

PURITAN AND REFORMED

by Quotes Inspirational

A compilation of inspirational quotations from Puritan and Reformed theologians, organized by topic including affliction, prayer, holiness, and the Christian life. The quotes offer spiritual perspectives on how trials serve God's purposes for believers' growth.

40 Chapters

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Inspirational Quotes from Puritan and Reformed writers

Affliction

Affliction To know that nothing hurts the godly, is a matter of comfort; but to be assured that all things which fall out shall co-operate for their good, that their crosses shall be turned into blessings, that showers of affliction water the withering root of their grace and make it flourish more; this may fill their hearts with joy till they run over.

—Thomas Watson God takes away the world, that the heart may cleave more to Him in sincerity.

—Thomas Watson God sweetens outward pain with inward peace.

—Thomas Watson Not to be afflicted is a sign of weakness; for, therefore God imposeth no more on me, because he sees I can bear no more.

—Joseph Hall When we grow careless of keeping our souls, then God recovers our taste of good things again by sharp crosses.

—Richard Sibbes The winter prepares the earth for the spring, so do afflictions sanctified prepare the soul for glory.

—Richard Sibbes Do not even such things as are most bitter to the flesh, tend to awaken Christians to faith and prayer, to a sight of the emptiness of this world, and the fadingness of the best it yield? Doth not God by these things (ofttimes) call our sins to remembrance, and provoke us to amendment of life? How then can we be offended at things by which we reap so much good?.... Therefore if mine enemy hunger, let me feed him; if he thirst, let me give him drink. Now in order to do this, (1) We must see good in that, in which other men can see none. (2) We must pass by those injuries that other men would revenge. (2) We must show we have grace, and that we are made to bear what other men are not acquainted with. (4) Many of our graces are kept alive, by those very things that are the death of other men's souls.... The devil, (they say) is good when he is pleased; but Christ and His saints, when displeased.

—John Bunyan As the wicked are hurt by the best things, so the godly are bettered by the worst.

—William Jenkyn Poverty and affliction take away the fuel that feeds pride.

—Richard Sibbes

I am mended by my sickness, enriched by my poverty, and strengthened by my weakness.... Thus was it with.... Manasseh, when he was in affliction, "He besought the Lord his God": even that king's iron was more precious to him than his gold, his jail a more happy lodging than his palace, Babylon a better school than Jerusalem. What fools are we, then, to frown upon our afflictions! These, how crabbed soever, are our best friends. They are not indeed for our pleasure, they are for our profit.

—Abraham Wright

Labour to grow better under all your afflictions, lest your afflictions grow worse, lest God mingle them with more darkness, bitterness and terror.

—John Owen The secret formula of the saints: When I am in the cellar of affliction, I look for the Lord's choicest wines.

—Samuel Rutherford The way to be eased is not struggling with it, but meekly to bear it.

There is a fable, but it has its moral for this purpose. A certain ass, laded with salt, fell into a river, and after he had risen, found his burden lighter, for the moisture had made it melt away; whereupon he would ever after lie down in the water as he traveled with his burden, and so ease himself. His owner perceiving this craft, after laded him with Wool. The ass purposing to ease himself, as before, laid himself down in the water, and thinking to have ease, rising again to feel his weight, found it heavier.

—Richard Stock

Look how fears have presented themselves, so have supports and encouragements; yea, when I have started, even as it were at nothing else but my shadow, yet God, as being very tender of me, hath not suffered me to be molested, but would with one Scripture or another, strengthen me against all; insomuch that I have often said, Were it lawful, I could pray for greater trouble, for the greater comfort's sake.

—John Bunyan He that rides to be crowned, will not think much of a rainy day.

—John Trapp

God takes a safe course with His children, that they may not be condemned with the world, He permits the world to condemn them, that they may not love the world, the world hates them....

—Richard Sibbes

Afflictions are light when compared with what we really deserve. They are light when compared with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. But perhaps their real lightness is best seen by comparing them with the weight of glory which is awaiting us.

—Arthur W. Pink No wise man can expect that...God should diet us with a continual feast. It would neither suit with our health, nor the condition of this pilgrimage. Live, therefore, on your peace of conscience as your ordinary diet; when this is wanting, know that God appointeth you a fast for your health; and when you have a feast of high joys, feed on it and be thankful! But when they are taken from you, gape not after them as the disciples did after Christ at His ascension; but return thankfully to your ordinary diet of peace.

—Richard Baxter The highest honor that God can confer upon his children is the blood-red crown of martyrdom. The jewels of a Christian are his afflictions. The regalia of the kings that God has made, are their troubles, their sorrows, and their griefs. Griefs exalt us, and troubles lift us.

—Charles Spurgeon

It is the great support and solace of the saints in all the distresses that befall them here, that there is a wise Spirit sitting in all the wheels of motion, and governing the most eccentric creatures and

their most pernicious designs to blessed and happy issues.

—John Flavel

Assurance

Assurance Whom God legally saves, He experimentally saves; whom He justifies, them He also sanctifies. Where the righteousness of Christ is imputed to an individual, a principle of holiness is imparted to him; the former can only be ascertained by the latter. It is impossible to obtain a Scriptural knowledge that the merits of Christ's finished work are reckoned to my account, except by proving that the efficacy of the Holy Spirit's work is evident in my soul.

—Arthur W. Pink

It is only in proportion as the Christian manifests the fruit of a genuine conversion that he is entitled to regard himself and be regarded by others as one of the called and elect of God. It is just in proportion as we add to our faith the other Christian graces that we have solid ground on which to rest in the assurance we belong to the family of Christ. It is not those who are governed by self-will, but “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

—Arthur W. Pink

Sit not down without assurance. Get alone, and bring thy heart to the bar of trial: force it to answer the interrogatories put to it to set the qualifications of the saints on one side, and the qualifications of thyself on the other side, and then judge what resemblance there is between them.... Yet be sure thou judge by a true touchstone, and mistake not the Scripture description of a saint, that thou neither acquit nor condemn thyself by mistake.

—Richard Baxter

Beware, I pray thee, of presuming that thou art saved. If thy heart be renewed, if thou shalt hate the things that thou didst once love, and love the things that thou didst once hate; if thou hast really repented; if there be a thorough change of mind in thee; if thou be born again, then hast thou reason to rejoice: but if there be no vital change, no inward godliness; if there be no love to God, no prayer, no work of the Holy Spirit, then thy saying “I am saved” is but thine own assertion, and it may delude, but it will not deliver thee.

—Charles Spurgeon The Scripture abounds in commands and cautions for our utmost diligence in our search and inquiry as to whether we are made partakers of Christ or not, or whether His Spirit dwells in us or not—which argue both the difficulty of attaining an assured confidence herein, as also the danger of our being mistaken, and yet the certainty of a good issue upon the diligent and regular use of means to that purpose.

—John Owen

We all profess that we are bound for heaven, immortality, and glory: but is it any evidence that we really design it if all our thoughts are consumed about the trifles of this world, which we must leave behind us, and have only occasional thoughts of things above?

—John Owen

Though true grace has various degrees, and there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whom the exercise of the inclination and will, towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet everyone that has the power of godliness in his heart, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards God

and divine things, with such strength and vigor that these holy exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them: for every true disciple of Christ "loves him above father or mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, houses and lands: yea, than his own life."

—Jonathan Edwards

Blessings

Blessings Did you never run for shelter in a storm, and find fruit which you expected not? Did you never go to God for safeguard, driven by outward storms, and there find unexpected fruit?

—John Owen To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless Him for miseries is the way to remove them.

—William Dyer Those blessings are sweetest that are won with prayers and won with thanks.

—Thomas Goodwin The riches of His free grace cause me daily to triumph over all the temptations of the wicked one, who is very vigilant, and seeks all occasions to disturb me.

—George Whitefield God will not be behind-hand in love to us: for our drop, we shall receive an ocean.

—Thomas Watson

Chastisement

Chastisement

Chastisement is designed for our good, to promote our highest interests. Look beyond the rod to the All-wise hand that wields it!

—Arthur W. Pink For a Christian to defy adversities is to "despise" chastisement. Instead of hardening himself to endure stoically, there should be a melting of the heart.

—Arthur W. Pink

Whatsoever we have over-loved, idolized, and leaned upon, God has from time to time broken it, and made us to see the vanity of it; so that we find the readiest course to be rid of our comforts is to set our hearts inordinately upon them.

—John Flavel God's wounds cure, sin's kisses kill.

—William Gurnall Better be pruned to grow than cut up to burn.

—John Trapp Thou art beaten that thou mayest be better.

—John Bunyan

Especially look to those sins to which your crosses have some reference and respect. Are you crossed in your goods? Think if you did not over-love them and get them unjustly, or if in your children, see if you did not over-love them and cocker them, and so in all things of like kind. In what God smites you, see if you have not in that sinned against Him, and so frame to lament your sins and to seek help against them.

—William Whately

God would not rub so hard if it were not to fetch out the dirt that is ingrained in our natures. God loves purity so well He had rather see a hole than a spot in His child's garments.

—William Gurnall No marvel if the worldling escape earthly afflictions. God corrects him not. He is base born and begot. God will not do him the favour to whip him. The world afflicts him not, because it loves him: for each man is indulgent to his own. God uses not the rod where He means to use the Word. The pillory or scourge is for those malefactors that shall escape execution.

—Joseph Hall

Christian Life

The Christian Life The whole life of a Christian should be nothing but praises and thanks to God; we should neither eat nor sleep, but eat to God and sleep to God and work to God and talk to God, do all to His glory and praise.

—Richard Sibbes The tenets of [the Christian life] seem paradoxes to carnal men; as first, that a Christian is the only freeman, and other men are slaves; that he is the only rich man, though never so poor in the world; that he is the only beautiful man, though outwardly never so deformed; that he is the only happy man in the midst of all his miseries.

—Richard Sibbes

We are only safe when we wisely make use of all good advantages that we have access to. By going out of God's ways we go out of His government, and so lose our good frame of mind, and find ourselves overspread quickly with a contrary disposition. When we draw near to Christ (James 4:8), in His ordinances, He draws near to us.

—Richard Sibbes In our manner of speech, our plans of living, our dealings with others, our conduct and walk in the church and out of it—all should be done as becomes the gospel (Php 1:27).

—Albert Barnes

Christians should be grave and serious, though cheerful and pleasant. They should feel that they have great interests at stake, and that the world has too. They are redeemed—not to make sport; purchased with precious blood—for other purposes than to make men laugh. They are soon to be in heaven—and a man who has any impressive sense of that will habitually feel he has much else to do than to make men laugh. The true course of life is midway between moroseness and levity; sourness and lightness; harshness and jesting. Be benevolent, kind, cheerful, bland, courteous—but serious. Be solemn, thoughtful, deeply impressed with the presence of God and with eternal things—but pleasant affable and benignant. Think not a smile sinful; but think not levity and jesting harmless.

—Albert Barnes

Sorrows, because they are lingering guests, I will entertain but moderately, knowing that the more they are made of the longer they will continue: and for pleasures, because they stay not, and do but call to drink at my door, I will use them as passengers with slight respect. He is his own best friend that makes the least of both of them.

—Joseph Hall The Christian and the carnal man are most wonderful to each other. The one wonders to see the other walk so strictly, and deny himself to those carnal liberties that the most take.... And the Christian thinks it strange that men should be so bewitched, and still remain children in the vanity of their turmoil, wearying and humouring themselves from morning to night,

running after stories and fancies, and ever busy doing nothing; wonder that the delights of earth and sin can so long entertain and please men, and persuade them to give Jesus Christ so many refusals—to turn from their life and happiness, and choose to be miserable, yea, and take much pains to make themselves miserable.

—Robert Leighton My brethren, let me say, be like Christ at all times. Imitate him in "public." Most of us live in some sort of public capacity—many of us are called to work before our fellow-men every day. We are watched; our words are caught; our lives are examined—taken to pieces. The eagle-eyed, argus-eyed world observes everything we do, and sharp critics are upon us. Let us live the life of Christ in public. Let us take care that we exhibit our Master, and not ourselves—so that we can say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me."

—Charles Spurgeon

Contentment

Contentment

Instead of complaining at his lot, a contented man is thankful that his condition and circumstances are no worse than they are. Instead of greedily desiring something more than the supply of his present need, he rejoices that God still cares for him. Such an one is "content" with such as he has (Hebrews 13:5).

—Arthur W. Pink

Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition.

—Jeremiah Burroughs

Death

Death

God, to prevent all escape, hath sown the seeds of death in our very constitution and nature, so that we can as soon run from ourselves, as run from death. We need no feller to come with a hand of violence and hew us down; there is in the tree a worm, which grows out of its own substance, that will destroy it; so in us, those infirmities of nature that will bring us down to the dust.

—William Gurnall Death is only a grim porter to let us into a stately palace.

—Richard Sibbes We spend our years with sighing; it is a valley of tears; but death is the funeral of all our sorrows.

—Thomas Watson

Mighty and gracious lords, I will tell you to what your honour shall come; first, ye shall wax old like others, then ye shall fall sick like others, then ye shall die like others, then ye shall be buried like others, then ye shall be consumed like others, then ye shall be judged like others, even like the beggars which cry at your gates: one sickens, the other sickens; one dies, the other dies; one rots, the other rots: look in the grave, and show me which was Dives and which was Lazarus. This is some comfort to the poor, that once he shall be like the rich; one day he shall be as wealthy, and as glorious as a king; one hour of death will make all alike.

—Henry Smith

I account this body nothing but a close prison to my soul; and the earth a larger prison to my body. I may not break prison till I be loosed by death; but I will leave it, not unwillingly, when I am loosed.

—Joseph Hall

If a man that is desperately sick today, did believe he should arise sound the next morning; or a man today, in despicable poverty, had assurance that he should tomorrow arise a prince: would they be afraid to go to bed....?

—Richard Baxter Let thy hope of heaven master thy fear of death. Why shouldst thou be afraid to die, who hopest to live by dying!

—William Gurnall Death is half disarmed when the pleasures and interests of the flesh are first denied.

—Richard Baxter He may look on death with joy, who can look on forgiveness with faith.

—Thomas Watson

Familiarize the thoughts of the evil day to thy soul; handle this serpent often, walk daily in the serious meditations of it, do not run from them because they are displeasing to flesh, that is the way

to increase the terror of it. Do with your souls, when shy of, and scared with the thoughts of affliction or death, as you use to do with your beast that is given to boggle and start as you ride on him; when he flies back and starts at a thing, you do not yield to his fear and go back, that will make him worse another time, but you ride him up close to that which he is afraid of, and intime you break him of that quality. The evil day is not such a fearful thing to thee that art a Christian, as thou shouldst start for it. Bring up thy heart close to it, show thy soul what Christ hath done to take the sting out of it....

—William Gurnall

Pray that thy last days, and last works may be the best; and that when thou comest to die, thou mayest have nothing else to do but die.

—Vavasor Powell

It is well known that when a jailer knocks off a prisoner's fetters, that the constant wearing them hath put him to a great deal less pain than the knocking of them off doth at the present; yet, though every blow go to the very heart of him, he never murmurs at it.. . . because he knows that the pain will be compensated by the ease that he shall afterwards enjoy.

—Nehemiah Rogers Death is never sudden to a saint; no guest comes unawares to him who keeps a constant table.

—George Swinnock

Lord, be pleased to shake my clay cottage before Thou throwest it down. Make it totter awhile before it doth tumble. Let me be summoned before I am surprised.

—Thomas Fuller

There is an essential difference between the decease of the godly and the death of the ungodly. Death comes to the ungodly man as a penal infliction, but to the righteous as a summons to his Father's palace. To the sinner it is an execution, to the saint an undressing from his sins and infirmities. Death to the wicked is the King of terrors. Death to the saint is the end of terrors, the commencement of glory.

—Charles Spurgeon

Eternal Security

Eternal Security A man sometimes goes from home, and sometimes he does not quite leave his house. There is much difference between those two. If a man leaves his house and comes no more, then he carries away all his goods.... But though a man ride a great journey, yet he may come again; and ye say, "Surely he will come again." Why? Because still his goods, wife and children are in his house. So if Christ rejects a man and go away finally, He carries away all His goods, spiritual gifts, graces and principles. But though He be long absent, yet if His household stuff abide in the heart— if there be the same desires after Him, and delight in Him, and admiring of Him—ye may say, "Surely, He will come again." Why? Because His household stuff is here still. When did Christ ever forsake a man in whose heart He left this spiritual furniture?

—William Bridge

God's decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saint's perseverance depends. That decree ties the knot of adoption so fast, that neither sin, death, nor hell, can break it asunder.

—Thomas Watson When God calls a man, He does not repent of it. God does not, as many friends do, love one day, and hate another; or as princes, who make their subjects favourites, and afterwards throw them into prison. This is the blessedness of a saint; his condition admits of no alteration. God's call is founded upon His decree, and His decree is immutable. Acts of grace cannot be reversed. God blots out His people's sins, but not their names.

—Thomas Watson Though Christians be not kept altogether from falling, yet they are kept from falling altogether.

—William Secker In our first paradise in Eden there was a way to go out but no way to go in again. But as for the heavenly paradise, there is a way to go in, but not way to go out.

—Richard Baxter

Eternity

Eternity A man's greatest care should be for that place where he lives longest; therefore eternity should be his scope.

—Thomas Watson

O my brother! your opinion about "for ever" can have no manner of effect upon the reality of that "for ever!" A party of boatmen on the Niagara river may have a very strong opinion when they are caught by the rapids that it is very pleasant rowing; but neither their shouts nor their merriment will alter the fact that the world's cataract is close at hand.

—Edward Reynold Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset; eternity to the wicked is a night that has no sunrise.

—Thomas Watson When the race is ended, and the play is either won or lost, and ye are in the utmost circle and border of time, and shall put your foot within the march of eternity, all the good things of your short nightdream shall seem to you like ashes of a blaze of thorns or straw.

—Samuel Rutherford

Faith

Faith

If a man would lead a happy life, let him but seek a sure object for his trust [or faith], and he shall be safe: "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." He hath laid up his confidence in God, therefore his heart is kept in an equal poise.

—Thomas Manton This is a life of faith, for God will try the truth of our faith, so that the world may see that God has such servants as will depend upon His bare word.

—Richard Sibbes

Faith, whereby especially Christ rules, sets the soul so high that it looks down on all other things as far below, as having represented to it, by the Spirit of Christ, riches, honor, beauty and pleasures of a higher nature.

—Richard Sibbes As the strongest faith may be shaken, so the weakest, where truth is, is so far rooted that it will prevail. Weakness with watchfulness will stand, when strength with too much confidence fails. Weakness, with acknowledgement of it, is the fittest seat and subject for God to perfect His strength in; for consciousness of our infirmities drives us out of ourselves to Him in whom our strength lies.

—Richard Sibbes A true faith in Jesus Christ will not suffer us to be idle. No, it is an active, lively, restless principle; it fills the heart, so that it cannot be easy till it is doing something for Jesus Christ.

—George Whitefield

Oh let us continually keep faith in exercise, till it be entirely swallowed up in the boundless ocean of beatific vision.

—George Whitefield No doubt [women of faith in the past] were reproached for His name's sake, and accounted mad women; but they had a faith which enabled them at that time to overcome the world, and by which they climbed up to heaven.

—George Whitefield Where reason cannot wade there faith may swim.

—Thomas Watson

It is the nature of faith to believe God upon His bare word.... It will not be, saith sense; it cannot be, saith reason; it both can and will be, saith faith, for I have a promise.

—John Trapp

How weak soever the believer finds himself, and how powerful soever he perceives his enemy to be, it is all one to him, he hath no more to do but to put faith on work, and to wait till God works.

—David Dickson

How many, alas, of the precious saints of God must we shut out from being believers, if there is no faith but what amounts to assurance.... shall we say their faith went away in the departure of their assurance? How oft then in a year may a believer be no believer? even as often as God withdraws and leaves the creature in the dark. Assurance is like the sun-flower, which opens with the day and shuts with the night. It follows the motion of God's face; if that looks smilingly on the soul, it lives; if that frowns or hides itself, it dies. But faith is a plant that can grow in the shade, a grace that can find the way to heaven in a dark night. It can "walk in darkness, and yet trust in the name of the Lord."

—William Gurnall

Faith endures as seeing Him who is invisible (Hebrews 11:27); endures the disappointments, the hardships, and the heart-aches of life, by recognizing that all comes from the hand of Him who is too wise to err and too loving to be unkind. But so long as we are occupied with any other object than God Himself, there will be neither rest for the heart nor peace for the mind. But when we receive all that enters our lives as from His hand, then, no matter what may be our circumstances or surroundings—whether in a hovel or prison-dungeon, or at a martyr's stake—we shall be enabled to say, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places" (Psalms 16:6). But that is the language of faith, not of sight nor of sense.

—Arthur W. Pink

Fear

Fear

Christian, let God's distinguishing love to you be a motive to you to fear Him greatly. He has put His fear in your heart, and may not have given that blessing to your neighbor, perhaps not to your husband, your wife, your child, or your parent. Oh, what an obligation should this thought lay upon your heart to greatly fear the Lord! Remember also that this fear of the Lord is His treasure, a choice jewel, given only to favorites, and to those who are greatly beloved.

—John Bunyan In order to the attaining of all useful knowledge this is most necessary, that we fear God; we are not qualified to profit by the instructions that are given us unless our minds be possessed with a holy reverence of God, and every thought within us be brought into obedience to Him.... As all our knowledge must take rise from the fear of God, so it must tend to it as its perfection and centre. Those know enough who know how to fear God, who are careful in every thing to please Him and fearful of offending Him in any thing; this is the Alpha and Omega of knowledge.

—Matthew Henry

We fear men so much, because we fear God so little. One fear cures another. When man's terror scares you, turn your thoughts to the wrath of God.

—William Gurnall The wicked is a very coward, and is afraid of everything; of God, because He is his enemy; of Satan, because he is his tormentor; of God's creatures, because they, joining with their Maker, fight against him; of himself, because he bears about with him his own accuser and executioner. The godly man contrarily is afraid of nothing; not of God, because he knows Him his best friend, and will not hurt him; not of Satan, because he cannot hurt him; not of afflictions, because he knows they come from a loving God, and end in his good; not of the creatures, since "the very stones in the field are in league with Him;" not of himself, since his conscience is at peace.

—Joseph Hall

How can you affright him? Bring him word his estate is ruined; "Yet my inheritance is safe," says he. Your wife, or child, or dear friend is dead; "Yet my Father lives." You yourself must die; "Well, then, I go home to my Father, and to my inheritance.

—Robert Leighton

Grace

Grace

"Grace" is more than mercy and love, it superadds to them. it denotes, not simply love, but the love of a sovereign, transcendly superior, one that may do what he will, that may wholly choose whether he will love or no. There may be love between equals, and an inferior may love a superior; but love in a superior, and so superior as he may do what he will, in such a one love is called grace: and therefore grace is attributed to princes; they are said to be gracious to their subjects, whereas subjects cannot be gracious to princes. Now God, who is an infinite Sovereign, who might have chosen whether ever He would love us or no, for Him to love us, this is grace.

—Thomas Goodwin The Kingdom of grace is nothing but.... the beginning of the Kingdom of glory; the Kingdom of grace is glory in the seed, and the Kingdom of glory is grace in the flower; the Kingdom of grace is glory in the daybreak, and the Kingdom of glory is grace in the full meridian; the Kingdom of grace is glory militant, and the Kingdom of glory is grace triumphant.... the Kingdom of grace leads to the Kingdom of glory.

—Thomas Watson

Grace and glory differ very little; the one is the seed, the other is the flower; grace is glory militant, glory is grace triumphant.

—Thomas Brooks As rivers, the nearer they come to the ocean whither they tend, the more they increase their waters, and speed their streams; so will grace flow more fully and freely in its near approaches to the ocean of glory.

—John Owen

Growth in Grace

Growth in Grace

God's children improve all advantages to advance their grand end; they labour to grow better by blessings and crosses, and to make sanctified use of all things.

—Richard Sibbes

If believers decay in their first love, or in some other grace, yet another grace may grow and increase, such as humility, their brokenheartedness; they sometimes seem not to grow in the branches when they may grow at the root; upon a check grace breaks out more; as we say, after a hard winter there usually follows a glorious spring.

—Richard Sibbes

Let weak Christians know that a spark from heaven, though kindled under green wood that sobs and smokes, yet it will consume all at last.

—Richard Sibbes The right manner of growth is to grow less in one's own eyes.

—Thomas Watson

Heaven

Heaven Where the unveiled glories of the Deity shall beat full upon us, and we for ever sun ourseves in the smiles of God.

—Ezekiel Hopkins How sweet is rest after fatigue! How sweet will heaven be when our journey is ended.

—George Whitefield

He that will be knighted must kneel for it, and he that will enter in at the strait gate must crowd for it—a gate made so on purpose, narrow and hard in the entrance, yet, after we have entered, wide and glorious, that after our pain our joy may be the sweeter.

—Thomas Adams

He that loves the world, how active is he! He will break his peace and sleep for it. He that loves honour, what hazards will he run! He will swim to the throne in blood.... Love heaven, and you cannot miss it; love breaks through all opposition—it takes heaven by storm.

—Thomas Watson

Some have asked whether we shall know one another in heaven? Surely, our knowledge will not be diminished, but increased. The judgement of Luther and Anselm, and many other divines is, that we shall know one another; yea, the saints of all ages, whose faces we never saw; and, when we shall see the saints in glory without their infirmities of pride and passion, it will be a glorious sight.

—Thomas Watson

Even the tired horse, when he comes near home, mends pace: be good always, without weariness, but best at last; that the nearer thou comest to the end of thy days, the nearer thou mayest be to the end of thy hopes, the salvation of thy soul.

—Thomas Adams

Hell

Hell Are there not millions of us who would rather go sleeping to hell; than sweating to heaven?

—Thomas Watson

Wrath to come implies both the futurity and perpetuity of this wrath.... Yea, it is not only certainly future, but when it comes it will be abiding wrath, or wrath still coming. When millions of years and ages are past and gone, this will still be wrath to come. Ever coming as a river ever flowing.

—John Flavel

Thus it is in hell; they would die, but they cannot. The wicked shall be always dying but never dead; the smoke of the furnace ascends for ever and ever. Oh! who can endure thus to be ever upon the rack? This word "ever" breaks the heart. Wicked men do now think the Sabbaths long, and think a prayer long; but oh! how long will it be to lie in hell for ever and ever?

—Thomas Watson The torments of hell abide for ever.... If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousandth year a bird should come, and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long time ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; yet, if after all that time the damned may come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word EVER breaks the heart.

—Thomas Watson

Holiness

Holiness There is nothing destroyed by sanctification but that which would destroy us.

—William Jenkyn

It is no small advantage to the holy life to "begin the day with God." The saints are wont to leave their hearts with Him over night, that they may find them with Him in the morning. Before earthly things break in upon us, and we receive impressions from abroad, it is good to season the heart with thoughts of God, and to consecrate the early and virgin operations of the mind before they are prostituted to baser objects. When the world gets the start of religion in the morning, it can hardly overtake it all the day.

—Thomas Case

Christ will be master of the heart, and sin must be mortified. If your life is unholy, then your heart is unchanged, and you are an unsaved person. The Savior will sanctify His people, renew them, give them a hatred of sin, and a love of holiness. The grace that does not make a man better than others is a worthless counterfeit. Christ saves His people, not IN their sins, but FROM their sins. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

—Charles Spurgeon

Hope

Hope

Truly, hope is the saint's covering, wherein he wraps himself, when he lays his body down to sleep in the grave: "My flesh," saith David, "shall rest in hope."

—William Gurnall

Hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called "the rejoicing of hope" (Hebrews 3:6).

—William Gurnall

Humility

Humility

Oh that I was lowly in heart! Honor and dishonor, good report and evil report would then be alike, and prove a furtherance to me in my Christian cause.

—George Whitefield A truly humble man is sensible of his natural distance from God; of his dependence on Him; of the insufficiency of his own power and wisdom; and that it is by God's power that he is upheld and provided for, and that he needs God's wisdom to lead and guide him, and His might to enable him to do what he ought to do for Him.

—Jonathan Edwards

Joy

Joy Take a saint, and put him into any condition, and he knows how to rejoice in the Lord.

—Walter Cradock [Believers] have joy and comfort—that joy that angels cannot give, and devils cannot take.

—Christopher Fowler

Foolish talking and jesting are not the ways in which Christian cheerfulness should express itself, but rather "giving of thanks" (Ephesians 5:4). Religion is the source of joy and gladness, but its joy is expressed in a religious way, in thanksgiving and praise.

—Charles Hodge The more we enjoy of God, the more we are ravished with delight.

—Thomas Watson

Judgment

Judgment

Both in thy private sessions, and the universal assizes, thou shalt be sure of the same Judge, the same jury, the same witnesses, the same verdict. How certain thou art to die, thou knowest; how soon to die, thou knowest not. Measure not thy life with the longest; that were to piece it out with flattery. Thou canst name no living man, not the sickest, which thou art sure shall die before thee.

—Thomas Adams That which a man spits against heaven, shall fall back on his own face.

—Thomas Adams Alas! that the farthest and of all our thoughts should be the thought of our ends.

—Thomas Adams

Love

Love

Let a man have what he will, and do what he will, it signifies nothing without charity; which surely implies that charity is the great thing, and that everything which has not charity in some way contained or implied in it is nothing, and that this charity is the life and soul of all religion, without which all things that wear the name of virtues are empty and vain.

—Jonathan Edwards

All the fruits of the Spirit which we are to lay weight upon as evidential of grace, are summed up in charity, or Christian love; because this is the sum of all grace. And the only way, therefore, in which any can know their good estate, is by discerning the exercises of this divine charity in their hearts; for without charity, let men have what gifts you please, they are nothing.

—Jonathan Edwards

I wish, brothers and sisters, that we could all imitate "the pearl oyster"—A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot reject the evil, but what does it do but "cover" it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl! Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which otherwise would have harmed us.

—Charles Spurgeon

Meditation

Meditation

Continued meditation brings great profit to the soul. Passant and transient thoughts are more pleasant, but not so profitable. Deliberate meditation is of most use because it secures the return of the thoughts.

—Thomas Manton

Meditation will keep your hearts and souls from sinful thoughts. When the vessel is full you can put in no more.... If the heart be full of sinful thoughts, there is no room for holy and heavenly thoughts: if the heart be full of holy and heavenly thoughts by meditation, there is no room for evil and sinful thoughts.

—William Bridge

If I have observed anything by experience, it is this: a man may take the measure of his growth and decay in grace according to his thoughts and meditations upon the person of Christ, and the glory of Christ's Kingdom, and of His love.

—John Owen

Singing God's praise is a work of the most meditation of any we perform in public. It keeps the heart longest upon the thing spoken. Prayer and hearing pass quick from one sentence to another; this sticks long upon it.

—John Lightfoot

What is the reason there is so much preaching and so little practice? For want of meditation.... Constant thoughts are operative, and musing makes the fire burn. Green wood is not kindled by a flash or spark, but by constant blowing.

—Thomas Manton

It is not the bee's touching of the flower that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time upon the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most, that will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest and strongest Christian.

—Thomas Brooks When we find our souls at all declining, it is best to raise them up presently by some awakening meditations, such as of the presence of God, of the strict reckoning we are to make, of the infinite love of God in Christ and the fruits of it, of the excellency of a Christian's calling, of the short and uncertain time of this life, of how little good all those things that steal away our hearts will do us before long, and of how it shall be for ever with us hereafter, as we spend this short time well or ill. The more we make way for such considerations to sink into our hearts, the more we shall rise nearer to that state of soul which we shall enjoy in heaven.

—Richard Sibbes

Patience

Patience The patient man is merry indeed.... The jailers that watch him are but his pages of honour, and his very dungeon but the lower side of the vault of heaven. He kisseth the wheel that must kill him; and thinks the stairs of the scaffold of his martyrdom but so many degrees of his ascent to glory. The tormentors are weary of him. the beholders have pitty on him, all men wonder at him; and while he seems below all men, below himself, he is above nature. He hath so overcome hlmself that nothing can conquer him.

—Thomas Adams

Peace

Peace And therefore you who think so basely of the Gospel and the professors of it, because at present their peace and comfort are not come, should know that it is on the way to them, and comesto stay everlastingly with them; whreas your peace is going is going from you every moment, and is sure to leave you without any hope of returning to you again. Look not how the Christian begins, but ends.

—William Gurnall

Perseverance

Perseverance

Christ ceaseth not to work by His intercession with God for us, and by His Spirit in us for God, whereby He upholds His saints, their graces, their comforts in life, without which they would run to ruin.

—William Gurnall Your life is short, your duties many, your assistance great, and your reward sure; therefore faint not, hold on and hold up, in ways of well-doing, and heaven shall make amends for all —Thomas Brooks

If Christ has once possessed the affections, there is no dispossessing of him again. A fire in the heart overcomes all fires without.

—Richard Sibbes When we are foiled, let us believe we shall overcome; when we have fallen, let us believe we shall rise again. Jacob, after he received a blow which made him lame, yet would not give over wrestling (Genesis 32:25) till he had obtained the blessing. So let us never give up, but, in our thoughts knit the beginning, progress and end together, and then we shall see ourselves in heaven out of the reach of all enemies.

—Richard Sibbes

Piety

Piety

Piety hath a wondrous virtue to change all things into matter of consolation and joy. No condition in effect can be evil or sad to a pious man: his very sorrows are pleasant, his infirmities are wholesome, his wants enrich him, his disgraces adorn him, his burdens ease him; his duties are privileges, his falls are the grounds of advancement, his very sins (as breeding contrition, humility, circumspection, and vigilance), do better profit him: whereas impiety doth spoil every condition, doth corrupt and embase all good things, doth embitter all the conveniences and comforts of life.

—Isaac Barrow

Pleasures of the World

Pleasures of the World

I cannot but look upon all the glory and dignity of this world, lands and lordships, crowns and kingdoms, even as on some brain-sick, beggarly fellow, that borrows fine clothes, and plays, the part of a king or lord for an hour on a stage, and then comes down, and the sport is ended, and they are beggars again.

—Richard Baxter Pleasures come like oxen slow and heavily, and go away like post-horses, upon the spur.

—Joseph Hall

Temporal good things are not the Christian's freight, but his ballast, and therefore are to be desired to poise, not load the vessel.

—William Gurnall

Seek not great things for yourselves in this world, for if your garments be too long, they will make you stumble; and one staff helps a man in his journey, when many in his hands at once hinders him.

—William Bridge

Prayer

Prayer Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.

—Martin Luther I had rather stand against the cannons of the wicked than against the prayers of the righteous.

—Thomas Lye

Israel prevailed with God in wrestling with Him, and therefore it is that he prevails with men also. If so be that we will wrestle with God for a blessing, and prevail with Him, then we need not to fear but we shall wrestle the enemies out of it also.

—Alexander Henderson

Furnish thyself with arguments from the promises to enforce thy prayers, and make them prevalent with God. The promises are the ground of faith, and faith, when strengthened, will make thee fervent, and such fervency ever speeds and returns with victory out of the field of prayer.... The mightier any is in the Word, the more mighty he will be in prayer.

—William Gurnall

Prayer is not appointed for the furnishing of God with the knowledge of what we need, but it is designed as a confession to Him of our sense of the need. In this, as in everything, God's thoughts are not as ours. God requires that His gifts should be sought for. He designs to be honoured by our asking, just as He is to be thanked by us after He has bestowed His blessing.

—Arthur W. Pink

Prayer is not intended to change God's purpose, nor is it to move Him to form fresh purposes. God has decreed that certain events shall come to pass through the means He has appointed for their accomplishment.

—Arthur W. Pink Prayer is the way and means God has appointed for the communication of the blessings of His goodness to His people.

—Arthur W. Pink The prevailing idea seems to be, that I come to God and ask Him for something that I want, and that I expect Him to give me that which I have asked. But this is a most dishonouring and degrading conception. The popular belief reduces God to a servant, our servant: doing our bidding, performing our pleasure, granting our desires. No, prayer is a coming to God, telling Him my need, committing my way unto the Lord, and leaving Him to deal with it as seemeth Him best.

—Arthur W. Pink

Real prayer is communion with God, so that there will be common thoughts between His mind and ours. What is needed is for Him to fill our hearts with His thoughts, and then His desires will

become our desires flowing back to Him.

—Arthur W. Pink Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude—an attitude of dependency, dependency upon God.

—Arthur W. Pink I have benefited by my praying for others; for by making an errand to God for them, I have gotten something for myself.

—Samuel Rutherford

Priorities

Priorities

If our principal treasure be as we profess, in things spiritual and heavenly, and woe unto us if it be not so! on them will our affections, and consequently our desires and thoughts, be principally fixed.

—John Owen A godly man preferreth grace before goods, and wisdom before the world.

—Richard Bernard Build your nest upon no tree here; for you see God has sold the forest to death.

—Samuel Rutherford

Let us use worldly things as wise pilgrims do their staves and other necessities convenient for their journey. So long as they help us forward in our way, let us make use of them, and accordingly esteem them. But if they become troublesome hindrances and cumbersome burdens, let us leave them behind us, or cast them away.

—George Downname

Promises of God

Promises of God

Promises, though they be for a time seemingly delayed, cannot be finally frustrated.... the heart of God is not turned though His face be hid; and prayers are not flung back, though they be not instantly answered.

—Timothy Cruso

Prosperity

Prosperity As men cherish young plants at first, and fence them about to keep them from hurt, but when they are grown, they remove them, and then leave them to the wind and weather, so God besets His children first with props of inward comforts, but afterwards exposes them to storms and winds, because they are better able to bear it. Therefore let no man think himself the better because he is free from troubles. It is because God sees him not fit to bear greater.

—Richard Sibbes Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns, ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles. The world, siren-like, sings us and sinks us.

—Thomas Brooks And as men's diversions increase from the world, so do their entanglements from Satan. When they have more to do in the world than they can well manage, they shall have more to do from Satan than they can well withstand.

—John Owen

Afflictions, like bills and pikes, make a terrible show when they cannot reach us; but the temptations of prosperity, like unseen bullets, wound and kill us before they are discerned.

—George Downname

Providence

Providence

How often has providence convinced its observers, upon a sober recollection of the events of their lives, that if the Lord had left them to their own counsels they had as often been their own tormentors, if not executioners!

—John Flavel

If God has given you but a small portion of the world, yet if you are godly He has promised never to forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). Providence has ordered that condition for you which is really best for your eternal good. If you had more of the world than you have, your heads and hearts might not be able to manage it to your advantage.

—John Flavel

All the dark, intricate, puzzling providences at which we were sometimes so offended...we shall [one day] see to be to us, as the difficult passage through the wilderness was to Israel, "the right way to the city of habitation".

—John Flavel

Providence so orders the case, that faith and prayer come between our wants and supplies, and the goodness of God may be the more magnified in our eyes thereby.

—John Flavel

Ah, did we but rightly understand what the demerit of sin is, we would rather admire the bounty of God than complain of the strait-handedness of Providence. And if we did but consider that there lies upon God no obligation of justice or gratitude to reward any of our duties, it would cure our murmurs (Genesis 32:10).

—John Flavel

Look around in the world, and you may see some in every place who are objects of pity, bereaved by sad accidents of all the comforts of life, while in the meantime Providence has tenderly preserved you.

—John Flavel When the world smiles upon us, and we have got a warm nest, how do we prophesy of rest and peace in those acquisitions, thinking with good Baruch, great things for ourselves, but Providence by a particular or general calamity overturns our plans (Jeremiah 45:4-5), and all this to turn our hearts from the creature to God.

—John Flavel

Let us consider and marvel that ever this great and blessed God should be so much concerned, as you have heard He is in all His providences, about such vile, despicable worms as we are! He does not need us, but is perfectly blessed and happy in Himself without us. We can add nothing to Him.

—John Flavel

You may look upon some providences once and again, and see little or nothing in them, but look "seven times," that is, meditate often upon them, and you will see their increasing glory, like that increasing cloud (1 Kings 18:44).

—John Flavel When our needs are permitted to grow to an extremity, and all visible hopes fail, then to have relief given wonderfully enhances the price of such a mercy (Isaiah 41:17-18).

—John Flavel

Sometimes God makes use of instruments for good to His people, who designed nothing but evil and mischief to them. Thus Joseph's brethren were instrumental to his advancement in that very thing in which they designed his ruin (Genesis 50:20).

—John Flavel

[Providences] often puzzle and entangle our thoughts, but bring them to the Word, and your duty will be quickly manifested. "Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end" (Psalms 73:17). And not only their end, but his own duty, to be quiet in an afflicted condition and not envy their prosperity.

—John Flavel

Whatsoever we have over-loved, idolized, and leaned upon, God has from time to time broken it, and made us to see the vanity of it; so that we find the readiest course to be rid our comforts is to set our hearts inordinately or immoderately upon them.

—John Flavel The boundless stores of Providence are engaged for the support of the believer. Christ is our Joseph, who has granaries full of wheat; but He does not treat us as Joseph did the Egyptians, for He opens the door of His storehouse and bids us call all the good therein our own. He has entailed upon His estate of Providence a perpetual charge of a daily portion for us, and He has promised that one day we shall clearly perceive that the estate itself has been well-farmed on our behalf and has always been ours. The axle of the wheels of the chariot of Providence is Infinite Love, and Gracious Wisdom is the perpetual charioteer.

—Charles Spurgeon

Those circumstances, which to the dim eye of Jacob's faith wore a hue so somber, were at that very moment developing and perfecting the events which were to shed around the evening of his life the halo of a glorious and cloudless sunset. All things were working together for his good! And so, troubled soul, the "much tribulation" will soon be over, and as you enter the "kingdom of God" you shall then see, no longer "through a glass darkly" but in the unshadowed sunlight of the Divine presence, that "all things" did "work together" for your personal and eternal good.

—Arthur W. Pink

Riches

Riches Riches are long in getting with much pains, hard in keeping with much care, quick in losing with more sorrow.

—Thomas Fuller

Separation

Separation

We should take heed with whom we join in league and amity. Before we plant our affections, consider the persons what they are; if we see any signs of grace, then it is good; but if not there will be a rent. Throughout our whole life this ought to be our rule; we should labour in all company either to do good or receive good; and where we can neither do nor receive good we should avoid such acquaintance. Let men therefore consider and take heed how they stand in combination with any wicked persons.

—Richard Sibbes

If any occupation or association is found to hinder our communion with God or our enjoyment of spiritual things, then it must be abandoned. Beware of 'leprosy' in the garment. (Leviticus 13:47) Anything in my habits or ways which mars happy fellowship with the brethren or robs me of power in service, is to be unsparingly judged and made an end of— 'burned.' (Leviticus 13:52) Whatever I cannot do for God's glory must be avoided.

—Arthur W. Pink Guilt or grief is all that gracious souls get by communion with vain souls (Psalms 119:136; Psalms 119:158).

—Thomas Brooks

It is our wisest and our safest course to stand at the farthest distance from sin; not to go near the house of the harlot, but to fly from all appearance of evil (Proverbs 5:8,1 Thessalonians 5:22). The best course to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest distance; he that will be so bold as to attempt to dance upon the brink of the pit, may find by woeful experience that it is a righteous thing with God that he should fall into the pit.

—Thomas Brooks

Sin is a plague, yea, the greatest and most infectious plague in the world; and yet, ah! how few are there that tremble at it, that keep at a distance from it!

—Thomas Brooks

Sovereignty of God

The Sovereignty of God

Divine sovereignty is not the sovereignty of a tyrannical Despot, but the exercised pleasure of One who is infinitely wise and good! Because God is infinitely wise He cannot err, and because He is infinitely righteous He will not do wrong. Here then is the preciousness of this truth. The mere fact itself that God's will is irresistible and irreversible fills me with fear, but once I realize that God wills only that which is good, my heart is made to rejoice.

—Arthur W. Pink A consciousness of our powerlessness should cast us upon Him who has all power. Here then is where a vision and view of God's sovereignty helps, for it reveals His sufficiency and shows us our insufficiency.

—Arthur W. Pink

What is God's remedy for dejection at apparent failure in our labours? This—the assurance that God's purpose cannot fail, that God's plans cannot miscarry, that God's will must be done. Our labours are not intended to bring about that which God has not decreed.

—Arthur W. Pink

Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual Warfare

There is no such way to be even with the devil and his instruments, for all their spite against us, as by doing what good we can wherever we be come.

—William Gurnall

Temptation

Temptation

Satan would seem to be mannerly and reasonable; making as if he would be content with one-half of the heart, whereas God challengeth all or none: as, indeed, He hath most reason to claim all that made all. But this is nothing but a crafty fetch of Satan; for he knows that if he have any part, God will have none: so the whole falleth to his share alone.

—Joseph Hall

If you yield to Satan in the least, he will carry you further and further, till he has left you under a stupefied or terrified conscience: stupefied, till thou hast lost all thy tenderness. A stone at the top of a hill, when it begins to roll down, ceases not till it comes to the bottom. Thou thinkest it is but yielding a little, and so by degrees are carried on, till thou hast sinned away all thy profession, and all principles of conscience, by the secret witchery of his temptations.

—Thomas Manton

Satan's time of tempting is usually after an ordinance; and the reason is, because then he thinks he shall find us most secure. When we have been at solemn duties, we are apt to think all is done, and we grow remiss, and leave off that zeal and strictness as before; just as a soldier, who after a battle leaves off his armour, not once dreaming, of an enemy. Satan watches his time, and when we least suspect, then he throws in a temptation.

—Thomas Watson Our great Pattern hath showed us what our deportment ought to be in all suggestions and temptations. When the devil showed Him "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," to tempt Him withal, He did not stand and look upon them, viewing their glory, and pondering their empire.... but instantly, without stay, He cries, "Get thee hence, Satan." Meet thy temptation in its entrance with thoughts of faith concerning Christ on the cross; this will make it sink before thee. Entertain no parley, no dispute with it, if thou wouldst not enter into it.

—John Owen

If thou least fallen into sin through violent temptations, seek speedily for repentance for it, recovery out of it, and reformation from it.

—Vavasor Powell

Temptations, when we meet them at first, are as the lion that reared upon Samson; but if we overcome them, the next time we see them we shall find a nest of honey within them.

—John Bunyan The cause why our oppressors prevail oft against us is, because we trust too much in our own wits, and lean too much upon our own inventions opposing subtilty to subtilty, one evil device to another, matching and maintaining policy by policy, and not committing our cause to God.

—Abraham Wright

God sometimes permits Satan to assail His dear children, the more to strengthen them in His spiritual graces, and to confirm them more fully in the assurance of His love and their salvation. For as a city which has been once besieged and not sacked will ever after be more strong to hold out if it be assaulted by the like danger.... so those who are besieged and assaulted by their spiritual enemies will ever after more carefully arm themselves against them with the graces of God's Spirit, that they may not be overcome nor foiled by them.

—George Downname

Watch constantly against those things which are thought to be no temptations. The most poisonous serpents are found where the sweetest flowers grow. Cleopatra was poisoned by an asp that was brought to her in a basket of fair flowers. Sharp-edged tools, long handled, wound at last.

—Charles Spurgeon

Verbal Communication

Verbal Communication

All our words ought to be filled with true sweetness and grace; and this will be so if we mingle the useful with the sweet.

—John Calvin As idle talk is often concealed under the garb of jesting, and wit, the Apostle Paul expressly condemns pleasantries, which is so agreeable as to seem a praiseworthy virtue, as a part of foolish talking (Ephesians 5:4).

—John Calvin

Foolish talking and jesting are not the ways in which Christian cheerfulness should express itself, but rather "giving of thanks" (Ephesians 5:4). Religion is the source of joy and gladness, but its joy is expressed in a religious way, in thanksgiving and praise.

—Charles Hodge

Whatever be the topic of conversation, the spirit of piety should be diffused through it—as the salt in our food should properly season it all, whatever the article of food may be (Colossians 4:6).

—Albert Barnes In our manner of speech, our plans of living, our dealings with others, our conduct and walk in the church and out of it—all should be done as becomes the gospel (1 Peter 1:27).

—Albert Barnes

Christians should be grave and serious, though cheerful and pleasant. They should feel that they have great interests at stake, and that the world has too. They are redeemed—not to make sport; purchased with precious blood—for other purposes than to make men laugh. They are soon to be in heaven—and a man who has any impressive sense of that will habitually feel he has much else to do than to make men laugh. The true course of life is midway between moroseness and levity; sourness and lightness; harshness and jesting. Be benevolent, kind, cheerful, bland, courteous—but serious. Be solemn, thoughtful, deeply impressed with the presence of God and with eternal things—but pleasant, affable and benignant. Think not a smile sinful; but think not levity and jesting harmless.

—Albert Barnes

I think it is not very difficult to discern by the duties and converses of Christians, what frames their spirits are under. Take a Christian in a good frame, and how serious, heavenly, and profitable, will his converses and duties be! what a lovely companion is he during the continuance of it!

—John Flavel

Watchfulness

Watchfulness The Christian soldier must avoid two evils—he must not faint or yield in the time of fight, and after a victory he must not wax insolent and secure. When he has overcome, he is so to behave himself as though he were presently again to be assaulted. For Satan's temptations, like the waves of the sea, do follow one in the neck of the other.

—George Downname When the soul puts her danger furthest off, and lies most secure, then 'tis nearest; therefore labour to be constant in thy holy care—the want of this spoils all. Some you shall have, that after a great fall into a sin that hath bruised them sorely, will seem very careful for a time where they set their foot, how they walk, and what company they come in, but as soon as the soreness of their consciences wears off, their watch breaks up, and they are as careless as ever; like one that is very careful to shut up his shop strongly, and maybe sit up late to watch it also, for two or three nights after it hath been robbed, but then minds it no more.

—William Gurnall

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