

# THE CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN

by William Secker

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*Secker's handbook for Christian living emphasizing practical piety and moral consistency, containing rich theological insights presented through comparisons, contrasts, and analogies as a guide to maintaining Christian virtue and righteousness in daily conduct.*

9 Chapters

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## **-0.1-THE CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN**

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THE CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN A Handbook for Christian Living William Secker, 1660

## **-0.2-EDITOR'S NOTE**

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### EDITOR'S NOTE

Without doubt, this is the richest book we have ever read. In order to gain any spiritual profit from the book - it must be carefully perused. It is much like the book of Proverbs, where each line must be contemplated. Concerning the literary style of the author, Secker abounds in the use of comparisons and contrasts - often using several analogies in the same sentence. Similar to the Old Testament authors, at times Secker 'purposely exaggerates' the wording, to make his point. This handbook for Christian living will be a treasure to all serious Christians. Originally titled "The Nonsuch Professor" this antiquated book has been carefully updated to modern English. (Editors, GraceGems.org)

## **-0.3-SOURCE NOTE AND SPECIAL THANKS**

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### SOURCE NOTE AND SPECIAL THANKS

God's servants at <http://www.gracegems.org/> updated, revised, and adapted this beautiful material to modern English. They adopted a 'flowing poetic form' for most of the quotes as an aid to reflection and comprehension. <http://www.gracegems.org/19/literature.htm> Grace Gems Copyright Policy: We frequently get requests asking for permission to use literature from Grace Gems. Since everything on our website is public domain, there is no need to ask permission. We encourage others to use our literature in any way they desire. Forward it to others - add it to your website - put it in your church bulletins - make it into books or booklets for distribution. Also, feel free to add a "link" to <http://www.gracegems.org/> on your website - there is no need to ask for permission. (Formatted for e-Sword by Tom Rightmer using e-Sword ToolTip v3.45)

## -0.4-PREFACE

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PREFACE Christian Reader, To serve man's necessity is charitable; to serve his convenience is warrantable; to serve his iniquity is blamable - but to serve his purity is honorable! The design of this piece is not the ostentation of the author - but the edification of the reader. In this subject you have a breviary of true religion. The works enjoined in it are weighty, and the blessings annexed to it are many. Christianity is here dressed in the white linen of purity. As grace begins in God's love to us - so it ends in our love to Him. Grace both makes our comforts greater - and our crowns brighter. Those children of God who are found moving in the orbits of obedience - shall enjoy the clearest sunshine of their Father's countenance!

Beloved, be sure to raise your superstructure upon an immovable foundation; and enter into such a business, as has an immediate tendency to blessedness. It is an unparalleled mercy - to be preserved from corruption in the midst of general infection. It is far better to be innocent than penitent; to prevent the malady, than invent the remedy!

Remember, reader, that we can call no time our own - but the present. How carefully should we shoot - who have but one arrow to direct at the mark! The more you enjoy the smiles of God - the more you will shine in the eyes of those saints, who judge of the trees of righteousness, by the fruits of righteousness. The enjoyment of this world is neither an evidence of divine favor - nor of divine anger. Do not judge yourself, therefore, by the gold in your bags - but by the grace of God in your heart; not by your wealth - but by your works. If religion is your vineyard to labor in - eternity shall be your bed to rest upon. Every grace that is here exercised - shall be there glorified!

It is an unseemly thing to put on the fair suit of profession - and to do the foul work of corruption. The time is approaching, when God will burn up those vines which bear only sour grapes. The gospel not only requires diligence - but it also requires excellence; that by the singularity of your actions - you may prove the sincerity of your disposition!

Christian, the race is short in which you run - but the prize is great for which you run. I wish this gale of divinity may speed your vessel to the haven of felicity! And when God gives in more to me - I shall give out more to you. In the mean time, I shall deem it my highest honor to be instrumental to others' conversion, and in this relation I beg to subscribe myself, yours in the Lord,

William Secker

## -1-OUTLINE

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### OUTLINE

#### TEXT

“If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?” Matthew 5:46-47

DOCTRINE That singular Christians will perform singular actions.

I. Eight reasons WHY a Christian should do more than others - 1. Because more is done FOR him than for others.

2. Because he is more nearly RELATED to God than others.

3. Because he PROFESSES more than others.

4. Because he is inwardly CONFORMED to the Redeemer more than others.

5. Because he is WATCHED more than others.

6. Because if he DOES no more than others--it will appear that he IS no more than others.

7. Because he is appointed to be a JUDGE of others.

8. Because he EXPECTS more than others.

II. WHAT the Christian does more than others - 1. He does much good - and makes but little noise.

2. He brings up the bottom of his life - to the top of his light.

3. He prefers the duty he owes to God - to the danger he fears from man.

4. He seeks the public good of others - above the private good of himself.

5. He has the most beautiful life - among the vilest people.

6. He chooses the worst of sorrows - rather than commit the least sin.

7. He becomes a father to all in charity - and a servant to all in humility.

8. He mourns most before God - for those lusts which appear least before men.

9. He keeps his heart lowest - when God raises his estate highest.

10. He seeks to be better inwardly in his substance - than outwardly in appearance.

11. He is grieved more at the distresses of the church - than affected at his own happiness.

12. He renders the greatest good - for the greatest evil.

13. He takes those reproofs best - which he needs most.
14. He takes up duty in point of performance - and lays it down in point of dependence.
15. He takes up his contentment - in God's appointment.
16. He is more in love with the employment of holiness - than with the enjoyment of happiness.
17. He is more employed in searching his own heart - than in censuring other men's states.
18. He sets out for God at his beginning - and holds out with Him to the end.
19. He takes all the shame of his sins to himself - and gives all the glory of his services to Christ.
20. He values his heavenly inheritance - above all earthly possessions.

III. APPLICATION A. Twenty PRINCIPLES which a believer should walk by - 1. That whatever is transacted by men on earth - is eyed by the Lord in Heaven.

2. That after all his present receivings - he will be brought to his future reckonings.
3. That God bears a greater respect to his heart - than to his works.
4. That there is more final bitterness in reflecting on sin - than there can be present sweetness in the commission of sin.
5. That there is the greatest vanity - in all created excellency.
6. That duties can never have too much attention paid to them - nor too little confidence placed in them.
7. That those precious promises, which are given to insure his happiness - do not supersede those directions which are laid down for him to seek after happiness.
8. That it is dangerous to dress himself for another world - at the looking-glass of this world.
9. That where sin proves hateful - it shall not prove hurtful.
10. That inward purity is the ready road - to outward plenty.
11. That all the time which God allows him - is but enough for the work which He allots him.
12. That there can never be too great an estrangement from defilement.
13. That whatever is temporarily enjoyed - should be spiritually improved.
14. That he should speak well of God - whatever trials he receives from God.
15. That the longer God forbears with the unrelenting sinner in life - the sorer He strikes him in the judgment-day.
16. That there is no judging of the inward conditions of men - by the outward dispensations of God.
17. That it is safest to cleave to that good which is the choicest.
18. That no present worldly business - should interrupt his pursuit of future blessedness.

19. That gospel integrity towards God - is the best security against wicked men.

20. That the richness of the crown which shall be received - shall more than compensate for the bitterness of the cross which may here be endured.

B. Seven DIRECTIONS to those who wish to do more than others - 1. You must deny yourself more than others.

2. You must pray more than others.

3. You must resolve more than others.

4. You must love more than others.

5. You must believe more than others.

6. You must know more than others.

7. God must reveal Himself more to you, than He does to others.

## -2-I. WHY a Christian Should Do More than Others

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I. WHY a Christian Should Do More than Others In a mountain, the law was propounded to Moses - and in a mountain the law was expounded by Jesus; the former to a man of God - the latter by the Son of God; the one to a prophet of the Lord, the other by the Lord of the prophets. As the works of Christ were miraculous - so the words of Christ were mysterious; they were such a depth which none could sound but those whom God had furnished with the plummet of an enlightened understanding. Before anyone can peruse the Scriptures to profit, the Lamb of God must open the 'seven seals'. In this chapter, the soul-justifying Savior condemns the self-justifying Scribes and Pharisees. Never did men make more boast in the law - but never had men less cause. They knew but little as to the letter - but less of its spirit. They were better acquainted with the customs of nature - than the canons of Scripture. Alas! how shall the blind see - when the seers are blind! They who should have put the eyes of others in, had put their own out! The righteous laws of God cannot connive at the unrighteous lives of men; they not only require truth without - but within also. The rays of this sun enter the most secret chambers of the heart, therefore he who lusts after, and he who lies with a woman are both adulterers. He is a murderer whose heart is full of hatred, though his hands are free from violence. Thus the lusts of men may be predominant, when the lives of men are not inordinate; as guests may be in the house, when they look not out of the windows. He who begins religion where it should end - will end religion where it should be begun. But as the suburbs direct to the city, and the portal leads to the palace - so the context will guide us to the text.

"If you love those who love you - what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?" As an echo returns the voice it receives - so many will show kindness where kindness is shown; but shall tax collectors be as godly as the Lord's disciples? Shall the sons of men - equal the sons of God? Shall the law of nature swell to so high a tide - as the law of grace? This were for the dribbling rivulet to vie with the swelling ocean; this were for royalty to degenerate into beggary; and for the meridian sun to yield no more light than midnight shadows.

"And if you greet only your brothers - what are you doing more than others?" I shall not meticulously dissect these words, lest I should present to your view a frightful skeleton; nor shall I lavishly paint these windows, lest my deep colors should shut out the light. The native loveliness of Scripture scorns the unnatural color of a bewitching Jezebel. One rough diamond is of more value - than many smooth counterfeits. My subject treats not of oratory - but divinity; and my design in it is rather to express affections, than to affect expressions. Though the sweetness of the sauce may yield pleasure to the palate - yet it is only the soundness of the meat which can administer nourishment to the blood. This text is like a precious jewel - small in quantity, but great in quality. The words contain two parts:

I. Anactionpropounded.

II. Aquestionproposed.

I. An action propounded, touching that which is lawful: "If you love those who love you." "And if you greet only your brothers." This means to greet - with kisses and affection; therefore, what one verse calls greeting, the other calls loving; because greeting is a pledge of affection, it is the overflowing of the heart at the lips. There is a kiss of subjection and obedience - that is the subject's kiss; there is a kiss of wantonness and temptation - that is the harlot's kiss; there is a kiss of deception - that is the traitor's kiss; there is also a kiss of tenderness and affection - and that is the brother's kiss.

Now this Scripture enjoins you, not only to greet your friends - but your enemies also. Party esteem is but withered fruit, and falls rather from Sodom's vines - than Zion's trees. There is therefore a kiss of pity and forgiveness - and that is the Christian's kiss. If this is lacking - the others are vain. For, if you greet your brethren only, then observe what follows, which is:

II. A question proposed, "What are you doing - more than others?" What great or singular thing do you do? The words thus understood contain this golden head of instruction:

Doctrine, That singular Christians will perform singular actions. This is the well from which I shall draw the water; and the foundation upon which I shall raise the superstructure. You cannot rationally imagine that you will be supplied with bitter streams - from so sweet a spring; or that I should make a crooked wall or tottering fence - with such choice materials. Those who collect pearls from this spot - will leave as many behind them, as they carry with them. As the disciples of Christ are more than others - so the disciples of Christ do more than others. A religious hypocrite may move beyond a Sodomite - but a true Christian moves beyond them both. Though the naturally dead can do nothing - yet the spiritually dead may do something. Though they can do nothing to merit the grace of life - yet they may do something as to using the means of life.

Cicero complains of Homer, that 'he taught the gods - to live like men'. But grace teaches men - to live like gods. It is lamentable that we should live so long in the world - and do so little for God; or that we should live so short a time in the world - and do so much for Satan. Other creatures are not more below a sinner, than a saint is above a sinner. Man is the excellency of the creation, the saint is the excellency of man, grace is the excellency of the saint, and glory is the excellency of grace!

Believers are among others, as Saul was among the Israelites - the tallest by the head and shoulders. Their birth is truly low - who are not born from above. What are such earthly shrubs - compared with heavenly cedars? Those trees which have their top branches of hope in Heaven - will have their lower boughs of activity on earth. Those who look for a Heaven made ready - will live as though they were already in Heaven.

Grace not only makes a man more a man - but it also makes him more than a man. The primitive Christians were the best of men. None were more lowly in their dispositions, or more lovely in their conversation. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation. He was not a sinner among saints - but he was a saint among sinners. Who would have looked for so fair a bird - in so foul a nest! Though he once acted as the sons of men do - yet he was numbered with the sons of God. A field of wheat may be good - and yet have a weed in it. A saint is not free from sin - that is his burden; a saint is not free to sin - that is his blessing. Sin is in him - that is his lamentation; his soul is not in sin - that is his consolation.

Mark how an immaculate Savior glories in one of these singular saints, "And the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job?" Why, what is there in him so considerable? "There is none like him in all the earth." Though there were none in Heaven so bad as Job - yet there were none on earth so good as Job. He was a man so like God - that there was no man like him. A gracious person once hearing how far a hypocrite might go, said "Let hypocrites proceed as far as they can in that which is laudable; and when they can advance no further - I will go beyond them." A true Christian not only does more than others will do - but he also does more than others can do. Whatever is not above the top of nature, is below the bottom of grace. There are some who pretend to believe - but work not; there are others who work - but believe not. But a saint does both, he so obeys the law, as if there were no gospel to be believed; and so believes the gospel, as though there were no law to be obeyed. True religion consists not singly in believing or doing - but in both.

There are four sorts of things in the world:

1. There are some things which are neither good nor pleasant, such as envy and slander. The eclipsing of another's sun - will not make your own shine with brighter beams. O pare off those envious nails, which are ever disfiguring that face which is fairer than your own. Why do you wound yourself - with that plaster which is laid upon your brother's sore? Why do you weep at every shower - which falls beside your own field? Who would envy an ox that pasture - which only fits it for the slaughter? Who would envy the malefactor that carriage - which only conveys him to the place of execution? You have no less - because others have much; nor have they much - because you have little. Another's wealth is no more the cause of your need, than Leah's fruitfulness was the cause of Rachel's barrenness. O never pine at your neighbor's prosperity - and you shall never pine away through your own scarcity. He enjoys much - who is thankful for a little. A grateful mind is a great mind.

2. There are some things which are pleasant - but not good, such as youthful lusts and worldly delights. These bees carry honey in their mouths - but they have a sting in their tails! When this Jael brings forth her milk and her butter - then beware of the nail and the hammer! Death is in the pot - while you are tasting the soup! The world always presents a deadly potion - in the gilded cup of worldly pleasure. If the cup is sinful - do not taste it; if it is lawful - do not carouse over it. Reason forbids you, either to taste known poison - or to be intoxicated with pleasant wine. The fish is caught upon the hook - by leaping at the bait. Sin is like a river, which begins in a quiet spring - but ends in a tumultuous sea. "Flee from youthful lusts - and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace."

3. There are some things good - but not pleasant, such as sorrow and affliction. Sin is pleasant - but unprofitable. Affliction is unpleasant - but profitable. "Before I was afflicted I went astray - but now I keep Your word!" "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I could learn Your statutes!" By affliction, the Lord separates the sin that He hates - from the soul that He loves. He sends affliction - to take the dirt of the world out of the hearts of His children. It is not sent to take down the tabernacle of nature - but to rear up the temple of grace within you. As waters are purest when they are in motion - so saints are generally holiest when in affliction. Some Christians resemble those doltish children, who will learn their lessons - no longer than while the rod is on their backs! It is well known that by the greatest affliction - the Lord has sealed the sweetest instruction. Many

are not bettered by the judgments they see - when they have been bettered by the judgments they have felt. The purest gold is the most pliable by being in the furnace. That is the best blade which bends well, without retaining its crooked figure.

4. There are some things both good and pleasant, and those are gracious operations on the soul. A believer's bed of graces - is more fragrant than the most precious bed of spices. He who freely gives His image to us - must of necessity love His image in us. How illustrious do the heavens appear - while the sun is radiating them with his beams! "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things!"

But, as you cannot see so well by a candle under a bushel, as upon a table - I shall therefore hold up the subject to your view in the following light:

Firstly, I shall touch upon the explanation of that which is doctrinal.

Secondly, upon the application of that which is practical. The former is like cutting the garment out - the latter is like putting the garment on.

I am first to treat of that which is DOCTRINAL. And here I shall show, First - WHY a Christian does more than others; Secondly - WHAT a Christian does more than others.

## **-3-II. WHY a Christian does more than others.**

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### II. WHY a Christian does more than others.

#### 1. Because more is done FOR them - than is done for others.

There is that done for them - which none but He who made them could do. They are loved, they are atoned for, they are prayed for, and they are provided for - more than others. Now where there is an overabundance of privilege - there should be an overabundance of practice. We naturally expect more splendor from the beaming of the sun - than from the burning of a candle; and we look for more moisture from the drops from a cloud - than from the drops from a bucket. The same heat which melts the wax - will harden the clay. The juice which distills into a rose - is returned in a sweet perfume; but that which drops upon a nettle - is returned in an ill savor. If the mercies of God are not loadstones to draw us to Heaven - they will be millstones to draw or sink us to Hell! "Do you despise the riches of His kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed!"

"To whom much is given - of them much shall be required." The blessings we enjoy are not the fruit of our merit - but the fruit of God's mercy. By how much the more grace we have received - by so much the more glory we are obliged to return to the Giver. He does not exact much - where little is bestowed; nor does He accept little - where much is received. A drop of praise is an unsuitable acknowledgment for an ocean of mercy! "Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O children of Israel - You only have I loved of all the families of the earth." But was their return according to the benefit? Surely not - otherwise He would not have added, "Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." They were more loved by God than others - therefore they should have acknowledged Him more than others.

Those who have tasted the goodness of God - can never speak good enough of God. Reason teaches, that those should bless most - who are most blessed. What are carnal men - compared to Christian men? The power of God appears in the formation of the carnal man - but the stupendous grace of God shines illustriously in the transformation of the Christian man. In creation God has given the productions of the earth for our bodies - but in redemption He has given Himself for our souls! Thus, it is a greater favor to be converted than to be created; yes, it were better for us to have no being - than not to have a new being. When you were sailing to destruction, before sin's dangerous blast - then the most blessed gales of mercy sprang up, and changed your course! When you lay in the blood of your transgression - then God beheld you with the affections of His compassion. His heart pitied you - and His hand helped you! Now where there is distinguishing mercy - there ought to be distinguishing duty. The gardener who holds the largest farms - will pay the greatest rent; and he who sows the most precious seed - will expect the choicest crop. Now read the great Gardener's complaint against His vineyard: "My beloved has a vineyard on a rich and fertile hill. He plowed the land, cleared its stones, and planted it with choice vines." Here is an

inventory of God's goodness to His vineyard. Now what follows? "He waited for a harvest of sweet grapes - but the grapes that grew were wild and sour!" God looked that they should be better to Him than others - because He had been better to them than He had been to others.

God had made them flowers of His paradise; while others were left as the weeds of Satan's wilderness. While others were Satan's thoroughfare - they were God's choice enclosed garden.

God has made you His own dials - on which the beams of the Sun of righteousness shines! He has made you gems for His crown - while others are stools for His feet! "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us - and not unto the world?" As if he had said: "Lord, what are we more than others - that You should show Yourself to us; when You might have shown Yourself to them - and not to us?"

Reader! has God made you a vessel unto honor - out of the same lump, as another unto dishonor? Has He shown Himself to you - and not to the world? And will you not show yourself for God - and not for the world? Remember, that it lay as a great blotch on Hezekiah's escutcheon, that, "he rendered not unto the Lord - according to the benefit done unto him."

2. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is - Because they stand in a nearer RELATION to God than others. The nearer the relation - the stronger are the ties of obligation. In this view, believers on earth are superior to angels in Heaven. Christ is related to the angels as a master to his servants - but He is united to believers as a head to its members. In this head, there are no glazed eyes - nor are there any withered or dead members in this body. While others are made of God - believers are born of God. While others stand before Him as prisoners before their judge - believers appear before Him as children before their father, and as a bride before a bridegroom. There are no stillborn children in the family of grace. God is the living Father, and therefore all His children live by Him; He is also the everlasting Father, and therefore He will have due honor paid Him. "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. But if I am a Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is your fear of Me?" As a Father - He will be revered for His goodness; and as a Master - He will be feared for His greatness.

If honor is not the Lord's due - let Him not have it; if it is His due - let Him not be denied it. As man was born to serve God - he had better never have been born, than to refuse God that service. This is the language of God to His children - I did not give you bodies and souls to serve sin with - but to serve Me with. Our bodies were not formed to be the instruments of unrighteous actions - nor our souls the gloomy abodes of foul spirits. The everlasting Father cannot endure the ungrateful behavior of His own children. Therefore, attend to the great complaint He makes against them. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for My children refuse to hear! I have nourished and brought up children - and they have rebelled against Me!" Where the relation is the nearest - there the provocation is the greatest. It is far more pleasing to behold rebels becoming children - than to behold children becoming rebels. When Caesar was wounded by the senators of Rome, Brutus a Roman of an illustrious family, also made a thrust at him. With that Caesar gave him a wistful look, saying, "What you - my son Brutus!" How can that tender mother endure to feel those lips sucking her blood - which used to draw her maternal breast? The unkindness of a friend is more sensibly felt - than that of an enemy. The Roman censors took such an utter dislike to the debauched son of Africanus, that they refused to let him wear a ring on which his father's likeness was engraved; alleging, "That he who was so unlike the father - was unworthy to wear the father's picture." Thus

God will never grant any to enjoy the love of Christ in Heaven - who are destitute of the likeness of Christ on earth.

Alexander, who was reported to be an exceeding swift runner, was once solicited to run in the Olympic games. He answered "I will, if kings are my competitors." Give me such a saint who will pursue nothing on earth, which may be unsuitable to his birth from Heaven. What! Shall he walk in darkness - whose Father is light! What! Shall those lips be found broaching falsehood - which were found breathing out prayers! What! Shall those eyes be found gazing on sinful objects - which were found reading the living Word of God! The remembrance of our dignity - should engage us to our heavenly duty. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine and strong drink." Such a sin is detestable in a sovereign, who has the eyes of his subjects upon him; but it is aggravated in a saint, who has the eyes of his Savior upon him. A spot in scarlet, is worse than a stain in cotton.

3. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is - Because they PROFESS more than others.

Though there are many professors who are not true believers; yet there are no true believers - who are not professors. As trees are known by their fruits - so believers are known by their works. Such as have received Christ's bounty - are unwilling to fight under Satan's banner.

There are many who "claim to know God - but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good." Man is not what he says - but what he does. For a man to say what he does - and not to do what he says - is to resemble those trees which are full of leaves - but void of fruits; or those barns wherein there is much chaff - but no wheat. "There is a difference between chaff and wheat! - says the Lord."

Ah, how intolerable will the punishment of those professors be - who have appeared as burnished gold to men - and are found only base metal in the sight of God! What will it profit, to put off the old manners - and not put off the old man? A snake may change its skin - and yet preserve its sting. The gospel professed, may lift a man unto Heaven - but it is only the gospel possessed, that brings a man into Heaven. To profess piety - and yet to practice impiety - will be so far from advancing a man's commendation, that it will assuredly heighten his condemnation!

"Why do you call Me, Lord, Lord - and do not do the things that I say?" As if He had said, "Either keep My words more - or else call Me Lord no more! Either take Me into your lives - or cast Me out of your lips." As princes disdain to have their images on base counterfeits - so the Lord Jesus cannot delight to see His name on rotten hypocrites. Therefore He says, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ, depart from all iniquity." If godliness is evil - why is it so much professed? If godliness is good - why is it so little practiced?

"Who has saved us - and called us with a holy calling." Now a holy calling - will be attended with a holy carriage. Many may be found who can talk of grace - but very few can be found who taste of grace. It is not everyone who looks like a Christian - who lives like a Christian. For there are some who make their boast of the law, and yet through breaking the law, they dishonor God. It is a greater glory to us, that we are allowed to serve God - than it is to Him, that we offer Him that service. He is not rendered happy by us - but we are made happy by Him. He can do without such earthly servants - but we cannot do without such a heavenly Master.

It is unnatural for a Christian's tongue - to be larger than his hand. It is lamentable for him to hold a lamp to others - and yet to walk in darkness himself. There are more infected by the undue conduct of some - than there are instructed by the righteous doctrines of others. He who gives proper precepts, and then sets improper examples, resembles that foolish person, who labors hard to kindle a fire, and when he has done it, throws cold water upon it to quench it. Though such a physician may administer the reviving cordial to some fainting patient - yet he is in danger himself of dying in a swoon. I may say of such professors, as was once said of a certain preacher, that "when he was in the pulpit, it was a pity he should ever leave it - for he was so excellent an instructor. But when he was out of the pulpit, it was a pity he should ever ascend it again - for he was so wretched a liver!"

Many people are offended with the profession of religion, because all are not truly pious who make a profession. A little consideration will correct this error. Does the sheep despise its fleece, because the wolf has worn it? Who blames a crystal river - because some melancholy men have drowned themselves in its streams? Will you refuse medicine - because some have wantonly poisoned themselves with it? He is a bad steward, who having a spot in his garment, cuts off the cloth, instead of rubbing off the dirt. God rejects all religion - but His own.

4. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is - Because they are inwardly CONFORMED to the image of their Redeemer more than others. As Jesus Christ is the fountain of all excellency - to which all must come; so He is the pattern of excellency - to which all must conform. As He is the root on which a saint grows; so He is the rule by which a saint walks. God has made one Son in the image of us all - that He might make all His sons in the image of that One. Jesus Christ lived to teach us how to live - and died to teach us how to die. Therefore He commands us, saying, "Learn of Me - for I am meek and lowly in heart - and you shall find rest unto your souls." O Reader! if the life of Christ is not your pattern - the death of Christ will never be your pardon! Though the Lord Jesus was a Man of many sorrows - yet He was not a man of the least sin. No man can equalize Him in holiness; yet every man ought to imitate Him in holiness. As the sun is the glory of creation - so is Christ the glory of redemption. The summit of true religion consists in imitating God. Without this, your religion will be found a Tekel - when it is weighed in the balance, it will be wanting. It would be well if there were as great a similarity between the life of Christ - and the life of Christians; as there is between a copy and the original. What He was by nature - that we should be by grace. As face answers to face in water - so should life answer to life in Scripture. He who was a Way to others - never went out of the way Himself. A truly pious life, is a looking-glass, wherein Christ sees His own likeness. In our sacramental participations, we show forth the death of Christ; and in our evangelical conversation, we show forth the life of Christ. An excellent Christ - calls for excellent Christians. As He was never unemployed, He was never ill-employed. For, "He went about doing good." As our happiness lay near His heart - so His honor should lie near our hearts.

Jesus Christ even submits His person to be judged by His actions: "If I do not the works of My Father - do not believe Me." As if He had said, "Never take Me for a Savior - if I act contrary to a Savior." Thus should it be with a professor, "Never take me for a Christian - if I live contrary to the life of a Christian." If professors do no more than others, it might be said, "Those are professors; but not Christians."

Man is naturally an aspiring being, and loves to be nearest to those who are highest. Why does he not therefore take as much delight in those precepts which enjoin holiness - as in those promises which ensure happiness?

All those who are conformed to the image of the Redeemer, are as willing to be ruled by Christ, as they are to be esteemed by Him. He who deems His yoke heavy - will not find His crown easy. By David's language, there were many singular saints in his day: "To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Was it so then? And should it not be so now? We know the New Testament outshines the Old, as much as the sun outshines the moon. If we then live in a more glorious dispensation, should we not maintain a more glorious conversation?

How blessed would it be for us, to have that blessed Scripture fulfilled in us, "As He was - so are we in this world." Now if we are in this world as He was - we shall be in Heaven as He is! If there be no likeness between Christ and you on earth - there can be no friendship between Christ and you in Heaven!

5. Another reason why Christians should do more than others, is - Because they are WATCHED more than others.

If once a man commences to be a professor - the eyes of all are upon him; and well they may, for his profession in the world, is a separation from the world. Believers condemn those by their lives - who condemn them by their lips! Righteous David saw many who were waiting to triumph in his mistakes. Hence the more they watched - the more he prayed: "Teach me Your way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of my enemies." It may be rendered, "because of my observers."

Christian, if you dwell in the open tent of licentiousness - the wicked will not walk backward, like modest Shem and Japheth, to cover your shame; but they will walk forward, like cursed Ham, to publish it. Thus they make use of your weakness - as a plea for their wickedness.

Men are merciless in their censures of Christians! They have no sympathy for their infirmity. But God weighs them in more equal scales, and says, "The spirit is willing - but the flesh is weak." While the saint is a dove in the eyes of God - he is only a raven in the estimation of sinners. Consider Christian - that an unholy life strips off the rich ornamental jewels from the neck of the bride, the Lamb's wife! Sin indulged in a believer, is like a rent in a richly embroidered garment; or like a crack in a golden bell. A foul spot is soonest discerned - in the fairest cloth. The world will sooner make an excuse for its own enormities - than for your infirmities. The behavior of some professors has often given the wicked an opportunity to reproach true religion. Lactantius reports, that the heathens were accustomed to say, "The Master could not be good - when His disciples were so bad." The malice of sinners is such, that they will reproach the rectitude of God's Word - for the blemishes of the lives of professors who swerve from it. O that your pure life, did but hang a padlock upon their impure lips! Such will ever be throwing the dirt of professors - upon the face of profession!

If the sun is eclipsed one day - it attracts more spectators than if it shone a whole year! So if you commit one sin - it will cause you many sorrows - and the world many triumphs. Dr. Whitaker, on reading the Sermon on the Mount, broke out, saying, "either this is not the gospel - or we are not of the gospel." The cruelty of the Spaniards to the Indians, made them refuse Christian baptism, "For," said they, "He must be a wicked God, who has such wicked servants!" O that God's jewels

would sparkle more - in this benighted world! That was a glorious eulogy given to Zacharias and Elizabeth: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." God made them both righteous - and then men saw them righteous. Their religion was undefiled before God - and their lives were unspotted from the world.

Reader! would you be righteous in God's sight? Then you must be righteous in God's Son. Would you be unspotted from the world? Then remember, you are not of the world. When the godly are left to fall, then the envious sinner will exclaim, "So that is your religion!" No wonder if a Barbarian gives the alarm - when the leprosy is in an Israelitish house.

6. Another reason why believers should do more than others, is - Because if they do more - it will appear that they are no more than others. As there is no man so vicious - but some good may be performed by him to man; so there is no one so religious - but some evil may be committed by him against God. As one bird does not prove the approach of summer - neither does one good action prove a man to be a believer. There is in every being a natural tendency to some center. God is the center of the saints - and glory is the center of grace. Now where we do not discover that bias towards grace - we may deny the being of grace.

Reader! would you be thought more than tax collectors and sinners? Then beware of living as tax collectors and sinners! Jesus Christ gives you an excellent mirror in His memorable sermon upon the mount, for you to behold your own likeness in: "You shall know them by their fruits." There is no ascertaining the quality of a tree - but by its fruits. When the wheels of a clock move within - the hand on the dial will move without. When the heart of a man is sound in conversion - then the life will be fair in profession. How shall we judge of the well - but by the waters which run through the pipes? As a sinner will reveal the good he desires; so a saint will show the good he enjoys. When the sun dawns upon the earth, it is presently known; and when the Sun of righteousness arises upon the heart - it cannot be hidden. It is said of the Savior, that "He could not be hidden." As it is with the Head - so it is with the members: "You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine among men, that they may see your good works." When Saul was made a sovereign, he had another spirit poured out upon him; a spirit of government, for a place of government: and when a sinner is made a saint, he has also another spirit poured out upon him. As he is what he was not - so he does what he did not.

It is reported of a harlot, that when she saw a certain person with whom she had committed immorality, she renewed her enticements; to whom he replied, "I am not now what I once was!" Though she was the same woman that she was before - yet he was not the same man he was before. Were the sun to give no more light than a star, you could not believe he was the regent of the day; were he to transmit no more heat than a glow-worm, you would question his being the source of earthly heat. Were God to do no more than a creature - where would His Godhead be? Were a man to do no more than a brute - where would his manhood be? Were not a saint to excel the sinner - where would his sanctity be?

Professor, if you live and walk as a worldling, you subject yourself to that apostolic rebuke, "Are you not carnal - and walk as men?" If men debase themselves as beasts - the Lord will denominate them beasts. If professors live like other men - God will call them unregenerate men. There is no passing for current coin in Heaven - without the stamp and signature of Heaven.

7. The disciples of Christ do more than others - Because they are appointed to be JUDGES of others.

If you consult the Holy Scriptures, you will find that both the Father, the Son - and the saints are to judge the world. The ordination is the Father's, the execution is the Son's, and the approbation is the saints'. This shall no more derogate from the honor of Christ, than the sessions of the justices derogate from the authority of the judges. When the apostle Paul would quash the sinful suits among the believing Corinthians, he informed them that they did not so much require men of eminence to terminate their controversy, as men of godliness. "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? If you are to judge in causes between God and man - how much more in controversies between man and man?" If about matters that are eternal - why not in affairs that are temporal?

Felons may be jovial in the prison, and bold at the bar - but they will tremble at the hangman's halter. When wicked men come like miserable captives out of their holes, the godly shall rise like an unclouded sun above the horizon of the grave.

There is a cloud of witnesses to prove the Christian's judicial process - Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." Again he says, "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Now the world judges the godly - but then the godly shall judge the world. The act of the Head is imputed to the members, and the act of the members is acknowledged by the Head.

Reader! in the great day there will be no distinction made between him who now sits on the bench, and him who stands at the bar. Tell me - how will you be capable of passing a righteous sentence on others, for those evils which you have lived in the constant commission of? The true Christian can cordially subscribe to that ancient maxim, "Because I enjoy the greatest share of religious majesty, I am therefore entitled to the least share of licentious liberty." It was once said to Caesar, "Seeing all things are lawful to Caesar, therefore it is the less lawful for Caesar to do them."

"By faith Noah, being warned of God, prepared an ark - by which he condemned the world." Noah's believing set him to prosecute his building. Thus the consistent Christian judges the world, both by his faith and his practice.

Christian Reader! remember, that the gospel purity of your life - shows to worldlings the impurity of theirs. The usual prejudices which the world has against religion, is - that it makes no man better, though it may make some men stricter.

We too frequently behold that those who exclaim against the pride of others - are as proud as others. As they so constantly meet together, they are expected to be more godly - but they are not more godly for their meeting together. Take away their profession, and you take away their religion. They have nothing belonging to the sheep - but its skin.

Mark, how the God of Israel expostulates with the professing Israel of God, "Has a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit." Here is a professing people, outdone by a people who made no profession. If heathens

take up their gods - they will zealously keep up their gods. They were true to the false gods - while Israel was false to the true God.

“Hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!” Why, what is the matter? “Even the animals - the donkey and the ox - know their owner and appreciate his care - but not My people Israel. No matter what I do for them, they still do not understand.” God does not call in a jury of angels to condemn them - but He calls a jury of oxen and donkeys, to pass sentence upon them. Alas, that oxen and donkeys should be more religious - than men who professed religion! In their kind they are more kind. If their owners feed them, they readily own their owners.

8. And lastly, the disciples of Christ do more than others - Because they EXPECT more than others. A true hope of Heaven - excites an utter dislike to the earth. “And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.” Hope is too pure a plant - to flourish or grow in an impure soil.

Reader! you must not expect to toil for the prince of darkness all the long day of your life - and then sup with the Prince of light at the evening of death. There is no going from Delilah’s lap-to Abraham’s bosom. It is not the tyrannic reign of sin in your mortal body - which makes way for the triumphant reign of your soul in eternal glory. Grace is such a pilot, as without its steerage you will certainly suffer shipwreck in your voyage to everlasting tranquility.

There is no gaining admittance into the King of Heaven’s privy chamber of felicity - without passing through the strait gate of purity. “Blessed are the pure in heart - for they shall see God.” A dirty looking-glass will not clearly represent the face. To look for a Turkish paradise, is to conceive of the Heaven of purity - as a house of impurity; but while they expect to bathe themselves in carnal pleasures - you should look to be the chaste and happy consort of the Lamb! The Lord’s gratuitous bestowments on saints - awaken the grateful sentiments of saints. “Giving thanks unto the Father - Who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Men commonly season the vessel with water - before they trust it with costly wine. Thus God will season the vessel of your heart with His grace - before He pours into it the wine of His glory. It is hard to say, whether God discovers more love in preparing Heavenly mansions for the soul - than in preparing the soul for Heavenly mansions.

Reader! if the Lord has made you a true believer, you earnestly desire that your present deportment may be suitable to your future preferment. You know there is no living a wicked life - and dying a righteous death. As divine justice crushes none on earth before they are corrupted - so divine mercy crowns none in Heaven before they are converted.

Holiness and happiness are so wisely joined together - that God will never allow them to be put asunder: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Though holiness is that which a sinner scorns - yet it is that which a Savior crowns. The soul of man is the Lord’s casket, and grace the jewel. Now, wherever the jewel is not found - the casket will be thrown away. Though the wheat is for a garner - yet the chaff is for the fire. The Scripture presents you, not only, with an account of what God will do for a Christian - but also what a Christian will do for God. The high prize of heavenly bliss, is at the end of the gospel race: “So run - that you may obtain.” To neglect the race of holiness, is to reject the prize of happiness. He who made you without your assistance - will not crown you until He has saved you from your

disobedience.

It would be well for fruitless sinners, were they seriously to consider that fearful Scripture: "Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit - is cut down and thrown into the fire!" If you are not fruit-bearing plants - you must be burning brands. There is no making out your salvation, where there is no working out your salvation. Men are condemned, not only for their profaneness - but also for their slothfulness. Men may perish for being unprofitable servants, as well as for being abominable servants. The Lord binds none in the bundle of life - but such as are heirs of life. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." How cheerfully should those cast in their net - who are sure to enclose so excellent a catch of fish!

Reader! why do you expect more than others in Heaven - if grace has not made you more than others on earth? "If you love those who love you - what reward do you have?" It is but natural, that love should be returned to those from whom it has been received. Now, natural works - shall have only natural wages. If you would not have God put you off with a Pharisee's portion - how can you put Him off with a Pharisee's performance? The Lord hangs the bait of duty - upon the hook of mercy. He sets the promises of the gospel - in the galleries of His ordinances. The hardy soldier will undergo a bloody seed time - to enjoy a happy harvest. He has nothing more than earthly mammon in his pursuit - but the saint has nothing less than Heavenly mansions in his pursuit.

Thus have I dispatched the first general head, namely, WHY the disciples of Christ do more than others. I therefore come secondly to consider,

## -4-II. WHAT a Christian does more than others.

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II. WHAT a Christian does more than others. And here I shall form a golden chain of twenty links - for believers to wear about their necks.

1. The first singular action of a consistent Christian, is to do much good - and make but little noise.

Some people say much - and do nothing. But Christians do much - and say nothing. To deserve praise where none is obtained - is better than to obtain praise where none is deserved. The old maxim is worthy to be revived - he who desires honor, is not worthy of honor.

“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men - to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in Heaven.” A saint may be seen doing more works than any - and yet he does not desire to do any of the works to be seen. An alms which is seen, is by no means unpleasant to God, provided it be not given with a design to have it seen. Though good ends do not make bad actions lawful; yet bad ends make good actions sinful. The harp sounds sweetly; yet it hears not its own melody. Moses had more glory by his veil - than he had by his face. It is truly pleasant to behold those living in the dust of humility - who have raised others from the dust by their liberality. That ancient caution of our Savior is very suitable to modern times: “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.” What the first verse calls doing to be seen by men, this calls doing to receive honor from men.

Hypocrites would never be anxious for men to see them - but that by seeing them - men should praise them. The indigent are more indebted to their vanity - than their charity. They give alms, not so much for the poor to live upon - as for the rich to look upon. This is employing the master's coin - for the servant's gain. Hypocrites are more zealous for the market - than for the closet. They can pray better in the corners of the streets - than in the corners of their houses.

It is both food and drink to a formalist to fast - if others do but see it. It is reported, that the nightingale never sings so sweetly - as when others stand by to hear its melody. “Come - see my zeal for the Lord!” when there was no zeal for the Lord to be seen. Jehu only made religion a stirrup - to mount upon the saddle of popularity. Sounding souls are seldom souls that are sound. The boast of a Jehu is always linked to the heart of a Judas. Some people are like hens - which no sooner drop their eggs than they begin to chatter. If such bestow a little money on a church's repairs - it must be recorded upon a church plaque.

How frequently do the enemies of grace - lurk under the praises of nature! While a hypocrite is extolled - grace is injured. By how much we arrogate to our honor - we derogate from God's honor. Vain-glory is like Naaman's leprosy - a foul spot upon a fair paper. What are the acclamations of man - compared to the approbation of God? Of what real advantage is it, to be praised on earth, by those about us - and damned in Heaven, by Him who is above us? One flaw in a diamond diminishes both its splendor and value. Where SELF is the end of our actions - there Satan is the

rewarder of them!

“But when you give to the needy - do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.” Acts of mercy are right hand acts - but the left hand must not know them, because it will make them known. It is a singular thing for Christians to do much in secret - and to keep it secret when it is done. God is nearer to us - than we are to ourselves. We need not sound a trumpet for any ‘acts of righteousness’; for when the great trumpet shall sound - every work shall be revealed. Where the river is the deepest, the water glides the smoothest. Empty casks sound most; whereas the well-fraught vessel, silences its own sound. As the shadow of the sun is largest, when his beams are lowest; so we are always least - when we make ourselves the greatest. Wicked Saul would rather resign his crown - than his honor: “Honor me before the people!” There is little worth in outward splendor - if grace yield it not an inward luster. When the sun of worldly grandeur is in its meridian, it may be masked with a cloud. By climbing too high on the bough of honor - you may hang yourselves on the tree of dishonor. Some would rather suffer the agony of the cross - than the infamy of the cross. It is worse, in their esteem, to be dispraised - than it is to be destroyed. Thus Abimelech, the fratricide, conceived of it: “A woman on the roof threw down a millstone that landed on Abimelech’s head and crushed his skull. He said to his young armor bearer, “Draw your sword and kill me! Don’t let it be said that a woman killed Abimelech!” Poor man, he dies - but his pride does not die!

How frequently does God reject those as reprobate silver - whom men esteem as fine gold! “A man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men - but from God.” The praise of a hypocrite is not of God - but of man; the praise of a true Israelite is not of man - but of God. The former desires to appear good - that he may be admired. The latter desires to be good - that God may be honored. The self-abased saint on earth, imitates the holy angels in Heaven; while the self-admired sinner on earth, imitates the fallen angels in Hell. The cherubim in Ezekiel’s vision “had the hands of a man under their wings.” They had not their wings under their hands - but their hands under their wings. Their hands denoted skill, their wings denote celerity. Their hands under their wing’s, denote the secrecy of their actions. They would not have others fall down and worship them, who were only around the throne - but they fell down themselves to worship Him, who is upon the throne!

It was foretold of our Lord Jesus Christ, who did the most excellent works that ever were done, that “He will not cry out or shout or make His voice heard in the streets.” “He will not cry out,” that is - He would not be contentious. “He will not shout or make His voice heard in the streets,” that is - He would not be vain-glorious.

How repugnant to this, was the conduct of the boasting Pharisee. “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself - ‘God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.’” Hypocrites are better in setting forth their own worth - than their own wants; in displaying the banners of their perfections - than in revealing the heinousness of their own transgressions. “I am not as other men are!” As if he had been such a fellow - as had had no fellow. Because he was not so bad as most - he thought himself as good as the best. Ambition is so great a planet - that it must have a whole orbit to move in. Ambition is envious of its equals. A sun-burned face seems fair, compared with an Ethiopian - but ciphers can

never constitute a sum. This Pharisee was as far from being religious, as he was from being scandalous. But upon what foundation did he rear his superstructure? "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." He proclaims all out of doors - which was done within doors. He forgot that he was like the sea - which loses as much on one shore as it gains on another. He hid his sins - which he should have confessed; and he published his good deeds - which he should have concealed.

What victory a formalist seemingly obtains over one lust - he loses, by being overcome by another. He trades, not for God's glory - but for his own vain-glory. If a tear is shed, or a prayer is made, as it is performed by him - so it is divulged by him. He who traffics in God's service, to freight himself with man's praises - shall suffer shipwreck in the haven!

It is reported of Alexander's footman, that he ran so swift upon the sand, that the prints of his footsteps were not to be seen. Thus may it be with Christians. Nothing is more pleasing to God, than a hand liberally opened - and a tongue strictly silent!

Most people are like Themistocles, who never found himself so much contented as when he heard himself praised. I will not say a gracious heart never lifts up itself in pride - but I will say, that grace in the heart never lifts it up. Grace in the heart constantly acts like itself - but a gracious heart does not always do so.

Saints should resemble a spire steeple, which is smallest where it is highest; or those orient stars, which the higher they are seated - the less they are seen. Usually the greatest boasters - are the smallest workers. The deep rivers pay a larger tribute to the sea than shallow brooks - and yet empty themselves with less noise. What will a hypocrite not do - so he might but see his own signet upon it when it is done!

2. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to bring up the bottom of his life - to the top of his light. By how far our hearts are set upon God's precepts - to love them; by so far are God's ears set upon our prayers - to answer them. David knew this when he said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Since the tree of knowledge has been tasted - the key of knowledge has been rusted.

Therefore, "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Spiritual truths oppose the wickedness of human reason - because they are against it, and therefore it cannot receive them. Spiritual truths also exceed the weakness of human reason - because they are above it, therefore it cannot perceive them. It is better to be a toe in the foot - and that be sound; than to be an eye in the head - and that be blind.

There is a great propriety in the exhortation of Peter, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." No knowledge can equal that of Christ; no growth can equal that of grace. Without grace, there may be seeming knowledge - but without grace, there can be no saving knowledge.

There were more enlightened, than enlivened, in the days of Christ; hence He said, "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." To obey the truth, and not to know it - is impossible. To know the truth, and not obey it - is unprofitable. For, "Not everyone who says unto me, 'Lord,

Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven - but he who does the will of My Father who is in Heaven." Saving knowledge is not as the light of the moon - to sleep by; but as the light of the sun - to work by. It is not a loiterer in the market-place - but a laborer in the vineyard. A man may be a great scholar - and yet be a great sinner. Judas the traitor - was Judas the preacher! The snake which has a pearl in its head - has poison in its body! The tree of knowledge has often been planted, and flourished - where the tree of life never grew. A man may be acquainted with the grace of truth, and yet not know the truth of grace. All abilities and gifts - without grace and holiness - are but like Uriah's letters, which were the death warrants of him who carried them!

Mere head knowledge will be as unhelpful to the soul, in the judgment day - as a painted fire is unhelpful to the frozen body, in a cold day. As some articles are tanned by the same sun in which others are whitened - so are some professors hardened under the same gospel by which others are softened.

I would never have that the brand of Christians, which was the bane of heathens, "Though they knew God - they did not glorify Him as God." As it is lost labor to smite the flint - if it disperses no sparks; so it is fruitless toil to furnish our heads with light - if it does not refine our hearts. Satan may as well put out our eyes - that we should not see the truth; as cut off our feet - that we should not walk in the truth. Mere theoretical knowledge may make the head giddy - but it will never make the heart holy. Who would wait for such a gale, as would drive them farther from the desired haven? or freight their vessels with such a cargo, as would ruin the owner? Shall we hold the candle of the gospel in one hand - and the sword of rebellion in the other? How many professors are there, who have light enough to know what should be done - but have not love enough to do what they know! Such people have no advantage from carrying a bright candle in a dark lantern. Give me the Christian who perfectly sees the way he should go - and readily goes the way he sees! That is barren ground - which brings forth no fruit. "To him who knows to do good, and does it not - to him it is sin." The sins of ignorance are most numerous - but the sins of knowledge are most dangerous! That sinner's darkness will be the greatest in Hell - whose light was the clearest on earth!

Pharnaces, the Prince of Pontus, sent a crown to Caesar, at the time he was in rebellion against him. Caesar refused the present, saying, "Let him first lay down his rebellion, and then I will receive his crown." There are many who set a crown of glory upon the head of Christ by a good profession, and yet put a crown of thorns upon His head by an evil conversation. By the words of our mouth - we may affect to adore religion; but it is by the works of our lives - that we adorn religion.

It was a just saying of one, "That in the best reformed churches, there were the most deformed professors." Look to this, reader - that all will be pulled down without you - if there be no grace set up within you. As trees without fruits are unprofitable - so knowledge without good works is abominable! Leah and Rachel are fit emblems of knowledge and obedience. Knowledge, like Rachel, is beautiful - but obedience, like Leah, is fruitful. He who dislikes to do what he knows - will one day not know what to do.

"Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Wise as serpents to guard against the wolf's rapacity; and harmless as doves that you may do no man any injury. Thus, the serpent's eye is an ornament when placed in the dove's head. The lives of many professors are awfully unlike their

lights. They have the light of the sun - for wisdom; but lack the heat of a candle - for grace and holiness.

I have read of a painter, who being warmly reprehended by a cardinal, for putting too much red in the faces of St. Paul and St. Peter, answered, "It is to show how much they blush at the conduct of many who style themselves their successors!" Were Abraham the father of the faithful, now on earth, how would he disclaim all relation to many who call themselves his offspring! Though there was less grace revealed to the saints of old - yet there was more grace manifested by them. They knew little - and did much; we know much - and do little.

John the Baptist "was a burning and a shining light" To shine is not enough, a glow-worm will do so; to burn is not enough, a firebrand will do so. Light without heat - does but little good; and heat without light - does much harm. Give me those Christians who are burning lamps - as well as shining lights. The sun is as vigorous in his moving - as he is illustrious in his shining. I know the light of nature requires grace, to repel the lusts of nature. Will any say, "The day of hope is dawning within them - when the powers of darkness are ruling over them?"

How monstrous is it to see a Christian's tongue larger than his hand! To speak so much of God, to others - and act so little for God, himself.

3. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to prefer the duty he owes to God - to the danger he fears from man!

Christians in all ages have prized their services - above their safety. "The wicked flee, when no man pursues - but the righteous are bold as a lion!" The fearful hare trembles at every noise - but the courageous lion is unmoved by the greatest clamors. Were believers to shrink back at every contrary wind which blows - they would never make their voyage to Heaven.

"My righteousness I hold fast - and will not let it go." Poor Job could hold nothing fast - but his integrity. Grace kept his heart - when he could not keep his gold. Uprightness is so fair a complexion, as not to be subject to any alteration by the scorching beams of persecution. The laurel preserves its verdure amidst the severest blasts of winter. Times of trouble have often been - times of triumph to a believer. Suffering seasons have generally been sifting seasons - in which the Christian has lost his chaff, and the hypocrite his courage!

Dangers have frequently made the worldling leave his duties. The scythe of persecution - cuts down the tender grass of his devotion. Those who always refuse to carry the yoke of Christ upon their necks - will also refuse to carry the cross of Christ upon their backs. Nothing less than the enjoyment of God, who is altogether good - can permanently support us under the suffering of that which is evil. The flesh is an enemy to suffering; because suffering is an enemy to the flesh. The flesh may make a man an earthly courtier - but it will never make a man a Christian martyr.

Wicked men stumble at every straw in the way to Heaven - but they climb over mountains in the way to destruction! Hang heavy weights on rotten boughs - and they will suddenly break. If mere professors take up religion in a fair day - they will eagerly lay it down in a foul one. The language of such is "Lord, we are willing to serve You - but unwilling to suffer for You. We will go to sea with You - but on condition we have no storms. We have no objections to enter into the war - but upon the promise that we have no fighting!" Such would gladly be wafted to the port of felicity - in such

vessels as would not be tossed in the sea of calamity! They think too much of wearing a thorn - though it is borrowed from Christ's crown!

There are some who would sacrifice a stout heart - to a stubborn will; and would rather die martyrs for their sins - than servants for the truth. How shall those stand for Christ - who never stood in Christ? True believers are more studious how to adorn the cross - than how to avoid the cross. They deem it better to be saved in troubled water - than to be drowned in a calm ocean!

Temporary professors are like hedge-hogs which have two holes; one to the north and another to the south; when the south wind chaffs them - they turn to the north; and when the north wind chills them - they turn to the south. Thus they lose their activity to preserve their security. That was a beggarly saying which fell from a prince's lips, "I will sail no farther in the cause of Christ - than while I can preserve my safe retreat to land."

Man is a short-sighted creature; he is afraid to follow too far upon the heels of truth - lest it should lead him into danger. Weak grace may do for God - but it must be strong grace which will die for God. A true Christian will lay down his lusts - at the command of Christ; and his life - for the cause of Christ. The more a tree of righteousness is shaken by the wind - the more it is rooted in the ground. What, are you a member of Christ - and afraid to be a martyr for Christ? If those are blessed who die in Christ - what must they be who die for Christ!

What though the flesh returns to dust - so long as the spirit returns to Heaven? What is the body of man, for a soul to live in - compared with the bosom of Abraham, for a soul to lie in? Righteous Abel, the first martyr in the church militant, was the first saint in the church triumphant. He offered up a sacrifice - when the altar was sprinkled with his own blood. As his body was the first which ever went into the earth - so his soul was the first which ever went into Heaven!

"Should such a man as I flee?" says Nehemiah - a man so much owned and honored by God? It is better to die a conqueror in religion, than to live a coward in religion. Those who are willing to be combatants for God - shall also be more than conquerors through God. None are so truly courageous - as those who are truly religious. If a Christian lives - he knows by whose might he stands; and if he dies - he knows for whose sake he falls. Where there is no confidence in God - there will be no continuance with God. When the wind of faith ceases to fill the sails - the ship of obedience ceases to plough the seas! The taunts of Ishmael - shall never make an Isaac disesteem his inheritance.

Reader! if a righteous cause brings you into sufferings - a righteous God will bring you out of sufferings. A Christian is as much indebted to his enemies - as to his friends. The malicious crucifixion of Christ - wrought out the glorious exaltation of Christ. The worst that men can do against believers - is the best they can do for believers. The worst they can do against them - is to send them out of the earth; and the best they can do for them - is to send them into Heaven! That was a Christian expression of one of the martyrs to his persecutors, "You take a life from me, which I cannot keep - and bestow a life upon me, which I cannot lose! This is as if you should rob me of my pennies - and load me with diamonds!" He who is assured of a heavenly life which has no end - need not care how soon this earthly life shall end!

Neither the persecuting hand of men, nor the chastising hand of God - relaxed ancient singular saints. "All this happened to us, yet we had not forgotten You or been false to Your covenant. Our

hearts had not turned back; our feet had not strayed from Your path.” Believers resemble the moon, which emerges from her eclipse by keeping her motion; and ceases not to shine, because the dogs bark at her. Shall we cease to be professors, because others will not cease to be persecutors? By the seed of the serpent - the heel of the woman may be bruised - but by the seed of the woman - the head of the serpent shall be broken! A Christian may enjoy a calm of inward peace - while he sustains the storms of outward trouble. If he enjoys the former - he may expect the latter. If he suffers the latter - he may expect the former. There is no summer without its winter.

“Many waters” (may drown the world, but) “cannot quench love.” The water of affliction cannot extinguish the fire of affection. If true religion goes against their lusts, formalists will quickly shut up their hearts against it. They will rather tarry out of the land of Canaan - than swim to it through the Red Sea. A man will never sustain trouble for Jesus - until he finds rest in Jesus.

Adventurous Peter could cry, “Lord! if it is You - bid me come to You on the water.” Love to Christ can walk on the water without drowning, and lie in the fire without burning. It is said of the serpent, “That it cares not to what danger it exposes its body - so long as it can but secure its head.” Thus a Christian cares not to what danger he is liable, so long as Jesus is but honored thereby.

Paul, who turned the world upside-down, could not be turned upside-down by the world. “None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself; so that I might finish my course with joy.” A saint is inwardly pious - when he is not outwardly prosperous. The sharper the medicine is - the sounder the patient is for its operation. The higher the flood swells on earth - the nearer the ark mounts to Heaven.

God can strike straight strokes - with crooked sticks; and make Satan’s dross burnish His choice vessels. Christians are crucified by the world - that they might be crucified to the world. God makes it their enemy - that He might make them enemies to it. Religion is that phoenix which has always flourished in its own ashes. While reprobates attack the truth with their sword - martyrs defend it with their blood. The loss of their heads - hastens the reception of their crowns.

We would never land in triumph at the haven of rest - if we were not tossed upon the sea of trouble. If Joseph had not been Egypt’s prisoner - he would never have been Egypt’s governor. The iron chains about his feet - ushered in the golden chains about his neck. Temporal losses are only gentle breezes - but eternal losses are insupportable storms.

Reader! tell me, is not Christ, with His cross for a few years - better than Dives, with his dainties for a few days? What comparison is there between the short-lived happiness of the wicked - attended with everlasting misery; and the short-lived misery of the righteous - attended with everlasting happiness?

4. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is - To seek the public good of others above the private good of himself. The sentiment of Plato, a heathen, is worthy to be adopted by every Christian, “I was not born for myself alone; for my country claims a part, my relations claim a part, and my friends claim a part in me.” As we are not born by ourselves - so we are not born for ourselves.

Baruch, the man of God, was forbidden to make SELF the center of his wishes, “Are you seeking great things for yourself? Seek them not!” For saints to set their hearts - upon that whereon beasts

set their feet; is as if a king should abdicate his throne - to follow the plough; or, as if a man should desert a golden mine - to dig in a pit of gravel. When we hide ourselves - it denotes that we are virtuous; but when we seek ourselves - it denotes that we are covetous.

I am unwilling to draw a defective feature in any man's picture; yet how many are there, who have occupied public places - with private aspirations! While they pretended to undertake everything for the good of others; it has appeared, that they undertook nothing but for the good of themselves. Such suckers at the roots - have drawn away the sap and nourishment from the tree. They have set kingdoms on fire - that they might roast their own venison at the flames. These drones stealing into the hive - have fed upon the honey; while the laboring bees have been famished! Too many resemble ravenous birds, which at first seem to bewail the dying sheep - but at last, are found picking out their eyes!

There is a proverb - but none of Solomon's, "Every man for himself - and God for us all." But where every man is for himself - the devil will have all. Whoever is a seeker of himself - is not found of God. Though he may find himself in this life - he will lose himself in eternity. The public spirit of Seneca is a sharp censure to many private-spirited Christians; "I would so live," said he, "as if I knew I received my being only for the benefit of others." How justly might that complaint be taken up, which was so sadly laid down by Paul, "All men seek their own - not the things of Jesus Christ." If some heathens excel Christians - it is not because Christianity does not surpass heathenism. A selfish man will not sow his seed - unless he reap the whole harvest! Nor will he plant the vines - unless he presses all the grapes into his own vessel. The wheel of his diligence will not move - unless the oil of profit is in it. It may be said to many, as a great personage once said to his servant; "your rise has been my fall."

If Dives is tormented - because he refused to impart his own goods; what shall their torment be - who take that which is another's! If those fingers are cut off, which so closely grasp their own property; what will become of those hands, which are always open to grasp at other men's property!

It was Israel's lamentation - that those who were once clad in scarlet - now embraced the dunghill. It may now be England's lamentation - that many who once embraced the dunghill, are now by injustice, clothed in scarlet. Every man's private interest - is best secured in the public good. A drop of water will soon be dried up if alone - but, in the ocean, it will retain its moisture. A single beam of light is suddenly obscured - but in the body of the sun, it retains its splendor.

Too many, in all ages, have turned a common weal - into a common woe. They have spun themselves superfine suits, out of the nation's fleece. Many noble birds have been deplumed - that their wings might be richly feathered. When any springs have been opened - they have laid pipes to convey the water into their own cisterns. Such pretended pilots have steered the ship of plenty into their own haven - but God's justice will certainly squeeze such sponges, and leave them as dry at last as they were at first. All those moths shall be destroyed - which eat into other men's garments. For a man to advance his interest, out of another's property - is to keep all the meat in his mouth, and starve all the body beside. Naturally, every man is his own Alpha and his own Omega. He has his beginning from himself - and his ending in himself. That was a morose speech of Cain to the Almighty: "Am I my brother's keeper?" He thought it was not his duty to be his brother's keeper - but did not consider that it was against his duty to be his brother's assassin.

There are many who will not be their brother's keepers, and yet will be their butchers. They have riveted themselves to their possessions by the bones of their murdered brethren; and paved causeways to honor with the skulls of honest men.

Self-seeking has been so long pulling the ropes, that it has rung the death-bell of many nations. It is sad to see the house in flames, while the chamber is being furnished; the ship sinking, while the cabin is filling; or the tree falling, while the nest is a building. But better fruit cannot grow upon the trees of cruelty, than wantonness and oppression. God will compel them to drink the dregs of that cup, which they have so unjustly mingled for others.

Queen Esther was a singular saint; for she preferred the public to her private good. "If I perish, I perish!" For how can I endure to see the evil which shall come upon my people? This Israelitess was not more lovely in appearance, than benevolent in her disposition. She did not prefer her own life to her people's - but her people's to her own. When Theodosius lay on his dying pillow, he was more studious how to do his kingdom good - than how to sustain his torturing pains; as appears by his counsel to his sons, to whom he left it. "I counsel you to be deeply concerned for the promotion of religion, and the good of man; for by this, peace will be preserved, and wars no more known."

Though the eagle is the queen of birds - yet she was not offered up in sacrifice, because she lived upon the spoil of others. Grace teaches a Christian not only to act like a man to God - but also like a God to man. Our Lord Jesus Christ pleased not Himself; that thereby He might eternally profit us. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor; that you through His poverty might become rich!" A drop of His blood is worth more than a sea of ours! And yet He died our death - that we might live His life; and suffered our Hell - to bring us to His Heaven. He lay in the feeble arms of His mother - that we might lie in the tender bosom of His Father. His love began in His eternal purposes of grace - and ends in our eternal possession of glory.

Why was the Bread of Life hungry - but to feed the hungry with the bread of life! Why was Rest itself weary - but to give the weary rest! Why did He hang upon the cross on Mount Calvary - but that we might sit upon the throne on Mount Zion! His glorious face was covered with spittle - that our disfigured faces might be enameled with glory! Why did this Jonah cast Himself into the sea of His Father's wrath - but to save the ship of His church from sinking! Christ is not only the vessel in which the waters of life are contained - but He is also the pipes through which they are conveyed.

If the mountains overflow with moisture - the valleys are the richer; but if the head is full of disease, the whole body is the worse. Happy are those people, whom God will use as brooms, to sweep out the dust from His temple; or who shall tug at an oar, in the boat where Christ and His church are embarked.

David was a king who ruled in righteousness, and studied not so much to make himself great - as to make his people happy. For David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God, fell asleep. His royal services were not swallowed up in the narrow gulf of SELF. He did not draw all his lines - to the ignoble center of his own ends. Such birds are bad in the nest - but worse when they fly abroad. He served his own generation, not the preceding; for that was dead before he was alive; nor the following, for he was dead before that was alive.

Every gracious person is benevolent - but not every benevolent person is gracious. An iron key may open a golden treasury; and lead pipes convey pleasant waters. Though earthly blessings may be communicated to a spiritual man - yet spiritual blessings will not be communicated to a carnal man.

While meteors keep above in the skies, they yield a pleasing luster - but when they decline, and fall to the earth, they come to nothing.

Though the name of the author of Psalm 137 is not recorded; yet his generous disposition should ever be admired. "May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not exalt Jerusalem as my greatest joy!" Good old Eli mourned more for the loss of religion - than for the loss of his relations. His heart was broken before his neck.

Augustus Caesar possessed such an entire attachment to his country, that he called it his own daughter, and refused to be called its master; because he ruled it, not by fear - but by love. After his decease, his disconsolate people lamented over him, saying, "O that he had never lived - or that he had never died!" Those whose lives deserve no praises, their death deserves no tears. A self-seeker lives unrespected - and dies unlamented. When once a man becomes a god to himself, he then becomes a devil to others! Such a one cares not who sinks - so long as he arrives safe at shore. Those execrable wretches, whose conduct is recorded in the book of Acts, cared not whether a whole city lost their souls - so that a few shrine-makers might but preserve their gain.

It is reported of Agrippina, the mother of Nero, who being told, that if her son ever came to be an Emperor - he would be her murderer! She made this reply, "I am content to perish, if he may be Emperor." What she expressed vain-gloriously, that we shall do religiously, "Let us perish - so long as our neighbors, our relations, and our country - is bettered; and the gospel, and the Savior - is honored." But there are many who entirely reverse this language; if not in words, yet in heart they say, "Let relations, neighbors, country, and religion perish - so long as we are benefited thereby."

Such was the public spirit of Moses, that when the Lord proposed to him to destroy Israel, and to make a great nation of him - he became intercessor for them; yes, even when they were ready to stone him! His affections as a ruler - were stronger than his affections as a father. Thus Joshua, his honorable successor, so far imitated him, that he first divided Canaan into several allotments and portions for the tribes of Israel, before he made any provision for his own family. Give me such carvers as lay not all the meat upon their own dishes!

5. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to have the most beautiful lives - among the vilest people. As an ungodly man poisons the air in which he breathes; so he pollutes the age in which he lives. The putrid grape corrupts the sound cluster. Pious Joseph, by living in the court of Pharaoh, had learned to swear by the life of Pharaoh. A high priest's hall instructed Peter how to deny his suffering Master. Fresh waters lose their sweetness - by gliding into the salt sea. Those who sail among the rocks - are in danger of splitting their ships. When vice runs in a single stream, it is then a fordable shallow - but when many of these meet together, they then swell into a deeper channel. The Lord has appointed from the beginning, that enmity shall exist between the righteous seed of the woman - and the unrighteous seed of the serpent. There can be no harmony - where the musicians will have a jar. It is far better to have the ungodly man's enmity - than his society. By

his enmity - he is most hateful; but by his society - he is most hurtful. A pious man in the company of wicked men - is like a green branch among dry and burning brands; they can sooner kindle him - than he can quench them. As sheep among the thorns injure their fleeces; so saints among sinners do an injury to their graces. Hence it is said, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." To see a saint and a sinner maintaining familiar fellowship with each other - is to behold the living and the dead keeping house together! The godly are more frequently corrupted by the evil deportment of the worldling - than the worldling is refined by the chaste life of the godly. The impious lives of the wicked, are as contagious as the most fearful plague which infects the air. When the pure doves of Christ lie among such filthy pots - their white feathers are sullied. You may observe, that if you mix an equal portion of sour vinegar and sweet wine together; you will find that the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine sweeten the vinegar. That is a sound body which continues healthful in a pest house. It is a far greater wonder to see a saint maintain his purity among sinners, than it is to behold a sinner becoming pure among saints. Christians are not always like fish - which retain their freshness in the salt sea; or like the rose - which preserves its sweetness among the most foul weeds; or like the fire - which burns the hottest when the season is coldest. A godly man was once heard to lament, "that as often as he went into the company of the wicked, he returned less a man from them than he was before he joined with them." As it is a difficult thing to touch melting pitch - and not to be defiled; so it is for saints to act toward sinners as to do much good for them - and receive no injury from them. If we cannot help them - it is their unholiness; if they hurt us - it is our unhappiness. The Lord's people, by keeping evil company, are like people who are much exposed to the sun - insensibly tanned and darkened.

Every Christian is a light in the world - though he is not the light of the world. "Let your light shine before men - that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in Heaven!" O that Christians were more like the light, which abides pure, though the air in which it dwells is corrupted! Men may defile themselves in the light - but they cannot defile the light itself. The sun shines throughout an impure world, and yet knows no impurity. Ah, how many resemble swine in the fairest meadow; which would break every bound to find the mire! They remind me of impious Judas, who, instead of being a disciple among devils - was a devil among disciples. Poor man, he was all precept - and no example. He could attempt to reprove one, who was innocence itself; and encourage one, who was sin itself.

Pious company brings fire to our graces, to kindle them when they are freezing - but impious company brings water to quench them, when they are flaming.

It is observed by some, "that the sweetest flowers may be found among the most offensive herbs." The poets affirm, that "Venus never appeared so beautiful, as when she sat by black Vulcan's side." This we are beyond a doubt concerning, that Stephen's face never shone so gloriously in the church, where he was admired; as in the council, where he was abhorred. Had he been like them - they would not have disliked him. Had not God given him spiritual life - they would never have put him to an ignominious death. How will the fire consume dry fuel, when it prevailed to such a degree over the green. That jewel must be glorious in the sun - which glitters in the shade. There

are many men that can match with any men; they can be professors among those that are professors, and scorners among those that are scorners. These are good in conjunction with those that are good - but evil in conjunction with those that are evil. Every man loves to be a man that is beloved - and is apt to take pleasure in them who do take pleasure in him; but take heed of ceasing to be good Christians, that others may think you good companions. It is hard to be conformed to the world in the outward man - and transformed to God in the inward man; to be an outward heathen - and an inward Christian. It is a Spanish proverb, "Tell me but where you go - and I will tell you what you do." As our English proverb well states, "Birds of a feather - will flock together." To be too intimate with sinners - is to intimate that you are sinners!

"After they were released, they went to their own company." To whom should believers join - but to believers. There is no trusting the tamest natures; let but the lions out of their fetters - and they will soon show you their bloody natures! How dare you be found lodging - in that house where God Himself is not found dwelling. There is no sleeping with dogs - without swarming with fleas.

It is a royal diadem that Christ sets on the head of His spouse. "Like a lily among thorns - is my beloved among the maidens." There are many thorns that are among the lilies - but few lilies that are among the thorns. How rare a spectacle is it to see a believer keep his purity - in the midst of vanity; to be like Noah - a new man in an old world. If Lot had been polluted with Sodom's sins - he might have been consumed in Sodom's flames! It is ill breathing - in an infectious air. Satan's progeny do not want to go to Hell - without society. A man may pass through Ethiopia and yet be unchanged - but if he remains there, he will be discolored.

Church history says of Valens, the Emperor, that by marrying an Arian lady, he was himself ensnared in that wicked opinion. "Then I heard another voice from Heaven say: "Come out of her, My people, so that you will not share in her sins - so that you will not receive any of her plagues!" Where the Catholic Church is fallen away from God - there let us fall away from them. Where such worms breed in the body of a nation - they will be sure to eat out the vitals of true religion. Not to take away such traitors - is to make a nest wherein to hatch their treasons.

6. Another singular action of a consistent Christian - is to choose the worst of sorrows - before he will commit the least of sins. The wicked entirely reverse this - for they prefer the greatest sin - to the least sufferings! This is to leap out of the hot pan - into the consuming fire! By seeking to shun an external calamity - they rush into eternal misery! This is as if a man should lose his head - to preserve his hat! Or, as if the mariner should sink the vessel - to avoid the rising storm.

Above every evil, we should consider sin as the greatest evil. Sin is the only target - at which all the arrows of divine vengeance are shot! Sinners are those spiders which weave their own webs - and are afterwards entangled in them. Our own destruction - is but the fruit of our own transgression.

Sin has every evil united to it. Sin is the fountain and origin of all evils. Thus the prophet viewed it, "Why does a living man complain - for the punishment of his sins?" When man had no evil within him - he had no evil upon him. He began to be sorrowful - when he began to be sinful. When the soul shall be fully released from the guilt of iniquity - the body shall be wholly delivered from the burden of infirmity. Sorrow shall never be a visitant - where sin is not an inhabitant. Sorrow would be a foreigner - if sin were not a sojourner.

God is as far from chastening His children for nothing - as He is from beating them to nothing. A hole in the ship will sink it to the bottom. A small bite from a poisonous serpent will affect the whole body. There is no way to calm the sea - but by excommunicating Jonah from the ship. If the root is killed - the branches will soon be withered. If the spring is diminished - there is no doubt but the streams will soon fail. Where the fuel of corruption is removed - there the fire of affliction is extinguished. The wages of sin - is death. As the works of sin are dishonorable; so the wages of sin are deadly! The corruption of nature is the cause of the dissolution of nature. The candle of our lives - is blown out by the wind of our lusts! Sin is that noxious weed - which chokes out the choicest grain. Sin is that offensive smoke - which depresses the rising flame. Sin is that dismal cloud - which overshadows the beaming sun. Were it not for sin - death would never have had a beginning! Were it not for death - sin would never have an ending! Man, as a creature, is a debtor to the commands of God, as a Sovereign - but as a sinner, he is a debtor to the severity of God, as a Judge.

What is so sweet a good as Christ? And what is so great an evil as lust? Sin has brought many a believer into suffering - and suffering has instrumentally kept many a believer out of sin. It is better to be preserved in brine - than to rot in honey! The bitterest medicine is to be preferred - before the sweetest poison. In the same fire wherein the dross is consumed - the precious gold is refined.

There are many thousands of souls, who would never have obtained the hopes of Heaven - if they had not been brought there by the gates of Hell. As every mercy is a drop derived from the ocean of God's goodness; so every misery is a grain weighed out by the supreme wisdom of God's providence. When Eudocia angrily threatened Chrysostom with banishment, he calmly replied; "Go tell her I fear nothing but sin!" He who serves God - need fear nothing so much as sin!

Those who launch out into any voyage, should always previously look well to their tackling, lest a destructive storm should drown them. A bad conscience embitters the sweetest comforts - but a good conscience sweetens the bitterest crosses. How great a wound do vices make in the conscience; yes, even in our infant years! Though the hardened sinner is not afraid to do evil - yet he will be afraid to suffer evil. They need not fear a cross on their back - who feel a Christ in their heart! The water outside the ship may toss it - but it is the water inside the ship, which sinks it! It is better to have the body consumed to ashes for the sake of Christ - than to have the soul dwell in everlasting burnings, through being ashamed of Christ! Though Christians have no warrant to expect that they shall live here without afflictions; yet in the exercise of them, faith will teach them to live above afflictions. That noble servant of Christ, Ignatius, gloried in reproaches for his Lord. He truly delighted to suffer for Christ, "I am not worthy to suffer for Jesus." Every Christian's Patmos - is his way to paradise.

Suppose the furnace is heated 'seven times hotter' - yet God can make the sufferer seventy times happier. Those who are here persecuted for well-doing, shall hereafter be crowned with well-dying. There are none more welcome to the spiritual Canaan - than those who swim to it through the red sea of their own blood.

Christian Reader! when you come into the world - you do but live to die again! And when you leave the world - you do but die to live again! What is the grain the worse - for the fan by which it is winnowed? What is the gold the worse - for the fire by which it is refined?

Pendleton, a self-confident professor, promised to fry out his fat body in the flames of martyrdom, rather than betray religion. But when the trial approached, he changed his note, and said, "I came not into the world burning - neither will I go out of the world flaming."

Those who refuse to give up their lusts for Christ - will never be inclined to give up their lives for Christ! Paul and Silas had their prison songs - in their prison sufferings. Those caged birds sang with as much melody - as any which have sky liberty. Thus Ignatius, in his epistle to the persecutors of the church, gloried, saying, "The wild beasts may grind me, as corn between their teeth - but I shall by that become as choice bread, in the hand of my God!"

I have read an account of a woman, who was imprisoned for her faith; and being in travail with child, she cried out with pain. The keeper derided her, saying. "How can you endure the fire - seeing you make so much noise in bringing forth a child?" "Very well," said she, "for now I suffer as a sinner - but then I shall suffer for my Savior."

There is more real evil in a particle of corruption, than in an ocean of tribulation! In suffering - the offence is offered to us; in sinning - the offence is committed against God. In suffering, there is an infringement of man's liberty; in sinning, there is a denial of God's authority. The evil of suffering is transient - but the evil of sin is permanent. In suffering - we lose the favor of men; but in sinning - we hazard the favor of God. The rose is sweeter under the still where it drops - than upon the stalk whereon it grows. The face of godliness is never so beautiful - as when it is spit upon! The best of wheat - is that which sustains all the drifts of wintry snow. That was an heroic saying of Vincentius, to his hardened persecutors, "You may rage and do your worst - but you shall find the Spirit of God administering more strength to the tormented, than the spirit of the devil affording strength to my tormentors!" Where Christians choose that which is truly best - there let malicious persecutors do their worst. Though you may feel their might - yet you need not feel their malice. They can have no just grounds of fear, whose confidence is in God. Life is only to be desired - by those to whom death would be no gain.

It is reported of Hooper the martyr, that when he was going to suffer, a certain person addressed him, saying, "O Sir, take care of yourself! Life is sweet - and death is bitter!" "Ah, I know that," he replied, "but eternal life is full of more sweetness than this mortal life! And eternal death is full of more bitterness than this fiery death!" A man may suffer without sinning - but he cannot sin without suffering. That was animating language which dropped from the lips of the three Hebrew children, or rather of the three champions, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power. But even if He doesn't, Your Majesty can be sure that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up!" Either they must sin foully - or suffer sadly. They must either bow to a golden image - or burn in a flaming furnace. But they were as far from worshiping his gods - as he was from worshiping their God! The beloved Daniel chose rather to die in the den of lions; than shamefully desert the cause of the Lamb. Shall not we, for His sake, bear the wrath of man - who, for our sakes, bore the wrath of God? Though obedience is better than sacrifice - yet sometimes, for a man to sacrifice himself is the best obedience.

He who loses a base life for Christ - shall hereafter find a better life in Christ. When some attempted to turn Polycarp from the faith, by insinuating, that, "There was no evil in calling Caesar LORD, and offering sacrifices to him." He replied, that, "He had served Jesus Christ for many

years, and had always found Him a good Master - that he would therefore, submit himself to all the tortures they should inflict; rather than deny Him."

Moses, that memorable worthy, "Chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the short-lived pleasure of sin." What is a cup of medicine, which removes a disease; compared with a cup of poison, which takes away the life? Those who live upon God, in the use of the creature; can also live upon Him, in the loss of the creature. That was a noble expression, of a noble Christian, "Whatever I thankfully receive, as a token of God's love to me; I part with contentedly, as a token of my love to Him."

"Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die." Shall one even dare to die for a good man - and shall we refuse to die for a good God?

"Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection." Some would have used any pick-lock, to have opened a passage to their liberty; but they knew too much of another world to bid at so high a rate for the present.

It is reported of Hormisdas, a nobleman of Persia; who being degraded of all his promotions, because he would not change his profession of Christ; that afterward, his persecutors restored them all again, and solicited him to deny Christ. But he rent his purple robe, and laid all his honors at the feet of the Emperor, saying, "If you restore these honors, with an intention to make me desert my Savior; I decline to accept them, upon such conditions!" Good man, he thought, and that justly too - that Christ without worldly honor - was better than worldly honor without Christ.

It is recorded concerning one of the martyrs, that when he was going to the stake, a nobleman besought him, in a compassionate manner, to take care for his soul. "So I will," he replied, "For I give my body to be burnt - rather than have my soul defiled." How many professors are there, who would rather have sinful self satisfied, than crucified! As the power of grace, comes in at one door; the love of vice, will go out at another! The only way, to have the house of Saul weakened; is to get the house of David strengthened. Those Philistines, who lacked courage to meet Sampson when he was in vigor; could insultingly dance round him, when he was in weakness.

Reader! consider seriously - that it is sin which in this life debases a person; and in the next life destroys him. Their state must be dreadful, whose end is damnation, because their damnation is without end. No condition can be so intolerably doleful - as that which is unalterably dreadful. A certain person, on seeing a Christian woman go cheerfully to prison, said to her, "O you have not yet tasted of the bitterness of death!" She as cheerfully answered, "No, nor shall I ever; for Christ has promised, that those who keep His sayings, shall never see death." A believer may feel the stroke of death; but he shall never feel the sting of death. The first death may bring his body to corruption; but the second death shall never bring his soul to destruction. Though he may endure the cross - yet he shall not endure the curse. There can be no condemnation, to those Christians, who belong to Christ.

7. Another singular action, of a consistent Christian, is - to be afatherto all in charity - and yet aservantto all in humility.

First, to be a father to all - in charity. That crop that is sown in mercy - shall be reaped in glory. In Heaven, there are riches enough - but no poor to receive them. In Hell, there are poor enough - but no riches to relieve them. How many of the most wealthy - are deaf to the most importunate requests for mercy! They will do no good, in the world - with the goods of the world. They too much resemble sponges - which greedily suck up the waters, but will not yield a return of them again, until they are well squeezed.

Necessity, is not likely to be supplied by the hand of misery; while so many, who would help, cannot, for lack of ability; and so many, who may help, will not, for lack of charity. There is not a drop of water - for such a Dives in Hell; who has not a crumb of bread - for a poor distressed Lazarus upon earth. Every act of charity - is but an act of equity. It is not the bestowment of our gifts; but the payment of our debts. The rich man's excess, was ordained to relieve the poor man's necessity. A lady on giving sixpence to a beggar, said thus to him, "I have now given you more than ever God gave to me." To whom he replied, "No, madam! No, madam - God has given you all your abundance." "That is your mistake" said she, "for He has but lent it me - that I might bestow it on such as you."

John, the beloved disciple of Christ, inculcates the doctrine of love, to the disciples of Christ, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father - loves His children, too." As holiness works a likeness to Him who begets it; so it works a love to those who enjoy it. It is impossible for anyone to love the person of Christ - who does not delight in the picture of Christ. While he is out of charity with his brother - he shows that God is out of charity with him. We lose more for lack of God's love - than our brethren lose for lack of our love.

He is not a covetous man, who lays up something providentially - but he is a covetous man, who gives out nothing willingly. He is as prudent a man, who sometimes distributes discreetly - as he who accumulates hastily. Men frequently manifest more wisdom in laying out - than in laying up.

Reader! the hope of living long on earth, should not make you covetous - but the prospect of living long in Heaven should make you bounteous. Though the sun of charity rises at home - yet it should always set abroad.

Seneca, the heathen, inculcates a principle worthy of the acceptance of every Christian, "I truly enjoy no more of the world's affluence - than what I willingly distribute to the needy." Without your mercy - the poor cannot live on earth; and without God's mercy - you shall not live in Heaven! Some men's churlishness entirely swallows up their charitableness. Instead of praying one for another - they are making a prey of one another. When I consider that our hearts are no softer - I wonder that the times are no harder. It is a reproach to many rich men, that God should give them so much - and that they should give the poor so little.

Some observe that the most barren grounds - are nearest to the richest mines. It is too often true in a spiritual sense, that those whom God has made the most fruitful in estates - are most barren in good works. It is too generally true, that the rich spend their substance wantonly - while the poor give their alms willingly. A penny comes with more difficulty out of a bag that is pressing full - than a dollar out of a purse that is half empty.

Why does the Lord make your cup run over - but that other men's lips might taste the liquor? The showers which fall upon the highest mountains, should glide into the lowest valleys. "Give - and it shall be given you," is a maxim little believed.

It is infidelity which is the spring of all cruelty. Wherever you can discover the face of one, you may also hear the sound of the other's feet. If you deny relief to those who are virtuous - you kill laborious bees; if you bestow your gifts on those who are wicked - you do but support drones. But it is better to favor an illegitimate child - than to murder a legitimate child. God looks not so much on the merits of the beggar - as upon the mercy of the giver.

"The Lord has already told you what is good, and this is what He requires: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Here is a trinity of precepts - from a trinity of Persons. Pharisees more delight to plead this precept, than to practice it; which is, as if a man should cry up the kindness of his king - and at the same time join in rebellion against him. If all were rich - no alms need be received; if all were poor - no alms could be bestowed.

God, who could have made all men wealthy, has made most men poor; that the poor might have Christ for an example of patience - and the rich for an example of goodness. Cruelty is one of the highest scandals to piety; for instead of turning lions into lambs - it turns lambs into lions!

"Be merciful - as your Father in Heaven is merciful." Clemency is one of the brightest diamonds in the crown of majesty. How cheerfully should we practice benevolence, when we consider who has set us the example! "Be perfect - even as your heavenly Father is perfect." What one Scripture calls mercy - the other styles perfection; as if this one perfection of mercy included all. He who shows mercy when it may be best spared - will receive mercy when it shall most be needed.

It is reported of one of the dukes of Savoy, that, being asked by certain ambassadors at his court what hounds he kept; he conducted them into a large room, where there were a number of poor people sitting at his table. "These" said he, "are all the hounds I have upon earth; and with whom I am in pursuit of the kingdom of Heaven." It is counted an honor to live like princes - but it is a greater honor to give like princes.

"Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world." The flames of piety towards God - must be accompanied with the incense of charity towards man. Mercy is so good a servant - that it will never allow its master to die a beggar.

Those who have drained their own wells dry, in order to fill the poor man's cistern - shall never perish for lack of water to quench their thirst. Those who have blessed others - shall be blessed themselves.

"Then the King will say to those on His right - Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me." Mercy is the queen of beauty - and the blessed offspring of the King of glory!

Scarcely any virtue in the whole Scripture has been returned with greater interest - than the love of mercy. Though charity may make your purse lighter one day; yet God will make it heavier another. All who have their names registered in the book of eternity - will have the poor man's distresses recorded upon the heart of sympathy. For though they are so poor as to be unable to relieve him - yet they are so tender as to pity him. I know no better way to preserve your meal - than by parting with your cake. Large springs should send forth their waters, without pumping. Your benevolence should seek the poor - before the poor seek your benevolence.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness...." He who distributes in compassion, has put on the badge of election. Many can love at their tongue's end - but the godly love at their finger's end. If a man is without proper clothing, it is easy for the miser to bid him be clothed; or if he is empty, he can easily bid him be filled; as if poor Christians were able to live upon the air. Liberality does not consist in good words - but in good works! The doubtful are to be resolved by our counsels - but the necessitous are to be relieved by our morsels. It is exceedingly lovely to behold the pictures of purity, though they be hung in the frames of poverty.

Reader would you be covetous of anything? let it be rather to lay out on necessity, than to lay up for posterity. Generosity is seed; and the gardener does not become wealthy by saving his seed - but by sowing of his seed.

Secondly, A servant to all - in humility. Our first fall was by rising against God - but our best rise, is by falling down before Him. The acknowledgment of our own impotence, is the only stock upon which the Lord engrafts divine assistance. A humble saint - looks most like a citizen of Heaven. "Whoever will be chief among you - let him be your servant." He is the most lovely Christian, who is the most lowly Christian. As incense smells the sweetest when it is beaten smallest - so saints look loveliest when they lie lowest. Arrogance in the soul, resembles the spleen in the body; which grows most, while other parts are decaying. God will not allow such a weed to grow in His garden, without taking some course to root it up. A believer is like a vessel cast into the sea - the more it fills, the more it sinks.

"Pride goes before destruction - and a haughty spirit before a fall." It is not all the world that can pull a humble man down - because God will exalt him; nor is it all the world that can keep a proud man up - because God will debase him. Do but mark how one of the best of saints, views himself as one of the least of saints; "For I am the least of the apostles - and do not even deserve to be called an apostle!" In the highest heavens - the beams of majesty are displayed; but to the lowest hearts - the streams of mercy are discovered. "Be clothed with humility." Pride is a sinner's torment - but humility is a saint's ornament. The garment of humility - should always be worn on the back of Christianity.

God many times places a thorn in the flesh - to pierce the balloon of pride. He makes us feel a sense of our misery - that we may sue for His unmerited mercy. The first Adam was for self-advancement - but the second Adam is for self-abasement. The former was for having SELF deified - the latter is for having SELF crucified.

Though there may be something left by self-denial; yet there can be nothing lost by self-denial. Nay, a man can never enjoy himself - until he is brought to deny himself. We live - by dying to

ourselves; and die - by living to ourselves. There is no proud man - who is not a foolish man; and scarcely is there any foolish man - who is not a proud man. It is the night-owl of ignorance, which broods and hatches the peacock of pride.

God abhors those people worst - who adore themselves most. Pride is not a Bethel - that is, a house where God dwells; but a Babel - that is, a stinking dungeon in which Satan abides. Pride is not only a most hateful evil - but it is a radical evil. As all other lusts are found lodging in it - so they are found springing from it. Pride is a foul leprosy, in the face of morality; and a hurtful worm, gnawing at the root of humility. Pride is a cancer within, and a spreading plague without.

“God resists the proud - but gives grace to the humble.” Give me the lovely vessel of humility, which God shall preserve - and fill with the wine of His grace; rather than the varnished cup of pride, which He will dash in pieces, like a potter’s vessel. Where humility is the corner-stone - there glory shall be the top-stone.

It is impossible to have true thoughts of ourselves, while we entertain high thoughts of ourselves. “Even if everyone else deserts You, I never will!” Poor Peter, he was the most impotent - when he was the most arrogant. He had no doubt of standing, while others were falling. But it proved at last, that he fell while others stood. That was an excellent saying of one; “Where a gracious person would sit below me - I will acknowledge his dignity; but where a proud person would move above me - I would abhor his vanity!” A humble heart may meet with opposition from man - but it shall meet with approbation from God. As humility is a grace very excellent in itself; so it is very pleasing to God. He who is a subject of the former - shall hereafter be an inheritor with the latter.

8. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is - Tomournmost before God - for those lusts which appear least before men.

Others cannot mourn in secret for public sins - but we should mourn in public for our secret sins. That must be sought with repentance, which has been so long lost by disobedience. Outward acts are most scandalous among men - but inward lusts are most atrocious before God.

Reader! if you would know the heart of your sin - then you must know the sins of your heart! “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are the things that defile a man!” These streams of defilement which appear in your life - do but show what a fountain of wickedness there is in your heart! Even the “thought of foolishness in sin!” “When sin has conceived, it brings forth death!” There is no sin so little - as not to kindle an eternal fire! Sin’s first-born is death - and its last-born is Hell.

Though repentance is the act of man - yet it is the gift of God. It requires the same power to melt the heart - as to make it. As we are deeply fallen from a state of innocence, so we should rise to a state of penitence. Those sins shall never make a Hell for us - which are a Hell to us. Some people do nothing more - than make work for repentance; and yet do nothing less - than repent of their works. They have sin enough for all their sorrows - but not sorrow enough for all their sins. Their eyes are windows to let in lusts - when they should be flood-gates to pour out tears! When godly sorrow takes possession of the house - it will quickly shut sin out of doors. There must be a falling out with our lusts - before there can be a genuine falling off from our lusts. There must be a sincere loathing of sin in our affections - before a true leaving of sin in our actions. It is a hearty mourning for our transgressions, which makes way for a happy funeral of our corruptions!

Sinner, you have filled the book of God with your sins - and will you not fill the bottle of God with your tears? Remember, that when Christ draws the likeness of the new creature, His first brush is dipped in water: "Unless you repent - you shall all likewise perish!" Is it not better to repent without perishing - than to perish without repenting? Godly sorrow is such a grace, that without it - not a soul shall be saved; and with it - not a soul shall be lost! Is it not therefore better to swim in the water-works of godly repentance - than to burn in the fire-works of divine vengeance? Do not think that the tears which are shed in Hell - will in the least abate the torments which are suffered in Hell!

Repentance is a priceless grace - for it is the bestowment of a priceless Savior. "God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins." As a prince He gives repentance - and as a priest He gives pardon. Our humiliation - is the fruit of His exaltation. As He was abased for the sinner's advancement - so He was exalted for the sinner's abasement! Remember, sinner, if your heart is not broken in you - your guilt is not broken from you. If you lay not your sins to heart - that you may be humbled; God will lay your sins to your charge - that you may be damned. Though repentance is not a pardon's obtainer; yet it is a pardon's forerunner.

He who lives in sin, without repentance - shall die in sin, without forgiveness. There is no coming to the fair haven of glory - without sailing through the narrow strait of repentance. Christ rejoices over those as blessed - who mourn over themselves as cursed. "Blessed are those who mourn - for they shall be comforted." Out of the saltiest water - God can brew the sweetest cordial. The skillful bee gathers the best honey - from the bitterest herbs. When the cloud has been dissolved into a shower - there soon follows a glorious sunshine. The more a stone is chiseled by the hand of the engraver - the greater the beauty of the gem. By groans unutterable - the Lord ushers in joys unspeakable.

None do more sing in the possession of Christ, than such as most lament the departure of Christ. Usually their joys - are commensurate to their sorrows. A tender heart is like melting wax - ah what choice impressions are made upon such soft dispositions! A Christian should mourn more for the lusts of the flesh - than for the works of the flesh; for the sin of our nature transcends the nature of all our outward sins. Carnal sins defile the soul by the body - but spiritual sins defile the soul in the body. Many people can mourn over a body from which a soul is departed - but they cannot mourn over a soul whom God has deserted! Alas! What is the bite of a flea - compared to the bite of a lion? What is a spot in the face - compared to a stab in the heart? Inward diseases are least visible - and yet most fatal. A man may die of an internal cancer - although a spot never appears on his body.

Sin in the soul, is like Jonah in the ship - it turns the smoothest water into a troubled ocean. We must mourn for sin on earth - or burn for sin in Hell! It is the coldness of our hearts - which kindles the fire of God's anger. "They will look on Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for Him as for a firstborn son who has died!" Christians! the nails which pierced Christ's hands - should now pierce your hearts! You should now be deeply wounded with godly sorrow, for having so deeply wounded Him with your ungodly sins! It should grieve your spirits - to remember how much you have grieved His Spirit. A believer puts on the sackcloth of contrition - for having put off the garment of perfection. As the sugar-cube is dissolved, and weeps itself away - when dipped in wine. Likewise do our hearts melt under a sense of divine love. Our

language at such a season is, "O that we should be such base children - to such a blessed Father!"

Man must be convinced of sin - before he can truly repent of sin. Unbelief in the heart is like the worm in Jonah's gourd - an unseen adversary. Unbelief is least visible - but most hurtful. Unbelief is the worst of robbers - it both plunders and wounds the soul. Christ may dwell in the heart - where unbelief lurks - but not where it reigns. If Christ destroys its armor - it becomes as weak as other men. The chief strength in which unbelief trusts - is ignorance! It is no wonder why men sigh so little for sin - when they see so little of sin. They have tears enough for their outward losses - but none for their inward lusts! They can mourn for the evil which sin brings - but not for sin which brings the evil.

Pharaoh more lamented the hard strokes that were upon him, than the hard heart which was within him! Esau did not mourn, because he sold the birthright, which was his sin - but because he lost the blessing, which was his punishment. This is like weeping over an onion - the eye sheds tears because it hurts! When the sailing is smooth, the mariner has his heart set on his costly cargo - yet he casts it overboard in a storm. Many complain more of the sorrows to which they are born - than of the sins with which they were born! They tremble more at the vengeance of sin - than at the venom of sin. The venom of sin delights them - the vengeance of sin affrights them!

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling seizes the ungodly!" Why - what is the matter? "Who among us can dwell with a consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with ever-burning flames?" They feared sin - not as it was a black coal which defiled - but as it was a fire which burned them!" A stroke from God's justice broke the heart of Judas into despair; while a look from Christ's mercy melted Peter's heart into tears!

There are two evil things in our sins: the devilishness of them, and the dangerousness of them. Now take a saint and an unrepentant sinner; the saint says, "What evil have I done?" The sinner says, "What evil must I suffer?" One mourns for the sin - the other mourns for the punishment! The saint grieves because his soul is defiled - the sinner grieves because his soul is damned. Water may gush from a rock - when it is smitten with a rod. But all such streams are lost; for they neither quench the flames of Hell - nor fill God's bottles in Heaven. Our whole life should be a life of repentance - and such repentance, as needs not to be repented of. While the vessel is leaking, the pump may be going. Reader, it is an unfavorable symptom, if you can wipe away tears from your eyes - before God has washed away guilt from your conscience. It is better traveling to Heaven sadly - than to Hell merrily! Give me a sorrowful saint - rather than a merry sinner. Did the rocks rend - when Christ died for sin? And shall not our hearts rend - for having lived in sin? "If we confess our sin - He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin; and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Did ever words like these drop from the lips of any being - except God? Here, the sinner is desired only to acknowledge the debt - and the mountain of sin shall be canceled. Is it not therefore better to be saved by divine mercy - than to be damned by divine justice? As soon as we are oppressed, and groan under our burden of sin - we are sure to be eased by Christ's shoulders. If we repent of our offences with sincere grief - the offended Lord joyfully forgives and forgets them all. Where misery passes undiscerned - there mercy passes undesired. Christ may knock long at such doors - before He gains admittance. He only enters into those - who enter into themselves. "Behold I stand at the door and knock!" Christ oftener comes to the door - than He

enters the house. As we knock at His door for audience - so He does at ours for entrance. If Christ is shut out of our heart - our prayers will be shut out of His heart. Why should God show him mercy - who never acknowledged himself guilty? A saint's tears - are better than a sinner's triumphs.

Bernard says, "The tears of penitents - are the wine of angels!" When a sinner repents - the angels rejoice! Give me such a mourning on earth - as creates music in Heaven. Many are battered as lead by the hammer - who were never bettered as gold by the fire. Sometimes, that repentance which begins in the fears of Hell - ends in the flames of Hell!

9. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to keep his heart the lowest - when God raises his estate the highest.

Paul saw the need of this, when he enjoined Timothy to charge those who were rich in this world not to be proud-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches. Sinful arrogance, usually attends creature-confidence. Worldly wealth is a bellows to swell the balloon of pride! For when men's estates are lifted up - it is but too common for men's hearts to be puffed up. Oh! how fond is thin dust - of thick clay! Pride breeds in great estates - as worms do in sweet fruits.

Remember, Christian, if you are poor in the world - you should be rich in faith; and if you are rich in this world, you should be poor in spirit. The way to ascend - is to descend; the deeper a tree roots - the wider do its branches spread. The sun of prosperity shines the clearest - in the sphere of humility. The true nobility of the mind - consists in the humbleness of the mind. Consider, that as none have so little - but they have great cause to bless God; so none have so much - as to have the least cause to boast before God. Shall the theatrical vagrant be proud of his borrowed robes, or the mud wall swell because the beams of a beautiful sun shine upon it? Gold in your bags may make you great - but it is grace in your hearts which makes you godly. Godliness, without greatness, shall be esteemed; when greatness, without godliness shall be confounded. Proud sinners are the fittest companions - for proud devils. The more prosperity man enjoys - the more humility God enjoins.

Nature teaches us, that those trees bend the most freely - which bear the most fully. As a proud heart loves none but itself - so it is beloved by none but itself. Who would attempt to gain those pinnacles - that none have ascended without fears, or descended without falls? When men through daring pride cast off all allegiance to God - He in just derision casts them out from the inheritance of God. If we refuse to acknowledge Him - He will refuse to acknowledge us.

It is reported of Philip of Macedon, that after having obtained the honor of an unexpected victory, he was observed to look very much dejected. On being asked the reason, he replied, "that the honors which are obtained by the sword, might also be lost by the sword." Was he pensive - when providence crowned him with victory? and shall we be vainly elated - when providence makes us wealthy? The Supreme Majesty cannot allow us to glory in any, but Himself. Therefore, when we glory in our pride - He stains the pride of our glory. It is a difficult matter - to be grand in the estimation of others - and base in our own estimation. The face of no mere man ever shone so illustriously, as that of the ancient Jewish lawgiver's; and yet it is affirmed that no man's heart was ever so meek. But most men resemble chameleons; which no sooner take in the air - than they begin to swell. As that is a rebellious heart - in which sin is allowed to reign; so that is not a very enlarged heart - which the world can fill. Alas, what will it profit us to sail before the pleasing gales

of prosperity - if we are afterwards overset by the gusts of vanity? Your bags of gold should be ballast in your vessel - to keep her always steady; instead of being topsails to your masts - to make your vessel giddy. Give me that distinguished Christian, who is rather pressed down under the weight of all his honors - than puffed up with vain-glory.

It has been observed by those who are experienced in the sport of angling, that the smallest fishes bite the fastest. Oh, how few great men do we find so much as nibbling at the gospel hook! "But the leaders had utterly rejected their God." Mercy favored them - but gratitude could not bind them. When King James' tutor lay upon his expiring pillow, his Majesty sent to inquire how he did, "Go tell my royal sovereign, that I am going where few kings go." The tree of life is not often planted - in an earthly paradise. Under the Levitical law, the lamb and the dove were offered in sacrifice - while the lion and the eagle were rejected. The shining diamond of a great estate - may frequently be found upon an unsound and idolatrous heart. Great prosperity is not to be deemed the greatest security. The lofty unbending cedar is more exposed to the injurious blast, than the lowly shrub. The little rowboat rides safely along the shore - while the gallant ship is wrecked in the wide ocean. Those sheep which have the most wool - are generally the soonest fleeced. Poverty is its own defense against robbery. A fawning world - is worse than a frowning world. Who would shake those trees - upon which there is no fruit?

Many think they are saved - because they are poor; and others - because they are rich - but these are all capitally mistaken! For much of the former are not saved, and not many of the latter will be saved. "Not many of the worldly wise; not of the influential; not many of noble birth - are called." You nobles, I call you to see - that not many nobles are called. He does not say, not any - but not many. Blessed be God, we can say of them, as Luther once said of Elizabeth, a pious queen of Denmark, "Christ will sometimes carry a queen to Heaven." Rich men are choice dishes at God's table.

Some people, when their estates are low - their hearts are high. But true believers, when their estates are high - their hearts are low. What an excellent commendation does the beloved prophet of Israel give the beloved prince of Israel, "Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and prayed - Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that You have brought me this far?" The weighty clusters of mercy completely bowed the branches of this royal vine! He does not contend with God for mercies denied - but he adores Him for mercies granted. The eye of his humility views the grace of God - and then he is thankful; it also views the folly of his heart - and this makes him mournful.

Theodosius deemed it more honorable to be a child of God - than a monarch of the world; and so did King David. Ah! why will you set your heart upon vanity? For everything will come to nothing - but He who formed all things out of nothing. Many think it must go well with them hereafter, because it is so well with them here; as if silver and gold, which came out of the dirt of the earth - would carry them to the bosom of the God of Heaven. Though the gates of Heaven will open to admit the Heaven-born soul; yet they are not unlocked with a golden key. A man may bask in the beams of prosperity now - and yet burn in the flames of eternity hereafter! The worm of pride is always injurious to celestial plants! Either this vice must be shut out on earth - or we shall be shut out in Heaven. The bowing reed of a humble mind - shall be preserved entire; while the sturdy oak of a proud lofty mind - shall be broken to shivers. A proud person thinks everything too much -

which is done by him; and everything too little - which is done for him. God is as far from pleasing him with his gifts - as he is from pleasing God with his works. Remember what the observant prophet Habakkuk declares, "Behold! his soul which is lifted up in him, is not upright." Observe, he introduces the subject with a "Behold!" He who lifts up himself - is not lifted up of God. I will not say, 'a godly man is never proud' - but I will say, 'a proud man is never godly.'

10. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to seek to be better inwardly in his substance - than outwardly in appearance.

"Having a form of godliness - but denying its power." This is a business which no hypocrite chooses to be employed in - he prefers varnish - to solid gold. It little concerns him how much the house is infected with the leprosy - just so long as it is but outwardly fair to human inspection. He forgets that, "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God."

Formality frequently takes its dwelling near the chambers of integrity, and so assumes its name; the soul not suspecting that Hell should make so near an approach to Heaven. A rotten post, though covered with gold, is more fit to be burned in the fire, than for the building of a fabric. Where there is a pure conscience - there will be a pure conversation. The dial of our faces does not infallibly show - the time of day in our hearts. The humblest looks may enamel the face - while unbounded pride governs the heart! Unclean spirits may inhabit the house - when they look not out at the window. A hypocrite may be both the fairest - and the foulest creature in the world! He may be fairest outwardly in the eyes of man - and foulest inwardly in the sight of God. How commonly do such unclean swans cover their black flesh with their white feathers! Though such wear the mantle of Samuel - they should bear the name of Satan!

Many appear righteous - who are only righteous in appearance. But while they are deceiving others with the false shows of holiness - they are also deceiving themselves with the false hopes of happiness. The hypocrite would not willingly appear evil - and yet would inwardly be evil. He would gladly be accounted godly - and yet would not be godly. Man, either appear what you are - or be what you appear. What will the form of godliness do for you - if you deny the power thereof? Own this - or God will disown you! Those who have the power of godliness, cannot deny the form; while those who have the form of godliness, may deny the power.

Hypocrites resemble looking-glasses - which present the faces that are not in them. Oh, how desirous are men to put the fairest gloves - upon the foulest hands; and the finest paint - upon the rottenest posts! To counterfeit the coin of Heaven, is to commit treason against the King of Heaven. Who would spread an exquisite cloth - upon a dirty table?

If a mariner sets sail in an unsound ship - he may reasonably expect to lose his voyage. No wise virgin would carry a lamp - without light. O professor, either get the light - or part with the lamp. None are so black in the eyes of the all knowing God - as those who paint for spiritual beauty.

Some people are better in show - than in substance. But not so with true Christians; they are not like painted tombs, which enclose decayed bones. The king's daughter "is all glorious within!" She is all glorious within - though within is not all her glory. That is a sad charge, which the God of truth brings against certain false professors, "I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews,

and are not - but are the synagogue of Satan!" A false friend - is worse than an open enemy. A painted harlot is less dangerous - than a painted hypocrite. A treacherous Judas is more abhorred by God - than a bloody Pilate!

Professors! Remember the sheep's clothing will soon be stripped from the wolf's back! The velvet plaster of profession - shall not always conceal the offensive ulcer of corruption. Neither the ship of formality nor hypocrisy - will carry one person to the harbor of felicity. The blazing lamps of foolish virgins may light them to the bridegroom's gate - but not into his chamber. Either get the nature of Christ within you - or take name of Christ away from you.

Oh, what vanity is it to lop off the boughs - and leave the roots which can send forth more; or to empty the cistern, and leave the fountain running which can soon fill it again! Such may swim in the water as the visible church - but when the net is drawn to shore, they must be thrown away as bad fishes. Though the tares and the wheat may grow in the field together - yet they will not be housed in the granary together.

How pious and devout did the Pharisees appear before men! The people concluded these religious leaders, to be the only saints upon the earth. They judged the inward man by the outward - but not so with the heart-searching God! For He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men - but God knows your hearts! What is highly valued among men - is detestable in God's sight!" That sepulcher is not always the repository of gold - which is outwardly garnished. Herod was a god in the esteem of the people - when he was but a fiend in the sight of the Lord; they adored him - but God destroyed him. A man's outward life may be civilized - when his heart is not evangelized. There is as much difference between nature restrained - and nature renewed, as between the glimmering of a glowworm - and the splendor of the noonday sun! A bad man is certainly the worst - when he is seemingly the best. We must not account everyone a soldier - who swaggers with a sword. A rusty sword - may frequently be found in a highly decorated scabbard. What good is it to have our hands as white as snow - if our hearts are as black as the bottomless pit! Such professors resemble soap bubbles - smooth and pretty without - yet only filled with air! A man may wear the Savior's livery - and yet be busied in Satan's drudgery! The skin of an apple may be fair - when it is rotten at the core! Though all gold may glitter - yet all is not gold that glitters. The worst hypocrite may have the color of gold - but not the value of gold. What comparison is there, between the golden cup filled with putrid water - and the clay cup filled with fine wine?

Very few deceivers duly weigh that notable saying of the wise man, "The man of integrity walks securely - but he who takes crooked paths will be found out!" God, who promises to cover the true Christian's infirmities - threatens also to disclose the hypocrite's impieties. Well would it be for such to remember, that arch-traitor Judas, purchased nothing by his deceitful dealings - but a halter for his body, in which he was hanged; and fire for his soul, in which he is burning!

11. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to be more afflicted at the distresses of the church, than affected at his own happiness. When we suffer not from the enemies of Christ by persecution - we should then suffer for the friends of Christ by compassion. Let not Zion's sons be rejoicing - while their mother is mourning. "Are not her breaches like the sea - and there is none to heal her?" If her breaches be irreparable - our hearts should be inconsolable. It is observed of doves, that if one is sick, the other laments. Yes, the savage beasts will mourn over the afflicted

creatures of their own species; and shall that be lost among men - which is found among beasts?

Christianity never was designed to strip men of humanity. Reader! Can you see the church bleeding - and never ask balm for her wounds? How can you rejoice when she stands - if you do not mourn when she falls? It thrilled impious Nero to see the Christians burning - but it should wound us to hear of it. The cruel massacre of the Judean infants - was a pleasant sight to bloody Herod.

We may justly prefer that charge against many nominal Christians, which God did against nominal Israel. "You drink wine by the bowlful, and you perfume yourselves with exotic fragrances, caring nothing at all that your nation is going to ruin!"

Many can weep a flood for the groans of a child - but they cannot drop a tear for the groans of the church. Their love to relations transcends their love to religion. He who has property on board the church's ship, cannot but be alarmed at every storm. Many professors are like a silver eye in the spiritual head, and a wooden leg in the spiritual body - which are insensible to all its sorrows. That man who has no compassion for afflicted Christians, may rest persuaded that God will have no compassion on him! His language will be, "Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite Me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after Me." The enemies of the church may toss her as waves - but they shall not split her as rocks. She may be dipped in water as a feather - but shall not sink therein as lead. He who is a well of water within her, to keep her from fainting - will also prove a wall of fire about her, to preserve her from falling. Tried she may be - but destroyed she cannot be. Her foundation is the Rock of Ages - and her defense the everlasting Arms. It is only such fabrics as are founded upon the sand - which are overthrown by the wind. The adversaries of God's people will push at them as far as their horns will go - but when they have scoured them by prosecution as tarnished vessels - then God will throw such wisps into the fire!

Many would rather see the church's expiration - than her reformation. It would afford them more pleasure to find her nullified, than purified; for they suppose that happiness increases - in proportion as holiness decreases. Christians! when persecutors make long furrows upon the saint's back - then we should cast in the seed of sympathetic tears! "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" Thus the Head cries out in Heaven - while the toe is trod upon on earth!

Though Jesus Christ has altered His condition - yet He has not changed His affection. Death took away His life for us - but not His love from us. He who washed away the blood of guilt from our hearts - will soon wipe away those briny tears which disfigure our cheeks. He who paid so great a price for our redemption, will not resign us into the hands of our cruel tormentors. "Comfort, comfort My people - says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Tell her that her sad days are gone and that her sins are pardoned." If the Father of mercies thus proclaims pardon to returning prodigals - we may expect soon to hear of music and rejoicing among all the heavenly harpers! When we see the church suffering in the cup of affliction - we should then help her with the cup of consolation. A heavy burden may easily be borne - by the assistance of many shoulders. Some are like Gallio, "none of these things concerned them." Nay, when they should be sympathizers, they are censors. They conclude that the gold is not good, because it is tried; and that the

ground is worthless, because it is ploughed. They wound those with the arrows of reproach - whom God has only corrected with the rod of reproof. It is dangerous to smite those with our tongues - whom God has smitten with His hand. His right to correct - is not our right to correct.

Because Christ suffered for transgressors, many numbered Him with transgressors - but that was to give Him the sharpest vinegar, when they should have given Him the sweetest wine. "Pour out your fury on them; consume them with Your burning anger!" Why, David? "For they persecute those You wound and talk about the pain of those You have wounded."

Sympathy is a debt we owe to sufferers. For Christians to be rejoicing when their brethren are weeping - is like putting silver-lace upon a mourning suit. Our own particular losses and distresses resemble the extinguishing of a candle, which only occasions darkness in one room - but the general distresses of the church are like the eclipsing of the sun, which overshadows the whole hemisphere. Pliny informs us of two goats meeting together on a narrow bridge, where neither of them could either proceed or recede; at last one of them lay down, that the other might go over him. How much of the man was there in those beasts - and how much of the beast is there in some men!

It is certainly better to be in the humble posture of a mourner - than in the proud gesture of a scorner. The woman of Canaan could not rest - while her daughter was restless. The torture of one - was the torment of the other - but a word from Jesus relieved them both. Sympathy renders a doleful state - more joyful. Alexander refused water in a time of great scarcity, because there was not enough for his whole army.

It should be among Christians, as among lute-strings - when one is touched, the others tremble. Believers should be neither proud flesh - nor dead flesh. Fellow members - should ever have fellow feelings. Other men's woes are our warnings - their desolation should be our information.

Jeremiah suffered not in his own person, being under the protection of the Divine Being - but though he dwelt securely from the hand of mortality - yet he was filled with the affections of sympathy. Though he wrote of the Jews desolations - yet he named them Jeremiah's Lamentations.

12. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to render the greatest good for the greatest evil.

Mariners look for a storm at sea, when the waters begin to utter a murmuring noise. Theodosius the emperor, being urged to execute one who had reviled him, answered, "I am so far from gratifying your wish; that were it in my power, if he were dead, I would raise him to life again; rather than, being alive, to put him to death."

He makes a good market of bad commodities, who with kindnesses overcomes injuries. For a man to be captivated by his own angry passions, and conquer another person - is but to lose the palace of a prince - to gain the cottage of a peasant. A spark of fire falling in the ocean, expires immediately; but dropping upon combustibles, burns furiously. God has bound every believer in gospel cords - to godly behavior. A carnal man may love his friends - but it is a Christian man who loves his enemies. "But I tell you - love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you." He calls to patience, who

is patience itself! He who gives the precepts - enforces it by His own example. It is unnatural to hate those who love us; and it is supernatural to love those who hate us. A sinner can do much evil - but he can suffer none; a saint can suffer much evil - but he will do none.

He who takes up fire to throw at his adversaries, is in great danger of burning his own fingers! A badly loaded gun, instead of hitting the mark, does but recoil on him who discharges it. He who glories in wounding others - will finally wound himself. If injuries are our enemies' weapons, forgiveness should be ours. How many have had their blood seen, because they would not have their backs seen. Men's bad actions towards others - are generally excused by others' bad actions towards them. There is a two-fold madness: that of the head - which deprives men of prudence; and that of the heart - which deprives them of their patience. To forget an injury, is more than nature can promise - but to forgive it, is what grace can perform. Patience affords us a shield to defend ourselves - but innocence denies us a sword to offend others. If ever you hope that your charity should live after you - then let resentment die before you.

It is written in the law of Mahomet, that "God made angels of light - and devils of flame." But of this I am sure - that they are of hellish constitutions, who play off the fire-works of contention. "Be angry - and sin not." Anger should not be a burning coal from Satan's furnace - but a blazing coal from God's altar. It should resemble fire in straw - which is as easily quenched, as suddenly kindled. He who would be angry and not sin - must be angry at nothing but sin! "Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the devil!" He who carries angry passions to bed with him - will find that the devil will creep between the sheets! Why should we give place to Satan - who crowds in so fast himself?

O man, shall your life be mortal - and your wrath immortal? Should we not give place to an offending brother, rather than to be a designing murderer? How many are there who profess to forgive - but cannot forget an injury! Such are like people who sweep the chamber - but leave the dust behind the door. Whenever we grant our offending brethren a discharge - our hearts also should set their hands to the acquittance.

We should not only break the teeth of malice by forgiveness - but pluck out its sting by forgetfulness. To store our memories by dwelling on injuries - is to fill that chest with rusty iron - which was made for refined gold. The pot of malice should not stand upon the fire - until it boils over. Christian, can you expect better treatment in the world - than He who was better than the world? When Aristides, the Athenian general, sat to arbitrate a difference between two people, one of them said, "This fellow accused you at such a time!" To whom Aristides answered "I sit, not to hear what he has done against me - but against you." How should a Christian shine, if a heathen gives such light! "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Not the coals of vengeance to consume him - but the coals of kindness to soften him.

Jesus was an intercessor both in His life and death; His dying breath was praying breath - and that not only for His sorrowful disciples - but for His enraged murderers also. "Father, forgive them - for they know not what they do." Thus He gave them the best wine - for the bitterest gall. The Lord Jesus spreads a large table every day, and the major part who feed thereat - are His enemies! "In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard and the goat will be at peace. Calves and yearlings will be safe among lions, and a little child will lead them all!" The Lord Jesus can

both tame the most cruel beast - and quench the most raging lust!

None but a patient Christ - can make us patient Christians. As our passions were the cause of His - so His passion is the cure of ours. Reader, if you cannot forgive others - God will not forgive you. You have His own authority for this, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." In vain do we ask God to be pacified to us - while we live at variance with others. How can we expect to have pounds remitted to us - if pence are not remitted by us?

I have read of a person who imbrued his hands in his own blood, because they were too short to reach his enemy's. Poor revenge! How repugnant was this to the apostolic advice, "Do not take revenge, my friends - but leave room for God's wrath." This was the conduct of dying Stephen, "Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice - Lord, do not charge them with this sin!" Could living men do worse to a dying man - or a dying man pray better for living men? To do evil for good, is human corruption; to do good for good, is civil retribution - but to do good for evil, is Christian perfection. Though forgiveness is not the grace of nature - yet it is the nature of grace. When Shimei cursed David in his distress, Abishai was for an immediate retaliation. "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head!" What was David's answer? "No!" the king said. "If the Lord has told him to curse me, who am I to stop him?" He was so far from taking off his head, that he does not even attempt to shut his mouth. The shoulders of charity - are able to carry the burden of injury - without either being moved with violence, or removed from patience.

Though God does not allow His people to sin in avenging their enemies - yet He allows not the sin of their enemies to go unavenged. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay! says the Lord." "Anger rests in the bosom of fools." Where there is the most indignation, there is the least discretion. No men do more readily brook insults from others - than such as have learned to despise themselves. Make not an enemy of your friend - by returning evil for good; but make a friend of your enemy - by returning him good for evil.

13. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to take those reproofs best - which he needs most.

It was the saying of a heathen, though no heathenish saying, "That he who would be good, must either have a faithful friend to instruct him, or a watchful enemy to correct him." Should we murder a physician - because he comes to cure us? Should we like him worse - because he would make us better? The flaming sword of reprehension - is but to keep us from the forbidden fruit of transgression. "Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they reprove me, it is soothing medicine. Don't let me refuse it." 'Let him smite me as with an hammer,' for so the word signifies. A Boanerges is as necessary as a Barnabas.

"Have I become your enemy - because I tell you the truth?" Truth is not always relished - where sin is nourished. Light is pleasant - yet it may be offensive to sore eyes. Honey is sweet - though it causes the wound to smart. We must not neglect the sinful actions of friends - for fear of drawing upon ourselves the suspicions of being enemies. It is better to lose the smiles of men - than the souls of men. "You must not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor directly, and you will not incur guilt because of him." He who loves a garment - hates the moths which fret it.

“Rebuke a wise man - and he will love you. Rebuke a scorner - and he will hate you.” Reproof slides from a scorner’s breast - as water from an oiled post. Instead of loving a man amidst all his injuries - he will hate him for all his civilities. Most people are like unruly horses, which no sooner feel the ‘bit’ - than they strike with their heels. Or like bees, which no sooner are angered - than they give a sharp sting!

There is much discretion to be manifested in reprehension. A word will do more with some - than a blow with others. A Venice glass is not to be rubbed so hard - as an iron kettle. The tender reed is more easily bowed - than the sturdy oak. Christ’s warfare requires no carnal weapons. Dashing storms do but destroy the seed - while gentle showers nourish it. Chariots too furiously driven, may be overturned by their own vehemence.

How many are there, who check passion - with passion; and are very angry - in reproving anger! Thus to slay one devil - they raise another; and leave more work to be undone, than they found to be done. Such a reproof of vice - is a vice to be reproofed. In reprehension, we should always beware of carrying our teeth in our tongues; and of biting while we are speaking. A surgeon would not be justifiable in dismembering a body - if he could effect a cure without such drastic measures.

“Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit.” The word signifies, to set a dislocated bone. This requires the lady’s hand; tenderness - as well as skillfulness. Reprehension is not an act of butchery - but an act of surgery. Take heed of putting too keen an edge, upon this scalpel. Mark the reason which the apostle assigns for gentle reproof: “But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.”

If your neighbor’s house is on fire - your own may be in danger. We should be willing to lend mercy at one time - as we may have occasion to borrow it at another. We should do with other’s sins, as we do with our own sores; which, if a gentle cut will produce a sufficient healing, we avoid sharp slashing. If ravenous birds can be frightened away by a look - we need not expend powder and shot.

It is true, open sinners deserve open censures - but private admonitions will best suit private offences. While we seek to heal a wound in our brother’s actions, we should be careful not to leave a scar upon his person. That is a choice friend, who conceals our faults from the view of others - and yet reveals them to our own view. That medicine which rouses the evil humors of the body, and does not carry them off - only leaves it in a worse condition than it found it.

It must be lamented, that many are as deaf to the softest tongue of reproof - as the adder is deaf to the sweet voice of the charmer. They are always administering the bitter pills of calumny - for the sweet cordials of charity. Men love to be adored - yet hate to be reproofed. But how can we praise what they do - when they are so far from doing what is worthy to be praised?

How securely would David have slept - if Nathan had not been sent to rouse him! How far do many travel in the downward road - for lack of a wholesome friend to stop them in their journey! Private admonition is rather a proof of benevolence, than of malevolence. It was the saying of Augustine, when his hearers resented his frequent reproofs, “Change your conduct - and I will change my conversation!” The more a serpent is stirred - the more he gathers up his poison!

Some are to reproof, as tigers are to drums; because they cannot stop them, they will tear their own flesh. Man is a cross creature - yet cannot endure to be crossed. He would have a "touch me not" written upon himself - but who would chide the dog for barking, when the thief is approaching! Sin is like a nettle, which stings when it is gently touched - but hurts not when it is roughly handled. Beloved, this rough hewing of reproof is but to square us for the celestial building. As for flatterers, they may be named the devils upholsterers. They no sooner see men troubled at their lusts - than they are for laying pillows under their elbows! But let such know, that their lack of the fire of zeal - will be punished with the fire of Hell. He is an unskillful artist - who paints deformities with the loveliest of colors.

Reprehension should tread upon the heels of transgression. The plaster should be applied - as soon as the wound is received. It is easier to extinguish a burning match - than a burning house. Gentle medicine will serve for a new distemper - but chronic diseases require powerful remedies. The sword of reproof should be drawn against the offence - and not against the offender. Man thinks this cup is not sufficiently bitter - unless he mingles it with his wormwood and gall. But the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. The severest reproofs of the godly are not mortal - but medicinal. They are to raise the dead to life - and not put the living to death. Who knows how much the kindness of a reprover - may tame the insolence of an offender. He who hates reproof is brutish. He is brutish, like an angry dog, that snarls and bites while the festering thorn is being taken out of his foot! Or like a wicked horse, that kicks the groomer while he is rubbing off the dirt.

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over." The spaniel loses the prey - by barking at the game. The presence of a multitude - makes a man take up an unjust defense, rather than lie down under just shame. It is better to censure a man in private - than to spread his guilt by proclamation. How many do that in the market, which they should do in the closet! Sin is a slippery mire; if we attempt to help others out, and do not - we sink them the deeper. Remember, tender lambs, if straying, must be gently restored to the fold.

14. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to take up every duty in point of performance; and lay down in point of dependence. When the purest duties have been performed - the purest mercies should be implored. Many have passed the rocks of gross sins - who have suffered shipwreck upon the sands of self-righteousness. Some people live more upon their customs - than they do upon Christ; more upon the prayers which they make to God - than upon the God to whom they make their prayers. This is, for the redeemed captive to reverence the sword - instead of the hand which wrought his rescue! The Name of God with a sling and a stone - will do more than Goliath with all his armor. Duties are but dry pits, though ever so meticulously wrought - until Christ fills them. Reader, I would neither have you be idle in the means - nor make an idol of the means. Though it be the mariner's duty to weigh his anchor, and spread his sails - yet he cannot make his voyage until the winds blow. The pipes will yield no conveyance, unless the springs yield their concurrence.

What is hearing without Christ - but like a cabinet without a jewel? What is receiving without Christ - but like a glass without a cordial? We can only ascend to Heaven - upon that ladder which was let down from Heaven. The most diligent saint - has been the most self-distrusting saint, "that I

may gain Christ and be found in Him - not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law - but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." If you are found in your own righteousness, you will be lost by your own righteousness. That garment which was worn to shreds on Adam's back - will never make a complete covering for you.

Duties may be good crutches to go upon - but they are bad "Christs" to lean upon. When Augustus Caesar desired the senate to join some person with him in the consulship, they replied, "They held it as a great dishonor to him - to have anyone joined with him, who was so capable himself." It is the greatest disparagement that Christians can offer to Christ - to put their services in the scale with His suffering. The beggarly rags of the first Adam - must never be put on with the princely robe of the second Adam!

Man is a creature too much inclined to warm himself by the sparks of his own fire - though he lies down in eternal flames for kindling them! Though Noah's dove made use of her wings - yet she found no rest but in the ark. Duties can never have too much of our diligence - or too little of our confidence. "For he who is entered into rest - has ceased from his own works." A believer does not perform good works to live - but he lives to perform good works.

It was a haughty saying of one, "I will not accept of Heaven, gratis." But he shall have Hell as his debt - who will not take Heaven as a gift. "For we are the true circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh." A true Christian stands at as great distance from trusting in the best of his services - as in the worst of his sins. He knows that the greatest part of his holiness - will not make the least part of his justifying righteousness. He has unreservedly subscribed to that sentiment, "That when we have done all - we are only unprofitable servants." When we have kept all the commandments, there is one commandment above all to be kept; that is, "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags!" In most of our works - we are abominable sinners; and in the best of our works - we are unprofitable servants. Our works are not like the crystal streams of a living fountain - but like the impure overflowings of an unruly torrent. "I will go in in the strength of the Lord God. O Sovereign Lord, I will proclaim Your righteousness, Yours alone." You see, beloved, the righteousness of Christ is to be magnified - when the righteousness of a Christian is not to be mentioned.

It is hard for us to be "nothing in ourselves" amidst all our works; and to be "all things in Christ," amidst all our weakness. To undertake every duty - and yet to overlook every duty - is a lesson which none can learn - but Christ's scholars. Our obedience, at best, is like good wine - which relishes of a bad cask. The 'Law of God' will not accept ninety-nine for a hundred. It will not accept the coin of our obedience, either short in quantity - or base in quality. The duty it exacts, is as impossible to be performed in this our fallen state - as the penalty it inflicts is intolerable to be endured in our eternal state!

We do not sail to glory - in the salt sea of our own tears - but in the red sea of the Redeemer's blood! The cross of Christ - is the only key of paradise! We owe the life of our souls - to the death of our Savior. It was His going into the fiery furnace - which keeps us from the devouring flames! Man lives - by death: his natural life is preserved by the death of the creature; and his spiritual life by the death of the Redeemer.

Moses must lead the children of Israel through the wilderness - but Joshua must conduct them into Canaan. While we are in the wilderness of this world, we walk under the guidance of Moses - but when we enter the spiritual Canaan, it must be under the leadings of Jesus. The same hand which shut the doors of Hell - to keep us out of perdition - has opened the gates of Heaven - to admit us to its eternal fruition.

Those who carry their vessel of hope to the puddle of their own merit - will never draw the water of comfort, from the fountain of God's mercy! Luther compares the law and gospel - to earth and Heaven. We should walk in the earth of the law, in point of obeying; and in the Heaven of the gospel, in point of believing. It was the saying of one, that "He would swim through a sea of brimstone - if he might but arrive safely at Heaven." Ah, how would natural men sing - if they could but soar to Heaven upon the pinions of their own merit! The sunbeams of Divine justice - will soon melt such weak and wax wings!

He who has no better righteousness than what is of his own providing, shall meet with no higher happiness than what is of his own deserving. "They disregarded the righteousness from God - and attempted to establish their own righteousness." If such people rest not from duty - then they rest in duty. They are determined to sail in their own ship - though they sink in the ocean! I would that all such did but know, that though good works are not destroyed by Christ - yet they must be denied for Christ. When a looking-glass reflects the brightness of the sun, there is but an acknowledgment of what was - not an addition of what was not. A well-drawn picture praises a beautiful face; not by communicating what it lacks - but by presenting what it has. As God has none the less - for the mercy He gives; so He has none the more - for the duty He receives. Man is such a debtor to God, that he can never pay his obligation to God; yes, the more we pay Him - the more we owe Him for our payments.

It is Christ alone, who is the righteousness of God to man, and man to God. We are so far from paying the utmost farthing - that at the utmost, we have not a farthing to pay! That man will be a miserable spectacle of vanity - who stands upon the lame feet of his own ability.

15. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to take up his contentment, in God's appointment. As many do the things which God dislikes - so they dislike the things which God does. If the children of Israel obtain no meat for their lusts - then they are weary of their lives. They are delighted with their burning corruption - but are enraged with their trying condition. This is nothing less, than to be in love with their malady - and to hate their remedy. They studied more how to gratify their humor - than to satisfy their hunger. They complained of the shoe - but the disease lay in the foot.

Those who think too highly of their own deserts - will think too lowly of their estates. It is the task of God - to satisfy the desires of men. He can do everything - but they are not pleased with anything.

There is no man, but who has received more good - than he has deserved. Likewise, there is no man, who has done less evil - than has been inflicted upon him. He should therefore be contented, though he sees but little good. And he should not be discontented, though he suffers much evil. "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said - Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Where the seal of faith has been set to the bond of truth - He who has said it will maintain you in the lack of earthly provisions. When a

wicked man's purse grows light - his heart grows heavy. When he has something without to afflict him - he has nothing within to support him. That well known Scripture is unknown to him: "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

It is hard to carry a full cup - without spilling; or to stand under a heavy load - without bowing. It is difficult to walk in the clear day of prosperity - without wandering; or in the dark night of adversity - without stumbling. But from whatever point the wind blows - the skillful mariner knows how to meet it with his sails.

Repenting is the act of Christian men - but repining is the act of carnal men. Though their estates are like a fruitful paradise - yet their hearts are like a barren wilderness. Such people are like those spiders - which suck poison out of the sweetest flowers - and by an infernal chemistry, extract dross from the purest gold!

Outward prosperity cannot create inward tranquility. Hearts-ease is a flower which never grew in the world's garden. The ground of a wicked man's trouble, is not because he has not enough of the creature - but because he cannot find enough in the creature to satisfy him! His possession is great enough - but his disposition is not good enough.

Some are satisfied under the hand of God, because they are not sensible of the hand of God. They never fret, because they never feel.

We are not to be troubled - that we have no more from God; but we are to be troubled - that we do no more for God. Christian, if you are well pleased with your eternal salvation - should not you be well pleased with your temporal condition?

Believers should be like sheep, which change their pastures at the will of the shepherd; or like vessels in a house, which stand to be filled or emptied - at the pleasure of their owner. He who sails upon the sea of this world in his own ship - will sink at last into a bottomless ocean. Never were any their own carvers - but they were sure to cut their own fingers. A covetous man is fretful - because he has not as much as he desires. But a gracious man is thankful - because he has more than he deserves. It is true, I have not the sauce - but then, I merit not the meat. I have not the lace - but then, I deserve not the coat. I want that which may support my vanity - but I have that which supplies my necessity. "If we have food and clothing, we will be content with these." Here is the flesh of the creature to fill us - and the fleece of the creature to cover us.

It is reported of a woman who, being sick, was asked whether she was willing to live or die; she answered, "Whatever God pleases." "But," said one "if God should refer it to you, which would you choose?" "Truly," replied she, "I would refer it to Him again." Thus, that man obtains his will from God - whose will is subjected to God. A contented heart is an even sea in the midst of all storms. It is like a tree in autumn, which secures its life - when it has lost its leaves. When worthy Mr. Hern lay upon his deathbed, his wife, with great concern, asked him what was to become of her and her large family? he answered, "Peace, sweetheart. That God who feeds the ravens, will not starve the Hens." If the child questions his father's affection - he will soon be dubious of his father's provision. Our most golden conditions in this life are set in bronze frames. There is no gathering a

rose without a thorn - until we come to Immanuel's land. If there were nothing but showers - we would conclude the world would be drowned. If there were nothing but sunshine - we would fear the earth would be burned. Our worldly comforts would be a sea to drown us - if our crosses were not a plank to save us! By the fairest gales - a sinner may sail to destruction! By the fiercest storms - a saint may sail to glory! When our circumstances become necessitous, our corruptions become impetuous; they rage the more, because stopped by the dam of poverty. If God withholds the Hand of providence, we employ the tongue of insolence. We too frequently bite at the stone - until we break our teeth! We murmur because we are in want - and therefore want because we murmur.

Contentment is the best food to preserve a sound man - and the best medicine to restore a sick man. It resembles the gilt on bitter pills, which makes a man take them - without tasting their bitterness. Contentment will make a cottage look as fair as a palace. He is not a poor man who has but little - but he is a poor man who desires much. In this sense, the poorest are often the richest, and the richest the poorest.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." This is too precious a flower to grow in every soil. Though every godly man may not always be contented - yet every truly contented man is godly. "The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need." Such a Scripture will bring us plenty in scarcity; and fullness out of emptiness. The water in a cloud soon ceases - but the water of a fountain continues. As Seneca said to Polybius, "Never complain of your hard condition, so long as Caesar is your friend." So say I to you, "Never complain of your hard condition, Christian, so long as Jesus is your Friend!"

Let your condition be ever so flourishing - it is a Hell without Him. Let your condition be ever so fluctuating - it is a Heaven with Him. Can that man lack anything - who enjoys Christ; or can he be said to enjoy anything - who is without Christ? Why should Hagar lament the loss of the water in her bottle - while there is a well so near?

16. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to be more in love with the employment of holiness, than with the enjoyment of happiness.

Thousands of professors prize the wages of religion above its works - but a Christian will prize its works above its wages. Give me that singular preacher, who prefers his labor - to his lucre; and who prefers the flock he attends - to the fleece he obtains. Some men serve God - that they may serve themselves upon God. He loves not religion sincerely, who does not love it superlatively.

"Israel is an empty vine - he brought forth fruit for himself." Empty - and yet fruitful; fruitful - and yet empty. Thus that fertility which springs up from the bitter roots of self - has nothing but vacuity in the account of God.

Such professors do not make gain stoop to godliness - but godliness to gain; which is, as if a man should fit his foot to the shoe - when he should fit the shoe to his foot. In all the good a carnal man does for God - he seeks himself more than God. The clock of his heart will stand still - unless its wheels of profit are oiled.

If the virgin should only give her hand in matrimony for her bridegroom's riches - she would not espouse herself unto his person - but unto his portion. This would not make a marriage with him -

but a merchandise of him. Augustine has an excellent saying; "He loves not Christ at all - who does not love Christ above all."

"You seek Me, not because you saw the miracles - but because you ate the loaves, and were filled." Christ was the object of their actions - but self was the end of their actions. They came to Christ - to serve their own turns; and when their turns were served - they then turned away their service. When the loaves were gone - these 'disciples' were gone. When He left off feeding them - they left off following Him!

Reader, until you can love the naked truth - you will never love to go naked for the truth. Most people are mercenary in those works, wherein they should be filial and free. They look more after the streams - than upon the spring from whence they constantly run; and admire the beams more than the sun from whence they are emitted. The desire for pardon, is the only spring of a servile man's duty; he plies his prayers, as sailors do their pumps - only in a storm, or when fearful of sinking!

"And now, O Father, glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You." Christ prayed for glory, more for the Father's sake, Who bestowed it - than for His Own sake, Who received it. A true Christian not only desires grace that God may glorify him - but that he also may glorify God. Could carnal men find the mercies of God - they would never seek the God of mercies. Could they tell how to be well without Him - they would never desire to come to Him. God has but little of their society - except when they can find no other company.

Worldlings, instead of looking upon godliness as their greatest gain, will look upon gain as their greatest godliness. They love religion, not for the beauty existing in it - but for the dowry annexed to it. They are like the fox, that follows the lion for the prey that is falling from him. If there is no honey in the pot - such wasps will no longer hover about it!

Mark how the long-suffering God expostulates with self-seeking Israel, "During those seventy years of exile, when you fasted and mourned in the summer and at the festival in early autumn, was it really for Me that you were fasting? And even now in your holy festivals, you don't think about Me but only of pleasing yourselves." In fasting and in festivals - their eyes were not cast upon God - but upon themselves! They did not forget to eat when they were hungry - but they forgot to praise God when they were full. Their greediness swallowed up all their thankfulness.

Reader! Remember that God will shut your duties out of Heaven - if your duties shut Him out on earth. I have heard an account of a woman, who had fire in one hand and water in the other - and was asked what she was going to do with them. She answered, "With this fire I am going to burn up all the joys of Heaven; and with this water I am going to quench all the flames of Hell; that my services to my God might neither arise from the fear of punishment, nor hope of reward." The less emphasis you lay upon your own works - the more will God lay upon them. Those who are most righteous in themselves - are least righteous to God. God has three sorts of servants in the world: some are 'slaves' and serve Him from a principle of fear; others are 'hirelings' and serve Him for the sake of wages; and the last are 'sons' and serve Him under the influence of love.

Now a hireling will be a changeling. He who will not serve God except something is given to him - would serve the devil, if the devil would give him more! Anyone shall have his works - who will but augment his wages. Many are advocates for the enjoyment of happiness, and enemies to the

employment of holiness.

Demetrius cries up the goddess Diana; yet it was not her temple - but her silver shrines, he so much adored. He was more in love with her wealth - than with her worship. "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business." If her temple had been demolished, their trade would have been diminished. "Does Job serve God for nothing?" Yes, for Job served God when he had nothing. He was as pious in his poverty - as in his plenty. In this sense, that man who will not serve God for nothing - is nothing in His services.

Love does not serve for selfish returns - but it amply pays itself in serving its beloved. It is reported of one, who, being asked for whom he labored most, he answered, "For my friends." And being asked for whom he labored least, he answered, "For my friends." Love does most - and yet thinks least of what it does.

Hypocrites are more in love with the gold of the altar, than with the God of the altar. "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for you devour widows houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you shall receive the greater damnation!" They painted their avarice in religious colors, and put the arms of Christ upon the devil; that iniquity might, by that means, be esteemed under the garb of religion. They fasted all the day - that they might feed upon the widows' houses at night. They hatched the birds of oppression in the nests of devotion. These spiders weaved the web of their own works - to catch the flies of other men's wealth! The observation of Augustine is founded on much truth: "There is often a vast difference between the face of the workman - and the heart of the workman." But a man influenced by the Lord in His services, though he may find self in them as an intruder - yet he will not allow self in them as a leader. A Christian is more in love with his present duty - than he is with his future glory. Paul was contented to stay a while out of Heaven - that he might be the instrument of bringing other souls into Heaven. "To me - to live, is Christ, and to die is gain." His life was most useful to others - but his death was most profitable to himself. By dying, he might have enjoyed his inheritance sooner; but by living, God made his usefulness greater. Were it possible to put those things asunder - which God Himself has joined together, a Christian would rather be holy without any happiness - than happy without any holiness.

Luther had this expression; "I had rather be in Hell with Christ - than in Heaven without Christ." Indeed, Hell itself would be a Heaven - if Christ was in it; and Heaven would be a Hell - if Christ was not in it. These are hard sayings to an uncircumcised ear - but the real choice of every renewed heart. A gracious man makes this request of his soul: "Lord, let me rather have a gracious heart - than a great estate; let me rather be pious without prosperity - than prosperous without piety." Though he may love many things besides true religion - yet he would not love anything above true religion. The earth is our work-house - but Heaven is our store-house. The earth is a place to run in - and Heaven is a place to rest in.

17. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to be more employed in searching his own heart - than he is in censuring other men's states.

Those bishops are too busily employed - who lord it over another man's diocese. "Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and look well to your herds." It is a matter of greater importance, to know the state of our hearts - than the state of our flocks.

Censorious men commonly take up magnifying glasses - to look at other people's imperfections; and diminishing glasses - to look at their own enormities.

While Plato was entertaining a few friends at an elegantly spread table Diogenes, a famous cynic philosopher, trampled upon it saying, "I trample upon the pride of Plato!" To whom Plato immediately replied, "Yes, but with greater pride in Diogenes!"

They are the first to find fault - in whom there is much fault to be found. "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye - and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." He who blows into a heap of dust - is in danger of putting out his own eyes.

"What makes you better than anyone else?" Reader, are there not the same lusts lodging in your heart - which are reigning in other men's lives? The reason why there is so little self-condemnation, is because there is so little self-examination. For lack of this, many people are like travelers, skilled in other countries - but ignorant in their own.

It is an evidence that those tradesmen are bankrupt in their estates - who are afraid to look into their books. Likewise, it is plain that there is something wrong within, among all those who are afraid to look within. The trial of ourselves - is the ready road to the knowledge of ourselves. He who buys a jewel in a box, deserves to be deceived with a fake stone.

Reader, would you see God? then cast your eyes upwards; would you see yourself? then cast you eyes inward. Contemplation is a magnifying glass to see our Savior in - but examination is a looking-glass to view ourselves in. Are we then in the narrow way, which leads to life - or in the broad way which leads to death? Are we Christ's bride - or Satan's harlots? Are our hearts chairs for vice to sit on - or thrones for grace to rule in?

Nero thought no person chaste - because he was so unchaste himself. Such as are troubled with the jaundice - see all things yellow. Those who are most pious - are least censorious. "Who are you that judge another man's servant?" Those who are fellow creatures with men - should not be fellow judges with God. Reader, why will you probe another man's wound - while your own is festering? Take heed that your own vesture is not full of dirt - when you are brushing the dust off your neighbor. Complain not of dirty streets - when heaps of rubbish lie at your own doors! Many people are not happy - unless they are poking their fingers into another's sores. Such are no better in their conduct than crows - which prey only upon carrion. "But let every man prove his own work - and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." For lack of self-examination, men have their accounts to cast up - when they should have them to deliver up. They have their evidences of grace to seek - when they should have them to show. They lie down with such hopes in their beds of rest - with which they dare not lie down in their beds of dust. Conversion begins in consideration. The hasty shower falls fastest - but the soft snow sinks the deepest. As that mariner who is inattentive to his helm, is in danger of wrecking his vessel - so he who knows not himself, is likely to lose himself. "Examine yourselves - to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves." If your heart is not the cabinet of such a jewel - your head will never be graced with a diadem in glory. If you must needs be a judge - then pray sit upon your own bench. I shall ever esteem such to be but religious lepers - who care not for Scripture looking-glasses. He who never cries out, "Woe is me - for I am undone!" will never hear Christ's "Go in peace." Self-examination, is the beaten path to perfection; it is like fire - which not only tries the gold - but purifies it also. The

heathen tell us, that "Know yourself" was an oracle which came down from Heaven. It is this oracle, which will lead us up to the God of Heaven. The sight of yourself in grace - will bring you to the sight of God in glory! The plague of the body is not every man's plague - but the plague of the soul is. If the plague of the soul were known more - the plague of the body would be feared less. Though there may be a more pleasant sight - yet there is not a more profitable sight. Until you know how deep the pit is, into which you are fallen - you will never properly praise that Hand which raises you out of it. The bottom of our diseases - lies in not searching our diseases, to the bottom. So we put on some filthy rags to cover our nakedness - and we then wickedly despise the Savior's righteousness.

"He who trusts his own heart is a fool!" And yet such fools are we - as to trust our own hearts! The Lord searches all hearts by His omniscient eye; but He searches His people's hearts by the eye of His mercy. If a man would know whether the sun shines - it is better to view its beams on the pavement, than its body in the sky. The readiest way to know whether you are in Christ - is to know whether Christ is in you. For the fruit on the tree is more visible - than the root of the tree.

18. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to set out for God at our beginning - and to hold out with God unto the end.

First - To set out for God at our beginning. "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come." In the distillation of strong waters, the first drawn is fullest of spirits. "The first of the first-fruits of your land - you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God." God prizes a Christian in the bud - and delights in the blossoms of youth, above the shavings of old age.

Naturalists inform us, that the most orient pearls, are generated from the morning dew. That field is full of the richest corn - which is cleansed from its noxious weeds in the spring. How pleasant is it to see the thousands of spiritual Israel, seeking the heavenly manna in the morning of their lives. Is it not better to cry for mercy on earth with the publican - than to call for water in Hell with Dives? To discover grace in an old sinner, is well - but to view it in vigorous youth, is better. All the sacrificial animals, were offered to God in their prime. Jesus was carried in triumph upon a colt. No music could ever equalize the Heaven-born cries of new-born babes. When the snow-drops of youth appear in the garden of the church - it shows that there is a glorious summer approaching.

If youth is sick of the will-nots, old age is in danger of dying of the shall-nots. It is hard to cast off the devil's yoke - when we have worn it long upon our necks! "Can a man be born again - when he is old?" Grace seldom grafts upon such withered stocks. An old sinner is nearer to the second death - than he is to the second birth. It is more likely to see his soul taken out of the flesh - than the flesh taken out of his soul. His body is nearer to corruption, than his soul is to salvation. Where the enemy is the strongest - there the victory is the hardest. Usually, where the devil pleads antiquity - he keeps propriety. As there are none so old, as that they should despair of mercy - so there are none so young, as that they should presume on mercy. If God's "today" is too soon for your repentance; your "tomorrow" may be too late for His acceptance. Mercy's clock does not always strike at our beck! The longer poison stays in the body - so much the more harmful are its effects. O how amiable are the golden apples of grace - in the silver pictures of blooming youth! God prizes a young friend - but punishes an old enemy. Old sinners are much like old serpents - the fullest of poison!

It is singularly pleasant to view the Ancient of Days - in infants of days; and to see green pieces of timber - being squared for the celestial building. Blessed are those in whom grace is in its prosperity, while their nature is in its minority. "I have more understanding than my teachers." His youth - was wiser than their age. His dawning was brighter than their noontide. And this was the more admirable, because it was in his youth; for when our lives are the most vigorous - our lusts are the most boisterous.

You teach a dog while he is a pup; and break a horse while he is a colt. A plentiful harvest, is the outcome of an early seed time. Young reader, remember that your youthful sins - lay a foundation for aged sorrows. You have but one arrow to shoot at the mark - and if that is shot at random, God may never put another into your bow!

"I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the ending; the first and the last." He who is the first and the last, should be served from the first to the last. You can never come too soon - to Him who is your beginning; and you can never stay too long - with Him who is your ending. The flower of life is of Christ's setting, and shall it be of the devil's cropping? But what is setting out, without holding out? Mutability is at best but the badge of infirmity. It can only be those trees which are unsound at their roots - which cease from putting forth leaves in their season. Those who at present are inwardly corrupt - will in the future be openly profane. False grace is always declining, until it is wholly lost. But true grace goes from a morning's dawn - unto a meridian splendor. It is just to be cast off from God - for casting off the ways and works of God.

"Be faithful unto death - and I will give you the crown of life." He has a crown for the runner - but a curse for the run-away. God accounts not Himself served at all - if He is not always served. It is not enough to begin our course well - unless it is crowned with perseverance. Some trees put forth fair blossoms - but their flattering spring is turned into an unfruitful winter. Some clear mornings have become overcast with the thickest clouds. The corn which promised a large harvest in the blade of profession, is blasted in the ear. The light remains - no longer than while the sun shines. When God ceases to be gracious - man ceases to be righteous. The flowers of paradise would quickly wither on earth - if they were not watered with drops from Heaven. How have the mighty fallen - when the Almighty has not stood by them! The devil would soon put out our candles - if Christ did not carry them in His lantern. "Do not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." To see a ship sink in the harbor of profession, is more grievous, than if it had perished in the open sea of profaneness.

There goes forth the same power of God - to strengthen a saint - as to quicken a sinner. He who sets us up and makes us holy - must keep us up and make us steady. How many professors have seemed to be just ready to cast an eternal anchor - when a contrary wind has driven them to sea, and they have perished forever! "O Israel and Judah, what should I do with you?" Why, what is the matter? "Your love vanishes like the morning mist and disappears like dew in the sunlight."

Some have beat Jehu's march; they have driven furiously in religion; but within a few years, they have knocked off their chariot wheels. After they have lifted up their hands to God - they have lifted up their heels against Him! That man's beginning was in hypocrisy - whose ending is in apostasy! Reader, you look for happiness as long as God has a being in Heaven - and God looks for holiness as long as you have a being on earth. "He who endures to the end - shall be saved."

“If any man draws back - My soul shall have no pleasure in him.” He who draws back from his profession on earth - shall be kept back from any possession in Heaven. He that departs in the faith, shall be saved; but he who departs from the faith, shall be damned. That mariner has no praise - who sinks his ship before he comes to the harbor. That soldier obtains no glory - who lays down his weapons in the heat of the battle. Some say, that the chrysolite, which is of a golden color in the morning, loses its splendor before the evening. Such are the glittering shows of hypocrites. Though fiery meteors fall to die on earth - yet fixed stars remain in Heaven. When once that fire which is laid on God’s altar is kindled, it shall no more be quenched. True grace may be shaken in the soul - but it cannot be shaken out of the soul. It may be a bruised reed - but it shall never be a broken reed.

Christ is more tender of His mystical body - than He was of His natural body. Though a believer may fall foully - yet he shall never fall finally. The gates of Hell shall not prevail - against the heirs of Heaven. The fiery darts of the devil, which in themselves are intentionally mortal - shall be to saints eventually medicinal. These bees may sting him - but their venom shall not destroy him. His light may be eclipsed for a time; but the sun will break forth again.

Under the law, the Lord had His evening sacrifice - as well as His morning sacrifice. “No man who puts his hand to the plough - and looks back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Our labors are never fulfilled, until our days are fulfilled. There is nothing pleasant - but what is constant. Though a saint may sometimes be weary in doing the work of the Lord - yet he is at no time weary of doing the work of the Lord. There may be a suspension of the operation of grace; but there cannot be a destruction of the being of grace. This babe may lie upon a sick-bed; but it shall never lie upon a death-bed.

Christ is called the Finisher of our faith - as well as the Author of our faith. There is as much necessity for the Spirit to keep up our graces-as there is to bring forth our graces.

Indifference in true religion - is the first step to apostasy from religion. Though Christians are not altogether kept from falling; yet they are kept from falling altogether. They may show an apathy toward Christ for a time; but they shall not depart from Christ forever. The trees of righteousness may have their winter; but they shall also have their spring. There is never so low an ebb - but there is also as high a tide.

Christians are like crocodiles - which grow until they die! They are like the moon, which increases in her beauty, until she is at the full. They have no desire of putting off the robes of purity - while they are on this side of eternity. They wish to hold the sword of piety in their hands - until God sets the crown of glory upon their heads!

Professing reader, if piety is not the way of safety - why do you set forth in it? And if piety is the way - why do you shrink back from it? Usually those who ride fastest at the beginning of their journey - are the first who talk of halting on the road.

See what a sparkling diamond there is set in the apostle’s crown, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith! Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of glory!” Paul the warrior - was Paul the conqueror. And Paul the conqueror - was Paul the crowned. Jesus Christ is never a father of abortive children. Where He gives strength to conceive, He gives strength to bring forth. He turns the bruised reed - into a brazen pillar; and the smoking flax - into

an enduring flame.

19. Another singular action of a consistent Christian, is to take all the shame of his sins unto himself - and to give all the glory of his services unto Christ.

Many people take all the glory of their services to themselves - and lay all the share of their sins on Christ; as if He who died on earth to redeem us from sin - should live in Heaven to confirm us in sin. The devil may flatter us - but he cannot force us. He may tempt us to sin - but he cannot compel us to sin. He could never come off a conqueror, were he not joined by our forces. The fire is his - but the tinder is ours. He could never enter into our houses - if we did not set open our doors.

Many complain for lack of liberty - who thrust their feet into Satan's fetters! "Then the man replied - The woman You gave to be with me - she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate." As if he had said, "I took that as a gift from her - whom You gave as a gift to me." It is the worst of sins - to charge God with our sins! They may receive their punishment from Him - but they shall never receive their temptation from Him. He cannot be the unrighteous upholder - of what He is the righteous avenger. O blasphemy, to charge that sun with darkness, by which the Heavens are enlightened; or that sea with a lack of moisture, by which the whole earth is watered! Our impiety is as truly the offspring of our souls - as our posterity is the issue of our bodies. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Whatever is truly good - has its origin in God. Now the same spring cannot send forth - both sweet and bitter waters. It is a known rule - contraries destroy each other.

Many have more leaves to cover their wickedness - than they have garments to cover their nakedness. They lay their heresy at the door of the sanctuary; and call their diabolical seductions, 'evangelical revelations'. As if the Father of light, could bring forth the darkness of sin. What is this, but to set a crown of lead, upon a head of gold! We can defile ourselves - but we cannot cleanse ourselves. The sheep can go astray alone - but can never return to the fold, without the assistance of the shepherd. Until we taste the bitterness of our own misery - we shall never relish the sweetness of God's mercy. Until we see how foul our sins have made us - we shall never pay our tribute of praise to Christ for washing us. If we were left to ourselves but for a moment - we would destroy ourselves in that moment!

Many advance themselves - to depreciate Christ; but we should look upon ourselves as nothing - and Christ as everything. "I am less than the least of all God's people." Paul was willing to be esteemed a cipher - so that Christ might stand for a figure. Well may we abase ourselves for His advancement, who abased Himself for our salvation. "Let Luther be accounted a devil - so long as Christ may be exalted as Savior!" said that flaming seraph of himself.

"Without Me, you can do nothing." The pen may as soon write without the hand which holds it - as our hearts work unless the Spirit moves them. Not only the enjoyment of our talents, is from God; but the improvement of them, is from Him. "Lord, Your pound has gained ten pounds." It is not my pains - but Your pound which has done it. The children of God are like a clock, which soon stands still - if it is not wound up. "Did not our hearts burn within us!" But how long did the flame last? All the time He talked with them. When He gave over breathing on them - their fuel gave over burning. Gracious hearts are like the moon in the heavens - which shines not by its own splendor. He who

takes the brick - must give the straw to make it. There is no water - unless he smites the rock; nor fire - unless he strikes the flint.

If He calls us to the work of angels - He will supply us with the strength of angels. "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." A Christless soul - is also a strengthless soul. Man is indebted to God for what he has - but God is not indebted to man for what he does. "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever!" The humble heart knows no foundation but God's grace; and the upright man knows no end but God's glory.

Whatever action has God for its author - has God for its center. A circular line makes its ending, where it had its beginning. Reader, take heed of turning a sacred privilege, into a privy sacrilege. If God gives that grace, which is not due to you - will you deny the praise, which is due to Him? The wicked make their end - their god; but we make God - our end. The sky is made more glorious by one sun - than by all the stars which stud the heavens. Thus Jesus Christ has more glory given to Him from one saint - than from all the world besides. He takes more pleasure in their prayers - and is more honored by their praise.

"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do - do all to the glory of God." From the lowest act of nature, to the highest act of grace, there is no argument for the pride of man - but every argument for the praise of God. If He makes our nature gracious - we should make His name glorious. He that would be stealing the honor of God - is not worthy to receive the honor of a man.

Caesar once said to his opponent, "Either I will be Caesar - or nobody." So the Lord says, "Either I will be a great God - or no God." That man disparages the glory of the sun - who sets it upon a level with the twinkling stars. The glory of God is the golden mark - at which all the arrows of obedience are shot, otherwise they fall short of their mark. The body has two eyes - but the soul must have but one; and that so firmly fixed upon Christ, as never once to glance beside Him. A single eye is fittest for a single object.

"When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying - The gods have come down to us in the form of men!" But do they take that glory to themselves, which is idolatrously given to them from others? No! "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you." As if they had said, "We are so far from possessing the glorious perfections of God, that we are clothed with all the weaknesses and sins of men."

Ungodly Herod was not like Paul and Silas, "The people gave a shout, saying - This is the voice of a god, not of a man!" What the people gave foolishly - he took fearlessly. "Immediately, because Herod did not give glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died!" Ah, how soon this worm-eaten wretch - was a wretch eaten up by worms! Every little river pays its tribute to the great sea - and shall we refuse ours to the great God? As there is no time, in which God is not blessing His children - there should be no time, in which His people are not praising Him. As He designs our happiness, in all He does - it is but reasonable that we should seek His honor in all we do. We have no way to turn the streams unto God, the ocean of all bounty - but through the pipes of gratitude.

"Giving thanks unto the Father who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." It is very fit - that He should be magnified by us; when He makes us fit - to be glorified with

Him. As the best of means should make us fruitful, so the least of mercies should make us thankful. "The twenty-four elders fall down and worship the one who lives forever and ever! And they lay their crowns before the throne and say - You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power!" Whatever ointment is poured out upon Christ's head, will run down to the skirts of His garment. What a saint gives to Christ in copper, shall be returned to him in silver! Yes, the only way to keep our crowns on our heads - is to cast them down at His feet!

20. The last singular action of a consistent Christian, is that he values his heavenly inheritance, above all earthly possessions.

"God has reserved a priceless inheritance for His children. It is kept in Heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay." "Our citizenship is in Heaven!"

Some say, that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush - but surely such a bird in the bush, is worth two in the hand. If others dote upon the streams - let us admire the fountain. Socrates, being asked what his native country was, answered, "I am a citizen of the whole world." But ask a Christian what his native country is - and he will answer, "I am a citizen of all Heaven!" Believers build their tombs - where worldlings build their habitations. The men of the world - fix their hearts upon the things of the world. This fleeting world, is the cabinet in which they lock up all their jewels! Though God has given the earth to beasts - yet such beasts are men - as to give themselves to the earth!

It was the saying of a cursed cardinal, "I prefer a part in the honors of Paris - to a part in the happiness of paradise." What is the glimmering of a candle, compared to the shining of the sun? or the value of dirt, compared with gold? Foolish children are taken up more with fleeting pleasures - more than with eternal glory. Thus while the shadow is embraced, the substance is neglected. That man who is a laboring bee, for earthly prosperity; will be but an idle drone, for heavenly felicity. "If you are risen with Christ - seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God."

There is no need of blotting out the characters of our affections - but of writing them on fairer paper. There is no necessity for drying up these running waters - but for diverting them into their proper channels. Why should we wholly destroy these valuable plants - when they might thrive so well in a better soil? He who looks upon Heaven with desire - will look upon earth with disdain. Our affections were made for the things which are above us - and not for the things which are about us.

What is an earthly manor - compared to a heavenly mansion! As carnal things seem small to a spiritual man - so spiritual things appear small to a carnal man. There is no desiring, and living for things, which are beyond the sphere of our own knowledge. Heaven is to the worldling - as a mine of gold which is buried deep in the earth - he does not realize that it exists. But if he had the eyes of an eagle to see it - he would wish for the wings of an eagle to soar to it.

How little would the great world seem to us - if the great God were not so little in us! Either men have no thoughts of a future state - or else they have low thoughts of a future state. If we had souls without any bodies - then there would be no need of the earth to keep us; if we had bodies without any souls - there would be no need of Heaven to crown us. Such as have no present holiness - are for a present happiness.

“Many are saying - who will show us any good?” Any good will serve those - who know not the chief good. But David adds, “O Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.” O how sordid is it for men to prefer the garlic and onions of Egypt - to the milk and honey of Canaan! Visible trifles to them - are better than invisible realities. They mind the present world so much - as if it would never have any end; and the eternal world so little - as if it would never have a beginning.

Reader, why should you be so taken up with your riches - when you will be so soon taken from your riches? Why do you dote upon a flower - which may wither in an hour? As you are traveling beyond the world - it would be your wisdom to be trading above the world. But alas, such are not easily awakened - who fall so fast asleep on the world's pillow! When the Gauls had tasted the wine of Italy - they asked where the grapes grew; and would never rest until they came there. Thus may you cry, “O that I had the wings of a dove - that I might fly away and be at rest!” A believer is willing to lose the world - for the enjoyment of grace. He is willing to leave the world - for the fruition of glory. As the worst on this side of eternity, compared with Hell - is mercy; so the best on this side of eternity, compared with Heaven - is misery. There is no more comparison to be made between earth - and Heaven; than there is between a piece of rusty iron - and refined gold.

Augustine says, “The hope of immortal life - is the life of our mortal lives.” It is the expectation of a future glorious inheritance, which is the Jacob's staff of saints - with which they walk through this dark pilgrimage. Because we have hope in Christ, after this life - we may be of all men the most comfortable!

Though we have desires in the world - yet we have no desires after the world. “In this world we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling.” A believer longs most for that place - where he shall be best. He not only grows in grace - but groans for glory. Perfection is the boundary of the strongest expectation. As it is satisfied with nothing less - so it looks for nothing more. Everything in eternity - is wound up to its highest capacity. It is in Heaven, that mercy will be received unmixed - and majesty viewed unveiled. What is a worthless pebble - compared with a matchless diamond!

What a sweet salutation is that of the Savior to His servant, “Enter into the joy of your Lord!” O, what joy shall enter into the believer - when he shall enter into the joy of his Redeemer! Then the vessels of mercy, shall have sea-room enough - in the ocean of glory!

Those whom love has closely united together - cannot contentedly dwell forever asunder. “Come, you who are blessed by My Father - inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world!” That which makes Hell so full of horror - is that it is below all hopes; and that which makes Heaven so full of splendor - is that it is above all fears. Hell is a night - without the return of day; Heaven is a day - free from the approach of night. Who would not seek after glory with the greatest diligence, and wait for glory with the greatest patience; seeing we increase the interest, while we wait for the principle.

There are some deluded professors, who aspire after earthly grandeur; as if the place where saints are crucified, were the place where they are glorified. This were to consider the church, in a triumphant condition, rather than a militant condition. The ark of the church, which is now tossed upon a tumultuous sea - shall then rest in the harbor of eternal tranquility.

“In My Father’s house are many mansions - I go to prepare a place for you.” Our Redeemer is our forerunner. He who takes possession of us on earth - takes possession for us in Heaven. As we are not long here without Him - so He will not be long there without us. Here on earth - all the world is not enough for one carnal man; but there in eternity - one Heaven shall be enough for all Christians. In this life - there are showers of tears which fall from the saint’s eyes; but in that eternal life - there shall be a perpetual sunshine of glory in the saint’s heart.

Many temptations may accost a Heaven-born soul - but no temptation shall finally prevail against him. Flying birds are never taken in a fowler’s snare. What is all that we enjoy here on earth; but as a dying spark - of that living flame! as a languishing ray - of that illustrious sun! or as a small drop - of that overflowing spring!

“You love Him, though you have not seen Him. And though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy!” If there is so much delight in believing - oh, how much is there in beholding! What is the wooing day, compared to the wedding day! What is the sealing of the will, compared to the enjoyment of the inheritance! What are the foretastes of glory, compared to the fullness of glory! The good things of that life are so great - as not to be measured; they are so many - as not to be enumerated; and so precious - as not to be estimated!

If the picture of holiness is so lovely - in its rough draft; how lovely a piece will it be - in all its perfections! Every grace which is here seen in its minority - shall be seen there in its maturity.

## -5-III. APPLICATIONS

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### III. APPLICATIONS

Having dispatched that which is doctrinal - I now come to the discussion of that which is practical. And I shall here propose two considerations:

Firstly, for the erection of singular principles.

Secondly, the direction of singular practices.

Application #1 Twenty PRINCIPLES which a believer should walk by.

Natural men obey natural principles - and spiritual men obey spiritual principles. No man can expect that bitter roots - should produce sweet fruits. Though civil principles may be kindled at the torch of nature - yet sacred principles are lighted at the blaze of Scripture. Now there are twenty singular principles which I shall consider, as the rise and spring of singular practices.

1. The first principle which believers walk by is this: that whatever is transacted by men on earth - is eyed by the Lord in Heaven. A man may hide God from himself - and yet he cannot hide himself from God. This, even a prodigal could acknowledge, "I have sinned against Heaven - and in Your sight." When a man wishes God to be like himself - it argues that he is wicked; but when he desires to be like God - it indicates that he is virtuous. A false god - would be most acceptable to a false heart. For, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands." They have mouths - but they speak not for our direction; they have eyes - but they cannot see our condition; they have ears - but they cannot hear our supplication; they have hands - but they cannot work our redemption. These were not the gods that made men - but the gods that men made.

"All things are naked and open before the eyes of Him, with whom we have to do." We cannot always see His will in His works - but He can always discover our works in our will. To Him the most hidden roots are as visible - as the uppermost branches. Though the place where we sin, is to men as dark as Egypt - yet to God, it is as light as Goshen. That advice which one gave to his friend privately - is worthy to be adapted publicly. "So act towards men - as in the sight of God; and so pray to God - as in the sight of men." He is a bold thief - who will cut your purse while you look in his face!

"All a man's ways seem right in his own eyes - but the Lord weighs the motives." The Lord sees faults - where men see none. Atoms which are invisible in the candle light of reason - are all made to dance naked in the sun-shine of omniscience! Cato was so grave and so good a man, that none would behave wrongly in his presence: whence it grew to a proverbial caution, "Take heed what you do - for Cato sees you!" How reproachful is it to us - that the eyes of a man should have more effect upon our actions - than the penetrating eyes of God!

God has a clear window into the darkest houses. He sees what is done in them, when none other can. To God's omnipotence, there is nothing impossible; and to God's omniscience, there is

nothing invisible. I never look for those people to strain at gnats - who will easily and greedily swallow camels.

What is the reason that men do the works of darkness - but that they think they do their works in thick darkness? They suppose that no eye sees them - no, not God's eye, which does nothing else but see. "Yet you say - What does God know? Can He judge through thick darkness? Clouds veil Him - so that He cannot see!" Ah, how gladly would the hand of man - draw a veil over the face of God! A sinful man - would be an unseen man! "Pay attention, you stupid people! Fools, when will you be wise? Can the One who shaped the ear - not hear? Can the One who formed the eye - not see?" What, will you make Him deaf - who gives you ears! Will you make Him blind - who gives you eyes! This is acting like a beast among men; and not as a man among beasts. But, "The Lord knows the thoughts of man; He knows that they are futile!" Foolish men think that God does not know the vanity of their thoughts. This is the vainest thought of them all!

Reader, you cannot set down your lusts, in such characters - but what the eyes of God can read them! As He can save in the greatest extremity, so He can see in the deepest obscurity. Though we cannot see God while we live - yet He can see how we live. "His eyes are on the ways of men; He sees their every step. There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide." Man may gild over the leaves of a blurred life, with the profession of holiness; but God can unmask the painted Jezebel of hypocrisy, and lay her naked to her own shame!

Because sin has put out our eyes, we vainly imagine - that it has put out God's eyes! Because we cannot see what God does in Heaven for us; we think, that He cannot see what we do on earth against Him.

Men do not care what sins they do - when they believe that God does not see what sins are done. "They kill the widow and the foreigner, and murder the fatherless. They say - The Lord does not see it. The God of Jacob does not pay attention!" The adulterer waits for the twilight. His sin gets up - when the sun goes down. The time of darkness, pays most tribute to the prince of darkness. There are many that blush to confess their faults, who never blush to commit them. When poor Adam had sinned, he sought not the fairest fruits to satisfy his hunger - but the broadest leaves to cover his nakedness.

It is God's gracious eye placed upon us - which makes us pious; and it is our believing eye fixed on Him - which keeps us pious. What servant is there - who would pilfer, under the view of his master? What soldier would appear a coward, in the presence of his prince?

2. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: that after all his present receivings- he will be brought to his future reckonings.

Thus the certain rich man dealt with his steward, "Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward!" Man's enjoyment of outward blessings, is not a lordship but a stewardship. God communicates those good things of life to men - not that they should lay them up for their own vanity - but that they should lay them out for His glory. The richest man had as poor a beginning - as the poorest; and the poorest will have as rich an end - as the wealthiest.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." Augustine says, "We can never do that - unless we number every day, as our last day." Many put their last day - far

away. They refuse to leave the earth, when the earth is about to take its leave of them. People of the greatest eminence, have anciently had their monitors - to remind them of their mortality. Agathocles, a Sicilian Prince, had his earthen plate set before him, to remind him that he had been a potter. The Roman triumphers in the meridian of their splendor, had a servant behind them, crying to each, "Remember that you are only a man!"

Men, who are gods in office - are too apt to think themselves gods in essence; but the change of the name, can make no change in the man. The royal Psalmist, who was raised to princely dignity, ridicules such a haughty prince's vanity, "I have said, you are gods - but you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler." All human divinity, will soon be shrouded in mortality; and those who would appear as gods before men - shall soon appear as men before God.

Death levels the highest mountains - with the lowest valleys. Death mows down the fairest lilies - as well as the foulest thistles. The robes of illustrious princes, and the rags of destitute peasants, are both laid aside in the wardrobe of the grave. As the cloud and pillar which led Israel through the wilderness, left them on the brink of Jordan - so shall all the glittering shows of life be forgotten, in the solemn article of death!

Then those ungodly mortals, who were determined not to approach the throne of grace - shall be obliged to appear before the throne of judgment. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." At the shrill voice of the last trumpet, every jailer shall deliver up all his prisoners. Now we see the living fall into the arms of death; but then we shall behold the dead awake, and rise to an unchanging life! Then the scattered dust of all Adam's children, shall ride upon the wings of the wind, until it meets together in its own bodies. Then the purchased bodies of saints, shall be claimed by their heavenly Owner. "But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead."

All the various animals which have feasted on human flesh - shall then find that their food was too rich for digestion. The bellies of beasts and whales, are not to be always the bed of God's Jonahs. Death will cut us down - but he shall not eternally keep us down. Now the same glorious Person, who shall come to raise the dead, will also come to judge the dead. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." The same rule which God has given the world to act by - the same rule has He taken to Himself to judge by. Reader, if you obstinately and finally disobey the precious Word of God - revealed from Heaven to you; you must suffer the eternal wrath of God - revealed from Heaven against you. Though you may now obstinately resist the judgments which He sets before your eyes; yet you cannot then resist those judgments, which He will angrily pour out upon your soul.

Poor sinner, will you yet so willfully embrace those poisonous vipers, your lusts, which will so assuredly sting you with the pains of eternal damnation? Why will you rashly pursue anything in this world, which will subject you to the intolerable curse of God in the eternal world? "God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He has ordained." It is the Son of man - by whom the believing world is redeemed; and it will be by the same Son of man - that the whole world shall be judged. He who was guarded to the cross, by a band of soldiers - shall soon be attended to the bench, by a shining company of angels! The

ancient Thebans pictured their judges without eyes - that they might not favor persons; and without hands - to denote that no bribes should be received. "But the Judge of all the earth shall do right." The wills of human judges, are to be regulated by the laws of righteousness; but so glorious is the heavenly Judge, that even the laws of righteousness are regulated by His will. As all His works are great and marvelous - so are all His ways just and righteous.

Reader, there will be no possibility of standing before Christ - but by standing in Christ. What hopes can you entertain of an acquittal at the final judgment, if your conscience condemns you before you appear at the bar?

Those who freight their minds with carnal pleasures, will one day be condemned for carrying contraband commodities. "Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see." This were brave indeed, if it could but be secured forever: but alas, after the flash of lightning - then comes the dreadful clap of thunder, "But know that for all these things - God will bring you to judgment!" This is just as if God had said, "Well, poor sinner, run down the hill as fast as you please; but know, that you will be sure to break your neck at last!" This is the day of God's long-suffering - but the judgment day will be the day of the sinner's long-suffering. Here the cords of patience, do, as it were, tie the hands of vengeance; but our Samson will at last be roused, and break all these cords, and then, woe be to all the Philistines! Sinners may have sparing patience exercised towards them - and yet, not have converting grace revealed in them. All such, at the world's end - will be at their wit's end.

He who now shakes His sword over the hardened sinner's head - will in the great day, sheathe it in his heart! In the awful storm of death, if his vessel be wrecked - there will be no plank to swim to shore upon. "Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks - Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of Their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

Thus, all who refuse and reject Him as a refining fire - must be obliged to meet, and feel Him as a consuming fire! How can they endure the wrath of the Lamb, who have consistently disregarded the death of the Lamb? If the night of death finds them graceless - the day of judgment will find them speechless!

Peter informs us of some, who deridingly challenge God to come to judgment, "In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say - Where is this 'coming' He promised?" These cowards may boast and discharge the artillery of their venom, and appear as conquering heroes now; but when God appears with His naked sword, they will wish for the wings of the wind, with which to make their escape! As a dying man has generally a short resurgence before his departure; and as an expiring candle gives a brighter glare when just going out, so these, in their boasted security - will be surprised with eternal misery! As God's mercy lets no service pass unregarded - so God's justice lets no sin pass unrevenged. He who now takes no account of His coming - will have a sad account to give at His coming.

One observes, that the resurrection of the body, is placed between the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting glory; to show, that only then can the resurrection of the body be a benefit, when

remission of sin precedes it, and eternal life follows it.

It is reported of a Hungarian king, who being extremely dejected, was asked the cause of it by his brother, "O, I have been a great sinner against God!" said he, "and know not how I shall appear before Him in judgment!" His brother ridiculed these thoughts as too melancholy, and as unworthy of the king's thought. The king then made no further reply; but it was customary in that country, that if the executioner sounded a trumpet at any man's door, he was immediately to be brought forth to execution. The king, at midnight, sent the trumpeter to sound an alarm at his brother's door; which so terrified him, that he ran to the king with a trembling heart, a pale and frightful countenance, and besought him to make known, wherein he had offended him. "O brother," said the king, "you have never displeased me; but if the sight of my executioner is so dreadful in your eyes, what must the sight of God's be in mine!"

Reader, if you have uniformly lifted up your rebellious hand against Christ - how will you be able to lift up your guilty head before Christ? "For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil!" If men were to be their own judges - they would never be just judges. But God shall bring every work into judgment. As God is too merciful to condemn the innocent - so He is too just to acquit the guilty!

"For by your words you shall be justified - and by your words you shall be condemned." Though the arrows of idle words, may be shot out of sight for a season; yet they will certainly hereafter, fall down upon the heads of those who discharged them! Reader, if your servant is capable of offending you by his words - is it not as reasonable to suppose that you are capable of offending God with your evil words? "Out of the same mouth proceed both blessing and cursing." There is nothing better - than a good tongue; and there is nothing worse - than an evil tongue. Jesus Christ, will in the great day, pass a sentence - upon every sentence that has passed.

There is in the same rose - honey for the bee, and poison for the spider. The same person who shall say, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" will also say, "Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" As both blessing and cursing proceed out of the mouth of the same man - so both blessing and cursing will come out of the mouth of the same Christ! Man's curse is a curse of wicked execration - but Christ's curse is a curse of righteous execution. As the same wind - may send one vessel into the haven, and sink another in the ocean; so shall the same voice of Christ - doom the sinner to eternal damnation, and welcome the saint to eternal salvation! That same gate which is opened for a citizen to go abroad for recreation, may also be opened for a malefactor to go out to execution!

Reader, how sad is that tragedy - which shall never be ended! On the stage of eternity, the rich man's bags will be emptied - to see how the poor man's box has been filled. Then the charge of the pilgrim's journey, will be examined in the steward's accounts. Ah, how can you hear the doleful knell of an everlasting funeral! Will those transient glances at former prosperity, lessen the intolerable weight of eternal calamity? The wheat and the chaff may grow together - but they shall not always lie together. There may be but of a few moments of breathing, between the sinner - and his everlasting burning! The day of retribution, will prove to him a day of separation. While the wheat is secured in the garner - the tares are consumed in the fire!

Sinner, if you now hold the righteous in derision - you would then give a thousand worlds to be their companion! Then their enjoyments will be incomparably pleasant - while your torments shall be intolerably painful. The sea of damnation will not be sweetened with a drop of compassion! If once you fall into Hell, after millions of ages are elapsed, you will be as far from coming out, as you were at going in! There will not be a sinner in Heaven - to interrupt the joys of saints; nor will there be a saint in Hell - to soften or soothe the anguish of sinners! Those who have the ear-mark of election, and those who have the hand-mark of transgression, shall be put into separate folds.

How will those magistrates appear, who have stained the sword of authority, with the blood of innocence? They have turned its back against the wicked, and whet its edge against the righteous. Many an unjust judge, who now sits confidently on the bench - will then stand tremblingly at the bar!

How will those ministers appear - who like the dog and wolf - combine to macerate and fleece the flock! Who instead of treading out the corn, tread it down! Who instead of nurturing the child - have strangled the child!

How will fair-faced, gilded professors appear - when they shall be found no better than Hell's freeholders! How will they appear - when the painted sepulcher shall be opened - and the dead men's bones disclosed! They will not be judged by the whiteness of their hands - but by the blackness of their hearts! The black hand - must then part with its white glove! That solemn day of judgment, will be too critical - for the hypocritical. All those who now color for show - will then be shown in their own colors.

3. Another principle which believers should walk by, is this: that God bears a greater respect to their hearts- than He does to their works.

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." God looks most - where man looks least. We cannot trust God too much - or ourselves too little. God is our merciful keeper; the heart is our barbarous traitor.

"My son - give Me your heart!" God, who is all in all to us - calls for that which is all in all in us. We may commit our estates - into the hands of men; but we must not commit our hearts - into the hands of any but God. None of our hearts are so good - but He deserves them; and none so bad - but He can refine them. On whom do parents bestow their hearts - but upon their children? And on whom should children bestow their hearts - but upon their parents?

Ah, how unwilling is man to give - what he has no right to keep! As God prefers the heart to everything, such is the wickedness of man - that he will give God anything, but the heart!

"This people draws near unto Me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips - but their heart is far from Me." Heartless operations, are but hearty deceptions. Men may keep their works to themselves, if they refuse to yield their hearts to Jesus Christ. He who regards the heart, without anything; He also will not regard anything, without the heart.

"I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship." He who makes all he has - has a right to have all he makes. The formalist is all for outward activity - and the pietist is all for inward sincerity. The formalist has nothing within him, therefore he is for that which is outward. The pietist has

nothing without him, therefore he is for that which is inward. But it is not the pretense of inward sincerity, which can justify outward impiety. Nor will a show of outward piety - be an excuse for inward hypocrisy.

Though the brain is the spring of cognitive motion - yet the heart is the original spring of vital motion. The heart is the first that lives - and the last that dies. "Wash your heart from wickedness! How long shall vain thoughts lodge within you!" Vain thoughts defile the heart - as well as vile thoughts. Snails leave their slime behind them - as well as serpents. If the mildew takes hold of a single thread - it will soon spread over the whole piece. Though sinful thoughts will rise - yet they must not reign. Though these foul birds may hover over the Christian's heart - yet he does not allow them to build their nests in it! The devil knows, that if there is any choice treasure - it is in our hearts; and he would gladly have the key of these cabinets - that he might rob us of our jewels! A heart which is sanctified, is better than a tongue which is silvered. He who gives only the skin of worship to God - receives only the shell of comfort from God. It is not the bare touching of the strings, which makes an harmonious tune. A spiritual man may pray carnally - but a carnal man cannot pray spiritually. If God's mercies do not eat out the heart of our sins - our sins will soon eat out the heart of our duties! A work which is heartless, is a work which is fruitless. God cares nothing for the decorated cabinet - but for the precious jewel.

It is said of Hannibal, the great Carthaginian commander, that he was the first who went into the field of battle - and the last who came out of it. Thus should it be in all the operations of a Christian - the heart should be the first that comes into the house of God, and the last that goes out of it. In prayer, the heart should first speak the words - and then the words should speak the sentiments of the heart. If the heart is indicting a good matter - the tongue will then be as the pen of a ready writer.

It is observed of the spider, that in the morning, before she seeks her prey, she mends her broken web; and in doing this, she always begins in the middle. And shall those who call themselves Christians, rise and pursue the callings and profits of the world, and yet be unconcerned about the broken webs of their lives, and especially of their hearts?

Those who would have the wells run with wholesome water - should look well to the springs that supply them. The Christian's heart is the guest room - where the King of glory takes up His residence. That which is most worthy in us, should be resigned to Him who is most worthy of us. Good words without the heart, are but flattery! And good works without the heart - are but hypocrisy! Though God pities stumbling Christians - yet He punishes halting hypocrites!

It is reported of Cranmer, that after his flesh and bones were consumed in the flames - his heart was found whole. A gracious man is clothed with sincerity - in the midst of his infirmities. "God is a spirit, and those who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit, and in truth." None can ever give Him the heart of their services, unless they are enabled to give Him their hearts in their services. The sorrowful sighing of the heart in worship - is preferable to the most elevated and harmonious voice. One is the production of grace - the other is the exertion of nature. Pride may be at the root of one - but God is the foundation of the other. One may ravish our ears - but the other ravishes God's heart!

It is said of the Lacedemonians, who were a poor and stupid people - that they offered lean sacrifices to their gods; and that the Athenians, who were a wise and wealthy people - offered fat and costly sacrifices. And yet in their wars, the Lacedemonians had always the mastery of the Athenians. Whereupon, the Athenians went to "the oracle" to know the reason why those should fare worst - who gave most. The oracle returned this answer to them, "That the Lacedemonians were a people, who gave their hearts to their gods; but that the Athenians only gave their gifts to their gods." Thus a heart without a gift - is better than a gift without a heart!

True religion is a sacrifice - but the heart is the altar upon which it must be offered. As the body is at the command of the head which rules it; so should the soul be at the command of God, who gives it. For a man to take his body to the service of God, and leave his soul behind him - is as if a person should send his garments stuffed with straw, instead of making a personal appearance.

4. Another principle by which believers will walk, is this: that there is more final bitterness in reflecting upon sin - than there can be present sweetness in the commission of sin. The 'ways of sin' may have popular approval - but they shall also have divine abhorrence marked upon them. This Delilah may please us for a time - but she will betray us at last! Though Satan's apples may have a fair skin - yet they certainly have a bitter core! Methinks the flaming sword in one hand, and the golden scepter in the other hand - should guard us from the forbidden tree; and make our hearts like wet tinder to all the sparks of Satan.

Reader, if you behold nothing but pleasure in the commission of sin - you will experience nothing but the most dreadful pain in the conclusion of sin. "The wages of sin - is death." All workmen should have their wages; and those who employ you, it is but reasonable that they should pay you. But, however you may delight in the works of sin - you will by no means relish the wages of sin. Ah, what wise man would toil so long in sin's drudgery - whose wages are no better than eternal misery!

Though all sins are not equal in their nature - yet all sins are in their very nature, deadly. The candle of man's life is blown out - by the wind of his lusts! The corruption of nature tends to the dissolution of nature. When the plague was in the Jewish houses - they were immediately to be demolished. It is at that enemy, SIN - which God shoots all His arrows!

Reader, you began to be sinful - when you began to be mortal. If you had never had anything to do with sin - death could never have had anything to do with you. It can only be your impiety which divests you of the chartered blessings of immortality.

Sin is like a serpent in your bosom - which stings you! Sin is like a thief in your closet - who plunders you! Sin resembles poison in the stomach; or a sword to the heart - both of which tend to death! Like John's little book - sin may be sweet in your mouth - but it will be bitter in your belly! However fair iniquity might appear to some, it will only be found like a bleary-eyed Leah to God. The foul dregs - lie at the bottom of the vessel. The golden cup of sin - is filled with the most poisonous ingredients! Sinner, that which is now like a rose flourishing in your bosom - will in a very little time be like a poisoned dagger in your heart! Poor soul, beware of those embraces - which are but signals of destruction. While such a Judas kisses - he kills! While the ivy twines round the oak - it eats out its sap.

If sin were not so delightful - it would not be so deceitful. Like a cunning angler - sin shows the bait, but conceals the hook! Now it presents its present painted beauty - but casts a covering over its future misery. Wickedness is certainly like a river which begins in a quiet spring - but ends in a tumultuous sea.

Every being produces its own likeness. "Do men gather grapes from thorns - or figs of thistles?" The grapes of tranquility cannot grow upon the thorns of impiety. Inward peace - can only be espoused to inward purity. A good way to have conscience untormented - is to have it undefiled. He who made you clean within - will also keep you calm within. A saint cannot so sin as to destroy his grace - but he may so sin as to disturb his peace. The spider cannot destroy the bee-hive - but it may get in and spoil the honey. If you, O man, are found nibbling at the bait - you may justly expect the hook! O think, you who now boast in nothing so much as sin - that there is a time approaching when you will be ashamed of nothing but sin! You will be eternally sinful - but you cannot be eternally joyful. In Hell, all that sugar will be melted, in which this bitter pill of sin was wrapped! Hell is too hot a climate for wanton delights to live in! The pleasures of sin are but for a season - but the torments of unpardoned sin are of an eternal duration. Our first parents soon ate of the forbidden fruit - but the world to this day feels that it is not freed from the miserable consequence of that stolen 'apple'!

Solomon exactly describes sin's rise and fall! "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is grief." Death will turn all the waters of pleasure - into blood. The serpent of sensual delight - always carries a deadly sting in its tail! All the blaze of worldly pomp - will soon end in midnight darkness and horror!

Sinner, will gall and wormwood - ever make you pleasant wine? Will thick and poisonous vapors - ever yield you sweet and wholesome showers? If you pursue sin for profit - you will never profit by your sin.

O that England did but look with Scripture glasses, upon all its departing glories, and solemnly say, "If sin had not been here - our miseries would never have been here." It is better to make your lodgings in a bed of snakes - than in the forbidden bed of sinful lusts! Who would spread the silken sails of the mind - upon the pirate ship of wantonness? When the pale horse of death goes before - the red horse of wrath follows after! When the sinner's body goes to the worms to be consumed - then his soul goes to Hell to be tormented! A wise man knows, that it is far better to forego the pleasures of sin here - than to undergo the pains of wrath hereafter!

Reader, if you delight in sin, I wish you to remember, that your ill-doing, will shortly be your undoing. "What benefit did you reap at that time - from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!" "There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed, feasting lavishly every day." What pleasure does Dives now reap in Hell, from all the choice banquets he sat down to, on earth? "I am in agony in this fire!" The stench and torment of everlasting burnings - will take away the sweetest perfumes which ever covered sin!

Young Joseph chose rather to be a bound prisoner for Christ, than to be an open slave to his lusts. "How can I do this wickedness - and sin against God!" It does not only grieve a saint, that God is displeased at what he does - but that He is dishonored by what he does. He is more distressed for sin which brings evil - than for the evil which sin brings. When the mute son of Croesus saw his

father's life in danger - he cried out so loud in his fright, that his tongue-strings broke, and he exclaimed, "Do not kill King Croesus!" Did Christ open His veins for our redemption, and shall not we open our mouths for His vindication? "The crown is fallen from our heads, woe to us - that we have sinned." Sin is not only a monster, which unmans us; but it is also a tyrant, which uncrowns us. Nay, it not only takes the crown from off the sinner's head - but it also entails the curse upon the sinner's soul.

There are many who vainly suppose that the fountain of their sin is quite dried up, when alas, the streams are only turned into another channel. A hand taken off from sinful practices, without a heart taken off from sinful principles, is only like a field, which having for a time lain fallow, afterward springs up with greater increase! or it is like a stream which having been dammed for a while, at last runs with greater violence, when the sluices are opened!

5. Another singular principle for believers to walk by, is this: that there is the greatest vanity- in all created excellency.

"Vanity of vanities! Everything is vanity!" If this truth were more believed - this world would be less adored. A lady being once told, that the world, in all its glory, was but vanity; returned for answer, "True, I have heard that Solomon said so - but he tried it, before he said it, and so will I." Thus, many believe not a serpent to be poisonous, until they are envenomed with it! They forget, that it is not only vanity - but also vexation of spirit; and all who are resolved to try the former, must also feel the latter.

He who knocks at the creature's door for supplies - will find an empty house kept there! "All the rivers run into the sea - yet the sea is not full." Though all the rising streams of worldly profits may run into the hearts of men - yet they cannot fill up the hearts of men. Reader, did you ever hear a rich man complain of the lack of riches? Though he has enough to support him - yet he never has enough to content him!

"All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing." Were it possible for the eye to see all that is to be seen - yet it would not be satisfied with seeing. If there is not enough in the world to satisfy the senses of men - how should there be enough in it to satisfy the souls of men? The earth is not a satisfying substance - but a fleeting shadow!

"For the fashion of this world passes away." The most excellent and flourishing appearances in the whole creation - are continually hastening to dissolution! We are commanded to use the world - as though we used it not; because while we use the world - it is not! The tide of worldly grandeur which brings the gallant ship into the haven, may suddenly leave her in the mud. The higher the sun of prosperity approaches on its meridian - the nearer it is to its setting.

O all you who caress the world, have you not seen some who have begun their lives in a palace - to end them in a prison? The golden chains about their necks - have been turned into iron fetters about their feet! The substance of this life, is but for the season of this life. All creature felicity will become a victim to mortality. You who feed upon golden dust - must have all your gold turned to dust! The short summer of your prosperity - will usher in the long winter of damnation. Those who now rejoice in the world, will before long - have no world wherein to rejoice. "Arise and depart; for this is not your rest, because it is polluted! It shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction."

Heart's-ease is a flower which does not grow in the world's garden. Where does that fish swim, which will not nibble at that hook, on which there hangs a golden bait? How many perish eternally - to gain that which perishes in the using.

Poor worldling, why do you seek for wealth with such incessant anxiety, seeing the greatest misers are laid as naked in their grave - as the poorest beggars? The tighter you grasp the world in your hands - the sooner it slides between your fingers. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world - and lose his own soul?" He who made this world - knew its worth. If the world is gained - it may be lost again; but if the soul be lost at death - it can never be recovered. There is one way to keep a man out of Hell - but there is no way to get a man out of Hell. It is as easy for a stone to lodge in the air - as for a man to find rest in the earth. Not few are there who have resolved to ascend the pinnacle of honor - but what have left a good conscience at the bottom of the ladder! Believers themselves would be glutted with the world's sweets - if a gracious God were not to call them away from the banquet. Creature comforts, are like the soft morning dews, which, while they water the branches of the tree, leave the roots dry. Why should professors be found eagerly pursuing those trifles - which even heathens have been found flying from? The world is rather a sharp brier to wound us - than a sweet flower to delight us. As poison works more furiously in wine - than in water; so corruptions manifest themselves more in a state of plenty - than they do in a state of poverty.

One compares this life to a beautiful nut, which, however fair it may seem - is full of nothing but worms and rottenness! The earth is for a saint's passage - but Heaven is prepared for him as his portion. The earth is for a believer's use - but Heaven alone, is a believer's choice. Everything below Heaven - is too base for the soul's nobility, and too brittle for the soul's stability. A professor boasting of the world - is but like a balloon filled with the wind. Those who set out at first, like Judas, for the world - may be put off at last, like Demas, with the world. "Son, remember that you, in your life time, received your good things." These blossoms will fall off from all such spreading trees - when death comes to shake the boughs! The world is too frequently gotten with anxious cares, kept with alarming fears, and lost with heart-rending groans! We see the outside of the great estate - but not the inside of it. We behold the field of corn - but not the tares that are mixed with it. We do not always see the worldling's clouds and dark nights - but his clear day and sunshine. The riches, honors and pleasures of the world are like beautiful - but poisonous trees. The devil shows us the fair leaves, and offers us the pleasant fruits - but conceals from us their deadly nature! The world pretends to be a nurse - but those who draw her breasts will find in one the water of vanity; and in the other the wind of vexation. It is counted miraculous to find a diamond in a vein of gold; but it is more miraculous to find a pure and precious Christ in the bosom of an earthly professor. When we have the least of creature enjoyments, it is then our duty to bless God for them. When we have most of creature enjoyments, it is then our distinguished privilege not to bless ourselves in them. The world does us infinitely more hurt by loving it - than it can possibly do us good by having it. "Labor not for the food which perishes - but for that which endures to everlasting life." Ah, what a fool is he who would hazard a glorious crown above, for a single crumb below! The higher the larks are in their flight - the sweeter are their songs. The higher a Christian is raised above the things of the earth - the more he is ravished with the joys of Heaven. The least portion of grace - is preferable to a mountain of gold. One ray of God's mercy - is better than a sun of earthly pleasure! One whisper of love from Christ's voice - is worth more

than all the symphony of nature. Give me that friend who lives forever, and that true wealth which lasts forever! I desire those blessings which come freely, satisfy fully, and continue eternally!

“Surely every man walks in a vain show! Surely he is disquieted in vain. He heaps up riches - not knowing who shall gather them.” Every carnal man walks in a vain show - and yet how vain is he of his show of vanity! He is disquieted in vain - and it is only vanity which disquiets him. He labors all his life for the profit of riches, and yet in death, his riches will not profit him. He who views an ox grazing in a fat pasture, should but conclude that he is being prepared for the day of slaughter!

Worldly enjoyments are but like hot waters, which, as some affirm, are soonest congealed in frosty weather. The greatest happiness of the creature - is not to have the creature for his happiness. It is far better not to have the world at all - than to have our all in the world. Who would be like the raven - to feed upon the carrion of this execrated world, while there is much more wholesome food for doves - in the ark? The world at best, is but a looking-glass; there is a face presented by it - but there is no face seated in it. When you have sifted out its finest flour - it turns to bran.

“Labor not to be rich.” A strange paradox! If it were not for labor - who would be rich? And if it were not for riches - who would labor? But see what follows! “Will you set your eyes upon that which is not?” While riches are - they are not. They are not what they look like - they have not in them what we look for. But what are they not? They are not durables - but changeables. “Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone - for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle!” The gourd may flourish in the day - but it will wither at night. The cup which now overflows with wine - may soon be filled up to the brim with water. When the sun of earthly happiness is in its meridian - it may be eclipsed. A man rejoices in health - and a severe illness shakes him. He delights in honor - and a cloud shadows him. He delights in riches - and a thief robs him. He delights in peace - and a rumor disturbs him. He delights in life - and death disappoints him! The heavens at first had their drossy - and then the old world was drowned. The heavens at last shall have their fever - and then the new world shall be burned. The earth is big in our hopes - but little in our hands. It is like Sodom’s apples, beautiful to the eye at a distance - but when they are touched, they crumble into ashes. “Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath.” Wealth is worthless in the day of man’s wrath - to preserve him from plundering. Wealth is worthless in the day of God’s wrath - to keep him from punishment. Pleasures are but a shield of melting wax, against a sword of power; they can no more keep an evil conscience from tormenting, than a velvet sleeve can keep a broken arm from aching.

See how the men of the world toil upon their hands and knees for the vanities of the world! “There are many who say - Who will show us any good?” As if they could find a Heaven - in the trifles of earth. That was a hard expression of a hardened worldling: “Let God but give me enough of the earth - and I will never complain of the loss of Heaven.” Thus we see the curse of the serpent - entailed upon the seed of the serpent. What God pronounces as a malediction - they take as a benediction! The devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give You,” he said, “if You will bow down and worship me.” If a covetous man had been there, O how he would have snatched the promise out of the devil’s lips - lest he should have gone back from his word! Some are so enchanted with their golden bags, that they will run hastily to Hell - if they might but be well paid with golden wedges for their pains. All such covetous Balaams - must fall by their own devices!

Covetousness is incompatible with the love of holiness. The truly excellent of the earth - can see no excellency in the earth. This world is no better than a loathsome dunghill, upon which the wealthy stand crowing - and about which the poor are scraping! If he alone is blessed - who lives above the world; then those cannot be blessed - who live in conformity to the world.

6. Another singular principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: that DUTIES can never have too much attention paid to them, or too little confidence placed in them. The Christian owes nothing to his corruptions - but their crucifixion. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; not to the flesh - to live after the flesh." Where God becomes a donor - man becomes a debtor. The debt of sin is mercifully discharged for him - that the debt of service might be willingly discharged by him. Every created thing has its bounds - but grace has none. In true godliness - there is no excess. Those wells which are of God's digging - can never be too full of water. He delights to see the trees of righteousness, laden with the fruits of righteousness!

Though faith alone justifies the soul - yet that faith which justifies the soul, is not alone. Faith without good works - is like trees without their fruits. In proof of sanctification, good works cannot be sufficiently magnified! But in point of justification, good works cannot be sufficiently nullified! The lamp of duty can only shine clearly - as it is trimmed with the oil of mercy.

Some choice ship captains, when they have approached the shore, have left the bottom of merit, to sail in the bark of mercy, crying out, "Our greatest safety is to rest only in the mercy of God." The law of God is such a master as to require the whole task of duty without mitigation; and the mercy of God is so good a benefactor, as to be capable of pardoning every transgression without limitation. He who ignorantly trusts in his own righteousness - will feel God's angry sword! And he who, as lost and helpless, trusts in the mercy of God - shall be enabled to touch the golden scepter!

Most that perish, it is not their disease which kills them - but their physician! They think to cure themselves - and this leaves them incurable. Good works are so indigent - that no man can be saved by them! And yet are so excellent - that no man can go to Heaven without them! It would be well for Christ's members - if it were with them as it is with skillful mariners, who have their eyes on the stars, and their hands at the stern! The self-righteous man is too prone to wrap himself in his religious duties! But this is making bad - worse! For he who vainly thinks to wipe off old scores by his merit - does but increase his enormous debt!

"Now we know that whatever things the law says, it says to those who are under the law - that every mouth may be stopped!" How shall any mouth be opened to plead guiltless - when God has stopped every mouth with its own guilt? It is in vain to stand up and plead innocence before Him who is all eye - to see the blackest flesh, under the whitest feathers; and the foulest heart under the fairest act!

Reader, though good works may be our Jacob's staff to walk with on earth - yet they cannot be our Jacob's ladder to climb to Heaven with! To lay the salve of our services upon the wound of our sins - is as if a man who is stung by a wasp should wipe his face with a nettle! Or as if a person should busy himself in supporting a tottering shack, with a burning fire-brand!

It is the greatest folly to expect profit - from that which is unprofitable. Could we have done all that was commanded us - yet, without the mercy of God, all that we could have done - would certainly

undo us. When the river fails us in its supplies of water, we then look up to the clouds for moisture. If Christ does not breathe into our religious services, it is impossible to grow under them. It was not the tempered clay which cured the blind man - but Christ's anointing his eyes therewith. The clay was more likely, without Christ - to make a seeing man blind - than a blind man see! Thus, though we may receive our spiritual sight in the ordinances - yet it is not the ordinances which give us sight.

It was not the troubling of the pool in Bethesda, which made it healing; but the coming down of the angel into it. That man must famish at last, who always feeds upon the dish - instead of the meat. There is no instruction to be gotten from the sun-dial of duty, except the Sun of Righteousness shines upon it.

Reader, it is dangerous for you to take shelter in your own righteousness; for the lightning of divine vengeance, which flashes before you; and the curses of the law, which thunder around you - may suddenly shake your house down upon you. As fast as you lay on your own plasters - a spiritual conscience will rub them off again. Nothing but the grace of the gospel - can perfectly heal the wounds which a broken law has made. Though at the command of Christ - you may let down the net; yet it is only by the blessing of Christ - that you can enclose a profitable catch.

Christian people judge that, as they can never see God according to the greatness of His majesty - so they can never serve Him according to the greatness of His mercy. When Paul wrote to Philemon concerning his receiving his servant Onesimus back, he used this argument to prevail with him, "You owe to me, even your own self." Thus man not only owes his services - but also himself to God. No man can merit a reward - by paying his debts; much less can a sinner merit mercy - by being an insolvent debtor. The body of a man can as soon labor incessantly without food - as the soul of a Christian can live continually without ordinances. Paul's religion was dearer to him than his life, "I consider my life worth nothing to me - if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me." Jesus Christ laid down His precious life - to secure the possession of Heaven for man; and shall man refuse to lay out his life - in pursuing the glories of Heaven? Was Heaven worth Christ's passion - and shall it not be worth our seeking? Alas, what is our sweat - compared to His blood!

What could Jesus do more - than to die for us! What can we do less - than to live for Him! "To whom much is given - of them much shall be required."

You cannot fathom all the good which He has bestowed upon you - nor all the evil which He has forgiven you! Such is His goodness - that He deserves infinitely more from you than He demands of you.

If Heaven could be obtained by human endeavors, then Heaven must either be of little worth, or the endeavors must be of great value. But He who puts an estimate upon all things according to their true value, has said, "When you have done everything which was commanded, you should say - We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." We are not only unprofitable when all is to be done - but when all has been done. We are unprofitable to God, because He is necessarily and eternally blessed without us! We are not profitable to ourselves, because without Him we shall be everlastingly cursed in ourselves!

It is our bounden duty - to live in obedience; but it will prove our utter ruin - to live on obedience. Heaven is either the gift of mercy, or the reward of duty. If the latter, Christ died in vain; but if the former, we boast in vain. "Fear not, little flock - for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Thus we see that Heaven is not the product of man's labor - but the token of God's good pleasure.

Many proud sinners will labor hard in the storms of life, and hurricanes of death, rather than cry with Peter, "Lord, save me - I perish!" But God is determined that every person shall die a malefactor, who dies without a Mediator. The dignity of good works does not lie in their merit - but in God's grace alone; for were He to examine and estimate them according to the rigor of the law, and separate from Christ - instead of their being valuable as refined gold, they would be as despicable as worthless tinsel! Our highest perfections are darkened with the blackest shades of imperfection. If Christ is not the foundation of our perfection on earth, He will not be the top-stone of our salvation in Heaven. Reader, what person would thank you - for holding a candle to assist the light of the sun? Or what prince would praise you - for setting a dirty pebble in his crown of precious diamonds? How then can it be supposed that those works which are pregnant with evil - can be pleasing to God?

If man lays too much weight upon the pillars raised by his own hands - he will pull the building down upon his own head! God, who cannot lie, has said, "So then, it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs - but of God who shows mercy." It is not of him who wills - though he wills ever so heartily; nor of him who runs - though he runs ever so hastily. Man's crown of glory - is only made by the hand of God's mercy. Man's working is not the cause of God's grace - but God's grace is the cause of man's working! The creature may do something against grace - but he can do nothing without it. It is dangerous to hang the weight of eternity - upon the slender threads of our activity. The boundless life of felicity - flows only from the bottomless love of the Deity.

7. Another principle by which a believer should walk, is this: that those precious promises, which are given to insure his happiness - do not supersede those precepts which are laid down for him to seek after happiness.

"Thus says the Lord - I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel - to do it for them." As those under the law - were not without a gospel to save them; so those who are under the gospel - are not without a law to rule them. There is the same impropriety in divorcing those who are united - as in uniting those who are divorced.

"Ask - and it shall be given you; seek - and you shall find; knock - and it shall be opened unto you." Continued gospel importunity - is the most powerful oratory. Man's importunity, has no meritorious claim upon God. God has a right to the former - but we have no right to the latter. He who enables us to find Him - enjoins us to seek Him. The Lord delights, neither to see us slothful seekers - nor doubtful seekers.

He who refuses to hear the voice of Christ - shall never see the face of Christ! "He who says he abides in Christ; ought himself also so to walk, even as Christ walked." Then only, does the watch of our lives move regularly - when the hand of mercy winds it up. The law condemns those as criminals, who lay claim to the royal crown - when they are not of royal blood. Many would be like Christ in bliss - who would not be like Him by grace. They are willing to have those promises which

confirm them in happiness - but dislike those precepts which are to regulate their conduct!

“The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King - He will save us.” Wherever the Lord is a priest for pardon - He is a prince for dominion. He is always a Ruler - where He is a Savior. As Jesus Christ is the foundation of our happiness - so is He the fountain of all our holiness. Reader, remember, if Christ be not a refiner’s fire, in you; He will be a consuming fire, to you! “But bring here these enemies of mine, who did not want me to rule over them - and slaughter them in my presence!” Thus, if you refuse Him to reign over you - He will refuse you to reign with Him.

“As many as walk according to this rule - peace be on them.” To tread in any other path on earth - is to miss the one way to Heaven. If the golden chains of love to God - do not bind you to duty; the iron chain of God’s wrath - will bind you to eternal misery! He who abuses his liberty in this world - will forever lose it in the eternal world.

“Blessed are those who do His commandments - that they may have the right to the tree of life.” To look upon a precept without a promise - is the high road to desperation. To look upon a promise without a precept - is the high road to damnation. The promise is like the cork in the net - to preserve it from sinking. The precept is like lead to the net - to keep it from floating. A believer is like the mariner’s compass; which is governed by the constant heavens - and not by the variable winds. Reader, will you make Him a stumbling stone - whom God has made a foundation stone? Remember, the fire can consume the dross - as well as refine the gold. The strength of a rock is seen not only in supporting the house which is built upon it - but in breaking the ships which dash against it. The pillar of cloud was as dreadful in the darkness it gave to the Egyptians - as it was glorious in the light it gave to the Israelites!

Whenever Christ takes the burden of guilt from a sinner’s shoulders - He then lays a yoke of obedience upon his neck. Though God can give a pardon to the greatest sin - yet He cannot grant a patronage to the least sin. To be lascivious, because God is gracious - what is this, but to drown yourself in that river - in which you should wash yourself! To live a life of gospel obedience - is the liberty of God’s children. But to give your licentious appetite the reins - is the bondage of Satan’s slaves! That soul was never related to Christ - who was never devoted to Christ. “Not everyone who says unto Me, Lord, Lord - shall enter the kingdom of Heaven; but only he who does the will of My Father, who is in Heaven.” Subjection to the will of God, is not only a test of our present duty - but it is also an evidence of our future glory! To expect to see God in Heaven, and not to seek Him on earth - is as foolish, as if a gardener should leave his plough into the barn, and then look for a rich harvest.

Sitting birds are the fowler’s targets; while those which soar as the eagle are in safety. When men are out of the way of their worldly callings - it is easy to call them out of their heavenly way. God works with - and without means. With means - that man should not be indolent. Without means - that he should not be self-confident. Jacob makes his prayers to his heavenly Father - and yet present his gifts to his angry brother. David went out against Goliath in the name of the God of Israel - and yet went to the brook to fetch stones for his sling. The sword of Joshua must go with the prayers of Moses - and the prayers of Moses accompany the sword of Joshua. Had they fought and not prayed - they would have obtained no victory, because God will not be neglected. Had they prayed and not fought - they would have obtained no victory, because God will not be

tempted.

“This is He who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ.” He did not come by water without any blood - or by blood without any water. He came not to pardon - and to leave the soul unpurged. Nor did He come to merely purge - and to leave the soul unpardoned. Wherever the death of Christ clears a soul from guilt - the Spirit of Christ cleanses that soul from filth. A man may be justified without immediate glorification; but not without attendant sanctification. The law by which God rules us - is as dear to Him, as the gospel by which He saves us.

Many would use faith as an eye to see with - but not as a foot to walk with. They look for the crown of victory - but are unwilling to fight the good fight of faith. That faith which sets men to oppose their internal enemies - sets God also to oppose their external adversaries. Prayer is the midwife of the promises! The promises are wells of comfort to the church - and believing prayer is the cup to draw the water out of the wells!

8. Another principle by which a believer should walk, is this: that it is dangerous dressing himself for the heavenly world - by the looking-glass of this present world.

“You shall not follow a multitude - to do evil.” Satan’s herd of swine - is larger than Christ’s flock of sheep! Let them be ever so mighty - they are not to be feared. Let them be ever so many - they are not to be followed. To infer that way to be the truest which is the largest - is to conclude upon the quality of the cloth - by the size of the cloth.

Remember - the multitude of people, are like the droves of cattle - which go to the slaughter! “Though the people of Israel are as numerous as the sand on the seashore - only the remnant will be saved.” The whole piece belongs to the devil - but God cuts off a remnant for Himself! There are many birds of prey - to one bird of paradise. Pebbles lie abundant in the streets - but pearls are rare to find. The Scripture not only presents us with an account of the purity of those who shall be saved - but also with the smallness of their number. “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to Hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose the easy way. But the gateway to Life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it!” “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom!” The Persians thought a crooked nose was a great ornament, because the face of their Emperor had a crooked nose. Great men’s vices are more imitated - than poor men’s graces. The ill humors of the head - may consume the vital organs of the body. Inferiors love to go the way - which superiors are accustomed to go. The actions of their rulers - are too much the rule of the people. Such people conceive by the eye - like Jacob’s sheep, which brought forth their lambs suitable to the color of the rods. Those who follow after others in sinning - will be sure to follow them in suffering! Alas, then the greatness of the multitude - will not extinguish the fierceness of the flame! The number of those immortal fagots - will but intensify the fury of the eternal fire!

“Many are called - but few are chosen.” It is not, many are chosen - and few called; but many are called - and few are chosen. Sinners are certainly the greatest company - but they are also the worst company. Though the nature of believers is the greatest - yet their numbers are the smallest.

One said that, “All the names of the good emperors, might be engraved on a little ring.” I will not say there are not any godly men who are great - but I will say, that there are not many great men who are godly. The trees of righteousness are thinly planted in the world’s orchard. As in one

righteous man there are many sins - so to one godly man - there are many wicked sinners! The generality of people, will rather walk in the way that most people go - than in the way that the best people go. They are like dead fish, which float down the stream, wherever it runs; or like the water, which takes the fragrance of the vessel in which it is contained. The 'voice of the people' - is often the voice of the devil. Whatever is engraved upon the seal - is imprinted upon the wax. If we will not have the people of the world to be our leaders - we shall be sure to have them as our troublers. If they cannot seduce us into their evil way - they will oppose us in our holy way. If they cannot scorch us with their fire - they will try to blacken us with their smoke. They will speak evil of us - because we do not run into the same excess of evil with them. Because we refuse to play the fool with them - they will say that we are mad.

Those who would arrive where the righteous now are - should be found in the road in which they once were. "Be followers of those, who through faith and patience, inherit the promises." What is the reason that there are so many scribbling professors in the world - but that they write after such imperfect copies! The best of men - are but men, at the best. It is better to imitate an evil man in that which is good - than imitate a good man in that which is evil.

Paul said, "Be followers of me." But his exhortation has its limitation - "Even as I am a follower of Christ." Where he follows Christ - there we must follow him. But if a Paul forsakes Christ, we must forsake even Paul! That was a good saying of Thomas More, "I will not pin my faith upon any man's sleeve, because I know not where he will carry it."

Believers have not only infirmities which are natural - but they have also such as are sinful. Noah was no sooner delivered from a deluge of water - than he was drowned in a deluge of wine! The failings of Christians do not flow from a want of grace - but from a weakness in grace; not from their depravity of spirit - but from the corruptions of the flesh. As they are not what they have been - before conversion; so they are not altogether what they would be - after conversion. Those roses which are now in blossom - shall hereafter be fully blown! And the stars which are yet concealed under a cloud - shall be seen in a clear sky.

Those are but suspicious Christians, who will approve all which believers do. Their lives must be followed no further - than they agree with the Scripture.

He is a rotten professor, who says in his heart, "Why may not I be drunk as well as Noah, and commit adultery as well as David?" Did you ever hear of any who plucked out their eyes - because others were smitten with blindness? Or of any who cut off their legs - because others went on crutches?

If you have sinned as David and Noah did - you should also mourn as they did! Their sins are not for our imitation - but for our caution. They are not land-marks to direct travelers - but sea-marks to warn mariners. If a man finds a piece of gold covered with dust - will he preserve the dirt, and throw away the gold?

"You have heard of the patience of Job." Yes, and of his impatience also! Instead of cursing the sin with which he was born, he cursed the day in which he was born!

You have heard of the meekness of Moses, and yet this even thread was not without its knots. While he is bringing water out of the rock - he is also fetching fire out of his own heart!

Peter not only forsook his Lord - but also forswore Him. Who would ever have suspected, that he who had his name from an immovable rock - should have proved such a shaken reed!

Reader, if you do not turn your back upon Egypt - you will fall short of the land of Canaan! When God comes to pass sentence, He will bring every sinner to the bar. His laws are not like spider's webs - which keep the little flies prisoners - but which the greater will break with smaller struggles.

Though man may have many under him upon earth - yet he has One in Heaven who is above him. "The Lord God called to Adam, and said to him, Where are you?" Not, where were you? but where are you? Oh how quickly have you forfeited that inheritance, which I so lately settled on you in paradise! "The woman whom You gave me - she gave me of the tree - and I ate." Because she put it into his hands - was that any reason why he should put it into his mouth? The monsters of sin are so hateful when they are brought forth - that we are unwilling to own them ourselves; therefore we lay them at the doors of others. The stable mountains are not so firm - but they may be removed by fearful earthquakes. Those saints who have been as the greatest stars or suns, have at times had their sad eclipses.

9. Another principle by which a believer should walk, is this: That wherever sin proves hateful - it shall not prove hurtful.

What an apology does a sorrowful Savior make for His sleeping saints! "The spirit is willing - but the flesh is weak!" Take a carnal man, and what he can do - that he will not do. Take a Christian man, and what he would do - that he cannot do.

God will pity impotency - but He will punish obstinacy. God has mercy for his own can-nots - but none for the devil's will-nots! Adam's want was rather in his will - than in his power; but a saint's want is rather in his power - than in his will. "O that my ways were directed to keep your statutes!" A saint's will begins where his work ends.

"Lord, I believe - help my unbelief!"

Lord, I see - but enlighten my darkness!

Lord, I hear - but cure my deafness!

Lord, I move - but quicken my dullness!

Lord, I desire - but help my unwillingness! In playing over a tune upon an instrument, a single string may jar and slip, and yet the main be musical. It would be folly, indeed, to think that our fields have no grain in them - because there is some chaff about the wheat; or that the ore had no gold in it - because there is some dross among it. In Heaven there is service alone - without any sin; in Hell there is sin alone - without service; but on earth, there is sin and service in the same man - as there is light and shade in the same picture.

Christian Reader! to condemn your evil - is good; but to condemn your good - is evil. Here on earth, believers are like the Israelites, who in their darkest night - had a pillar of fire; and in their clearest day - had a pillar of a cloud. Above us - there is light without any darkness; below us - there is darkness without any light; but in this world - it is neither day nor night - but in the evening time it shall be light.

Though the lowest believer is above the power of sin - yet the highest believer is not above the presence of sin! It is in a living Christian that sin is to be mortified - but it is only in a dying Christian that sin is to be destroyed. When the body and the soul are separated by mortality - sin and the soul, will be separated to eternity! Though a forced subjection is sufficient to satisfy a tyrant; yet it is only a sincere obedience which is true homage to a king.

Sin never ruins - but where it reigns. Sin is not damning - where it is disturbing. The more trouble sin receives from us - the less trouble sin does to us. Sin is only a murderer - where it is a governor. The rose is a fragrant flower, though it be surrounded with piercing thorns. The Passover was a feast, though the Israelites ate it with bitter herbs.

There is always too much of the wild olive tree - in those who are engrafted into the true olive tree. Our graces are our best jewels - but they do not yield their brightest luster in this world. The moon, when she shines brightest - has its spots; and the fire, when it burns the hottest - has its smoke.

"I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes; nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplication." Who would have thought those prayers should ever have had any prevalency in God's ear - which were mixed with so much infidelity in the petitioner's heart?

Sin is an enemy at the Christian's back - but not a friend in his bosom. Although believers should be mournful - because they have infirmities; yet they should be thankful - because they are but infirmities. It is true they have sin in them - and that should make them sorrowful. But it is just as true, that they have a Savior for them - and that should make them joyful. It is not the interposition of a cloud - but the departure of the sun, which constitutes a night.

Take the purest believer in the world, and you will find him fuller of sin - than he is of prayer. There is too much of the earth - in his most heavenly employments. But as Alexander's painter could find a finger to conceal the scar on his master's face - so when Jesus Christ draws the picture of the saint's excellency, He can find a covering for all the scars of their infirmities. The Savior looks over that which is His own - and overlooks that which is His people's. Where there is no sin allowed by them - there shall be grains of allowance to them. God will not throw away His jewels - for every speck of dirt which may be on them!

Though Christ honors grace in its maturity - yet He owns it in its minority. "You of little faith - why did you doubt?" Poor Peter had faith enough to keep him from drowning - but not enough to keep him from doubting. The least buds draw sap from the root - as well as the greatest branches. Though one star exceeds another in magnitude - yet both are alike seated in the heavens. Though one member of the body is larger than another - yet each has an equal union with the head. The conduct of a Christian may sometimes be spotted with infirmity - when the heart is sound in the love of sanctity. Jacob halted - and yet was blessed. As his blessing did not take away his halting - so his halting did not keep away his blessing.

Hagar will have a room in Sarah's house - until death turns her out of doors. As death leaves the body soulless - so it leaves the soul sinless. "For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have." God does not expect the pump to run with pleasant water - where there is none put into the cistern. The heavenly Bridegroom will not put out a believer's candle - because of the dimness of its burning; nor will He overshadow a believer's sun - because of the weakness of its shining.

Though that vice may be found in us, for which He might justly damn us; yet that grace is to be found in Him, by which He can easily save us. He does not come with water to extinguish the fire - but with wind to disperse the smoke!

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord!” because the incense savors of the hand which offers it! Not only the wicked man’s designs against the godly are sinful - but all his prayers to God are also hateful. Not so for the righteous; for, the prayer of the upright is God’s delight. If the vessel of the heart is clean - God will taste of the sweet wine which is drawn from it! “O My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crevices of the cliff - let Me see your face, let Me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely!”

10. Another principle that a Christian should walk by, is this: That inward purity is the ready road to outward plenty. That is but a Hell-made proverb, “Honest dealing is a jewel - but he who adheres to it shall die a beggar.”

Though true religion is against our sloth - yet it is not against our interest. Oh what rich clusters of grapes hang all along our way to Canaan! True religion is so bountiful a master - that none need be afraid of becoming its servant. “Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you!” Our work below is the best done - when our work for above is the first done. He who has most of Heaven in his heart - has not always the least of earth in his hand.

“The young lions lack and suffer hunger - but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.” As they would feel no evil thing within, so they shall lack no good thing without.

He who freely opens the upper spring - will never wholly close the nether springs. There shall be no silver lacking in Benjamin’s sack - while Joseph has it to throw in. Grace is not such a beggarly visitant - as will not pay its own way. When the best of beings is adored - the best of blessings are enjoyed.

While the rough Esau of this world hunts after the venison - the smooth Jacob shall carry away the blessing! “For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly!” Why need a saint fear darkness - when he has such a sun to guide him! Or why should he dread dangers - when he has such a shield to guard him!

Christian, the God whom you serve is so excellent - that no good can be added to Him; and He is so infinite, that no good can be diminished in Him! He blesses others - and yet He is not the less full. He shows mercy to the full - and yet remains full of mercy.

Sinners look upon times of obedience - as times of hindrance. They trust to their own toiling - and not to God’s undertaking. They carry on such a trade for the earth - as makes them miscarry in their merchandise for Heaven. Though every rich man is not truly godly - yet every godly man is truly rich! The sun can as easily diffuse its beams over the whole world, as upon a single field. What God receives from man - makes Him no richer; and what man receives from God - makes God none the poorer. His goodness may be imparted - but cannot be impaired.

Christian Reader! if the deep fountain is still running - why should you fear to fill your little vessel? “The Lord is my shepherd - there is nothing I lack!” The sheep of Christ may change their pasture -

but they shall never lack a pasture. "Is not the life - more than food; and the body - more than clothing?" If God grants to us great things - shall we distrust Him for small things? He who has given us heavenly blessings - will also give us earthly blessings. The great Gardener never under-stocked His own gardens.

Jehu, who only served God in hypocrisy, had an external kingdom; and shall those who serve Him from a principle of inward purity, be put off without a heavenly kingdom? If God valued counterfeit coin so much - how highly will He esteem the true gold! If He drops so much blessing into a vessel of wrath - what will He put into a vessel of mercy! If He gives so much to a bond-slave of Hell - what will He do for a free-born child of Heaven!

"Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darkness?" God was not a wilderness to them - when they were in the wilderness. When they wanted bread - He gave them manna; when they wanted water - He opened a rock; and though they had no new apparel - yet their old garments did not wear out. Thus they were never better off - than when they were ready to give up all as lost.

Oh how good is the believer's God, who not only shortens his pilgrimage for him - but also sweetens it to him! Had Christians too much of temporal things - they might care too little for spiritual things. Daniel appeared better with his plain vegetables, than the Babylonians with all their royal feasts. Some have rowed safely in a narrow river - and been drowned afterwards in a large sea. A little is sufficient - to him who with it enjoys God's all-sufficiency.

Godliness is so full a spring - that it will not let the Christian perish for lack of water. "Let the people praise You, God, let all the people praise You!" (What then?) "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us." Our unthankfulness is the cause of the earth's unfruitfulness. While man is blessing God for His mercies - He is blessing man with His mercies.

Some are afraid of true religion, because they suppose they shall lose all their earthly mammon, while they are seeking heavenly manna. They think that piety - is the greatest enemy to prosperity. Could they but reap profit by praying, they would be found more at prayer. Ignorant worldlings look upon gain as their greatest godliness - and not on godliness as their greatest gain. But a golden plaster is a poor application for a wounded conscience. When the worm of carnality is gnawing at the root of religious performances, all the formalist's blooming hopes will fade, and die away at last!

"Godliness is profitable to all things; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Who knows how many rich productions there are in the pleasure-garden of religion! There is mellow fruit in it for every day in the year.

"Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, and delights greatly in His commandments; wealth and riches shall be in his house; and his righteousness endures forever." All worldly gain, while we live, we may lose it; and when we die, we must leave it - but in keeping God's commandments there is great reward. There is a reward of God's approbation in life; of the believer's confirmation in death; and of their complete salvation in glory. In earthly services the master enjoys the profit - but in pious services the servant enjoys the profit. "And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-Edom three months; and the Lord blessed Obed-Edom, and all his household." The ark was not blessed for the sake of his household - but his household was blessed for the sake of the ark.

The ark of God always pays for its hospitality, wherever it dwells.

Many will side with religion while they can live upon it - and desert it when it must live upon them. But that saying is yet true; "Godliness with contentment is great gain." It is only the Christian man, who is the truly contented man; and what are our enjoyments without contentment? What is a great possession - if wedded to great vexation? Wicked men make this world their treasure - and God makes it their torment. When they want estates - they are troubled for them; when they have estates - they are troubled with them. When they would drink of the river - God disturbs the water.

Reader! if you know nothing of Christ, I wish you to remember, that when you come to die - you will find true religion necessary; and while you live - you will find it profitable. The purest honey - is gathered out of the hive of holiness. The ways of iniquity - are the ways of beggary. It is but reasonable that God should fall out with those in the course of His providence, who fall off from Him in the course of their obedience.

"In Wisdom's right hand is length of days; and in her left hand riches and honor." Look to which ever hand you will - and you will find it full.

11. Another principle that a believer should walk by, is this: That all the time which God alloweth him - is but enough for the work which He alloteth him.

"Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble." Nature's womb - sometimes proves nature's tomb. With many it is ebb water - before the tide is at the full. The lamps of their lives are extinguished - almost as soon as they are lighted. The sand of their hour-glass is run out - when they think it is but newly turned. When men feel sickness arresting - then they fear death is approaching. But we begin to die - as soon as ever we began to live. Every man's death-bell, hangs in his own steeple. Take him in his four elements, of earth, air, fire, and water. In the earth - he is as fleeting dust; in the air - he is as a disappearing vapor; in the water - he is as a breaking bubble; and in the fire - he is as consuming smoke. Many think not of living any holier - until they can live no longer; but one today is worth two tomorrows.

Reader, you know not how soon the sails of your life may be rolled up - or how near you are to your eternal haven; and if you have not Jesus as your pilot within you - you will suffer an eternal shipwreck!

Poor soul what will you do, if you begin to die naturally, before you begin to live spiritually! How will you be astonished, if the tabernacle of nature be taken down - before the temple of grace be raised up! What must you feel, if your paradise is laid waste, before the tree of life is set in it! How can you bear to give up the spirit, before you have received the Holy Spirit? Eternal will be your darkness - if the sun of your life sets within you, before the Sun of Righteousness shines upon you. Woe be to you - if your body is returned into the earth - before your soul is fit to be taken into Heaven. If the second birth has no place in you - the second death will assuredly have power over you. Our life can be compared to a DAY. Infancy is the day dawn; youth is the sun rising; adulthood is the sun's meridian; and old age is the setting sun. By the light of the day - the Lord helps us to do the work of the day. "O that you had known in this your day, the things that belong to your peace; but now they are hidden from your eyes!" O how just it is - that they should miss of Heaven at last, who never seek for Heaven until the last! How reasonable it is - that God should deny them His grace to repent - who abuse His grace to sin!

It is a maxim, that everything has a principle to return to its own source. The rivers which have their efflux from the sea - have their reflux to the sea. Out of the dust man was formed - and therefore into the dust man will be returned. Aged Reader! how much of your life is gone - and yet how little of God is known! How can you appear before God - if you are not found in God? Your being ancient in days - will be no plea for you before the Ancient of Days. If you have not Christ the hope of glory in you - you must have Christ the God of glory against you. If you do not partake of what Christ has done - you will be eternally undone!

O fresh picture of youth - how lovely will you appear, if hung up in Heaven's palace! And will you spend your youthful life - in following youthful lusts? Do you not know that the blossom is as subject to be nipped - as the flower to be withered; and the spark to be extinguished - as the flame to be consumed? Veins full of youthful blood, may be emptied by an accident, as readily as those that are leakish with old age. As there are none too old for eternity - so there are none too young for mortality. In Golgotha, there are skulls of all sizes. Tell me - how will you live when you die - if you are dead while you live? Every step that your body takes, is towards the earth. Oh that every step your soul takes may be towards Heaven! The vine which brings forth no grapes - shall be cut down as well as that which brings forth wild grapes. Oh how sad is it, to be taken out of the world - before we are taken off from the world! "Today if you hear His voice - do not harden your hearts." We have but a day wherein we are called to repent - and therefore, should repent while it is called today. He is the deafest adder - who stops his ears to the voice of the sweetest charmer. The Lord has made a promise to late repentance - but He has not made a promise of late repentance. If the heart of man is not now thawed - it will be forever frozen. A pardon is sometimes given to a thief at the gallows - but he who trusts to that, usually has a rope for his wages! "Do not boast of tomorrow; for you don't know what a day may bring forth." Man is such a blind creature, that he cannot unerringly see a day before him. O see the end of one day - before you glory in the beginning of another!

Many a man's days deceive him - they pass away like a shadow by moonshine, which appears longest when the moon is lowest. You may not have half a day to live - when you think that you have not lived out half your days.

"The night is coming - wherein no man can work." The grave is a bed to rest in - but not a shop to trade in. There is no setting up under ground, for those who have neglected their souls above ground. When the soul takes her flight from her loving mate the body - they shall meet no more until the great day of retribution. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation!" Opportunities are for eternity - but not to eternity. Mercy's clock does not strike at the sinners beck! Where the means of grace are greatest - there they are often the shortest. You may be unhappy all your days, for despising the happiness of these days. That was a sad cry of one, "My life is done - but my work is undone." "Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." Though the summer of life is but just opening - yet the winter of death is approaching. And how can you live in that winter, if there be no honey in your hive in this summer?

"Seek the Lord while He may be found - call upon Him while He is near!" Young person, the sufferings of eternal death are but the consequence of your willful contempt of eternal life. Methinks the worth of such a heavenly pearl as Christ - should sparkle in your eyes. Oh that you may walk in the light of that Sun - by the beams of which you may see your way to Heaven! No

disease is more fatal - than that which stimulates you to reject the restoring medicine. What a sad thing it is - that such mines of grace should be opened, and not a penny of this treasure fall to your share! Come, I trust you are not gone so far in sin - as to be beyond all hope of returning. A returning prodigal - may yet meet with a welcome reception. The eternal Father is yet a tender Father. He delights to see a repenting prodigal; to hear a mourning Ephraim; and help a sinking Peter.

How much time has God bestowed upon man - before man has returned any of it to Him again? It is good to have an ark prepared, before that deluge comes, in which you may be overwhelmed. Remember that God can as easily turn you into dust - as He took you out of the dust. Delays are no more numerous, than they are dangerous. Before you can do good - you must be made good. For who would look for fresh water - from a drained river; or that sweet grapes should grow upon a withered vine? For a man to make his soul's concern his last concern; what is this - but as if a gardener should be putting in his plough - when he should be thrusting in his sickle!

Know, man, that there is but one Heaven! Miss that, and where will you take up your eternal lodging - but in Hell! A wicked man's life expires like a tallow candle, leaving a foul odor behind it - but a gracious man's life expires like a wax candle - which leaves a sweet perfume behind it.

12. Another principle that a Christian will walk by, is this: That there can never be too great an estrangement, from defilement.

He who now gives way to the least sin - may be given up to the greatest sins. We are never far enough from lust - while we are on earth; or near enough to Christ - while we are out of Heaven. A sound eye cannot endure the least spot. O, stand far off from the devil's mark - unless you would be hit by his arrows!

"Abstain from all appearance of evil." The drawing near to the appearance of evil - is the first step to the accomplishment of the most enormous evil. A spark of fire - will easily catch in a box of tinder. Little streams will find a passage to the great sea. Christian Reader! restriction is a good barrier to transgression. Why should you venture on slippery places - who can scarcely stand upon the firmest ground? As faith is a grace which feeds all the rest - so fear is a grace that guards all the rest. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." That man who is the most watchful - is the least sinful. He may quickly be cast down by a sinful temptation - who is already prepared for it by a sinful occasion. Who will pity that man whose house is blown up with gun powder - if he stores it in the chimney corner?

Such is the monstrous wickedness of men, that they use spurs and whips to that horse, which of itself rushes too fast into the battle. Though the streams and currents of their own lusts carry them too swiftly already - yet they hoist up sails to catch the devil's winds! Such have a title good enough for Hell - without so much trouble to make it surer. The fowler spreads his net - but the wings of the bird carry her into it! Do you murmur for lack of liberty - and yet surrender yourself to slavery? If you would not step into the harlot's house - you should not go by the harlot's door! If you would not gather the forbidden fruit, then beware how you look on the tree where it grows! To pray against temptations, and yet to rush into occasions to sin - is to thrust your fingers into the fire - and then pray that they might not be burnt! The fable says, "That the butterfly inquired of the owl, how she should deal with the candle which had singed her wings? The owl counseled her, to not

so much as behold the smoke!" If you hold the stirrup - no wonder Satan gets into the saddle! The fort-royal of your souls is in danger of an attack, while the outworks of your senses are unguarded. Your eyes, which may be floodgates to pour out tears - should not be windows to let in lusts. A careless eye is an index to a graceless heart! Remember - the whole world died by a wound in the eye. The eyes of a Christian should be like sunflowers, which are opened to no blaze, but that of the sun. To keep the eyes and not regard the ears, is as if a man should shut the windows of his house, and leave the doors open to the thief! The ear is an instrument which the devil loves to play upon! As your ears are joined to your head on earth, so they should be fastened to your head in Heaven. Your tongue, which should be tuned for God's glory, should not be turned to your own shame. By the striking of those clappers, we guess at the metal of the bell. "You are a Galilean; your speech betrays you." A soul without its watch - is like a city without its wall, exposed to the inroad of all its enemies. We need a sun to dispel our darkness - and a shield to repel our dangers. The earth is not so apt to be over-run with thorns - as the mind would with sins - did not our heavenly Gardener prevent their growth.

Those who would not fall into the river - should beware how they approach too near to its banks. He who crushes the egg - need not fear the biting of the serpent. He who would not drink of the wine of divine wrath - let him not touch the cup of sinful pleasure. He who would not hear the bell of eternal death, should not play with the rope of sin. A person who carries gunpowder about him - can never stand too far from the fire. If we accompany sin one mile - it will compel us to go two. It swells like Elijah's cloud, from the size of a man's hand to such an expansion, as to cover the whole sky.

"Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." You will quickly lose your standing - if you are fearless of falling. He who abstains from no lawful thing - may soon be brought to commit something that is sinful. Many a man has been thrown out of the saddle of profession, by riding with too slack a rein of circumspection. An honest woman will blush to be found in the attire of a sluttish woman. Reader, will you invite that sin into the chamber of your heart - which brought Christ unto the cross? Is your house so largely built, that you can afford that sin a harbor, which you know to be a traitor?

"Hate even the garment spotted by the flesh." Those garments which are defiled with the leprosy of sin - must either be cleansed by the priest, or burnt outside the camp. If a sick man dislikes the cup out of which he took his bitter medicine - how should he refuse and abhor that which is filled with deadly poison! A believer disbands those auxiliaries, who have assisted his adversaries.

If an Achan handles the golden wedge - his next work will be to steal it. If you take the devil's cup into your hand - it is to be feared that you will quickly lift it to your head.

13. Another principle by which a believer should walk, is this: That whatever istemporally enjoyed, should bespiritually improved.

All that a believer receives is from the hand of divine bounty - and should be employed to the end of the divine glory. Others make an earthly use of heavenly things - but he makes a heavenly use of earthly things. The more God oils our wheels on earth - the swifter our chariots move to Heaven. Grace can teach how to plume the wings of riches, and instruct us how to lay up that treasure in Heaven, which comes out of the midst of this earth.

There is a divine chemistry, which can extract the purest spirits out of the most foul matter. The beast on the altar differs not in kind - from the beast at the slaughter. There is a lawful craft of coining our money over again, and adding the image and superscription of God - to that which is Caesar's. It is said of the philosopher's stone - that it turns whatever it touches, into gold.

Whatever mill a saint has going in the world - he will spread the sails of it for the wind of divine approbation, that it may move round for God's glory. When God sets him up above the world - then he holds up God to the world.

It is unequal, to be hot in our petitions - and cold in our praises. Many will cry aloud, "Give us this day our daily bread" and whisper out, "Hallowed be Your name." This is like opening our windows to admit the light, and then shutting them tightly to keep out the sun.

It cannot be praiseworthy to remember God in our necessities - and then forget Him in our prosperity. His kindness is as proper a ground for praising Him - as His promise is for praying to Him. If under our miseries we can seek God with diligence - then under the weight of His mercies we should praise Him with cheerfulness. Mercies are such gifts - as advance our debts. It is as unpleasant to see a Christian in an ungrateful temper - as it is unnatural to see Pharaoh's lean cows in a fat pasture.

If God gives us any enjoyment - it is for His own entertainment. Well may those hands reap the fruits, which set the plants. Is he not worthy to feed at that table - which his own hands have spread? Where former blessings have been acknowledged, there future blessings shall be enjoyed. When man fights against God with His gifts - he fights against himself with his own sins.

Take a wicked man, and you will not find him led to God, by that which comes from God. He, like the sea, turns the sweetest showers - into the saltiest waters. The greater substance he has from God - the less service has God from him. Like the moon he is furthest from the sun - when he shines with the greatest splendor. The more a dunghill has the sunbeams upon it - the more stinking is the vapor arising from it.

Sinners, instead of having vials full of sweet odors - have hearts full of foul evils. How many are there, who are highly above others in false greatness, and yet are greatly below them in real goodness! To turn from God while He is blessing them - is worse than to turn from Him when He is smiting them!

Jesus answered, "Many good works have I showed you - for which of these good works do you stone Me?" He showed them His goodness - and they stoned Him for the goodness He had shown. They were like Aesop's snake, which lay still in the frost - but stung him who laid it in his bosom! If it be a sin to return unto man evil for evil - what must it be to return unto God evil for good? When we taste the sweet wine - we should not forget the vine whereon the grapes grew. When we are refreshed by the rolling streams - it would be well to remember the spring from whence they arose. A load of earth has crushed many a man to death! The richer some professors have been without - the poorer they have been within.

Notwithstanding the pious pretenses of the Romish conclave, the Indians brought more of the Spaniards to worship their gold, than ever the Spaniards brought of the Indians to worship their God. The Indians had made more infidels - than the Spaniards had made converts. Outward

mercies to our bodies, are divine baits - which are sometimes laid to catch our souls. God tries the vessel with plain water - that He may fill it with sweet wine. Every stream leads an observant believer - to the fountain-head. The more God's hand is enlarged in blessing him - the more his heart is enlivened in blessing God. Where the sun of mercy shines hottest - there the fruits of grace grow fastest. In the book of nature - we may read the God of nature. The creature is like a tuned instrument, and the Christian's hand can strike it to the Redeemer's praise. As a saint has a heart to seek God in what He has promised - so he has a hand to serve Him with what he possesses. The greater the wages are which he receives - the better is the work which he performs. If he has five talents committed to him - he earns five more. If he has one - he improves one. The more a merchant adventures at sea - the greater are the returns expected at land. The tallest vines should always bear the sweetest grapes, because they lie most open to the sun. It is sacrilege to possess the largest crops - and return to God the smallest gifts of gratitude. The requital of good for evil - is admirable. The requital of good for good - is laudable. The requital of evil for evil - is blamable. The requital of evil for good - is abominable! The April showers which invigorate the herbage, and beautify the spring - do likewise bring forth many offensive, croaking frogs. Man should resemble the rivers, which as they receive their increase from the sea - are restlessly returning to their source. Who is so unworthy of God's blessing as man? Who is so worthy of man's praises as God?

Beloved, we have not longer enjoyed the blessings of the earth - than we have abused them. This gives too much cause to fear, that though the child of mercy, like Jacob, has put forth his hand - yet the child of judgment, like Esau, may supersede him. The devout Bernard observes, "Ingratitude is a parching wind - which will dry up the divine springs of bounty, and dews of mercy." Man was formed the last of the creation - that he might contemplate upon God through every creature. Beloved, when you survey the spacious skies, and behold it hung with such resplendent gems - then think that if the suburbs are so beautiful, what must the city be! What is God's footstool, compared to the His throne! When you view the evening star above you - then reflect upon the morning star within you. When you sit down at your table to eat, let this be your first course - how happy are all those who shall eat bread in the kingdom of Christ! Those are the rarest feasts - which are graced with the most royal guests. When you see the winged travelers swiftly part the skies; or the winding rivers hastening to their origin - then consider how rapidly the little rivers of opportunity are pushing their way to the great ocean of eternity. When you are decorating your bodies with fine clothing - then reflect how the eternal Word put on the rough suit of humanity. Think how mercy undressed itself - to cover you with its garments! When you take off your apparel - then remember that you must put off this tabernacle. Be going to your bed - as if you were going to your grave; and so close your eyes in one world - as if you were immediately to open them in another. When you behold your garden stored with trees, and richly laden with fruit - then contemplate upon the Great Gardener, the true Vine, and His believing branches. It cannot be so pleasant to see our orchards bearing fruits for us - as it is to God, to see us bringing forth fruit to Him. When you gaze upon the stately buildings, the shady groves, the crystal streams, the pleasant meadows, and all the pomp of wicked men - then think if sinners go away with such large portions - how great shall Benjamin's portion be! If the children of the concubines have such possessions, what shall be the inheritance of the children of promise! If the dogs fare so well beneath the table - how must the children fare at it! Give me that eye which can see God in all; and that hand which can serve God with all; and that heart which can bless God for all.

14. Another principle that a Christian is to walk by is this: that he should speak well of God - whatever affliction he receives from God.

“What! Shall we receive good at the hand of God - and shall we not receive evil?”

While the water is quiet - the mud lies at the bottom; but when it is disturbed - it rises to the top. Every small row-boat can float in a shallow river; but it must be a strong vessel which ploughs the troubled ocean. “The Lord gives - and the Lord takes away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.” God gives before He takes - and He takes only what He gives. The hour-glass of outward happiness soon runs out! Today Job is the richest man in all the east; tomorrow Job is the poorest man in all the world. Yet his heart was like a fruitful paradise - when his estate was like a barren wilderness! Though God burnt up his houses - yet his palace (his heart) was left standing.

Outward mercies are like the tide - which ebbs as well as flows. Outward mercies are like the sky - which sometimes is clear, and at another time clouded. Outward mercies are like a budding flower - which opens on a warm day, and shuts on a cold day. If God blesses us in taking - as well as in giving; let us bless Him for taking - as well as for giving. That is the best musician - who can play well upon a broken instrument. To be impatient with our affliction, and patient with our corruption - is to be angry with the medicine which heals us, and in love with the poison which kills us! Beloved, it is sometimes a mercy to us - that God removes outward mercies from us. He never wounds a saint to kill him - but to heal him! A gracious person once said, “Though I am sometimes full of pain - yet I am at all times full of patience! I often mourn under my corruption - but I never murmur under my affliction.” Some can rejoice in anything but in Christ, and grieve for anything but lust.

Too many think that God is cutting down the whole tree - when He is but lopping off its wasteful branches. They imagine that He is demolishing the superstructure, when He is only laying a right foundation. Poor souls, He is not nipping the flowers - but plucking up the weeds! He is not laying your land fallow - but ploughing the field! He is not putting out the light - but snuffing the candle. God’s Providence has a beautiful face - under a black mask! God has the fairest ends - in the foulest ways! The sheep may be dipped in water to wash it, when there is no design in the Good Shepherd to drown it!

Christian reader, you may read the marks of a kind Father - in the severe stripes of His children. Every twig of His black rod of affliction - is but to draw His image upon you! Could we but bury our friends alive - we should not mourn so much for them when they are dead. Did not the possession of riches sometimes draw away our hearts - then the loss of them would not break our hearts! “Behold, I take away the desire of your eyes with a stroke!” Though God takes your wife out of your bosom - He is taking her into His own. You may embrace a creature - until you kill it with kindness. You may wither the sweetest flowers - by smelling them too often. God takes that out of your hands - which would thrust Him out of your heart.

He who mingles his angry passions with his afflictions - is like a foolish patient, who chews the bitter pills - which he should swallow whole. He who carnally disturbs his soul for the loss of his substance - casts away the kernel, because God has taken away the shell. If the tree yields us good fruit - it will be no very great loss, though the wind blows away the leaves. To bless God for mercies - is the way to increase them; to bless God for miseries - is the way to remove them. No

good lives so long - as that which is thankfully improved; no evil dies so soon - as that which is patiently sustained. God can make a plaster - of a disease; and bring soundness to the inward man - by the sickness of the outward man. When the stars do not shine, the sun appears, exchanging the loss of the smaller lights with brighter beams. In the loss of withered bouquets, you may smell flowers fresh on the stalk. When Christians have their candles put out, they may fetch their light from the Sun; and when they have their streams cut off, they may drink at the Fountain. The birds of paradise make the swiftest flight, when they have the smallest feathers. Those nightingales warble the most sweetly, when they are pierced by a thorn. The creature often interrupts the respect which we owe to our Creator; and then no wonder if He breaks the cistern - to bring us to the Fountain. Those who are found blessing God under all their losses - shall find God blessing them after all their losses.

15. Another principle by which a Christian should walk is this: that the longer God forbears with the unrepenting sinner in life - the sorer He strikes him in the judgment-day.

Divine patience is to be adored by all - and abused by none. Sinners usually take God's forbearance, for their acquittance. Because they sin unpunished for a time - they imagine there is no punishment for sin in eternity. They forget that it is one thing to forbear the debtor - and another to forgive the debt.

"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore, the heart of men is fully set in them to do evil." Because the Lord continues to spare them, therefore they go on to provoke Him. As He adds to their lives - so they add to their lusts. What is this, but as if a man should break all his bones - because there is a surgeon who is able to set them again!

Christian reader, you were greatly in debt to divine justice - but mercy stopped the dreadful arrest of vengeance. Many others have been taken from the earth - by a sudden arrow darted from Heaven. Adulterous Zimri and Cozbi unloaded their lives and their lusts at the same time. Because Justice seems to wink - men suppose her blind; because she delays punishment - they imagine she denies to punish them; because she does not always reprove them for their sins - they suppose she always approves of their sins. But let such know, that the silent arrow can destroy as well as the roaring cannon. Though the patience of God is lasting - yet it is not ever-lasting. Believer, the sword of justice is dipped in the oil of mercy for your sake; and it afflicts some parts of your body - that the whole might not be destroyed. "He who being often reproved, hardens his neck - shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy!"

God loves all men so as to feed and forbear them; yet He loves but few men so as to forgive them. He was six days in making the whole world - and seven days in destroying one city. Our garrisons are fairly summoned, before they are furiously stormed. If God's warnings are not sanctified to us - His vengeance will be executed upon us. It is sad for the iron - to gather rust under the file.

Reader, remember that if you are corrected - the Lord takes the scourge out of your own house. "I gave her space to repent of her fornication - but she repented not." Many have the space of repentance, who have not the grace of repentance. But what follows? "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds." Sinners may cast themselves upon a bed of false hope; but justice will cast them into a bed of real torment. Mark how the long-slumbering arm of Deity, awakes to the prey: "I have long

been silent; yes, I have restrained Myself. But now I will give full vent to My fury!" The longer God is in raising His hand - the heavier will the blow be when it falls.

Carnal security resembles a flash of lightning - which ushers in a clap of thunder; or it is like a profound calm at sea - which is generally followed by a dreadful storm.

Know, sinner, that God is pleased, sometimes, to shake your feeble cottage before He throws it down; He often makes it totter before it tumbles. It may be a fair, sunshiny season with you now - but a whirlwind may soon arise and dash you to pieces!

We pity a body that is going to the block - and shall we not pity a soul that is hastening to the bottomless pit? He dies the most comfortably, who lives the most heavenly. It is easier for a bird to avoid the snare - than to break the snare. The very beasts will shun the places - where their own species have miscarried. The rising sun in the morning - was no proof that Sodom should not be entombed in its own ashes before the evening. That day which begins in prosperity - may end in adversity.

Attend to the charge which the King of Heaven brings against the priests of Israel: "These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face!" But what is the application of this? "Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue!" Justice proportions the sinner's punishment to his sin - so that we may behold the greatness of the offence - in the fitness of the punishment.

"If a person does not repent, God will sharpen His sword; He will bend and string His bow. He will prepare His deadly weapons and ignite His flaming arrows." The sharpening of the sword - is but to give it a keener edge, that it may cut the deeper. God is long silent - but when the sword is sharpened - it is to cut; and when the bow is bent - it is to kill. Woe be to that man - who is God's target!

Enraged justice will avenge the quarrel of abused mercy. For, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" It is a good thing to fall at His feet - but a fearful thing to fall into His hands. The stronger the enemy's arm is - the stronger will his blow be. Never did a weary traveler complain of being at his journey's end too soon. But a sinner, if he dies soon - it does but hasten his torment; and if he lives long - it does but heighten his torment.

Ah, what a dreadful vision is that - where the black horse of death, precedes, and the red horse of wrath, follows after!

Sinner, how fearful is it, to be preserved from small evils - and reserved for great evils! The higher you are raised - the greater will be your fall. You should wonder more at the divine indulgence which has so long reprieved you - than at the Almighty vengeance which will soon overtake you. You were dry enough for eternal flames - when you were wrapped in your swaddling bands: for "You were by nature a child of wrath - even as others." All who draw their first breath in corruption - deserve to draw their second breath in destruction! It is a wonder that He should add to our days - when we are adding to our sins.

God has His vials of wrath, filled with indignation - for those who are vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction. If His patience does not draw the sinner to repentance, His wrath will drown him in desperation! O sinner, either seek a Savior to deliver you from the wrath of God - or else find a

shoulder to bear you up under the wrath of God.

16. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: that there is no judging of their inward conditions of men - by their outward dispensations of God.

“For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” The greatness of our estates - is no argument of the goodness of our hearts. To prize ourselves by what we have - and not by what we are; is to estimate the value of the jewel - by the box which contains it. Grace and gold can live together; but the smallest degree of grace in the heart, is preferable to a thick chain of gold around the neck.

Here on earth, it is sometimes evil with the righteous - and well with the wicked. Those who live most upon God, sometimes fare the worst in the world. Under the law, the dove was preferred in sacrifice - to the swine. Riches are called ‘thick clay’. They are more likely to weaken the back - than strengthen the heart. You cannot read the wrath of God - in the black lines of adversity; or the love of God - in the white lines of prosperity.

God often gives a full cup of temporal blessings to wicked men, though there are dregs at the bottom. They may be fruitful vines - and yet only laden with sour grapes. It is seldom that the sparkling diamond of a great estate - is set in the golden ring of a pious heart. Riches have made many good men - worse; but they never made any bad man - better. Thus if we discern but a spark of grace in a nobleman, we cry it up as a blazing comet, and speak of it in the superlative degree.

Though a Christian is made happy in the world - yet he is not made happy by the world. Give me those judgments which give birth to mercy - rather than those outward mercies which give birth to judgments. There are many who are temporally happy, who will be eternally miserable; and many are now temporally miserable, who will be eternally happy.

If poverty could procure Heaven - how many poor people would then be saved; and if wealth could free a man from Hell - how very few of the rich would be damned! The kingdom of Christ - is the kingdom of the cross. Those who attempt to take the cross from the Christian’s shoulders, do, in effect, aim to remove the crown from his head.

“God causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good - and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” The sun of prosperity shines upon the dunghill - as well as upon beds of spices. The rain of adversity falls upon the fruitful garden - as well as the barren wilderness. The abundance of the infidel is a golden chain - to bind him to the earth; and the apparent miseries of the believer are as fiery chariots - to convey him to Heaven!

“Now, those who do evil get rich, and those who dare God to punish them, go free of harm.” God’s jewels may here be trodden under foot - but hereafter, they will be fixed in His royal diadem. If we look for a saint, he is not always to be found upon a bed of down - but sometimes he has been seen on a heap of dust. Poor Lazarus rises to Heaven - and rich Dives sinks to Hell.

Benjamin was not the less regarded by Joseph, because the silver cup was discovered in his sack. We must not infer the absence of God’s affections - from the presence of numerous afflictions. Though the north wind may chill us - yet the warm beams of summer can soon revive us. Those stones which are designed for the building are frequently wounded by the chisel; while those which

are neglected lie in ruinous heaps. A saint is glorious in his misery - but a sinner is miserable amidst all his glory. We must not therefore think evil of religion, though we should behold a Joseph in the prison, while a Pharaoh is in a palace; or a Job on the ash-heap, while a Julian is on a throne. The most choice pearls are often enclosed in the most hideous shells. "Judge nothing according to appearance - but judge righteous judgment." Those who judge of a man's real greatness by his apparent grandeur, are unfit to sit upon the judicial bench. That apple which has the fairest skin - may have the rottenest core. The tinsel glare upon a sinner, is too apt to blind the weak eyes of a saint. Alas, why should he envy him a little light - who is to be shrouded in everlasting darkness! Why should we throw bludgeons at those boughs - which are only laden with poisonous fruits! "Deliver my soul from the wicked - who have their portion in this life." The things of the world are the only happiness of the men of the world. None of their flowers grow in paradise. They are anxious for the creature - and indifferent about the Creator. A man's estate in this world may be great - and yet his state for the eternal world may be fearful. God may say to him as to Pharaoh, "For this purpose have I raised you up - that I might show My power upon you." The same Hand which now pours abundance on ungodly men like oil - will soon pour down wrath upon them like fire. Under all their wealth - their hearts are sinful; and after all the riches are fled - their situation will be doleful! It is far better to pass through the Valley of Baca (Valley of Weeping) to Zion; than to pitch our tents in the plains of Sodom. Luther's expression was not the less true because it was homely: "The whole Turkish empire is but a crust - which God threw to the dogs." One said, "I would rather have Paul's plain coat, with his heavenly graces - than the purple robes of princes, with all their kingdoms."

Lest riches should be accounted evil in themselves, God sometimes gives them to the righteous; and lest they should be considered as the chief good, God frequently bestows them on the wicked. But they are more generally the portion of God's enemies - than His friends.

Alas, what is it to receive, and not to be received! Alas, what is it to have no other dews of blessing - than such as shall be followed with showers of brimstone! We may compass ourselves with sparks of security - and afterwards be secured in eternal misery! This world is a floating island, and so sure as we cast anchor upon it, we shall be carried away by it.

He can never lack treasure, who has such a golden mine as God! He is enough without the creature - but the creature is not anything without Him. It is, therefore, better to enjoy Him without anything else - than to enjoy everything else without Him. It is better to be a wooden vessel filled with wine, than a golden vessel filled with water.

17. Another principle by which a Christian should walk is this: that it is safest to cleave to that good which is the choicest.

There never was one who thought he had made a bad exchange - by selling all, for the Pearl of great price.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? for You have the words of eternal life." Peter knew that a soul who was truly changed - was not for changing. There cannot be a better being for us - than for us to be with the Lord; and shall those who have forsaken all to follow Him - forsake Him again to follow nothing?

Reader, you cannot tread in the steps of Christ - without drinking of the cup of Christ. The nearer you are to such a spring - the clearer will your streams be. When every other gourd is withered, He will prove a refreshing shelter. "How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with You."

David was least alone - when he was most alone. His heart was like the needle in the compass, which always inclines to the northern pole. Believers are desirous of leaving their hearts with God now - that they may dwell with Him forever. "Whom have I in Heaven but You; and there is none upon earth that I desire besides You." Let a believer search Heaven and earth - yet he can find nothing comparable to God! As Judah said of Jacob, "His life is bound up in the life of the lad;" so say I of the Christian - his life is bound up in God. To draw near to Him in present holiness - is to be near to Him in eternal happiness.

Many unstable professors may justly be reflected upon. They will readily attend an applauded Christ - but will hastily desert a crucified Christ. But a true Christian is as willing to follow Him to the cross - as to the throne! He has no desire to turn like a shadow from Him - in whom there is no shadow of turning. As there is no natural good in us - to lead us to God; so there is no evil outside of us - which shall finally draw us from Him. Who - but an idiot, would address a picture instead of a person; or prefer a shadow to a substance? There is nothing which can do us so much good as God's presence - or so much evil as His absence.

It is far better to part with a thousand worlds - for one Christ; than with one Christ - for a thousand worlds. How dreadful is their darkness - who live in the absence of such a Sun! Reader, every step you take to Christ - is a step toward Heaven; and every step you take from Him - is a moral step towards Hell.

"One thing you lack. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come, follow Me.' At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth." This poor rich man, or rather this rich poor man, came hastily to Jesus, and ran heavily from Him. If he may not enjoy God and mammon - he will leave God for mammon. Jesus was for selling all - and the rich man was for saving all. Ah, what false balances are those which will make corruptible silver - outweigh an incorruptible Savior! The 'prince of darkness' employs the men of the world to draw us from God - and the things of the world to keep us from God. Truly that good was never worth seeking - which is not worth keeping.

Reader, is it not a fault to depart from that God, in whom there is no fault? As Saul said to his servants, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?" So say I to sinners: Can sin, Satan, or the world - do that for you which God can? It is only the best of beings - who can convey the best of blessings.

None but that God who has the keys of Heaven - can open the gates of Heaven. By Him we obtain admittance, into the celestial inheritance. What is our life but a warfare; and what is the world but a thoroughfare? Know sinner, if you reject the Savior, you despise grace - which is the fairest jewel on earth; and glory - which is the brightest sun beyond this life. No set of men are in greater danger of losing the life to come, than those who are contented with the present. A drop is more

easily dried up - than a river; and a spark sooner extinguished - than a flame.

What powerful constraints does our God lay upon us to seek His friendship! "I will never leave you, nor ever forsake you." It would be better for us to leave all behind - than that He should leave us behind. It is not the brightest star that can constitute day when the sun is set; or the thickest cloud that can make a night if the sun is risen.

18. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this: that no presentworldly business-should interrupt his pursuit of future blessedness.

Solomon says, "All the labor of man is for his mouth." Though he says it is so - yet he does not say it should be so. This would encourage a Christian - to become a glutton. That hawk which follows the world's prey - is in danger of falling into God's snare! Why should I lay out that time in seeking worthless pebbles, which may be better employed in search of priceless jewels? What God bestows on some men as a temporary pension, they embrace as their only portion. Such foolish travelers are so taken up with the inn - as to forget the end of their journey. They may indeed sow this seed - but it will produce nothing but wormwood.

Outward mercies are not so base as to be totally neglected; or so great as to be primarily desired. If they are seducements from the mercy-seat, they will prove to be indictments at the judgment-seat.

I may say of the earth, as one said of Athens, "It may serve for a transient lodging - but not for a constant dwelling." Outward plenty may be a comfortable ship for indigence to sail in; but it is a dangerous rock for confidence to build upon. Give some people the earth in their hands - and they care not who has Heaven in his heart. When Crates threw his gold into the sea, he cried out, "I will destroy you - lest you should destroy me!" Thus, if the world is not put to death here - it will put us to death hereafter. Then we shall say, as Cardinal Wolsey, when discarded by his prince, and abandoned to the fury of his enemies, "If I had served my God as faithfully as my king, He would not have thus forsaken me." Poor man, all the perfumes on earth - are unable to prevail over the stench of Hell.

It would be well for Christians could they say, as one did, "I desire riches no more - than a feeble beast wishes for a heavy burden." Cares are bound to crowns. Anxiety disfigures the face of prosperity. A body laden with cares, and a soul laden with spiritual fruits - cannot well unite together. Those who die trifling with salvation, will, after death - tremble under the pains of damnation.

I have heard of a woman, who, being busied to save her goods, when her house was in flames - forgot her child! But the child being soon after inquired for, she cried out, "O my child, my child!" Thus will many thoughtless sinners in a worse fire cry out, "O our souls, our souls!" Poor Sisera was not much better for the milk and butter - when he so soon after felt the nail and the hammer!

Ah! how careful are men of their outward concerns - and how careless about their inward concerns! In a vigorous body - there is a wicked soul. The evil disposition of the soul - spoils the good composition of the body. For a man to be attentive to his flesh - and inattentive to his spirit; what is this but as if a gardener should gather in his stubble - and leave his grain behind? Or as if a goldsmith should hoard his dross - and cast away his gold?

Reader, will you decorate your scabbard - and let the costly sword decay with rust? If there is nothing done in your soul on earth - there will be nothing done for it in Heaven. It is truly lamentable that the soul, which received its being from God - should be excluded from being with God.

19. Another principle that a believer should walk by is this: that gospel integrity towards God, is the best security against wicked men.

Surly mastiffs which have no teeth may bark - but they cannot bite. Who would fear the hissing serpent - if he knew it had no sting? A naked man with innocence, is preferable to Goliath with his coat of armor.

"Who shall harm you - if you are followers of that which is good?" As no flattery can heal a bad conscience - so no cruelty can wound a good one. As the ways of God - have happiness connected with them; so sufferings for the sake of God - have honor annexed to them. A pious martyr has more renown, than a bloody persecutor.

Integrity may not keep us from infamy. The choicest professors have had their black marks in the world's calendars. But though integrity may not keep us from being shot at - yet it will preserve us from injury.

"With the Lord for me as my Helper, I will look in triumph on those who hate me." God will either find a shield to ward off sufferings - or a hand to sustain us under them. Though the Christian is as a sheep among wolves - God can save him from being torn by them. Though the Christian is as a ship amidst waves - God can keep him from being overwhelmed by them.

Whether God plucks up the tares, or lets them stand, it is only for the sake of His people. Noah was sound in the faith - when all the earth was polluted; and he was saved in the ark - while it was deluged. The shields of salvation - are not hung up in the way of transgression. All the wiles of Hell - cannot conquer a single soldier in Christ's camp, much less rout His whole army. "The name of the Lord is a strong fortress; the godly run to Him and are safe!" The name of the Lord is a strong fortress - both for sublimity and security. When Christ is our harbor - we may safely run our vessels into so desirable a haven.

"You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain." As God numbers the hairs of His people - so He preserve their heads. He has a strong hedge of protection for them, when their enemies would break in upon them.

"But now, O Israel, the Lord who created you says: 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! For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Here is a dangerous voyage - but a safe convoy. God never deals with His friends - as we do with ours. We serve them too often as we do sun-dials; which we only look upon when the sun of prosperity shines; or as ladies do with flowers, who while they are fresh - place them in their bosoms; but when they fade - cast them away. But when our need is greatest - God's help is nearest. The more grievous is our oppression - the more glorious is our deliverance. When our misery is most powerful - then the Lord's mercy is most visible. "As our tribulations abound - so our consolations much more abound." When God's benignity is most

admired - our calamity is more easily endured. Israel often slumbers and sleeps - but He who keeps Israel does neither. Thus we may boldly say, "If God is for us - who can be against us?" Against us they may be - to hate us; but against us they shall not be - to hurt us.

Noah rides safely in a well-pitched ark - while the old world is drowned. When Israel is led captive, Jeremiah is set at liberty. The prophet found more favor with the princes of Babel, than from the people of Israel. Gideon's fleece was wet - when the earth was dry. Thus will God always preserve integrity - and punish vanity. His grain is often gathered into the garner, before He comes to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire!

20. Lastly, a Christian will walk by this principle: that the richness of the crown - which shall be received; shall more than compensate for the bitterness of the cross - which may here be endured. The last wine which Christ draws - is the best wine which Christians drink. When the waters cover the earth, where should the dove-like spirits fly - but to the ark of Christ? He who left Heaven - to make them righteous; will come from Heaven - to make them glorious!

"You joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions." O how did the glory of their heavenly mansions - outshine all the glare of their earthly possessions!

Christian, you are now on a troubled sea - do not say that you shall never arrive at your sure resting-place. What, has God plucked you out of the fire of destruction - and will He leave you in the water of affliction! In a small moment you will cheerfully sing: "The winter is past, and the rain is over and gone. The flowers are springing up, and the time of singing birds has come, even the cooing of turtledoves. The fig trees are budding, and the grapevines are in blossom. How delicious they smell! Yes, spring is here!" The blessed Sun of Righteousness will shine clearer, when these clouds are blown over. If there is so much delight in a single grape, what must there be in the whole cluster!

Take a believer while he lives - and God has a servant on earth; take him when he dies - and God has a servant in Heaven. Christian, you must never look for an end to your sorrows - until you see an end to your sins! As your sorrows did not come a day before your sins - so they will not stay a day after your sins! "As many as I love - I rebuke and chasten." Well may you bear the rod, when infinite love makes it up - and lays it on. When you lie under God's afflicting hand - you then lie near His loving heart. Rake a dunghill - and its stench will be foul; but beat perfume, and its fragrance will be sweet.

I have read of a fountain that is cold at mid-day - and warm at midnight. Thus are saints frequently cold in the mid-day of prosperity - and warm in the midnight of adversity. Afflictions are not a consuming fire - but a refining fire to the godly. They are like the thorn at the nightingale's breast, which rouses and puts her upon her delightful notes.

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present life - are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Our present sufferings fall as far short of glory - as the least filings of gold - fall short of all the riches of India. If the faint glimmerings of Christ's face, overpower the pains of our afflictions; what must the full meridian of His glorious light do?

“For our light afflictions which are but for a moment - work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Ah, how light is a grain of reproach, compared to a weight of glory; and how short a moment’s pain, compared to an eternity of pleasure!

He should not be weary of the cross - who is sure of the crown. After the cup of affliction, then comes the cup of salvation. The wine-press prepares for the wine-cellar. The painful throes of travail - are soon forgotten in the fond embraces of a tender babe.

Sour fruits require something to sweeten them. Death is grateful to no creature - but it is profitable to every Christian. Our good Physician will not continue us a moment longer in His infirmary - than is necessary. Our Refiner regards His choice gold too much - to consume it in the flames.

Those who are patient in the seed time of sorrow, shall soon reap the glorious harvest of unfading joy! We may converse concerning our future greatness - but we shall never know the weight of the crown, until it be placed on our heads.

Come, O Christian, be of good comfort, though the cloth is cut - it is only to make it up into a splendid garment. The hewing of the timber - is only to prepare it for the structure. The new corn - which lives in summer; is produced from the old corn - which died in the winter. It is neither commendable to rush into the arms of death - contrary to the dictates of reason; or to fly from the arms of death - when God calls us to them. Shall Jesus come down from Heaven to die for you - and will you be unwilling to ascend from earth to Heaven to live with Him! A saint’s reluctance to meet death, arises from his apprehensions of un-readiness to meet Him. A pardon may have passed the prince’s seal - which is not put into the prisoner’s hand. The edge of the sword of death - has been blunted ever since it was sheathed in Christ’s side!

After the vessel has endured the storms - it will arrive at the haven. Though the Christian’s triumphs never end - yet, blessed be God, his trials shall soon end. When his body and soul shall part asunder - then God and his soul shall meet together.

“Though you have lain among the pots - yet shall you be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.” Suppose the lancet makes a deep incision - it is only to reach the depth of your wound, and render the cure more complete. Health is most pleasant - after sharp sickness; and liberty is most pleasant - after the most rigorous bondage. Sailors most rejoice at the appearance of land - after a long and tedious voyage. All the grapes in Christ’s vineyard - must pass through the wine-press.

However pleasant a sinner’s beginning may be - his end is damnation! And however troublesome a saint’s beginning may be - his end shall be salvation! The fresh rivers of carnal pleasures - run into the salt sea of eternal destruction. But the seed-time of a pious life - ends in the blessed harvest of eternal glory. When Adrianus asked how the Christians could so patiently endure the tortures he had inflicted on them? They answered, “The love of Christ constrains us - and the love of Heaven encourages us!” Those who are born blind cannot judge of the glories - which dazzle the eyes of angels. One smile from God’s face - will forever dry up all the tears from the saint’s eyes! As fish dropping out of a narrow brook into the large ocean, do not lose - but enlarge their element; so when the godly leave this life, they do not forsake - but increase their blessedness. As the flames of a burnt-offering ascend to Heaven - while its ashes fall to the ground; so the soul of a saint rises to glory - while his body falls into the dusty grave!

Application #2 Seven DIRECTIONS to those who wish to do more than others.

Having thus digested the twenty singular principles by which a believer walks; I come lastly, to give directions to those who wish to do more than others. And here I shall stud your golden ring with seven precious diamonds. Would you therefore DO more than others?

1. You must deny yourself more than others.
2. You must pray more than others.
3. You must resolve more than others.
4. You must love more than others.
5. You must believe more than others.
6. You must know more than others.
7. God must reveal Himself more to you, than He does to others.

1. Would you do more than others? Then DENY yourselves more than others.

Either self must be laid aside - or God will lay us aside. What can any true Israelite behold in this Dagon - that the Ark of God should bow before it?

Though self-seeking had its birth in Heaven - yet, being justly cast out, it can never find its way there again. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." This is the very basis of our profession. Sinful self is to be destroyed - and natural self is to be denied. A little will satisfy a man who is strong in grace; much will but satisfy him who is weak in grace; but nothing will satisfy him who is void of grace. As we are called to lay out all in the cause of God - so we are to lay down all at the call of God.

2. Would you do more than others? Then you must PRAY more than others. Our daily bread - calls for our daily prayers; because one want is created while another is supplied. Are we called by the name of Christ - and shall we not call upon the name of Christ? Take away spiritual breath - and you take away spiritual life. There never was one new-born soul - who was still-born. Who would not stretch out a beggar's hand - to receive a jewel of infinite value? With what boldness should those appear at court - who are sure of the king's ear!

Spiritual prayer resembles Noah's dove - which returned with an olive branch. Prayers were never rightly offered to God - but they were quickly answered. We are as much bound to pray while on earth, as angels are to praise while in Heaven.

He who would speed in his enjoyment - should plead for the attainment. The prayerless soul - is a fruitless soul. The waters of life are sweet - and it is blessed to bring the vessels of prayer to these wells. Throw a dry sponge into the river - it will soon fill itself with water.

Many will cast off this duty, because they are ashamed to go to it with crutches - but these lacks of accomplishment, should not be a discouragement; for many dumb beggars have been relieved at Christ's gate - by making signs. "As He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became dazzling white." Christ had the bright sunshine of His Father's affection, when He

was moving in the orbit of supplication.

Reader, is not that mercy worth your breath - which was worth a Savior's blood! Why should we cease petitioning, while God continues granting? "Lord, what will You give me - seeing I go childless?" Thus may you pray: "Lord, what will You give me - seeing I go comfortless?" Believing prayer is a trading for those commodities which are only locked up in Heaven's storehouse. Why should we be dumb - seeing God is not deaf? By fasting - the body learns to obey the soul; by praying - the soul learns to command the body. No Christian has so little from Christ - but there is ground for praise; and no Christian has so much from Christ - but he has need of prayer. Every day we find it is a great work - to accomplish a little work. Every new act of obedience, requires fresh assistance.

"Ask, and receive - that your joy may be full." Spiritual supplication is the channel to consolation. Now none are more fruitful in divine labor - than those who are most joyful under a sense of the divine favor. Death shortens our way to Heaven - but prayer sweetens our way to Heaven. A neglect to prune the flowers, does but increase the growth of the weeds. A small vessel with large gales - will sail faster than a large ship with small winds. I never expect that branch to bear any fruit - which receives no sap from the vine. When prayer mounts upon the wings of fervor to God - then answers come down like lightning from God. The gift of prayer may have praise from men - but it is the grace of prayer which has power with God. A few grapes prove the plant to be a vine, and not a thorn. Though prayer is God's due as a Creator; yet it is more truly performed when offered to Him as a Father.

Though none can pray aright but new creatures - yet all ought to pray because they are creatures.

Christians will never lack a praying time - if they possess a praying frame. In the morning, prayer is a golden key - to open the heart for God's service; and in the evening, prayer is an iron lock - to guard the heart against sin.

"Peter was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him." These prayers fetched an angel out of Heaven - to fetch Peter out of prison. Their prayer went up like fire, and brought down blessings like water. It is not always that hound which barks the loudest, which catches the hare; but that which follows closest in the chase.

Believers should not only pray one with another - but one for another. Next to the breach of piety in religion, we should abominate the breach of charity in communion.

Reader, when the vessel of your soul has given up sailing, we may conclude the divine winds have given up blowing. He who is omniscient - to know your needs; is also omnipotent - to grant your requests. Are you made a spiritual priest - and will you refuse to offer up spiritual sacrifices! Your affections should soar like an eagle, when your lips cannot move faster than a snail.

"Pray without ceasing." We may pray continually, though you be not continually at prayer. If the lesson is not always playing - yet the instrument must be kept in tune.

"And this is the confidence that we have in Him - that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." That soul shall have its will with God - who desires nothing but what God wills. They should never be dying petitioners - who have an ever-living Intercessor. It matters not, how often you carry your empty pitcher - to so full a river! The intercession of Christ is a golden censor, and

can we desire Him to offer up our drossy prayer for incense? It was an expression of Luther's: "Let my will be done - mine Lord, because it is Yours." Because it fixed in the same center - he was bold to call for the fulfilling of it. The covenant of grace without us - turns precepts into promises; but the Spirit of grace within us - turns promises into prayers. "Take with you words and turn unto the Lord; say unto Him, take away all our iniquity, and receive us graciously." Oh how willing is God that we should hit the mark - when He teaches us how to direct our arrows! What desires are there in Him that we should prevail - when He shows us how we should wrestle! Spiritual breathings are more potent than carnal roarings. None but such desires as lack good aims - do lack good outcomes. Nothing will get up to Heaven - but that which has first come down from Heaven. That prayer meets with no answer - which is not offered up in faith. Deny not God faith in prayer - and God will not deny a faithful prayer.

3. Would you do more than others? You must RESOLVE more than others.

God looks more at our wills - than at our works. The first fruits of conversion - hang upon the trees of holiness. "I will arise - and go to my Father!" Arrows weakly shot - fall short of the mark.

Shame is that which sinful nature abhors - and danger is what timorous nature declines. Reformation is an icy path, and cowardly spirits love to have it well beaten by others, before they will venture to tread it.

"As for me and my house - we will serve the Lord!" Firm resolutions are like rocks - which the waves cannot move. By our prayers we show what we wish God to do for us; and by our purposes we manifest what we desire to do for God. By the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the heart conceives holiness; the will resolves on holiness; and the life produces holiness.

"I am determined to know nothing among you - except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified!" Until we attain to strong resolutions, we shall not be conquerors of Satan's strong temptations. As diseases resort most to that part of the body which is weakest - so the devil's attacks will be most frequent where he is likely to be most prevailing. The Law's curse is the motive of a servile spirit - but the love of God is the motive of a true Christian. The resolutions of a Christian are like the water of a fountain - which flows by itself; but the resolutions of a sinner resemble the water of a pit - which must be forced up by artificial engines. Some never form resolutions - but under heavy afflictions; such are like goats, which never yield any milk - until they are stung; or like children under the rod - full of promises, but empty of performances. The sinner's determinations are like ice - which thaws in the burning sun, but freezes again in the cold shade. What! shall we vow against our sins - and then sin against our vows? This is to take the wages from one master, and do the work for another master! This is to make our promises to God - and our performances to the devil!

Sacred vows bind us to obedience - and sinful vows to repentance. Reader, say not that you have noble blood running in your veins - except you can prove it by heroic actions.

4. Would you do more than others? You must LOVE more than others.

"The love of Christ constrains us." There is no sin so sweet - but the love of Christ restrains them from it; there is no service so great - but the love of Christ constrains them to it. If once this affection takes fire - the room becomes too hot for any sin to stay in. The heart becomes a chamber for Christ - but not a harbor for lust. "The mandrakes give forth their fragrance, and the

rarest fruits are at our doors, the new as well as old, for I have stored them up for you, O my beloved." Love never shakes the boughs - but for Christ to eat the fruits.

Many pay the performance of duties, as oppressed subjects do heavy taxes - with sad complaints; but the spouse of Christ looks upon what she is - as not great enough for His remembrance; and what she does - as not good enough for His acceptance. Had she anything a thousand times better than herself, or were she herself a thousand times better - it would be bestowed upon Him! What is that little which He desires, compared to that much which He deserves. When Achilles was asked what enterprises he found most easy; he answered: "Those which I undertake for my friends." Seven years service seemed like nothing to Jacob, because of the love he bore to Rachel. Love, as it acts the most excellently, so it acts the most easily: "If you love Me, keep My commandments." The crystal streams of divine actions - bubble from the pure spring of divine affection.

"Faith works by love." The Christian's love advances - by equal paces with the Christian's faith; as the heat of the day advances - with the shining of the sun. Faith like Mary sits at the feet of Christ to hear His sermons; and love like Martha, compasses Him about with services. Faith is the great receiver - and love is the great disburser. We take in all by believing - and we lay out all by loving. Faith at first - works love; and then it works by love, as the workman sharpens an edge upon his tools, and then carves and cuts with them. The scripture has exceeding high expressions of this affection. Christ brings the ten commandments, down into two commandments, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind; this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it - you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Paul folds them up into one word: "For the Law is fulfilled in one word." What is that word? Surely it is too big for any mouth to utter: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." He who is not lacking in this duty - is lacking in no duty. Love is called "An old commandment, and a new commandment." It is as old as the law of Moses - and yet as new as the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Faith is the grace which first seals the title to Heaven - and love is the grace that at last possesses the heavenly inheritance. Faith unites Christ and sanctified souls together on earth - but love unites God and glorified souls together in Heaven. As the spleen grows - the body decays; and as hatred increases - so holiness abates. It is best that dissension should never be born among brethren - and next that it should die presently after its birth. When any leak springs in the ship of Christian society, we should use our endeavors to stop it speedily! The nearer the union is - the more dangerous is the breach. Things which are glued together may (if severed) be set together as beautiful as ever - but bodies rent and torn, cannot be healed without a scar. The love in a hypocrite's bosom is just like the fire in the Israelite's bush, which was not burning all the while it was blazing; his estate and relations have the chief and strength of his affections; they admit the world not only into the suburbs of their senses - but into the city of their souls. But the love of a Savior in the soul of a believer, is as oil put into a vial with water, in which, though both be ever so much shaken together, the oil will be uppermost. The expression of Absalom is also the language of God's people: "Now, therefore, let me see the king's face!" It is Heaven on earth - for His children to see Him; and it is Heaven in Heaven - for His children to dwell with Him! Love does not put off the pursuit of duty - until it attains the possession of glory. There is no rocking this babe to sleep - but in the cradle of the grave. A soul who loves much - will work much. The injunctions of love are not grievous - but precious.

God is not so much displeased at our having sin - as at our loving sin. He is more pleased at our loving His service - than at our performing His service. None can serve God like a believer; because none can love Him as a believer; for the obedience of the heart - is the heart of obedience.

5. Would you do more than others? Then it is necessary to BELIEVE more than others.

If there is life in the body - the pulse will beat; and if there is faith in the heart - it will work. "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?" An idle faith - is an evil faith; for the faith which works not - saves not.

Perceiving of Christ, bespeaks our knowledge - but receiving Him, bespeaks our faith. "To as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on His name." Faith not only looks upon Christ as a fountain - but it also lays pipes to convey the water into its own cistern. The window only radiates the room as a medium, by which the rays of light are let in. As faith can do nothing without Christ, so it will do nothing against Christ. A true faith resembles the spring in a watch, which moves all the golden wheels - but only as it is wound up.

"The father of the child cried out with tears: Lord, I believe; help my unbelief." Though his tears dropped to the earth - yet his faith reached up to Heaven. Divine confidence can swim upon those seas - which feeble reason cannot fathom. Strong distrust - begets weak obedience. The cords of unbelief once tied the hands of Christ - but not so strongly but He could have broken them. Now if they bound this greater than Samson - what must they do to feeble Israelites?

It is as natural for a believing man to be a working man - as it is for the sun to shine, or the fire to burn. Other graces, like the common people of Israel, stand in the outward court; but faith, like the high-priest, enters within the veil. If Satan can undermine the foundation, the superstructure will soon totter and fall. The great Bernard said, "Infidels fear the devil as a lion - but those who are strong in the faith, despise him as a very little worm." As there is no grace which glorifies God so much as faith - so there is no grace which He magnifies so much as faith.

Martha and Mary both said, "Lord, if You had been here, our brother would not have died." What then, could not He have saved him while absent - as well as present? Could He not as easily have sent him health - as brought it? But does their unbelief stop here? No! "Lord, by this time there is a bad odor!" True - but their unbelief stank more in Christ's nostrils - than Lazarus' body did in theirs.

"Being strengthened in his faith, he gave glory to God." Skillful swimmers are not afraid to venture beyond their depth; while learners paddle along the river bank. As faith receives the righteousness of Christ for justification, so it receives the holiness of Christ for sanctification. Faith is the hand, the mouth, and the eye of the child of God. It is the ring by which the soul is united to God. "He who believes, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." When saints would advance to a high degree in other virtues, then they generally pray for an increase of faith. "Lord, increase our faith!" is no uncommon prayer.

What the root sucks from the earth - it soon disperses through the branches. Lusts may struggle like wounded soldiers on their stumps, and rally like broken troops; but they shall never be masters of that field where faith is fighting. As our sins would not let Christ live in us - so Christ will not let

them live within us. "Holding the mystery of the faith - in a pure conscience." If faith is a precious pearl, a good conscience is the cabinet that contains it. This heavenly manna of faith - must be laid up in a golden pot of a good conscience. When faith comes out of the battle a glorious conqueror - then fear is foiled and taken prisoner. Faith is as able to keep us from falling into temptations, and from fainting under afflictions. A man in the exercise of faith, is like Joseph; the archers may hit him - but his bow shall abide in strength. He is a rich man - who lives upon his wealth; and he is a righteous man - who lives by faith. Christians are far from wrapping up the talent of faithfulness in the napkin of idleness.

Unbelief not only blinds the eyes to the purity of the Law - but deafens the ears to the music of the Gospel - and deadens the affections to the glories of Heaven. Every appeal to an unbeliever is like a spark of fire falling into the water, which is no sooner in - than it is out.

6. Would you do more than others? Then you should KNOW more than others.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." "I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins." "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light." "You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness." "God has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

"Wisdom makes the face to shine." I may say of divine wisdom, as was said of a Grecian lady, that no man ever saw her - but he loved her. That Christian is most excellent, who is the most intelligent. The papists cry up "ignorance" as the mother of devotion. But we cry down "ignorance" as the father of superstition. Satan binds all his captives down in the dark dungeon of ignorance! Like the cunning falconer, he blindfolds his birds - that he may carry them to Hell more securely. The Father of Light takes no pleasure in the children of darkness. He is not accustomed to carry souls to Heaven - as mariners do their passengers to their port, who shut them under the hatches, so that they cannot see where they are going. It is no wonder that Christ should be so much undesired, when He is so much unknown. A person without understanding, is but the soul of a beast, imprisoned in the body of a man. "If you know these things, happy are you, if you do them." The will of God must be known on earth, as it is in Heaven; before it can be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Utter darkness is the recompense of inward darkness. None will ever be darkened by walking in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Where there is a veil upon the eye of knowledge - there will be a chain upon the hand of diligence. An ignorant man neither cares what he does - nor knows where he is going. When such a one is taken off the earth - he cannot be taken into Heaven.

Wherever there is a trade carried on for Heaven, the Spirit of God must first open the shop windows. "I must work the works of Him who sent Me, while it is day; the night comes when no man can work." There is no doing the work of the day - but by the light of the day. Darkness is the devil's element - and the sinner's punishment. "He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves." "My people perish - for lack of knowledge." When the candle of the soul is extinguished, it must needs sit in darkness.

“Taking vengeance with flaming fire on those who don’t know God!” The infidel’s lack of judgment - is a sin that Christ will bring to judgment. Ah, how do blinded men take that for devotion - which is only superstition! and that for a Bethel - which is no better than a Babel. To preserve the understanding as a Goshen from the darkness of Egypt - is the way to avoid the plagues of Egypt.

“I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins.” Spiritual acts require spiritual eyes; and the clearer we see them - the better we perform them. He who desires to see the face of holiness in its native luster - must not let his carnal judgment draw the picture!

7. Would you do more than others? Then you must have God reveal Himself more to you - than He does to others.

Man does not first come to God - that he might be taught; but he is first taught - that he may come to God. “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.” God gives - and then we know. When He opens our eyes - then we can see. When He loosens our tongues - then we can speak. When He says come forth - then we live. When He commands us to be of good comfort - then we can rejoice.

God is first in all the works of creation and providence. He is all in nature, all in grace, and all in glory. “Without Me - you can do nothing.”

Thus, if you would deny yourselves; pray; resolve; love; believe, or know more than others - it can only be by the gracious revelation of God to your heart. All the difference which exists between man and man, is only from the Lord Almighty; who is wonderful in counsel. You may cast the net on any side of the ship of piety - but God alone can enclose it with spiritual blessings. Only thus, may you be taught to acknowledge who He is, rest on what He does, and finally be with Him where He is. And though your journey is attended with bitterness - yet He shall soon crown you with eternal blessedness!

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