

PURITAN DEVOTIONALS

by Puritans

A collection of 200 daily devotional meditations from Puritan authors addressing themes of God's greatness, Christ's love, the Holy Spirit, and various aspects of Christian living drawn from the rich heritage of Puritan spirituality.

201 Chapters

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Puritan Devotionals

001 The Golden Key, The Golden Thread

The Golden Key, The Golden Thread by Octavius Winslow Jesus is the one great theme both of the Old Testament and the New. The whole Bible is designed to testify of Christ. The scriptures point to me, John 5, verse 39.

In Christ the Messiah, in Jesus the Savior, in the Son of God the Redeemer, all the truths of the Bible center. To Him all the types and shadows point. Of Him all the prophecies give witness.

All the glory of the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, culminates at the cross of Christ. The Bible would be an inexplicable mystery apart from Christ, who unfolds and explains it all. He is the Golden Key, which unlocks the divine treasury of scriptural revelation.

Until He is seen, the Bible is, in a sense, a great mystery. But when He is found, it is a glorious revelation. Every mystery is opened.

Every enigma explained. Every discrepancy harmonized. And every truth and page, sentence and word, quickened with a life and glowing with a light flowing down from the throne of the Eternal God.

Christ is the substance of the Gospel. All its divine doctrines, all its holy precepts, all its gracious instructions, all its precious promises, all its glorious hopes, meet, center, and fill up their entire compass in Jesus. He is the Alpha and the Omega of the Bible.

From the first verse in Genesis to the last verse in Revelation. Oh, study the scriptures of truth with a view of learning Christ. Do not study the Bible as a mere history.

Do not read it as a mere poem. Do not search it as a book of science. It is all that, but infinitely more.

The Bible is the book of Jesus. It is a revelation of Christ. Christ is the golden thread which runs through the hole.

Blessed Lord Jesus, I will read and study and dig into the scriptures to find and learn more of you. You, Emmanuel, are the fragrance of this divine box of precious ointment. You are the beautiful gem sparkling in this divine cabinet.

You are the tree of life planted in the center of this divine garden. You are the ocean whose stream quickens and nourishes all who draw water out of this divine well of salvation. The Bible is all about you.

002 Contemplating God's Greatness

Contemplating God's Greatness by Charles Spurgeon Lift up your eyes, behold the heavens, the work of God's fingers. Behold the sun guided in his daily march. Go forth at midnight, and behold the heavens.

Consider the stars and the moon. Look upon these works of God's hands. And if you are men of sense, and your souls are attuned to the high music of the spheres, you will say, what is man that you are mindful of him? My God, when I survey the boundless fields of ether, and see those ponderous orbs rolling therein, when I consider how vast are your dominions, so wide that an angel's wing might flap to all eternity and never reach a boundary, I marvel that you should look on insects so obscure as man.

I am so little that I shrink into nothingness when I behold the almightiness of Jehovah. So little that the difference between the molecule and man dwindles into nothing when compared with the infinite chasm between God and man. Let your mind rove upon the great doctrines of the Godhead.

Consider the existence of God from before the foundations of the world. Behold him who is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty. Let your soul comprehend as much as it can of the infinite, and grasp as much as possible of the eternal.

And I am sure if you have minds at all, they will shrink with awe. The tall archangel bows himself before his master's throne, and we shall cast ourselves into the lowest dust when we feel what base nothings, what insignificant specks we are, when compared with our all-adorable Creator. Labor, O soul, to know your nothingness, and learn it by contemplating God's greatness.

003 He Has Done All Things Well

He has done all things well, by Octavius Winslow. He has done all things well, Mark 7, verse 37. Yes, from first to last, from our cradle to our grave, from the earliest pang of sin's conviction to the last thrill of sin's forgiveness, from earth to heaven, this will be our testimony in all the way the Lord our God has led us in the wilderness.

He has done all things well. In providence and in grace, in every truth of His Word, in every lesson of His love, in every stroke of His rod, in every sunbeam that has shone, in every cloud that has shaded, in every element that has sweetened, in every ingredient that has embittered, in all that has been mysterious, inscrutable, painful, and humiliating, in all that He gave, in all that He took away, this testimony is His just due, and this our grateful acknowledgment through time and through eternity. He has done all things well.

Has He converted us through grace by a way we had thought the most improbable? Has He torn up all our earthly hopes by the roots? Has He thwarted our schemes, frustrated our plans, disappointed our expectations? Has He taught us in schools most trying, by a discipline most severe and lessons most humbling to our nature? Has He withered our strength by sickness, reduced us to poverty by loss, crushed our heart by bereavement? And have we been tempted to exclaim, All these things are against me. Ah, no! Faith will yet obtain the ascendancy, and sweetly sing, I know in all things that befell, My Jesus has done all things well. Beloved, it must be so, for Jesus can do nothing wrong.

Study the way of His providence and grace with the microscopic eye of faith. View them in every light, examine them in their minutest detail, as you would the petal of a flower or the wing of an insect. And oh, what wonders, what beauty, what marvelous adaptation would you observe in all the varied dealings with you of your glorious Lord.

004 The Infinite Ocean of Christ's Love

The Infinite Ocean of Christ's Love By Octavius Winslow The mind has often been sensible of a feeling of awe as we have stood upon the shore and gazed upon the vast expanse of the ocean. With a similar, yet far transcending emotion, we approach the infinite ocean of Christ's love. Like the eternity of God, we cannot fathom where His love begins or where it terminates.

There is no other solution to the marvelous mysteries of His incarnation and sacrificial death but this, Christ has loved us. Love originated all, explains all, illustrates all. Love is the interpreter of every divine mystery.

There is not a circumstance of our Lord's history which is not another form or manifestation of love. His incarnation is love stooping. His sympathy is love weeping.

His compassion is love supporting. His grace is love acting. His teaching is the voice of love.

His silence is the repose of love. His patience is the restraint of love. His obedience is the labor of love.

His suffering is the travail of love. His cross is the altar of love. His death is the burnt offering of love.

His resurrection is the triumph of love. His ascension into heaven is the enthronement of love. His intercession in heaven is the prayer of love.

Such is the deep, the vast, the boundless ocean of Christ's love. The soul muses in silent awe as it gazes upon this fathomless, limitless sea. Nothing short of a divine love could or would have borne our sins and the punishment of our sins.

The weight of the one and the terribleness of the other would have crushed and annihilated a mere created affection. There existed no love but the love of Jesus which was equal to the work of salvation. Who was willing, who was able to bear that heavy load, to endure that overwhelming curse but Jesus? Oh, think, beloved reader, what the love of Christ has done and suffered for you, the burden it bore, the sorrow it felt, the humiliation it underwent, the insults, the ignominy, the privation through which it prevailed, its groans, its sighs, its tears, its darkness, how inconceivably it agonized, how freely it bled, how voluntarily it died, the sins it has pardoned, the guilt it has cleansed, the declensions it has restored, the backslidings it has healed, the sorrows it has soothed, the patience it has exercised, the gentleness it has exhibited, and then ask, could any other but the love of Jesus have done all this and endured all this? Such is the love of Christ.

To have saved us upon such terms, a stoop so low, a humiliation so profound, a labor so immense, mental anguish so acute, bodily suffering so agonizing, a death so ignominious, was there ever a love like this? Was it ever equaled? Where shall we find its parallel? Love less divine, less strong, less gentle, could never have won your heart, uprooted your enmity, torn you from your idols, enthroning Christ, all of Christ, Christ only, Christ supremely, Christ forever. The love of

Christ will be the wonder, the study, and the song of all pure, holy creatures through eternity. Beloved, nothing shall take the love of Christ from you or separate you from it.

It does not ebb with the ebbing of your feelings. It does not chill with the chill of your affections. It does not change with the changing scenes and circumstances of your life.

The love of Christ has depths we cannot sound, heights we cannot explore, an infinite fullness and freeness tidying over all the sins, infirmities and sorrows of its blessed and favored objects. Seek to know this love of Christ, though it is so vast that it passes knowledge. Infinite though it is, you may experience its reality, taste its sweetness, and be influenced by its all-commanding, all-constraining power.

Do not limit your heart experience of Christ's love, for it is infinite in its nature and boundless in its extent. As yet, how many of us stand upon the shore of this ocean? How little do we know, experimentally, of the love of Christ in our souls. Bring your heart with its profoundest emptiness, its most startling discovery of sin, its lowest frame, its deepest sorrow, and sink it into the depths of the Savior's love.

That infinite sea will flow over all, erase all, absorb all, and your soul shall swim and sport amid its gentle waves, exclaiming in your joy and transport, Oh, the depths! May the Lord direct your heart into the love of God, just as it is hard, cold, fickle, sinful, sad, and sorrowful. Christ's love touching your hard heart will dissolve it. Christ's love touching your cold heart will warm it.

Christ's love touching your sinful heart will purify it. Christ's love touching your sorrowful heart will soothe it. Christ's love touching your wandering heart will draw it back to Himself.

Only bring your heart to Christ's love. Believe that He loves you, and just as love begets love, so the simple belief in the love of Jesus will inspire you with a reflective, responsive affection, and your soul, like the flower, will burst from its captivity and bloom, and soaring in life, liberty, and beauty, will float in the sunbeams of God's full, free, and eternal love, and, in a little while, will find itself in heaven, where all is love. Blessed Jesus, your love, like your agonies, is an unknown and unfathomable depth.

It surpasses knowledge. Let it rise and expand before me, until it fills the entire scope of my soul's vision, occupies every niche of my heart, and bears me onward by its all-commanding, all-constraining influence in the path of a holy, loving obedience and surrender.

005 The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit by David Harsha. The Spirit is given to supply the Savior's absence and to apply to our souls the redemption finished on Calvary. It is His blessed work to glorify Jesus, to testify of Him.

Through His power we are renewed and sanctified, filled with all joy and peace in believing and abound in hope of a blissful immortality. The Spirit reveals the Savior to our souls in a manner that renders Him exceedingly precious in our estimation. He shows us His excellence, the perfection of His divine nature as the brightness of the Father's glory, His power as the creator of all things, His wisdom, His immutability, His eternity.

The Spirit exhibits to us the amazing love of Jesus to sinners, the wonders of His incarnation, the amiableness of His life on earth, the spotless purity of His character, the unparalleled sufferings of His life, the fruits of His death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession. The Spirit shows us Christ's suitableness to our needs as sinners. He points us to Calvary and whispers in our ears the cheering truth that we have redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins.

The Spirit comforts us amid all the tribulations of earth by assuring us that our trials are but light and momentary, by perfecting His strength in our weakness, by bringing to our remembrance that many precious words of the Lord Jesus, by communicating to us the things of God, by lifting our hearts above the world, and by pointing us to a home of rest and glory beyond the skies where tribulation and anguish and death never come. Yes, by His divine power thus operating on our minds, He enables us to look far beyond the present. He directs faith's far-reaching eye to our Father's house and the fountains of immortal life flowing through those sweet fields beyond the swelling flood, the site of which makes us long to be there, that we may see Jesus as He is and taste His goodness on the shores of the promised land.

006 All Enameled and Interwoven

All Enameled and Interwoven with Free Grace by Thomas Watson Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were influential.

Not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before Him. 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 26 through 29 Without this effectual call there is no going to heaven. This effectual call is a gracious call.

It is the fruit and product of free grace. That God should call some and not others. That some should be taken and others left.

That one should be called who is of a more wicked disposition while another of a sweeter temper is rejected. Here is free grace. That the poor should be rich in faith, heirs of a kingdom.

James chapter 2 verse 5 And the nobles and great ones of the world for the most part rejected. This is free and rich grace. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight.

Matthew chapter 11 verse 26 That under the same sermon one should be effectually wrought upon while another is no more moved than a dead man with the sound of music. That one should hear the Spirit's voice in the word while another does not hear it. That one should be softened and moistened with the influence of heaven while another, like Gideon's dry fleece, has no dew upon him.

Behold here distinguishing sovereign grace. What is the cause of this but the free grace of God? It is all enameled and interwoven with free grace. Those who are monuments of God's mercies will be trumpets of His praise so that no one may boast before Him.

1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 29

007 Altogether Lovely

Altogether Lovely, by James Michael. Yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.

Song of Solomon, chapter 5, verse 16. Why does the world reject the savior of the world? Why do they abhor him who is altogether lovely, and hate him who is the best friend of mankind? O men of the world, what good can you desire which is not in Christ? The excellencies of earth are but his footstool, the excellencies in heaven are but his throne. How excellent, then, must he himself be! His treasures are infinite and open for you.

In Jesus are riches, if you are poor. In Jesus is honor, if you are despised. In Jesus is friendship, if you are forsaken.

In Jesus is help, if you are injured. In Jesus is mercy, if you are miserable. In Jesus is joy, if you are disconsolate.

In Jesus is protection, if you are in danger. In Jesus is deliverance, if you are a captive. In Jesus is a life, if you are a mortal.

In Jesus are all things, if you have nothing at all. Time and eternity are his. He can give you all the glorious things of eternity.

Moreover, he can deliver you from all your fears, from sin, the worst of all evils, from self, the most hurtful of all companions, from death, the most dreadful of all changes, from Satan, the most subtle of all enemies, from hell, the most horrible of all prisons, and from wrath, the most horrifying doom of all sinners. Now, where will you find such a one as Jesus? Why, then, refuse life and seek after death? All heaven is enamored with his beauty. The longer we look on created gaities, the leaner and less lovely they grow, so that, by the time we have viewed them forty, fifty, or sixty years, we see nothing but vanity in the creature.

But when ten thousand angels are employed in beholding the perfection and beauty of Jesus, he still appears more and more lovely, even altogether lovely. Alas, I can say nothing of his true excellencies. They overwhelm my laboring thought and are too vast for my feeble conception to bring forth.

008 All Is Transparent

All is Transparent and Harmonious to His Eye by Octavius Winslow We live in a world of mysteries. They meet our eye, awaken our inquiry, and baffle our investigation at every step. Nature is a vast arcade of mysteries.

Science is a mystery. Truth is a mystery. Religion is a mystery.

Our existence is a mystery. The future of our being is a mystery. And God, who alone can explain all mysteries, is the greatest mystery of all.

How little do we understand of the inexplicable wonders of a wonder-working God, whose thoughts are a great deep and whose ways are past finding out. But to God, nothing is mysterious. In His purpose, nothing is unfixed.

In His forethought, nothing is unknown. In His providence, nothing is contingent. His glance pierces the future as vividly as it beholds the past.

He knows the end from the beginning. All His doings are parts of a divine, eternal, and harmonious plan. He may make darkness His secret place, His pavilion round about Him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.

And to human vision, His dispensations may appear gloomy, conflicting, and confused. Yet He is working all things after the counsel of His own will. And all is transparent and harmonious to His eye.

009 Strewing Flowers on a Dead Corpse

Strewing Flowers on a Dead Corpse By Thomas Watson Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Matthew chapter 5, verse 8 External morality is not heart purity. A person may be clothed with great moral virtues, such as justice, charity, prudence, and temperance, yet go to hell.

We must not rest in mere outward morality. A swine may be washed, yet be a swine still. Morality does not wash a man.

Grace changes him. Morality may shine in the eyes of the world, but it differs as much from purity as a pebble differs from a diamond. Morality is but strewing flowers on a dead corpse.

A man who is but highly moral is but a tame devil. How many have made morality their savior? Morality will dam, as well as vice. A boat may be sunk with gold, as well as with dung.

The moral person, though he will not commit gross sins, yet he is not sensible of heart sins. He is not troubled for unbelief, hardness of heart, vanity of thoughts. He abhors gross sins, not gospel sins.

The snake has a fine appearance, but has a deadly sting. Just so, the moral man is fair to look on, but has a secret antipathy against the holy ways of God. Morality is not to be rested in.

The heart must be pure. God would have Aaron wash the inner parts of the sacrifice. Leviticus chapter 9 verse 14.

Morality does but wash the outside. The inside must be washed. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Matthew chapter 5 verse 8.

010 He Beholds the Idol in its Nature

He Beholds the Idol in Its Natural Deformity by Thomas Reed The converted sinner daily feeds upon Christ by faith, and daily derives strength from this gracious source of blessedness. He feels his own weakness and experiences the power of Jesus. He loathes himself and truly loves his Savior, in whose righteousness he appears all lovely in the eyes of his Heavenly Father.

As a pilgrim, he journeys onwards under the guidance of that Holy Spirit who dwells in him as in a temple, and who has promised to keep him by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. The world fascinates no longer. The mask falls from its face, and he beholds the idol in its natural deformity.

He sees the emptiness of human applause, the madness of ambition, the deceitfulness of riches, the folly of extravagance. Everything beneath the sun assumes its true character while he views it through the medium of God's Holy Word. The converted sinner lives by faith.

He longs for heaven. He desires to be daily conformed to Jesus and to glorify Him more, whether it be by life or death. To him, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Such is the character of the converted sinner. Oh, how precious, how divine, how rare a character!

011 The Knock

The Knock by Charles Spurgeon With unfailing love have I drawn you to myself. Jeremiah chapter 31 verse 3 The master came one night to the door, and knocked with the iron hand of the law. The door shook and trembled upon its hinges.

But the man piled every piece of furniture which he could find against the door, for he said, I will not admit that man. The master turned away, but by and by he came back, and with his own soft hand, using most of that part where the nail had penetrated, he knocked again, oh, so softly and tenderly. This time the door did not shake, but, strange to say, it opened, and there upon his knees the once unwilling host was found rejoicing to receive his guest.

Come in, come in, you have so knocked that my affections are moved for you. I could not think of your pierced hand leaving its blood mark on my door. I yield, I yield, your love has won my heart.

So in every case, the love of Christ wins the day. What Moses with the tablets of stone could never do, Christ does with his pierced hand. Such is the doctrine of effectual calling.

Do I understand it experimentally? With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself. Jeremiah chapter 31 verse 3

012 The More Vile Christ Made Himself

The More Vile Christ Made Himself for Us by Thomas Brooks Let the thoughts of a crucified Christ be never out of your mind. Let them be food and drink unto you. Let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation.

Ah, remember this, his wounds were deep, his burden weighty, his cup bitter, his suffering painful, his agony and torment above conception, beyond expression. That blessed head of his was crowned with thorns. Those eyes of his which were purer than the sun were put out by the darkness of death.

Those ears of his which now hear nothing but hallelujahs were filled with the blasphemies of the multitude. That blessed beautiful face of his which was fairer than the sons of men was spit on by beastly, filthy wretches. That gracious mouth and tongue which spoke as never any man spoke was slandered and accused of blasphemy.

Those hands of his which healed the sick, which gave out pardons, which swayed a scepter in heaven, were nailed to the cross. Those feet which were brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation into the world were also nailed to the cross. All these great and sad things did Jesus Christ suffer for his people.

Oh, the more vile Christ made himself for us, the more dear he ought to be unto us.

013 Stuffed Christians

Stuffed Christians by Charles Spurgeon We are all Christians. Why, we belong to a Christian nation. Are we not born Christians? Surely we must be alright.

We have always attended our parish church. Is not that enough? Our parents were always godly. We were born into the church, were we not? Did they not take us up in their arms when we were little and make us members of Christ? What more do we lack? This is the common talk.

There is no Christian practice, there is no Christian habit, but what has been or will be before long, imitated by people who have no vital godliness, whatever. A man may appear much like a Christian and yet possess no vital godliness. Walk through the British Museum and you will see all the orders of animals standing in their various places and exhibiting themselves with the utmost possible propriety.

Every creature, whether bird, beast or fish, remains in the particular glass case allotted to it. But you all know well enough that these are not the living creatures, but only the outward forms of them. Yet in what do they differ? Certainly in nothing which you could readily see, for the well-stuffed animal is precisely like what the living animal would have been.

Yet you know well enough that there is a secret inward something lacking, which, when it has once departed, you cannot restore. So in the churches of Christ, many professors are not living believers, but stuffed believers, stuffed Christians. There is all the external of religion, everything that you could desire, and they behave with a great deal of propriety too.

They all keep their places and there is no outward difference between them and the living, except upon that vital point, they lack spiritual life. This is the essential distinction, spiritual life is absent. It is almost painful to watch little children when some little pet of theirs has died, how they can hardly realize the difference between death and life.

Your little boy's bird moped for a while upon its perch and at last dropped down in the cage. You remember how the little boy tried to set it up and gave it seed and filled its glass with water and was quite surprised to think that birdie would not open his little eye upon his friend as it did before and would not take its seed nor drink its water. Ah, you finally had to tell the poor boy that a mysterious something had gone from his little birdie and would not come back again.

There is just such a spiritual difference between the mere professor and the genuine Christian. There is an invisible but most real indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the absence or the presence of which makes all the difference between the lost sinner and the saint.

014 Poor Miserable Paltry Works

Poor, Miserable, Paltry Works of a Polluted Worm by J.C. Philpott We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves we wither and fall, and our sins, like the wind, sweep us away.

Isaiah chapter 64, verse 6 We once thought that we could gain heaven by our own righteousness. We strictly attended to our religious duties, and sought by these and various other means to recommend ourselves to the favor of God and induce Him to reward us with heaven for our sincere attempts to obey His commandments. And by these religious performances, we thought we could surely be able to make a ladder whereby we could climb up to heaven.

This was our Tower of Babel, whose top was to reach unto heaven, and by mounting which we thought to scale the stars. But the same Lord who stopped the further building of the Tower of Babel by confounding their speech and scattering them abroad on the face of the earth, began to confound our speech so that we could not pray, or talk, or boast as before, and to scatter all our religion like the chaff of the threshing floor. Our mouths were stopped, we became guilty before God, and our bricks and mortar became a pile of confusion.

When then the Lord was pleased to reveal to our souls by faith His being, majesty, greatness, holiness, and purity, and thus gave us a corresponding sense of our filthiness and folly, then all our creature religion and natural piety, which we once counted as gain, we began to see was but loss. We then saw that our very religious duties, so far from being for us, were actually against us. And instead of pleading for us before God as so many deeds of righteousness, were so polluted and defiled by sin perpetually mixed with them, that our very prayers were enough to sink us into hell had we no other iniquities to answer for in heart, lip, or life.

But when we had a view by faith of the person, work, love, and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, then we began more plainly and clearly to see with what religious toys we had been so long amusing ourselves and what is far worse, mocking God by them. We had been secretly despising Jesus and His sufferings, Jesus and His death, Jesus and His righteousness, and setting up the poor, miserable, paltry works of a polluted worm in the place of the finished work of the Son of God.

015 A Continual Supply of Grace

A Continual Supply of Grace, Comfort, and Strength by William Mason I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians chapter 2, verse 20 That the believer may live cheerfully and comfortably, he is exhorted to the free and constant use of Christ. O consider, Christ is given to us, to be enjoyed by us.

He is the bread of life, we are to feed upon him daily. He is the water of life, which our souls are to drink of constantly. He is our righteousness, we are to put him on continually.

So then, we not only have a precious Christ, but we are also to use him and enjoy his preciousness. He is not only a well of salvation, but we must draw water out of it with joy and drink of it to the refreshing of our souls. Deeply consider that without this inward enjoyment of Christ, you cannot be happy in your soul, comfortable in your walk, nor holy in your life.

We must live by faith upon Christ, so as to derive a continual supply of grace, comfort, and strength from him. I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2 verse 20

016 A Grey Head and a Carnal Worldly

A Gray Head and a Carnal Worldly Heart by James Michael Hitherto I have looked upon myself as young and coming to the prime of my life, but henceforth I shall consider myself as in my declining years. I am certain how long I have lived in the world, but quite uncertain how soon I must leave the world, and therefore I should be preparing for my final departure, and daily be ripening for the regions of bliss. A young man and a holy life, one in his prime and all his graces flourishing, is lovely to behold.

But a Gray Head and a Carnal Worldly Heart is a wounding sight. Henceforth be gone bewitching vanities, and all the enchantments of the world. The last years of my life are not to be trifled away with you.

Death attends me. The grave awaits me. Eternity is at hand.

017 A Glance Into Heavenly Bliss

A Glance Into Heavenly Bliss by James Michael O Eternity! All at once I find myself in an unbounded flood of bliss, a spacious sea of glory, lost in wonder amidst ineffable delights, and transported with the raptures of seraphic harmony. While all His saints rejoice in His excellent glory, what ardor glows in every soul, what rapture swells in every song! O, the adorable displays of His perfections, the manifestations of His goodness, the outlettings of His love! Here we received out of His fullness grace upon grace and glory upon glory. Our possession is worthy of our liberal giver.

We have a kingdom which cannot be moved, an undefiled inheritance which does not fade away, a city with foundations whose builder and maker is God, garments of glory, a crown of righteousness and eternal life, the tree of life to feed upon, the fountain of life to drink of, the garden of God to walk in, life above the reach of death, health secured from sickness, pleasure without pain. Our bodies are immortal, our souls immaculate, our senses sanctified, our conceptions spiritualized, our faculties enlarged, and our whole soul replenished by divinity. Our past bliss is with us in the sweet remembrance, our present bliss entrances in the enjoyment, and our future bliss is present with us in the full assurance of our eternal felicity.

Thus we are forever blessed to the highest degree. We are above all fear, beyond anxiety and doubt, and fixed above all change. Our service is sincere, our adorations ardent, our knowledge profound and satisfying.

Rapture rushes in at every part. Our eyes are ravished with seeing the King in His beauty, our ears with hearing the songs of the inner temple, our nose with the fragrance of the rose of Sharon, the plant of renown, our feet with standing in His holy place, our hands with handling of the word of life, our mouth with the wine of our beloved, which goes down sweetly, causing our souls to shout aloud, and the lips to sing and never cease. Our experience of His fullness, our vision of His perfections and glory, constitute our most exalted bliss, and are the heaven of heavens.

Oh, what torrents of eternal love teem from the throne into our souls! Oh, the pleasure that is in His presence! Oh, the exuberant rivers of joy that flow at His right hand! Oh, love never to be forgotten, which has brought me safely through so many winding labyrinths and crooked paths, in sight of so many enemies, in spite of a tempting devil, the accusations of my sins, the rebellion of my lusts, the carnality of my affections and the weakness of all my graces, to dwell at last forever in heavenly bliss. Oh, eternity, once the comfort of our longing expectations, now the transport of our enlarged souls. For we are ever with the Lord, seeing His unclouded face, wearing His divine name, drinking at the streams of His pleasures, eating of His hidden manna, sitting beneath the tree of life, basking under the beams of the sun of righteousness, singing hallelujahs to Him who loved us, who washed us from our sins in His blood and brought us here to be with Him forever.

Oh, state of complete happiness and consummate bliss!

018 Perpetual Fuel To the Flames

Perpetual Fuel to the Flames of Hell by Thomas Brooks Our earthly fire destroys and consumes whatever is cast into it. It turns all combustibles into ashes. But the fire of hell is not of that nature.

The fire of hell consumes nothing which is cast into it. It rages, but it does not consume or destroy either bodies or souls. Men will seek death, but will not find it.

They will long to die, but death will elude them. Revelation chapter 9 verse 6. They shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. They shall cry to the mountains to fall upon them and to crush them to nothing.

They shall desire that the fire which burns them would consume them to nothing. The worm which feeds on them would gnaw them to nothing. The devils which torment them would tear them to nothing.

They shall cry to God, who first made them out of nothing, to reduce them to that first nothing from whence they came. But their Maker has no compassion on them, and their Creator shows them no favor. Isaiah chapter 27 verse 11.

They shall always be burned, but never consumed. Ah, how well would it be with the damned if in the fire of hell they might be consumed to ashes! But this is their misery. They shall be ever dying, and yet never die.

Their bodies shall be always a-burning, but never a-consuming. It is dreadful to be perpetual fuel to the flames of hell. What misery can compare to this? For infernal fire to be still a-preying upon damned sinners, and yet never making an end of them.

The fierce and furious flames of hell shall burn, but never annihilate the bodies of the damned. In hell there is no cessation of fire-burning, nor of matter burned. Neither flames nor smoke shall consume or choke the impenitent.

Both the infernal fire and the burning of the bodies of reprobates in that fire shall be preserved by the miraculous power of God, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 10. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 9.

019 A Poor, Weak, and Trembling Creation

A Poor, Weak, and Trembling Creature by John Angel James He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. Isaiah chapter 40 verse 11 Dwell upon the love and tenderness of our Lord Jesus.

Notice who are the objects of his care? The lambs, which means not only those of tender age, but also those who have been newly converted, those who are young in Christian experience, and also those whose temperament is naturally timid, whose strength is feeble, and whose danger is great. Yes, you are the objects of Christ's special attention, care, and solicitude. You are those whom he takes up in the arms of his power and lays on the bosom of his love.

He knows your weakness, your timidity, your dangers. He will exert for you his tenderest sympathy, his greatest vigilance, his mightiest power. This expression, however, not only conveys the idea of great care of the weak, but the exercise of that care with a view to their preservation and growth.

It means not only that he cordially receives them, will provide for their safety, to be concerned for their comfort, and will accommodate his conduct to their needs, but he will also nourish them through their infant existence and raise them up to maturity and strength. Let every lamb of the flock of Christ therefore go to him by faith and prayer and say, Blessed Jesus, I come to you as a poor, weak, and trembling creature, doubtful of my own continuance, and alarmed at my numerous difficulties and enemies. I am but a lamb, and often fear I shall never be anything better.

But was it not in regard to such weakness that you have been pleased to utter these gracious and tender words? I flee to you as the helpless lamb to its shepherd, when hungry to feed it, or when pursued by wild beasts that he may defend it. Lord, take me in the arms of your power and lay me on the bosom of your love, though I am so poor and helpless a creature. I will hope in your nurturing power and love that I shall continue to grow and that you will one day rejoice in me as one of the flock which you have purchased with your own blood.

020 Made For Frivolities

Made for Frivolities by Charles Spurgeon Were you made only to be a machine for digging holes, laying bricks, or cutting out pieces of wood? Were you created only to stand at a counter and measure or weigh out goods? Do you think your God has made you for that and that only? Is this the chief end of man, to earn so many dollars a week and try to make ends meet? Is that all immortal men were made for? As a man with a soul capable of thought and judgment, and not a mere animal like a dog, nor a machine like a steam engine, can you stand up and look at yourself and say, I believe I am perfectly fulfilling my destiny. God has made man that he may glorify him, and whatever else man accomplishes, if he does not attain to this end, his life is a disastrous failure. Others are lovers of pleasure.

They are merry as the birds and their life is as the flight of a butterfly, which lightly floats from flower to flower according to its own sweet will. It cannot be that an immortal spirit was made for frivolities, spending all its time on the playthings of the world. So great a thing as an immortal soul could not have been made by God with no higher object than to spend itself upon trifles as light as air.

Oh, pause a while, you careless, godless one. There is something more than the fool's laugh. All things are not a comedy.

Death and heaven and hell are serious, and should not life be serious? The charms of music, the merriment of the gay assembly, the beauties of art, and the delights of banqueting, there must be something more for you than these, and something more will be required of you than that you should waste your precious time from morn to night upon nothing but to please yourself.

021 The Fool's Bauble

The Fool's Bauble, The Fool's Fiddle by Thomas Brooks The wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored among men. Psalm 12, verse 8. They love to indulge in evil pleasures. 2 Peter 2, verse 13.

Their souls delight in their abominations. Isaiah 66, verse 3. Proverbs 10, verse 23. A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct.

Evil conduct is the fool's bauble, the fool's fiddle. Fools take great delight and pleasure in doing evil. Sin and wickedness are a sport or recreation to a fool.

It is a great pleasure and merriment to a fool to do wickedness. Proverbs 14, verse 9. Fools make a mock of sin. They make a jeer of sin, which they should fear more than hell itself.

They make a sport of sin, which will prove a matter of damnation to them. They make a pastime, a game of sin, which will make them miserable for all eternity. They make a mock of sin on earth, for which the devil will mock and flout them forever in hell.

Justice will at last turn such fools over to Satan, who will be sure to return mock for mock, jeer for jeer, and flout for flout. Those who love such kind of pastime shall have enough of it in hell. All unbelievers are such fools, for they delight and take pleasure in sin, which is the most corrupting and dangerous thing in the world.

And so, all will be condemned who have not believed the truth, but have delighted in wickedness. 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 12. Well, sirs, sin is the poison of the soul, the nakedness of the soul, the disease of the soul, the burden of the soul.

And if God in mercy does not prevent it, sin will prove the eternal bane of the soul. Oh, then, how great is their folly, who delight in sin and who make a sport of it.

022 A Little Nook in the Very Heart

A Little Nook in the Very Heart of God by J.R. Miller God's plan for every marriage is happiness. Marriage is meant to be a miniature of heaven, a fragment of the celestial blessedness let down into this world. Marriage is meant to be a little sanctuary into which husband and wife may flee from Earth's storms and dangers, where in love's shelter, their hearts fed with affection's daily bread, they may dwell in quiet peace.

Marriage is meant to be a shelter in which, covered from the frosts of the world and shielded from its cold and tempests, two lives may grow together into richest beauty, realizing their sweetest dreams of happiness, blending in whatever things are true, whatever things are pure, and attaining the finest possibilities of godly character. Marriage is meant to be a holy ark, floating on the wild floods of human life, like Noah's ark on the deluge, bearing to heaven's gates, to the harbor of glory, the lives which God has shut within its doors. A godly marriage is a little nook in the very heart of God, where faithful souls are held close to the Father's heart and carried safely amid dangers and sorrows to the home above.

023 Christ's Garden

Christ's Garden by Charles Spurgeon I have come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. Song of Solomon chapter 5 verse 1. The heart of the believer is Christ's garden. He bought it with his precious blood, and he enters it and claims it as his own.

A garden implies separation. It is not the open common. It is not a wilderness.

It is walled around or hedged in. Would that we could see the wall of separation between the church and the world made broader and stronger. It makes one sad to hear Christians saying, well, there is no harm in this, there is no harm in that, thus getting as near to the world as possible.

Grace is at a low ebb in that soul, which can even raise the question of how far it may go in worldly conformity. A garden is a place of beauty. It far surpasses the wild, uncultivated lands.

The genuine Christian must seek to be more excellent in his life than the best moralist, because Christ's garden ought to produce the best flowers in all the world. Even the best is poor compared with Christ's deservings. Let us not put him off with withering and dwarf plants.

The rarest, richest, choicest lilies and roses ought to bloom in the place which Jesus calls his own. The garden is a place of growth. The saints are not to remain undeveloped, always mere buds and blossoms.

We should grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Growth should be rapid where Jesus is the gardener and the Holy Spirit is the dew from above. A garden is a place of retirement.

So the Lord Jesus Christ would have us reserve our souls as a place in which he can manifest himself as he does not unto the world. Oh that Christians were more retired, that they kept their hearts more closely shut up for Christ. We often worry and trouble ourselves like Martha with much serving so that we have not the room for Christ that Mary had and do not sit at his feet as we should.

May the Lord grant the sweet showers of his grace to water his garden this day.

024 A Lamb With a Wolf's Head

A LAMB WITH A WOLF'S HEAD by John Angel James Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Philippians chapter two, verse five. Christians should excel in the manifestation of Christ's character.

The mind which was in Jesus should be in them. They should consider His character as a model of their own, and be conspicuous for their poverty of spirit, meekness, gentleness, and love. It is a matter of surprise and regret that many people seem to think that Christianity has nothing to do with character, and that provided they are free from gross sins and have lively feelings and devotional exercises, they may be as petulant, irritable, and implacable as they please.

This is a dreadful error, and has done great mischief to the cause of God. A sour, ill-natured Christian is like a lamb with a wolf's head, or like a dove with a vulture's beak. If there be any one word which above all others should describe a Christian's character, it is that which represents his divine Father.

As it is said that God is love, so should it be also affirmed that a Christian is love, love embodied, an incarnation of love. His words, his conduct, his very looks should be so many expressions of love. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 32 through chapter 5, verse 2.

025 The Christian Pilgrim

The Christian Pilgrim by Thomas Reed The Christian pilgrim has to journey to the heavenly Canaan through the wilderness of this world. Therefore, like the Israelites of old, his soul is sometimes discouraged because of the difficulty of the way. The world frowns.

Satan assaults. Providences darken. Corruptions harass.

All these things produce, for a season, much discouragement. Like Peter, he looks at the raging waves instead of the omnipotent Savior, and then he begins to sink into despondency and would be overwhelmed in the depths of mental affliction did not the compassionate Jesus stretch out His hand of mercy and uphold him by His mighty power. Thus, to every humble pilgrim, strength is imparted.

Realizing views of the faithfulness of Emmanuel are granted, and he is made to rise superior to every discouragement, and to walk with increasing alacrity and joy along the narrow way which leads unto eternal life.

026 What, Lord, After All I Have Done

What, Lord, after all that I have done? By Octavius Winslow Only acknowledge your guilt, admit that you rebelled against the Lord your God and committed adultery against Him by worshipping idols under every green tree. Confess that you refuse to follow Me, I, the Lord, have spoken. Jeremiah chapter 3 verse 13 God has laid great stress in His word upon the confession of sin.

How touching is His language addressed to His backsliding people, whose backslidings were of a most aggravated character, than which none could have been of deeper guilt, seeing that they had committed the sin of idolatry. Only acknowledge your guilt. This was all He required at their hands.

Only acknowledge. Poor penitent soul, bending in tears and self-reproaches over this page, read these words again and again and yet again until they have scattered all your dark, repelling thoughts of this sin-forgiving God, winning you to His feet as His restored and comforted child. Only acknowledge your guilt.

What, Lord, after all that I have done? After my base returns, my repeated wanderings, my aggravated transgressions, my complicated iniquity, my sins against conviction, light, and love, do you still stretch out your hand to me, a poor, wretched wanderer as I am? Do you go forth to meet, to welcome, to pardon me? Do you watch for the first kindling of penitence, the first tear of contrition, the first word of confession? Father, I have sinned. Lord, I fall at your feet, the greatest of sinners. Your power has drawn me.

Your love has subdued me. Your grace has conquered me.

027 Keep Me Entirely To Yourself

Keep Me Entirely to Yourself by Thomas Reid O divine Redeemer, out of whose inexhaustible fullness I would daily draw a rich supply of grace into my needy soul, be pleased to impart unto me an undivided heart, that to please You may be my greatest happiness, and to promote Your glory my highest honor. Preserve me from false motives, from a double mind and a divided heart. Keep me entirely to Yourself, and enable me to crucify every lust which would tempt my heart from You.

Enable me by Your grace to walk in one uniform path of holy, childlike obedience. When tempted to turn aside to the right hand or to the left, may I keep steadily Your way, until when brought before Your throne, I shall see Your face, behold Your smile, and fall in ecstasy at Your feet, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

028 If God Left Us

If God Left Us by Thomas Watson The sins of the ungodly are looking-glasses in which we may see our own hearts. Do we see a heinous, impious wretch? Behold a picture of our own hearts. Such would we be if God left us.

What is in wicked men's practice is in our nature. Sin in the wicked is like fire which flames and blazes forth. Sin in the godly is like fire hidden in the embers.

Christian, though you do not break forth into a flame of scandalous sin, yet you have no cause to boast, for there is as much sin in the embers of your nature. You have the root of all sin in you and would bear as hellish fruit as an ungodly wretch if God did not either curb you by His power or change you by His grace. Why might not have God left you to the same excess of wickedness? Think with yourself, O Christian, why should God be more merciful to you than to another? Why should He snatch you as bran plucked out of the fire and not Him? How should this make you to adore free grace? What the Pharisees said boasting, we may say, thankfully, God, I thank You that I am not like other men, robbers, evildoers, adulterers, etc.

If we are not as wicked as others, we should adore the riches of free grace. Every time we see men hastening on in sin, we are to thank God that we are not such. If we see a crazy person, we thank God that it is not so with us.

When we see another infected with the plague, how thankful are we that God has preserved us from it. Much more when we see others under the power of Satan, how thankful we should be that this is no longer our condition. For we, too, were once foolish, disobedient, deceived captives of various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

Titus 3.

029 The Trojan Horse

The Trojan Horse, by Thomas Watson. Deliver us from evil, Matthew chapter 6, verse 13. In this petition, we pray to be delivered from the evil of our heart, that it may not entice us to sin.

The heart is the poisoned fountain from whence all actual sins flow. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. Mark chapter 7, verses 21 through 22.

The cause of all evil lies in a man's own bosom. All sin begins at the heart. Lust is first conceived in the heart, and then it is midwived into the world.

Whence comes rash anger? The heart sets the tongue on fire. The heart is the shop where all sin is contrived and hammered out. The heart is the greatest seducer.

Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. James chapter 1, verse 14. The devil could not hurt us if our own hearts did not give consent.

All that he can do is lay the bait, but it is our fault to swallow it. How needful, therefore, is this prayer. Deliver us from the evil of our hearts.

It was Augustine's prayer. Lord, deliver me from that evil man, myself. Beware of the bosom traitor, the flesh.

The heart of a man is the Trojan horse, out of which comes a whole army of lusts. Oh, let us pray to be delivered from the lusts and deceits of our own heart.

030 When They Are Twisted

When They Are Twisted Out Of My Hand, by James Michael Mankind is born for trouble as surely as sparks fly upward, Job 5, verse 7. Oh, what losses and crosses, sorrows and distresses, uncertainties and anxieties do mankind labor under? Godly wisdom will lead me to expect nothing but vanity and vexation here below. But oh, how happy is the soul that has all his treasure in heaven, all his happiness in God! May this be my case, and then shall I triumph in the midst of losses, distresses, disappointments and pain. I take a loose hold of all earthly things, that when they are twisted out of my hand, they may not torment my heart.

Eternal felicity secured is a noble panacea and a sufficient antidote against the heaviest misfortunes and disappointments of this deceitful world. I rest and am composed and calmly wait on God, resigned to His perfect determination in everything concerning me in time, until I arrive at that better country, at that perfect state where there is neither disappointment nor pain.

031 The Sweeter Morsel for the Worm

The Sweeter Morsel for the Worm by Charles Spurgeon
How many live for that poor body of theirs
Which so soon must moulder back to the dust?
To dress, to adorn themselves, to catch the glance
of the admirer's eye, To satisfy public taste, to follow fashion,
Surely a more frivolous object in life
Never engrossed an immortal soul. It seems as strange as if an angel
Should be gathering daisies or blowing soap bubbles.
An immortal spirit living only to dress the body,
To paint the face, to dye the hair,
To display a ribbon, to show off a pin,
Is this the pursuit of an immortal being? Yet tens of thousands live for little else.

As for earth's most lovely ones, How do time and death and the worm
Together make havoc of them? Take up yonder skull,
Just upturned by the sexton's careless spade,
And take it to the yonder beauty and tell her,
Though she paint her face an inch thick,
To this complexion she must come at last.
All her dressing shall end in a shroud,
All her make-up and her dainty ornaments
Shall only make her the sweeter morsel for the worm.
Beloved friends, there is another life beyond this fleeting existence.

Why, then, do you waste your time and degrade your souls with these frivolities?
But godliness has value for all things, Holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 8

032 Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, Holy, Holy by Thomas Brooks Who is like you, glorious in holiness? Exodus 15 verse 11 God is infinitely holy, transcendently holy, superlatively holy, constantly holy, unchangeably holy, exemplary holy, glorious holy. All the holiness that is in the best and choicest Christians is but a mixed holiness, a weak and imperfect holiness. Their unholiness is always more than their holiness.

Ah, what a great deal of pride is mixed with a little humility, of unbelief is mixed with a little faith, of peevishness is mixed with a little meekness, of earthliness is mixed with a little heavenliness, of carnality is mixed with a little spirituality, of harshness is mixed with a little tenderness. Oh, but the holiness of God is a pure holiness. It is a holiness without mixture.

There is not the least drop or the least drag of unholiness in God. God is light and in him is no darkness at all. 1 John 1 verse 5 In God there is all wisdom without any folly, all truth without any falsehood, all light without any darkness, and all holiness without any sinfulness.

God is universally holy. He is holy in all his ways and holy in all his works. His precepts are holy precepts.

His promises are holy promises. His threatenings are holy threatenings. His love is a holy love.

His anger is a holy anger. His hatred is a holy hatred. His nature is holy.

His attributes are holy. His actions are all holy. He is holy in sparing and holy in punishing.

He is holy in justifying of some and holy in condemning of others. He is holy in bringing some to heaven and holy in throwing others to hell. God is holy in all his sayings, in all his doings, in whatever he puts his hand to, in whatever he sets his heart to.

His frowns are holy. His smiles are holy. When he gives, his givings are holy giving.

When he takes away, his takings are holy takings. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty. Isaiah 6 verse 3. God is eminently holy.

He is transcendently holy. He is superlatively holy. He is glorious in holiness.

There is no fathoming. There is no measuring. There is no comprehending.

There is no searching of that infinite sea of holiness which is in God. O sirs, you shall as soon stop the sun in its course and change the day into night and raise the dead and make a world and count the stars of heaven and empty the sea with a cockle shell as you shall be able either to conceive or express that transcendent holiness which is in God. God's holiness is infinite.

It can neither be limited nor lessened nor increased. God is the spring of all holiness and purity. All that holiness which is in angels and men flows from God as the streams from the fountain, as the beams from the sun, as the branches from the root, as the effect from the cause.

Ministers may pray that their people may be holy. Parents may pray that their children may be holy. But they cannot give holiness nor communicate holiness to their nearest and dearest relations.

God alone is the giver and the author of all holiness. It is only the Holy One which can cause holiness to flow into sinners' hearts. It is only He who can form and frame and infuse holiness into the souls of men.

A man shall sooner make a world than he shall make another holy. It is only a holy God who can enlighten the mind and bow the will and melt the heart and raise the affections and purge the conscience and reform the life and put the whole man into a holy, gracious temper. God is exemplary holy.

He is the rule, example, and pattern of holiness. Be holy as I am holy. 1 Peter 1 verse 15.

God's holiness is the copy which we must always have in our eye and endeavor most exactly to write after.

033 Look At The King In His Beauty

Look at the King in His Beauty by David Harsha Your eyes will see the King in His Beauty Isaiah 33 verse 17 Contemplate your blessed Redeemer, seated on His great white throne, encircled with heavenly glory. Look at the King in His Beauty. It is the sight of a glorified Savior which will make the heaven of the believer.

Endeavor now, by the eye of faith, to behold the Lord Jesus in all His matchless beauty and excellence. Contemplate His glorious character, His infinite mercy, His unparalleled condescension, and His boundless love. There is enough in Jesus to employ the soul in rapturous meditation throughout a vast eternity.

His excellence, His goodness, and His love can never be fathomed. Oh, keep your eye fixed on this adorable Savior while you sojourn in this valley of tears, and in a little while you shall see Him as He is, face to face, and ascribe to Him unceasing praise.

034 For His Poor Rachel

For His Poor Rachel By Ruth Bryan Did Jacob serve seven years for his Rachel, By day in the heat and by night in the frost? And did they seem but as a day unto him, For the love he had for her? Our spiritual Jacob has far exceeded him. He left the throne of his glory for his poor Rachel, And took her humble flesh in the form of a servant, And for her sake served thirty-three years under the law. He bore the heat of temptation, weariness, and thirst, As well as the cold of reproach and scorn, And the malice of sinners against himself.

This he thought not too much, for when he had finished the work on her behalf, For her he cheerfully entered upon the most bitter part of his sufferings, Which made even his mighty heart to shudder with agony, While his dear lips prayed, O my father, if it is possible, With the rescue of my bride, Let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. Behold the depth of his unflinching love! The cup of curse must be drunk, or the captive bride must perish.

And so he takes the bitter cup and does not turn away Until every dreg is consumed, And the same sacred lips which emptied it could say in triumph, It is finished. For the joy that was set before him of possessing his beloved bride, He endured the cross, despising the shame, And has now sat down at the right hand of God, Until the blissful consummation before assembled worlds, When it will be joyfully proclaimed, The marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife has made herself ready. Then shall the spiritual Jacob and his Rachel meet and embrace, And part no more forever.

She, transformed into his likeness, shall be satisfied, And he, seeing her in glory, the very travail of his soul, Shall be satisfied likewise. May you experience the love of Christ, Though it is so great you will never fully understand it. Ephesians 3 verse 19

035 Holiness

Holiness, by J. A. James. You ought to live holy and godly lives, 2 Peter 3 verse 11. Holiness is a very comprehensive word, and expresses a state of mind and conduct, which includes many things.

Holiness is the work of the Spirit in our sanctification. Holiness is the fruit of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Holiness is the operation of the new nature which we receive in regeneration.

Holiness may be viewed in various aspects according to the different objects to which it relates. Toward God, holiness is supreme love, delight in His moral character, submission to His will, obedience to His commands, zeal for His cause, seeking of His glory. Toward Christ, holiness is a conformity to His example, imbibing His Spirit.

Toward man, holiness is charity, integrity, truth, mercy. Toward sin, holiness is a hatred of all iniquity, a tender conscience easily wounded by little sins and scrupulously avoiding them, together with a laborious, painful, self-denying mortification of all the known corruptions of our heart. Toward self, holiness is the control of our fleshly appetites, the eradication of our pride, the mortification of our selfishness.

Toward divine things in general, holiness is spirituality of mind, the habitual current of godly thought, godly affections flowing through the soul. And toward the objects of the unseen world, holiness is heavenly mindedness, a turning away from things seen and temporal to things unseen and eternal. Oh, what a word is holiness! How much does it comprehend? How little is it understood? And how much less is it practiced?

036 The Plan

The Plan by Charles Spurgeon God does not work without a plan. God has not left the world to chance. There are some men who are always kicking against the doctrine of an eternal purpose and who grow angry if you assert that God has settled what shall occur.

It is by the consent of all agreed that men are foolish if they work without a plan, and yet they cry out when we insist that God also, in all His working, is fulfilling a well-arranged design. Depend upon it, however. Let men rebel against this truth as they will that God has determined the end from the beginning.

He has left no screw loose in the machine. He has left nothing to chance or accident. Nothing with God is the subject of an if or a perhaps, but even the agency of man, free as it is, as untouched and undisturbed as if there were no God, even this is guided by His mysterious power and works out thoroughly His own purpose in every jot and tittle.

God wings the thunderbolt, and shall He not guide the most passionate spirit of man? God puts a bit into the mouth of the whirlwind, and shall He not control the most ambitious will? God takes care that even the sea shall come no farther than He bids it, and shall not the heart of man be equally subject to the divine purpose? Everything that has moved or shall move in heaven and earth and hell has been, is, and shall be according to the counsel and foreknowledge of God, fulfilling a holy, just, wise, and unalterable purpose. God is wonderful in His design and excellent in His working. Believer, God overrules all things for your good.

The needs be, for all that you have suffered, has been most accurately determined by God. Your course is all mapped out by your Lord. Nothing will take Him by surprise.

There will be no novelties to Him. There will be no occurrences which He did not foresee, and for which, therefore, He was not provided. He has arranged all, and you have but to patiently wait, and you shall sing a song of deliverance.

Your life has been arranged on the best possible principles, so that if you had been gifted with unerring wisdom, you would have arranged a life for yourselves exactly similar to the one through which you have passed. Let us trust God's heart, where we cannot trace His hand. In the end, we shall read the whole of God's purpose as one grand poem, and there will not be one verse in it that has a syllable too much or a word too little.

There will be not one stanza or one letter redundant, much less one that is erased. But from the beginning to the end, we shall see the Master Pen and the Master Mind drawing forth the glorious array of majestic thoughts, and with angels and seraphs and principalities and powers, shall burst forth into one mighty song, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. We shall see how from the first even to the last, the King has been ruling all things according to His own sovereign will.

037 The Secret of True Happiness

The Secret of True Happiness by Harvey Newcomb The secret of true happiness lies in a cordial acquiescence in the will of God. It is sweet to lie passive in His hand and know no will but His. The doctrine of a particular providence is precious to the Christian's heart.

It enables him to see the hand of God in every event, hence the sinfulness of a repining, discontented, unsubmitive temper. It is difficult to reconcile the habitual indulgence of such a sinful disposition with the existence of grace in the heart. The first emotion of the newborn soul is submission to the will of God.

We are prone to lose sight of the hand of God in the little difficulties and perplexities which are of everyday occurrence and to look only at second causes. We often do the same in more important matters. When we are injured or insulted by others, we are disposed to murmur and complain and give vent to our indignation against the immediate causes of our distress.

Forgetting that these are only the instruments which God employs for the trial of our faith or the punishment of our sins. In this doctrine of the secret agency of divine providence, we have the strongest motive for a hearty and cheerful resignation to all the troubles and difficulties, trials and afflictions which come upon us in this life, whatever may be their immediate cause. We know that they are directed by our Heavenly Father, whose tender mercies are over all His works and who does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

Whatever may be our afflictions, so long as we are out of hell, we are monuments of His mercy. Why does a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? We are assured that all things work together for good to those who love God. The afflictions of this life are the faithful corrections of a kind and tender Father, for whom the Lord loves He chastens and He scourges every son whom He receives.

How consoling the reflection that all our sufferings are designed to mortify and subdue our corruptions, to wean us from the world and lead us to a more humble and constant sense of dependence upon God. How ungrateful for a child of God to repine at the dealings of such a tender and faithful Father. God will give us all that He sees is best for us, and surely we ought to be satisfied with this, for He who sees the end from the beginning must know much better than we what is for our good.

It is our duty to maintain a contented and cheerful spirit in every situation of life. If God directs all our ways and has promised to give us just what He sees we need, we surely ought to rest satisfied with what we have, for we know that it is just what the Lord, in His infinite wisdom and unbounded goodness, sees fit to give us.

038 Only The Blood Of Christ

Only the blood of Christ can soften it, by Thomas Watson. I will take away their hearts of stone and give them tender hearts, Ezekiel 11, verse 19. Oh, the misery of a hard heart! A heart of stone is insensible.

A stone is not sensible of anything. Lay a heavy weight upon it, or grind it to powder. It does not feel.

So it is with a hard heart. It is insensible to both its own sin and God's wrath. The stone in the kidneys is felt, but not the stone in the heart.

Having lost all sensitivity, Ephesians 4, verse 19. A heart of stone is inflexible. A stone will not bend.

Just so, the hard heart will not comply with God's command. It will not stoop to Christ's scepter. A heart of stone will sooner break than bend by repentance.

It is so far from yielding to God, that like the anvil, it beats back the hammer. A heart of stone will always resist the Holy Spirit, Acts 7, verse 51. A hard heart is void of all grace.

While the wax is hard, it will not take the impression of the seal. Just so, the heart, while it is hard, will not take the stamp of grace. It must first be made tender and melting.

The plow of the Word will not penetrate a hard heart. A hard heart is good for nothing but to make fuel for hellfire. Because of your hardness and unrepented heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, Romans 2, verse 5. Hell is full of hard hearts.

There is not one soft heart there. There is much weeping there, but no softness. We read of vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, Romans 9, verse 22.

Hardness of heart fits these vessels for hell and makes them like withered wood, which is fit only to burn. Hardness of heart makes a man's condition worse than all his other sins besides. If one is guilty of great sins, yet if he can mourn, there is hope.

But hardness of heart binds guilt fast upon the soul. It seals a man under wrath. It is not heinousness of sin, but hardness of heart which damns.

Oh, the misery of a hard heart! A stony heart is the worst heart. If it were bronze, it might be melted in the furnace, or it might be bent with the hammer. But a stony heart is such that only the arm of God can break it, and only the blood of Christ can soften it.

I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart, Ezekiel 36, verse 26.

039 A Little Book Which Contains

A Little Book Which Contains Only Three Pages by William Mason I have read of a godly man who was once very dissolute. When converted, his former companions sought to bring him back to his former wicked courses. But he told them, I am deeply engaged in meditating on a little book which contains only three pages.

So at present, I have no time for other business. Some time after, being asked if he had finished his book, he replied, No, for though it contains only three pages, yet there is so much contained in them that I have devoted myself to read therein all the days of my life. The first page is read.

Here I meditate on the sufferings of my Lord and Savior, His shedding His precious blood as an atonement for my sins, and a ransom for my soul, without which I must have been a damned sinner in hell to all eternity. The second page is white. This cheers my heart with the wonderful consideration of the unspeakable joys of heaven obtained for me by Christ, and of being forever with Him.

The third page is black. Here I think of the horrible state of the damned and the perpetual torments they are suffering in hell. Oh, this excites thankfulness to my Savior for His wonderful love and rich grace in snatching me as a brand out of hellfire and saving me from eternal destructions.

Here is a good man, a good book, and a good example for you and I. Let us go and do likewise. Constantly meditate upon Christ, upon the wrath He has saved us from and the glory He has saved us to.

040 A New Impulse

A New Impulse, A Nobler Bent, by Hannah Moore. The Holy Spirit operates on the human character to produce a new heart and a new life. By this operation, the affections and faculties of the man receive a new impulse.

His dark understanding is illuminated. His rebellious will is subdued. His irregular desires are rectified.

His judgment is informed. His imagination is chastened. His inclinations are sanctified.

His hopes and fears are directed to their true and adequate end. Heaven becomes the object of his hopes, and eternal separation from God becomes the object of his fears. His love of the world is transformed into the love of God.

The lower faculties are pressed into the new service. The senses have a higher direction. The whole internal frame and constitution receive a nobler bent.

His intents and purposes receive a more sublime aim. His aspirations receive a nobler flight. His vacillating desires find a fixed object.

His vagrant purposes find a settled home. His disappointed heart finds a certain refuge. That heart, no longer the worshipper of the world, begins struggling to conquer the world.

041 There Are Nails In That Cross

There Are Nails in That Cross by Thomas Watson If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Luke 9 verse 23 Self-denial is the highest sign of a sincere Christian. Hypocrites may have great knowledge and make large profession, but it is only the true-hearted believer who can deny himself for Christ.

Self-denial is the foundation of godliness, and if this foundation is not well laid, the whole building will fall. If there is any lust in our souls which we cannot deny, it will turn at length either to scandal or apostasy. Self-denial is the thread which must run through the whole work of piety.

A man must deny self-esteem. Every man by nature has a high opinion of himself. He is drunk with spiritual pride.

A proud man disdains the cross. He thinks himself too good to suffer. Oh, deny self-esteem.

Let the plumes of pride fall off. Let us shake off this viper of pride. A man must deny carnal self.

This I take to be the chief sense of the text. He must deny fleshly ease. The flesh cries out for ease.

It is loath to put its neck under Christ's yoke or stretch itself upon the cross. The flesh cries out, Oh, the cross of Christ is heavy. There are nails in that cross which will lacerate and fetch blood.

We must deny our self-ease and be as a deaf adder, stopping our ears to the charmings of the flesh. Those who lean on the soft pillow of sloth will hardly take up the cross. This self-denying frame of heart is very hard.

This is to pluck out the right eye. It is easier to overcome men and devils than to overcome self. Stronger is he who conquers himself than he who conquers the strongest walled city.

Self is the idol and how hard it is to sacrifice this idol and to turn self-seeking into self-denial. But though it is difficult, it is essential. A Christian must first lay down self before he can take up the cross.

Alas, how far are they from a self-denial who cannot deny themselves in the least things, who in their diet or apparel, instead of martyring the flesh, pamper the flesh. Instead of taking up the cross, take up their cups. Is this self-denial to let loose the reins to the flesh? Oh, Christians, as ever you would be able to carry Christ's cross, begin to deny yourselves.

Everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property for my sake will receive a hundred times as much in return and will have eternal life. Matthew 19 verse 29. Here is a very choice bargain.

042 I Am Not What I Once Used To Be

I am not what I once used to be, by J.C. Ryle. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, Hebrews 12, verse 14. The regenerate man is a holy man.

He endeavors to live according to God's will, to do the things which please God, to avoid the things which God hates. His aim and desire is to love God with heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love his neighbor as himself. His wish is to be continually looking to Christ as his example as well as his Savior, and to manifest himself as Christ's friend by obeying whatever he commands.

No doubt he is not perfect, no one will tell you that sooner than himself. He groans under the burden of indwelling corruption cleaving to him. He finds an evil principle within him, constantly warring against grace and trying to draw him away from God.

Yet, in spite of all shortcomings, the average bent and bias of his ways is holy, of his doings is holy, of his tastes is holy, and of his habits is holy. In spite of all his swerving and turning aside like a ship going against a contrary wind, the general course of his life is in one direction, toward God and for God. He will generally be able to say with old John Newton, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in the eternal world, but still I am not what I once used to be.

By the grace of God I am what I am. Let none conclude that they have no grace because they have many imperfections in their obedience. Your grace may be very weak and imperfect and yet you may be truly born again and be a genuine son of God and heir of heaven.

043 Milk-White

Milk White by Thomas Watson The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sin. 1 John 1 verse 7 Christ's blood is a cleansing blood. As the merit of Christ's blood pacifies God, so the virtue of it purifies us.

Christ's blood is heaven's bath. It is a laver to wash in. It washes a crimson sinner milk white.

The word of God is a looking glass to show us our spots, and the blood of Christ is a fountain to wash them away. On that day, a fountain will be opened to cleanse them from all their sins and defilement. Zechariah 13 verse 1 But this blood will not wash if it is mingled with anything.

If we mingle our good works with Christ's blood, it will not wash. Let Christ's blood be pure and unmixed, and there is no spot which it cannot wash away. It purged out Noah's drunkenness and Lot's incest.

044 Grace Denial

Grace Denial by Octavius Winslow Be cautious of grace denial. You will need much holy wisdom here, lest you overlook the work of the Spirit within you. You have thought, it may be, of the glory that Christ receives from brilliant genius and profound talent and splendid gifts and glowing zeal and costly sacrifices, and even extensive usefulness.

But have you ever thought of the glory, the far greater, richer glory, that flows to Him from the contrite spirit, the broken heart, the lowly mind, the humble walk, the tear of godly repentance which falls when seen by no human eye, the sigh of godly sorrow which is breathed when heard by no human ear, the sin abhorrence, the self-loathing, the deep sense of vileness and poverty and infirmity, which takes you to Jesus with the prayer, Lord, here I am, I have brought to you my rebellious will, my wandering heart, my worldly affections, my peculiar infirmity, my besetting and constantly overpowering sin. Receive me graciously. Put forth the mighty power of your grace in my soul, and subdue all, and rule all, and subjugate all to yourself.

Will it not be for your glory, the glory of your great name, if this strong corruption were subdued by your grace, if this powerful sin were nailed to your cross, if this temper so volatile, if this heart so impure, if these affections so truant, if this mind so dark, if these desires so earthly, if these pursuits so carnal, if these aims so selfish were all entirely renewed by your Spirit, sanctified by your grace, and made each to reflect your image? Yes, Lord, it will be for your glory through time and through eternity.

045 Prepare To Meet The Monster

Prepare to Meet the Monster by David Harsha. This young lady had been confined to a bed of severe suffering for one year. At last, her soul was ripened for glory.

The time came that she must die, and her deathbed was a scene of triumph. Christ was very precious to her, and His love was wonderfully manifested to her soul. She often exclaimed, My beloved is mine, and I am his.

The following are among her last words. To her distant brother, she thus dictated a letter. Dear brother, I know not whether I shall meet you again on earth, but I hope to meet you in heaven, where we shall be forever singing the praises of God, where the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed us and lead us unto living fountains of water, and where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

To her father, who said to her, I fear I must lose you, she replied, Your loss will be my gain. I have a building from God, a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And again, when he said, I think you will fall asleep in Jesus, she responded, It will be a happy change.

She exclaimed in a transport of joy, Oh, I would not give up Christ for all the world. Her earthly course being nearly finished, she opened her eyes, which were soon to be closed in death, and in the language of strong, unshaken faith, exclaimed with Job, But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God.

I will see Him for myself. Yes, I will see Him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought.

Once she broke out into a rapture and exclaimed, Oh, to be forever with the Lord, what a happy change. Her faith remained firm unto the end, and her hope and confidence unshaken to the last. Her sky was clear and serene, her mind calm and composed, and thus she fell asleep in Jesus and entered into the joy of her Lord.

A few days before this young lady died, she requested the following lines to be read at her funeral. To My Young Companions My youthful mates, both small and great, stand here and you shall see an awful sight which is a type of what you soon will be. I used to appear once fresh and fair among the youthful crowd, but now behold me dead and cold, wrapped in a sable shroud.

My cheeks once red like roses spread, my sparkling eyes so gay, but now you see how tis with me a lifeless lump of clay. When you are dressed in all your best in fashion so complete, you soon must be, as you see me, wrapped in a shrouding sheet. Ah, youth, beware and do prepare to meet the monster Death, for he may come when you are young and steal away your breath.

When you unto your frolics go, remember what I say. In a short time, though in your prime, you may be called away. Now I am gone, I can't return, no more of me you'll see, but it is true that all of you must shortly follow me.

When you unto my grave do go, that gloomy place to see, I say to you who stand in view, prepare to follow me. What an awful thing it is to die without salvation by Christ, without a saving interest in Him. Millions die in the same awful condition and plunge into a dark and miserable eternity.

Let me die like the righteous, let my life end like theirs. Numbers 23 verse 10.

046 Not Our Home

Not Our Home by David Harsha This world is not our home. We are looking forward to our city in heaven, which is yet to come. Hebrews 13 verse 14.

We are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. This present world is not our home. We are coming up from the wilderness with our faces zionward.

We are traveling to the celestial city. Our path is rough, but the Savior sustains us. Our pilgrimage lies through a wilderness, but faith cheers us with a view of the glorious rest of the redeemed in our Father's house, in mansions of blessedness.

Let this consideration animate us amid the conflicts of life. In a little while, we shall obtain a joyous entrance into the rest above. The storms of life's ocean will soon carry us into the haven of peace, where there is no trouble.

The language of scripture is, get up, go away, for this is not your resting place, because it is defiled, it is ruined, beyond all remedy. Your Savior, pilgrim Christian, has prepared for you a nobler rest than this polluted world. In our Father's house are many spacious mansions, where your happy spirit, after tasting the bitter cup of life's sorrow, shall rest in eternal blessedness.

This world is not our home. We are looking forward to our city in heaven, which is yet to come. Hebrews 13 verse 14.

047 They Will Not Believe It

They Will Not Believe It Until They Feel It by Thomas Brooks Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Luke 3 verse 7 Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath? 1 Thessalonians 1 verse 10 1. The coming wrath is the greatest wrath. It is the greatest evil which can befall a soul. Who knows the power of your wrath? Psalm 19 verse 11 The coming wrath is such wrath as no unsaved man can either avoid or abide.

And yet, such is most men's stupidity that they will not believe it until they feel it. As God is a great God, so His wrath is a great wrath. If the wrath of an early king is so terrible, oh, how dreadful must the wrath of the king of kings then be! The greater the evil is, the more cause we have to flee from it.

Now the coming wrath is the greatest evil, and therefore the more it concerns us to flee from it. 2. The coming wrath is treasured-up wrath. Sinners are still a treasuring-up wrath against the day of wrath.

Romans 2 verse 5 While wicked men are following their own lusts, they think that they are still adding to their own happiness. But alas, they do but add wrath to wrath. They do but heap up judgment upon judgment, and punishment upon punishment.

Look, as men are daily adding more and more to their treasure, so impenitent sinners are daily increasing the treasury of wrath against their own souls. 3. The coming wrath is pure wrath. It is judgment without mercy.

The cup of wrath which God will put into sinners' hands at last will be a cup of pure wrath, all wrath, nothing but wrath. They must drink the wine of God's wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God's cup of wrath.

And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. Revelation 14 verse 10 Look, as there is nothing but the pure glory of God, which can make a man perfectly and fully happy, just so there is nothing but the pure wrath of God, which can make a man fully and perfectly miserable. Reprobates shall not only sip of the top of God's cup, but they shall drink the dregs of His cup.

They shall not have one drop of mercy, nor one crumb of comfort. They have filled up their lifetime with sin, and God will fill up their eternity with torments. 4. The coming wrath is everlasting wrath.

And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever. Revelation 14 verse 11 They shall have punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without support, crying without comfort, mischief without measure, torment without ease, where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched. 5. The torments of the damned shall continue as many eternities, as there are stars in the skies, as there are grains of sand on the seashore, and as there are drops of water found in the sea.

When the present worlds are ended, the pains and torments of hell shall not cease, but begin afresh, and thus this wheel shall turn round and round without end. Oh, the folly and vanity, the madness and baseness of poor wretched sinners, who expose themselves to everlasting torments for a few fleshly momentary pleasures. Oh, sirs, who can stand before His fierce anger? Who can survive His burning fury? His rage blazes forth like fire, and the mountains crumble to dust in His presence.

Nahum 1 verse 6 How should these things work poor sinners to flee to Christ, who alone is able to save them from the coming wrath?

048 What A Comfort Is This

What a comfort is this, by Thomas Watson. I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep. John 10 verse 14.

Christ knows all his sheep, his knowing his sheep is his loving them. This is a great consolation. He knows every one of their names.

He calls his own sheep by name. John 10 verse 3. He knows all the sighs and groans they make. My groaning is not hidden from you.

Psalms 38 verse 9. Christ knows every tear they shed. I have seen your tears. 2 Kings 20 verse 5. He bottles their tears as precious wine.

You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.

Psalms 56 verse 8. He knows all their sufferings. I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. Exodus 3 verse 9. The Lord saw the bitter suffering of everyone in Israel.

2 Kings 14 verse 26. Christ knows all their good works, all their works of piety and charity. I know all the things you do.

I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. Revelation 2 verse 2. I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep.

What a comfort is this. He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. Then the king will say to those on the right, come, you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 25 verses 33 and 34.

049 Do You Remember Little Elizabeth

Do you remember Little Elizabeth? By J. A. James. He who wins souls is wise. Proverbs 11, verse 30.

My imagination has sometimes presented me with this picture of a faithful Sunday school teacher's entrance into the state of her everlasting rest. The agony of death finished, the triumph of faith completed, and the conquering spirit hastening to her crown. Upon the confines of the heavenly world, a divinely lovely form awaits her arrival.

Enwrapped in astonishment at the dazzling glory of this celestial inhabitant, she inquires, is this Gabriel, chief of all the heavenly multitudes, and am I honored with his aid to guide me to the throne of God? With a smile of ineffable delight, such as gives fresh beauty to an angel's countenance, the mystic form replies, do you remember Little Elizabeth who was in yonder world, a pupil in your Sunday school class? Do you recollect the child who wept as you talked to her of sin and directed her to the cross of the dying Redeemer? God smiled with approbation upon her heart in characters never to be effaced. Providence removed her from beneath your care before the fruit of your labor was visible. The gospel seed, however, had taken root, and it was the privilege of another to water what you had sown.

Nourished by the influence of heaven, the plant of piety flourished in her heart and shed its fragrance upon her character. Piety, after guarding her from the snares of youth, cheered her amidst the accumulated trials of an afflicted life, supported her amidst the agonies of death, and elevated her to the mansions of immortality. And now behold before you the glorified spirit of that poor child who, under God, owes the eternal life on which she has entered to your faithful labors in the Sunday school, and who is now sent by our Redeemer to introduce you to the world of glory as your first and least reward for guiding the once thoughtless, ignorant, wicked Elizabeth to the world of grace.

Hail, happy spirit! Hail, favored of the Lord! Hail, deliverer of my soul! Hail to the world of eternal glory! I can trace the scene no further. I cannot paint the raptures produced in the honored teacher's bosom by this unexpected encounter. I cannot depict the mutual gratitude and love of two such spirits meeting on the confines of heaven, much less can I follow them to their everlasting mansion and disclose the bliss which they shall enjoy before the throne of God.

All this, and a thousand times more, is attendant upon the salvation of one single soul. Teachers, what a motive to diligence! Amidst surrounding millions, the faithful teacher shall stand to receive the public plaudits of her judge and Savior. And as much as you have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me.

Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of your Lord!

050 The Net By Which He Drags Millions

Unbelief makes sermons to be like showers of rain falling upon a rock. They neither mollify nor fructify because men don't really believe them. If men really believed that sin was so bitter and that wrath and hell followed it, would they take this serpent into their bosom? If men really believed that there was a beauty in holiness, that godliness was great gain, that there was joy in the way and heaven at the end, would not they turn their feet into Christ's holy way? Men have some slight transient thoughts of these things, but their minds are not fully convinced, nor their conscience fully captivated into believing them.

Unbelief is Satan's masterpiece, the net by which he drags millions to hell.

051 God's Love-Letter

God's Love Letter by Thomas Brooks The scripture is God's love letter to men. Here the lamb may wade, and here the elephant may swim. The blessed scriptures are of infinite worth and value.

Here you may find a remedy for every disease, a balm for every wound, a plaster for every sore, milk for babes, meat for strong men, comfort for the afflicted, support for the tempted, solace for the distressed, ease for the wearied, a staff to support the feeble, a sword to defend the weak. The holy scriptures are the map of God's mercy and man's misery, the touchstone of truth, the shop of remedies against all maladies, the hammer of vices, the treasury of virtues, the exposure of all sensual and worldly vanities, the balance of equity, the most perfect rule of all justice and honesty. Ah, friends, no book befits your hands like the Bible.

The Bible is the best preacher. This book, this preacher will preach to you in your shops, in your chambers, in your closets, yes, in your own bosoms. This book will preach to you at home and abroad.

It will preach to you in all companies, and it will preach to you in all conditions. By this book, you shall be saved, or by this book, you shall be damned. By this book, you must live.

By this book, you must die. By this book, you shall be judged in the great day. Oh, therefore, love this book above all other books.

Prize this book above all other books. Read this book before all other books. Study this book more than all other books.

For he who reads much and understands nothing is like him who hunts much and catches nothing. Oh, how I love your law. I meditate on it all day long.

Psalm 119, verse 97.

052 Amusements, Pleasures, and Gaiety

Amusements, Pleasures, and Gaieties of the World by John Abbott It is not necessary for us to search for happiness in dangerous and forbidden paths. The young, inexperienced in the dangers of the world, often wonder why their pious parents are so unwilling that they should acquire a fondness for worldly amusements, which appears so innocent and pleasing to their youthful hearts. Parents, cultivate in your children a taste for pure and noble pleasures, instead of a love of worldly gaiety.

Pure and noble pleasures, last, they wear well. They leave no sting behind. The pleasures of worldliness and gaiety do not wear well.

They exhaust the powers of body and mind, and all the capacities of enjoyment prematurely, and leave a sting behind. That is the reason why the Word of God condemns them, and why Christians abstain from them. He who acquires a taste for the amusements, pleasures, and gaieties of the world, will find his earthly happiness greatly impaired, and will be exposed to temptations which will greatly endanger his eternal well-being.

These worldly amusements are all of the same general character, leading to peculiar temptations. They all tend to destroy the taste for those quiet, domestic enjoyments, which, when cultivated, grow brighter and brighter every year, and which confer increasing solace and joy when youth has fled, and old age and sickness and misfortune come. Christian parents endeavor to guard their children against acquiring a taste for these worldly pleasures, because they foresee that these amusements will, in the end, disappoint them, and they can lead them in a safer path, and one infinitely more promotive of their happiness.

The true Christian has experienced the folly of a life of worldly pleasure. There are thousands who were once the devotees of worldly gaiety, and they will tell you that, since they have abandoned their former pursuits, and sought happiness in different objects, and cultivated a taste for different pleasures, they have found peace and satisfaction, which they never knew before, and they have no more disposition to turn back to these gaieties than they have to resume the rattles of babyhood.

053 Lord, Smite My Rocky Heart

Lord, smite my rocky heart, by Thomas Reed. Adorable Jesus, I acknowledge my vileness, my worthlessness, my ingratitude. With shame and confusion of face, I look up unto you, O bleeding lamb, for having slighted your goodness and your loving kindness towards me.

Take away this earthliness from my mind, this coldness from my heart, this insensibility to the things of God. Preserve me from a secret alienation of heart from a growing lukewarmness. You are the rock of ages, the everlasting strength.

Endue me with power from on high to overcome all my indwelling corruptions, which, like a thick cloud, intervene between my soul and you, the Son of Righteousness, and thus prevent the rays of your consolation from gladdening my heart and making me to abound in the fruits of righteousness. To whom can I look? To whom can I go? But unto you, O friend of sinners. Lord, at your sweet call, I come for pardon, peace, and holiness.

Lord, I am sorely grieved that I love you so little, that my affections move so slowly towards you. Stir up my languid desires, inflame my cold affections, set my whole soul on fire with holy love. How painful that I should be so little affected by the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and sufferings of my adorable Redeemer.

Why is not my soul all on fire when I think of your love? Why is it not melted into tears when I think of my dying Savior? Am I harder than the adamantine rock? Am I colder than the northern ice? Lord, smite my rocky heart with the rod of your lovingkindness. Dissolve my frozen affections by the melting beams of your grace. O blessed Jesus, I praise you for such infinite love, such abounding grace, to the Chief of Sinners.

054 The Way To Be Like Jesus

The Way to Be Like Jesus by Thomas Watson To render evil for evil is brutish To render evil for good is devilish To render good for evil is Christian Blessed are the meek Matthew 5 verse 5 Meekness is a grace whereby we are enabled by the Spirit of God to moderate our angry passions. Meekness has a divine beauty and sweetness in it. This meekness consists in three things, the bearing of injuries, the forgiving of injuries, the recompensing good for evil.

Meekness is opposed to anger, malice, revenge, and evil speaking. Meekness is a great ornament to a Christian, the ornament of a meek spirit which is so precious to God. 1 Peter 3 verse 4 How lovely is a saint in God's eye when adorned with this jewel.

No garment is more befitting to a Christian than meekness. Therefore we are bid to put on this garment, put on therefore as the elect of God, meekness. Colossians 3 verse 12 Meekness is a noble and excellent spirit.

A meek man is a valorous man. He gets a victory over himself. Anger arises from weakness of character.

The meek man is able to conquer his fury. He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty. Controlling one's temper is better than capturing a city.

Proverbs 16 verse 32 To yield to one's anger is easy. It is swimming along with the tide of corrupt nature. But to turn against nature, to resist anger, to overcome evil with good, this is truly Christian.

Meekness is the best way to conquer and melt the heart of an enemy. Meekness melts and thaws the heart of others. The greatest victory is to overcome an enemy without striking a blow.

Mildness prevails more than fierceness. Anger makes an enemy of a friend. Meekness makes a friend of an enemy.

Meekness is the way to be like Jesus. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. Matthew 11 verse 29 It is not profession which makes us like Jesus, but imitation.

Where meekness is lacking, we are like brutes. Where it is present, we are like Jesus.

055 Some Beloved Idol

Some Beloved Idol By J.C. Philpott Because the whole land is filled with idols, and the people are madly in love with them. Jeremiah 50 verse 38 Have we not all in our various ways set up some beloved idol? Something which engaged our affections? Something which occupied our thoughts? Something to which we devoted all the energies of our minds? Something for which we were willing to labor night and day? Be it money, be it power, be it esteem of men, be it respectability, be it worldly comfort, be it literary knowledge, there was a secret setting up of self in one or more of its various forms, and a bowing down to it as an idol. The man of business makes money his God.

The man of pleasure makes the lust of the flesh his God. The proud man makes his adored self his God. The Pharisee makes self-righteousness his God.

The Arminian makes free will his God. The Calvinist makes dry doctrine his God. All in one way or other, however they may differ in the object of their idolatrous worship, agree in this that they give a preference in their esteem and affection to their peculiar idol above the one true God.

There is, then, a time to break down these idols which our fallen nature has set up. And have not we experienced some measure of this breaking down, both externally and internally? Have not our idols been in a measure smashed before our eyes, our prospects and life cut up and destroyed, our airy visions of earthly happiness and our romantic paradises dissolved into thin air, our creature hopes dashed, our youthful affections blighted, and the objects from which we had fondly hoped to reap an enduring harvest of delight removed from our eyes? And likewise, as to our religion, our good opinion of ourselves, our piety and holiness, our wisdom and our knowledge, our understanding and our abilities, our consistency and uprightness, have they not all been broken down and made a heap of ruins before our eyes? Idols will be utterly abolished and destroyed. Isaiah 2 verse 18.

056 If We Were More Like Christ

If We Were More Like Christ By Charles Spurgeon It is enough for the disciple that he is like his master. Matthew 10 verse 25 When our Lord was on earth, what was the treatment he received? Were his claims acknowledged, his instructions followed, and his perfections worshipped by those whom he came to bless? No. He was despised and rejected of men.

Outside the camp was his place, cross-bearing was his occupation. Did the world yield him solace and rest? Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. This inhospitable world afforded him no shelter, it cast him out and crucified him.

If you are a follower of Jesus and maintain a consistent Christ-like walk and lifestyle, you must expect the same treatment from the world. They will treat you as they treated the Savior, they will despise you. Do not dream that worldlings will admire you, or that the more holy and the more Christ-like you are, the more peaceably people will act towards you.

They prized not the polished gem, how should they value the jewel in the rough? If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call those of his household? If we were more like Christ, we would be more hated by his enemies. It is a sad dishonor to a child of God to be the world's favorite. It is a very ill omen to hear a wicked world clap its hands and shout, Well done to the Christian man! When the unrighteous give him their approbation, he should begin to look to his character and wonder whether he has not been doing wrong.

Let us be true to our master and have no friendship with a blind and base world, which scorns and rejects him. Far be it from us to seek a coronet of honor where our dear Lord found a crown of thorns.

057 Your Gracious Keeping

Your Gracious Keeping By John McDuff Anew I commend myself to your gracious keeping this day. Guide me by your counsel. Guard me from temptation.

Lead me in the everlasting way. May every unloving thought, every unworthy aim and aspiration, give place to what is pure and unselfish and kind. May every idol that would usurp your place be overthrown.

May no corrupt thought pollute my heart. No unworthy utterance defile my tongue. No unholy action stain my life.

Preserve me from the world's insinuating, seductive power. And from the treachery and deceitfulness of my own evil heart. Whatever is my dominant sin, ease or pleasure, pride or passion, covetousness or ambition, enable me by the promised help of your Spirit to subdue it, nailing it to the Redeemer's cross.

Defend me from every snare and danger which may beset my path. Be my shield in prosperity, my refuge in adversity, my comforter in sorrow, my light in darkness, my hope in death, my defender and vindicator in judgment, my joy and portion through all eternity.

058 Who Made You To Differ

Who made you to differ? By Charles Spurgeon. By the grace of God, I am what I am. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 10.

It is grace, free, sovereign grace, which has made you to differ. Should any here, supposing themselves to be the children of God, imagine that there is some reason in them why they should have been chosen? Let them know that as yet they are in the dark concerning the first principles of grace, and have not yet learned the gospel. If ever they had known the gospel, they would, on the other hand, confess that they were the less than the least, the offscoring of all things, unworthy, ill-deserving, undeserving, and hell-deserving, and ascribe it all to sovereign grace, which has made them to differ, and to distinguishing love, which has chosen them out from the rest of the world.

Great Christian, you would have been a great sinner if God had not made you to differ. O you who are valiant for truth, you would have been as valiant for the devil if grace had not laid hold of you. A seat in heaven shall one day be yours, but a chain in hell would have been yours if God's grace had not changed you.

You can now sing His love, but a licentious song might have been on your lips if grace had not washed you in the blood of Jesus. You are now sanctified, you are quickened, you are justified. But what would you have been today if it had not been for the interposition of the divine hand? There is not a crime you may not have committed, there is not a folly into which you might not have run, even murder itself you might have committed if grace had not preserved you.

You shall be like the angels, but you would have been like the devil if you had not been changed by grace. Never be proud, though you now have a wide domain of grace. You had once not a single thing to call yours own except your sin and misery.

You are now wrapped up in the golden righteousness of the Savior and accepted in the garments of the beloved. But you would have been buried under the black mountain of sin and clothed with the filthy rags of unrighteousness if God had not changed you. And are you proud? Do you exalt yourself? O strange mystery that you who have borrowed everything should exalt yourself, that you who have nothing of your own but have still to draw upon grace should be proud, that you, a poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of your Savior, and yet proud, that you, one who has a life which can only live by fresh streams of life from Jesus, should be proud.

Go, hang your pride upon the gallows as high as Haman, hang it there to rot, and you stand beneath and execrate it all to eternity. Surely of all things most to be cursed and despised is the pride of a Christian. He of all men has ten thousand times more reason than any other to be humble and walk lowly with his God and kindly and humbly toward his fellow creatures.

059 We Get Entangled With Some Idol

We Get Entangled With Some Idol by J.C. Philpott Wherever the grace of God is, it constrains its partaker to desire to live to His honor and glory. But he soon finds the difficulty of so doing, such as the weakness of the flesh, the power of sin, the subtlety of Satan, the strength of temptation, and the snares spread on every side for our feet that we can neither do what we want nor be what we want. Before we are well aware, we get entangled with some idol, or drawn aside into some indulgence of the flesh, which brings darkness into the mind and may cut us out some bitter work for the rest of our days.

But we thus learn not only the weakness of the flesh, but where and in whom all our strength lies. And as the grace of the Lord Jesus, in its suitability, in its sufficiency, and its super-aboundings, becomes manifested in and by the weakness of the flesh, a sense of His wondrous love and care in so bearing with us, in so pitying our case, and manifesting mercy where we might justly expect wrath, constrains us with the holy obligation to walk in His fear and to live to His praise.

060 You Have Been Long

You Have Been Long A-Gathering Rust by Thomas Brooks Oh, but my afflictions are greater than other men's afflictions are. Oh, there is no affliction like my affliction. How can I not murmur? It may be your sins are greater than other men's sins.

If you have sinned against more light, more love, more mercies, more promises than others, no wonder if your afflictions are greater than others. If this is your case, you have more cause to be silent than to murmur. It may be that the Lord sees that it is very needful that your afflictions should be greater than others.

It may be your heart is harder than other men's hearts, and prouder and stouter than other men's hearts. It may be your heart is more impure than others, and more carnal than others, or else more selfish and more worldly than others, or else more deceitful and more hypocritical than others, or else more cold and careless than others, or more formal and lukewarm than others. Now if this is your case, certainly God sees it very necessary for the breaking of your hard heart, and the humbling of your proud heart, and the cleansing of your foul heart, and the spiritualizing of your carnal heart, that your afflictions should be greater than others, and therefore do not murmur.

Where the disease is strong, the remedy must be strong, else the cure will never be wrought. God is a wise physician, and He would never give strong medicine if a weaker one could affect the cure. The more rusty the nail is, the oftener we put it into the fire to purify it, and the more crooked it is, the more blows and the harder blows we give to straighten it.

You have been long a gathering rust, and therefore if God deals thus with you, you have no cause to complain. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and punishes every son whom He receives. Hebrews 12 verse 6

061 A Vexing Vanity

A Vexing Vanity by Thomas Watson Deliver Us from Evil, Matthew 6, verse 13 In this petition, we pray to be delivered from the evil world. He died for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live. Galatians 1, verse 4 It is an evil world as it is a defiling world.

The opinions and examples of the world are defiling. How easily are we hurried to sin when we have the tide of natural corruption and the wind of example to carry us. You shall not follow a multitude to do evil.

Exodus 23, verse 2 Bad examples are contagious. They mingled among the pagans and adopted their evil customs. Psalm 106, verse 35 Living in the world is like traveling on a dirty road.

It requires a high degree of grace to keep ourselves unspotted by the world. James 1, verse 27 It is an evil world as it is an ensnaring world. The world is full of snares.

Company is a snare. Recreation is a snare. Riches are golden snares.

The Apostle John speaks of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. 1 John 2, verse 16 The lust of the flesh is beauty. The lust of the eye is money.

The pride of life is honor. These are the natural man's trinity. The world is a flattering enemy.

Whom it kisses, it betrays. It is a silken noose. The pleasures of the world, like opium, cast men into the sleep of carnal security.

Lysimachus sold his crown for a cup of water. Just so, many part with heaven for the world. They are enslaved with the world's golden fetters.

The world bewitched Demas. 2 Timothy 4, verse 10 One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. It is hard to drink the wine of prosperity and not be giddy.

The world, through our innate corruption, is evil as it is a snare. It is an evil world as it is a deadening world. It dulls and deadens the affections to heavenly objects.

Earthly things choke the seed of the word. A man entangled in the world is so taken up with the secular concerns that he can no more mind spiritual things than an elephant can fly in the air. And even such as have grace in them, when their affections are beslimed with earth, they find themselves much indisposed to meditation and prayer.

It is like swimming with a heavy stone around the neck. It is an evil world as it is a deceitful world. The world makes us believe it will satisfy our desires, but it only increases them.

It is an evil world as it is a vexing world. It is full of trouble. In this world, you will have trouble.

John 16, verse 33 Basil was of opinion that before the fall, the rose grew without prickles. But now every sweet flower of our life has its thorns. There are many things which cause trouble.

Some are troubled that they have no children, others that they have children. The world is a vexing vanity. If a man is poor, he is despised by the rich.

If he is rich, he is envied by the poor. If we do not find an ensnaring world, we shall find it an afflicting world. It has more in it to trouble us than tempt us.

The world is a sea where we are tossed upon the surging waves of sorrow and often in danger of shipwreck. The world is a wilderness and full of fiery serpents. What great need, then, have we to pray, Lord, deliver us from being hurt by this evil world?

062 Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats

Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats? By Charles Spurgeon. An evil is in the professed camp of the Lord, so gross in its impudence that the most short-sighted Christian can hardly fail to notice it. During the past few years, this evil has developed at an alarming rate.

It has worked like leaven until the whole lump ferments. The devil has seldom done a more clever thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them. From speaking out of the gospel, the church has gradually toned down her testimony, then winked at and excused the frivolities of the day.

Then she tolerated them in her borders. Now she has adopted them under the plea of reaching the masses. My first contention is that providing amusement for people is nowhere spoken of in the scriptures as a function of the church.

If it is a Christian work, why did not Christ speak of it? Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature and provide amusement for those who do not relish the gospel. No such words, however, are to be found. It did not seem to occur to him.

Where do entertainers come in? The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people or because they confronted them? The concert has no martyr role. Again, providing amusement is in direct opposition to the teaching and life of Christ and all his apostles.

What was the attitude of the apostolic church to the world? You are the salt of the world, not the sugar candy. You are something the world will spit out, not swallow. Had Jesus introduced more of the bright and pleasant elements into his teaching, he would have been more popular.

When many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him, I do not hear him say, run after these people, Peter, and tell them we will have a different style of service tomorrow, something short and attractive with little preaching. We will have a pleasant evening for the people. Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it.

Be quick, Peter. We must get the people somehow. No.

Jesus pitied sinners, sighed, and wept over them, but he never sought to amuse them. In vain will the epistles be searched to find any trace of the gospel of amusement. Their message is, therefore, come out from them and separate yourselves from them.

Don't touch their filthy things. Anything approaching amusement is conspicuous by its absence. They had boundless confidence in the gospel and employed no other weapon.

After Peter and John were locked up for preaching, the church had a prayer meeting, but they did not pray, Lord, grant unto your servants that by a wise and discriminating use of innocent recreation, we may show these people how happy we are. No, they did not cease from preaching Christ. They had no time for arranging entertainments.

Scattered by persecution, they went everywhere preaching the gospel. They turned the world upside down. That is the only difference from today's church.

Lastly, amusement fails to affect the end desired. Let the heavy-laden who found peace through the concert not keep silent. Let the drunkard to whom the dramatic entertainment had been God's link in the chain of their conversion stand up.

There are none to answer. The mission of amusement produces no converts. The need of the hour for today's ministry is earnest spirituality joined with biblical doctrine, so understood and felt that it sets men on fire.

Lord, clear the church of all the rot and rubbish which the devil has imposed on her and bring us back to apostolic methods.

063 Bliss Beyond What the Angels Know

Bliss Beyond What the Angels Know by Charles Spurgeon Why me, Lord? Words cannot express the joy of heart which I feel in knowing that Jesus is with me and that He has loved me with an everlasting love. I shall never understand, even in heaven, why the Lord Jesus should ever have loved me. There is no love like it.

Why was it fixed upon me? Have you never felt that you could go in like David and sit before the Lord and say, Who am I, O Lord God, that you have saved me? Yet wonderful as it is, it is true. Jesus loves His believing people. He loves them now at this very moment.

Do you not rejoice in it? I assure you that in the least drop of the love of Christ, when it is consciously realized, there is more sweetness than there would be in all heaven without it. Talk of bursting barns, overflowing wine vats, and riches treasured up, these give but a poor solace to the heart. But the love of Jesus, this is another word for heaven.

It is a marvel that even while we are here below, we should be permitted to enjoy a bliss beyond what the angels know.

064 I Bequeath My Pastor's Soul

I bequeath my pastor's soul to the devil. By Thomas Brooks. Covetousness which is idolatry.

Colossians 3 verse 5. Covetousness is explicit idolatry. Covetousness is the darling sin of our nation. This leprosy has infected all sorts and ranks of men.

Covetousness, being idolatry and the root of all evil, is highly provoking to God. Whatever a man loves most and best, that is his God. The covetous man looks upon the riches of the world as his heaven, his happiness, his great all.

His heart is most upon the world. His thoughts are most upon the world. His affections are most upon the world.

His discourse is most about the world. He who has his mind taken up with the world and chiefly delighted with the world's music, he has also his tongue tuned to the same key and takes his joy and comfort in speaking of nothing else but the world and worldly things. If the world is in the heart, it will break out at the lips.

A worldly-minded man speaks of nothing but worldly things. They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world. John 4 verse 5. The love of this world oils the tongue for worldly discourses and makes men forget God, neglect Christ, despise holiness, forfeit heaven.

Ah, the time, the thoughts, the strength, the efforts which are spent upon the world and the things of the world, while sinners' souls lie a-bleeding and eternity is hastening upon them. I have read of a greedy banker who was always best when he was most in talking of money. Being near his death, he was much pressed to make his will.

Finally, he dictates, First, I bequeath my own soul to the devil for being so greedy for the muck of this world. Secondly, I bequeath my wife's soul to the devil for persuading me to this worldly course of life. Thirdly, I bequeath my pastor's soul to the devil because he did not show me the danger I lived in nor reprove me for it.

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 1 Timothy 6 verse 9

065 The Difference Between the Godly

The Difference Between the Godly and the Ungodly By James Michael There is a wide difference in both principle and practice between the godly and the ungodly. The affections of the godly are refined, and their desires exalted. The inclinations of the ungodly are corrupt, and their desires groveling.

Sin has but a tottering standing, and a momentary abode in the godly. But sin has fixed its throne, and taken up its eternal residence in the ungodly. In the godly, grace and sin struggle for sovereignty.

In the ungodly, sin domineers, and there is no struggle. The godly is deeply concerned about world to come. The ungodly has no concern about eternal realities.

The speech of the godly is seasoned with grace. The discourse of the ungodly is insipid and vain. The godly has his hope fixed on God.

The ungodly has no fear of God before his eyes. The godly use the world without abusing it. The ungodly, in using the world, abuse both themselves and it.

The godly confesses God in his daily life, and rejoices with his whole heart in Him. The ungodly says in his practice, there is no God, and wishes in his heart that there were no God. The godly adores the creator above all else.

The ungodly worships the creature more than the creator. The godly uses God's name with profoundest reverence, and departs from iniquity. The ungodly profanes God's name with impudence, and adds iniquity to sin.

The godly redeems his time. The ungodly trifles away his time. The godly studies his duty and obedience to all God's precepts.

The ungodly shakes himself loose from every command of God. The godly forgives his foes. The ungodly lays a snare for his foes.

The godly commits it to God to avenge his wrong. The ungodly, fiery and tumultuous, seeks revenge. The godly loves chastity in all things.

The ungodly wallows in uncleanness. The godly is content with his condition. The ungodly covets all the day long.

The godly is pure in heart. The heart of the ungodly is like a cage full of unclean birds. The godly walks at liberty in the ways of God.

The ungodly is the servant and slave of sin. The Holy Spirit rules in the heart of the godly. Satan rules in the heart of the ungodly.

The godly has his conversation in heaven. The ungodly has his conversation in hell. As there is such a wide difference in their principles and practices, so also in their eternal destinies.

God is faithful. He has promised felicity to the pious and threatened vengeance to the wicked. The wicked is thrust out in his wickedness, but the righteous has hope in his death.

Proverbs 14 verse 32 The godly are under the blessing of God's love. The ungodly are under the curse of God's law. The godly with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation.

The ungodly shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. To the godly pertain all the exceeding great and precious promises. To the ungodly pertain all the threatenings of God.

Heaven shall be the palace of the godly. Hell shall be the prison of the ungodly. While the godly shall dwell through eternity with God, the ungodly shall be driven away into everlasting darkness.

Thus, the righteous and wicked are separated in their life and divided in their death. They are divided in their principles, in their practices, in their choices, in their joys, in their thoughts, in their company, in their speech, in their fears, in their expectations, in their death, and through eternity itself.

066 A Panacea

A Panacea by Thomas Watson The scripture is a golden epistle written by the Holy Spirit and sent to us from Heaven. The scripture is a spiritual looking glass to dress our souls by. It shows us heart sins, vain thoughts, unbelief, etc.

It not only shows us our spots, but washes them away. The scripture is an armory out of which we may fetch spiritual artillery to fight against Satan. When our Savior was tempted by the devil, He fetched armor and weapons from scripture.

It is written. The scripture is a panacea, or universal medicine for the soul. It gives a remedy to cure deadness of heart, Psalm 119 verse 50, pride, 1 Peter 5 verse 5, and infidelity, John 3 verse 36.

It is a garden of remedies where we may gather an antidote to expel the poison of sin. The scripture is the only standard of conduct. It is the only rule by which we are to square our lives.

It contains in it all things needful to salvation, what duties we are to do, what sins we are to avoid. When your words came, I ate them. They were my joy and my heart's delight, Jeremiah 15 verse 16.

All true solid comfort is fetched out of the word. The word is a spiritual garden and the promises are the fragrant flowers or spices in this garden. How should we delight to walk among these beds of spices? The scripture is a sovereign elixir or comfort in an hour of distress.

Your promise revives me. It comforts me in all my troubles, Psalm 119 verse 50. If we would have the scripture effectual, let us labor not only to have the light of it in our heads, but its power in our hearts.

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you, Psalm 119 verse 11. The word locked up in the heart is a preservative against sin. As one would carry an antidote with him when he comes near an infected place, so David carried the word in his heart as a sacred antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin.

When we read the Holy Scriptures, let us look up to God for a blessing. Let us pray that God would not only give us His word as a rule of holiness, but His grace as a principle of holiness. It is said that the alchemist can draw oil out of iron.

God's Spirit can produce grace in the most obdurate heart.

067 All The Whole Volume

All the Whole Volume of Perfections by Thomas Brooks Whom do I have in heaven but you? And I desire nothing on earth but you. My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart, My portion forever. Psalm 73 verses 25-26 The true Christian seeks God as his choicest and chief good.

God is a perfect good, a solid good. That is a perfect good, to which nothing can be added. That is a solid good, from which nothing can be spared.

Such a good God is, and therefore He is chiefly to be sought. God is a pure and unmixed good. He is a light in whom there is no darkness, a good in whom there is no evil.

The goodness of the creature is mixed, yes, that little goodness, which is in the creature, is mixed with much evil. But God is an unmixed good. He is good.

He is pure good. He is all over good. He is nothing but good.

God is an all-sufficient good. Augustine said, He has all who has the haver of all. God has in himself all power to defend you, all wisdom to direct you, all mercy to pardon you, all grace to enrich you, all righteousness to clothe you, all goodness to supply you, all happiness to crown you.

God is a satisfying good, a good that fills the heart and quiets the soul. In Him I have all. I have all comforts, all delights, all contentments.

As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is to be found in one piece of gold, so all the petty excellencies which are scattered abroad in the creatures are to be found in God. Yes, all the whole volume of perfections, which is spread through heaven and earth, is epitomized in Him. No good below Him who is the greatest good can satisfy the soul.

A good wife, a good child, a good name, a good estate, a good friend cannot satisfy the soul. These may please, but they cannot satisfy. Ah, that we should seek early, seek earnestly, seek affectionately, seek diligently, seek primarily, and seek unweariedly this God, who is the greatest good, the best good, the most desirable good, the most suitable good, the most pure good, the most satisfying good, a total good, and an eternal good.

Whom do I have in heaven but you? And I desire nothing on earth but you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever. Psalm 73 verses 25 through 26

068 The Most Precious Thing In Heaven

The Most Precious Thing in Heaven or Earth By John Flavel In giving Christ to die for poor sinners, God gave the richest jewel in His cabinet, a mercy of the greatest worth and most inestimable value. Heaven itself is not so valuable and precious as Christ is. Ten thousand thousand worlds, as many worlds as angels can number, would not outweigh Christ's love, excellency, and sweetness.

Oh, what a lovely one! What an excellent, beautiful, ravishing one is Christ! Put the beauty of ten thousand paradises, like the Garden of Eden, into one. Put all flowers, all fragrances, all colors, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness into one. Oh, what a lovely and excellent thing would that be! And yet it would be less to that loveliest and dearest well-beloved Christ than one drop of rain to all the seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths.

Now, for God to bestow the mercy of mercies, the Most Precious Thing in Heaven or Earth upon poor sinners, and as great, as lovely, as excellent as His Son was. What kind of love is this?

069 Such A Friend

Such a Friend by Thomas Brooks There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18 verse 24. Such a friend is Jesus.

He is so a friend to every one of his people as if he were a friend to none besides. Jesus is an omnipotent friend, an omniscient friend, an omnipresent friend, an indeficient friend, a sovereign friend, an immutable friend, a loving friend, a faithful friend, a compassionate friend, a close friend, a universal friend, a friend in all cases and in all places, our first friend, a constant friend, whom he loves, he loves to the end. John 13 verse 1. He is altogether lovely.

This is my beloved, this my friend. Song of Songs 5 verse 16.

070 Spit Out The Sweet Morsels of Sin

Spit out the sweet morsels of sin by Thomas Brooks. When he comes, he will convict the world about sin. John 16 verse 8. A man never comes to see his sins, nor to be sick of his sins, nor to loathe his sins, nor to arraign his sins, nor to condemn his sins, nor to judge himself for his sins, until he comes to be possessed by the Holy Spirit.

A man never comes to spit out the sweet morsels of sin, to make a sacrifice of his only Isaac, to hack his trembling Agag in pieces, to strangle his Delilah, and in good earnest to set upon an utter extirpation of his most cherished sins, until the Spirit of holiness comes upon him, until the Holy Spirit falls upon the hearts of sinners. They will never be turned out of their pride, their formality, their carnality, their sensuality, their security. To make a man holy is greater than to create a world.

It can be done by none but by the Holy Spirit. It is the great work of the Spirit to shape and form holiness in all the vessels of glory. The Spirit sweetly and strongly moves his people to mind holiness, to fall in love with holiness, to press after holiness, to leave off their sins, to turn to God, to embrace Christ, to tremble at his threatenings, to embrace his promises.

For more information visit www.fema.org

071 A Base Heathenish Invention

A Base Heathenish Invention by Charles Spurgeon. The word chance should be forever banished from the Christian's conversation. Luck, or chance, is a base, heathenish invention.

God rules and overrules all things, and he does nothing without a motive. The falling of a sparrow to the earth is in the divine purpose and answers an end. Every grain of dust that is whirled from the threshing floor is steered by God with as unerring a wisdom as the stars in their courses.

There is not a leaf which trembles and falls in the autumn breeze but is piloted by the plan and purpose of the Lord. The insatiable archer of death is not permitted to shoot his bolts at random. Every arrow that flies bears this inscription, I have a message from God for you.

A purpose consistent with the love and justice of God lies hidden in the harvest of death.

072 Not Puny Sinful Worms

Deliverance seldom comes in the way we look for it. For who has directed the spirit of the Lord? Or who gave him his counsel? Who did he consult with? Who gave him understanding and taught him the paths of justice? Who taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding? Isaiah 40 verses 13 and 14. Ah, has not the Lord frustrated our purposes over and over again? I cannot tell you with what majesty this passage has often come to my mind.

Who gave him his counsel? Not puny, sinful worms. He will counsel for them, but not with them. My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

Yet fear not, worm Jacob, I will help you. Help you to stand still and see my salvation. Or help you to walk on in the dark in a rough and unknown path, just as my wisdom sees fit.

Spiritual eyesight is not given to look at the outward path, but to look at our guide. Not to look before us at the way we are going to travel, but to look only at him who will guide us safely through all, who will himself be our way. Oh, to be kept abiding in him and constantly looking unto him, it is most safe and blessed, but very contrary to flesh and blood.

I will lead the blind by a way they did not know. I will guide them on paths they have not known. I will turn darkness to light in front of them and rough places into level ground.

This is what I will do for them, and I will not forsake them. Isaiah 42 verse 16.

073 A Cooler Hell

A Cooler Hell by Thomas Brooks God, I thank you that I'm not like other people, greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give a tenth of everything I get.

Luke 18, verses 11 and 12. Many please and satisfy themselves with mere civility and common morality. They bless themselves that they are not swearers, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor adulterers, etc.

Their behavior is civil, sincere, harmless, and blameless. But civility is not sanctity. Civility rested in is but a beautiful abomination, a smooth way to hell and destruction.

Civility is very often the nurse of impiety, the mother of flattery, and an enemy to real sanctity. There are those who are so blinded with their fair shows of civility that they can neither see the necessity nor beauty of sanctity. There are those who now bless themselves in their common morality, whom at last God will scorn and cast off for lack of real holiness and purity.

A moral man may be an utter stranger to God, to Christ, to Scripture, to the filthiness of sin, to the depths and devices of Satan, to their own hearts, to the new birth, to the great concerns of eternity, to communion with Christ, to the secret and inward ways and workings of the Spirit. Well, sirs, remember this. Though the moral man is good for many things, yet he is not good enough to go to heaven.

He who rises to no higher pitch than civility and morality shall never have communion with God in glory. The most moral man in the world may be both Christless and graceless. Morality is not sufficient to keep a man out of eternal misery.

All morality can do is to help a man to one of the best rooms and easiest beds which hell affords. For as the moral man's sins are not so great as others, so his punishments shall not be so great as others. This is all the comfort that can be given to a moral man, that he shall have a cooler hell than others have.

But this is but cold comfort. Morality without piety is as a body without a soul. Will God ever accept of such a stinking sacrifice? Surely not.

But the tax collectors stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, God, have mercy on me, a sinner. I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.

074 Where Then Are All My Spots

Where, then, are all my spots? By Susanna Spurgeon You are all beautiful, my beloved. There is no spot in you. Song of Songs 4, verse 7 Ah, I hear some timid, trembling believer say, Such a text can have nothing to do with me.

I am the very opposite of all that is beautiful and spotless. The eyes of my soul have seen hideous sights within, which I can never forget. And I loathe myself and my sins so much, that though I believe God has forgiven me for Christ's sake, I feel it impossible to take those precious words as address to one so sinful and imperfect as myself.

Yet, trembling soul, I would bid you take courage and look up. Christ's love for His people is marvelously set forth in this Song of Songs. The same precious blood was poured out to redeem the least lamb of the flock, as for the choicest sheep.

Come, then, timid one. Rejoice in the blessed fact that you are indeed precious to the Lord. And He says, You are all beautiful, my beloved.

Adoringly bow before Him in wonder at the miracle His love has wrought in you. It ill befits the bride of Christ to ignore His loveliness, which He has put upon her, and go about bemoaning the scars and blemishes which His great love overlooks and forgets. It is quite true that, in themselves, believers are sorrowfully imperfect and sinful.

But if the Lord Jesus, in His marvelous mercy, unrobes Himself to cover over their unrighteousness, they may well be content to be thus made beautiful in His sight. We cannot comprehend the mystery and sublimity of divine love. But it is the sole and all-sufficient reason for the dear Lord's estimate of us.

And when He uses such endearing language, our hearts melt and are ravished by His wondrous condescension. With reverence we say it when our dear Master dines to address us in accents of love and admiration. Our souls are thrilled with heavenly bliss, and we are uplifted beyond all the sorrows and vexations of this world into an atmosphere of unspeakable spiritual joy.

My beloved, oh, say it again, dear Savior. Let the music of Your voice touch and vibrate through the deepest chords of my nature and awaken sweet responses in my soul. You are the fount and source of all love.

Oh, fill me, overwhelm me, plunge me in this sea of mercy and of grace. I would be swallowed up in it, knowing no other joy or bliss comparable to that of being able to say, My beloved is mine, and I am His. There is no spot in You.

Can our loving Lord really mean this? He does, indeed. Where, then, are all my spots, dear Lord? For they were legion, and sin must render me vile and loathsome in Your pure sight. All the sins, past, present, and future, all the deformity and blackness, are cleansed away by Christ's blood, covered by His righteousness.

And so completely is this done, that God Himself can find no remnant or stain of that which would have meant eternal death to an unwashed soul. The poor sinner is lifted from the depths of sin to the heights of heavenly bliss. What kind of love is this? It is so divine and incomprehensible that, in the contemplation of it, we are lost in wonder and amazement.

Lord Jesus, what a glorious Savior You are! All the sin which made Your bride so black and vile was laid upon You. There is no spot in You. An old writer says, now, if God sees no spot, why should you be prying after one? Pouring over your misery, searching after your blackness and depravity, will be no help to you.

This only keeps your eyes off Jesus, instead of up unto Jesus. You cannot look two ways at once. How did the poor serpent-bitten Israelites in the wilderness get relief and healing? By looking to their sores, their wounds, their malady? Oh, no! It was by looking to the brazen serpent.

And if you would get relief, it must be by looking to Jesus Christ.

075 Idling Life Away Like An Idiot

Idling Life Away Like an Idiot or a Madman By J.C. Philpott When one is spiritually reborn, he sees at one and the same moment God and self, justice and guilt, power and helplessness, a holy law and a broken commandment, eternity and time, the purity of the Creator and the filthiness of the creature. And these things he sees not merely as declared in the Bible, but as revealed in himself as personal realities involving all his happiness or all his misery in time and in eternity. Thus it is with him as though a new existence has been communicated, as if for the first time he had found there was a God.

It is as though all his days he had been asleep and were now awakened, asleep upon the top of a mast with the raging waves beneath, as if all his past life were a dream and the dream were now at an end. He has been hunting butterflies, blowing soap bubbles, angling for minnows, picking daisies, building houses of cards and idling life away like an idiot or a madman. He had been perhaps wrapped up in a religious profession, advanced even to the office of a deacon or mounted in a pulpit.

He had learned to talk about Christ and election and grace and fill his mouth with the language of Zion. But what did he experimentally know of these things? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Ignorant of his own ignorance, of all kinds of ignorance, the worst, he thought himself rich and increased with goods and to have need of nothing and knew not that he was wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

076 When He Shows No Anger

When He Shows No Anger by Thomas Brooks The Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every son whom he receives. Hebrews 12 verse 6 There cannot be a greater evidence of God's hatred and wrath than His refusing to correct men for their sinful courses and vanities. Where God refuses to correct, there God resolves to destroy.

There is no man so near God's axe, so near the flames, so near hell, as he whom God will not so much as spend a rout upon. Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. Revelation 3 verse 19 God is most angry when He shows no anger.

Who can seriously meditate upon this and not be silent under God's most smarting rod?

077 As Proud and Carnal As Ever

As proud and carnal as ever. By Thomas Watson. Grace changes the heart.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5 verse 17.

The true Christian has a great change wrought. Not a change of the faculties, but of the tendencies. He is altered from what he was before.

His body is the same, but not his mind. Oh, what a metamorphosis does grace make. There is a change wrought in the understanding.

Before, there was ignorance, but now there is light. The first work of God in the creation of the world was light. Likewise, it is in the new creation.

He now says, I once was blind, but now I see. John 9 verse 25. He sees such evil in sin and excellency in the ways of God as he never saw before.

It is a marvelous light because it is more penetrating. Other light may shine upon the face, but this light shines into the heart and enlightens the conscience. 2 Corinthians 4 verse 6. There is a change wrought in the will.

The will, which before opposed Christ, now embraces him. The will, which was an iron sinew against Christ, is now like melting wax and readily receives the stamp and impression of the Holy Spirit. The will now moves heavenward and carries all the affections along with it.

The will now says, Lord, what will you have me to do? Acts 9 verse 6. Before, the will kept Christ out. Now it keeps sin out. Oh, what a happy change is wrought here.

There is a change wrought in the conduct. He who is saved walks directly contrary to what he did before. He once walked in envy and malice.

Now he walks in love. He once walked in pride. Now he walks in humility.

In the heart there is a new birth and in the life there is a new conduct. Thus we see what a mighty change grace makes. How far are they from salvation who never had any change? They are the same today as they were forty or fifty years ago.

They are as proud and carnal as ever. They have had no change in their heart. Let not them think to leap out of the harlot's lap, the world, into Abraham's bosom.

They must either have a gracious change while they live or a cursed change when they die.

078 The Miserable Dregs of Self

The Miserable Dregs of Self by J.C. Philpott Accepted in the Beloved Ephesians 1 verse 6 We are ever looking for something in self to make ourselves acceptable to God. We are often sadly cast down and discouraged when we cannot find in ourselves that holiness, that obedience, that calm submission to the will of God, the serenity of soul, that spirituality, that heavenly mindedness, which we believe to be acceptable in God's sight. Our crooked tempers, our fretful, peevish minds, our rebellious thoughts, our coldness and barrenness, our alienation from good, our headlong proneness to evil, with the daily feeling that we get no better but rather worse, makes us think that God views us just as we ourselves.

And this brings on great darkness of mind and bondage of spirit until we seem to lose sight of our acceptance in Christ and get into the miserable dregs of self, almost ready to quarrel with God because we are so vile and only get worse as we get older. Now, the more we get into these dregs of self and the more we keep looking at the dreadful scenes of wreck and ruin which our heart presents to daily view, the farther do we get from the grace of the gospel and the more do we lose sight of the only ground of our acceptance with God. It is in the beloved that we are accepted and not for any good works, good words, good thoughts, good hearts, or good intentions of our own.

If our acceptance with God depended on anything in ourselves, we would have to believe we might be children of God today and children of the devil tomorrow. What, then, is to keep us from sinking altogether into despair without hope or help? Why, a knowledge of our acceptance in the beloved, independent of everything in us, good or bad. And you are complete in Him.

Colossians 2 verse 10

079 They Chained and Nailed Their God

They chained and nailed their God Apollo to a post. By Thomas Brooks. Moses said unto God, if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

Exodus 33 verse 15. Nothing would satisfy Moses below the presence of God because he knew that it would be better that they should never move a foot farther as to go on without God's favorable presence. God promised that His angel would drive all their enemies out of the land.

Oh, but if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. Yes, but I will bring the necks of all your proud, stout, strong, and subtle enemies under your feet. Oh, but if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

Yes, but I will bring you to a land flowing with milk and honey. I will make you suck honey out of the rock and oil out of the flinty rock and you shall drink the finest wine. Oh, but if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

Yes, but I will bring you to the paradise of the world, to a place of pleasure and delight, to Canaan, a type of heaven. Oh, but if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. Oh Lord, if I might have my wish, my desire, my choice, I would infinitely rather to live in a barren, howling wilderness with your presence than in Canaan without it.

It is a mercy to have an angel to guard us. It is a mercy to have our enemies sprawling under our feet. It is a mercy to be brought into a pleasant land.

Oh, but if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. Lord, nothing will please us. Nothing will profit us.

Nothing will secure us. Nothing will satisfy us without your presence. I have read of the Tyrians, that they bound their gods with chains, that they might secure them and not be conquered by their enemies.

And among the rest, they chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post, that they might be sure to keep their idol, because they thought their safety was in it. I am sure of this, that our safety, our comfort, our all, lies in the special presence of God with us. Therefore, let us, by faith and prayer, chain God to ourself.

If we let him go, a thousand worlds cannot make up his absence. The heathens in Troy imagined that so long as their idol was kept safe, they were unconquerable. All the strength and power of Greece would never be able to prevail against them.

Therefore, the Grecians sought by all the means they could to get this idol from them. Oh, my friends, so long as you keep the presence of God with you, I am sure you are unconquerable. But if God withdraws his special presence, the weakest enemy will be too hard for you.

Yes, wounded men will prevail over you. The burning bush, which was a type of the church, was not consumed because God was in the midst of it. Oh, do but keep God's special presence with you, and nothing shall hurt you, nothing shall burn you.

But if God's special presence departs, nothing can secure you. Moses said unto God, if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. Exodus 33 verse 15.

080 He Who Trifles With It Is A Fool

He who trifles with it is a fool, by J. A. James. If the man who trembles at death is a coward, he who trifles with it is a fool. There is a thousand times more rationality in the trembler than in the trifler.

There is a phenomenon in the rational world well worthy of consideration, inquiry, and solution. The strange and fatal insensibility of men to the grand fact that they are mortal. Since it is infallibly certain that they must and will die, and since death is so solemn an event, how does it happen that so few ever seriously think of it or really prepare for it? One would think that so grand and solemn a fact as death, especially viewed in connection with the events which are to immediately follow it, heaven, hell, and eternity, along with the uncertainty how soon it may be realized, might operate with an unlimited and altogether overpowering influence upon men's minds and hearts.

But men wish to forget death. They try to forget it, and alas, too often succeed in accomplishing this fatal oblivion. Yet we can scarcely wonder at this when we consider what their spiritual condition is and what death is.

It is the commonness of death which deprives it of its extreme dreadfulness. If death happened in our world only once in a century, it would be felt like the shock of an earthquake and would hush the inhabitants of earth into a breathless silence while the echoes of the knell of the departed soul were reverberating around the globe. Death is the moment of destiny.

The seal of eternity. The cessation of probation. The commencement of retribution and judgment.

The antecedents of death are dreadful. So are the accompaniments. So are the consequences.

To every sense, death is revolting. To every social affection, death is crucifying. To reason, death is perplexing.

To everything but saving faith, death is overwhelming.

081 Treasures and Pleasures

Treasures and Pleasures by Thomas Watson I am your exceeding great reward. Genesis 15 verse 1 God himself is his people's reward. In what way is God the reward of his people? God is a satisfying reward.

God is a whole ocean of blessedness. So that the soul, while it is bathing in it, cries out in a divine ecstasy, I have enough. Here is fullness, but no excess.

Psalm 17 verse 15 I shall be satisfied when I awake in your likeness. That is, when I awake out of the sleep of death, having my soul embellished with the illustrious beams of your glory, I shall be satisfied. In God there is not only sufficiency, but redundancy, not only the fullness of the vessel, but the fullness of the fountain.

In God this ark of blessedness are all good things to be found. Therefore Jacob, having God for his reward, could say, I have enough, or as it is in the original, I have all. Genesis 33 verse 11 God is all marrow and fatness.

He is such a plenteous reward as exceeds our very faith. If the queen of Sheba's heart fainted when she saw all King Solomon's glory, what would it have done to have beheld the astonishing and magnificent reward which God bestows upon His favorites? God is a suitable reward. The soul, being spiritual, must have something comparable and suitable to make it happy, and that is God.

Light is no more suitable to the eye, nor melody to the ear, than God is to the soul. He pours spiritual blessings into the soul. Ephesians 1 verse 3 He enriches it with grace, feasts it with His love, and crowns it with heavenly glory.

God is a pleasant reward. He is the quintessence of delight. He is all beauty and love.

To be feeding upon thoughts of God is delicious. Psalm 104 verse 34 My meditation on Him shall be sweet. It is delightful to the bee to suck the flower.

Just so, by holy musing, to suck out some of the sweetness in God carries a secret delight in it. To have a prospect of God only by faith is pleasant. 1 Peter 1 verse 8 In whom believing you rejoice.

Then what will the joy of vision be when we shall have a clear personal sight of Him and be laid in the bosom of divine love? What a delicious reward will God be in heaven! This will be better felt than expressed. The godly, entering upon their celestial reward, are said to enter into the joy of their Lord. Matthew 25 verse 21 Oh, amazing! The saints enter into God's own joy.

They have not only the joy which God bestows, but the joy which God enjoys. God is a transcendent reward. The artist, going to paint the picture of Helena, not being able to draw her beauty, drew her face covered with a veil.

Just so, when we speak of God's excellencies, we must draw a veil. He is so supereminent a reward that we cannot set Him forth in all His luster and magnificence. Put the whole world in scale with Him, and it is as if you should weigh a feather compared to a mountain of gold.

God is far better than all other things put together. He is better than the world and better than heaven. He is the original cause of all good things.

Nothing is sweet without Him. He perfumes and sanctifies our comforts. God being an infinite reward, there can be no defect or scantiness in Him.

There is no lack in that which is infinite. Some may ask, is God sufficient for every individual saint? Yes. If the sun, which is but a finite creature, disperses its light to the universe, then much more God, who is infinite, distributes glory to the whole number of the elect.

As every person enjoys the whole sun to himself, so every believer possesses the whole God to himself. The Lord has land enough to give all His heirs. Throw a thousand buckets into the sea, and there is water enough in the sea to fill them.

Just so, though there are millions of saints and angels, there is enough in God to fill them. God is an infinite reward, and though He is continually giving out His fullness to others, yet He has not the less. His glory is imparted, but never impaired.

It is a distribution without a diminution. God is an honorable reward. Honor is the height of men's ambition.

Aristotle calls honor the greatest of blessings. What greater dignity than to be taken up into communion with the God of glory and to possess a kingdom with Him, bespangled with light and seated with Christ upon His throne above all the visible orbs. God is an everlasting reward.

Mortality is the flaw of all earthly things. But God is an eternal reward. Eternity cannot be measured by years nor ages.

Eternity makes glory weighty. Psalm 48, verse 14 This God is our God forever and ever. O saints of God, your praying and repenting are but for a while, but your reward is forever.

As long as God is God, He will be rewarding you. Hosea 2, verse 19 I will betroth you unto Me forever. God marries Himself to His people, and this admits of no divorce.

God's love for His elect is as unchangeable as His love for Christ. Psalm 73, verse 26 My portion forever. This portion cannot be spent because it is infinite, nor can it be lost because it is eternal.

In God are treasures which can never be emptied and pleasures which can never be ended. You have made known to me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in Your presence with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.

Psalm 16, verse 11

082 The Infernal Dungeon of Hell

The Infernal Dungeon of Hell By John Bunyan Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25, verse 41 Those in the infernal dungeon of hell will undergo a variety of torments. Those who are most afflicted upon earth have seldom any more than one malady at a time.

But should they have the plague, the gout, the stone, and fever all at one time, how miserable would they think themselves! Yet all that is but like the biting of a flea, compared to those intolerable, pungent pains which those in hell endure. There they have all the loathed variety of hell to grapple with, the unquenchable fire to burn them, a lake of burning brimstone ever choking them, eternal chains to bind them, utter darkness to affright them, and a worm of conscience which gnaws upon them eternally. Any one of these is worse to bear than all the torments which mankind ever felt on earth.

But the torments in hell are also universal, afflicting each part of the body and soul, which renders what they suffer most insufferable. In those illnesses which men are seized with on earth, though some parts are afflicted, other parts are free. But in hell, each member of the soul and body is continually tormented.

The eye is tormented with the sight of the devils, who appear in all the horrid and black shapes which sin can give them. The ear is tormented with the loud yellings and continual outcries of the damned. The nostrils are smothered with sulfurous flames.

The tongue is covered with burning blisters. And the whole body is rolled in flames of liquid fire. The imagination is tormented with the thoughts of what a heaven has been lost.

The memory is tormented with reflecting on those opportunities they had of being saved. The mind is tormented with considering how vainly precious time has been wasted. The understanding is tormented with the thoughts of present pains and future sorrows, which are to last forever.

The conscience is tormented with the continual gnawing worm. Another thing which makes the misery of hell so dreadful is the extremity of the torments. The fire which burns is so violent that all the water in the sea can never quench it.

The pains suffered are so extreme that it is impossible they should be known by any but those who feel them. Another part of hell's misery is the ceaselessness of the torments. As various, as universal, and as extremely violent as they are, they are continual also.

Nor have they the least rest from them. If there were any relaxation, it might be some ally. But what makes this condition so deplorable is that there is no easing of the torments.

They will go away into eternal punishment. The company they have there is another element of their misery. Tormenting devils and tormented souls are all the company.

Dreadful shrieks and howlings under the fierceness of pain and fearful blasphemies is all the conversation. The place in which they suffer is another thing which increases the sufferings. Hell is the epitome of all misery.

A prison. A dungeon. A bottomless pit.

A lake of fire and brimstone. A furnace of fire which burns to eternity. The blackness of darkness forever.

The cruelty of our tormentors is another thing which adds to the torments. The tormentors are devils in whom there is no pity. Being tormented themselves, they take pleasure in tormenting others.

But that which makes these sufferings most grievous is that they shall always be so. These most intolerable sufferings shall last to all eternity. Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire will perpetually sound in the ears of the damned.

The miserable situation they are in shall be forever.

083 The Last Pang, and Groan, and Tear

The Last Pang and Groan and Tear by J.A. James The Christian also looks to the end of afflictions. The end may sometimes come in this world. In reference to this, the utmost that the believer can be sure of is that they will end in God's time.

They may last for his whole life. The sickness which afflicts his body may be unto death. The loss which he has sustained in his property may be irreparable.

And poverty may go down with him to the grave. The trial which beclouds and distresses his spirits may be his lot for life. But on the other hand, they may not.

God may be bringing him through fire and through water to bring him out into a wealthy place. But the Christian leaves this in the hand of God and endeavors to maintain a hope which shall save him from despondency, checked at the same time by a reverence that guards him from unwarranted presumption. But if the end of the trial should not come in this world, it will come in the next world, when they will not only forever cease, but leave an eternal blessing behind.

I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Four things are set forth in these passages.

1. Our afflictions will have a termination. This is sweet. They are to end.

They are not to last forever. The last pang and groan and tear are at hand, and how near the Christian never knows. 2. Our afflictions are not to end like those of the brute creation, in the grave merely, but in heaven.

The last pang and groan and tear are to usher in that blessed state of which it is so beautifully said, The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Heaven shall terminate the afflictions of the righteous. 3. Heaven is so glorious that the first view of its scenes and the first moment of its enjoyment shall make amends for the longest life of the most protracted and intense sufferings.

4. The sufferings of our earthly pilgrimage will enhance and increase the felicities of heaven. Their submissive endurance, the graces which they call into exercise, the sanctification which they promote, the heavenly temper which they cultivate, will be the means of ripening the spirit and making it fit for its eternal inheritance. 5. Every tear that is shed, every groan that is heaved, every loss that is sustained, every moment of suffering that is endured, every disappointment that is experienced, which is borne with patience, with resignation, with unwearied holiness, will not only be followed with millions of ages of ineffable felicity, but will prepare the soul for its enjoyment and add some measure to its weight and its luster.

084 A Cold Chill Fell Upon Their Health

A Cold Chill Fell Upon Their Hearts By J. A. James It has frequently occurred that young converts, in the ardor of their first love, and while much unacquainted as yet with what is called the religious world, have looked upon the church as a sacred enclosure within which dwelt a kind of heavenly inhabitants who could think or speak of little else than the glory which awaited them. In the church, these novices expected to find the sweetest and holiest fellowship, an almost unearthly spirituality, and an uninterrupted strain of pious conversation. But alas, what a woeful disappointment did the reality produce.

In the sacred enclosure, they found worldly-minded professors, almost as intent upon seen and temporal things as those they had left out in the world. In the vestibule of heaven, they beheld professors covered with the earthly dust, disordered with worldly concerns, and given up to worldly amusements. In the church members, they saw little but worldly conduct, and heard little else but worldly conversation.

A cold chill fell upon their hearts, which checked the ardor of their pious affections, and even they, lately so fervent, soon sunk and settled down into the lukewarmness of those among whom they had come to dwell.

085 Let Your Light Shine

Let Your Light Shine, by John McDuff. Let your life shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father in heaven. Matthew 5, verse 16.

There are many things connected with the Christian's pathway which worldlings cannot comprehend. They know nothing of the high and hidden walks of spiritual experience. What is said of the workings of the divine life in the soul is regarded by them as foolishness and fanaticism.

Its internal principles, its constraining motives and impulses, its heavenly aspirations, its rapturous bliss, and its agonizing struggles, are things which these strangers cannot comprehend. But still, there is much which they are able to understand, such as whatever is consistent in character, whatever is honest and straightforward between men, whatever is kind and compassionate in behavior, whatever is forbearing and forgiving under insults and injuries. Such features, when unostentatiously exhibited, excite their attention and generally call forth their praise.

The manner in which the ordinary duties of life are discharged is something so tangible that it lies within the province of their own observation. These things they can understand, and it is of the highest importance that all who profess to be Christians should be distinguished by an exhibition of these practical fruits of righteousness. What if a small band of Christians were placed in some locality by whom the principles of the gospel were fully lived out? What a powerful effect, we may suppose, would their simple presence produce? Let them be connected with those around them by the ordinary engagements of life, but without employing any direct means to promulgate their Christian views.

There they are blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation. Their hearts are filled, not merely with love to God, but with sincere and ardent affection for all by whom they are surrounded. Selfishness, pride, resentment, censoriousness have no place among them.

Their entire spirit and deportment are influenced and controlled by those noble and generous and God-like sentiments and feelings which Christianity inculcates and inspires. The holy religion they profess would appear in its true character and beneficent tendency, and men would be constrained by the good works which they beheld to glorify God. May the Lord strengthen you with all might according to His glorious power, that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

086 Monsters of Cruelty

Monsters of Cruelty by James Michael Now that I am a father and know the affection of a parent, would I not defend from every danger? Would I not bestow every truly good thing? Would I not implore every blessing on my tender children? Would I not nourish their infant state, correct and educate their childhood, inspect, reprove, and admonish them in youth? Would I allow the dear little creatures to play with sharp pointed knives, to frolic on the brink of a rapid torrent, or dance around a pit's mouth? Would I permit them to eat deadly berries, or to put a cup of poison to their tender lips? However indulgent, would I allow them to disobey my commands? And if they labored under any disease which threatened their precious life, what pains or expenses would I spare to procure them relief? If assured that a physician lived somewhere who could heal them without fail, would I not send to the uttermost corner of the land? Would I not travel to the ends of earth? But hear me, oh parents, if our concern for our children ends only with their bodies, we are monsters of cruelty. Would we pluck them from fire and water, and yet permit them to plunge into the fire of hell, and lie under the billows of Jehovah's wrath? Will we snatch from them sword, pistol, or knife, and allow them to wound themselves to the very soul with sin? Will we chastise their disobedience to us, and wink at their spitting in the very face of God, by open acts of sin? Are we fond to have them educated and well-bred, and yet let them live in the neglect of prayer, which is the highest disrespect that can be put upon the author of our being? In a word, is this the sum of our kindness? Is this the height of our concern for our dear children? To see them happy in time, flourishing in the affairs of this life, though they end up being miserable beyond description through eternity itself? Will their bodily pain excite our sympathy, and will we do all in our power to have their diseases healed, and yet have no concern that their souls pine under sin, and they suffer all the pangs of hell? Will we not bring them in our prayers to the physician of souls, to the Savior of sinners? I have but one request for all of my children, and that is that they may fear and serve God here, and enjoy Him forever. No matter though they sweat for their daily bread, only let them feed on the hidden manna.

Let them toil and spin for their apparel, but let them be covered in Christ's righteousness. How would I count my house renowned and my family ennobled if there sprang from it not wealthy princes or kings let potsherds of the earth strive for such earthly vanities, but pillars for the temple of God in glory, who shall dwell in the presence of the King of kings, when time is no more.

087 You Blind Fools

You Blind Fools, by Thomas Watson. Yes, he is very precious to you who believe, 1 Peter 2, verse 7. There is nothing in Christ but what is precious. His name is precious.

His virtues are precious. His blood is precious, more precious than the world. The rose of Sharon is always sweet.

We cannot prize Christ at too high a rate. We may prize other things above their value, and that is our sin. We commonly overrate the creature.

We think there is more in it than there is. Therefore God withers our gourd because we overprize it. But we cannot raise our esteem of Christ high enough.

He is beyond all value. There is no ruby or diamond, but the jeweler can set a fair price on it. But Christ's worth can never be fully known.

No seraphim can set a due value on him. His riches are unsearchable. Christ is more precious than heaven.

True Christians prize Christ as most precious. He is their chief treasure and delight. The reason why millions perish is because they do not prize Christ.

The ungodly choose things of no value before Christ. You blind fools! If a person chooses an apple before a priceless diamond, he is judged to be a fool. How many such idiots are there who choose the gaudy, empty things of this world before the Prince of Glory? Give a baby a rattle and it will not want gold.

Give a worldling his lusts and he will be content enough without Christ. We value Christ above honor and riches. This pearl of great price lies nearest our heart.

He who prizes Christ esteems the gleanings of Christ better than the world's vintage. He counts the worst things of Christ better than the best things of the world. Moses regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt.

Hebrews 11 verse 26 If we are the prizers of Christ, we cannot live without Him. A man may live without music, but not without food. A child of God can lack health and friends, but he cannot lack Christ.

Give me children, said Rachel, or else I die. Genesis 30 verse 1 So the soul says, Give me Christ or else I shall die. Give me one drop of the water of life to quench my thirst.

If we are prizers of Christ, then we shall not complain at any pains to get Him. He who prices gold will dig for it in the mine. My soul follows hard after God.

Psalms 63 verse 8 He in whose eye Christ is precious never rests until he has gained Him. I sought Him whom my soul loves. I held Him and would not let Him go.

Canticles 3 verses 1 and 4 If we are prizers of Christ, then we take great pleasure in Christ. What joy a man takes in that which he counts his treasure! He who prizes Christ makes Him his greatest joy. He can delight in Christ when earthly delights are gone.

Though a flower in a man's garden dies, he can still delight in his money and jewels. He who esteems Christ can solace himself in Christ when there is a dearth of all other comforts. If we are prizers of Christ, then we will part with our dearest pleasures for Him.

He who esteems Christ will pull out that lust which is as precious as his right eye. He who sets a high value on Christ will set his feet on the neck of his sins. How can they be said to prize Christ who will not leave a vanity for Him, or who prefer a damning pleasure before a saving Christ? Yes, He is very precious to you who believe.

088 Men May See Something of God

Men May See Something of God in Me by J. A. James For I have given you an example that you should also do just as I have done for you. John 13, verse 15 It has long been my conviction that there is a great deficiency in evangelical churches of the practical enforcement of Christian duties in detail, especially of what may be emphatically called the Christian virtues, the passive graces of the Christian character, the exercise of brotherly kindness and love. It is not so acceptable to have all the special and difficult duties of the Christian life or man's conduct to his fellows set clearly before the understanding and enforced upon the conscience.

Men do not like to be followed through all the labyrinths of the heart's deceitfulness, beaten out of every refuge of lies, and made to feel the obligation to love where they are inclined to hate, and to forgive where they desire to revenge. And we ministers pander too much to this taste. The pulpit has not done its duty.

We have preached to the intellect, to the imagination and to the taste, but not enough to the heart and to the conscience. In our endeavor to please, we have not been sufficiently intent upon the greater object, to profit. We have not preached justification too much, but sanctification too little.

We have urged faith, but not love. We have discarded upon the evil of immorality and falsehood and dishonesty and covetousness, but have said far, far too little about malice and bitterness. We have urged men to zeal and liberality, but not enough to humility, forbearance and forgiveness.

We have rightly led men to view the cross of Christ, but we have not sufficiently urged them to take up their own cross. We have properly entreated them to view Jesus as their righteousness, but not sufficiently as their example. O Christians, study that wondrous character, contemplate that illustrious pattern, dwell upon that beautiful model, until the frosty incrustations of your cold hard heart have all melted like icicles before the sun.

How wonderful and how ennobling is the conception and what an ambition should it raise in the mind of the Christian to consider and say, men may see something of God in me. Yes, we can teach them what God is as to His moral character and let them see in our merciful disposition a ray of the infinite sun of His own glory. These sweet relentings of our nature, these soft and congenial currents of our soul, these effusions of love, these, we can remind them, are but the overflowings of His goodness, His own love, into our hearts and the reflection of His infinite mercy to us.

The one who says he abides in Him should walk just as He walked. 1 John 2 verse 6 Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps. 1 Peter 2 verse 21

089 The Mortifying of Your Darling Sin

The Mortifying of Your Darling Sins by Thomas Brooks Most professing Christians have not the right art of mortifying sin. All their attempts are to hide a lust, not to quench it. A great motive to provoke you to the mortifying of your darling sins is solemnly to consider that the conquest and effectual mortifying of one bosom's sin will yield a Christian more glorious joy, comfort, and peace than ever he has found in the gratifying and committing of all other sins.

The pleasure and sweetness which follows victory over sin is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness which is in the gratifying of sin. The joy which attends the subduing of sin is a noble joy, a pure joy, a special joy, an increasing joy, and a lasting joy. But that joy which attends the committing of sin is an ignoble joy, a corrupt joy, a decreasing joy, a dying joy.

The truth is, if there were the least real joy in sin, there could be no hell torments where men shall most totally sin and be most totally tormented with their sin. Ah, Christians, be restless until in the Spirit and power of Jesus you have brought under control that sin which sticks so close unto you. Remember this, nothing below the conquest of bosom sins can make a jubilee in the heart.

It is not a man's whining and complaining over sin, but his mortifying of sin, which will make his life a paradise of pleasure. If, notwithstanding all that has been said, you are still resolved to dally with sin, then you must resolve to live as a stranger to God. You must expect sad trials without and sore troubles within.

This shall be your just wages for playing with sin. If you like the wages, then dally with sin still. If otherwise, then sacrifice your Isaac.

Ah, souls, of all unpardoned sins, your bosom sins will be presented by God, conscience, and Satan at last as the most filthy and ugly, as the most terrible and dreadful. Your bosom sins at last will appear to be those monsters, those fiends of hell, which have most provoked God against you, which have shut up Christ's affection of love and compassion from you, which have armed conscience against you, which have barred the gates of glory against you, which have prepared the hottest place in hell for you, and which have given Satan the greatest advantage eternally to triumph over you.

090 Even Your Own Relatives

Even Your Own Relatives Think You Are Almost Insane By J.C. Philpott The spirit of truth, the world, cannot receive him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. John 14, verse 17 The world, that is, the world dead in sin, and the world dead in profession, men, destitute of the life and power of God, must have something that it can see. And, as heavenly things can only be seen by heavenly eyes, they cannot receive the things which are invisible.

Now this explains why a religion which presents itself with a degree of beauty and grandeur to the natural eye will always be received by the world, while a spiritual, internal, heartfelt, and experimental religion will always be rejected. The world can receive a religion that consists of forms, and rites, and ceremonies. These are things seen, beautiful buildings, painted windows, peeling organs, melodious choirs, the pomp and parade of an earthly priesthood, and a whole apparatus of religious ceremony carry with them something that the natural eye can see and admire.

The world receives all this external religion because it is suitable to the natural mind and intelligible to their reasoning faculties. But the quiet, inward, experimental, divine religion which presents no attractions to the outward eye but is wrought in the heart by a divine operation, the world cannot receive this because it presents nothing that the natural eye can rest upon with pleasure, or is adapted to gratify their general idea of what religion is or should be. Do not marvel, then, that worldly professors despise a religion wrought in the soul by the power of God.

Do not be surprised if even your own relatives think you are almost insane when you speak of the consolations of the Spirit or of the teachings of God in your soul. They cannot receive these things, for they have no experience of them, and being such as are altogether opposed to the carnal mind, they reject them with enmity and scorn.

091 Meditation

Meditation, by Octavius Winslow. My heart grew hot within me, and as I meditated, the fire burned. Psalm 39, verse 3. That is, while I was retracing all the way the Lord had led me, while I was meditating upon the fullness and preciousness of His word, and while I was musing upon the great love with which He had loved me, the fire in my soul was enkindled.

There are few more powerful aids to growth in grace, to progress in sanctification of heart and humbleness of mind, than devout meditation. Isaac went out to meditate in the field at evening. I meditate on you in the night watches.

Cultivate, my reader, this holy and useful habit. In a world of incessant action, and in an age of restless excitement, we have great need to imitate these holy examples, and to retire to the calm retreat, the silent shade, and there abandon ourselves to devout meditation upon divine, heavenly, and eternal things.

092 We Have Been Admiring Our Own Vileness

We Have Been Admiring Our Vile Selves By William Mason I hate pride and arrogance. Proverbs 8 verse 13 What a monster of pride is man! How full of that cursed venom is human nature! We cannot receive any grace or blessing from the Lord, but corrupt nature is prone to be proud of it and to boast in it. No one is exempt from this.

I appeal to your hearts. I refer to your experience when your heart has been enlarged in prayer, when your soul has been carried out in humblings, meltings, longings, aspirings, etc., when you have heard the Word with warm affections and heavenly joy, when your tongue has with sweetness and liberty talked of Christ to others, when your hand has been stretched forth to do any good work. Now in all these, Have you not found pride very busy? Have not you been ready to stroke yourself with pleasure and to reflect with delight, Well, now the Lord loves me indeed.

Surely He loves me better now that I find myself so holy and feel myself so heavenly. But where is our precious Jesus all this while? We have looked at ourselves until we have lost sight of Him. We have been admiring our vile selves for our graces, instead of being in raptures with Christ, who is altogether lovely, in whom all fullness of grace dwells, and out of whose fullness we receive grace upon grace.

The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Proverbs 16 verse 5.

093 He Welcomes Them To Hell

He Welcomes Them to Hell by Thomas Watson The Prince of this World, John 16, verse 11 The devil has a kingdom. His throne is set up in the hearts of men. Satan does not care for their purses, but their hearts.

Satan's empire is very large. Most people in the world pay tribute to him. His kingdom has two characters.

1. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of impiety. Nothing but sin goes on in his kingdom. Murder and heresy, lust and treachery, oppression and division are the constant trade driven in his dominions.

He is called the unclean spirit. Nothing else but iniquity is propagated in his kingdom. 2. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of slavery.

He makes all his subjects slaves. The sinner is held captive under the grim tyranny of the devil. 3. Satan is a tyrant and a worse tyrant than any other.

Other tyrants do but rule over the body, but Satan rules over the soul. He rides his captives as we ride upon horses. Other tyrants have some pity on their slaves.

Though they make them work in the galleys, yet they give them food and let them have their hours for rest. But Satan is a merciless tyrant who gives his slaves poison instead of food and hurtful lusts to feed on. 1 Timothy 6 verse 9 Nor will he let his slaves have any rest.

He wearies them out to do his drudgery. They weary themselves to commit iniquity. Jeremiah 9 verse 5 When men have served him to their utmost strength, he welcomes them to hell with fire and brimstone.

Thus, he is the worst of tyrants. Men are willing slaves to Satan. They will fight and die for him.

Therefore, he is not only called the Prince of this world, but the God of this world. 2 Corinthians 4 verse 4 To show what power he has over men's souls. O let us pray that they may come to their senses and escape the devil's trap having been captured by him to do his will.

2 Timothy 2 verse 26

094 We Also Rejoice In Our Afflictions

We also rejoice in our afflictions by James Michael. We also rejoice in our afflictions because we know that affliction produces endurance. Endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope.

Romans 5 verses 3 and 4. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Sometimes God kindly sends afflictions to chastise His people for sin and curb their carnal affections. Yet, at other times, He sends afflictions to exercise and improve their graces.

Whatever my affliction is, the wisdom of Him who sends it should make me embrace and bear it without repining. Afflictions do not spring out of the dust nor come at random. Some of God's favorite ones have, for wise ends, had the severest afflictions.

Affliction deadens the pleasures of sense and gives the soul a relish for spiritual things. It divorces the soul from the creature and draws it near to God. Affliction renders the creature tasteless and the world barren.

It dispels the intoxicating juice of carnal pleasures and sensual delights. I should welcome whatever afflictions loosen me from this world and bring me nearer to God.

095 It Makes Men So Filthy

It Makes Men So Filthy by Thomas Watson It is a part of our Christian profession to fight under Christ's banner against the world. The world is a flattering enemy. It shows its golden apple.

It is given to some as a snare. Take heed of being drowned in the world's luscious delights. It must be a strong brain which can bear heady wine.

Just so, he had need of a great deal of wisdom and grace who knows how to maintain a great estate. Riches often send up intoxicating fumes which make men's heads giddy with pride. It is hard to climb up the hill of God with too many golden weights.

The world shows its two breasts of pleasure and profit and many fall asleep with the breast in their mouth. The world never kisses us except with an intent to betray us. The world is a silken halter.

The world is no friend to grace. It chokes our love to heavenly things. The earth puts out the fire.

Naturally, we love the world. Too many are wedded to their money. They live together as man and wife.

Oh, let us take heed of being entangled in this pleasing snare. Many who have escaped the rock of scandalous sins yet have sunk in the world's golden quicksands. The sin is not in using the world but in loving it.

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2 verse 15.

Believers are called out of the world. They are not of the world even as I am not of it. John 17 verse 16.

They are in the world but not of it. A true saint is crucified in his affections to the world. Galatians 6 verse 14.

He is dead to the honors and pleasures of it. What delight does a dead man take in pictures or music? Jesus Christ gave himself to redeem us from this present evil world. Galatians 1 verse 4. Living fish swim against the stream.

We must swim against the world, else we shall be carried down the stream and fall into the dead sea of hell. The world is deceitful. Our Savior calls it the deceitfulness of riches.

Matthew 13 verse 22. The world promises happiness but gives weariness. It promises us Rachel but gives us bleary-eyed Leah.

The world promises to satisfy our desires but only increases them. The world gives poisoned pills but wraps them in sugar. The world is polluting.

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. It is called filthy lucre because it makes men so filthy. Men will damn themselves to get the world.

Ahab would have Naboth's vineyard though he swam to it in blood. The world is perishing. The world and its desires pass away.

The world is like a flower which withers while we are smelling it.

096 Toys and Playthings of the Religion

Toys and Playthings of the Religious Baby House by J.C. Philpott I will feed my flock. Ezekiel 34 verse 15. The only real food of the soul must be of God's own appointing, preparing, and communicating.

You can never deceive a hungry child. You may give it a plaything to still its cries. It may serve for a few minutes, but the pains of hunger are not to be removed by a doll.

A toy horse will not allay the cravings after the mother's breast. So with babes in grace. A hungry soul cannot feed upon playthings, altars, robes, ceremonies, candlesticks, bowings, mutterings, painted windows, intoning priests, and singing men and women.

These dolls and wooden horses, these toys and playthings of the religious baby house cannot feed the soul that, like David, cries out after the living God. Psalm 42 verse 23. Christ, the bread of life, the manna that came down from heaven, is the only food of the believing soul.

John 6 verse 51.

097 Pastoral Counsels

Pastoral Councils by James Michael Do not contract many worldly acquaintances. Learn to be abused without becoming angry. Do not meddle much with the affairs of this life.

Argue coolly and from conscience, not for victory. Do not pretend a show of sanctimony before men. Do not be ashamed of piety in any company.

Whatever else you read, read a double portion in the scriptures of truth. Shun familiarity with the men of the world, else celestial truths, as uttered by you, will be despised. Do not be much concerned about your own reputation, as long as the truth and the gospel do not suffer.

Learn daily more of Christ and more of yourself, else your other studies will profit little. Seek not great things for yourself. Seek not great fame, great applause, great comforts, or a great income.

But seek great things for Christ. Seek for Him great glory, many converts, and abundant fruit of righteousness. Consider the preciousness of souls, the value of salvation, the weight of the sacred charge, the terrors of the Almighty, the solemn day of judgment, and your own utter inability.

Then shall you have no vain confidence, but depend on God alone. Please all men so long as you are consistent with the truth, but do not wound the truth to please any. Set your affections on things above, so shall spiritual things be your delight and not your burden.

In company, always study to say something for edification. In this way, you preach every day as well as on Sundays. Be much with God in secret, so shall God be with you in public.

See that the behavior of every person in your family is a pattern to all observers, and not matter of reproach to the joy of God's enemies. Let your flock be continually on your mind, and not only pray with them in public and from house to house, but carry them to your closet and pray for them in private. Do not neglect to visit them at all proper times, but especially embrace those golden opportunities, sickness and affliction.

Have sympathetic feelings with the sufferings of all your flock. Let your life be consistent with your message. What you preach on Sunday, practice through the week.

Do not only press charity on the wealthy, but let your example, according to your ability, show the way. Lend your ear to reproaches rather than applauses. Reproaches may let us see some of our foibles or failings, but commendation is very apt to kindle self-conceit of which everyone has enough.

Be temperate in eating and drinking. Do not, when at a feast, though temperate at other times, be a glutton or a wine-bibber. With respect to your flock, consider that you are made the steward of this family, and therefore must, seeing the Great Master allows it, provide food for all, meat for the strong and milk for the weak.

Keep an exact list or catalog of your flock, who is pious or profligate, who is in affluence or poverty, who is in health or sick, and read it often. Give a pleasant ear when others are commended, but always frown away that friend who would commend you to your face. Be scant in exhibiting specimens of your learning or comments on the scriptures in their original languages, for a fine grammarian may be but a novice in true piety.

In preaching, aim at God's glory and the good of souls, and then, without deviating from that rule, please all men as much as possible. Let your sermons be always the fruit of much study and application, and never dare to serve God or His people with that which costs you nothing.

098 What Would You Ask For

What Would You Ask For? By Joseph Aline That night God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you. 2 Chronicles 1 verse 7 If God would give you your choice as he did to Solomon, what would you ask for? Go into the gardens of pleasure and gather all the fragrant flowers there. Would these satisfy you? Go to the treasures of Mammon.

Suppose you may carry away as much as you desire. Go to the towers, to the trophies of honor, and become a man of renown. Would any of these, would all of these satisfy you and make you to count yourself happy? If so, then certainly you are carnal and unconverted.

Converting grace turns the heart from its idols to the living God. Before conversion, the man minded his farm, friends, and pleasures more than Christ. He found more sweetness in his merry company, worldly games, earthly delights, than in Christ.

Now he says, But whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Philippians 3 verses 7 and 8

099 This Heavenly Light of Truth

This Heavenly Light of Truth by J. A. James All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3 verses 16 and 17. The doctrines of scripture are facts which involve corresponding emotions and principles of action and must, from their very nature, if believed, be operative upon the heart and the life.

If the doctrines of scripture exert no godly influence, carry with them no practical weight, exert no moral power, they are not truly believed. The doctrines of scripture are at once the source of consolation and the means of sanctification. The doctrines of scripture come into the mind as knowledge, produce peace and love in the heart and spread the beauties of holiness over the character and conduct.

The doctrines of scripture are light and, like the rays of the sun, they sustain life at the root of the vine and produce fruit on its branches. This heavenly light of truth gives spiritual vitality to the soul and holy conduct to the life. For our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

1 Thessalonians 1 verse 5. Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth. John 17 verse 17.

100 The Best Means To Mortify Sin

The Best Means to Mortify Sin by Thomas Brooks Therefore put to death whatever in you is worldly, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. Colossians 3 verse 5. While a darling sin lives and keeps the throne in the heart, grace and holiness will be kept exceeding weak and low. But when your darling sin is dethroned and slain by the power and the sword of the Spirit, grace and holiness will quickly grow stronger and stronger and rise higher and higher.

When a man has eaten poison, nothing will make him thrive until he has vomited up the poison. Beloved sins, they are the poison of the soul, and until these are vomited up and cast out by sound repentance and the exercise of faith in the blood of Christ, the soul will never thrive in grace and holiness. If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then fall with all your might upon subduing and crucifying your most raging corruptions and your most daring lusts.

Oh, do not think that your golden and your silver idols will lay down their weapons and yield the battle and lie at your feet and let you trample them to death without striking a blow. Oh, remember that besetting sins will do all they can to keep their ground, and therefore you must arise with all your strength against them and crush them to powder and burn them to ashes. Oh, deal with your most enraged lusts as the Philistines dealt with Samson.

Pluck out their eyes and force them to grind in the mill of mortification until their strength is utterly consumed and wasted. I have read of five men who being asked, What was the best means to mortify sin gave these answers? Said the first, the best means to mortify sin is to meditate on death. Said the second, the best means to mortify sin is to meditate on the judgment day.

Said the third, the best means to mortify sin is to meditate on the joys of heaven. Said the fourth, the best means to mortify sin is to meditate on the torments of hell. And said the fifth, the best means to mortify sin is to meditate on the death and sufferings of Christ.

Doubtless, the last man hit the nail on the head. The daily sight of a bleeding, groaning, dying Savior is the only thing which will subdue and mortify darling sins. Oh friends, never stop looking up to a crucified Christ until virtue flows from Him to the crucifying of those special, besetting sins which do most obstruct and hinder the growth and increase of holiness.

101 This Incomparable Book

This Incomparable Book by Thomas Brooks The whole of Scripture is but one entire love letter, dispatched from the Lord Christ to His beloved spouse. Oh, the mysteries, the excellencies, the glories which are in this Incomparable Book. There are none so useful, none so needful, none so delightful, none so necessary to make you happy and to keep you happy as this.

Ah, the Word of the Lord is a light to guide you, a counselor to counsel you, a comforter to comfort you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, a physician to cure you. The Word is a mine to enrich you, a robe to clothe you, a crown to crown you, bread to strengthen you, wine to cheer you, a honeycomb to feast you, music to delight you, a paradise to entertain you. The Word is a treasure.

Oh, therefore, before all and above all, search the Scripture, study the Scripture, meditate on the Scripture, delight in the Scripture, treasure up the Scripture. There is no wisdom like Scripture wisdom, no knowledge like Scripture knowledge, no experience like Scripture experience, no comforts like Scripture comforts, no delights like Scripture delights, no convictions like Scripture convictions, no conversion like Scripture conversion. I exhort you to a speedy, serious, diligent, and constant study of the Scripture.

Ah, you do not know how soon your blind minds may be enlightened, your hard hearts may be softened, your proud spirits may be humbled, your sinful natures may be changed, your defiled consciences may be purged, your distempered affections may be regulated, and your poor souls may be saved by searching into the Scriptures, by reading the Scripture, and by pondering upon the Scripture. Ah, if you do not, in good earnest, give yourself up to the reading, to the studying, to the pondering, to the believing, to the practicing, to the applying and to the living up to the Scripture, Satan will be too hard for you, the world will be too hard for you, your lusts will be too hard for you, temptations will be too hard for you, deceivers will be too hard for you, and in the end, you will be miserable.

102 Nothing Escapes His Notice

Nothing Escapes His Notice by Arthur Pinck What a wondrous being is the God of Scripture! Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4 verse 13 God is omniscient.

He knows everything, everything possible, everything actual, all events, all creatures of the past, the present, and the future. He is perfectly acquainted with every detail in the life of every being in heaven, in earth, and in hell. Nothing escapes His notice.

Nothing can be hidden from Him. Nothing is forgotten by Him. His knowledge is perfect.

He never errs. He never changes. He never overlooks anything.

God not only knows whatever has happened in the past, in every part of His vast domains, and He is not only thoroughly acquainted with everything that is now transpiring throughout the entire universe, but He is also perfectly cognizant of every event, from the least to the greatest, that will ever happen in the ages to come. God's knowledge of the future is as complete as is His knowledge of the past and the present, and that because the future depends entirely upon Himself. God has Himself designed whatever shall yet be, and what He has designed must be effectuated.

God's knowledge does not arise from things because they are or will be, but because He has ordained them to be. Yes, such is the God with whom we have to do. You know when I sit and when I rise.

You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue, You know it completely, O Lord. How solemn is this fact! Nothing can be concealed from God. Though He is invisible to us, we are not so to Him.

Neither the darkness of night, the closest curtains, nor the deepest dungeon can hide any sinner from the eyes of omniscience. Men would strip deity of His omniscience if they could. They wish there might be no witness of their sins, no searcher of their hearts, no judge of their deeds.

103 That Spiritual Pipe

That Spiritual Pipe by Thomas Watson Christ is all in all. Colossians 3 verse 11 All good things are transmitted and conveyed to us through Christ. As our rich commodities, such as jewels and spices, come to us by the sea, so all heavenly blessings sail to us through the Red Sea of Christ's blood.

Christ is that Spiritual Pipe through which the golden oil of mercy empties itself into the soul. Christ is all in all. He is a treasury and storehouse of all spiritual riches.

You may go with the bee from flower to flower and suck a little sweetness here and there, but you will never have enough until you come to Christ, for He is all in all. There is enough in Christ to scatter all our fears, to remove all our burdens, to supply all our needs. The unsearchable riches of Christ.

Ephesians 3 verse 8 There can be no defect in that which is infinite. Christ is the most supreme good. Put what you will in the balance with Christ, He infinitely outweighs it.

Christ is the most sufficient good. He who has Christ needs no more. He who has the ocean needs not the cistern.

Christ is the most suitable good. In Him dwells all fullness. Colossians 1 verse 19 Christ is whatever the soul can desire.

Christ is beauty to adorn, gold to enrich, balm to heal, bread to strengthen, wine to comfort, salvation to crown. Christ sweetens all our comforts. He who has Christ may say, This mercy is given to me by the hand of my Savior.

This is a love token from Him, a pledge of glory. Christ sanctifies all our crosses. They shall be medicinal to the soul.

They shall work sin out and work grace in. Christ sees to it that His people lose nothing in the furnace of affliction but their drossy impurities. Christ is the most rare blessing.

Christ is a jewel that few are enriched with. This should both raise our esteem of Him and quicken our pursuit after Him. Many hear of Christ but few have Him.

Many have Christ sounded in their ears but few who have Christ formed in their hearts. Christ is the most choice good. God shows more love in giving us Christ than in giving us crowns and kingdoms.

God may give a man many worldly things and hate him. God may give others a little gold and silver. But if He gives you Christ, He gives you all that ever He had.

Without Christ, nothing else is good. Without Christ, health is not good. It is fuel for lust.

Without Christ, riches are not good. They are golden snares. Without Christ, ordinances are not good.

They are as breasts without milk. Without Christ, they will damn us. Millions go to hell loaded with ordinances.

Make Christ all in your affections. Desire nothing but Christ. He is the aggregation of all good things.

Why should the soul desire less? How can it desire more? Love nothing but Christ. Love is the choicest affection. It is the richest jewel the creature has to bestow.

Oh, if Christ is all, love Him better than all. He who is all, let Him have all. Give Him your love, who desires it most and deserves it best.

Oh, Christian, have you seen the Lord Jesus? Has this morning star shone into your heart with its enlightening, quickening beams? Then rejoice and be exceeding glad. Shall others rejoice in the world, and will not you rejoice in Christ? How much better is He than all other things? It reflects disparagement upon Christ when His saints are sad and drooping. Is not Christ yours? What more would you have? Be thankful for Christ.

God has done more for you in giving you Christ than if He had made you angels or had given you the whole world. God cannot give a greater gift than Christ, who is all in all. Here is a breast of comfort to every believer.

Christ is all. When a Christian sees a deficiency in himself, he may see an all-sufficiency in his Savior. He who has Christ has no lack, for Christ is all.

In the hour of death, a believer may rejoice. When he leaves all, he is possessed of all. A godly man say, I fear not death, because I have Christ to go to.

Death will but carry me to that torrent of divine pleasure which runs at His right hand forevermore. I have the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

104 Murdered

Murdered, from Spurgeon's Autobiography. There was a day, as I took my walks abroad, when I came by a spot forever engraved upon my memory, for there I saw this friend, my best, my only friend, murdered. I stooped down in sad fright and looked at him.

I saw that his hands had been pierced with rough, iron nails, and his feet had been torn in the same way. There was misery in his dead countenance so terrible that I scarcely dared to look upon it. His body was emaciated with hunger, his back was red with bloody scourges, and his brow had a circle of wounds about it.

Clearly could one see that these had been pierced by thorns. I shuddered, for I had known this friend full well. He never had a fault.

He was the purest of the pure, the holiest of the holy. Who could have injured him? For he never injured any man. All his life long he went about doing good.

He had healed the sick. He had fed the hungry. He had raised the dead.

For which of these works did they kill him? He had never breathed out anything else but love. And as I looked into the poor, sorrowful face, so full of agony, and yet so full of love, I wondered who could have been a wretch so vile as to pierce hands like his. I said within myself, where could these traitors live? Who are these that could have smitten such an one as this? Had they murdered an oppressor, we might have forgiven them.

Had they slain one who had indulged in vice or villainy, it might have been his desert. Had it been a murderer and a rebel, or one who had committed sedition, we would have said, bury his corpse. Justice has at last given him his due.

But when you were slain, my best, my only beloved, where did the traitors hide? Let me seize them, and they shall be put to death. If there be torments that I can devise, surely they shall endure them all. Oh, what jealousy! What revenge I felt! If I might but find these murderers, what I would do to them! And as I looked upon that corpse, I heard a footstep, and wondered where it was.

I listened, and I clearly perceived that the murderer was close at hand. It was dark, and I groped about to find him. I found that somehow or other, wherever I put out my hand, I could not meet with him, for he was nearer to me than my hand would go.

At last, I put my hand upon my breast. I have you now, said I, for, lo, he was in my own heart. The murderer was hiding within my own bosom, dwelling in the recesses of my inmost soul.

Ah, then I wept indeed that I, in the very presence of my murdered master, should be harboring the murderer, and I felt myself most guilty while I bowed over his corpse and sang that plaintive hymn. 'Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins, his chief tormentors were. Each of my crimes become a nail, an unbelief the spear.

Amid the rabble which hounded the Redeemer to his doom, there were some gracious souls whose bitter anguish sought vent in wailing and lamentations, fit music to accompany that march of woe. When my soul can, in imagination, see the Savior bearing His cross to Calvary, she joins the godly women and weeps with them, for, indeed, there is true cause for grief, cause lying deeper than those mourning women thought. They bewailed innocents maltreated, goodness persecuted, love bleeding, meekness about to die.

But my heart has a deeper and more bitter cause to mourn. My sins were the scourges which lacerated those blessed shoulders and crowned with thorns those bleeding brows. My sins cried, crucify Him, crucify Him, and laid the cross upon His gracious shoulders.

His being led forth to die is sorrow enough for one eternity, but my having been His murderer is more, infinitely more grief than one poor fountain of tears can express. If Christ had died for me, ungodly as I am, without strength as I am, then I cannot live in sin any longer, but must arouse myself to love and serve Him who has redeemed me. I cannot trifle with that evil which slew my best friend.

I must be holy for His sake. How can I live in sin when He has died to save me from it?

105 The Divine Illuminator

The Divine Illuminator by James Alexander But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14 verse 26 Divine truth is an instrument in the hand of the Spirit for the accomplishment of His work of consolation. If we would be comforted, we must seek it by the truth.

The Comforter is the Spirit of truth. The consoling process is carried on by the application of scriptural truth. Therefore, the Word of God is beyond all other volumes, the book of consolation.

The precious doctrines concerning God, Christ, salvation, and Heaven are the principal means which the Holy Spirit uses for the support of the soul under heavy afflictions. Thus we are enabled to perceive more clearly and fully how the adorable Spirit comes in Christ's name. He teaches what Christ taught.

He takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. From the infinite fund of scriptural wisdom and knowledge, He draws and dispenses according to the diversified necessities of His people. It is scarcely a change of teacher.

The Spirit gives the same lessons as Jesus. He repeats and revives them. He brings out afresh in the chambers of memory the truths which had faded.

He touches the sluggish heart to awaken it to new impressions of scriptural truth. All this is by a direct influence on the soul by the Spirit, opening the mind and pouring in light. It is this which accounts for the difference between believers and between different states of the same individual.

In order that truth be effectual, especially to consolation, something more is necessary than that it should be revealed in the Bible, something more than that it should be understood by the intellect. It must be powerfully brought home to the mind and heart. And to do this is the special work of the Holy Spirit.

No effect will be produced in reading Scripture except so far as the Holy Spirit takes, shows, and impresses them to the heart. And this He graciously does to many a broken-hearted Christian. The experienced and godly Christian, long tried in the school of sorrows, is made to know that the soul may be comforted amidst the deepest afflictions.

In some unexpected moment, the divine illuminator reveals to him the great abiding truths of Scripture, truths which are as precious and as satisfying in adverse as in prosperous days. By a process of holy attraction, his thoughts are drawn away from self and all its sorrows and losses to be fixed and absorbed by the character of God, by His mighty works, by the person of the adorable Redeemer, by the work of redemption, by the glory yet to be revealed. Filled and animated and tranquilized by these blessed truths, he is led to forget his private griefs, and thus the Comforter performs His office by means of the truth.

The things of Christ, applied to the heart by the Spirit, direct the mind from its earthly pangs and, to a certain extent, afford a foretaste of the celestial joy.

106 Practical Predestination

Practical Predestination by Octavius Winslow There are no guesses, conjectures, or contingencies with God as to the future. Not only does He know all, but He has fixed, appointed, and ordered all things after the counsel of His own will. It would seem impossible to form any correct idea of God disassociated from the idea of predestination.

The sole basis of predestination is the practical belief that God is eternal and infinite in and over all. Predestination is God's predetermined appointment and for-arrangement of all things beforehand, according to His divine and supreme will. God pre-arranges, predetermines, and supremely rules in all the concerns of our world.

He fixes a constellation in the heavens, guides the gyrations of a bird in the air, directs the falling of an autumn leaf in the pathless desert, and conveys the seed borne upon the wind to the spot where it should fall. In predestination, we see the everlasting love of God to, and His most free choice of, His people to be His special and peculiar treasure. What doctrine is more emptying, humbling, and therefore sanctifying than predestination? It lays the axe at the root of all human boasting.

In the light of this truth, the most holy believer sees that there is no difference between him and the vilest sinner who crawls the earth, but what the sovereign grace of God has made. One blessing accruing from the doctrine of predestination is the sweet and holy submission into which it brings the mind under all afflictive dispensations. Each step of his pilgrimage, and each incident of his history, the believer sees appointed in the everlasting covenant of grace.

He recognizes the discipline of the covenant to be as much a part of the original plan as any positive mercy that it contains. That all the hairs of his head are numbered, that affliction springs not out of the earth, and therefore is not the result of accident or chance, but is in harmony with God's purposes of love, and, thus ordained and permitted, must work together for His good. The radiance which predestination reflects upon the entire history of the child of God, and the calm repose which it diffuses over the mind in all the perplexing, painful, and mysterious events of that history, can only be understood by those whose hearts have fully received this doctrine.

Whatever betides him, inexplicable in its character, enshrouded in the deepest gloom, as may be the circumstance, the believer in this truth can stand still and, calmly surveying the scene, exclaim, This also comes forth from the Lord Almighty, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. He who works all things after the counsel of his own will has done it, and I am satisfied that it is well done.

107 I Follow Like A Little Blind Child

I FOLLOW LIKE A LITTLE BLIND CHILD by J. A. James And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose. Romans 8, verse 28. Strong faith has a firm persuasion of God's overruling providence, so comprehensive as to include the destinies of empires and worlds, and so minute as to extend to individuals.

Strong faith believes that God's providence is ever-active, ever-directing, ever-controlling, and ever-subordinating all things to His own purposes and plans. Strong faith is a conviction of this great truth, so deep, so satisfying, and so tranquilizing, as not at all to be shaken by the chaotic aspect of human affairs or the prevalence of gigantic evils. A weak faith must give way before the deep mysteries, the confounding events, the defeats of what is good and the triumphs of what is evil which are perpetually going on in our world's history.

The stream of providence is so twisting, so dark, apparently so murky, and occasionally so devastating that it requires strong faith to believe that it is the work of God and not of chance, and that if it is the work of God, it must be just and wise and good. In the darkest dispensations of providence affecting ourselves, strong faith realizes that it is all from God and must therefore be wise and just and good. Strong faith says, It is well.

I am sure it is right. I cannot tell how it is right. I do not understand why this deep, afflictive providence came.

I can find no key to unlock the mystery, but I am as confident that it is right as if God's whole purpose were transparent to my reason and I could see the event in all its connections, bearings, and results. I cannot see how or why, but I believe that my deep affliction is for God's glory and my ultimate benefit. I know that God causes everything to work together for good.

Faith assures us that the darker, the more confounding, the more disappointing events are all right and just and good. Strong faith walks on amid shadows and darkness, grasping the arm of God, believing that He is leading us and will lead us right. Strong faith gives up all into His hands, saying, I cannot even see a glimmering of light.

I cannot see where to place my next step, but I can most implicitly trust in the wisdom, power, and truth of God. I follow like a little blind child grasping the hand of His Father. Times of great troubles and difficulties are seasons and opportunities for the exercise of faith.

God is always the Christian's best refuge and often His only one. He is sometimes reduced to extremity and is compelled to say, He alone is my rock and my salvation. My help comes only from the Lord.

No one else will help me. No one else can. Sense and reason both fail.

No door of escape presents itself, nor any way of relief. There is nothing left for Him to do but to take up the promise and carry it in the hand of faith, knock by prayer at the door of mercy, and as He stands there to say, Find rest, O my soul, in God alone. My hope comes from Him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress. I will not be shaken.

Yes, Lord, You have bid me come when I could go nowhere else. And here, according to Your command and promise, I will remain waiting, trembling, yet believing and hoping. I am sure You will come and help me.

My Heavenly Father knows the necessities of His poor, helpless child, and He will come in His own time and in His own way, and I will wait for Him. My bread will be given me, and my water will be sure.

108 This Little Idol

This Little Idol by Octavius Winslow To affirm, as the scriptures of truth positively do, that mankind is originally and totally depraved, is but to portray it with every feature of its pristine nobleness, purity, and excellence. Utterly spoiled. Mankind has become the living embodiment, the acting impersonation, the very incarnation of fallen self-love.

Self-love in the form of complete selfishness. The original center of the soul forsaken, man had become a center to himself. The god he worshipped was the deification of self.

The religion he professed was the adoration of self. The powers he cultivated were consecrated to self. His whole existence was one act of service and devotion to self.

The divine center abandoned, he knew no other god, acknowledged no other sufficiency, recognized no other end than himself. Every faculty and thought, every affection and action, was made to contribute to the cloud of incense which rose as in one dense column before this little idol, self. Self, the first.

Self, the last. Self, all in all. And is it not so now? Self, in some shape, is still the deity of the natural man.

Selfishness is still the universal sin of our nature. Exhibited in one or more of its thousand modifications, its endless forms. All are in pursuit either of wealth or ambition or pleasure or honor or gratification under the law of selfishness.

Self is the only recognized principle and rule of action which regulates the conduct of the great majority of our depraved species. The indictment is heavy. The picture is dark.

The sin is awful, we admit. But it is borne out by daily observation and frequent experience and by the faithful, unerring word of God, all men seek their own. What, we ask, is all this? This self-exaltism? This egotism? This envy and jealousy? This attempt to supplant others in esteem, influence and power? This prodigality and love of worldly show? This eager chase of wealth? This covetousness and stinginess? This love of ease and sloth? This niggardly dole of charity? This cruel, heartless, grinding oppression? This growing sensuality and crime? What, we ask, is all this and a thousand times more but the one appalling, cancerous sin of selfishness existing in the very heart of depravity and sending its fatal poison along all the fibers of human society?

109 The Unchangeable Method of Godly

The Unchangeable Method of God by Matthew Mead I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. Luke 5, verse 32. That is, such as see themselves as sinners, and thereby in a lost condition.

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19, verse 10. God will have the soul truly sensible of the bitterness of sin, before it shall taste the sweetness of mercy.

The plow of conviction must go deep and make deep furrows in the before God will sow the precious seed of grace there, so that it may have depth of earth to grow in. This is the unchangeable method of God in bestowing grace. To begin with conviction of sin.

First to show man his sin, then his Savior. First his danger, then his Redeemer. First his wound, then his cure.

First his own vileness, then Christ's righteousness. The sinner must see the worthlessness and vileness of his own righteousness, before he can be saved by Christ's righteousness. The Israelites are first stung with the fiery serpents, and then the brazen serpent is set up to heal them.

We must see the leprosy of our righteousness, and be brought to cry out, unclean, unclean. We must mourn for Him whom we have pierced, and then He sets open for us a fountain to cleanse us from all sin and impurity. Zechariah 12, verse 10, and Zechariah 13, verse 1. Be convinced of the evil of sin, the filthy and heinous nature of it.

Sin is the greatest evil in the world. It wrongs God. It wounds Christ.

It grieves the Holy Spirit. It damns a precious soul. All other evils cannot be compared with this, though to do sin is the worst work.

Yet to see sin is the best sight. Sin, discovered in its vileness, makes Christ to be desired in His fullness. Alas, it is Christ's infinite righteousness, which must atone for our sins.

For it is an infinite God whom we have sinned against. If ever your sin is pardoned, it is Christ's infinite mercy which must pardon it. If ever you are reconciled to God, it is Christ's infinite merit which must do it.

If ever your heart is changed, it is Christ's infinite power which must affect it. If ever your soul escapes hell and is saved at last, it is Christ's infinite grace which must save it.

110 I Am Not What I Once Used To Be

I AM NOT WHAT I ONCE USED TO BE by J.C. Ryle Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Hebrews 12 verse 14 The regenerate man is a holy man. He endeavors to live according to God's will, to do the things which please God, to avoid the things which God hates.

His aim and desire is to love God with heart and soul, and mind and strength, and to love his neighbor as himself. His wish is to be continually looking to Christ as his example as well as his Savior, and to show himself Christ's friend by obeying whatever he commands. No doubt he is not perfect.

None will tell you that sooner than himself. He groans under the burden of indwelling corruption cleaving to him. He finds an evil principle within him constantly warring against grace and trying to draw him away from God.

Yet, in spite of all shortcomings, the average bent and bias of his ways is holy, his doings holy, his tastes holy, and his habits holy. In spite of all his swerving and turning aside like a ship going against a contrary wind, the general course of his life is in one direction, toward God and for God. He will generally be able to say with old John Newton, I am not what I ought to be.

I am not what I want to be. I am not what I hope to be in another world, but still, I am not what I once used to be. By the grace of God, I am what I am.

Let none conclude that they have no grace because they have many imperfections in their obedience. Your grace may be very weak and imperfect, and yet you may be truly born again and be a genuine son of God and heir of heaven.

111 We He Not Stab It With a Thousand

Sin never appears so odious as when we behold it in the red glass of Christ's sufferings. Can we look upon sin as the occasion of all Christ's sufferings? Can we look upon sin as that which made Christ a curse, and which made Him forsaken of His Father, and which made Him live such a miserable life, and which brought Him to die such a shameful, painful, and cruel death, and our hearts not rise against it? Shall our sins be grievous unto Christ, and shall they not be odious unto us? Shall He die for our sins, and shall not we die to our sins? Did not He suffer for sin, that we might cease from sin? If one would kill our Father, would we hug and embrace Him? Surely not. We would be revenged on Him.

Sin has killed our Savior, and shall we not be revenged on it? Can a man look upon that snake which has stung his dearly loved wife to death, and preserve it alive, warm it at the fire, and hug it in his bosom? Would he not stab it with a thousand wounds? It is sin which has stung our dear Jesus to death, which has crucified our Lord, clouded His glory, and shed His precious blood. Oh, how should this stir up our indignation against sin? How can a Christian make much of those sins which have killed his dearest Lord? How can he cherish those sins which betrayed Christ, and bound Christ, and condemned Christ, and scourged Christ, and which violently nailed Him to the cross, and there murdered Him? It was neither Judas, nor Pilate, nor the Jews, nor the soldiers, which could have done our Lord Jesus the least hurt, had not our sins, like so many butchers and hangmen, come in to their assistance.

112 A Whole Christ With a Whole Heart

A WHOLE CHRIST WITH A WHOLE HEART by Thomas Brooks The terms upon which Christ is offered in the gospel are these, that we shall accept of a whole Christ with a whole heart. Now, Mark, a whole Christ includes all his offices, and a whole heart includes all our faculties. Christ as mediator is prophet, priest, and king.

Christ as a prophet instructs us. Christ as a priest redeems us and intercedes for us. Christ as a king sanctifies and rules us.

A hypocrite may be willing to embrace Christ as a priest to save him from wrath, from the curse, from hell, from everlasting burning. But he is never sincerely willing to embrace Christ as a prophet to teach and instruct him, and as a king to rule and reign over him. Many hypocrites are willing to embrace a saving Christ, but they are not willing to embrace a ruling Christ, a commanding Christ.

But those enemies of mine who do not want me to be king over them, bring them here and kill them in front of me. Luke 19, verse 27. Hypocrites love to share with Christ in his happiness, but they don't love to share with Christ in his holiness.

They are willing to be redeemed by Christ, but they are not cordially willing to submit to the laws and government of Christ. They are willing to be saved by his blood, but they are not willing to submit to his scepter. But a true Christian receives Christ in all his offices.

He accepts him not only as a saving Jesus, but also as a Lord Jesus. He embraces him not only as a saving Christ, but also as a ruling Christ. He received Christ as a king upon his throne, as well as an atoning sacrifice upon his cross.

A hypocrite is all for a saving Christ, for a sin-pardoning Christ, for a soul-saving Christ, but has no regard for a ruling Christ, a reigning Christ, a commanding Christ, a sanctifying Christ. And this, at last, will prove his damning sin.

113 The Guilty Naked Sinner

The Guilty Naked Sinner by E. P. Rogers It is extraordinary how different are the conclusions of faith from those of reason. Once reason came along and she heard a man cry, I am guilty, guilty. Reason stopped and said, the man is guilty, God condemns the guilty, therefore this man will be condemned.

Reason went away and left the man condemned, ruined, and quivering with fear. Then faith came and heard the same cry, rendered more bitter by the cruel syllogism of reason. Faith stopped and said, the man is guilty, Christ died for the guilty, the man will be saved.

Faith's logic was right, the man lifted up his head and rejoiced. Reason came one day and saw a man naked and she said, he does not have a wedding garment on, can naked souls appear before the judgment of God? Should they have a place at the supper of the Lamb? That man is naked, he must be cast out, for naked ones cannot enter heaven. Then faith came by and said, the man is naked, Christ wove a robe of righteousness, he must have made it for the naked.

Christ would not have made it for those who have a robe of their own, that robe is for the naked man and he shall stand in it before God. Faith's logic was right and just. Reason once heard a man say that he was righteous and good.

Reason saw him go up to the temple and pray, I thank you God that I am not a sinner like everyone else, for I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, I fast twice a week and I give you a tenth of my income. Reason concluded that this man was better than others and that he would be accepted by God in the day of judgment. But Reason's logic was wrong, for Reason then saw a poor sinner who stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed.

Instead, this man beat his chest in sorrow saying, O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner. Reason saw this poor sinner, not the proud Pharisee, return home justified before God.

114 The Best of Saints Are Sinners

The Best of Saints are Sinners by Thomas Brooks A child of God may slip into a sin, as a sheep may slip into the mire, But he does not and cannot wallow in sin, as the swine wallows in the mire. The best of saints are sinners, though the worst and weakest of saints Do not indulge sin, or cherish it, or make daily provision for it, Or take daily pleasure and delight in sin, Or habitually yield a willing and total subjection To the authority and commands of sin. There is as much difference between sin in a regenerate person And sin in an unregenerate person As there is between poison in a man and poison in a serpent.

Poison in a man is most offensive and burdensome, And he readily uses all remedies and antidotes To expel it and get rid of it. But poison in a serpent is in its natural place And is most pleasing and delightful. Just so, sin in a regenerate man is most offensive and burdensome, And he readily uses all holy means and antidotes To expel it and to get rid of it.

But sin in an unregenerate man is most pleasing and delightful, It being in its natural place. A godly man may have many sins, Yet he has not one beloved sin, One bosom sin, one darling sin. His sins are his greatest grief and torment.

Every godly man hates all known sin, Would sincerely have his sins not only pardoned, But destroyed, groans under the burden of sin, Combats and conflicts with all known sin, Has fixed purposes and designs not to sin, Has a sincere willingness to be rid of all sin. No sincere Christian indulges himself in any trade, Course, or way of sin. Oh, says the gracious soul, That I could be rid of this proud heart, This hard heart, This unbelieving heart, This unclean heart, This earthly heart, This froward heart of mine.

Oh sirs, this is most certain, Whoever gives up himself freely, Willingly, cheerfully, habitually, To the service of any one particular lust or sin, He is in the state of nature, under wrath, And in the way to eternal ruin.

115 To The Dust You Will Return

To the dust you will return By Horatius Bonner For the wages of sin is death Romans 6 verse 23 All your life you will sweat to produce food Until your dying day Then you will return to the ground from which you came For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return Genesis 3 verse 19 Ours is a dying world, we dwell in a world of death, In a land of graves. Immortality has no place upon this earth. That which is deathless is beyond these hills.

Mortality is here, immortality is yonder. Mortality is below, immortality is above. Earth is a vast graveyard.

At every moment one of the sons of Adam passes from this life. At each swing of the pendulum is the death warrant of some child of time. Death, death, it says unceasingly as it oscillates to and fro.

The gate of death stands ever open. It has neither lock nor bars. The river of death flows sullenly past our dwellings.

We continually hear the splash and the cry of one and another and another as they are flung into the rushing torrent and carried down to the sea of eternity. Earth is full of deathbeds. The groan of pain is heard everywhere, in cottage or castle, in prince's palace or peasant's hut.

The tear of parting is seen falling everywhere. The rich and poor, good and evil, are called to weep over the death of beloved kindred, husband or wife or child or friend. Who can bind the strong man that he shall not lay his hand upon us or our beloved ones? Who can say to sickness, you shall not touch my body? Or to pain, you shall not come near me? Or to death, you shall not enter my home? Who can light up the dimmed eye? Or recolor the faded cheek? Or reinvigorate the icy hand? Or bid the sealed lip to open? Or the stiffened tongue to speak once more the words of warm affection? Who can enter the death chamber and speak, little girl, I say to you, get up? Who can look into the coffin and say, young man, arise? Who can go into the tomb and say, Lazarus, come forth? The voice of death is heard everywhere, not only from the coffin, nor the funeral procession, nor the dark vault, nor the heaving churchyard.

Death springs up all around. Each season speaks of death. The dropping spring blossom, the scorched leaf of summer, the ripe sheaf of autumn, the chill winter cold, all tell of death.

The wild storm, with its thick clouds and hurrying shadows, the sharp lightning bent on smiting, the dark torrent ravaging field and valley, the cold sea wave, the crumbling rock, the upturned tree, all speak of death and corruption. Earth numbers its graveyards by hundreds of thousands, and the sea covers the dust of uncounted millions who, confined and unconfined, have gone down into its unknown darkness. Death reigns over earth and sea.

City and village are his. Into every house this last enemy has entered, in spite of man's desperate efforts to keep him out, there is no family without some empty seat or crib, no garden without some faded rose, no forest without some seer leaf, no tree without some shattered bough, no harp

without some broken string. There is no exemption from this necessity.

There is no discharge in this war. The old man dies, but the young also. The gray head and the golden head are laid in the same cold clay.

The wicked dies, so also does the godly. The common earth from which they sprang receives them both. The fool dies, so also does the wise.

The poor man dies, so also does the rich. I will ransom them from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death.

Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction? Hosea 13, verse 14. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6, verse 23.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. For the old order of things has passed away.

Revelation 21, verse 4. No failing of eyesight, no wrinkles on the brow, no hollowness in their cheeks, no gray hairs upon their heads, no weariness of limbs, no languor of spirit, no drying up of their rivers of pleasure.

116 Playing With Monkeys and Parrots

Playing with Monkeys and Parrots by Thomas Watson You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. Psalm 16 verse 11 Eternity is the highest link of the saint's happiness. The believer shall be forever bathing in the pure and pleasant fountain of bliss.

There is neither intermission nor expiration in the joys of heaven. When once God has set His plans in the celestial paradise, He will never more pluck them up. You may sooner separate light from the sun than a glorified saint from Jesus Christ.

Oh, eternity, eternity! What a never-failing spring of delight will that be! The glory of heaven is infinitely satisfying. There is neither lack nor excess. This cannot be properly said of anything but heaven.

You who look to the world for satisfaction, remember what the creature says. It is not in me. Heaven alone is commensurate to the vast desires of the soul.

Here the Christian cries out in a divine ecstasy, I have enough, my Savior, I have enough. Oh, eternity, eternity! What a never-failing spring of delight will that be! You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting them drink from your rivers of delight. Not drops, but rivers.

These alone can quench the thirst. Every day in heaven shall be a feast. There is no lack at this feast.

Here is soul satisfaction. Oh, the glory of this paradise! It is more than we can ever imagine. There is unspotted purity, unstained honor, unparalleled beauty.

There will God give us infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope. Is not this enough? What more could we ask for? A man could ask for millions of worlds, but in heaven God will give us more than we can ask, nay, more than we can ever imagine. We could imagine, what if all the dust of the earth were turned to silver? What if every stone were a wedge of gold? What if every flower were a ruby? What if every blade of grass were a pearl? What if every sand in the sea were a diamond? Yet all this is nothing compared to the glory of heaven.

It is as impossible for any man in his deepest thoughts to comprehend glory as it would be for him to measure the heavens with a ruler or drain the great ocean with a thimble. Oh, incomparable place! But why do I expatiate? These things are unspeakable and full of glory. Had I as many tongues as hairs on my head, I could never sufficiently set forth the beauty and resplendence of this blissful inheritance.

Such is the excellency of this celestial paradise that if the angels should take up their pencil to delineate it in its colors, they would but stain and eclipse the glory of it. I have given you only the dark shadow of the picture and that but crudely and imperfectly. How should we be inflamed with desire to taste of those rare and sweet delicacies which are above at God's right hand? Oh, what madness is it for men to spin out their time and tire out their strength in pursuing the vanities of this

world? Who would, for the indulging of lust, forfeit so glorious an inheritance? Lay the whole world in scales with heaven? It is lighter than vanity.

It is reported of Caesar that traveling through a certain city, as he passed along, he saw some of the women playing with monkeys and parrots, at which sight he said, What, have they no children to play with? So I say, when I see men toying with these earthly and beggarly vanities, What, are there not more glorious and sublime things to mind?

117 Get Out Of My Sight

Get Out of My Sight by Thomas Brooks Many nowadays say there is no hell. Multitudes think that all that is spoken of hell in scripture is false and mythical. They will not believe that there is a hell until they come to feel themselves in hell, until they find everlasting flames about their ears, until they are sentenced to the fire, until they are doomed to everlasting fire.

The last words that Christ will ever speak to the ungodly will be the most tormenting and horrifying, the most killing and damning, the most stinging and wounding. Then He will also say to those on the left, This terrible sentence breathes out nothing but fire and brimstone, terror and horror, dread and woe. Depart from me, here is utter rejection.

Pack, be gone, get out of my sight, let me never see your face again. You who are cursed, here is malediction. You shall be cursed in your bodies and cursed in your souls.

You shall be cursed of God, and cursed of angels, and cursed of saints, and cursed of devils, and cursed of your companions. Yes, you shall curse your very selves, your very souls. All your former curses, all your maledictions, shall at last recoil upon your own souls.

Now you curse every man and thing which stands in the way of your lusts, and which cross your designs. But at last, all the curses of heaven and hell shall meet in their full power and force upon you. But Lord, if we must depart and depart cursed, oh let us go into some good place.

No, depart into the eternal fire, there is the vengeance and everlasting continuance of it. You shall go into fire, into everlasting fire, which will neither consume itself nor consume you. Eternity of extreme punishment is the hell of hell.

If all the fires which ever were in the world were contracted into one fire, how terrible would it be? Yet such a fire would be but as a painted fire compared to the fire of hell. The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth are but ice in comparison to the fire of hell. Ah, how sad, how dreadful would it be to experience what it is to lie in unquenchable fire, not for a day, a month, or a year, or a hundred or a thousand years, but forever and ever.

If it were, says one, but for a thousand years, I could bear it. But seeing it is for eternity, this astonishes and affrights me. I am afraid of hell, says another, because the worm there never dies and the fire never goes out.

It is called unquenchable fire and eternal fire. The torments of the damned are very grievous for the bitterness of them, and more grievous for the diversity of them, but most of all grievous for the eternity of them. Wronged justice can never be satisfied, and therefore the sinner must be forever tormented.

The sinner in hell will sin forever, and therefore he must be punished forever. It will not stand with the unspotted justice and righteousness of God to cease punishing, while the sinner ceases not sinning. But, Lord, if I must go into fire, into everlasting fire, oh, let me have some good company

in my misery.

No, the devil and his demons shall be your companions, ah, who can conceive or express the misery of living with devils and damned spirits and hellish fiends and furies forever.

118 Sympathy

Sympathy, by Octavius Winslow. Jesus wept, John 11, verse 35. The creator of all worlds, the author of all beings, the upholder of the universe, raining tears of human woe and sympathy upon a grave.

Oh, there lies not a being in the universe who can enter into our bereavements with the sympathy, the support, and the soothing of Christ. They were tears of sympathy. His heart was not only touched with the sense of his own personal affliction, but it was also touched, deeply touched, with sympathy for the sorrow of others.

He wept because the mourning sisters wept. He mingled his tears with theirs. This is true sympathy, weeping with those that weep, making their sorrow our own.

How really our Lord does this with his people. So completely is he our surety that he takes our sins and infirmities, our trials and sorrows upon himself as if they were all and entirely his own. Our sins were so completely laid upon him that not one remains charged to the account of those who believe in Jesus.

And our present griefs are so entirely absorbed in him that, softened by his love, soothed by his sympathy, supported by his grace, trial is welcome, affliction is sweet, and the rod of a father's chastening buds and blossoms into delectable fruit. Bereaved mourner, the sympathy of Christ is yours. The Savior who wept at the grave of Bethany now shares your grief and joins your tears.

Deem not your sorrow as isolated or that your tears are forbidden or unseen. You have a merciful and faithful High Priest who is touched with your present calamity. There exists no sympathy so real, so intelligent, so deep, so tender, so sanctifying as Christ's sympathy.

And if your Heavenly Father has seen it wise and good to remove from you the spring of human pity, it is but that he may draw you closer beneath the wing of Jesus's compassion, presence, and love. O child of sorrow, will not this suffice, that you possess Christ's sympathy, immeasurable and exhaustless as the ocean, exquisite and changeless as his being? Yield your heart to his rich compassion. Will Jesus be regardless of what I feel and the sorrows under which I groan? Oh no, the sigh which bursts in secret from my heart is not secret to him.

The tear which is my food day and night and drops unperceived and unknown is known and remembered by him. You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle.

You have recorded each one in your book. Psalm 56 verse 8.

119 Walking Pictures of Christ

WALKING PICTURES OF CHRIST by Thomas Watson Leaving you an example so that you should follow in His steps. 1 Peter 2 verse 21. The one who says he abides in Him should walk just as He walked.

1 John 2 verse 6. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John 13 verse 15. True religion is to imitate Christ.

There are four things in which we should labor to be like Christ. 1. Be like Christ in disposition. He was of a most sweet disposition.

He has a heart to pity us. He has breasts to feed us. He has wings to cover us.

2. He would not break our heart but with mercy. Let us be like Him in sweetness of disposition. Do not be of a morose spirit.

It was said of Nabal, he is so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him. Some are so sour and breathe forth nothing but revenge. Or they are like those two men in the gospel, possessed with the devils coming out of the tombs.

They were so violent that no one could pass that way. Let us be like Christ in mildness and sweetness. Let us pray for our enemies and conquer them by love.

David's kindness melted Saul's heart. A frozen heart will be thawed with the fire of love. 2. Be like Christ in humility.

He humbled himself. He left the bright robes of His glory to be clothed with the rags of our humanity, a wonder of humility. Let us be like Christ in this grace.

Humility is the glory of a Christian. We are never so lovely in God's eyes as when we are black in our own eyes. In this, let us be like Christ.

Indeed, what cause have we to be humble if we look within us, about us, below us, and above us? If we look within us, here we see our sins represented to us in the looking-glass of conscience, lust, envy, passion. Our sins are like vermin crawling in our souls. How many are my iniquities? Job 13 verse 23.

Our sins are as the sands of the sea for number, as the rocks of the sea for weight. Augustine cries out, My heart, which is God's temple, is polluted with sin. If we look about us, there is that which may humble us.

We may see other Christians outshining us in graces as the sun outshines the lesser planets. Others are laden with fruit, and perhaps we have but here and there a berry. If we look below us, there is that which may humble us.

We may see the mother earth out of which we came. The earth is the most ignoble element. They were viler than the earth.

Job 30 verse 8. Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground. Genesis 2 verse 7. You will return to the ground from which you came, for you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return. Genesis 3 verse 19.

You who are so proud, behold your pedigree. You are but walking dirt. And will you be proud? What is man? The son of dust.

And what is dust? The son of nothing. If we look above us, there is that which may humble us. If we look up to the heaven, there we may see God resisting the proud.

God pursues the proud in vengeance. He threw proud Lucifer out of heaven. The proud man is the mark which God shoots at, and he never misses the mark.

Oh then, be like Christ in humility. Number three. Be like Christ in the contempt of the world.

Christ was not ambitious for riches or honor. He declined worldly dignity and greatness as much as others seek it. When they would have made him a king, he refused it.

He chose rather to ride upon the foal of a donkey than be drawn in a chariot. He chose rather to hang upon a wooden cross than to wear a golden crown. He scorned the pomp and glory of the world.

He ignored secular affairs. Who made me a judge? He did not come into the world to be a judge, but a redeemer. He minded nothing but heaven.

Let us be made like him in heavenliness and contempt of the world. Let us not be ambitious for the empty honors and glories of the world. Let us not purchase the world with the loss of our soul.

What wise man would damn himself to grow rich or throw his soul down to hell to build up an earthly estate? Be like Christ in a holy contempt of the world. Number four. Be like Christ in holiness of life.

No temptation could fasten upon him. Temptation to Christ was like a spark of fire upon a marble pillar which glides off. As the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct.

1 Peter 1 verse 15. A Christian should be both a magnet and a diamond. A magnet in drawing others to Christ.

A diamond in casting a sparkling luster of holiness in his life. Let us be so just in our dealings, so true in our promises, so devout in our worship, so unblameable in our lives, that we may be the walking pictures of

120 Idiots Catching Flies

Idiots Catching Flies, by Charles Spurgeon. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Mark 8, verse 36. Most people are not seeking to escape from the wrath to come.

They are busy in worldly things, while hell is near them. They are like idiots catching flies on board a ship which is in the very act of sinking. We see many people busy about their bodies, decorating themselves, when their soul is in ruin.

They are like a man painting the front door when the house is in flames. Men are in a restless pursuit after satisfaction in earthly things. They will greedily hunt after wealth, they will travel the pathways of fame, they will dig into the mines of knowledge, they will exhaust themselves in the deceitful delights of sin, and, finding them all to be vanity and emptiness, they will become very perplexed and disappointed.

But they will still continue their fruitless search. Though wearied, they still stagger forward under the influence of spiritual madness, and though there is no result to be reached except that of everlasting disappointment, yet they press forward with much ardor. Living for today is enough for them.

That they are still alive, that they possess present comforts and present enjoyments, this contents the many. As for the future, they say, let it take care of itself. As for eternity, they leave others to care for its realities.

The present life is enough for them. Their motto is, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. They have no forethought for their eternal state.

The present hour absorbs them. Carnal minds pursue with all their might Earth's vanities, and when they are wearied in their pursuit, they but change their direction and continue the idle chase. They turn to another and another of Earth's broken cisterns, hoping to find water where not a drop was ever discovered yet.

121 More Fit To Be Called a Devil

More fit to be called a devil than a parent by Richard Baxter. Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord, Ephesians 6 verse 4. Parents, your example and life are a continual and powerful sermon which is always seen by your children. Parents, your children have an everlasting inheritance of happiness to attain and it is that which you must bring them up for.

They have an endless misery to escape and it is that which you must diligently teach them. If you don't teach them to know God and how to serve Him and be saved and to escape the flames of hell, you teach them nothing or worse than nothing. It is in your hands to do them the greatest kindness or cruelty in all the world.

Help them to know God and to be saved and you do more for them than if you help them to be kings or princes. If you neglect their souls and bring them up in ignorance, worldliness, ungodliness and sin, you betray them to the devil, the enemy of souls, even as truly as you sold them to him. You sell them to be slaves to Satan.

You betray them to him who will deceive them and abuse them in this life and torment them in eternity. If you saw but a burning furnace, much more the flames of hell, would you not think that man or woman more fit to be called a devil than a parent who could find in their hearts to cast their child into it? What monsters then of inhumanity are you who read in Scripture that which is the way to hell and who they are that God will deliver up to Satan to be tormented by him and yet will bring up your children in that very way and will not take pains to save them from it? If you love them, show it in those things on which their everlasting welfare depends. Do not say you love them and yet lead them unto hell.

If you do not love them, yet do not be so unmerciful to them as to damn them. You cannot possibly do more to damn them than to bring them up in ignorance, carelessness, worldliness, sensuality and ungodliness. There is no other way to hell and yet will you bring them up in such a life and say that you do not desire to damn them? But if you train up your children in ungodliness, you may as well say that you intend to have them damned.

And is not the devil more excusable for dealing thus cruelly to your children than you who are their parents, who are bound by nature to love them and prevent their misery? Let me seriously speak to the hearts of those careless and ungodly parents who neglect the holy education of their children. Oh, do not be so unmerciful to those who you have brought into the world. Oh, pity and help the souls that you have defiled and undone.

Have mercy on the souls that must perish in hell if they are not saved. Oh, help them that have so many enemies to assault them. Help them that have so many temptations to pass through and so many difficulties to overcome and so severe a judgment to undergo.

Help them that are so weak and so easily deceived and overthrown. Help them speedily before sin hardens them and Satan makes a stronger fortress in their hearts. Oh, be not cruel to their souls.

Do not sell them to Satan and that for nothing. Do not betray them, not by your ungodly negligence to hell. If any of them will perish, let it not be because of you who are so much bound to do them good.

The undoing of your children's souls is a work much fitter for Satan than for their parents. Consider how odious soul-betraying parents are who betray their children to be the slaves of Satan here and the firebrands of hell forever. Oh, do not join with the devil in this unnatural, horrid wickedness.

Do not withhold correction from a child, for beat him with the rod and shall deliver his soul from hell. Proverbs 23 verses 13 and 14

122 Undeserving, Ill-Deserving, Hell

Undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving. By Thomas Vincent. How may I attain great degrees of love to Christ? Be much in holy contemplation of Christ.

Spend time in secret retirement, and there think, and think again, of the superlative excellencies and perfections which are in Christ. Think how wonderful and matchless His love is. What heights of His love which cannot be reached.

What depths of His love which cannot be fathomed. What dimensions of His love which cannot be comprehended. Oh, the ravishments of love.

Oh, the transports of soul which some believers have found in their retired thoughts and views of Christ. Oh, dear Jesus, how lovely are You in Yourself, the darling of heaven, the delight of the Father, the admiration of angels. Oh, what brightness of glory, what shining luster are You arrayed with.

You are clothed with most excellent majesty and honor. You are girded with infinite might and power. The beauty of Your face is most wonderful.

The smiles of Your countenance are most sweet and delightful. And does this beautiful one, this fairest of ten thousand, this most excellent and altogether lovely one bear a special love to me? To such a vile worm as me, to such a dead dog as me, to such an undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving sinner as me. Oh, what marvelous kindness in this.

What infinite riches of free grace. Has He given Himself for me and given Himself to me and shall not I give Him my heart? Am I written in His book, redeemed with His blood, clothed with His righteousness, beautified with His image? Has He made me His child and prepared a place in the Father's house for me? Oh, how wonderful. Oh, how astonishing.

What shall I render unto Him? What returns shall I make? Had I a thousand tongues, should I not employ them all in speaking His praise? Had I a thousand hearts, should I not present them all as too poor for a thank-offering unto Him? And yet am I slow, slow of heart, to love this dear and sweet Jesus. Awake, oh my soul, awake from your dullness and stupidity. Shake out the dust of the earth which has gotten into your eyes and keeps you from the view of your matchless Beloved.

Arise, oh my soul, unfetter yourself, take the wing, and mount up above the sky and visible heavens to the place where my lovely and dear Jesus is. Bid farewell to the flattering honors, the deceitful riches, the glancing pleasures which are here below. Bid adieu to them and leave them to those who place their chief happiness in them.

Why do you hang downwards, oh my soul? Why do you bend so much to the earth and earthly things? Everything here below is altogether unworthy of your love. How empty and vain and thorny are these worldly things! Do not waste your time and weary yourself for every vanity. Do not sting and wound yourself with these things anymore.

Come, oh my soul, ascend and soar aloft with your thoughts and desires and loves and hopes and joys unto the heavens. There you may see and view and admire and embrace your dearest Lord Jesus. Such retired contemplations of Christ and soliloquies and pleadings with your own souls when alone by yourselves will tend exceedingly to the promotion of your love unto Christ.

123 The Golden Key Which Fits All Locks

The Golden Key Which Fits All Locks by John McDuff from Thoughts for the Quiet Hour, 1895. If I have not love, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13 verse 2. What a magic spell there is in love, the absolute devotion of a beautiful soul which loses itself in the hallowed mission of radiating peace and joy and sympathy all around.

When other charmers have failed to charm, many dull, unsusceptible ears have been arrested and won by the music of kindness. By it, old age renews its youth, sick pillows are smoothed, burdens are eased, tears are turned into smiles, dirges are turned into songs. Love is, of all magical charms, the most irresistible.

Love is the golden key which fits all locks. If I have not love, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13 verse 2.

124 Happiness Hunters

Happiness Hunters, by Cornelius Tyree. A higher degree of personal piety will promote a higher degree of personal happiness. Sin and sorrow are bound together by adamant chains.

Hence man increases in misery as he increases in sin. It is upon this principle that the devil is the most miserable being in the universe, because he is the most depraved. So, on the other hand, there is an inseparable connection between holiness and happiness.

God is the most happy being in the universe, because he is the most holy. And the happiness of his people is just in proportion as they resemble him, in righteousness and true holiness. Heaven is a world of supreme happiness, because it is a world of supreme holiness.

Hell is a world of supreme misery, because sin is there fully developed. God has so ordered it that our comfort and happiness in this world can only be found in a pious life. For the last six thousand years, mankind have been happiness hunters.

In all ages and lands, the eager query has been, Who will show us any good? But every device has been a failure. The recorded and unrecorded experience of all has been, All is vanity and vexation of spirit. We can no more expect to find happiness in the pursuits and objects of this world than we may expect to find luscious grapes growing at the icy North Pole.

But in the likeness and service of Christ is found a happiness which is pure, elevating, perennial, inexhaustible, a happiness that will go with us in all conditions, all lands, and all worlds. The great cause of all the sadness and depression in the followers of Christ is the small degree of their piety. The only reason why they are disconsolate is because they follow the Lord afar off.

One single, uncrucified, unbemoaned sin will not only destroy all pious enjoyment, but open the soul to the devil with his whole black train of guilt and misery. It matters not what this sin is. Any one sin habitually indulged in, whether it is pride, malice, backbiting, covetousness, filling the mind with unholy images, or murmuring under adverse providences, will exclude from the soul all pious enjoyment.

After all, the great secret of being happy is to be holy. He who grows in practical piety has opened a thousand sources of true bliss. The golden fruit of happiness grows only on the tree of holiness.

If happiness is sought in any other way than by being holy, it is sought in vain.

125 Oh What Crowds of Pitiable Objects

Oh, what crowds of pitiable objects by J.C. Philpott. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4 verse 16.

What heart can conceive or tongue recount the daily, hourly triumphs of the Lord Jesus Christ's all-conquering grace? We see scarcely a millionth part of what He, as a King on His throne, is daily doing. What a crowd of needy petitioners every moment surrounds His throne. What urgent needs and woes to answer, what cutting griefs and sorrows to assuage, what broken hearts to bind up, what wounded consciences to heal, what countless prayers to hear, what earnest petitions to grant, what stubborn foes to subdue, what guilty fears to quell, what grace, what kindness, what patience, what compassion, what mercy, what love, what power, what authority does this Almighty Sovereign display? No circumstance is too trifling, no petitioner too insignificant, no case too hard, no difficulty too great, no seeker too importunate, no beggar too ragged, no bankrupt too penniless, no debtor too insolvent, for Him not to notice and not to relieve.

Sitting on His throne of grace, His all-seeing eye views all, His almighty hand grasps all, and His loving heart embraces all whom the Father chose, whom He Himself redeemed by His blood, and whom the Blessed Spirit has quickened into life by His invincible power. The hopeless, the helpless, the outcasts whom no man cares for, the tempest-tossed and not comforted, the ready to perish, the mourners in Zion, the bereaved widow, the wailing orphan, the sick in body, the still more sick in heart, the racked with hourly pain, the wrestler with death's last struggle, oh, what crowds of pitiable objects surround His throne, and all needing a look from His eye, a word from His lips, a smile from His face, a touch from His hand. Oh, could we but see what His grace is, what His grace has, what His grace does, and could we but feel more what it is doing in and for ourselves, we would have more exalted views of the reign of grace now exercised on high by Zion's enthroned King.

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4 verse 16.

126 An Easy Hell

An Easy Hell by Thomas Watson I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know both how to have a little and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances, I have learned the secret of being content, whether well-fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need.

Philippians 4 verses 11 and 12 Whatever affliction or trouble a child of God meets with, it is all the hell he shall ever have. Whatever eclipse may be upon his name or estate, it is but a little cloud which will soon be blown over and then his hell is past. Death begins a wicked man's hell.

Death ends a godly man's hell. Think with yourself, what is my affliction? It is but a temporary hell. Indeed, if all my hell is here on earth, it is but an easy hell.

What is the cup of affliction compared to the cup of damnation? Lazarus could not get a crumb. He was so diseased that the dogs took pity on him and as if they had been his physicians, licked his sores. But this was an easy hell.

The angels quickly fetched him out of it. If all our hell is in this life, and in the midst of this hell we have the love of God, then it is no more hell but paradise. If all our hell is here on earth, we may see to the end of it.

It is but skin deep. It cannot touch the soul. It is a short-lived hell.

After a dreary night of affliction comes the bright morning of glory. Since our lives are short, our trials cannot be long. As our riches take wings and fly away, so do our sufferings.

Let us learn then to be content whatever our circumstances.

127 Opinions About The Way

288 Opinions about the Way to Happiness by Thomas Watson. In what does happiness consist? Millions of people mistake both the nature of happiness and the way there. Some of the learned have noted 288 opinions about the way to happiness and all have shot wide of the mark.

How do men thirst after the world as if the pearl of happiness hung upon an earthly crown? Oh, says one, if I had but such an estate, then I would be happy. Had I but such a comfort, then I would sit down satisfied. Well, God gives him that comfort and lets him suck the very juice out of it.

But, alas, it falls short of his expectation. It cannot fill the emptiness and longing of his soul. Happiness does not lie in the acquisition of worldly things.

Happiness cannot, by any chemistry, be extracted from the world. Christ does not say, happy are the rich or happy are the noble, yet too many idolize these things. How ready is man to terminate his happiness in external worldly things? If they have but worldly accommodations, they are ready to say with that brutish fool in the gospel, soul, you have many goods laid up for many years.

Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But, alas, the tree of happiness does not grow in an earthly paradise. Has not God cursed the ground because of sin? Yet many are digging for happiness here, as if they would fetch a blessing out of a curse.

A man may as well think to extract oil out of a stone or fire out of water. As happiness out of earthly things. King Solomon had more worldly things than any man.

His crown was hung full of jewels. He had treasuries of gold. He had the flower and quintessence of all delights, sumptuous fare, stately edifices, vineyards, lands, all sorts of music to enchant and ravish the senses with joy.

If there were any rarity, it was present in King Solomon's court. Thus did he bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure. Never did the world cast a more smiling aspect upon any man.

Yet when he comes to give his impartial verdict, he tells us that the world has vanity written upon its front piece. And all those golden delights he enjoyed were but a painted felicity, a glorious misery. Behold, all was vanity.

Happiness is too noble and delicate a plant to grow in this world's soil. Worldly joys are but sugared lies, pleasant deceits, which have not one grain of true happiness. Nothing on earth can satisfy the soul's desires.

The world passes away, 1 John 2, verse 17. Worldly delights are winged. They may be compared to a flock of birds in the garden, which stay a little while, but when you come near to them, they take their flight and are gone.

Just so, riches make themselves wings. They fly away like an eagle toward heaven. They are like a meteor which blazes, but soon burns out.

They are like a castle made of snow, lying under the fiery beams of the sun. Worldly comforts are like tennis balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another. They are like a bouquet of flowers, which withers while you are smelling it.

They are like ice, which melts away while it is in your hand. Those things which do more vex than comfort cannot make a man truly happy, as riches are compared to wind to show their vanity, so they are compared to thorns to show their vexation. Thorns are not more apt to tear our garments than riches to tear our hearts.

They are thorns in the gathering and they prick with anxious care. They pierce the head with care of getting, so they wound the heart with fear of losing. Happiness is not to be fetched out of the earth.

Worldly comforts cannot make you happy. You might live rich and die cursed. You might treasure up an estate and God might treasure up wrath.

128 Constant Religious Engagements

Constant Religious Engagements, by Ruth Bryan They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept. Song of Solomon 1, verse 6 We may be active in our Lord's cause, but not spiritual in our own souls. We may be earnest for the salvation of others, but not be living in the joys of salvation ourselves.

We may be instrumentally distributing the bread and water of life, but not be enjoying daily refreshment in our own experience. I do sorrowfully think that this is too much the case in the present day. The reason why I thus judge is from finding people so lively in conversing upon what they are doing for the Lord, yet so slow to speak of what He is doing for them.

They seem delighted to tell of the great things which are going on all around, but immediately shrink back if any heart subject is brought home to them. In fact, if one speaks of personal enjoyment of the love of Jesus, there is no response from some, but they put it down to the score of egotism. While others refer to years past when they did feel Him to be precious, but they confess that they know little of it now.

They are so occupied in what they call working for Him that they hear little from Him, say little to Him, enjoy little of Him, and may truly say, while I was busy here and there, He had left. It is most lamentable for any living soul to be in constant religious engagements for the good of others while following Jesus afar off. Very many such, I fear, there are, as well as hundreds who only know Him in the judgment and yet are continually reading, teaching, and conversing on His blessed name.

This is a day of great profession, but yet real vital godliness is at a low ebb and close walking with God in sweet communion is too little sought after. Solemn, indeed, are these facts. We may well say with David, Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

129 An Ignorant, Profane, Soul-Flatt

An Ignorant, Profane, and Soul-Flattering Clergy by Thomas Brooks A preacher's life should be a commentary upon his doctrine. His practice should be the counterpart of his sermons. Heavenly doctrines should always be adorned with a heavenly life.

An Ignorant, Profane, and Soul-Flattering Clergy are the greatest pest, plague, affliction, and judgment which can befall a people. There is no rank nor order of men on earth who have so enriched hell, who have been such benefactors to hell, as the Ignorant and Profane Clergy. How many are there in these days who are more ready and willing to make a sacrifice of the gospel for profit's sake, and preferment's sake, and honor's sake, and lust's sake? Where there is no serious, sincere, faithful, and powerful preaching, there the people grow abominably wicked and will certainly perish and go tumbling to hell.

Pastors, either preach as the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to preach—plainly, spiritually, powerfully, feelingly, fervently, frequently—and live as the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to live—heavenly, graciously, holily, humbly, righteously, harmlessly, exemplary—or else lay down your names of being the ministers of Jesus Christ. Do not any longer put a cheat upon yourselves, nor upon the people, by making them believe that you are ministers of Jesus Christ, when you have nothing of the Spirit of Christ, nor of the anointings of Christ, nor of the grace of Christ, nor of the life of Christ in you.

130 Other Baals

Other Baals by J.A. James How long are you going to waver between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow Him. But if Baal is God, then follow Him. 1 Kings 18 verse 21 There are other Baals in this age, in all the various forms under which they are objects of human idolatry.

It is true, you are not called, invited, or disposed to bow the knee to idols of wood, stone, or metal. These, however, are not the only way in which idolatry may be practiced. Everyone has a God, and if man does not love and worship Jehovah, he will make a deity of his own image.

Survey the idols which you are called upon to worship. Among them, sustaining a high place, is the idol of sensuality. This goddess is decked out with all that can pollute the imagination, inflame the passions, or excite the evil propensities of a youthful heart.

Before this image, multitudes of devotees of both sexes bow the knee and offer the most costly sacrifices of property, health, principle, and reputation. Near her is the bewitching and smiling image of worldly pleasure with the sound of music, the song, and the dance, alluring the giddy and thoughtless to its orgies, and throwing the spell of its fascinations over the imagination of multitudes who go merrily to their ruin. Mammon, the despicable deity of wealth, is there, glittering with gold and offering riches to his eager followers as the reward of their diligent and faithful adherents.

His liturgy is the cry of, Money! Money! Money! His sacrifices are the time, the bodies, the comfort, and the souls of his worshippers. Near this is the shrine of human knowledge. This idol is only evil when raised above the place of faith, piety, and virtue.

When thus exalted above Scripture, it is a deceiving, corrupting idol, the false goddess of a pantheon of vices. Nor must we leave out the idols of false religion, the chief of which is popery, the antichrist of the apocalypse, the man of sin sitting in the temple of God, exalting itself above all that is called God, This idol, taking the name of Christ as its designation, assuming the cross as its symbol, and boasting of an apostle as its first pope, enriched by wealth, venerable for antiquity, dignified by learning, decorated by sculpture, architecture, and painting, and adding the abysmal policies and most serpentine craft to all these other dangerous qualities, has fascinated countless millions. And, notwithstanding the monstrous absurdity of its doctrines, the blood-stained page of its history, and its hostility to the liberties of mankind, is now putting forth the most arrogant claims, and making the most audacious attempts for the conquest of our country.

All these idolaters have chosen their God, and are the determined and devoted worshippers of their bales. They have hardened their hearts, and seared their consciences, except it be an occasional qualm in the season of death or sickness. They congratulate themselves upon their having thrown off all the weakness and fears of Christianity, and upon their being now enabled to pursue their downward course, unchecked by the restraint of conscience.

Unhappy men, blind, and glorifying in their blindness, benumbed in all their moral faculties, and exalting in their stupidity. With every tie cut which held them to piety and truth, they accounted a privilege that they are drifting unobstructed to destruction, determined to be lost, and rejoicing that nothing bars their path to the bottomless pit. These men have set up idols in their hearts.

Their hearts were devoted to their idols. Verse 16

131 They Are All Head, But No Feet

They Are All Head, But No Feet By Thomas Watson A sermon is never rightly heard until it is practiced. If you know these things, happy are you if you do them. John 13, verse 17.

Christ does not put happiness upon knowing, but upon doing. It is not knowledge of the points of religion, but practice which renders a man truly happy and blessed. Luke 6, verse 46.

Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and don't do the things I say? It is not the mere knowledge and acceptance of the most glorious gospel truths which will bring a man to heaven. If a man could fluently discourse on all scriptural truths, if his head were a treasury of wisdom, an ocean of learning, yet this would not entitle him to happiness. His knowledge might make him admired by men, but not blessed by God.

If a man knew and believed all the doctrines of scripture, this would not crown him with eternal happiness. Knowledge is a fair garland to look upon, but it is like Rachel. Though she was beautiful, yet being barren, she said, give me children or I die.

Just so, if knowledge does not bring forth the child of obedience, it will die and come to nothing. I would by no means disparage knowledge. Knowledge is the pilot to guide us in our obedience.

Yet, knowledge must usher in obedience. Knowledge may put us into the way of happiness, but it is only practice which brings us there. Knowledge alone does not make a man better, therefore it cannot make him happy and blessed.

Bare knowledge has no influence. It does not leave a spiritual tincture of holiness behind. Knowledge informs, not transforms.

Knowledge of itself has no power upon the heart to make it more holy. Bare knowledge is like weak medicine, which does not work. It does not warm the affections, nor purge the conscience.

It does not fetch virtue from Christ to dry up the bloody issue of sin. A man may receive the light of the truth, yet not love the truth. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved, 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 10.

The apostle calls it a form of knowledge, Romans 2 verse 20. Knowledge alone is but a dead form, having nothing to animate it. He who has knowledge alone is a spiritual stillborn.

He looks like a Christian, but has neither appetite nor motion. Knowledge alone makes men monsters in religion. They are all head, but no feet.

They do not walk in Christ, Colossians 2 verse 6. A man may have scriptural knowledge and still be profane. He may have a clear head and a foul heart. The understanding may be illumined when the foot treads in unholy paths.

If knowledge is divorced from practice and does not make a man better, then it cannot make a man eternally happy and blessed. If bare knowledge will save, then all who have knowledge shall be saved. But that is not true.

For then Judas would be saved, for he had knowledge enough. Then the devil would be saved. A man may have right knowledge and be no better than a devil.

Hell is full of learned heads. Knowledge alone makes a man's case worse. Knowledge takes away all excuse.

Knowledge adds to a man's torment. Woe to you! I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on that day of judgment than for you. It will be better with heathen than with professing Christians living in a contradiction to their knowledge.

Luke 12 verse 47. The servant will be severely punished, for though he knew his duty, he refused to do it. Knowledge without practice serves only as a torch to light men to hell.

The brighter the light, the hotter the fire.

132 God's Tools and Instruments

God's Tools and Instruments, by Thomas Brooks. I form the light and create darkness. I bring prosperity and create disaster.

I, the Lord, do all these things. Isaiah 45, verse 7. Let us see the hand of the Lord in this recent dreadful fire which has turned our once renowned London into a ruinous heap. London's sins were now so great and God's wrath was now so hot that there was no quenching of the furious flames.

The decree for the burning of London was now gone forth and nothing could reverse it. The time of London's fall was now come, the fire had now received its commission from God, to burn down the city and to turn it into a ruinous heap. Certainly, God is the great agent in all those dreadful judgments which befall people, cities, and kingdoms.

Whoever or whatever be the rod, it is God's hand which gives the stroke. The power of bringing judgments upon cities, God takes to Himself. When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it? Amos 3, verse 6. Whatever that judgment is which falls upon a city, God is the author of it.

He acts in it and orders it according to His own good pleasure. There is no judgment which accidentally falls upon any person, city, or country. Every judgment is inflicted by a divine power and providence.

God had given a commission to the fire to burn with that force and violence as it did, until London was laid in ashes. Whoever kindled this fire, God blew the coal. And therefore no arts, councils, or endeavors of men were able to quench it.

All judgments are at the beck of God and under the command of God. Whatever judgment God commands to destroy a person, a city, or a country, that judgment shall certainly and effectually accomplish the command of God, in spite of all that creatures can do. If God commissions the sword of war to walk abroad and to glut itself with blood, who can command it into the scabbard again? No art, power, or policy can cause that sword to lie still.

God, as He is our Creator, Preserver, and Sovereign Lord, has an absolute power both over our persons, lives, estates, and habitations. And when we have transgressed His righteous laws, He may do with us and all we have as He pleases. He may turn us out of house and home and burn up all our comforts round about us and yet do us no wrong.

Our God is in heaven. He does whatever pleases Him. Psalm 115 verse 3. The Lord does whatever pleases Him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

Psalm 135 verse 6. Those things which seem accidental and chance to us are ordered by the wise counsel, power, and providence of God. Instruments can no more stir until God gives them a commission than the axe or the knife can cut by itself without a hand. God makes use of whatever second causes He pleases for the execution of His pleasure.

And many times He makes the worst of men the rod of His indignation to chastise His people with. All inferior or subordinate causes are but God's tools and instruments, which He rules and guides according to His own will, power, and providence. Job eyed God in the fire which fell from heaven and in all the fiery trials which befell him.

And therefore he does not say, The Lord gave, and the devil took away. Nor, The Lord gave, and the Chaldeans and Sabeans took away. But, The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away.

May the name of the Lord be praised. Job 1 verses 20 and 21. Certainly without the cognizance and concurrence of a wise, omniscient, and omnipotent God, no creatures can move.

Without His foresight and permission, no event can befall any person, city, or country. Whatever the means or instruments of our misery are, the hand is God's. It behooves us in every judgment to see the hand of the Lord and to look through visible means to an invisible God.

The Lord has afflicted me. The Almighty has brought misfortune upon me. Ruth 1 verse 21.

The Lord brings death and makes alive. He brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth.

He humbles and He exalts. 1 Samuel 2 verses 6 and 7.

133 My Needs, His Fullness

My Needs, His Fullness, by James Michael All plenitude is in Christ, to answer all the needs of His people. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, that out of His fullness I may receive all spiritual blessings. Have I destroyed myself by sin? I have deliverance from Him who is mighty to save from sin and wrath.

Is my foolish mind darkened? Am I a guilty, polluted and ruined wretch? Jesus is my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Is my life fleeting and passing away like a shadow? Jesus is the ancient of days and endures forevermore. Are my days short-lived and full of trouble? Jesus is my life, the length of my days and the joy of my heart.

Am I exposed to contempt? Jesus shall be my crown of glory and diadem of beauty. Am I traveling through the wilderness? Jesus is my staff and on Him I lean all the way. Am I on my last journey to my long home? Jesus is my leader and my rewarder.

Am I a sheep? Jesus is my pasture and my green pasture too. Am I hungry and thirsty? Jesus is my heavenly manna and gives me to drink of the water of life. Am I weary? Jesus is my rest and refreshing.

Am I weak? Jesus is my strength. Am I oppressed and wronged? Jesus is my judge and my avenger. Am I reproached? The reproach of His people Jesus will wipe away.

Am I a soldier? Jesus is my captain and shield and my shield. Must I fight in the field of battle? Jesus is my armor in the day of war. Do I sit in darkness? Jesus is my light.

Do I have doubts? Jesus is my counselor. Am I ignorant? Jesus is my wisdom. Am I guilty? Jesus is my justification.

Am I filthy? Jesus is my sanctification. Am I dead in sin? Jesus is my life and quickens those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Am I poor? Jesus is the pearl of great price and has immeasurable riches.

Am I blind? Jesus and none but He can open the eyes of one born blind. Am I naked? Jesus has white clothing to cover the shame of my nakedness. Am I in the very utmost necessity? Jesus is a very present help in time of trouble.

Am I exposed to the hurricanes of adversity? Jesus is a refuge from the storm, a shelter from the blast, rivers of water in a desert, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Am I afraid of being left alone? Jesus will never leave me nor forsake me. Do friends and brethren prove false? Jesus is the friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Am I in danger from diseases and death or from sin and Satan? My life is hidden with Christ in God. When He shall appear, I shall appear with Him, immortal in my body and glorious in my soul. Is my case considered in the court of heaven? There Jesus is my advocate.

Do I offend the Father? Jesus is my intercessor. Do I suffer in my body and am I grieved in my mind? Jesus bore my infirmities and carried my griefs. Is my mind disquieted and my soul debarred from peace? Jesus is my sympathetic high priest.

He was tempted in all points and knows how to support those who are tempted. Am I poor in my circumstances? Jesus, the heir of all things, though He was rich, yet for my sake He became poor, that I through His poverty might be made rich. Do I suffer in my character? Jesus was numbered with transgressors, called a Samaritan, a glutton, a drunkard, and a devil.

Am I bereaved or alone? Well, Jesus in the fatal night was left alone. All the disciples forsook Him and fled. Jesus, my only friend, can never die.

Must I undergo death and be laid in the grave? Jesus has taken away the sting of death and robbed the grave of its victory. Must I rot in the grave? Jesus shall be my resurrection and raise me to immortality and bliss. Would I go to God and to glory? Jesus is my way and must admit me into the palace of the great King where I shall abide forever.

In summary, Jesus is my brother, my physician, my prophet, my priest, my king, my father, my head, my husband. In eternity, when I shall dwell in the land of bliss, in the city of God, Jesus will be the light thereof. And since I am to worship there forever, He will be the temple of all the redeemed.

My needs are many, but His fullness is infinitely more. The morning dews and fructifying showers water the fields and refresh the parched furrows. But what are they compared to the exhaustless ocean of Jesus? What is all that I enjoy here below compared to the exuberant fullness of the heavenly bliss? Oh, then how shall my soul be replenished when possessed of this infinite all through eternity itself?

134 Had I a Thousand Lives

Had I a Thousand Lives, A Thousand Souls by John Fawcett My meditation of him shall be sweet. Psalm 104 verse 34 It is the tendency of love to excite in the mind many thoughts about the beloved object. A right knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ will fill the mind with thoughts and meditations concerning him, so as to excite the affections to cleave to him with delight.

A discovery of the glory of his person, of the perfection of his atoning sacrifice, and of the fullness of his grace must inspire the heart with love to him. Yes, he is very precious to you who believe. 1 Peter 2 verse 7 It is much to be lamented that those who profess a sincere attachment to the Redeemer should have their thoughts so little employed about him.

Where a multitude of worldly cares, desires, fears, and hopes prevail in the mind, they cumber and perplex it, so as to bring on a great disinclination to spiritual meditation. The advice of the Apostle Paul is of great importance in this case. If you then are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

Set your affection, your mind, your thoughts, on things above, not on things on the earth. But earthly and sensual affections fill the hearts and heads of men with multitudes of thoughts concerning those objects on which they are fixed, so as to leave no room nor any inclination for spiritual and heavenly thoughts. Shall not my thoughts, says the believer, be frequently employed in meditating on the love of that infinitely glorious person to whom I am indebted for deliverance from the greatest misery and for all the hope I have of being one day advanced to everlasting glory and felicity? He poured out his holy soul in agonies, under the curse of the avenging law, to make me a partaker of eternal blessedness.

He perfectly fulfilled the precepts of that holy law that I, by his obedience, might be made righteous. This glorious and adorable Redeemer thought upon us long before the foundations of the world were laid. He bore us on his heart when he hung on the cross, when he was torn with wounds and racked with pain, when he poured out his dying groans and spilt his blood.

He remembers us now when he is exalted at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens and will never, never forget us through all the ages of eternity. Surely, then, we ought to think of him. Impressed with a sense of his everlasting kindness, we should be ready to say, as the captives in Babylon concerning their beloved city Jerusalem, If I forget you, O blessed Jesus, let my right hand forget its skill.

May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I fail to remember you, if I don't make you my highest joy. What holy transports of soul, what divine delights have many Christians experienced in meditating on the glories of the Redeemer? Ascending the mount of contemplation, their souls have taken wing and explored the height and the depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. They have seen by the eye of faith that he is infinitely lovely in himself, that he is the admiration of angels, the darling of heaven, and the delight of the Father.

They have viewed him in the brightness of his ineffable glory, clothed with indescribable majesty and honor. They have been transported with the smiles of his countenance and said of him, he is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. They have also considered their own unworthiness and said, can such a wretch as I be the object of his love? So vile a worm, so unprofitable a creature, so great a sinner, one so deserving of his everlasting abhorrence.

Has he loved me so as to give himself for me? Oh, what marvelous kindness is this? Is my worthless name written in his book of life? Am I redeemed by his blood, renewed by his spirit, beautified with his loveliness, and clothed in his righteousness? Oh, wonder of wonders! How can I forbear to love this adorable Savior? Can I withhold my choicest affections from him? Ah, no! Had I a thousand lives, a thousand souls, they would all be devoted to him. You tempting vanities of this base world, you flattering honors, you deceitful riches, adieu! Jesus is my all, he is my light, my life, my unfailing treasure, my everlasting portion. Nothing below the skies is deserving of my love.

Precious Redeemer, in you the boundless wishes of my soul are filled. I long to leave this tenement of clay and to rest in the bosom of your love forever. My meditation of him shall be sweet.

Psalm 104 verse 34.

135 For You, A Vile Sinner, A Rebel

For You, a Vile Sinner, a Rebel Worm by David Harsha Ponder the amazing love exhibited in the death of Christ. Would you see the highest manifestation of eternal love? Then contemplate Christ crucified. Here is the grand exhibition of infinite love.

In the crucifixion of the glorious Redeemer, the brightest love that ever shone on earth is displayed. What boundless love is seen here? The infinite love of Christ, shining in all of its glory. What but infinite love brought Him from the height of bliss to the depths of suffering, from the throne of heaven to the cross of Calvary? What but infinite love made Him a suffering man and a dying Savior? What but infinite love made Him hasten to Jerusalem to suffer for sinners? What but infinite love led Him to Gethsemane to endure those agonies for sinners, where His blessed form was covered with bloody sweat? What but infinite love nailed Him to the cross, there to bleed and die for sinners? Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

But oh, the greatest wonder in the universe is that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Think of this. Wonder at it.

Be amazed at it. Christ, the glorious Son of God, dying for you, a vile sinner, a rebel worm. Oh, admire that love which pitied you in your lost condition, visited your world, and raised you from the depths of sin and suffering to become an heir of eternal life and of eternal glory.

How vast is this love, the all-surpassing love of a dying Savior! Your breadths and lengths have never been compassed by a human thought, your depths never fathomed by a created intelligence, your heights never scanned by a seraph's gaze. Stupendous love! What a theme, the dying love of the crucified Son of God! Well may angels desire to dwell on this mystery! Well may saints be enraptured with this profound subject! What heart is so obdurate as not to be melted by its touching exhibition, or so benighted as not to be dazzled by its glory! How wonderful that He who kindled up the stars of heaven should take upon Him our nature and die in our room instead! Amazing love! This is the wonder of wonders, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Truly, the love of Christ passes knowledge.

Those and those alone who have stood by the cross and viewed Emmanuel in agonies and death, bleeding and dying for their sins, and have felt the healing balm applied to their diseased souls, have seen all their sins washed away with the blood of God, their ransom paid and their pardons sealed, will appreciate the astonishing love of Christ.

136 The Spirit's Work in Salvation

The Spirit's Work in Salvation by Charles Spurgeon The Holy Spirit lays bare his heart, lets him see the lonesome cancer that is there eating away his life, uncovers to him all the blackness and defilement of that sink of hell, the human heart. And then the man stands aghast. I never thought I was like this.

Oh, those sins I thought were little have swelled to an immense stature. What I thought was a molehill has grown into a mountain. It was a hyssop on the wall before, but now it has become a cedar of Lebanon.

Then the man says to himself, Oh, I will try to reform. I will do enough good deeds to wash these black deeds out. Then the Holy Spirit comes and shows him that he cannot do this, takes away all his fancied power and strength.

So that the man falls down on his knees in agony and cries, Oh, once I thought I could save myself by my good works, but now I find that could my tears forever flow? Could my zeal no respite? No, all for sin could not atone. You must save and you alone. Then his heart sinks and the man is ready to despair.

He says, I can never be saved. Nothing can save me. Then the Holy Spirit comes and shows the sinner, the cross of Christ, gives him eyes anointed with heavenly eye salve and says, look to yonder cross.

That man died to save sinners. You feel you are a sinner. He died to save you.

And then the Holy Spirit enables the heart to believe and come to Christ.

137 He Drank It Up, Every Drop

He drank it up, every drop, by Thomas Brooks. Who can comprehend the power of your wrath? Psalm 90, verse 11. Jesus Christ comprehends it, for He underwent it.

His whole life was made up of suffering, from His birth to His death, from His cradle to the cross, from the womb to the tomb. He was a man of sorrows. Behold His bodily sufferings, the crown of thorns on His head, the smiting of His cheeks, the spitting on His face, the scourging of His body, the cross on His back, the vinegar in His mouth, the nails in His hands and feet, the spear in His side.

His crucifixion and death on the cross might well astonish us. Behold that head, before which angels cast down themselves and worshipped, crowned with thorns. Behold those eyes, which were purer than the sun, put out by the darkness of death.

Behold those ears, which heard nothing but hallelujahs, hearing the blasphemies of the multitude. Behold that lovely face, spit on by such beastly wretches. Behold that mouth and tongue, which spoke as never any man spoke, accused of blasphemy.

Behold those hands, which freely swayed the scepter of heaven, nailed to the cross. Behold those feet, like unto fine brass, nailed to the cross for man's sins. Who can behold Christ thus suffering and not be struck with astonishment? 1 Peter 3 verse 18 Christ has suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous.

This is the wonderment of angels, the happiness of fallen man, and the torment of devils that Christ has suffered. The doleful tragedy of his sufferings is unutterable. The sufferings of Jesus Christ were very great and heinous.

What agony, what torment was our Savior racked with? He was despised and rejected. A man of sorrows acquainted with bitterest grief. Isaiah 53 verse 3 He was a man of sorrows as if he were a man made up of sorrows.

He knew more sorrows than any man, yes, than all men ever did. We never read that Jesus laughed at all when he was in the world. His whole life was filled up with sufferings.

How deep were his wounds. How weighty his burden. How full of trembling his cup when he lay under the mountains of the guilt of all the elect.

How bitter were his tears. How painful his bloody sweat. How dreadful his death.

Lamentations 1 verse 12 is very applicable to Christ. Look and see, is there any pain like mine, which was dealt out to me, which the Lord made me suffer on the day of his burning anger? What sufferings can you think of which Christ did not suffer? Christ suffered in his birth, and he suffered in his life, and he suffered in his death. He suffered in his body, for he was diversely tormented.

He suffered in his soul, for his soul was exceedingly sorrowful. He suffered in his estate. They parted his clothing, and he had nowhere to rest his head.

He suffered in his reputation, for he was called a Samaritan, a devilish sorcerer, a drunkard, an enemy to Caesar, etc. He suffered from heaven when he cried out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He suffered from the earth being hungry. He suffered from hell, Satan assaulting and encountering him with his most black and horrid temptations.

He began his life lowly and basely, and was sharply persecuted. He continued his life poorly and distressedly, and was cruelly hated. He ended his life woefully and miserably, and was most grievously tormented with whips, thorns, nails, and above all, with the terrors of his father's wrath, and horrors of hellish agonies.

Who can compute how many vials of God's inexpressible, insupportable wrath, which Christ drank? Yet, he drank it up, every drop, leaving nothing behind for his redeemed people, but large drops of love and salvation. The death of Christ on the cross was a bitter death, a sorrowful death, a bloody death. The bitter thoughts of his sufferings put him into a most dreadful agony.

Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground. Luke 22, verse 44. Nothing could fasten Christ to the cross, but the golden link of his free love.

Oh, what a wonder of love is this, that Jesus Christ, who is the author of life, the fountain of life, the Lord of life, that he should so freely, so readily, so cheerfully, lay down his life for us.

138 Angels Damned, Men Saved

Angels Damned, Men Saved, by Charles Spurgeon. God has chosen to himself a people whom no man can number, out of the children of Adam, out of the fallen and apostate race which sprang from the loins of a rebellious man. Now, this is a wonder of wonders, when we come to consider that the heaven, even the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's.

If God must have a chosen race, why did he not select one from the majestic orders of angels, or from the flaming cherubim and seraphim which stand around his throne? Why was not Gabriel fixed upon? Why was he not so constituted that from his loins there might spring a mighty race of angels? And why were not these chosen by God from before the foundations of the world? What could there be in man, a creature lower than the angels, that God should select him rather than the angelic spirits? Why were not the cherubim and seraphim given to Christ? Why did he not assume angels' nature and take them into union with himself? An angelic body might be more in keeping with a person of deity than a body of weak and suffering flesh and blood. There were something congruous if he had said unto the angels, You shall be my sons. But no, though all these were his own, he passes by the hierarchy of angels and stoops to man.

He takes up an apostate worm and says unto him, You shall be my son, and to myriads of the same race, he cries, You shall be my sons and daughters by a covenant forever. But, says one, it seems that God intended to choose a fallen people that he might in them show forth his grace. Now the angels, of course, would be unsuitable for this, since they have not fallen.

I reply, There are angels that have fallen. There were angels that kept not the first estate, but fell from their dignity. And how is it that these are consigned to blackness and darkness forever? Answer me, you that deny God's sovereignty and hate his election.

How is it that angels are condemned to everlasting fire, while to you, the children of Adam, the gospel of Christ is freely preached? The only answer that can possibly be given is this, God wills to do it. He has a right to do as he pleases with his own mercy. Angels deserve no mercy, neither do we deserve mercy.

Nevertheless, he gave it to us, and he denied it them. They are bound in chains, reserved for everlasting fire to the last great day. But we are saved.

Why, if there were any reason to move God and his creatures, he would certainly have chosen devils rather than men. Had the angels been reclaimed, they could have glorified God more than we. They could have sang his praises louder than we can, clogged as we are with flesh and blood.

But passing by the greater, he chose the lesser, that he might show forth his sovereignty, which is the brightest jewel in the crown of his divinity. Our Arminian antagonists always leave the fallen angels out of the question, for it is not convenient to them to recollect this ancient instance of election. They call it unjust that God should choose one man and not another.

By what reasoning can this be unjust, when they will admit that it was righteous enough in God to choose one race, the race of men, and leave another race, the race of angels, to be sunk into misery on account of sin? Brethren, let us be done with arraignment God at our poor, fallible judgment seat. God is good and does righteousness. Whatever he does, we may know to be right, whether we can see the justice of it or not.

God's election is marvelous indeed. God had unlimited power of creation. Now, if he willed to make a people who would be his favorites, who would be united to the person of his Son, and who would reign with him, why did he not make a new race? When Adam sinned, it would have been easy enough to strike the earth out of existence.

He had but to speak, and this round earth would have been dissolved as the bubble dies into the wave that bears it. There would have been no trace of Adam's sin left. The whole might have died away and have been forgotten forever.

But no, instead of making a new people, a pure people who could not sin, instead of taking to himself creatures that were pure, unsullied, without spot, he takes a depraved and fallen people and lifts these up, and that too by costly means, by the death of his own Son, and by the work of his own spirit, that these must be the jewels in his crown to reflect his glory forever. Oh, singular choice! Oh, inexplicable election! My soul is lost in your depths, and I can only pause and cry, Oh, the goodness, Oh, the mercy, Oh, the sovereignty of God's grace. Now, when you think that God has chosen you, you may well pause and say in the language of that hymn, Pause, my soul, adore and wonder, Ask, Oh, why such love to me? Kings passed by and beggars chosen.

Wise men left, but fools made to know the wonders of his redeeming love. Publicans and harlots sweetly compelled to come to the feast of mercy, while proud religious people are allowed to trust in their own righteousness and perish in their vain boastings. God's choice will ever seem in the eyes of unrenewed men to be a very strange one.

He has passed over those whom we would have selected, and He has chosen those who thought themselves to be the least likely ever to taste of His grace. Before your sovereignty, I bow, great God, and acknowledge that you do as you wish, and that you give no account of your matters.

139 Such a God Should Be Derided

Such a God should be derided by William S. Plumer. The unrenewed heart is atheistic in its inclinations. They say, the Lord doesn't see it.

The God of Jacob doesn't pay attention. Psalm 94 verse 7. The wicked say to themselves, God isn't watching. He will never notice.

Arise, O Lord. Punish the wicked, O God. Psalm 10 verses 11 and 12.

Nothing more derogatory to the character of God can possibly be said than that He does not rule the world. God reigns is a logical conclusion from God is. To deny God's providence is as atheistic as to deny His existence.

A God who neither sees, nor hears, nor knows, nor cares, nor helps, nor saves, is a vanity and can never claim homage from intelligent men. Such a God should be derided, not worshipped. He might suit the mythology of paganism or meet the demands of an infidel heart, but could never command the allegiance or win the confidence of an enlightened and pious man.

The world may as well be without a God, as have one who is incompetent to rule it, or who, wrapping himself in a mantle of careless indifference, abandons creation to the governance of puny mortals, to the rule of devils, or to the sway of a blind chance. Such conduct may well comport with the character of false gods, but is wholly abhorrent to the nature of Jehovah. God's tender mercies are over all His works.

His kingdom rules over all. Our God is in heaven and does whatever He pleases. Psalm 115 verse 3 For I know that the Lord is great, our Lord is greater than all gods.

The Lord does whatever He pleases in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the depths. Psalm 135 verses 5 and 6 Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Revelation 19 verse 6

140 The Ant's Nest

The Ant's Nest by Thomas Boston Never did any sin appear in the life of the vilest wretch who ever lived, but look into your own corrupt nature, and there you may see the seed and root, that sin and every other sin. There is atheism, idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and whatever is vile in your heart. Possibly none of these are apparent to you, but there is more in that unfathomable depth of wickedness than you know.

Your corrupt heart is like an ant's nest, which, while the stone lies on it, none of them appear. But take off the stone and stir them up but with a straw, and you will see what a swarm is there, and how lively they are. Just such a sight would your heart afford you, did the Lord but withdraw the restraint He has upon it, and allow Satan to stir it up by temptation.

For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. Mark 7 verses 21 and 22. Christian, the remembrance of what you are by nature should keep you humble.

141 True Christianity

True Christianity by J.C. Ryle Number one, true Christianity has always taught the inspiration, sufficiency, and supremacy of Holy Scripture. It has told men that God's written word is the only trustworthy rule of faith and practice in religion. That God requires nothing to be believed that is not in this word, and that nothing is right which contradicts it.

It has never allowed reason or the voice of the church to be placed above or on a level with Scripture. It has steadily maintained that, however imperfectly we may understand it, the old book is meant to be the only standard of life and doctrine. Number two, true Christianity has always taught fully the sinfulness, guilt, and corruption of human nature.

It has told men that they are born in sin, deserve God's wrath and condemnation, and are naturally inclined to do evil. It has never allowed that men and women are only weak and pitiable creatures who can become good when they please and make their own peace with God. On the contrary, it has steadily declared man's danger and vileness and his pressing need of a divine forgiveness and atonement for his sins, a new birth or conversion, and an entire change of heart.

Number three, true Christianity has always set before men the Lord Jesus Christ as the chief object of faith and hope in religion, as the divine mediator between God and men, the only source of peace of conscience, and the root of all spiritual life. The main things it has ever insisted on about Christ are the atonement for sin He made by His death, His sacrifice on the cross, the complete redemption from guilt and condemnation by His blood, His victory over the grave by His resurrection, His active life of intercession at God's right hand, and the absolute necessity of simple faith in Him. In short, it has made Christ the Alpha and the Omega in Christian theology.

Number four, true Christianity has always honored the person of God the Holy Spirit and magnified His work. It has never taught that all professing Christians have the grace of the Spirit in their hearts, as a matter of course, because they are baptized or because they belong to a church. It has steadily maintained that the fruits of the Spirit are the only evidence of having the Spirit, and that those fruits must be seen.

It has always taught that we must be born of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, sanctified by the Spirit, and feel the operations of the Spirit, and that a close walk with God in the path of His commandments, a life of holiness, love, self-denial, purity, and zeal to do good, are the only satisfactory marks of the Holy Spirit. Such is true Christianity. Well would it have been for the world if there had been more of it during the last nineteen centuries.

Too often, and in too many parts of Christendom, there has been so little of it that Christ's religion has seemed extinct and has fallen into utter contempt. This is the Christianity which, in the days of the apostles, turned the world upside down. It was this which emptied the idle temples of their worshipers, routed the Greek and Roman philosophers, and obliged even heathen writers to confess that the followers of the new superstition, as they called it, were people who loved one another and lived very pure and holy lives.

Let it never be forgotten that its leading principles are those which are least likely to please the natural man. On the contrary, they are precisely those which are calculated to be unpopular and to give offense. Proud man does not like to be told that he is a weak, guilty sinner, that he cannot save his own soul and must trust in the work of another, that he must be converted and have a new heart, that he must live a holy, self-denying life and come out from the world.

Yet, this is the Christianity which is doing good at this day, wherever real good is done. The only religious teaching which can show solid, positive results is that which gives prominence to the doctrines which I have endeavored to describe. Wherever they are rightly taught, Christianity can point to fruits which are an unanswerable proof of its divine origin.

There are myriads of professing Christians who have no life or reality in their religion and are only nominal members of Christ's church. Except for going to church on Sundays, they give no evidence of true Christianity. If you mark their daily life, they seem neither to think nor feel nor care for their souls or God or eternity.

Men and women who crowd churches on Sundays and then live worldly, selfish lives all the week are the best and most efficient allies of the devil. True faith is not a mere mental assent to certain theological propositions, but a living, burning, active principle which works by love, purifies the heart, overcomes the world and brings forth much fruit of holiness and good works. Let us live as if we really believed every jot and tittle of Scripture and as if a dying, risen, interceding and coming Christ were continually before our eyes.

142 A New Existence

A New Existence, by J. C. Ryle Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3, verse 3. To be born again is, as it were, to enter upon a new existence, to have a new mind, a new heart, new views, new principles, new tastes, new affections, new likings, new dislikings, new fears, new joys, new sorrows, new love to things once hated, new hatred to things once loved, new thoughts of God, of ourselves, of the world, of the life to come, of salvation. He who has been born again is a new man, a new creature, for old things are passed away.

He receives an utterly new bias and direction. All things have become new. It is the implanting of a new principle, which will surely bear good fruit.

It is opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, loosing the tongue of the dumb, giving hands and feet to the maimed and lame. For he that is born again no longer allows his members to be instruments and servants of unrighteousness, but he gives them unto God, and then only are they properly employed. You must be born again.

John 3 verse 7.

143 My Unstable Soul

My Unstable Soul by John Fawcett O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Psalm 25, verse 11 If men have no inward grief on account of their ingratitude to a dying Savior, it indicates a lack of love to Him, and that they have not a just sense of the evil and malignity of their sin. To think of the love of Jesus to my poor soul, manifested in His sorrows, His sufferings, His agonies, and the shedding of His precious blood, pierces my heart and makes me loathe myself in my own sight.

While I look to Him upon the cross, whom I have pierced by my sins, surely I ought to mourn and be in bitterness, as one who mourns for the death of his firstborn. Shall not I shed tears of grief for those sins, for which my Redeemer shed His precious blood? Blessed Jesus, how cold, how feeble, how languid is my love to You, the altogether lovely One. Alas, how readily are my fluctuating passions captivated by worldly things.

O, let me not live so estranged from You, warm my cold and frozen heart, and kindle in my bosom a flame of holy fervor towards You. At some seasons, the believer's mind is so oppressed with a sense of his own vileness that he is ready to sink into despondency. In his retired moments, he pours out his complaints in such a language as this, the clogs of guilt and the clouds of darkness hang heavy on my soul.

What language can express the depth of my distress on account of my sin? A sense of the vilest ingratitude to the best of beings stings my heart and deprives me of comfort. What returns have I made for the abundant divine favors which I have received? I cannot bear the sight of my own vileness. I abhor myself and repent as in dust and ashes.

My life has been marked with repeated instances of ingratitude to Him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, whom I desire to love and to obey with my whole heart. My unstable soul has been perpetually departing from God, inclining to folly and verging towards that which is evil. This, this is wretchedness indeed.

For this I condemn myself almost without ceasing. My spirits droop. My heart desponds.

My soul is disquieted within me. O Lord, be merciful to me. Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

Lord, I abhor myself on account of the defilement which cleaves unto me. Behold, I am vile. I will lay my hand upon my mouth and put my face in the dust.

I have experienced a thousand proofs of Your goodness, the remembrance of which fills me with shame because of my ingratitude. The height of my folly lies in having so often sinned against infinite goodness and love. I have abused Your kindness and affronted Your mercy.

O Lord, I beseech You, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Such exercises of mind as these strongly indicate the sincerity of our love for the Divine Savior.

144 He Who Truly Believes In Christ

He Who Truly Believes in Christ by J.C. Ryle There is a dead faith as well as a living one. There is a faith of devils as well as a faith of God's elect. There is a faith which is vain and useless, as well as a faith which justifies and saves.

How shall a man know whether he has true saving faith? The thing may be found out. The Ethiopian may be known by the color of his skin, and the leopard may be known by his spots. True faith may always be known by certain marks.

These marks are laid down unmistakably in Scripture. Reader, let me endeavor to set these marks plainly before you. Look at them carefully, and test your own soul by what I am going to say.

He Who Truly Believes in Christ has a new heart. It is written, If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away.

Behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5 verse 17 A believer has no longer the same nature with which he was born. He is changed, renewed, and transformed after the image of his Lord and Savior.

He who minds first the things of the flesh has no saving faith. True faith and spiritual regeneration are inseparable companions. An unconverted person is not a genuine believer.

He who truly believes in Christ is a holy person in heart and life. It is written that God purifies the heart by faith, and that Christians are sanctified by faith. Whoever has this hope in him purifies himself.

Acts 15 verse 9 chapter 26 verse 18 and 1 John 3 verse 3 A believer loves what God loves and hates what God hates. His heart's desire is to walk in the way of God's commandments and to abstain from all manner of evil. His wish is to follow after the things which are just and pure and honest and lovely, and to cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

He falls far short of his aim in many things. He finds his daily life a constant fight with indwelling corruption, but he fights on and resolutely refuses to serve sin. Where there is no holiness, we may be sure there is no saving faith.

An unholy man is not a genuine believer. He who truly believes in Christ works godly works. It is written that faith works by love.

Galatians 5 verse 6 True belief will never make a man idle or allow him to sit still, contented with his own religion. It will stir him to do acts of love, kindness, and charity according as he sees opportunity. It will constrain him to walk in the steps of his master, who went about doing good.

In one way or another, it will make him work. The works that he does may attract no notice from the world. They may seem trifling and insignificant to many people, but they are not forgotten by him who notices a cup of cold water given for his sake.

Where there is no working love, there is no faith. A lazy, self-professing Christian has no right to regard himself as a genuine believer. He who truly believes in Christ overcomes the world.

It is written that whoever is born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith. 1 John 5 verse 4 A true believer is not ruled by the world's standard of right or wrong, of truth or error. He is independent of the world's opinion.

He cares little for the world's praise. He is not moved by the world's censure. He does not seek for the world's pleasures.

He is not ambitious of the world's rewards. He looks at things unseen. He sees an invisible Savior, a coming judgment, and a crown of glory which never fades away.

The sight of these objects makes him think comparatively little of this present world. Where the world reigns in the heart, there is no genuine faith. A man who is habitually conformed to the world is not a genuine believer.

He who truly believes in Christ has the witness of the Holy Spirit. He has hopes, joys, fears, sorrows, consolations, expectations, of which he knew nothing before he believed. He has internal evidences which the world cannot understand.

Where there are no inward pious feelings, there is no faith. A man who knows nothing of an inward, spiritual, experimental religion is not a genuine believer. He who truly believes in Christ has a special regard to the person of Christ Himself.

It is written, Unto you who believe, Christ is precious. 1 Peter 2 verse 7. That text deserves a special notice. It does not say Christianity is precious, or the gospel is precious, or salvation is precious, but Christ Himself, a true believer's religion, does not consist in mere intellectual assent to a certain set of propositions and doctrines.

It is not a mere cold belief of a certain set of truths and facts concerning Christ. It consists in union, communion, and fellowship with an actual living person, even Jesus the Son of God. It is a life of faith in Jesus, confidence in Jesus, leaning on Jesus, and drawing out of the fullness of Jesus, speaking to Jesus, working for Jesus, loving Jesus, and looking for Jesus to come again.

Such life may sound like enthusiasm to many, but where there is true faith, Christ will always be known and realized as an actual living personal friend. He who knows nothing of Christ as his own priest, physician, redeemer, advocate, friend, teacher, and shepherd knows nothing yet of genuine believing. Where these marks of which I have been speaking are utterly lacking, I dare not tell a man that he is a true believer.

He may be called a Christian and attend a Christian church, but if he knows nothing of these marks, I dare not pronounce him a believer. He is yet dead in trespasses and sins. Except he awakes to newness of life, he will perish everlastingly.

Show me a man who has these marks, and I feel a strong confidence about the state of his soul. He may be poor and needy in this world, but he is rich in the sight of God. He may be despised and sneered at by man, but he is honorable in the sight of the King of Kings.

He is traveling towards heaven. He has a mansion ready for him in the Father's house. He is cared for by Christ while on earth.

He will be owned by Christ before assembled worlds in the life which is to come.

145 Your Spots and Blots

Your Spots and Blots by Thomas Brooks The Lord Our Righteousness, Jeremiah 23, verse 6 They are without fault before the throne of God, Revelation 14, verse 5 Weak hearts are apt to sit down troubled and discouraged when they look upon that body of sin which is in them and those imperfections which attend their best services. They are ready to say, We shall one day perish by the strength of our lusts or by the defects of our services. Oh, but to strengthen them against all discouragements, they should remember this, that they stand before God clothed with the righteousness of their Savior.

They are without fault before the throne of God, Revelation 14, verse 5. So in Solomon's song, All beautiful you are, my darling, There is no flaw in you. There is no flaw in God's account. God looks upon weak saints in the sun of His love and sees them all lovely.

Ah, poor souls, you are apt to look upon your spots and blots and to cry out with the leper, not only unclean, unclean, but undone, undone. Well, forever remember this, that you stand before God in the righteousness of Christ, upon which account you always appear before the throne of God without fault, where you are all lovely and where there is no flaw in you. They are without fault before the throne of God, Revelation 14, verse 5.

146 You Have But a Little Way To Go

You Have But a Little Way to Go by Thomas Watson Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Romans 13 verse 11. You are within a few days march of heaven.

Salvation is near to you. Christians, it is but a little while and you will be done weeping and praying and be triumphing. You shall put off your mourning garments and put on white robes.

You shall put off your battle armor and put on a victorious crown. You are almost ready to commence eternal glory. When a man is almost at the end of a race, will he tire or faint away? You have but a little way to go and you will set your foot in heaven.

Though the way is uphill and full of thorns, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way and shortly shall rest from your labors. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Luke 12 verse 32.

147 Nine Evils Which Death Will Put

9 EVILS WHICH DEATH WILL PUT AN END TO By Thomas Watson I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far. Philippians 1 verse 23 It is the desire of a true saint to be gone from this present world. I desire to depart.

What a wicked man fears, that a godly man hopes for. The worldling desires to live in this present world forever. He knows no other heaven but earth.

And it is death to him to be turned out of his heaven. A wicked man does not go out of this world, but is dragged out. But a soul enlivened and ennobled with the principle of grace looks upon the world as a wilderness wherein are fiery serpents, and he desires to get out of this wilderness.

The bird desires to get out of the cage, though it is made of gold. Just so, the saints of God have looked upon themselves as imprisoned in the body, and have longed for a jail delivery. Oh, that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest.

Psalm 55 verse 6 It is no wonder that a true saint is so earnest to be gone from this present world, if we consider how beneficial death is to a child of God. Death puts an end to all his evils. In particular, there are nine evils which death will put an end to.

Number one, death will put an end to a believer's sins. Number two, death will put an end to a believer's temptations. Number three, death will put an end to a believer's fears.

Number four, death will dry up a believer's tears. Number five, death will put an end to a believer's troubles. 6. Death puts an end to a believer's cares 7. Death will put an end to all our natural imperfections 8. Death will put an end to the imperfections of grace 9. Death will put an end to a weary pilgrimage Though death is a bitter cup, there is sugar at the bottom 10.

Death is the believer's best friend, for it brings him to Christ, which is far better 11. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far

148 What a Heaven

What a Heaven! by J. A. James. Heaven will consist of the moral perfection of the soul, perfect knowledge, perfect holiness, perfect love, perfect likeness to Christ, perfection of the body in incorruptibility, immortality, glory, and spirituality. The presence of God in the full manifestation of His glory, the beatific vision of Christ, the fellowship of angels and all the redeemed, the joint worship of the heavenly multitudes, the perfect service of Christ without interruption, imperfection, or cessation, complete freedom from pain, toil, hunger, thirst, anxiety, fear, sorrow, and death.

Such is the substance of heavenly felicity. Take any one of them by itself, and each is a heaven. Add them all together, and what a heaven! How pure, how elevated, how felicitous! Thanks for watching.

149 I Might Have Escaped All This

I Might Have Escaped All This Misery By Archibald Alexander Let me imagine myself to have died impenitent. It would seem that the first moment after death must be one of unparalleled misery. My first reflections would be, I am lost forever.

All hope of happiness or relief is gone from my miserable soul. The blackness of darkness is round about me. No ray of light dawns on my wretched soul.

Despair, terrible despair has now seized upon me and must blacken every prospect to all eternity. While in the body and engaged in secular pursuits, I entertained a secret hope that there might be some mistake respecting the extreme misery of the damned or that there might possibly be some way of escape not revealed. But now all these idle notions have fled like a dream when one awakes.

I find hell to be no fable but a dreadful reality. I find that the preachers, so far from exaggerating the misery of the lost, had no adequate conception of the wretchedness of a soul cast off from God forever and doomed to dwell in everlasting burnings. Oh, horrible, horrible! I am undone, forever undone.

I have passed beyond the reach of mercy. For the sake of momentary enjoyments and worthless riches and honors, I have bartered away my soul, a cursed folly. What benefit can I now derive from those earthly pleasures and possessions? They only serve as fuel to the flames which consume me.

Oh, for one drop of water to cool my tongue! But for this I beg in vain. The time of prayer and for mercy has gone by and my soul is lost, lost, lost. And through eternity I must expect no deliverance, no relief, nor even the slightest mitigation of my misery.

Woe, woe, woe is me! It would have been infinitely better for me never to have been born. If I had not enjoyed the offers of the gospel, my anguish would not be so excruciating. But this it is which rings my heart with unspeakable anguish, that I might have escaped all this misery.

Had it not been for my own sin and folly, I might before now have been in heaven. Others who heard the same sermons and belonged to the same family are now in eternal glory while I am tormented in this flame. Oh, that I could cease to be, but to fly from existence is impossible.

Here I am surrounded by wretches as miserable as myself, but their company rather aggravates than mitigates my soul's anguish. I am reproached and cursed by all who were ever led by my counsel or example into the ways of iniquity. They dreadfully scowl upon me and the fiends of the pit who were my seducers now combine to taunt me with my folly.

They never had the offers of mercy. The merits of a dying Savior were never offered to them. They seem to entertain a malignant pleasure, if pleasure it can be called, in witnessing my extreme misery.

Oh, wretched that I am! Where can I flee? Is there no possible escape from this prison of despair? Can no one ever pass the gulf which separates this dismal abode from the regions of the blessed? None, none! May I hope that the passing of time will lessen the horrors and anguish of my wretched soul. Will my heart, so susceptible of the emotions of bitter anguish, by degrees become less sensible to these piercing pains and be more able to bear up under this overwhelming weight of misery? This question can only be solved by experience. Let me ask someone who has been suffering for thousands of years.

Here comes Cain, the first murderer, who is known still by having upon him the stain of a brother's blood. Suppose I speak to him. Tell me, fellow prisoner, who has long endured the pains of this infernal prison, whether by long continuance these miseries become more tolerable? But why do I ask? The wretched fratricide is evidently writhing in keenest anguish.

He is too miserable to speak and too full of malignity to gratify anyone. His guilty stain, the blood spot, has not been burnt out by the fiercest fires of hell, no. See, he defies the Almighty.

He blasphemes the God of heaven. He asks for no mitigation of his punishment now. His malignant, fiery spirit feeds on despair and challenges his avenger to do his worst.

Oh, then I see there is a progression in wickedness, even in hell. This is the most appalling prospect of all, an endless progression in sin and, consequently, an increase instead of a diminution of misery through the endless ages of eternity.

150 All The Sins of the Saints

All the Sins of the Saints, by Thomas Brooks. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8, verse 28.

All the afflictions, and all the temptations, and all the desertions, and all the oppressions, and all the oppositions, and all the persecutions which befall a godly man, shall work for his good. Every cross, and every loss, and every disease which befall the holy man, shall work for his good. Every device, every snare, every deceit, every depth, every stratagem, and every enterprise of Satan against the holy man, shall work for his good.

They shall all help to make him more humble, more holy, more heavenly, more spiritual, more faithful, more fruitful, more watchful. Every prosperity, and every adversity, every storm, and every calm, every bitter, and every sweet, every cross, and every comfort, shall work for the holy man's good. When God gives a mercy, that shall work for His good.

When God takes away a mercy, that shall work for His good. Yes, even all the falls, and all the sins of the saints, shall work for their good. Oh, the care, the fear, the watchfulness, the tenderness, the zeal which God raises in the souls of His saints by their very falls.

Oh, the hatred, the indignation, and the detestation which God raises in the hearts of His children against sin by their very falling into sin. Oh, what love to Christ! What thankfulness for Christ! What admiration of Christ! What cleaving to Christ! What exalting of Christ! What drawings from Christ's grace are saints led to by their very falls! It is the glory of God's holiness that He can turn spiritual diseases into holy remedies. He can turn soul poisons into heavenly cordials.

He can prevent sin by sin, and cure falling by falling. Oh, Christian, what though friends and relations frown upon you? What though enemies are plotting and conspiring against you? What though needs, like armed men, are breaking in upon you? What though men rage and devils roar against you? What though sickness is devastating your family? What though death stands every day at your elbow? Yet there is no reason for you to fear nor faint, because all these things shall work for your good. Yes, there is a wonderful cause of joy and rejoicing in all the afflictions and tribulations which come upon you, considering that they shall all work for your good.

Oh, Christians, I am afraid, I am afraid that you do not run so often as you should to the breasts of this promise, nor draw that sweetness and comfort from it that it would yield and that your several cases may require. We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. I have been the longer upon this verse because the condition of God's people calls for the strongest cordials and the choicest and the sweetest comforts.

151 God's Jewels

God's Jewels by Thomas Watson They will be mine, says the Lord Almighty, in the day when I make up my jewels. Malachi 3 verse 17 God's people are his jewels, his own special treasure. Jewels are precious things.

The Hebrew word for jewels signifies a treasure. A treasure is made up of costly things, gold and diamonds and rubies. Such a precious treasure are the saints to God.

In what sense are the saints God's jewels? They are jewels for their sparkling quality. Their holiness shines and sparkles in God's eyes. Song of Solomon 4 verse 9 You have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes, that is, with one of your graces.

The godly are jewels for their scarcity. Diamonds are not common, just so. The godly are scarce and rare.

There are but few of these to be found. There are many false professors, as there are many paste diamonds, but few true Christians. Among the millions in Rome, there were but few senators, just so.

Among the swarms of people in the world, there are but few true believers. The godly are jewels for their price. Queen Cleopatra had two jewels which were worth half the price of a kingdom.

Thus, the saints are jewels for their value. God esteems them at a high rate. He parted with his best jewel for them.

Christ's precious blood was shed to ransom these jewels. The saints are jewels for their adorning quality. Jewels adorn those who wear them.

The saints are jewels which adorn the world. Their piety, mixed with prudence, honors the gospel. Hypocrites eclipse true religion and make it badly spoken of.

The saints, as jewels, render it illustrious by their sanctity. God the Father has chosen these jewels and set them apart for himself. Christ has bought these jewels with his blood.

The Holy Spirit has sanctified them. When they were a lump of sin, he made them into his jewels. He will string these pearls together and put them into his celestial cabinet.

Bless God who has wrought such a change in you. From lumps of dirt and sin, he has made you into his jewels.

152 The Devil's Tennis Ball

THE DEVIL'S TENNIS BALL By Thomas Brooks WARN THOSE WHO ARE IDLE 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 14 Take heed of an idle and slothful spirit. An idle life and a holy heart are far asunder. By doing nothing, men learn to do evil things.

It is easy slipping out of an idle life into an evil and wicked life. Yes, an idle life is of itself evil, for man was made to be active, not to be idle. Idleness is a mother sin, a breeding sin.

It is the devil's cushion on which he sits, and the devil's anvil on which he frames very great and very many sins. Look, as toads and serpents breed most in standing waters, so sin thrives most in idle people. Idleness is that which provokes the Lord to forsake men's bodies, and the devil to possess their souls.

No man has less means to preserve his body, and more temptations to infect his soul, than an idle person. Oh, shake off sloth! The sluggish Christian will be sleeping, or idling, or trifling, when he should be in his closet a-praying. Sloth is a fatal sickness of the soul.

Get it cured, or it will be your eternal bane. Of all devils, it is the idle devil which keeps men most out of their closets. There is nothing which gives the devil so much advantage against us as idleness.

Idleness is the time of temptation. An idle person is the devil's tennis ball, tossed around by him at his pleasure. The fowler bends his bow and spreads his net for birds when they are set, not when they are up on the wing.

Just so, Satan shoots his most fiery darts at men when they are most idle and slothful. Slothful and idle people commonly lie so long in bed and spend so much precious time between the comb and the mirror, and in eating, drinking, sporting, and trifling, that they can find no time for private prayer. Certainly, such as had rather go sleeping to hell than sweating to heaven, will never care much for prayer.

And therefore, shun sloth and idleness, as you would shun a lion in your way, or poison in your food, or burning coals in your bosom.

153 The City Was Full of Idols

The City Was Full Of Idols By J.C. Ryle While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was troubled within him when he saw that the city was full of idols. Acts 17 verse 16. Man will have a religion of some kind, for human nature, corrupt as it is, must have a God, but it will be a religion without light, or peace, or hope.

The feelings with which we regard sin, heathenism, and false religion are a subject of vast importance. It is a sorrowful fact that most professing Christians regard the semi-heathen districts of our country with apathy, coolness, and indifference. But Paul was deeply troubled when he saw that the city was full of idols.

Paul was stirred with holy compassion. It troubled his heart to see so many myriads perishing for lack of knowledge, without God, without Christ, having no hope, traveling in the broad road which leads to destruction. Paul was stirred with holy indignation against sin and the devil.

He saw the God of this world blinding the eyes of multitudes of His fellow men and leading them captive at His will. He saw the natural corruption of man infecting the population of a vast city like one common disease and an utter absence of any spiritual medicine, antidote, or remedy. Paul was stirred with holy zeal for his Master's glory.

He saw his Divine Master unknown and unrecognized by His own creatures, and idols receiving the homage due to the King of Kings. Millions of immortal beings at this moment are sunk in ignorance, superstition, and idolatry. They live and die without God, without Christ, and without hope.

Ought not these things be things to stir our hearts? Ought not our hearts to be affected by the sight of false religion and heathenism? We ought to feel compassion when we think of the wretched state of unconverted souls and the misery of all who live and die without Christ. No poverty like this poverty. No disease like this disease.

No slavery like this slavery. No death like this death in idolatry, false religion, and sin. While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was troubled within him when he saw that the city was full of idols.

154 The Silent Influence in Parental

The Silent Influence in Parental Conduct by John Angel James. Parents have a great power of influence over the minds and hearts of their children. Their children are almost continually with them.

They are seen by them in nearly all they do, in their habitual conduct and character at home. They are heard in what they say, seen in what they do, studied in all their behavior by little ears and eyes and minds, which are scarcely ever closed. The child's heart is soft and pliable to a father's or a mother's influence.

Their constant influence has been molding him from the dawn of reason. What, then, ought to be the parent's behavior at home? The whole cultivation and direction and management of a child's mind from the very dawn of reason should be carried on with special reference to the formation of Christian character. This should be the one thing to which all other things should be subordination.

The silent influence in parental conduct is far greater, either for good or for evil, than most parents are aware of. They teach by what they say, they influence by what they do, and also by what they do not say and do not perform. The pious parents who embody a meek, benevolent, ardent, and consistent godliness in their character exert a tremendous influence over the minds of their children.

But, oh, the dreadful contrast in the case of those parents who are characterized by ungodly dispositions, worldly associations, mirthful and extravagant living, trifling conversation, and lack of all seriousness and spirituality. Oh, what can be expected from such parents but children who regard their religion with disgust? Every man is best known at home. Parents are ever doing something to prejudice their children in favor of true religion or to prejudice them against it, doing something to draw them into the church or to drive them into the world, lending a helping hand to lead them to heaven or taking them by the hand and leading them to hell.

Parents, must you employ your influence in ruining the souls of your children and sending them to perdition? Oh, tremble at the interview you must have with them at the Day of Judgment and the dialogue you must hold with them forever in the bottomless pit.

155 Supremely Precious

Supremely Precious by John Fawcett Yes, he is very precious to you who believe 1 Peter 2 verse 7 If Christ is truly precious to us, we shall prefer him above every other object. He will have the chief place in our affections. The love which a Christian has to his Savior penetrates and possesses his heart.

This distinguishes it from the pretended love of hypocrites, which is only in word or in some external actions. While their hearts are full of sinful self-love, so that it may be said of them, this people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. We may possibly delight in some objects of an inferior nature as they contribute to our health, our ease, or our comfort.

Our homes, our food, and our other temporal enjoyments are dear to us because they minister to our comfort and convenience in the present life. But true love for Christ does not allow any other object to hold the chief place in the heart. This chief place is for Jesus, whom we ought to love with supreme ardor.

The choicest affections of our souls ought to be supremely upon him. As it is impossible for any man to love an unknown object, so it cannot be expected that Christ should be supremely precious unto us unless we know him to be excellent and desirable, beyond whatever may be compared with him. We shall not esteem him above all things if we have not elevated views of his transcendent worth.

Our esteem of him rises in proportion to the knowledge we have of him. Godly men, therefore, ardently desire to increase in the knowledge of him that their affections may be more intensely fixed upon him. That love which has but created things for its object is degrading to the soul.

It is a cleaving to that which can neither give happiness to our souls nor repose to our minds. For to love any object ardently is to seek our felicity in it and to expect that it will answer our desires. It is to call upon it to fill that deep void which we feel in ourselves and to imagine that it is capable of giving us the satisfaction we seek.

It is to regard it as the resource of all our needs, the remedy of all the troubles which oppress us, and the source of all our happiness. Now, as it is God alone in whom we can find all these advantages, it is a debasing of the soul. It is idolatry to seek them in created objects.

I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ. Philippians 3 verse 8 If Christ is truly precious to us, we shall be induced to devote our souls and our bodies, our talents, our abilities, and our faculties, as a living sacrifice to him.

To contemplate his adorable perfections will be our highest joy. We shall be ready to obey him, in opposition to all the threats and the solicitations of men. We shall rely upon him, though all outward appearances seem to be against us.

We shall rejoice in him, though we have nothing else to comfort us. If we enjoy health and plenty, friends and reputation, the Lord is still the object of our earnest desires and our supreme delight. Whom have I in heaven but you? There is nothing upon earth that I desire besides you.

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so longs my soul after you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

156 Life Is Too Short, Love Is Too Small

Life is too short. Love is too sacred. By J.R. Miller.

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way.

Love is not irritable and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful and endures through every circumstance.

1 Corinthians 13 verses 4-7 The ideal Christian life is one of unbroken kindness. It is dominated by love. The love whose portrait is drawn for us in the immortal 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians.

We have but to turn to the gospel pages to find the story of a life in which all this was realized. Jesus never lost his temper. He lived among people who tried him at every point.

Some by their dullness, others by their bitter enmity and persecution. But he never failed in sweetness of disposition, in long-suffering patience. Self-denying love.

Like the flowers which give out their perfume only when crushed. Like the odiferous wood which bathes with fragrance the acts which use it. The life of Christ yielded only the tenderer, sweeter love to the rough impact of men's rudeness and wrong.

That is the pattern on which we should strive to fashion our life and our character. Every outbreak of violent temper. Every shade of ugliness and disposition.

Mars, the radiant loveliness of the picture we are seeking to have fashioned in our lives. The perfect beauty of Christ should ever be envisioned in our hearts as that which we would attain for ourselves. The honor of our master's name should impel us to strive ever toward Christ-likeness in spirit and in disposition.

We represent Christ in this world. People cannot see him and they must look at us to see a little of what he is like. Whatever great work we may do for Christ, if we fail to live out his life of patience and kindness, we fail in an essential part of our duty as Christians.

The servant of the Lord must be gentle. Only as our own lives shine in the brightness of holy affectionateness and our hearts and lips distill the sweetness of patience and gentleness, can we fulfill our mission in this world as Christ's true messengers to men. Life is too short to spend even one day of it in bickering and strife.

Love is too sacred to be forever lacerated and torn by the ugly briars of sharp temper. Surely we ought to learn to be patient with others, since God has to show every day such infinite patience toward us. Can we not, then, train our life to sweeter gentleness? Can we not learn to be touched even a little roughly without resenting it? Can we not bear little injuries and apparent injustices without flying into a rage? Can we not have in us something of the mind of Christ which will enable

us, like him, to endure all wrong and injury and give back no word or look of bitterness? There is no temper so obdurately bad that it cannot be trained into sweetness.

The grace of God can take the most unlovely life and transform it into the image of Christ.

157 His Life Is the Textbook

His Life is the Textbook by J. R. Miller Bible knowledge alone does not make one a godly Christian. One might know all the great facts and doctrines of the Word of God, might be a profound Bible scholar and a wise theologian, and yet not be an advanced or even a growing Christian. We are to learn to live Christ as well as to know the truths about Christ.

Jesus in his teachings makes a great deal of obedience. You are my friends, if you do what I command you. John 15 verse 14 We are to learn to be patient, meek, gentle, compassionate.

We are to learn to be humble, kind, unselfish, truthful, sincere. We enter Christ's school to be trained in all the qualities which make up the true Christian life. Jesus is not only the teacher, his life is the textbook which we are to study.

We are to look to his life to learn just how to live, the kind of character we are to seek to have, and the meaning of the lessons which his words set for us. We are in the school of Christ to be trained in all Christian life and duty. The lessons which the Bible sets for us, we are to live out in common life.

For example, it is not enough to learn from the Beatitudes that certain qualities are praised by the great teacher. We are to get the Beatitudes into our own life as quickly and as perfectly as we can. Likewise, for all the teachings of Christ, they are not for merely knowing, as one learns the fine sayings of favorite literary writers.

They are for living. They are to become lamps to our feet and lights to our path, and to be wrought into the web of our character. We are not to expect perfection in the school of Christ, but we have a right to expect an increasing knowledge of spiritual things, and also spiritual growth in all the qualities which belong to Christian character.

We should become more patient, more loving, more unselfish, more like Christ.

158 The Religionists of the Day

THE RELIGIONISTS OF THE DAY by J. C. Philpott And everyone will hate you because of your allegiance to me. Luke 21, verse 17. Professors of religion have always been the deadliest enemies of the true children of God.

Who were so opposed to the Blessed Lord as the scribes and Pharisees? It was the religious teachers and leaders who crucified the Lord of Glory. And so in every age the religionists of the day have been the hottest and bitterest persecutors of the Church of Christ. Nor is the case altered now.

The more the children of God are firm in the truth, the more they enjoy its power, the more they live under its influence, and the more tenderly and conscientiously they walk in godly fear, the more will the professing generation of the day hate them with a deadly hatred. Let us not think that we can disarm persecution by a godly life, for the more that we walk in the sweet enjoyment of heavenly truth and let our light shine before men as having been with Jesus, the more will this draw down their hatred and contempt. The world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not.

John 17, verse 14.

159 Do You Indeed Act As You Pray

Do You Indeed Act As You Pray? by John Angel James I need not prove to you that prayer, as a duty, is essential to Christian conduct, and, as a privilege, prayer equally indispensable to Christian enjoyment. All Christians give themselves to this devout exercise. Their petitions are copious, comprehensive, and seemingly earnest.

What solemn professions they make to God! What ardent desires they express! What numerous blessings they seek! What strong resolutions they form! If we so pray, how ought we to live? What kind of people must we be to live up to the standard of our prayers? And ought we not, in some measure at least, to reach this standard? Should there not be a harmony, a consistency, a proportion between our practice and our prayers? Do you indeed act as you pray? Do you understand the import and feel the obligation of your own petitions? Do you rise from your knees where you have asked, and not, to seek? Do you really want, wish for, and endeavor to obtain an answer to your prayers? Are you really intent upon doing and being what you ask for in prayer? Our prayers are to act upon ourselves. They have, or ought to have, great power in the formation of character and the regulation of conduct. It is plain, therefore, that much of prayer is mere words.

We either do not understand, or do not consider, or do not mean what we say. Do we go from praying to acting and to live for Jesus, for heaven, for eternity? How common is it for professors to pray for victory over the world, to be delivered from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, to be enabled to set their affections on things above and not on things of the earth, and to be dead to seen and temporal things, and yet all the while they are as obviously eager to amass wealth, to multiply the attractions of earth, and to enjoy as much luxurious gratification as possible? Spirituality of mind is the subject of innumerable prayers, from some who never take a step to promote it, but, on the contrary, who are doing all they can to make themselves carnally minded. How many repeat that petition, lead us not into temptation, who, instead of most carefully keeping at the utmost possible distance from all inducements to sin, place themselves in the very path of sin? How often do we pray to have the mind of Christ and to imitate the example of Jesus, but where is the assiduous endeavor, the laboring effort, to copy this high model in its self-denying condescension, its profound humility, its beautiful meekness, its indifference to worldly comforts, its forgiving mercy, its devotedness to God? How often do we pray to be delivered from evil tempers and irascible feelings, and yet we indulge them on every slight provocation and take no pains to subdue them? It is unnecessary to multiply the illustrations of the inconsistency between our prayers and our practice.

160 Satan's Apes

Satan's Apes, by Thomas Brooks. Pride sets itself against the honor, being, and sovereignty of God. Other sins strike at the word of God, the people of God, and the creatures of God.

But pride strikes directly at the very being of God. He bears a special hatred against pride. It was pride which turned angels into devils.

They would be above others in heaven, and therefore God cast them down to hell. Pride is a sin which, of all sins, makes a person most like Satan. Pride is Satan's disease.

Pride is so base a disease that God had rather see his dearest children to be buffeted by Satan than that in pride they should be like Satan. Humility makes a man like the angels, and pride makes an angel a devil. Pride is worse than the devil, for the devil cannot hurt you until pride has possessed you.

If you would see the devil portrayed to the life, look upon a proud soul, for as face answers to face, so does a proud soul answer to Satan. Proud souls are Satan's apes, and none imitate him to the life like these. And oh, that they were sensible of it, before it is too late, before the door of darkness be shut upon them.

The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this, they will not go unpunished. Proverbs 16 verse 5

161 Temptations Work For Our Good

TEMPTATIONS WORK FOR OUR GOOD By Thomas Watson And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Romans 8 verse 28. Even temptations are overruled for good to the children of God.

A tree which is shaken by the wind is more settled and rooted. Just so, the blowing of a temptation does but settle a Christian the more in grace. Temptations are overruled for good in eight ways.

Number one. Temptation sends the soul to prayer. The more furiously Satan tempts, the more fervently the saint prays.

The deer being shot with a dart runs faster to the water. When Satan shoots his fiery darts at the soul, it then runs faster to the throne of grace. When Paul had the messenger of Satan to buffet him, he says, Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

2 Corinthians 12 verse 8. That which makes us pray more works for good. Number two. Temptation to sin is a means to keep from the perpetration of sin.

The more a child of God is tempted, the more he fights against the temptation. The more Satan tempts to blasphemy, the more a saint trembles at such thoughts and says, Away from me, Satan. When Joseph's mistress tempted him to lust, the stronger her temptation was, the stronger was his opposition.

That temptation which the devil used as a spur to sin, God makes a bridle to keep back a Christian from sin. Number three. Temptation works for good as it abates the swelling of pride.

To keep me from getting puffed up, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from getting proud. 2 Corinthians 12 verse 7. The thorn in the flesh was to puncture the balloon of pride. Better is that temptation which humbles me than that duty which makes me proud.

Rather than a Christian shall be haughty minded, God will let him fall into the devil's hands a while to be cured of his swelling pride. Number four. Temptation works for good as it is a touchstone to test what is in the heart.

The devil tempts that he may deceive us, but God allows us to be tempted that he may test us. Temptation is a trial of our sincerity. It argues that our heart is chaste and loyal to Christ.

When we can look a temptation in the face and turn our back upon it. Many have no heart to resist temptation. No sooner does Satan come with his bait, but they yield.

They are like a coward who, as soon as the thief approaches, gives him his purse. But he is the valorous Christian who brandishes the sword of the Spirit against Satan and will rather die than yield. The valor and courage of a saint is never more seen than on a battlefield when he is fighting the red dragon and by the power of faith puts the devil to flight.

That grace is tried gold, which can stand in the fiery trial and withstand Satan's fiery darts. Number five. Temptations work for good as God makes those who are tempted fit to comfort others in the same distress.

A Christian must himself be under the buffetings of Satan before he can speak a word in due season to him who is weary. Paul was well versed in temptations. We are very familiar with Satan's evil schemes, 2 Corinthians 2, verse 11.

Thus he was able to acquaint others with Satan's cursed wiles, 1 Corinthians 10, verse 13. A man who has ridden over a place where there are bogs and quicksands is the fittest to guide others through that dangerous way. He who has felt the claws of Satan, the roaring lion, and has lain bleeding under those wounds is the fittest man to deal with one who is tempted.

None can better discover Satan's subtle devices than those who have been long in the fencing school of temptation. Number six. Temptations work for good as they stir up fatherly compassion in God to those who are tempted.

The child who is sick and bruised is most looked after. When a saint lies under the bruising of temptations, Christ prays and God the Father pities. When Satan puts the soul into a fever, God comes with a cordial.

This made Luther say that temptations are Christ's embraces because he then most sweetly manifests himself to the soul. Number seven. Temptations work for good as they make the saints long more for heaven.

There they shall be out of gunshot. Heaven is a place of rest. No bullets of temptation fly there.

The eagle, which soars aloft in the air and sits upon high trees, is not troubled with the stinging of the serpent. Just so, when believers are ascended to heaven, they shall not be molested by the old serpent, the devil. In this life, when one temptation is over, another comes.

This makes God's people wish for death to call them off the battlefield where the bullets fly so quick and to receive a victorious crown where neither the gun nor cannon but the harp and violin shall be eternally sounding. Number eight. Temptations work for good as they engage the strength of Christ.

Christ is our friend, and when we are tempted, he sets all his power working for us. Since he himself has gone through suffering and temptation, he is able to help us when we are being tempted. Hebrews 2 verse 18.

If a poor soul was to fight alone with the Goliath of hell, he would be sure to be vanquished. But Jesus Christ brings in his auxiliary forces. He gives fresh supplies of grace.

We are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Romans 7 verse 37. Thus, the evil of temptation is overruled for our good.

But sometimes Satan foils a child of God. How does this work for good? Answer. I grant that through the suspension of divine grace and the fury of a temptation, a saint may be overcome.

Yet this foiling by a temptation shall be overruled for good. By this foil, God makes way for the augmentation of grace. Peter was tempted to self-confidence.

He presumed upon his own strength and Christ let him fall. But this wrought for his good. It cost him many a tear.

He went out and wept bitterly. Matthew 26 verse 75. And now he grows less self-reliant.

He dared not say he loved Christ more than the other apostles. Do you love me more than these? John 21 verse 15. He dared not say so.

His fall into sin broke the neck of his pride. The foiling by a temptation causes more circumspection and watchfulness in a child of God. Though Satan did before decoy him into sin, yet for the future he will be the more cautious.

He will beware of coming within the lion's chain anymore. He is now more vigilant and fearful of the occasions of sin. He never goes out without his spiritual armor, and he girds on his armor by prayer.

He knows he walks on slippery ground, therefore he looks wisely to his steps. He keeps close sentinel in his soul, and when he spies the devil coming, he grasps his spiritual weapons and displays the shield of faith. This is all the hurt the devil does when he foils a saint by temptation.

He cures him of his careless neglect. He makes him watch and pray more. When wild beasts get over the hedge and damage the grain, a man will make his fence the stronger.

Just so, when the devil gets over the hedge by a temptation, a Christian will be sure to mend his fence. He will become more fearful of sin and careful of duty. Thus, the being worsted by temptation works for good.

Objection. But if being foiled works for good, this may make Christians careless, whether they are overcome by temptations or not. Answer.

There is a great difference between falling into a temptation and running into a temptation. The falling into a temptation shall work for good, not the running into it. He who falls into a raging river is fit for help and pity, but he who desperately runs into it is guilty of his own death.

It is madness running into a lion's den. He who runs himself into a temptation is like King Saul who fell upon his own sword. From all that has been said, see how God disappoints the old serpent by making his temptations turn to the good of his people.

Luther once said, There are three things which make a godly man, prayer, meditation, and temptation. The wind of temptation is a contrary wind to that of the Spirit. But God makes use of this cross wind to blow the saints to heaven.

162 Afflicted, Tormented, and Destroy

Afflicted, Tormented, and Destroyed By Thomas Brooks Let me give you a little abridgment of the sufferings of some of the early Christians of whom the world was not worthy. Number 1 In the reign of Hadrian the Emperor, there were 10,000 Christians crowned with the crown of thorns, thrust into the sides with sharp lances, and then crucified. Number 2 Others were so whipped that their entrails were seen, and afterwards they were thrown upon sharp shells, and then upon sharp nails and thorns.

And after all this cruelty, they were thrown to wild beasts to be devoured. Number 3 Multitudes were banished. Number 4 Others were pulled apart with wild horses.

Number 5 Some were beaten and racked with bars of iron. Number 6 Others were cast into loathsome dungeons. Number 7 Some were burnt in the fire.

Number 8 Others were knocked down and had their brains beaten out with staves and clubs. Number 9 Some were pricked in their faces and eyes with sharp reeds. Number 10 Others were stoned to death with stones, as Stephen was.

Number 11 Some were dashed in pieces against millstones. Number 12 Others had their teeth dashed out of their jaws and their joints broken. Number 13 Some were cast down from very high places.

Number 14 Others were beheaded. Number 15 Some were tormented with razors. Number 16 Others were slain with a sword.

Number 17 Some were run through with pikes. Number 18 Others were driven into the wilderness, where they wandered up and down, suffering hunger and cold, and where they were exposed to the fury both of wild beasts and also to the rage of the barbarous Arabians. 19 Some fled into caves, which their persecutors crammed up with stones, and there they died.

20 Others were trodden to death by the people. 21 Some were hanged on gibbets with a slow fire under them. 22 Others were cast into the sea and drowned.

23 Some were slain by being thrown in mines. 24 Others were hanged by their feet and choked with the smoke of a small fire, their legs being first broken. 25 Some were covered with oil and then roasted with a soft fire.

26 Others were hung by one hand, that they might feel the weight of their whole bodies scorching and broiling over burning coals. 27 Some were shot through with arrows and afterwards thrown into stinking prisons. 28 Others were stripped stark naked and thrown out in cold frosty nights and burnt the next day.

29 In Syria, a company of Christian virgins were stripped stark naked to be scorned by the multitude, then shaved and then torn in pieces and devoured by beasts. 30 Lastly, many women had the joints of their bodies pulled, and their flesh and sides clawed with talons of wild beasts to

the bones, and their breasts seared with torches until they died. 31 And thus you have an account of thirty different ways by which the precious sons and daughters of God have formerly been afflicted, tormented, and destroyed.

32 What heart of stone can read over this list with dry eyes? 33 And now tell me, sirs, whether your sufferings are worth a naming in that day, wherein the sufferings of the precious servants of God in the primitive times are spoken of? 34 Oh no! Well then, take heed of making mohills into mountains, and of crying out, Is there any sorrow compared to my sorrow? Or any sufferings compared to my sufferings?

163 This Pleasure-Loving, Pleasure-Seeking

This Pleasure-Loving, Pleasure-Seeking, and Pleasure-Inventing Age By John Angel James A taste for worldly amusements will inevitably prove, wherever it is indulged, a powerful obstacle to growth in grace. Man is unquestionably made for enjoyment. He has a capacity for bliss, an instinctive appetite for gratification.

And for this, God has made ample provision of a healthful and lawful kind. But, a taste for worldly pleasure means that this God-given capacity is directed to wrong sources, or carried to an excess. Now there are some amusements, which in their very nature are so utterly incompatible with true godliness, that a liking for them, and a hankering after them, and especially an indulgence in them, cannot exist with real, earnest, and serious piety.

The dissolute parties of the glutton and the drunkard, the fervency for the gambling-table, the pleasures of the race-course, the performances of the theatre, are all of this kind. But a taste for them is utterly uncongenial with a spirit of godliness. So is a love for the gay and fashionable entertainments of the ballroom, and the wanton parties of the upper classes.

These are all unfriendly to true religion, and are usually renounced by people who are intent upon the momentous concerns of eternity. We would not doom to perdition all who are at any time found in this round of worldly pleasure, but we unhesitatingly say that a taste for them is entirely opposed to the whole spirit of Christianity. They are all included in that world which is overcome by faith and the new birth.

True religion is, though a happy, a very serious thing, and can no more live and flourish in the uncongenial atmosphere of those parties than could a young tender plant survive if brought into a frigid zone. But in this pleasure-loving, pleasure-seeking, and pleasure-inventing age, there is a great variety of amusements perpetually rising up which it would be impossible to say are sinful and therefore unlawful. Yet the supposition of their lawfulness viewed in connection with their abundance, variety, and constant repetition is the very thing which makes them dangerous to the spirit of true religion.

A taste for even lawful worldly amusements, which leads its possessor to be fond of them, seeking them, and longing for them, reveals a mind which is in a very poor state of vital piety. A Christian is not to partake of the pleasures of the world merely to prove that his religion does not debar him from enjoyment, but he is to let it be seen by his peace which passes understanding, and his joy unspeakable and full of glory, that his godliness gives far more enjoyment than it takes away, that, in fact, it gives him the truest happiness. The way to win a worldly person to true religion is not to go and partake of his amusements, but to prove to him that we are happier with our pleasures than he is with his, that we bask in full sunshine while he has only a smoking candle, that we have found the river of water of life clear as crystal proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, while he is drinking of the muddy streams which issue from the earth.

Many are asking, Who can show us any good? Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. After all, it is freely admitted that true religion is not hostile to anything which is not hostile to it.

That many things which are not strictly pious, though not opposed to piety, may be lawfully enjoyed by the Christian. That what he has to do in this matter is not to practice total abstinence, but moderation. Yet the Christian should remember how elastic a term moderation is, and to be vigilant lest his moderation should continually increase its latitude until it has swelled into the imperial tyranny of an appetite which acknowledges no authority and submits to no restraint.

164 Constant Multiplication of Corrupt

Constant Multiplication of Corrupted Copies by J. A. James. Our idea of the nature of earnest individual piety must be taken, not from the conventional customs of the age, but from the word of God. Once give up the Bible as the only true standard of personal piety, and there is no rule left but custom, which is ever varying with the opinions and corruptions of the times.

Yet how prevalent is the disposition to conform ourselves to the prevailing religion of the day, and of the church to which we belong, and to satisfy ourselves with the average measure of piety around us? I am as good as my fellow members, is the shield with which many a professor wards off the allegation of his being below his duty. This has been the fatal practical error of the church through every age of its existence, by which its beauty has been disfigured, its power weakened, its usefulness impeded. Professing Christians, instead of looking into the perfect standard of Scripture and seeing themselves reflected from that faithful mirror, and adjusting their character and conduct by its infallible revelations, placed before themselves the standard of the Christian profession, as it was found in the church of the day, and regulated their behavior by what they saw in the prevailing character of their fellow Christians.

Thus, a constant multiplication of corrupted copies has ever been going on, and religion, as seen in the conduct of its professors, compared with that which is described in the pages of its own inspired rule, have been quite different things. Let us turn away from the religion we see in the church, to the religion we read in the Bible. Let us not go to the imperfect and blurred copy, but to the perfect and unspotted original.

The Bible's representation of the nature of true piety is intended for us as our guide, and is obligatory upon us. The inspired, unalterable, and infallible standard of Scripture is too spiritual, too devout, too unearthly, too humbling, too self-denying for many professors. Deny yourself, and take up your cross, and follow me, is still the stern, unbending demand of Christ.

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165 Christ, The Example of Ministers

Christ, the Example of Ministers by Jonathan Edwards It is not only our great duty, but will be our greatest honor, to imitate Christ, and do the work which He has done, and so act as co-workers with Him. The ministers of Christ should be people of the same spirit that their Lord was of, the same spirit of humility, and lowliness of heart, for the servant is not greater than his Lord. They should be of the same spirit of heavenly mindedness, and contempt of the glory, wealth, and pleasures of this world.

They should be of the same spirit of devotion and fervent love to God. They should follow the example of His prayerfulness, of whom we read from time to time of His retiring from the world, away from the noise and applause of the multitudes, into mountains and solitary places, for secret prayer and holy converse with His Father. Ministers should be people of the same quiet, lamb-like spirit that Christ was of, the same spirit of submission to God's will and patience under afflictions, and meekness towards men, of the same calmness and composure of spirit under reproaches and sufferings from the malignity of evil men, of the same spirit of forgiveness of injuries, of the same spirit of charity, of fervent love and extensive benevolence.

They should be of the same disposition to pity the miserable, to weep with those that weep, to help men under their calamities of both soul and body, to hear and grant the requests of the needy, and to relieve the afflicted. They should be of the same spirit of condescension to the poor and lowly, tenderness and gentleness toward the weak, and great and effectual love to enemies. They should also be of the same spirit of zeal, diligence, and self-denial for the glory of God and advancement for His kingdom and for the good of mankind, for which things sake Christ went through the greatest labors and endured the most extreme sufferings.

And in order to are imitating Christ in the work of the ministry, in any tolerable degree, we should not have our hearts weighed down and time filled up with worldly affections, cares, and pursuits. The duties of a minister which have been recommended are absolutely inconsistent with a mind much taken up with worldly profits, worldly honors, worldly amusements, and worldly entertainments. This Puritan devotional has been brought to you by Grace Gems, a treasury of ageless Sovereign Grace writings.

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166 Satan's Workshop

Satan's Workshop by J. A. James I don't want Satan to outwit us. After all, we are not ignorant about Satan's scheming. 2 Corinthians 2 verse 11 The press has a great power for evil.

Infidel and immoral writers are pouring forth a deluge of skepticism and vice, which are depositing a pernicious and pestiferous slime over the minds of the people. Let it be imagined, if imagined it can be, what must be the state of multitudes in this country when millions of pestiferous publications are annually going out among the masses of our population. Let the minds of all Christian people dwell upon the insult offered to God, the ruin brought upon souls, the injury done to morals, and the mischief perpetrated in the nation by such a state of things.

These ungodly publications originate from Satan's Workshop and reflect the scenes of that dreadful laboratory of mental poison. These authors, printers, publishers, booksellers, vendors by myriads are all busy and indefatigable to do what? To destroy the Bible, to corrupt the mind, to pull down the cross, to dethrone God, to subvert true religion, to turn man into a speaking brute, to overturn all morality, to poison the springs of domestic happiness, to dissolve the ties of social order, to plunge our country into ruin. Satan and all his emissaries upon earth are in earnest in ruining men's souls.

We have an evil to contend with, so gigantic in its strength, so diffused in its influence all around us, so infectious and malignant in its effects. The enemy is coming in like a flood. Infidelity and immorality are invading us.

The alarm bell must be rung. Editors note, in 1848 when J. A. James wrote this article, the press was the only media available. What would he say today with the deluge on godly media from Satan's Workshop pouring into Christian homes and minds?

167 Ignorant Formal Christianity

Ignorant Formal Christianity by J.C. Ryle. I am convinced that one of our grave defects today is a most serious diminishing of the good old custom of private reading of the Bible. Between the growth of Christian periodicals and books, I have a strong impression that Bibles are not read as much and as carefully as they were 200 years ago.

I am well aware that there are more Bibles in Great Britain at this moment than there ever were since the world began. There is more Bible buying and Bible selling, more Bible printing and Bible distributing than there ever was. But all this time, I fear we are in danger of forgetting that to have the Bible is one thing, and to read it privately ourselves is quite another thing.

I am afraid that the Bible of many a man and woman in Great Britain is never read at all. In one house, it lies in a corner, as stiff, cold, glossy, and fresh as it was when it came from the bookseller's shop. In another house, it lies on a table with its owner's name written in it, a silent witness against him day after day.

In another house, it lies on some high shelf, neglected and dusty, to be brought down only on grand occasions, such as a birth in the family, like a heathen idol at its yearly festival. In another house, it lies deep down at the bottom of some box or drawer, among the things not wanted, and is never dragged forth into the light of day until the arrival of sickness or death. These things are sad and solemn, but they are true.

I am afraid that many in Great Britain who do read the Bible, yet do not read it aright. One man looks over a chapter on Sunday evening, but that is all. Another reads a chapter every day at family prayers, but that is all.

A third goes a step further and hastily reads a verse or two in private every morning before he goes out of his house. A fourth goes further still and reads as much as a chapter or two every day, though he does it in a great hurry, and omits reading it on the smallest inconvenience. But each and every one of these men does what he does in a heartless, scrambling, formal kind of way.

He does it coldly, as a duty. He does not do it with desire and pleasure. He is glad when the task is over, and when the book is shut, he forgets it all.

This is a sad picture, but in multitudes of cases, oh, how true. But why do I think all this? What makes me speak so confidently? Listen to me a few moments, and I will lay before you some evidence. Neglect of the Bible is like disease of the body.

It shows itself in the face of a man's conduct. It tells its own tale. It cannot be hidden.

I fear that many neglect the Bible because of the enormous ignorance of true religion, which everywhere prevails. There are thousands of professing Christians in this country who know literally nothing about the gospel. They could not give you the slightest account of its distinctive doctrines.

They have no more idea of the true meaning of conversion, grace, faith, justification, and sanctification than of so many words and names written in Arabic. And can I suppose that such people search the scriptures? I cannot suppose it. I do not believe they do.

I fear that many neglect the Bible because of the utter indifference with which they regard false doctrine, as if it did not signify much, and was all the same thing in the long run, whether one was a Roman Catholic, or a Socinian, or a Mormonite, or a deist, or an agnostic. And can I suppose that such people search the scriptures? I cannot suppose it. I do not believe they do.

I fear that many neglect the Bible because of the readiness with which they receive false teaching. They are led astray by the first false prophet they meet with, who comes in sheep's clothing, and has a pleasant voice, a nice manner, and a gift of eloquent speech. They swallow all that he says without inquiry, and believe him as implicitly as papists believe the Pope.

And can I suppose that such people search the scriptures? I cannot suppose it. I do not believe they do. I declare my firm conviction that an idle neglect of the Bible is one cause of the ignorant formal Christianity, which is so widely prevalent in these latter days.

Brethren, we are drifting, drifting, drifting, and what the end will be, no man can tell.

168 The Tenderness of God

The Tenderness of God by John Macduff He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young.

Isaiah 40 verse 11 How soothing in the hour of sorrow, or bereavement, or death, to have the countenance and sympathy of a tender earthly friend. Reader, these words tell you of one nearer, dearer, tenderer still, the friend that never fails, a tender God. By how many endearing epithets does Jesus exhibit the tenderness of his relation to his people? Does a shepherd watch tenderly over his flock? The Lord is my shepherd.

Does a father exercise fondest solicitude towards his children? I will be a father unto you. Does a mother's love exceed all other earthly types of affection? As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you. Is the apple of the eye, the pupil, the most sensitive part of the most delicate bodily organ? He guards his people as the apple of his eye.

He will not break the bruised reed. When the shepherd and guardian of souls finds the sinner, like a lost sheep, stumbling on the dark mountains, how tenderly he deals with him. There is no look of wrath, no word of upbraiding.

In silent love, he lays him on his shoulders, rejoicing. Reader, are you mourning over the weakness of your faith, the coldness of your love, your manifold spiritual declensions? Fear not. He knows your frame.

He will give feeble faith tender dealing. He will carry in his arms those that are unable to walk, and will conduct the burdened ones through a path less rough and rugged than others. When the lion or the bear comes, you may trust the true David, the tenderest of shepherds.

Are you suffering from outward trial? Confide in the tenderness of your God's dealings with you. The strokes of his rod are gentle strokes. The needed discipline of a father yearning over his children at the very moment he is chastising them.

The gentlest earthly parent may speak a needlessly harsh word at times, but not so God. He may seem, like Joseph to his brethren, to speak roughly, but all the while there is love in his heart. The pruning knife will not be used unnecessarily.

It will never cut too deeply. The furnace will not burn more fiercely than is absolutely required. A tender God is seated by it, tempering the fury of its flames.

And what, believer, is the secret of all this tenderness? There is a man upon the throne. Jesus, the God-man mediator, combining with the might of Godhead, the tenderness of spotless humanity. Is your heart crushed with sorrow? So was his.

Are your eyes dimmed with tears? So were his. Jesus wept. Bethany's chief mourner still wears the brother's heart in glory.

Others may be unable to enter into the depths of your trial. Jesus can. Jesus does.

With such a tender God caring for me, providing for me, watching my path by day and guarding my couch by night, I will lie down and sleep in peace. For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

169 I Am Confounded With Wonder

I AM CONFOUNDED WITH WONDER By James Michael WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND Romans 5 verse 20 Dear Savior, in your sufferings I not only see the infiniteness of sin, but also the infiniteness of your love, so that though I have cause with myself to be angry on account of sin, I need not despair. If the deservings of my sinful folly is death, the merit of your sufferings is life. If my sins mount up to heaven, your mercy is above the heavens.

Though my sins reach to the very throne to accuse me, there is one upon the throne who will not condemn me. When I look to myself and see my vileness and necessity, I am confounded with shame. But when I look to you and see your fullness and all sufficiency, I am confounded with wonder.

Am I weak? Jesus is my strength. Am I foolish? Jesus is my wisdom. Am I wicked? Jesus is my righteousness.

Am I impure? Jesus is my sanctification. Am I in bondage? Jesus is my complete redemption. Am I in misery? From Jesus tender mercy flows.

Am I deceitful? Jesus is holy truth. In a word, am I enmity itself? Then Jesus is love itself, which passes understanding. Mine is but the enmity of a creature, but yours is the love of God.

Where sin abounded, your grace did much more abound. Where misery has surrounded me, your mercy has crowned me. Sin is too strong for me, but your grace is too strong for sin.

Why, then, am I so vexed with fears, doubts, and unbelief? Because I am sinful. On that very account, Jesus, who knew no sin, was made sin, that I, who knew no righteousness, might be made the righteousness of God in Him. But I am a great sinner.

But Jesus is a Savior and a great One. Where is boasting now? See, it is great mercy in God, great merit in Christ, which saves a great sinner. Since rich and free grace builds the temple of salvation, let it have all the glory.

But I fall often into the same sin. That is my failing, over which I ought to mourn and by which I should be driven out of all boasting in my own holiness, high attainments, and religious duties, and cry with tears of holy joy, Grace, grace to Him who has laid the foundation, carries on the whole work of redemption, and will with shouting bring forth the topstone. Now, law, what have you to do with me? Go to my surety, Jesus.

O curse, you have lighted on His head that the blessing might rest on mine. Though once I dared not lift my eyes heavenward for fear of divine wrath, yet now I may come boldly to the throne of grace and claim the blessings of His purchase. Though my sin offends Him, I shall never sin away His love, nor His presence altogether, for He shall come a second time to deliver me from all my inherent sinfulness.

Though my sin is my burden, it shall not be my bane. Yet I shall never willingly let the traitor rest in my bosom, which would persuade my soul into rebellion against my dearest Lord and best friend. I may have continual war with the invader, but shall obtain the victory at last.

Meanwhile, I will grieve more for offending Him whose name is Love by my sin than for the trials, afflictions, and chastisements which seize me because of my sinfulness. Now, with the arms of my faith, I clasp the promise, and Jesus in the promise. Here will I live, and here will I die, blessing God, who causes me always to triumph in Jesus Christ my Lord.

170 She Is Ugly

She is Ugly, by Ruth Bryan Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, that this most glorious Immanuel, the Prince of Peace, whom angels worship, and before whom the seraphim bow, should from all eternity engage to come and seek his bride from this poor world and claim her for his own. Yet so it is. But she is filthy and polluted.

Then his own precious veins shall pour forth the rich crimson flood to cleanse her, and his spirit shall open the fountain to wash her from her sin and uncleanness. But she is naked and bare. Then he will cast his skirt over her, and will for her weave in the loom of the law fine linen, clean and white, a robe in which she shall be fit to appear at his court.

Moreover the spirit shall bring near the righteousness of Jesus, clothing her with the garments of salvation, and covering her with the robe of righteousness, as a her jewels. But she is diseased. She is a leper.

Yet will he bring her health and cure. For he says, I am the Lord who heals you. And he is actually made to be sin for her, that she might be made the righteousness of God in him.

But she has no personal charms. She is ugly. Then he will put his loveliness upon her, and through it her beauty shall be perfect.

But she is poor. So he bestows himself and his fullness upon her, and thus endows her with unsearchable riches. But she is unwilling and has no heart to the match, for she obeys a hostile prince.

Her delights, too, are in the world and the flesh. A new heart will he give her, and a right spirit will he put within her. The Holy Spirit shall make her willing in the day of his power.

I will cause you to forget your images of Baal. Even their names will no longer be spoken. Hosea 2 verse 17.

So that prostrate at his feet she shall say, O Lord our God, other lords than you have ruled over us, but we remember your name alone. And now that the spirit has touched her heart, she feels she is diseased, and discovers her filthiness and nakedness, and knows she is ugly and poor, and cannot think the bridegroom's heart is towards her, or that she can find favor in his eyes. And therefore she cries out, I am black.

Behold, I am vile. My loveliness has turned into corruption. But he overwhelms her by responding, You are all beautiful, my love.

There is no spot in you. Then she exclaims, Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm, for love is as strong as death. He replies, Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you.

I have called you by name. You are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you.

When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up. The flames will not consume you, for I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Now she ventures with a captivated heart to declare, My beloved is mine, and I am his. He is the chief among ten thousand. He is altogether lovely.

May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great, you will never fully understand it.
Ephesians 3 verse 19

171 That Heavenly Teacher

That Heavenly Teacher by J. C. Philpott We do not learn that we are sinners merely by reading it in the Bible. It must be wrought, I might say burnt, into us. Nor will anyone sincerely and spiritually cry for mercy until sin is spiritually felt and known in its misery, in its dominion, in its guilt, in its entanglements, in its wiles and allurements, in its filth and pollution, and in its condemnation.

Where the Holy Spirit works, He kindles sighs, groans, supplications, wrestlings, and pleadings to know Christ, feel His love, taste the efficacy of His atoning blood, and embrace Him as all our salvation and all our desire. And though there may and doubtless will be much barrenness, hardness, deadness, and apparent carelessness often felt, still that Heavenly Teacher will revive His work, though often by painful methods. Nor will He let the quickened soul rest short of a personal and experimental enjoyment of Christ and His glorious salvation.

172 Eternal, Absolute, Predestination

Eternal, Absolute Predestination by Charles Spurgeon Oh, we love the sublime doctrine of eternal, absolute predestination. Some have doubted whether predestination is consistent with the free agency of man. We believe that man does as he pleases, yet, notwithstanding, he always does as God decrees.

Man does as he wills, but God makes him do as he wills, too. No, not only is the will of man under the absolute predestination of Jehovah, but all things, great or little, are of him. There is nothing great or little which is not from him.

The summer dust moves in its orbit, guided by the same hand which rolls the stars along. The dewdrops trickle on the rose-leaf as God bids them. Yes, the fallen leaves of the forest, when hurled along by the tempest, have their allotted position where they shall fall, nor can they go beyond it.

In the great and in the little, there is God working all things according to the counsel of his own will. And though man seeks to go against his Maker, yet he cannot. Everything is ordained by God.

Unto him who guides the stars, and sparrows who rules planets, and yet moves atoms, who speaks thunders, and yet whispers zephyrs, unto him be glory.

173 The Lord Reigns

The Lord Reigns by William Plumer The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty. Psalm 93 verse 1 The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble. Psalm 99 verse 1 Jesus Christ is Lord, Master, Governor, Ruler, Shepherd, Prince, Prince and Savior, The Great Prince, The Prince of Life, The Prince of Peace, The Prince of Princes, The Prince of the Kings of the Earth, A King, The King, The King of Kings, And Lord of Lords, He is God over all, Blessed forever.

Christ's Kingdom is universal. It includes all worlds, all creatures, all causes. Nothing in heaven, nothing in earth is outside of it.

His saints praise Him, The angels adore Him, the devils are subject to Him. The King's heart is in His hands, And He turns it wherever He will. His Kingdom rules over all.

His Kingdom is supreme, nothing can shake it. Worms cannot spit their venom so far As to reach the stars in their course, Nor can puny mortals reach the person or the power of our glorious Emmanuel. Christ's Kingdom is omnipotent.

By His own divine efficiency He carries on His government. He upholds all things by His wonderful Word. He does His will in heaven and in earth.

Not an empire rises or sinks, but by His will. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Every change on earth is by His providence.

He gives no account of any of His matters. His work on His people is mighty. He subdues them to Himself.

He reigns as their Lord and Master. He chains their great adversary. He subdues their iniquities.

He strips the world of its fatal fascinations. He makes them willing in the day of His power. He leads them into all necessary truth.

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Revelation 19 verse 6

174 The Difference Between the Godly

The Difference Between the Godly and the Ungodly by James Michael There is a wide difference in both principle and practice between the godly and the ungodly. The affections of the godly are refined, and their desires exalted. The inclinations of the ungodly are corrupt, and their desires groveling.

Sin has but a tottering standing and a momentary abode in the godly, but sin has fixed its throne and taken up its eternal residence in the ungodly. In the godly, grace and sin struggle for sovereignty. In the ungodly, sin domineers and there is no struggle.

The godly is deeply concerned about world to come. The ungodly has no concern about eternal realities. The speech of the godly is seasoned with grace.

The discourse of the ungodly is insipid and vain. The godly has his hope fixed on God. The ungodly has no fear of God before his eyes.

The godly use the world without abusing it. The ungodly, in using the world, abuse both themselves and it. The godly confesses God in his daily life and rejoices with his whole heart in Him.

The ungodly says in his practice, There is no God and wishes in his heart that there were no God. The godly adores the Creator above all else. The ungodly worships the creature more than the Creator.

The godly uses God's name with profoundest reverence and departs from iniquity. The ungodly profanes God's name with impudence and adds iniquity to sin. The godly redeems his time.

The ungodly trifles away his time. The godly studies his duty in obedience to all God's precepts. The ungodly shakes himself loose from every command of God.

The godly forgives his foes. The ungodly lays a snare for his foes. The godly commits it to God to avenge his wrong.

The ungodly, fiery and tumultuous, seeks revenge. The godly loves chastity in all things. The ungodly wallows in uncleanness.

The godly is content with his condition. The ungodly covets all the day long. The godly is pure in heart.

The heart of the ungodly is like a cage full of unclean beasts. The godly walks at liberty in the ways of God. The ungodly is the servant and slave of sin.

The Holy Spirit rules in the heart of the godly. Satan rules in the heart of the ungodly. The godly has his conversation in heaven.

The ungodly has his conversation in hell. As there is such a wide difference in their principles and practices, so also in their eternal destinies. God is faithful.

He has promised felicity to the pious and threatened vengeance to the wicked. The wicked is thrust out in his wickedness, but the righteous has hope in his death. Proverbs 14 verse 32 The godly are under the blessing of God's love.

The ungodly are under the curse of God's law. The godly with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation. The ungodly shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

To the godly pertain all the exceeding great and precious promises. To the ungodly pertain all the threatenings of God. Heaven shall be the palace of the godly.

Hell shall be the prison of the ungodly. While the godly shall dwell through eternity with God, the ungodly shall be driven away into everlasting darkness. Thus, the righteous and wicked are separated in their life and divided in their death.

They are divided in their principles, in their practices, in their choices, in their joys, in their thoughts, in their company, in their speech, in their fears, in their expectations, in their death, and through eternity itself.

175 The Path of the Scissors

The Path of the Scissors by Lewis Bailey For who makes you to differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? 1 Corinthians 4 verse 7. We are all fashioned from the same mold, hewed out of the same rock, made, as it were, of the same cloth, the path of the scissors making the only difference between one person and another. It is therefore only the free love and grace of God which makes all the difference between us. No believer should ever insolently demean the unsaved who, like miserable drudges, allow their corrupt nature to carry them to any villainy, lust, or lewd course, and who damn themselves in the devil's slavery.

Alas, our hearts should bleed within us at beholding so many around us, imbrewing their cruel hands in the blood of their own souls, by their ignorance, worldliness, drunkenness, lust, unbelief, and scoffing at true religion. What heart except it be hewed out of the hardest rock, or has sucked the breasts of merciless tigers, but would yearn and weep to see a man made of the same mold with himself, willfully, as it were, against a thousand warnings and God's many compassionate invitations, cast himself, body and soul, into the endless, easeless, and remedulous miseries of hell. We should the rather pity and pray for such a one who follows the bent of his own evil heart to his own everlasting perdition.

It is only the free mercy, goodness, and grace of God which has made the difference between them and us. If God should give us over to the unbridled current of our corrupt nature, we might be worse than them and run riot in this world of wickedness. If the same God visits them in mercy, they may become every way as godly or better than us.

By the grace of God, I am what I am.

176 Oh How A Changed Man He Is Now

Oh, how changed a man he is now. By Octavius Winslow. Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things have passed away. Behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5 verse 17.

Originally shaped in iniquity and conceived in sin, the love of sin and the hatred of holiness are born with us. But when by the Holy Spirit we are born again, this original and natural love of sin and hatred of holiness are reversed. A new and heavenly principle is implanted which leads the regenerate man to hate sin and love holiness.

Now, it is in this divine principle that the love of holiness in the believer is implanted. And a power of antagonism to sin is implanted in his heart. What a reverse now transpires.

The regenerate now loves what they once hated and hates what they once loved. We loved sin, lived in sin, in some of its many forms. Intellectual sin, gross sin, refined sin, open sin, secret sin, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life, the power of mammon, the fascination of the world, the idolatry of the creature, the love of self.

Some or all these forms of sin maintained the supremacy and held their unbroken, undisputed rule. Oh, how changed a man is he now. The sins which he once committed, the objects which he once loved, the tastes which he once cultivated, the sensualities in which he once indulged, have lost their power to fascinate, to please, to enthrall.

177 Lord, Smite This Sin

Lord, smite this sin by Thomas Watson. Your word is completely pure, and your servant loves it. Psalm 119 verse 140.

Do we love the holiness of the word? The word is preached to beat down sin and advance holiness. Do we love it for its spirituality and purity? Many loved the preached word only for its eloquence and notion. They come to a sermon as to a performance or as to a garden to pick flowers.

But not to have their lusts subdued or their hearts purified. These are like a foolish woman who paints her face but neglects her health. Do we love the convictions of the word? Do we love the word when it comes home to our conscience and shoots its arrows of reproof at our sins? It is the minister's duty sometimes to reprove.

He who can speak smooth words in the pulpit but does not know how to reprove is like a sword with a fine handle but without an edge. Rebuke them sharply. Titus 2 verse 15.

Dip the nail in oil, reprove in love, but strike the nail home. Now Christian, when the word touches on your sin and says, you are the man, do you love the reproof? Can you bless God that the sword of the spirit has divided between you and your lusts? This is indeed a sign of grace and shows that you are a lover of the word. A corrupt heart loves the comforts of the word but not the reproofs.

You hate the one who reproves and despise him who tells the truth. Amos 5 verse 10. Their eyes flash with fire like venomous creatures that at the least touch spit poison.

When they heard these things they were enraged in their hearts and gnashed their teeth at him. Acts 7 verse 54. When Stephen touched their sins they were furious and could not endure it.

How shall we know that we love the reproofs of the word? When we desire to sit under a heart searching ministry. Who cares for medicines that will not work? A godly man does not choose to sit under a ministry that will not work upon his conscience. When we pray that the word may meet with our sins.

If there is any traitorous lust in our heart we would have it found out and executed. We do not want sin covered but cured. We can open our heart to the sword of the word and say, Lord smite this sin.

When we are thankful for a reproof. Let a righteous man strike me. It is a kindness.

Let him rebuke me. It is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it.

Psalm 141 verse 5. David was glad for a reproof. Suppose a man were in the mouth of a lion and another should shoot the lion and save the man. Would he not be thankful? So when we are in the mouth of sin as of a lion and the minister by a reproof shoots this sin to death.

Shall we not be thankful? A gracious soul rejoices when the sharp lance of the word has pierced his abscess of sin. He wears a reproof like a jewel on his ear. Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.

Proverbs 25 verse 12. To conclude it is convincing preaching which must do the soul good. A nipping reproof prepares for comfort as a nipping frost prepares for the sweet flowers of spring.

178 The Great Foster-Parent

The Great Foster Parent by William Plumer Saving faith is the great foster parent of all that belongs to scriptural piety. Faith begets true worship, godly fear, devout thanksgiving, genuine humility, Christian boldness, holy joy, evangelical repentance, enlarged liberality, fervent love, a pure conscience, a holy life, victory over the world, eternal glory. Faith gazes upon the cross until the course of the new nature is set on fire with heavenly love.

Saving faith unites to Christ, lays hold of salvation, conquers every foe, brings every blessing into the soul, pronounces death abolished, always begets humility, is self-renouncing, consents to be nothing, that God may be all and in all, excludes boasting, is jealous for God's honor, brings forth forgiveness to enemies, begets repentance, nourishes other graces, ever clings to the fullness of Christ, kindles love to an unseen Savior, is ever laying its crown at the feet of Emmanuel, puts all things in their proper place, abases the sinner in the dust, sets God on the throne of universal dominion, pronounces all God's ways just and right, counts all things as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of God's dear Son. True, saving, justifying faith carries the soul through all difficulties, discouragements, and natural impossibilities to Jesus Christ. Precious faith.

2 Peter 1 verse 1. If you desire a useful life, a pleasant old age, a comfortable death, a blissful immortality, believe God, trust to His grace, rely on His Son. Rely on God alone as your Father, Christ alone as your Redeemer, the Holy Spirit alone as your Comforter.

179 The Robe

The Robe, by Charles Spurgeon
God's children are wrapped around with a robe, A seamless robe, which earth and heaven
Could not buy the like of it, were it once lost. For texture, it excels the fine linen of the merchants. For whiteness, it is purer than the driven snow.

No looms on earth could make it, But Jesus spent his life to make my robe of righteousness. There was a drop of blood in every throw of the shuttle, And every thread was made of his own heart's agonies. It is a robe that is divine, complete, A better robe than Adam wore in the perfection of Eden.

Adam had but a human righteousness, though a perfect one, But we have a divinely perfect righteousness. Wonderfully, my soul, are you arrayed, For your Savior's garment is on you. The royal robe of David is wrapped about his Jonathan.

Look at God's people as they are clothed also in the garments of sanctification. Was there ever such a robe as jeweled as that? Every day he arrays the lowliest of his people as though it were a wedding day. He arrays them as a bride adorns herself with jewels.

He will have them dressed in gold of ophir. What riches of grace, then, must there be in God, Who thus clothes his children?

180 Our Continual and Absolute Need

Our Continual and Absolute Need of Christ By John Fawcett Yes, he is very precious to you who believe. 1 Peter 2, verse 7. The sense we have of our continual and absolute need of Christ has a tendency to engage our affections to Him. At our first conversion, when we were turned from darkness to light, we saw ourselves lost, and that none but Christ could save us.

We felt the wounds of a guilty conscience, and we knew that He alone could heal them. We trembled before the offended majesty of God, and we were persuaded that He alone could deliver us from the wrath to come. We saw that there was no remission of sin, no reconciliation with God, no salvation, but through Jesus.

Hence, He became, at that period, all in all to us. We still see the absolute necessity of this precious Savior in every respect, so that without Him we can do nothing, as He Himself has told us. We have need of Him when we are dark, to enlighten us, when we are dull and lifeless, to quicken us, when we are weak, to strengthen us, when we are tempted, to support us, when we have fallen, to raise us and restore us, when we are disquieted with fears, to encourage us, when we are full of doubts and perplexity, to comfort us and give us peace, when we are staggering at the promises through unbelief, to increase our faith.

As none but Christ can do these things for us, He must be precious to our souls. Yes, He is very precious to you who believe. If Jesus Christ is precious to us, the bent of our souls will be towards Him.

We shall choose Him above and beyond every other object as our most desirable portion, an exceeding great reward. If anything in this world is chosen by us as our chief good, our hearts will run out in strongest affections towards it. We shall look for our felicity in that object, be it what it may.

That object, therefore, and not Christ, will be most precious unto us. If our regard for the Redeemer is supreme as it ought to be, our whole hearts will go out after Him in the most intense longings and with the most ardent desires. The heart of a believer is restless until it obtains a solid hope and persuasion of Christ's love, a growing conformity to Him, and sincere delight in Him.

The soul rests and acquiesces in Him alone, and is not happy without the enjoyment of some tokens of His love. The language of such a one is, If I have Christ for my friend and my everlasting portion, I have all. When His face is hidden and His comforts withdrawn, I seek Him with restless desire, and often cry, Oh, that I knew where I might find Him.

Reign, blessed Jesus, in my heart. Reign supreme and without a rival. I would sincerely love You above all things in heaven or earth.

I see that You are infinitely glorious in Yourself and worthy of my highest esteem and love. You are the only all-sufficient good, the overflowing spring of grace and blessedness. All things beneath and besides You are vanity and emptiness.

In comparison with You, they are less than nothing. You have drawn my heart towards You and made me willing to make choice of You as my Savior and my portion. I would renounce all that the world calls good or great that I may be entirely Yours.

Be my everlasting inheritance, and I shall desire nothing that the world can bestow. Whom have I in heaven but You? There is nothing on earth that I desire in comparison of You. What can the present world afford to tempt me to relinquish You? I would therefore bid adieu to the gaudy pumps and empty vanities of life and give my heart supremely to You.

Oh, may all the alluring trifles and vain delights of this world stand aloof from my heart, for I have devoted it to my Redeemer for His habitation. Keep Your distance, O captivating delusions, from the gates of my heart, where You alone should dwell. There may You reign alone over all my desires forever.

181 His Uplifted Dart Is Inexorable

His Uplifted Dart is Inexorable By Octavius Winslow We are born to die. The treasured ones around us have within them the seeds of death, and upon them the sentence of death. The brilliant eye, the rosy cheek, the vermilion lip, the tall graceful form, shooting up like a cedar, are often to a skillful and discerning glance, but as flowers blooming for the tomb.

Our home circles, with all the powerful barriers which affection and influence can cast around them, guarded as by angels, sentinels of love, are not a security against the entrance of the king of terrors. Youth cannot resist him. Beauty cannot awe him.

Wealth cannot bribe him. Eloquence cannot persuade him. Learning cannot confound him.

Skill cannot baffle him. Tears cannot move him. Religion cannot evade his icy touch.

To all this, his uplifted dart is inexorable. He takes the prince from the throne, the ruler from the state, the orator from the senate, the judge from the bench, the minister from the pulpit, the head from the family, the mother from the home, the babe from its mother's arms. None, none are spared.

Do you see that vacant chair? Those unread books? Those portraits on the wall? That treasured locket? That unworn apparel? What do they mean? Oh, how sad, how touching is their mute, expressive eloquence. They remind us of the departed. They tell of the eternal land where they have fled, where they will not return again until time is no more.

But what is this sad visitation of bereavement but one of the appointed dispensations of our Heavenly Father, sent in unerring wisdom, righteousness, and love?

182 No Dirty Dogs

No dirty dogs shall ever trample upon that golden pavement. By Thomas Brooks Throughout the scriptures, unholy people are branded to their everlasting contempt with the worst appellations. They are the most dangerous and the most harmful beings in the world and therefore are emblemized by lions, for they are cruel, by bears, for they are savage, by dragons, for they are hideous, by wolves, for they are ravenous, by dogs, for they are snarling, by vipers and scorpions, for they are stinging, by spiders and cockatrices, for they are poisoning, by swine, for they are intemperate.

Remember this, that all these stinging expressions and appellations which disgrace and vilify unholy people were inspired by the Holy Spirit and published in His Holy Word. The glutton is depicted as a swine. The fraudulent person is depicted as a fox.

The lustful person is depicted as a goat. The backbiter is depicted as a barking cure. The slanderer is depicted as an asp.

The oppressor is depicted as a wolf. The persecutor is depicted as a tiger. The seducer is depicted as a serpent.

Do you think that God admits such vermin as unholy people are to eternally inhabit His holy heaven? Surely not. God has long since resolved upon it that no unclean beasts shall enter into heaven, that no dirty dogs shall ever trample upon that golden pavement. Certainly, God will not allow such beasts and toads and snakes and serpents to forever live with Him.

Heaven is a too holy place to admit such vermin to inhabit. Nothing impure will ever enter it. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

All in heaven are holy. The angels holy. The saints holy.

But the Lord Himself above all is most glorious in holiness. Now certainly, it would be a hell to these holy ones to have unholy wretches to be their eternal companions. When the angels fell from their holiness, heaven was so holy that it spewed them out.

Certainly, there will be no room in heaven for such filthy beasts as unholy people are. Jerusalem above is too glorious a habitation for beasts or for men of beastly spirits or beastly principles or beastly practices. The city of the great God was never built for beasts.

A wilderness and not a paradise is fittest for beasts.

183 The Wrath of God

The Wrath of God by Thomas Boston. The wrath of God abides on him. John 3, verse 36.

Number one. The wrath of God is irresistible. There is no standing before it.

Who can stand in your sight when once you are angry? Psalm 76, verse 7. Can the worm or the moth defend itself against him who designs to crush it? Can the worm, man, stand before an angry God? Foolish men, indeed, bid a defiance against God. But the Lord often, even in this world, opens such sluices of wrath upon them as all their might cannot stop. They are carried away thereby, as with a flood.

How much more will it be so in hell? Number two. The wrath of God is insupportable. What a man cannot resist, he will try to endure.

But who shall dwell in devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? God's wrath is a weight which will sink men into the lowest hell. It is a burden which no man can endure. Number three.

The wrath of God is unavoidable to those who continue impenitently and die in their sinful course. He who, being often reprov'd, hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Proverbs 29, verse 1. We may now flee from it, indeed, by fleeing to Jesus Christ.

But those who flee from Christ will never be able to avoid it. Where can men flee from the avenging God? Where will they find a shelter? The hills will not bear them. The mountains will be deaf to their loudest supplications when they cry to them to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.

Number four. The wrath of God is powerful and fierce. Who can comprehend the power of your anger? Your wrath is as awesome as the fear you deserve.

Psalm 90, verse 11. We are apt to fear the wrath of man more than we ought. But no man can apprehend the wrath of God to be more dreadful than it really is.

The power of God's wrath can never be known to the utmost, for it is infinite and, properly speaking, has no utmost limit. However fierce it is, either on earth or in hell, God can still carry it farther. Everything in God is most perfect in its kind, and therefore no wrath is so fierce as His.

O sinner, how will you be able to endure that wrath which will tear you in pieces and grind you to powder? Number five. The wrath of God is penetrating and piercing wrath. It is burning wrath and fiery indignation.

There is no pain more intense than that which is caused by fire, and no fire so piercing as the fire of God's indignation, which burns unto the lowest hell. The arrows of men's wrath can pierce flesh, blood, and bones, but cannot reach the soul. But the wrath of God will sink into the soul, and so pierce a man in the most tender part.

Number six. The wrath of God is constant wrath, running parallel with the man's continuance in an unregenerate state, constantly attending him from the womb to the grave. There are few days so dark, but the sun sometimes looks out from under the clouds.

But the wrath of God is an abiding cloud on the objects of it. John 3, verse 36. The wrath of God abides on him who believes not.

Number seven. The wrath of God is eternal. O miserable soul, if you flee not from this wrath unto Jesus Christ, though your misery had a beginning, yet it will never have an end.

Should devouring death wholly swallow you up and forever hold you fast in the grave, it would be kind. But your body must be reunited to your immortal soul, and live again and never die, that you may be ever dying in the hands of the ever-living God. Death will quench the flame of man's wrath against us, if nothing else does.

But God's wrath, when it has come on the sinner for millions of ages, will still be the wrath to come. While God is, He will pursue the quarrel. Number eight.

However dreadful it is, and though it is eternal, yet it is most just wrath. It is a clear fire, without the least smoke of injustice. The sea of wrath, raging with greatest fury against the sinner, is clear as crystal.

The judge of all the earth can do no wrong. Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath? Absolutely not. Otherwise, how will God judge the world? Romans 3, verses 5 and 6. The judge, being infinitely just, the sentence must be righteous.

Therefore, stop your mouth, O proud sinner. Still your clamor against your righteous judge.

184 All The Hell That You Shall Ever

Consider, Christian, that all your trials and troubles, calamities and miseries, crosses and losses, which you meet with in this world, is all the hell that you shall ever have. Here and now you have your hell, hereafter you shall have your heaven. This is the worst of your condition, the best is yet to come.

Lazarus had his hell first, his heaven last, but Dives had his heaven first and his hell at last. You have all your pangs and pains and sufferings here that you shall ever have. Your ease and rest and pleasure is yet to come.

Here you have all your bitters, your sweets are yet to come. Here you have your sorrows, your joys are yet to come. Here you have all your winter nights, your summer days are yet to come.

Here you have your evil things, your good things are yet to come. Death will put an end to all your sins and to all your sufferings. Death will be an inlet to those joys, delights and comforts, which shall never have an end.

Who can seriously meditate upon this and not be silent under God's most smarting rod?

185 Rich In Spiritual Experiences

Rich in Spiritual Experiences by Thomas Brooks The mature Christian is rich in spiritual experiences. Oh, the experiences that he has of the ways of God, of the workings of God, of the word of God, of the love of God. Oh, the divine stories that old Christians can tell, of the power of the word, of the sweetness of the word, of the usefulness of the word, as a light to lead the soul, as a staff to support the soul, as a spur to quicken the soul, as an anchor to stay the soul, and as a cordial to comfort and strengthen the soul.

Oh, the stories that he can tell concerning the love of Christ, the blood of Christ, the offices of Christ, the merits of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the grace of Christ, and the influence of Christ. Oh, the stories that an old disciple can tell of the indwellings of the Spirit, of the operations of the Spirit, of the teachings of the Spirit, of the leadings of the Spirit, of the sealings of the Spirit, of the witnessings of the Spirit, and of the comforts and joys of the Spirit. Oh, the stories that an old Christian can tell of the evil of sin, of the bitterness of sin, of the deceitfulness of sin, of the prevalence of sin, and of the happiness of conquest over sin.

Oh, the stories that he can tell you of the snares of Satan, of the devices of Satan, of the temptations of Satan, of the rage of Satan, of the malice of Satan, of the watchfulness of Satan, and of the ways of triumphing over Satan. As an old soldier can tell you of many battles, many scars, many wounds, many losses, and many victories, even to admiration, so an old saint is able to tell you many divine stories, even to admiration. Experimental religion is far beyond mere notions and impressions.

A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. No man so rich, so honorable, so happy, as the old disciple who is rich in spiritual experiences. The righteous will flourish like a palm tree.

They will grow like a cedar of Lebanon, planted in the house of the Lord. They will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age.

They will stay fresh and green. Psalm 92 verses 12 through 14.

186 The Scale

The Scale, by J.C. Philpott What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16, verse 26 Put your soul in one side of the scale, and put all that the world calls good and great in the other side. Think of everything that the heart of man can desire, riches, honor, pleasure, power. Keep it up well.

Fill one side of the scale until there is no room for more. Put in all the gold of Australia, all the diamonds of India, all the delights of youthful love, all the pleasures of wife and home, of children and friends, of health and strength, of name and fame. Put in all that the natural mind of man deems the height of happiness, and everything that may weigh this side of the scale down.

Now, when you have filled this side of the scale, put your soul into the other side, the state of your soul for all eternity. Represent to yourself your deathbed. Hold the scale with dying hands as lying just at the brink of eternity.

See how the scale now hangs. What if you had the whole world that you have put into the scale and could call it all your own, but at that solemn hour felt that your soul was forever lost, that you were dying under the wrath of God, and there was nothing before you but an eternity of misery? At such a moment as this, what could you put in the scale equal to the weight of your immortal soul? Take the scale again. Put into one side every affliction, trial, sorrow, and distress that imagination can conceive or tongue express.

Let them all be yours. Distress of mind, pain of body, poverty of circumstances, contempt from man, assaults from Satan, Job's afflictions, Jacob's bereavements, David's persecutions, Jeremiah's prison, Hezekiah's sickness. Put into this side of the scale everything that makes life miserable, and then put into the other side a saved soul.

Surely, as in the case of worldly honors and riches and happiness, a lost soul must weigh them all down. So, in the case of afflictions and sorrows and troubles, a saved soul must weigh them all down too.

187 Who Can Wonder

Who Can Wonder by J. A. James You should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4 verse 12. Look into some families of professors, follow them through the history of only one week, and see their worldly mindedness, their gaiety, their frivolity, their unsanctified tempers, their worldly reading, their amusements, their homage to talent, their low esteem of holiness, their negligence of family prayer, their neglect of godly instruction to their children.

And who can wonder that young people brought up amidst such scenes do not become pious, but go off into the world or into sin. Too often the children are like their parents and bring into the church no higher or better kind of religion than what they have learned at home, and thus a low tone of piety, a lukewarm Laodicean spirit, is extended and perpetuated. There must be a revival of piety in the parents.

It is vain to expect that a worldly minded father whose spirituality, if ever he had any, has been utterly evaporated by the exclusiveness of concern about business and politics. Or a frivolous, pleasure loving mother who thinks far more about adorning the bodies of her children than about saving their souls should be at all concerned about the pious education of their children. Recollect what a solemn thing it is to be a parent.

What a weighty responsibility attaches to those who have the immortal souls of their children committed to their care. You fathers, don't provoke your children to wrath, but nurture them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6 verse 4.

188 An Inexhaustible Fullness

An inexhaustible fullness by John Fawcett. Yes, He is very precious to you who believe. 1 Peter 2 verse 7. Christian, Jesus is your Savior, your friend, and your portion.

You are guilty. His blood cleanses from all sin. You are miserable.

He is rich in mercy. You are helpless. He is mighty to save.

You are impoverished. His riches are unsearchable. His treasures of grace are inexhaustible.

There is an inexhaustible fullness in Him, answerable to all your necessities, be they ever so many or ever so great. He is the ever-flowing, the overflowing fountain of living waters. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think.

It has pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell. Indeed, we have all received grace after grace from His fullness. His kindness and mercy are unbounded.

If the kindness of men has a tendency to win your hearts, how much more should the infinite love of Jesus constrain you to love Him? He is precious in the glorious perfections of His person, His transcendent worth, and His all-surpassing excellency. Surely then, it is reasonable, it is highly proper, that He should be chief, the object of your love. All that is excellent, all that is desirable, all that is comforting is concentrated in Him.

He is fairer than the children of men, the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely. Oh, how unspeakably, how infinitely precious! Yes, He is very precious to you who believe. 1 Peter 2 verse 7. Love to Jesus is maintained and continued in its warmth and fervor by frequent meditation on His adorable person, His dying love, and His infinite excellence and preciousness.

If we lose sight of Him as the spring of all our happiness and of His ineffable glories, the fervency of our love for Him will be abated. If Jesus Christ is so superlatively precious in Himself, we have reason to be ashamed that we love Him no more. Alas, how languid are our affections towards Him who is altogether lovely, and how easily are our hearts captivated with vanities and trifles.

This is matter of deep humiliation, grief, and sorrow.

189 Is This Your Religion

Is This Your Religion? By John Angel James If I have the gift of prophecy, and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13 verse 2. Love is a grace which many professing Christians think far too little about, but it is of infinite value in the eyes of God. Love is the most characteristic feature of Christ's image in a renewed man.

Love is the most precious fruit of grace, and yet the fruit which too many of his professed followers seem to think themselves hardly under any obligation to cultivate. Christian love is that benevolent disposition or kindness which consists in good will to all creatures, and which leads us, as we have opportunity, to promote their happiness. The apostle has given us a description of the exercises of this noble and God-like principle.

Love is patient and forbearing under injuries and annoyances, and does not revile, revenge, or retaliate. Love is kind, not harsh or crude, but ever ready, willing, and pleased by looks, words, and actions to promote the comfort of others. Love does not envy.

It does not pine and grieve at the sight of another's superior possessions, fame, happiness, or piety, or dislike him on that account. Love does not boast. Love is not proud.

It neither boasts its own gifts, achievements, and possessions, nor despises others, nor makes insulting comparisons, but is humble and gentle. Love does not behave unseemly. It modestly keeps its place, and does nothing to offend by doing what is unfitting of its rank, station, or circumstances.

Love seeks not her own. It does not selfishly want to have its own way or promote its own interest to the neglect of others. Love is not easily provoked.

It governs its temper, controls its passions, and is not soon or unreasonably irritable or petulant. Love thinks no evil. It is not censorious nor forward to impute a bad motive to a doubtful action, but is disposed to put the best construction on the actions and words of others.

Love rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. It does not delight in the sins, but in the excellences of an opponent. Love bears, or aggravate faults, but hides them as far as it can, and it is right to do so.

Love believes all things that are to the advantage of another. Love hopes all things where there is not sufficient evidence to authorize belief. Love endures all things, bears hardships, sustains labor, makes sacrifices, in order to accomplish its purposes of goodwill.

Such is love in exercise and act. This is benevolence. This is a regard to the happiness of others.

Whoever acts thus must promote happiness. He must bless all around him. All things smile in his presence.

Beautiful description, heavenly temper, godlike mind. Now, dear friends, look at love. Gaze upon its lovely form, its beautiful countenance, its graceful actings.

Observe its seraphic glow, its divine temper, until you are all enamored with its charms. But look at it not only as something to be admired, but to be possessed and practiced. Unless this is your temperament, you are not Christians.

I do not say you cannot be Christians unless you have love in perfection, but you must have the principle of love and must be living in its exercise. You are Christians, no further than you live under its influence. No matter what knowledge you may have of the doctrines of the gospel, what seeming faith you may possess, what zeal you may manifest, what liberality you may exercise, what regularity and punctuality and attendance upon the means of grace you may maintain, if love is lacking, all this is of no avail.

Nothing can be a substitute for love. Christianity is love, not a slavish attendance on ceremonies, nor receiving the sacraments, not zeal for orthodoxy, not a form of church government, not belonging to any particular church. God's eternal thoughts and purposes in election, Christ's redeeming work upon the cross, the Spirit's omnipotent agency in regeneration, are not merely to bring us under a particular ecclesiastical regimen, but to deliver us from the dominion of selfishness and place us under the reign of love, and thus make us like God.

If an individual is destitute of love, he has no saving religion. He may be zealous for the forms of Christianity, but he is destitute of its living spirit. And now, my dear friends, let me entreat you to examine yourselves concerning this great essential of the Christian character.

Are you experimentally acquainted with this disposition? Is this your religion? Is your temperament thus molded? Is that one word, love, characteristic of your spirit? Has God's love to you changed you into its own likeness? Do you know what it is to have pride, passion, envy, malice, selfishness, subdued, repressed, resisted by a meek, gentle, lowly, forgiving, forbearing, generous, self-denying temper? Are the harshness, hardness, asperity of the fallen nature displaced by the softness, sweetness, and kindness of true love?

190 Trace the Steps

Trace the Steps of His Lovely Feet by John Fawcett Leaving you an example so that you should follow in His steps. 1 Peter 2 verse 21 He who says he abides in Him should walk just as He walked. 1 John 2 verse 6 We see in our Divine Leader the several precepts of God's Word drawn out in living characters.

We behold them reduced to practice and represented to the life, in the whole of His conduct towards God and man. We see one in our nature, amidst all the assaults of temptation, amidst all the opposition which malignity could invent, and all the allurements of this glittering world, behaving in a manner exactly agreeable to the dictates of the Divine Law, and leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. Surely it must be delightful, not only to contemplate His character, but to the utmost of our power to imitate the most perfect pattern which was ever exhibited.

It must be desirable, by constant and strenuous exertions, according to our measure, to endeavor to trace the steps of His Lovely Feet. It is impossible to contemplate the character of Jesus with serious and devout attention, and not be charmed with it. We see in Him all the human virtues in the highest perfection.

His joys were grave, His griefs were just, His gentleness and His severity, His holiness and His humanity, were in perfect harmony with each other. He manifested great tenderness, and genuine affection, and sensibility to human woe on all occasions. As He did no sin, so, on the other hand, every shining virtue was exemplified in Him to the highest degree, His humility and meekness, His contempt of the world, His heavenly temper, His love to the Father and zeal for His honor, His activity and diligence in doing good, His submission to the Father's will, His patience amidst the heaviest and severest sufferings, His constancy in the exercises of retired devotion, and His praying for His enemies who spilt His blood, can never be sufficiently admired.

When you are tempted to any vanity, set the Blessed Redeemer before you, consider His example, and ask yourself, How would Jesus, my Lord and Master, have acted in such a case? Would He have spent His time upon such trifles? Would He have spoken such and such, or done this or the other thing which I am solicited to do? And shall I give way to that which would be a manifest deviation from His example? God forbid! O Christians, fix your eyes intensely on the Great Exemplar. Thus you will, through divine grace, daily grow in love with meekness, patience, and lowliness of heart. The more I contemplate His lovely character while He sojourned on earth, the more I am delighted with it.

To have the same mind in me which was in Christ Jesus, and to tread in His steps, should be my constant aim. Those who are received by Him to the possession of everlasting felicity in heaven, have humbly traced His footsteps upon earth. Of them, it is said, these are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

They are forever led by Him, even in the celestial world, to the enjoyment of ever new delights and pleasures.

191 Communion With Jesus

Communion with Jesus, by John Fawcett. Yes, He is very precious to you who believe. 1 Peter 2, verse 7. Christ is precious to those who believe.

They desire to have more and more daily acquaintance with Him, and to grow in the sweet and powerful experience of communion with Him. Let us suppose the true Christian, in his retired moments, addressing God in such manner as the following, You, O God, are unchangeable in Your nature, glorious in Your essence, wonderful in Your perfections, wise in Your counsels, and holy in all Your works. It is my greatest good and highest happiness to enjoy Your favor and to behold Your glory.

Permit me to say, with Your servant Moses, I beseech You, show me Your glory. Show me the glory of Your wisdom, Your holiness, Your power, Your grace, and Your mercy in Christ Jesus. This will give me a distaste for the gaudy vanities of the present world.

I shall then look with indifference on all that after which the covetous are eagerly panting. I shall then pity the ambitious in their restless solicitude to make themselves great and to obtain the veneration of their fellow worms. Your divine beauty and infinite loveliness, as displayed in the glorious mediator, will captivate my desires, inflame my love, and excite my joy and delight.

A more intimate view of Your holiness will embitter every sin and lead me, in deepest humiliation, to abhor myself and repent as in dust and ashes. Give me such a sense of Your majesty as may dispose my heart to reverence You supremely. Afford me such discoveries of Your omnipotence, Your love, and Your goodness, as may support my fainting heart under the toils of this warfare and all the afflictions attending this state of mortality.

Let the impressions which Your adorable perfections make upon me be deep and powerful, so as to transform my soul into Your own lovely and holy likeness. Thus, by beholding Your glory, may I be changed into Your image. It is habitual and not transient communion with Jesus, the Lord of glory, which alone will satisfy my desires and produce those happy effects which I seek, of nearer conformity to Him in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness.

Communion with Christ will tend to refine my understanding, rectify my soul, and purify my heart. Grant me, O Author of all good, by frequent converse with You, to have my affections spiritualized, that I may look with indifference on all other objects and have my mind set on things above, not on earthly things. In fellowship with You, I shall find a source of delights infinitely superior to anything that this world can afford, for Your lovingkindness is better than life itself.

You are the inexhaustible treasury of blessedness. O Lord God Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in You.

192 High, Supercilious Thoughts of Yourself

High, Supercilious Thoughts of Yourselves by Thomas Watson Vain man would be wise. Job 11, verse 12. In the Hebrew, it is empty man.

Man is a proud piece of flesh. He is apt to have a high opinion of himself. Such as view themselves in the flattering-looking glass of self-love appear bigger in their own eyes than they are.

They think their spark is a sun. They think their drop is a sea. That you may deny all high supercilious thoughts of yourselves, consider that pride is a great sin.

Chrysostom calls it the mother of hell. It is a kind of idolatry, a self-worshipping. This should pull down the plumes of pride and self-conceit.

What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own? 1 Corinthians 4, verse 7. Consider that whatever noble endowments you have are borrowed. What wise man would be proud of a jewel which was lent to him? The moon has no cause to be proud of her borrowed light. Consider what a hell of sin you carry about you.

Sin is the accursed thing, Joshua 5, verse 13. It is the quintessence of evil. It was typified by the menstrual cloth, which was the most unclean thing under the law.

This may demolish all proud imaginations. Grace can never thrive where pride and self-conceit grow. As a body with cancer cannot thrive, so neither can the soul thrive, which is cancered with pride and self-conceit.

A proud head makes a barren heart. A supercilious conceitedness is odious to God. The more one values himself, the less God values him.

Such as have a high opinion of their own excellencies, are on the fast track to eternal ruin. The Lord sometimes lets vain conceited people fall, not only foully, but finally. Doves, says Pliny, take pride in their feathers and in their flying high, but they soar so high that they are prey to the hawk.

Just so, when men fly high in pride, they become prey to the prince of the air. All this should make us kill the worm of self-conceit. Let Paul be our pattern.

Though he was the chief of the apostles, he says, I am less than the least of all God's people. Ephesians 3 verse 8. I am nothing, 2 Corinthians 12 verse 11. This illustrious apostle, a star of the first magnitude, shrank into nothing in his own eyes.

193 I Would Unmask The Devil

I would unmask the devil by Talmud. Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11, verse 14.

Sin, crawling out of the ditch of poverty and shame, has but few temptations. Poets and painters have portrayed Satan as a hideous creature with horns and hooves. If I were a poet, I would describe him with manners polished to the last perfection, hair flowing in graceful ringlets, eye glistening with splendor, hands soft and diamond, step light and graceful, voice mellow as a flute, conversation articulate and eloquent, breath perfumed until it would seem that nothing had ever touched his lips but balm and myrrh.

But his heart I would encase with the scales of a monster, then filled with pride, with beastliness of lust, with recklessness, with hypocrisy, with death, with damnation. In my next portrait, I would unmask the devil until his two eyes would become the cold orbs of the adder and on his lip would come the foam of raging intoxication and to his feet the spring of the panther and his soft hand would become the clammy hand of a wasted skeleton and in the smooth lisp of his tongue would come the hiss of the worm which never dies while suddenly from his heart would burst in all devouring fury the unquenchable flames of hell. But until unmasked, I would describe him as nothing but myrrh and balm and ringlet and diamond and flute-like voice with pleasant and mirthful conversation so that Satan will not outsmart us for we are very familiar with his evil schemes.

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194 All the Afflictions of God's People

All the Afflictions of God's People by John Fawcett We also rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance. Endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. Romans 5 verses 3 and 4. The chastisements of Christ are precious to those who believe.

The believer's love to Jesus Christ not only continues under the rod of correction, but is quickened and increased by it. Thus it is distinguished from that pretended love which exists only in times of prosperity. The afflicted Christian is enabled to consider that whom the Lord loves, He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives, and that He only afflicts us for our profit, to make us partakers of His holiness.

The Lord can so manifest Himself to His afflicted people that the season of affliction shall be to them a season of great consolation. He is to them a fountain of life, of strength, of grace, and comfort in the afflictive hour, of His fullness they receive as their necessities require. The Lord Jesus Christ is a sun to enlighten and cheer His afflicted followers, and a shield to defend them.

He is a hiding place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, and as the shadow of a great rock in a dry and weary land. All the afflictions of God's people are designed under His gracious management to test, to make manifest, and to exercise those graces and virtues which He has implanted in them. Though afflictions in themselves are not joyous, but grievous, nevertheless they yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness in those who are exercised thereby.

Afflictions serve to quicken the spirit of devotion in us, and to rouse us from that formality and indifference which frequently attend a long course of ease and prosperity. We are constrained to seek God with sincerity and fervor when His chastening hand is upon us, since we then feel our absolute need of that help and deliverance which He alone can give us. When the loss of any temporal enjoyment casts us into excessive despondency and dejection, it is evident that what we have lost was the object of our inordinate love.

The most innocent attachments cease to be innocent when they press too strongly upon us. To cleave to any created object and to look for happiness from it is to make an idol of it and to set it up in God's place. Should this object be a friend, a brother, a wife, or a child, the idolatry is still odious in the eyes of that God to whom we owe our chief affection.

Our warmest passions, our most fervent love, desires, hopes, and confidences should always have God for their object. It is His desire that our happiness should not center in any of the good things of this life. Losses and disappointments are the trials of our faith, our patience, and our obedience.

When we are in the midst of prosperity, it is difficult to know whether we have a love for our benefactor or only for his benefits. It is in the midst of adversity that our piety is put to the trial. Afflictions serve most effectually to convince us of the vanity of all that this world can afford, to

remind us that this is not our rest, and to stir up desires and hopes for our everlasting home.

They produce in us a spirit of sympathy towards our companions in tribulation. They give occasion for the exercise of patience, meekness, submission, and resignation. Were it not for the wholesome and necessary discipline of affliction, these excellent virtues would lie dormant.

Afflictions serve to convince us more deeply of our own weakness and insufficiency, and to endear the person, the grace, the promises, and the salvation of our Redeemer more and more to our hearts. Thus, we are taught to esteem His very chastisements as precious on account of the benefits we derive from them. Afflictions are not to punish, but to purify the believing soul.

They are not in wrath, but in mercy. Amidst the distresses and miseries of life, it is a felicity to belong to Christ, without whose permission and appointment no evil can befall us. He always sends afflictions for our good and knows by experience what it is to suffer them.

His kind hand will speedily put an end to all the pains we feel, when we have derived from them all the good which He intends to do for us by them. How many, how suitable, how sovereign are the supports our Heavenly Father affords to His afflicted children. They make the affliction which in itself would seem heavy and tedious appear to be light, and but for a moment.

It is happier to be in the furnace of affliction with these supports than to be in the highest prosperity without them. Blessed with the hopes and comforts of Christ, the true Christian would prefer the lot of Lazarus, with all the poverty and distress which he endured, to the lot of the rich man, who amidst all the splendor and affluence which this world could afford, lived a life of alienation from God, and destitute of the sovereign supports, which can only be enjoyed by those who love and fear Him.

195 You May Get a Ticket

You may get a ticket straight to hell by express, by Talmage. If you would, lead a pure life, have nothing to do with bad books and impure newspapers. With such immoral literature, as is coming forth from our swift revolving printing presses, there is no excuse for dragging oneself through sewers of unchastity.

Never read a bad book. By the time you get through the first chapter, you will see the drift of it. If you find the hoof prints of the devil in the pictures, or in the style, or in the plot, away with it.

You may tear your coat or break a vase and repair them again. But it takes less than an hour to do your soul a damage which no time can entirely repair. Look carefully over your child's library.

See which book he reads after he has gone to bed with the light turned down. Young man, as you value heaven, never buy a book from one of those men who meet you in the square and, after looking both ways to see if the police are watching, shows you a book very cheap. Have him arrested, as you would kill a rattlesnake.

Grab him and shout, Police! Police! But there is more danger, I think, from many of the family newspapers. Some of them contain stories of vice and shame, full of evil suggestions, and go as far as they can without exposing themselves to the clutch of the law. On some tables in Christian homes, there lie family newspapers which are the very vomit of the pit of hell.

The way to ruin is cheap. It costs three dollars to go to Philadelphia, six dollars to Boston, thirty-three dollars to Savannah. But by the purchase of a bad paper for ten cents, you may get a ticket straight to hell by express, with few stopping places.

And the final stop is like the tumbling of the train over a bridge, sudden, dreadful, deathful, never to rise. Oh, the power of an iniquitous pen! If a needle punctures the body at a certain point, life is destroyed. But the pen is a sharper instrument, for with its puncture you may kill your soul.

Do not think that that book which you find fascinating and entertaining is therefore healthful. Some of the worst poisons are pleasant to the taste. The pen which for the time fascinates you may have been dipped in the slime of impure hearts.

196 An Ice House, Instead of a Hot Hell

An Ice House Instead of a Hot House By John Angel James It appears quite clear, then, that great numbers of Christian professors are but very imperfectly acquainted with the requirements of pure and undefiled religion, and need to be led to re-study it in the pages of Holy Scripture. We have lost sight of the divine original, and have confined our attention to the imperfect transcripts which we find on every hand in our churches. We have, by tacit consent, reduced the standard and fixed our eye and our aim upon an inferior object.

We are a law to each other, instead of making the Word of God the law to us all. We tolerate a worldly-minded, diluted and weakened piety in others, because we expect a similar toleration for ourselves. We make excuses for them, because we expect the like excuses for our own conduct in return.

We have abused, shamefully abused, the fact that there is no perfection upon earth, and converted it into a license for any measure and any number of imperfections. Our highest notion of religion requires only abstinence from open immorality and the more polluting worldly amusements, an attendance upon an evangelical ministry, and an approval of orthodox doctrine. This, this, is the religion of multitudes.

There may be no habitual spirituality, no heavenly-mindedness, no life of faith, no communion with God, no struggling against sin, Satan, and the world, no concern to grow in grace, no supreme regard to eternity, no studied and advancing fitness for the eternal world, no tenderness of conscience, no careful discipline of our disposition, no cultivation of love, no making piety our chief business and highest pleasure, no separation in spirit from the world. In short, no impress upon the whole mind and heart and conscience and life of the character of the Christian as delineated upon the page of Scripture. We all need to be taken out of the religious world, as it is called, and collected again around the Bible to study what it is to be a Christian.

Let us endeavor to forget what the bulk of professors are and begin afresh to learn what they ought to be. It is to be feared that we are corrupting each other, leading each other to be satisfied with a conventional piety. Many have been actually the worse for attending church.

They were more intensely concerned and earnest before they came into church fellowship. Their piety seemed to come into an ice house instead of a hot house. They grew better outside the church than in the church.

At first, they were surprised and shocked to see the conformness, the irregularities, the worldliness, the inconsistencies of many older professors, and exclaimed with grief and disappointment, Is this the church of Christ? But after a while, the fatal influence came over them, and their piety sank to the temperature around them.

197 Flesh-Pleasing Pulpit Opiates

Flesh-Pleasing Pulpit Opiates by J. A. James They are a rebellious people, deceptive children, children who do not obey the Lord's instruction. They say to the seers, Do not see, and to the prophets, Do not prophesy the truth to us. Tell us flattering things.

Prophesy illusions. Get out of the way. Leave the pathway.

Rid us of the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 30 verses 9-11 It is a striking fact that He who was love incarnate, who was mercy's messenger to our lost world, who was named Jesus because He was to be the Savior of His people, who was the manifestation of God's love to man, delivered, during the course of His personal ministry, more fearful descriptions of divine justice and the punishment of the wicked than are to be found in any other part of the Word of God. What can exceed the solemn scene of the parable of the rich man in torments? Hell and destruction are there set openly before us.

No man can fulfill his ministry, therefore, without frequently alluding to the justice of God in the punishment of sin. He must seek to alarm the fears of the unconverted by a representation of the consequences which will follow a state of final impenitence. Such a subject frequently calls up all the enmity of the carnal mind, to be told, not only that they are sinners, which all will admit in general terms, but that their sins are such as to deserve the wrath of God, such as to expose them to the torments of hell, and such as will infallibly bring them to the bottomless pit, unless they truly repent, to be told again and again that they are hastening to perdition, to have the rod of divine vengeance shaken over their heads, to have all the dreadful curses of the violated law analyzed, ascertained and announced, to have this done in their hearing and done frequently, to be made to sit and hear their future eternal doom, and thus to be tormented before their time, is what they cannot and will not endure.

Unable to bear any longer his pointed addresses to the conscience, they will leave his ministry, for the flesh-pleasing pulpit opiates of some flatterer of men's souls, who is too cowardly to trouble the minds, or alarm the consciences of those who love smooth, flattering and delusive preaching. To be publicly denounced as deserving divine wrath, to be told that they are sinners to such a degree as to merit the eternal punishment of a holy God, to be reminded that, instead of their imagined good heart, pure nature and blameless life, they are, in the sight of God, depraved in every faculty and polluted in every part, to be represented as unfit for communion with God here and for His presence hereafter, all this is so opposed to all their notions, so mortifying to their vain pride, so degrading to their dignity, that they cannot but hate it, to such a debasement they would not willingly descend, and hence their demand for the teaching of deceit and the smooth speech of falsehood. What they want is to be flattered into a good opinion of themselves.

They hate the doctrine which disturbs their self-delight, and revile the man who attempts to tell them the solemn reality of how vile they really are.

198 The Dregs of Old Age

The Dregs of Old Age by Thomas Brooks Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs. Numbers 23, verse 10. Many desire to repent when old age comes, when their wits are cracked, their souls distracted, their senses stupefied, their hearts bewildered, their minds darkened, and their bodies diseased and distempered.

Oh, then, they think, that they will be able to leap into heaven, with the Lord have mercy upon me in their mouths. Even though they have lived like devils, yet they hope they shall die like saints. Do you think, oh vain man, that after you have spent your time and wasted your strength and exhausted your energies in the work of Satan and in the service of your lusts, that God will receive you into His grace and favor? If you do thus flatter yourself, it is ten thousand to one that you will deceive yourself.

Though true repentance is never too late, yet late repentance is seldom true. Ah, how many millions are now in hell, who have thought and resolved, and said that they would repent hereafter, but that hereafter never came. You say, tomorrow, tomorrow I will repent, when you know not what a tomorrow will bring forth.

Alas, how many thousand ways may death surprise you before tomorrow comes. Though there is but one way to come into the world, yet there are a thousand thousand ways to be sent out of the world. Oh, the diseases, the hazards, the dangers, the accidents, the deaths, which daily, which hourly, attend the life of man.

Ah, friends, it is a dangerous thing to make repentance to be the task of old age. The longer any man defers his repentance, the more difficult it will be for him to repent. His heart will every day grow more and more hard, and his will more and more perverse, and his judgment more and more corrupted, and his affections more and more disordered, and his conscience more and more benumbed or enraged, and his whole life more and more defiled and debauched.

Friends, do not deceive yourselves. Old age is but a tottering and sinking foundation for you to build your eternal hopes and happiness upon, your eternal making or marring upon. Are the dog days of old age, are the trembling hands, the wrinkled face, the failing eyes, the gasping lungs, the fainting heart, the feeble knees and the broken down legs, are these a sacrifice worthy of a majestic God? Is a body full of sores, aches, and diseases, and a soul full of sin an offering worthy of a holy God? Surely not.

Oh, what madness, what wickedness is this, to serve Satan, your lusts, and this world with full dishes, and to put off God with scraps. To serve Satan, your lusts, and this world in the flower, in the prime and primrose of your days, and to put off God with the dregs of old age. Oh, do not let Satan deceive you.

Do not let your own hearts delude you.

199 A Shelf In My Head

A shelf in my head by Charles Spurgeon. Before I knew the gospel, I gathered up a heterogeneous mass of all kinds of knowledge from here, there, and everywhere. A bit of chemistry, a bit of botany, a bit of astronomy, and a bit of this, that, and the other.

I put them all together in one great confused chaos. When I learned the gospel, I got a shelf in my head to put everything away just where it should be. It seemed to me as if, when I had discovered Christ and Him crucified, I had got the center of the system so that I could see every other science revolving around in order.

From the earth, you know, the planets appear to move in a very irregular manner. Some are progressive, retrograde, stationary, etc. But if you could get upon the sun, you would see them marching round in their constant, uniform, circular motion.

Likewise with human knowledge. Begin with any other science you like, and truth will seem to be amiss. But if you begin with the science of Christ crucified, you will begin with the sun.

You will see every other science moving around it in complete harmony. The greatest mind in the world will be gained by beginning at the right end. The old saying is, go from nature up to nature's God.

But it is hard work going uphill. The best thing is to go from nature's God down to nature. And if you once get to nature's God and believe Him and love Him, it is surprising how easy it is to hear music in the waves and songs in the wild whisperings of the winds.

To see God everywhere, in the stones, in the rocks, in the rippling brooks. And hear Him everywhere, in the lowing of cattle, in the rolling of thunder, and in the fury of tempests. Get Christ first.

Put Him in the right place. And you will find Him to be the wisdom of God in your own experience.

200 Fear Him

Fear Him, by John Macduff Who would not fear you, O King of Nations? Jeremiah 10, verse 7 How reasonable it is that this glorious being, whose greatness is unsearchable, should be regarded with feelings of the profoundest reverence. It is, indeed, His due, and as such, He claims it from all His creatures. Concerning the sinfulness of the wicked, there is no fear of God before His eyes.

Psalm 36, verse 1 To have no fear of God before their eyes is at once the greatest injustice and the most unutterable folly. All who have the impudence to lift up their puny arms in rebellion against Him are engaged in a conflict which, if persisted in, is sure to terminate in their utter destruction. Reader, think of His incomprehensible greatness and majesty.

Think of Him as the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, the heavens His throne, the earth His footstool, the light His garment, the clouds His chariot, the thunder His voice. Viewing Him thus, it will be impossible for you to treat Him with indifference, far less with scornful disdain. If you are only brought in some measure to realize the fact of God's greatness and majesty, you cannot fail to acknowledge that He is greatly to be feared and to be held in reverence by all His creatures, just so with all the other attributes of His nature.

Who can think of His power so mighty, so irresistible, a power which is able to crush us into atoms with infinitely greater ease than we could tread the crawling worm beneath our feet and not fear Him? Who can think of His knowledge, nothing being hidden from His omniscient glance, the darkness of midnight and the splendor of noon being altogether alike to Him and not fear Him? Who can think of the terrors of His avenging justice and not fear Him, especially as when He proclaims from His exalted throne, There is no God other than Me. I am the One who kills and gives life. I am the One who wounds and heals.

No one delivers from My power. As surely as I live, when I sharpen My flashing sword and begin to carry out justice, I will bring vengeance on My enemies and repay those who hate Me. Deuteronomy 32, verses 39 through 41 Our God is truly a consuming fire.

It is most befitting for us to regard Him with reverence and godly fear. It is not those who can deprive us of our present life whom we should so much dread. Limited and of brief duration is the power of all mortal foes at best.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear. Fear Him who, after killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell.

Yes, I tell you, fear Him. Luke 12, verses 4 and 5

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