the treachery of religious leaders, the treachery of that man who is supposed to be "*the messenger of the Lord of hosts,*" but is instead the minister of Satan.

(Zephaniah 3:4) "Her prophets *are* light *and* treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law."

(Hosea 5:7) "They have dealt treacherously against the LORD: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions."

(Hosea 6:7) "But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me."

The Lord God has promised that he will give his church pastors after his own heart, pastors who will feed his people with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah 3:15). But Satan constantly seeks to fill the pulpits of churches with treacherous men.

TREACHEROUS PREACHERS

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The prophet specifically tells us that God’s message here is addressed to treacherous preachers, treacherous men who are supposed to be God’s messengers (vv. 1, 7).

(Malachi 2:1) “And now, O ye priests, this commandment *is* for you.”

(Malachi 2:7) “For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he *is* the messenger of the LORD of hosts.”

The Lord’s word here is to **apostate priests**, men who have willingly departed out of the way (v. 8), men who forsook the Word of God and the glory of God, and led the people to do so. — They **corrupted God’s covenant** (v.8), “*the covenant of Levi*” (Christ). They rejected the covenant of grace. They tried to make the purpose of God void. They despised the gospel, and tried to frustrate the grace of God.

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Their treachery is that while departing from the worship of God and corrupting the covenant, corrupting the gospel, they pretend that they are faithfully serving the Lord; but they are partial in dealing with his Word and constantly profane his covenant, setting the thoughts of men for the Word of God and mixing the works of men with the work of God (vv. 9-10).

(Malachi 2:9-10) “Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. (10) Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?”

In their self-serving treachery, the priest led Judah to deal treacherously with her God and taught Israel to commit abominations in the house of God (v. 11).

(Malachi 2:11) “Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.”

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Throughout the Scriptures the treachery of priest and prophets in dealing with God's people is compared, as it is here in Malachi 2 (vv. 11 and 15), with the treachery of a man against his wife, when he puts her away for another. False prophets, marrying the daughter of a strange god, profane God's holiness (v. 11; Proverbs 5:18-20; Isaiah 52:5).

(Proverbs 5:18-20) "Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. (19) *Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. (20) And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?"*

The strange woman is Babylon, the harlot religion of the world described in Proverbs 7.

(Isaiah 52:5) "Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day *is blasphemed.*"

That "*holiness*" referred to in verse 11, which God loves, is not the holiness of his character and being. That holiness no one can ever profane. The word "*profaned*" means to wound, or corrupt and defile. The "*holiness*" profaned by false religion and false prophets is God's salvation, the sanctified thing that he loves. It is the gospel of God's free salvation in Christ.

These treacherous priests (preachers) are cursed of God and shall be cut off by him (vv. 3, 12-13) because "*he hateth putting away*" (v. 16).

(Malachi 2:3) "Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, *even* the dung of your solemn feasts; and *one* shall take you away with it."

(Malachi 2:12-13) "The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts. (13) And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth *it* with good will at your hand."

TREACHERY**TREACHEROUS PRIESTS IDENTIFIED**

But are these false prophets, these treacherous preachers identified in the Book of god. Indeed, they are. Perhaps none so clearly identifies them as God's servant Jude (Jude 1:4-19).

(Jude 1:4-19) "For there are certain men **crept in** unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, **ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,** and **denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.** (5) I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. (6) And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. (7) Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (8) Likewise also these **filthy dreamers** — **defile the flesh,** — **despise dominion,** and **speak evil of dignities.** (9) Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. (10) But these **speak evil of those things which they know not:** but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they **corrupt themselves.** (11) Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of **Cain** (*THE WAY OF WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS*), and ran greedily after the error of **Balaam** (*MIXING THE WORSHIP OF GOD WITH THE WORSHIP OF IDOLS FOR PERSONAL GAIN*) for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of **Core** (*LOVE OF PRAISE AND PREEMINENCE — ENVY*). (12) These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, **feeding themselves** without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; (13) Raging waves of the sea, **foaming out their own shame;** wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. (14) And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, (15) To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that

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are **ungodly** among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (16) These are **murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, — having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.** (17) But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; (18) How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should **walk after their own ungodly lusts.** (19) These be they who **separate themselves, — sensual, — having not the Spirit.**”

BLASPHEMY IN THE PULPIT

By what means do these false prophets destroy themselves and destroy those who follow them? Jude tells us in the opening words of our text that it is by “*speaking evil of (blaspheming) those things which they know not,*” or, as he puts it in verse 9, by “*speaking evil of dignities,*” by blaspheming the glory, by blaspheming the glory of God revealed in the gospel. The word dignities in Jude 9, about which all false prophets are totally ignorant, is “glories.” They are totally ignorant of and pervert the glories of God revealed in the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-6). That is the treachery and abomination committed by these same men in the house of God at Jerusalem, as Malachi describes them (Malachi 2:11). They call evil good and delight themselves in the abominations they practice (Malachi 2:17).

(2 Corinthians 4:3-6) “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

FIVE TREACHEROUS BLASPHEMIES

It is always my intention to be crystal clear. I don’t ever want people to walk away from this place wondering exactly what I have been talking

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about. So let me show you from the Word of God five blasphemies of all freewill/works preachers by which they destroy themselves and destroy the souls of men with blasphemous religion. They blaspheme...

- God's Character
- The Lord Jesus
- The Spirit of God
- The Gospel of God
- The Righteousness of God.

1. **Their doctrine is treachery in that they blaspheme the character of God, making the eternal God a pathetic failure.**

As Isaiah puts it, while pretending to worship God, the “*pray unto a god that cannot save*” (Isaiah 45:20). Anyone who reads the Bible, with the slightest bit of interest, must see that the god of modern religion does not even faintly resemble that God who reveals himself in Holy Scripture.

- **The god of this generation is moved by sentiment, emotion and impulse.** — The God of heaven acts according to justice and the principles of holiness and righteousness. — “*Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne*” (Psalm 89:14).
- **The god of this generation has a will, a purpose and a desire, but his will is defeated both by men and Satan.** He desires, but he cannot accomplish his desire. He wills, but he cannot perform his will. He purposes, but he cannot do what he has purposed. — The God of the Bible works all things according to the counsel of his own will and purpose. This is what God says about himself: — “*I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*” (Isaiah 46:9-10).
- **Today's god has a wonderful plan for your life,** if you will just fulfil the necessary requirements. — The one true and living God works in you both to will and to do according to his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13; Romans 8:28).
- **The god of modern-day fundamentalism has provided a remedy for sin,** and it will work if only the sinner will co-operate with God. — The living God has provided a perfect righteousness and an effectual atonement for all of his elect through the righteous obedience and substitutionary death of his Son at Calvary (Hebrews 10. 11-14).

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- This is what I am saying: **the god of modern religion is a puny pigmy.** He is an idol. The God of the Bible is great and glorious. He is the only true God.

2 CORINTHIANS 11

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 11. Here Paul is warning us of those false prophets Jude describes in our text. He tells us that they are messengers of Satan who claim to be the apostles of Christ (v. 13), by whom the prince of darkness, would subtly corrupt our minds from the simplicity that is in Christ (v. 3). And he identifies them by their message in verse 4.

(2 Corinthians 11:4) “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or *if* ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*.”

2. They blaspheme the glory of God preaching a god that cannot save; and **their doctrine is treachery in that they blaspheme the glory of God by preaching “another Jesus.”** — Those are not my words, but God’s.
- Today’s Jesus **offers eternal life** to as many as will let him save them. The Christ of the Bible gives eternal life to as many as the Father has given him (John 17:2).
- The Jesus they preach, the Christ of modern, freewill, works religion **loves everybody** in the universe and wants to save them all.

We are told that Christ loves all men alike, desires the salvation of all men alike, and is gracious to all men alike. That makes the love, will, and grace of Christ helpless and useless. But that language cannot be applied to the Christ of the Bible.

The true Christ, the Christ of the Bible, the saving Christ loves his people, wills and prays for the salvation of his people, and is gracious to his people, the people unconditionally chosen unto salvation from eternity, whom he came to save (Psalm 5:5; 7:11; 11:5; Matthew 1:21; 11:27; John 10:16; John 17:9-10; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:21-24; Ephesians 1:3-6).

- The Jesus of modern, freewill, works religion **tries to save everyone.**

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We are told that **he offers salvation** to every sinner and does everything he can to save them all; but that his offer is rejected and his work is frustrated by the will of those who refuse to come to him and be saved.

The Christ of this Book does not merely offer salvation. He performs it! Grace is not an offer. It is an operation! The Son of God effectually calls to himself all his elect, his sheep, and sovereignly works salvation in them by the irresistible power and omnipotent grace of his Holy Spirit. Not one of them will be lost. Is this, or is it not the teaching of Holy Scripture? (Psalm 65:4; 110:3; Isaiah 55:11; John 5:21; 6:37-40; 10:3, 25-30; 17:2; Philippians 2:13)

- That other Jesus of Arminianism **cannot regenerate and save anyone who does not first choose to be saved by him.**

We are told that man has a freewill, but that Christ's will is bound by and must wait upon man's will because it would not be right for him to violate man's will!

The true, saving Christ, the Christ of God does violate man's imaginary freewill; and I am very thankful that he does. Had he not violated my freewill, I would be lost or in hell now!

The same is true of you. He sovereignly regenerates and saves every chosen, redeemed sinner. **His operations of grace are totally independent of the will and choice of the sinner.** Apart from his work of grace in us, spiritually dead sinners never would or could believe on him and come to him in faith.

Faith is not our contribution to the work of salvation. Our faith in him is the result, not the cause of God's saving operations. — *“Let God be true, but every man a liar”* (John 3:3-7; 6:44, 65; 15:16; Acts 11:18; Romans 2:4; 9:16; Ephesians 2:1-4, 8-10; Philippians 1:6, 29; Colossians 2:12; Hebrews 12:2).

- The puny, pigmy, worthless Jesus of modern, Arminian, freewill, works, man-centered religion **died on the cross for everyone in the world, to make it possible for everyone in the world to be saved, but actually secured no one's salvation by his death.**

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We are told that Christ by his death made it possible for all men to be redeemed, justified, and saved, but that his death has no efficacy and saving power for anyone until they believe on him. Thus, we are informed that the Son of God died in vain for all who perish in unbelief. Though he tried to save them, he failed!

The Christ of God is not a frustrated failure! He died for God's elect and effectually put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself. Having satisfied the justice of God for us, he obtained eternal redemption and salvation for us. We were and are forever pardoned, justified, and sanctified by his blood (Isaiah 42:4; 53:8; Matthew 20:28; John 10:14-15, 26; Acts 20:28; Romans 5:9-10; Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 9:12; 10:10-14; 1 Peter 3:18; Rev. 5:9-10).

- The helpless little Jesus of Arminianism **loses many who have been saved by him** because they do not hang on, hold out, or persevere to the end.

Among the heretical Baptists of our day, most do grant that the sinner has what has come to be called "eternal security." But it is not security based upon the will, work, and purpose of God in Christ. It is not security based upon the blood of Christ, or the operations of his Spirit. According to the freewill, all these things are done for all people alike. So their doctrine of "eternal security" is a declaration of security based upon the choice and will of man, not the choice and will of God.

The true Christ, the saving Christ, the Christ of the Bible preserves his chosen, redeemed, called ones by his almighty grace, so that they cannot fall away and perish at last. **We are kept in life, grace, and faith by the immutability of his will, the power of his blood, the perfection of his righteousness, the efficacy of his grace, the seal of his Spirit, and the perfection of his intercession** (Malachi 3:6; John 5:24; 10:26-29; Romans 8:28-39; 1 Peter 1:2-5; Jude 24-25).

At first glance, the Jesus of modern, Arminian, freewill, works religion may seem to closely resemble the true Christ, the Christ of Scripture. But he does not.

- The one is a false Christ, antichrist. The other is true, the Christ of God.

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- One is weak and helpless, waiting upon and bowing to the will of man. The other is the sovereign Lord, who wills what he pleases and does what he will!
- The one is supposed to be able to save with your cooperation. The other is able to save without any cooperation on your part. His salvation produces your cooperation!

Those who believe on and serve the Jesus of freewill, works religion do not believe on and serve the Christ of the Bible. They are deceived. They are lost. And they shall forever perish under the wrath of God, unless they come to know and trust the Christ of God, who saves his people from their sins by himself. We must, as we fear God and care for the souls of men, have no fellowship with and give no credibility to Arminian, freewill, works religion (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Revelation 18:4).

(2 Corinthians 6:14-18) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (15) And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (16) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (17) Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, (18) And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

(2 Corinthians 7:1) Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

(Revelation 18:4) And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

3. **Next, Paul tells us that these will-worshipping work mongers are treacherous in that they preach “another spirit.”**

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The spirit they preach is nothing more than an impotent, pathetic influence for good, that tries to get sinners to “pretty please” let Jesus be their Lord and Savior. That is not the Spirit of God. God the Holy Spirit, the third person of the sovereign trinity gives life to dead sinners, effectually causing them to come to Christ in faith by sovereign, omnipotent, irresistible grace, and seals them in grace forever.

4. Then, we read that every false prophet, every messenger of Satan, **every “filthy dreamer” blasphemes the gospel and deals treacherously against the souls of men by preaching “another gospel.”**

The gospel of God is the declaration of free salvation in Christ alone, by grace alone, without works. The false gospel of freewill/works religion is an offer of salvation that is a mixture of...

- Salvation by God’s will and your will, but determined by your will.
- Salvation by God’s choice and your choice, but determined by your choice.
- Salvation by God’s grace and your works (either to justify you or to sanctify you), but determined by your works.

(Galatians 1:6-9) “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

(Galatians 3:1-3) “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? (2) This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (3) Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

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5. Now, read 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, and you will see a fifth blasphemy of the glory of God by which false prophets destroy themselves and destroy the souls of men. — **Their doctrine is treachery in that they universally blaspheme the righteousness of God.**

(2 Corinthians 11:13-15) “For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (14) And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (15) Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

These “*filthy dreamers*” have nothing more vile in their dreams than the notion that men can and do perform works of righteousness, by which they make themselves righteous before God. I know of very few who are so brazen as to openly assert that a man can make himself righteous entirely by his own works. Most will insist that we must be justified by Christ’s righteousness imputed to us. But they tell us we must add to the righteousness of Christ our own righteousness.

Illustration: *Ted C. – The Balance Beam*

The “*filthy dreamers*” who blaspheme the glory of God will never come to him trusting Christ alone. Being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and ever going about to establish their own righteousness, they will not submit to the righteousness of God that is in Christ, only in Christ, who is “*the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*” Therefore, as Paul put it in 2 Corinthians 11:15, their “*end shall be according to their works.*”

How quickly churches are corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ by treacherous, self serving false prophets.

- MTP
- 13th Street
- Campus Church
- Hillcrest

CAUSE FOR JOY

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Now, turn back to Malachi 2 and I will show you our great comfort and joy. Look at verse 16: “*The LORD, the God of Israel saith that he hateth putting away*” (1 Thessalonians 5:9-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-15).

(1 Thessalonians 5:9-12) “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, (10) Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. (11) Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. (12) And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;”

(2 Thessalonians 2:11-15) “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (13) But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (15) Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

This is our joy, our comfort, and the cause of our unceasing praise and gratitude to our God. He would not leave us to ourselves!

Now, it is my heart’s prayer and desire to God for you that he will not leave you to yourself. It is in the light of God’s absolute sovereignty that I call upon you to come to Christ, that you may obtain mercy, just as our Lord himself does in Matthew 11.

(Matthew 11:25-30) “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. (26) Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. (27) All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*. (28) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek

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and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.”

The only wise course of action for any treasonous rebel in the land of an absolute sovereign is to sue for mercy.

Come humble sinner, in whose breast
A thousand thoughts revolve;
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed,
And make this last resolve.

“I’ll go to Jesus, though my sins
Like mountains round me close;
I know his courts, I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

Prostrate I’ll lie before his throne,
And there my guilt confess;
I’ll tell him I’m a wretch undone
Without his sovereign grace.”

I’ll to the gracious King approach,
Whose scepter pardon gives;
Perhaps He may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives!

Perhaps He will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know,
I must forever die.

But if I die with mercy sought,
When I the King have tried,
This were to die (Delightful thought!) —
As sinner never died!”

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If the Lord God takes you into his arms of mercy love and grace, if he weds himself to you and weds you to him, he will never put you away; and he will never allow you to leave him, because the faithful God of Israel says, “*He hateth putting away!*”

Amen.