

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

by John Bunyan

Bunyan's collection of theological essays including reflections on the Christian's relationship to the law under grace, using biblical metaphors to explain how believers are freed from the law's condemnation while still honoring its holiness.

6 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Miscellaneous Pieces
1. OF THE TRINITY AND A CHRISTIAN
2. OF THE LAW AND A CHRISTIAN
3. BUNYAN'S LAST SERMON--PREACHED JULY 1688.
4. BUNYAN'S DYING SAYINGS.
5. Endo of The Project Gutenberg Etext of Miscellaneous Pieces, by John Bunyan

Miscellaneous Pieces

OF THE TRINITY AND A CHRISTIAN

How a young or shaken Christian should demean himself under the weighty thoughts of the Doctrine of the Trinity or Plurality of Persons in the eternal Godhead. The reason why I say a YOUNG or SHAKEN Christian, is, because some that are not young, but of an ancient standing, may not only be assaulted with violent temptations concerning gospel-principles, but a second time may become a child, a babe, a shallow man, in the things of God: especially, either when by backsliding he hath provoked God to leave him, or when some new, unexpected, and (as to present strength) over weighty objection doth fall upon the spirit, by means of which great shakings of mind do commonly attend such a soul in the most weighty matters of the concerns of faith, of which this is one that I have supposed in the above-mentioned question: Wherefore passing other things, I will come directly to that, and briefly propose some helps to a soul in such a case. I. The first preparative. First, Then, be sure thou keep close to the Word of God for that is the revelation of the mind and will of God, both as to the truth of what is either in himself or ways, and also as to what he requireth and expecteth of thee, either concerning faith in, or obedience to, what he hath so revealed. Now for thy better performing of this, I shall give thee in brief these following directions. 1. Suffer thyself, by the authority of the Word, to be persuaded that the Scripture indeed is the Word of God the Scriptures of truth, the words of the Holy One; and that they therefore must be every one true, pure, and for ever settled in heaven. 2. Conclude therefore from the former doctrine, that that God whose words they are, is able to make a reconciliation and most sweet and harmonious agreement with all the sayings therein, how obscure, cross, dark, and contradictory soever they seem to thee. To understand all mysteries, to have all knowledge, to be able to comprehend with all saints, is a great work; enough to crush the spirit, and to stretch the strings of the most capacious, widened soul that breatheth on this side glory, be they notwithstanding exceedingly enlarged by revelation. Paul, when he was caught up to heaven, saw that which was unlawful, because impossible, for man to utter. And saith Christ to the reasoning Pharisee, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" It is great lewdness, and also insufferable arrogancy, to come to the Word of God, as conceiting already that whatever thou readest must either by thee be understood, or of itself fall to the ground as a senseless error. But God is wiser than man, wherefore fear thou him, and tremble at his word, saying still, with godly suspicion of thine own infirmity, What I see not, teach thou me; and, Thou art God only wise; but as for me, I am as a beast before thee. 3. Take heed of taking a part of the Word only, lest thou thereby go away with the truth as mangled in pieces. For instance, where thou readest, "The Lord our God is one Lord," there take heed that thou dost not thence conclude, then there are not three persons in the Godhead: when thou readest of "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," then take heed of concluding there must therefore either be three Gods, or else that Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are not true God, but the Father only. Wherefore to help thee here, observe, II. The second preparative. 1. That the Christian religion requireth credit concerning every doctrine contained in the Word; credit, I say, according to the true relation of every sentence that the Holy Ghost hath revealed for the asserting, maintaining, or vindicating that same truth. 2. And therefore, hence it is that a Christian

is not called a doer, a reasoner, an objector, and perverse disputer, but a believer. Be thou an example to "the believers;" and, "believers" were "added to the church," &c. 3. Therefore, know again, that the Word, if it saith and expresseth that this or that is so and so, as to the matter in hand, thou art bound and obliged, both by the name, profession, and the truth, unto which thou hast joined thyself, to assent to, confess, and acknowledge the same, even then when thy carnal reason will not stoop thereto. "Righteous art thou, O God," saith Jeremiah, "yet let me plead with thee; Wherefore do the wicked live?" Mark, first he acknowledgeth that God's way with the wicked is just and right, even then when yet he could not see the reason of his actions and dispensations towards them. The same reason is good as to our present case: and hence it is that the apostle saith, the spiritual armour of Christians should be much exercised against those high towering and self-exalting imaginations, that within our own bosoms do exalt themselves against the knowledge of God; that every thought or carnal reasoning may be not only taken, but brought a captive into obedience to Christ; that is, be made to stoop to the Word of God, and to give way and place to the doctrine therein contained, how cross soever our thoughts and the Word lie to each other. And it is observable that he here saith, "they exalt themselves against the knowledge of God;" which cannot be understood, that our carnal, natural reason doth exalt itself against an eternal deity, simply considered; for that nature itself doth gather from the very things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead: it must be then that they exalt themselves against that God as thus and thus revealed in the Word, to wit, against the knowledge of one God, consisting of three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit; for this is the doctrine of the Scriptures of truth: and therefore it is observable these thoughts must be brought captive, and be made subject in particular to the Lord Jesus Christ, as to the second person in the Godhead: for the Father is ever acknowledged by all that profess the least of religion; but the Son is that stumbling-stone and rock of offence, against which thousands dash themselves in pieces; though in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

OF THE LAW AND A CHRISTIAN

The law was given twice upon Mount Sinai, but the appearance of the Lord, when he gave it the second time, was wonderfully different from that of his, when at the first he delivered it to Israel. 1. When he gave it the first time, he caused his terror and severity to appear before Moses, to the shaking of his soul and the dismaying of Israel; but when he gave it the second time, he caused all his goodness to pass before Moses, to the comfort of his conscience and the bowing of his heart. 2. When he gave it the first time, it was with thunderings and lightnings, with blackness and darkness, with flame and smoke, and a tearing sound of the trumpet; but when he gave it the second time, it was with a proclamation of his name to be merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgressions, and sins. 3. When he gave it the first time, Moses was called to go up to receive it through the fire, which made him exceedingly fear and quake: but when he went to receive it the second time, he was laid in a clift of the rock. 4. From all which I gather, that, though as to the matter of the law, both as to its being given the first time and the second, it binds the unbeliever under the pains of eternal damnation (if he close not with Christ by faith); yet as to the manner of its giving at these two times, I think the first doth more principally intend its force as a covenant of works, not at all respecting the Lord Jesus; but this second time not (at least in the manner of its being given) respecting such a covenant, but rather as a rule or directory to those who already are found in the clift of the rock Christ; for the saint himself, though he be without law to God, as it is considered the first or old covenant, yet even he is not without law to him as considered under grace; not without law to God, but under the law to Christ. 5. Though, therefore, it be sad with the unbeliever, because he only and wholly standeth under the law as it is given in fire, in smoke, in blackness, and darkness, and thunder; all which threaten him with eternal ruin if he fulfil not the utmost tittle thereof; yet the believer stands to the law under no such consideration, neither is he so at all to hear or regard it, for he is now removed from thence to the blessed mountain of Zion -- to grace and forgiveness of sins; he is now, I say, by faith in the Lord Jesus, shrouded under so perfect and blessed a righteousness, that this thundering law of Mount Sinai cannot find the least fault or diminution therein, but rather approveth and alloweth thereof, either when or wherever it find it. This is called the righteousness of God without the law, and also said to be witnessed by both the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference. 6. Wherefore, whenever thou who believest in Jesus, dost hear the law in its thundering and lightning fits, as if it would burn up heaven and earth, then say thou, I am freed from this law, these thunderings have nothing to do with my soul; nay, even this law, while it thus thunders and roars, it doth both allow and approve of my righteousness. I know that Hagar would sometimes be domineering and high, even in Sarah's house, and against her; but this she is not to be suffered to do, nay, though Sarah herself be barren; wherefore, serve it also as Sarah served her, and expel her out from thy house. My meaning is, when this law with its thundering threatenings doth attempt to lay hold on thy conscience, shut it out with a promise of grace; cry, The inn is taken up already; the Lord Jesus is here entertained, and here is no room for the law. Indeed, if it will be content with being my informer, and so lovingly leave off to judge me, I

will be content, it shall be in my sight, I will also delight therein; but otherwise, I being now made upright without it, and that too with that righteousness which this law speaks well of and approveth, I may not, will not, cannot dare not make it my Saviour and judge, nor suffer it to set up its government in my conscience; for by so doing, I fall from grace, and Christ Jesus doth profit me nothing. 7. Thus, therefore, the soul that is married to him that is raised up from the dead, both may and ought to deal with this law of God; yea, it doth greatly dishonour its Lord and refuse its gospel privileges, if it at any time otherwise doth, whatever it seeth or feels. "The law hath power over the wife so long as her husband liveth, but if her husband be dead she is freed from that law; so that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man." Indeed, so long as thou art alive to sin, and to thy righteousness which is of the law, so long thou hast them for thy husband, and they must reign over thee; but when once they are become dead unto thee -- as they then most certainly will when thou closest with the Lord Jesus Christ -- then, I say, thy former husbands have no more to meddle with thee; thou art freed from their law. Set the case: A woman be cast into prison for a debt of hundreds of pounds; if after this she marry, yea, though while she is in the jailor's hand, in the same day that she is joined to her husband, her debt is all become his; yea, and the law also that arrested and imprisoned this woman, as freely tells her, go: she is freed, saith Paul, from that; and so saith the law of this land. The sum, then, of what hath been said is this -- The Christian hath now nothing to do with the law, as it thundereth and burneth on Sinai, or as it bindeth the conscience to wrath and the displeasure of God for sin; for from its thus appearing, it is freed by faith in Christ. Yet it is to have regard thereto, and is to count it holy, just, and good; which, that it may do, it is always, whenever it seeth or regards it, to remember that he who giveth it to us "is merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," &c.

BUNYAN'S LAST SERMON--PREACHED JULY 1688.

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" John i.13. The words have a dependence on what goes before, and therefore I must direct you to them for the right understanding of it. You have it thus, -- "He came to his own, but his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." In the words before, you have two things - First, Some of his own rejecting him when he offered himself to them. Secondly, Others of his own receiving him, and making him welcome. Those that reject him he also passes by; but those that receive him, he gives them power to become the sons of God. Now, lest any one should look upon it as good luck or fortune, says he, "They were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." They that did not receive him, they were only born of flesh and blood; but those that receive him, they have God to their father, they receive the doctrine of Christ with a vehement desire. First, I will shew you what he means by "blood." They that believe are born to it, as an heir is to an inheritance; they are born of God; not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; not of blood -- that is, not by generation; not born to the kingdom of heaven by the flesh; not because I am the son of a godly man or woman. That is meant by blood, Acts xvii.26, "He has made of one blood all nations." But when he says here, "not of blood," he rejects all carnal privileges they did boast of. They boasted they were Abraham's seed. No, no, says he, it is not of blood; think not to say you have Abraham to your father, you must be born of God if you go to the kingdom of heaven. Secondly, "Nor of the will of the flesh." What must we understand by that? It is taken for those vehement inclinations that are in man to all manner of looseness, fulfilling the desires of the flesh. That must not be understood here; men are made the children of God by fulfilling their lustful desires; it must be understood here in the best sense. There is not only in carnal men a will to be vile, but there is in them a will to be saved also -- a will to go to heaven also. But this it will not do, it will not privilege a man in the things of the kingdom of God. Natural desires after the things of another world, they are not an argument to prove a man shall go to heaven whenever he dies. I am not a free willer, I do abhor it; yet there is not the wickedest man but he desires some time or other to be saved. He will read some time or other, or, it may be, pray; but this will not do -- "It is not in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God that shews mercy;" there is willing and running, and yet to no purpose; Rom. ix.16, "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, have not obtained it." Here I do not understand as if the apostle had denied a virtuous course of life to be the way to heaven, but that a man without grace, though he have natural gifts, yet he shall not obtain privilege to go to heaven, and be the son of God. Though a man without grace may have a will to be saved, yet he cannot have that will God's way. Nature, it cannot know anything but the things of nature; the things of God knows no man but by the Spirit of God; unless the Spirit of God be in you, it will leave you on this side the gates of heaven -- "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It may be some may have a will, a desire that Ishmael may be saved; know this, it will not save thy child. If it were our will, I would have you all go to heaven. How many are there in the world that pray for their children, and cry for them, and

ready to die; and this will not do? God's will is the rule of all; it is only through Jesus Christ, "which were born, not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Now I come to the doctrine. Men that believe in Jesus Christ to the effectual receiving of Jesus Christ, they are born to it. He does not say they SHALL be born to it, but they ARE born to it; born of God, unto God, and the things of God, before they receive God to eternal salvation. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Now unless he be born of God, he cannot see it. Suppose the kingdom of God be what it will, he cannot see it before he be begotten of God; suppose it be the Gospel, he cannot see it before he be brought into a state of regeneration; believing is the consequence of the new birth, "not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God." First, I will give you a clear description of it under one similitude or two. A child, before it be born into the world, is in the dark dungeon of its mother's womb; so a child of God, before he be born again, is in the dark dungeon of sin, sees nothing of the kingdom of God, therefore it is called a new birth; the same soul has love one way in its carnal condition, another way when it is born again. Secondly, As it is compared to a birth, resembling a child in his mother's womb, so it is compared to a man being raised out of the grave; and to be born again is to be raised out of the grave of sin -- "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." To be raised from the grave of sin is to be begotten and born; Rev. i.5. There is a famous instance of Christ -- "He is the first-begotten from the dead, he is the first-born from the dead;" unto which our regeneration alludeth, -- that is, if you be born again by seeking those things that are above, then there is a similitude betwixt Christ's resurrection and the new birth; which were born, which were restored out of this dark world, and translated out of the kingdom of this dark world into the kingdom of his dear Son, and made us live a new life; this is to be born again; and he that is delivered from the mother's womb, it is the help of the mother; so he that is born of God, it is by the Spirit of God. I must give you a few consequences of new birth. First of all, a child, you know, is incident to cry as soon as it comes into the world; for if there be no noise, they say it is dead. You that are born of God, and Christians, if you be not criers, there is no spiritual life in you; if you be born of God, you are crying ones; as soon as he has raised you out of the dark dungeon of sin, you cannot but cry to God, What must I do to be saved? As soon as ever God had touched the jailor, he cries out, "Men and brethren, what must I do to be saved?" Oh! how many prayerless professors are there in London that never pray? Coffee-houses will not let you pray, trades will not let you pray, looking-glasses will not let you pray; but if you were born of God, you would. Secondly, It is not only natural for a child to cry, but it must crave the breast, it cannot live without the breast; therefore Peter makes it the true trial of a new-born babe; the new-born babe desires the sincere milk of the Word, that he may grow thereby. If you be born of God, make it manifest by desiring the breast of God. Do you long for the milk of promises? A man lives one way when he is in the world, another way when he is brought unto Jesus Christ; Isa. lxvi., "They shall suck, and be satisfied." If you be born again, there is no satisfaction till you get the milk of God's word into your souls; Isa. lxvi.11, "To suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of consolation." O what is a promise to a carnal man; a whorehouse, it may be, is more sweet to him; but if you be born again, you cannot live without the milk of God's word. What is a woman's breast to a horse? But what is it to a child? There is its comfort night and day, there is its succour night and day. O how loath is he it should be taken from him. Minding heavenly things, says a carnal man, is but vanity; but to a child of God, there is his comfort. Thirdly, A child that is newly born, if it have not other comforts to keep it warm than it had in its mother's womb, it dies. It must have something got for its succour; so Christ had swaddling clothes

prepared for him; so those that are born again, they must have some promise of Christ to keep them alive. Those that are in a carnal state, they warm themselves with other things; but those that are born again, they cannot live without some promise of Christ to keep them alive, as he did to the poor infant in Ezekiel xvii., "I covered thee with embroidered gold." And when women are with child, what fine things will they prepare for their child! O but what fine things has Christ prepared to wrap all in that are born again! O what wrappings of gold has Christ prepared for all that are born again! Women will dress their children, that every one may see them how fine they are; so he in Ezekiel xvi.11 -- "I decked thee also with ornaments, and I also put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head;" and, says he in the 13th verse, "thou didst prosper to a kingdom." This is to set out nothing in the world but the righteousness of Christ, and the graces of the Spirit, without which a new-born babe cannot live, unless he have the golden righteousness of Christ. Fourthly, A child when it is in its mother's lap, the mother takes great delight to have that which will be for its comfort; so it is with God's children, they shall be kept on his knee; Isaiah lxvi.11, "They shall stick and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation." Ver.13, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." There is a similitude in these things that nobody knows of but those that are born again. Fifthly, There is usually some similitude betwixt the father and the child; it may be the child looks like its father; so those that are born again, they have a new similitude, they have the image of Jesus Christ (Gal. iv.), every one that is born of God has something of the features of heaven upon him. Men love those children that are likest them most usually; so does God his children; therefore they are called the children of God. But others do not look like him, therefore they are called Sodomites. Christ describes children of the devil by their features; the children of the devil, his works they will do; all works of unrighteousness, they are the devil's works. If you are earthly, you have borne the image of the earthly; if heavenly, you have borne the image of the heavenly. Sixthly, When a man has a child, he trains him up to his own liking, he learns the custom of his father's house; so are those that are born of God; they have learned the custom of the true church of God, there they learn to cry, My Father and my God; they are brought up in God's house, they learn the method and form of God's house for regulating their lives in this world. Seventhly, Children, it is natural for them to depend upon their father for what they want. If they want a pair of shoes, they go and tell him; if they want bread, they go and tell him; so should the children of God do. Do you want spiritual bread? go tell God of it. Do you want strength of grace? ask it of God. Do you want strength against Satan's temptations? go and tell God of it. When the devil tempts you, run home and tell your heavenly Father; go pour out your complaints to God. This is natural to children; if any wrong them, they go and tell their father; so do those that are born of God, when they meet with temptations, go and tell God of them. The first use is this, to make a strict inquiry whether you be born of God or not. Examine by those things I laid down before of a child of nature and a child of grace. Are you brought out of the dark dungeon of this world into Christ? have you learned to cry, My Father? Jer. iii.16, "And I said, Thou shalt call me thy Father." All God's children are criers. Can you be quiet without you have a bellyful of the milk of God's word? Can you be satisfied without you have peace with God? Pray you consider it, and be serious with yourselves. If you have not these marks, you will fall short of the kingdom of God, you shall never have an interest there; there is no intruding. They will say, "Lord, Lord, open to us; and he will say, I know you not." No child of God, no heavenly inheritance. We sometimes give something to those that are not our children, but not our lands. O do not flatter yourselves

with a portion among the sons, unless you live like sons. When we see a king's son play with a beggar, this is unbecoming; so if you be the king's children, live like the king's children. If you be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above, and not on things below. When you come together, talk of what your Father promised you; you should all love your Father's will, and be content and pleased with the exercises you meet with in the world. If you are the children of God, live together lovingly. If the world quarrel with you, it is no matter; but it is sad if you quarrel together. If this be amongst you, it is a sign of ill-breeding, it is not according to rules you have in the Word of God. Dost thou see a soul that has the image of God in him? Love him, love him; say, This man and I must go to heaven one day. Serve one another, do good for one another; and if any wrong you, pray to God to right you, and love the brotherhood. Lastly, If you be the children of God, learn that lesson: "Gird up the loins of your mind as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former conversation; but be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Consider that the holy God is your father, and let this oblige you to live like the children of God, that you may look your Father in the face with comfort another day.

BUNYAN'S DYING SAYINGS.

OF SIN. Sin is the great block and bar to our happiness, the procurer of all miseries to man, both here and hereafter; take away sin, and nothing can hurt us; for death temporal, spiritual, and eternal, is the wages of it. Sin, and man for sin, is the object of the wrath of God. How dreadful therefore must his case be who continues in sin; for who can bear and grapple with the wrath of God? No sin against God can be little, because it is against the great God of heaven and earth; but if the sinner can find out a LITTLE God, it may be easy to find out little sins. Sin turns all God's grace into wantonness: it is the DARE of his justice; the RAPE of his mercy; the JEER of his patience; the SLIGHT of his power; and the CONTEMPT of his love. Take heed of giving thyself liberty of committing one sin, for that will lead thee to another; till by an ill custom it become natural. To begin sin is to lay a foundation for a continuance; this continuance is the mother of custom, and impudence at last the issue. The death of Christ giveth us the best discovery of ourselves; in what condition we were, so that nothing could help us but that; and the most clear discovery of the dreadful nature of our sins. For if sin be such a dreadful thing as to wring the heart of the Son of God, how shall a poor wretched sinner be able to bear it? OF AFFLICTION. Nothing can render affliction so heavy as the load of sin; would you therefore be fitted for afflictions, be sure to get the burden of your SINS laid aside, and then what afflictions soever you meet with will be very easy to you. If thou canst hear and bear the rod of affliction which God shall lay upon thee, remember this lesson, thou art BEATEN that thou mayst be better. The Lord useth his FLAIL of tribulation to separate the chaff from the wheat. The school of the cross is the school of light; it discovers the world's vanity, baseness, and wickedness, and lets us see more of God's mind. Out of dark affliction comes a spiritual light. In times of affliction we commonly meet with the sweetest experiences of the love of God. Did we heartily renounce the pleasures of this world, we should be very little troubled for our afflictions; that which renders an afflicted state so insupportable to many, is because they are too much addicted to the pleasures of this life; and so cannot endure that which makes a separation between them. OF REPENTANCE AND COMING TO CHRIST. The end of affliction is the discovery of sin; and of THAT to bring us to the Saviour; let us therefore, with the prodigal, return unto him, and we shall find ease and rest. A returning penitent, though formerly bad as the worst of men, may by grace become as good as the best. To be truly sensible of sin, is to sorrow for DISPLEASEING of God: to be afflicted, that he is displeased BY US more than that he is displeased WITH us. Your intentions to repentance, and the neglect of that soul-saving duty, will rise up in judgment against you. Repentance carries with it a DIVINE RHETORIC, and persuades Christ to forgive multitudes of sins committed against him. Say not to thyself, to-morrow I will repent; for it is thy duty to do it daily. The gospel of grace and salvation is above all doctrine the most dangerous, if it be received in WORD only by graceless men; if it be not attended with a sensible need of a Saviour, and bring them to him; for such men only as have the NOTION of it, are of all men most miserable; for by reason of their knowing more than heathens, this shall only be their final portion, that they shall have greater stripes. OF PRAYER. Before you enter into prayer, ask thy soul these questions, 1. To what END, O my soul! art thou retired into this place? Art thou come to converse with the Lord in prayer? Is he present, will he hear thee? Is he merciful,

will he help thee? Is thy business slight, is it not concerning the welfare of thy soul? What words wilt thou use to move him to compassion? To make thy preparation complete, consider that thou art but DUST and ASHES; and he the great God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, THAT CLOTHES HIMSELF WITH LIGHT AS WITH A GARMENT; that thou art a vile sinner, and he a holy God; that thou art but a poor crawling worm, and he the omnipotent Creator. In all your prayers, forget not to thank the Lord for his mercies. When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without WORDS than thy words without HEART. Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer. The spirit of prayer is more precious than thousands of gold and silver. Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan. OF THE LORD'S-DAYS, SERMONS, AND WEEK-DAYS. Have a special care to sanctify the Lord's-day; for as thou keepest it, so will it be with thee all the week long. Make the Lord's-day the MARKET for thy soul; let the whole day be spent in prayer, repetitions, or meditations; lay aside the affairs of the other parts of the week; let the sermon thou hast heard be converted into PRAYER: shall God allow thee six days, and wilt thou not afford him one? In the church, be careful to serve God; for thou art in his eyes, and not in man's. Thou mayst hear sermons often, and do well in practising what thou hearest; but thou must not expect to be told in a pulpit all that thou oughtest to do, but be studious in reading the Scriptures, and other good books; what thou hearest may be forgotten, but what thou readest may better be retained. Forsake not the public worship of God, lest God forsake thee; not only in public, but in private. On the week-day, when thou risest in the morning, consider, 1. Thou must die; 2. Thou mayst die that minute; 3. What will become of thy soul. Pray often. At night consider, 1. What sins thou hast committed; 2. How often thou hast prayed; 3. What hath thy mind been bent upon; 4. What hath been thy dealing; 5. What thy conversation; 6. If thou callest to mind the errors of the day, sleep not without a confession to God, and a hope of pardon. Thus, every morning and evening make up thy account with Almighty God, and thy reckoning will be the less at last. OF THE LOVE OF THE WORLD. Nothing more hinders a soul from coming to Christ than a vain love of the WORLD; and till a soul is freed from it, it can never have a true love for God. What are the honours and riches of this world, when compared to the glories of a crown of life? Love not the world, for it is a moth in a Christian's life. To despise the world is the way to enjoy heaven; and blessed are they who delight to converse with God by prayer. What folly can be greater than to labour for the meat that perisheth, and neglect the food of eternal life? God or the world must be neglected at PARTING time, for then is the time of trial. To seek yourself in this life is to be lost; and to be humble is to be exalted. The epicure that delighteth in the dainties of this world, little thinketh that those very creatures will one day witness against him. ON SUFFERING. It is not every suffering that makes a man a martyr; but suffering for the Word of God after a right manner; that is, not only for RIGHTEOUSNESS, but for righteousness' sake; not only for TRUTH, but out of love to truth; not only for God's Word, but according to it: to wit, in that holy, humble, meek manner, as the Word of God requireth. It is a rare thing to suffer aright, and to have my spirit in suffering bent against God's enemy, sin. Sin in doctrine, sin in worship, sin in life, and sin in conversation. Neither the devil, nor men of the world, can kill thy righteousness, or love to it, but by thy own hand; or separate that and thee asunder, without thy own act. Nor will he that doth indeed suffer for the sake of it, or out of love he bears thereto, be tempted to EXCHANGE it for the good will of the whole world. I have often thought that the best of Christians are found in the worst times: and I have thought again, that one reason why we are not better is, because God purges us no more. Noah and Lot, who so HOLY as they in the time of their

afflictions! and yet, who so IDLE as they in the time of their prosperity? OF DEATH AND JUDGMENT. As the devil labours by all means to keep out other things that are good, so to keep out of the heart as much as in him lies, the thoughts of passing out of this life into another world; for he knows if he can but keep them from the serious thoughts of DEATH, he shall the more easily keep them in their sins. Nothing will make us more earnest in working out the work of our salvation than a frequent meditation of mortality; nothing hath a greater influence for the taking off our hearts from vanities, and for the begetting in us desires for holiness. O! sinner, what a condition wilt thou fall into when thou departest the world; if thou depart unconverted, thou hadst better have been SMOTHERED the first hour thou wast born; thou hadst better have been plucked one limb from the other; thou hadst better have been made a dog, a toad, a serpent, than to die unconverted; and this thou wilt find true if thou repent not. A man would be counted a fool to slight a judge before whom he is to have a trial of his whole estate. The trial we are to have before God is of OTHERWISE importance; it concerns our eternal happiness or misery, and yet dare we affront him. The only way for us to escape that terrible judgment is to be often passing a sentence of condemnation upon ourselves here. When the sound of the trumpet shall be heard, which shall summon the dead to appear before the tribunal of God, the righteous shall hasten out of their graves with joy to meet their Redeemer in the clouds; others shall call to the mountains and hills to fall upon them, to cover them from the sight of their judge; let us, therefore, in time be POSING ourselves which of the TWO we shall be. OF THE JOYS OF HEAVEN. There is no good in this life but what is mingled with some evil: honours perplex, riches disquiet, and pleasures ruin health. But in heaven we shall find blessings in their purity, without any ingredient to imbitter; with everything to sweeten it. O! who is able to conceive the inexpressible, inconceivable joys that are there! None but they who have tasted of them. Lord, help us to put such a value upon them here, that in order to prepare ourselves for them, we may be willing to forego the loss of all those deluding pleasures here. How will the heavens echo for joy, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall come to dwell with her husband for ever! Christ is the desire of nations, the joy of angels, the delight of the Father; what solace then must the soul be filled with, that hath the possession of him to all eternity! O! what acclamations of joy will there be, when all the children of God shall meet together, without fear of being disturbed by the anti-Christian and Cainish brood. Is there not a time coming when the godly may ask the wicked, what profit they have in their pleasure? what comfort in their greatness? and what fruit in all their labour? If you would be better satisfied what the beatifical vision means, my request is, that you would live HOLILY and go and see. OF THE TORMENTS OF HELL. Heaven and salvation is not surely MORE promised to the godly, than hell and damnation is threatened to, and shall be executed on, the wicked. Oh! who knows the power of God's wrath? None but damned ones. Sinners' company are the devil and his angels, tormented in everlasting fire with a curse. Hell would be a kind of paradise, if it were no worse than the WORST of this world. As different as grief is from joy, as torment from rest, as terror from peace; so different is the state of sinners from that of SAINTS in the world to come.

Chapter 5

Endo of The Project Gutenberg Etext of Miscellaneous Pieces, by John Bunyan

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net