

# BODY OF PRACTICAL DIVINITY (CHOICE EXCERPTS)

by Thomas Watson

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*Selected passages from Thomas Watson's Body of Practical Divinity focusing on the troubles of human life and how trust in God's mercy frees believers from anxiety and care.*

2 Chapters

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## Body of Practical Divinity(choice excerpts)

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Body of Practical Divinity By Thomas Watson

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

Mirror and fountain

The Scripture is a mirror to show us our sins; Christ's blood is a fountain to wash them away.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A lamp for my feet

"Teach me Your ways, O Lord, that I may live according to Your truth!" Psa 86:11

Let us lead Scripture lives. Oh that the Bible might be seen printed in our lives! Obedience is an excellent way of commenting upon the Bible. Let the Word be the sun-dial by which you set your life. What are we the better for having the Scripture, if we do not direct all our speech and actions according to it? What is a carpenter the better for his rule about him, if he sticks it at his back, and never makes use of it for measuring and squaring his work? So, what are we the better for the rule of the Word, if we do not make use of it, and regulate our lives by it? How many swerve and deviate

from the rule!

"Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path." Psa 119:105. It is not only a light to our eyes to mend our sight--but to our feet to mend our walk. Oh, let us lead Bible lives!

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Why is salvation by faith?

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast." Eph 2:8-9

"Jesus said to the woman--Your faith has saved you; go in peace." Luk 7:50

Why is salvation by faith?

To exclude all glorying in the creature. Faith is a humble grace. If salvation were by repentance or works, a man would say, "It is my righteousness which has saved me!" But if it is of faith, where is boasting? Faith fetches all from Christ--and gives all the glory to Christ!

God's believing people are a humble people. "Be clothed with humility." God's people shrink into nothing in their own thoughts. David cries out, "I am a worm, and not a man!" Though a saint, though a king--yet a worm! When Moses' face shined, he covered it with a veil. When God's people shine most in grace--they are covered with the veil of humility. Abraham the father of the

faithful, confesses, "I am nothing but dust and ashes." "God resists the proud." Surely, God will not take to be with Himself in glory, such as whom He resists.

God's believing people are a willing people. Though they cannot serve God perfectly--they serve Him willingly. They do not grudge God a little time spent in His worship. They do not murmur at sufferings. They will go through a sea and a wilderness--if God calls. "Your people shall be a willing people." This spontaneity and willingness is from the attractive power of God's Spirit. The Spirit does not force--but sweetly draws the will. This willingness makes all our services acceptable. God sometimes accepts of willingness without the work--but never the work without willingness.

God's believing people are a consecrated people. They have "holiness to the Lord" written upon them. "You are a holy people to the Lord your God." God's people are separated from the world--and sanctified by the Spirit. The priests under the law were not only to wash in the laver--but were arrayed with glorious apparel. This was typical, to show that God's people are not only washed from gross sins--but adorned with holiness of life. They bear not only God's name--but His image! Holiness is God's stamp; if He does not see this stamp upon us, He will not own us for His believing people.

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Worse than a dog!

Sin cleaves to us, as blackness to the skin of the Ethiopian, so that we cannot get rid of it. Paul shook off the viper on his hand--but we cannot shake off this inbred corruption! Sin comes not, as a lodger, for a night--but as an indweller. "Sin which dwells in me." Rom 7:17. Sin is an evil spirit, which haunts us wherever we go.

Sin, though latent in the soul, and as a spring which runs underground--often breaks forth unexpectedly. Christian, you cannot believe that evil which is in your heart, and which will break forth suddenly--if God should leave you! "Is your servant a dog that he should do this monstrous thing?" 2Ki 8:13. Hazael could not believe he had such a root of evil in his heart, that he would rip up pregnant women. "Is your servant a dog?" Yes, and worse than a dog--when that corruption within is stirred up!

If one had come to Peter and said, "Peter, within a few hours you will deny Christ;" he would have said, "Is your servant a dog?" But alas! Peter did not know his own heart, nor how far that corruption within would prevail upon him. The sea may be calm, and look clear; but when the wind blows--how it rages and foams! So though now your heart seems good--yet, when temptation blows--how may sin reveal itself, making you foam with lust and passion!

Who would have thought to have found adultery in David, and drunkenness in Noah, and cursing in Job? If God leaves a man to himself--how suddenly and scandalously may sin break forth in the holiest men on the earth!

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See its ugly face!

What a heinous and execrable thing is sin! Sin is the distillation of all evil. The Scripture calls it the "accursed thing." It is compared to the venom of serpents, and the stench of sepulchers. The devil would paint sin with the pleasing colors of pleasure and profit--that he may make it look fair; but I shall pull off the paint, that you may see its ugly face! We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, and say to it, as Lot of Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" But sin is a great evil.

Sin fetches its pedigree from hell; sin is from the devil. "He who commits sin is of the devil." Satan was the first actor of sin, and the first tempter to sin. Sin is the devil's first-born!

Sin is a defiling thing--a polluting thing. It is to the soul--as rust is to gold, as a stain to beauty. It makes the soul red with guilt, and black with filth! Sin in Scripture is compared to a "menstruous cloth," and to a "plague-sore." Sin has blotted out God's image, and stained the orient brightness of the soul.

Sin makes God loathe a sinner; and when a sinner sees his sin--he loathes himself!

Sin stamps the devil's image on a man. Malice is the devil's eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot. Sin turns

a man into a devil. "One of you is a devil!" John 6:70

Sin is an act of rebellion against God. A sinner tramples upon God's law, crosses His will, and does all he can to affront, yes, to spite God!

Sin strikes at the very Deity. Sin is God's would-be murderer. Sin would not only unthrone God--but

un-God Him. If the sinner could help it, God would no longer be God.

Sin is an act of ingratitude and unkindness. God feeds the sinner, keeps off evils from him, be-miracles him with mercy; but the sinner not only forgets God's mercies--but abuses them! He is the worse for mercy; like Absalom, who, as soon as David had kissed him, and taken him into favor, plotted treason against him! Like the mule, who kicks the mother after she has given it milk. God may upbraid the sinner, "I have given you your health, strength, and estate; but you requite Me

evil for good; you wound Me with My own mercies! Did I give you life--to sin against Me? Did I give you wages--to serve the devil? Is this your kindness to your Friend?"

Sin is a disease. "The whole head is sick!" Some are sick with pride, others with lust, others with envy. Sin has distempered the intellectual part--it is a leprosy in the head; it has poisoned the vitals. It is with a sinner as with a sick patient--his palate is distempered--the sweetest things taste bitter to him. The Word, which is "sweeter than the honey-comb," tastes bitter to him. Nothing can cure this disease, but the blood of the Physician!

Sin is an irrational thing. It makes a man act not only wickedly--but foolishly. It is absurd and irrational to prefer the less, before the greater. The sinner prefers the passing pleasures of sin, before eternal rivers of pleasures. Is it rational to lose heaven--for the indulging of a lust? Is it

rational to gratify an enemy? When sin burns in the soul, Satan warms himself at this fire. Men's sins feast the devil.

Sin is a painful thing. It costs men much labor to pursue their sins. How do they tire themselves in doing the devil's drudgery! "They weary themselves to commit iniquity." What pains did Judas take to bring about his damnation! Many a man goes to hell, in the sweat of his brow.

Sin is the only thing God has antipathy against. God does not hate a man because he is poor, or despised in the world. The only thing which draws forth the keenness of God's hatred, is sin. "Oh, do

not do this abominable thing, which I hate!" And surely, if the sinner dies under God's hatred, he cannot be admitted into the celestial mansions. Will God let that man live with Him--whom He hates? God will never lay such a viper in His bosom!

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Well-colored dirt

Did God make our bodies out of the dust, and that dust out of nothing? Let this keep down pride! When God would humble Adam, He uses this expression, "You were made from dust." Why are you proud, O dust and ashes?

David says, "I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Your being wonderfully made--should make you thankful; your being made from the dust--should keep you humble.

If you have beauty, it is but well-colored dirt!

"For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return." Gen 3:19

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The trials and sufferings of the godly

God's own people often suffer great afflictions.

"This is what the wicked are like--always carefree, they increase in wealth. Surely in vain have I kept

my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. For I am afflicted all day long!"

Psa 73:12-14

How can this be consistent with God's justice?

'God's ways of judgment are sometimes secret, but never unjust!' The Lord never afflicts His people

without a cause; He cannot be unjust towards them.

There is some good in the godly--therefore the wicked afflict them; there is some evil in them--therefore God afflicts them!

God's own children have their blemishes. "But aren't you also guilty of sins against the Lord your God?" 2Ch 28:10. These spiritual diamonds--have they no flaws? Do we not read of the spots of God's children? Are not they guilty of much pride, passion, worldliness? Though, by their profession, they should resemble the birds of paradise, to fly above, and feed upon the dew of heaven; yet, as the serpent, they often lick the dust!

The sins of God's people, do more provoke God than the sins of others. "The Lord saw this and was filled with loathing. He was provoked to anger by His own sons and daughters." Deu 32:19. The sins of others pierce Christ's side; the sins of His people wound His heart! Therefore is not God just in all the afflictions which befall them? "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins." Amo 3:2. I will punish you sooner, surer, sorer--than others.

The trials and sufferings of the godly, are to refine and purify them. God's furnace is in Zion. Is

it any injustice in God to put His gold into the furnace to purify it? Is it any injustice in God, by afflicting His people, to make them partakers of His holiness? What more proclaims God's faithfulness--than to take such a course with them as may make them more holy?

"I know, O Lord, that Your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness You have afflicted me." Psa 119:75

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A sleeping lion

"Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do the treacherous live at ease?" Jer 12:1

Such as are highest in sin--are often highest in prosperity. This has led many to question God's justice. Diogenes, seeing a thief live on affluently, said, "Surely God has cast off the government of the world, and does not care how things go on here below."

How can it be consistent with God's justice, that the wicked should prosper in the world?

If God lets men prosper a while in their sin--His vial of wrath is all this while filling; His sword is all this time sharpening. Though God may forbear with men a while--yet long forbearance is not forgiveness. The longer God is in taking His blow, the heavier it will be at last! As long as there is eternity, God has time enough to reckon with His enemies!

God's justice may be as a sleeping lion--but the lion will awake at last, and roar upon the sinner!

"Yes, Lord God Almighty, Your punishments are true and just." Rev 16:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Who are you, O man, to talk back to God?

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy." Rom 9:15-16

God has a sovereign right and authority over man. He can do with His creatures as He pleases. Who shall dispute with God? Who shall ask Him a reason of His doings? "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it--Why did you make me like this?" Rom 9:20

"Our God is in heaven and does whatever He pleases." Psa 115:3

"The Lord does whatever He pleases in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the depths." Psa 135:6

God sits as judge in the highest court, and is not bound to give a reason for His proceedings. "He puts down one, and raises up another." He has salvation and damnation in His power. He has the key of justice in His hand, to lock up whomever he will, in the fiery prison of hell! And He has the key of mercy in His hand, to open heaven's gate to whomever He pleases! The name engraved upon

His vesture is, "King of kings, and Lord of lords!" He sits Lord paramount, and who can call Him to account? The world is God's house, and shall not He do what He desires in His own house?

"My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please!" Isa 46:10

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns!" Rev 19:6

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God bottles every tear!

Is God a God of infinite knowledge? This is comfort to the child of God. Christian, you set hours apart for God, your thoughts run upon Him as your treasure; God takes notice of every good thought! "He had a book of remembrance written for those who thought upon His name." You enter into your closet, and pray to your Father in secret; He hears every sigh and groan! "My groaning is not hidden from You." You water the seed of your prayer with tears--God bottles every tear! "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in Your bottle. You have recorded each one in Your book!" Psa 56:8

The infiniteness of God's knowledge is a comfort, in the case of saints who have not a clear knowledge of themselves. They find so much corruption--that they judge they have no grace. "If it is so--why am I thus? If I have grace, why is my heart in so dead and earthly a frame?" Oh remember, God is of infinite knowledge. He can spy grace where you cannot; He can see grace hidden under corruption, as the stars may be hidden behind a cloud. God can see that holiness in you, which you cannot discern in yourself. He can spy the flower of grace in you, though overtopped with weeds.

"Because there is some good thing in him." God sees some good thing in His people--when they can see no good in themselves; and though they judge themselves harshly, He will forgive their sins and infirmities.

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God sees through these fig-leaves!

"My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from Me, nor is their sin concealed from My eyes!" Jer 16:17

If God is a God of infinite knowledge, then see the folly of hypocrisy. Hypocrites carry it fair with men--but care not how bad their hearts are; they live in secret sin. "They say--How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?" "What does God know? Can He judge through thick darkness?" "God has forgotten, He hides His face, He will never see it!"

But, "His understanding is infinite!" He has a window to look into men's hearts! He has a key to open up the heart. "Your Father who sees in secret." God sees in secret. As a merchant enters debts in his book, so God has His debt-book, in which He enters every sin!

The hypocrite thinks to disguise and juggle with God--but God will unmask him. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing." "For they have done outrageous things . . . I know it and am a witness to it--declares the Lord." Jer 29:23

The hypocrite hopes he shall color over his sin, and make it look very good. Absalom masks over his

treason with the pretense of a religious vow. Judas cloaks his covetousness, with the pretense of "charity to the poor." Jehu makes religion a cloak for his selfish design. But God sees through these fig-leaves!

He who has an eye to see--will find a hand to punish!

Since God is infinite in knowledge, we should always feel as under His omniscient eye. "I have set the Lord always before me." The consideration of God's omniscience would be preventive of much sin. The eye of man will restrain from sin; and will not God's eyes much more?

"Will he even assault the queen right here in the palace, before my very eyes? the king roared." Est 7:8. Will we sin when our Judge looks on? Would men speak so vainly, if they considered God overheard them? What care would people have of their words, if they remembered that God heard, and His pen was writing everything down in heaven? Would they commit immorality, if they believed God was a spectator of their wickedness, and would punish them in hell for it? Would they defraud in their dealings, and use false weights, if they knew God saw them; and for making their weights lighter--would make their damnation heavier?

Is God omniscient, and His eye chiefly upon the heart? Then be sincere--be what you seem! "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1Sa 16:7

Men judge the heart--by the actions. God judges the actions--by the heart.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The best friend--but the worst enemy!

Woe to all such, as have God against them. He lives forever to be avenged upon them. "Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with you?" Such as oppose His people, trampling these jewels in the dust; and such as live in contradiction to God's Word--engage the Infinite Majesty of heaven against them! How dreadful will their case be! "As

surely as I live, when I sharpen My flashing sword and begin to carry out justice, I will bring vengeance on My enemies and repay those who hate Me!"

If it is so dreadful to hear the lion roar, what must it be when he begins to tear his prey? "Consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces!" Oh that men would think of this--who go on in sin! Shall we engage the great God against us? God strikes slow--but heavy! "Have you an arm like

God?" Can you strike such a blow? God is the best friend--but the worst enemy! If He can look men into their grave, how far can He throw them? "Who knows the power of His wrath?" What fools are they, who, for a drop of pleasure--drink a sea of wrath!

Paracelsus speaks of a craze some have, which will make them die dancing. Just so--sinners go dancing to hell!

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What is the chief end of man?

Question: What is the chief end of man?

Answer: Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Psa 42:2

Is the enjoyment of God in this life so sweet? How wicked are those who prefer the enjoyment of their lusts, before the enjoyment of God! 'The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life,' is the evil trinity they worship.

Lust is an inordinate desire or impulse, provoking the soul to that which is evil. Lust, like a feverish heat, puts the soul into a flame. Aristotle calls sensual lusts, brutish, because, when any lust is violent--reason and conscience cannot be heard. These lusts besot and brutalize the man.

How many make it their chief end, not to enjoy God--but to enjoy their lusts! Lust first bewitches with pleasure--and then comes the fatal dart! This should be a flaming sword to stop men in the way of their carnal delights--Who, for a drop of pleasure, would drink a sea of wrath?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A weeping creature

"Open to Me, My sister, My darling, My dove, My flawless one." Song of Solomon 5:2

Christ calls His spouse His "dove". The dove is a weeping creature. Grace dissolves and liquefies the soul, causing a spiritual thaw. The sorrow of the heart, runs out at the eye.

A godly heart grieves that it is not more holy. It troubles him that he falls short of the rule and standard which God has set. "I should", he says, "love the Lord with all my heart. But how defective

my love is! How far short I come of what I should be, no, of what I might have been!"

A godly man sometimes weeps out of the sense of God's love. Gold is the finest and most solid of all the metals, yet it is soonest melted in the fire. Gracious hearts, which are golden hearts--are the soonest melted into tears, by the fire of God's love.

A godly person weeps because the sins he commits are in some sense worse than the sins of other men. The sin of a justified person is very odious, because it is a sin of unkindness. Peter's denying of Christ was a sin against love. Christ had enrolled him among the apostles. He had taken him up into the Mount and shown him the glory of heaven in a vision. Yet after all this mercy, it was base ingratitude that he should deny Christ. This made him go out and 'weep bitterly.' He baptized himself, as it were, in his own tears.

The sins of the godly go nearest to God's heart.

The sins of the wicked--anger the Lord. The godly man's sins--grieve Him.

The sins of the wicked--pierce Christ's side. The sins of the godly--wound His heart.

How far from being godly--are those who scarcely ever shed a tear for sin!

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If our hearts are not rocks

"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Php 2:8

See here the astonishing humility of Christ. That Christ should clothe Himself with our flesh--a piece of that earth which we tread upon--oh infinite humility! For Christ to be made flesh, was more humility than for the angels to be made worms! He stripped Himself of the robes of His glory, and covered Himself with the rags of our humanity!

Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a poor condition; and His undergoing . . .

the miseries of this life,

the cursed death of the cross,

and the wrath of God.

The prime cause of Christ's humiliation was free grace! Love was the intrinsic motive. Christ came to us, out of pity and love. Not our deserts--but our misery, caused Christ to humble Himself. This was a plot of free grace--a design of pure love! Christ incarnate, is nothing but 'love' covered with flesh! As Christ's assuming our human nature was a masterpiece of wisdom, so it also was a monument of free grace!

Behold the infinite love of Christ! Had not He been made flesh--we would have been made a curse! Had He not been incarnate, we would have been incarcerated, and had been forever in the prison of hell.

Consider where Jesus came from. He came from heaven, and from the richest place in heaven--His

Father's bosom, that hive of sweetness.

Consider for whom Jesus came. Was it to His friends? No! He came for sinful man--who had defaced His image, and abused His love, and rebelled against Him! Yet He came to man, resolving to conquer our obstinacy with His kindness.

If He would come to any, why not to the fallen angels? The angels are of a more noble origin, are more intelligent creatures, and more able for service! But behold the love of Christ--He did not come to the fallen angels--but to sinful mankind!

Among the several wonders of the magnet is that it will not draw gold or pearl--but despising these, it draws the iron to itself--one of the most inferior metals. Just so, Christ leaves angels, those noble spirits, the gold and the pearl--and comes to poor sinful man, and draws him into His embraces!

Consider in what manner Jesus came. He came not in the majesty of a king, attended with His royal retinue--but He came poor.

Consider the place Jesus was born in--

a feeding trough was His cradle,

the cobwebs were His curtains,

the beasts were His companions!

Christ was so poor, that when He needed money, He had to work a miracle to obtain it. When He died, He made no will.

Consider why Jesus came. That He might take our sins upon Him--and so appease God's wrath for us, and bring us into His kingdom!

He was poor--that we might become rich!

He was born of a virgin--that we might be born of God!

He took our flesh--that we might have His Spirit!

He lay in the feeding trough--that we might lie in paradise!

He came down from heaven--that we might go up to heaven!

And what was all this, but love? If our hearts are not rocks, this love of Christ should affect us. "May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it!" Eph 3:19

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Do not be proud of your fine feathers!

Behold here a sacred riddle or paradox--"God was manifest in the flesh." That man should be made in God's image, was a wonder--but that God should be made in man's image, is a greater wonder!

That the Ancient of Days--should be born; that He who thunders in the heavens--should cry in the cradle; that He who rules the stars--should suck the breast; that Christ should be made of a woman--and of that woman which He Himself made; that the mother should be younger than the child she bore; this is the most astonishing miracle! "God was manifest in the flesh" is a mystery we shall never fully understand until we come to heaven, when our light shall be clear, as well as our love perfect.

"He humbled Himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross!" Php 2:8

"God made Him who had no sin--to be sin for us!" 2Co 5:21

This was the lowest degree of Christ's humiliation. That Christ, who would not endure sin in the angels, should endure to have sin imputed to Himself--is the most amazing humility that ever was!

Christian! Learn to be humble! Do you see Christ humbling Himself--and are you proud? It is the humble saint, who is Christ's picture! Christians, do not be proud of your fine feathers! Have you an estate? Do not be proud. The earth you tread on is richer than you! It has mines of gold and silver in its depths. Have you beauty? Do not be proud. It is but water mingled with dirt! Have you skill and abilities? Be humble. Lucifer has more knowledge than you! Have you grace? Be humble. It is not of your own making--it was given to you by God. You have more sin than grace; more spots than beauty. Oh look on Christ--this rare pattern of humility--and be humbled! It is a sad sight, to see God

humbling Himself--and man exalting himself; to see a humble Savior--and a proud sinner! God hates the very semblance of pride! "I hate pride and arrogance!" Pro 8:13

"If God," says Augustine, "did not spare the angels when they grew proud; will He spare you--who are but dust and sin?"

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Walking pictures of Christ!

"Leaving you an example--so that you should follow in His steps." 1Pe 2:21

"The one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked." 1Jn 2:6

"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." John 13:15

True religion is to imitate Christ. There are four things in which we should labor to be like Christ.

1. Be like Christ in DISPOSITION.

He was of a most sweet disposition.

He has a heart to pity us.

He has breasts to feed us.

He has wings to cover us.

He would not break our heart--but with mercy. Let us be like Him in sweetness of disposition. Do not be of a morose spirit. It was said of Nabal, "He's so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!" Some are so sour, and breathe forth nothing but revenge! Or they are like those two men in the gospel, "possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs. They were so violent that no one could

pass that way." Let us be like Christ in mildness and sweetness. Let us pray for our enemies--and conquer them by love. David's kindness melted Saul's heart. A frozen heart will be thawed, with the fire of love.

2. Be like Christ in HUMILITY. "He humbled himself." He left the bright robes of His glory--to be clothed with the rags of our humanity--a wonder of humility! Let us be like Christ in this grace. Humility is the glory of a Christian. We are never so lovely in God's eyes--as when we are black in our own eyes. In this let us be like Christ. Indeed, what cause have we to be humble--if we look within us, about us, below us, and above us!

If we look within us--here we see our sins represented to us in the looking-glass of conscience--lust, envy, passion. Our sins are like vermin crawling in our souls. "How many are my iniquities!" Job 13:23. Our sins are as the sands of the sea for number; as the rocks of the sea for weight! Augustine cries out, "My heart, which is God's temple--is polluted with sin!"

If we look about us--there is that which may humble us. We may see other Christians outshining us in graces, as the sun outshines the lesser planets. Others are laden with fruit--and perhaps we have but here and there, a berry!

If we look below us--there is that which may humble us. We may see the mother earth, out of which we came. The earth is the most ignoble element. "They were viler than the earth." Job 30:8.

"Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground." Gen 2:7. "You will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return." Gen 3:19. You who are so proud, behold your pedigree--you are but walking dirt! And will you be proud? What is man? The son of dust! And what is dust? The son of nothing!

If we look above us; there is that which may humble us. If we look up to heaven, there we may see God resisting the proud. God pursues the proud in vengeance. He threw proud Lucifer out of heaven! The proud man is the mark which God shoots at--and He never misses the mark! Oh then--be like Christ in humility!

3. Be like Christ, in the contempt of the WORLD. Christ was not ambitious for titles or honor. He declined worldly dignity and greatness--as much as others seek it. When they would have made Him a king--He refused it. He chose rather to ride upon the foal of a donkey, than be drawn in a chariot. He chose rather to hang upon a wooden cross--than to wear a golden crown! He scorned the pomp and glory of the world. He ignored secular affairs. "Who made Me a judge?" He did not come into the world to be a judge--but a Redeemer. He minded nothing but heaven.

Let us be made like Him--in heavenliness and contempt of the world. Let us not be ambitious for the empty honors and glories of the world. Let us not purchase the world--with the loss of our soul.

What wise man would damn himself--to grow rich? or throw his soul down to hell--to to build up an earthly estate?

Be like Christ in a holy contempt of the world.

4. Be like Christ in HOLINESS of life. No temptation could fasten upon Him. Temptation to Christ, was like a spark of fire upon a marble pillar, which glides off. "As the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct." 1Pe 1:15.

A Christian should be both a magnet and a diamond! A magnet--in drawing others to Christ; a diamond--in casting a sparkling luster of holiness, in his life. Oh let us be . . .

so just in our dealings,

so true in our promises,

so devout in our worship,

so unblamable in our lives;

that we may be the walking pictures of Christ!

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How shall we know if we have saving faith?

By the noble fruits and effects of saving faith.

True faith is a Christ-prizing grace--it puts a high valuation upon Christ. "To you who believe--He is precious." See how Paul styles all things in comparison with Christ, "I count all things but rubbish, that I may win Christ." Do we set a high estimate upon Christ? Could we be willing to part with the wedge of gold--for the Pearl of great price?

True faith is a refining grace. Faith is in the soul as fire among metals--it refines and purifies. Morality may wash the outside--but faith washes the inside. "Having purified their hearts by faith." Faith makes the heart a holy of holies. Faith is a virgin-grace; though it does not take away the life of sin--yet it takes away the love of sin. Examine if your hearts are an unclean fountain, sending out the mud and mire of pride and envy. If there are legions of lusts in your soul, there is no faith. Faith is a heavenly plant, which will not grow in an impure soil.

True faith is an obediential grace. "The obedience of faith." Faith melts our will into God's. It runs at God's call. If God commands duty (though cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys. "By faith Abraham obeyed." Faith is not an idle grace. As it has an eye to see Christ--so it has a hand to work for Him. It not only believes God's promises--but obeys His commands. It is not having knowledge that will evidence you to be believers; the devil has knowledge, but lacks obedience--and that makes him a devil. The true obedience of faith, is a cheerful obedience. God's commands do not seem grievous. Have you obedience, and obey cheerfully? Do you look upon God's command as your burden--or privilege; as an iron fetter about your leg--or as a gold chain about your neck?

True faith is an assimilating grace. It changes the soul into the image of the object; it makes it like Christ. Never did any look upon Christ with a believing eye--but he was made like Christ. A deformed person may look on a beautiful object, and not be made beautiful; but faith looking on Christ--transforms a man, and turns him into His similitude.

Looking on a bleeding Christ--causes a soft bleeding heart.

Looking on a holy Christ--causes sanctity of heart.

Looking on a humble Christ--makes the heart humble. As the chameleon is changed into the color of that which it looks upon--so faith, looking on Christ,

changes the Christian into the similitude of Christ.

True faith grows. All living things grow. Growth of faith is seen by doing duties in a more spiritual manner, with more fervency. When an apple has done growing in bigness, it grows in sweetness. Just so, duties performed in love and are sweeter, and come off with a better relish.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Lord has two heavens

"Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written--Be holy, because I am holy." 1Pe 1:15-16

God is not drawn to any person's outward beauty, great abilities, noble blood or worldly grandeur. But He is drawn to a heart embellished with holiness. Christ never admired anything but the beauty of

holiness. He slighted the glorious buildings of the temple--but admired the woman's faith, and said,

"O woman, great is your faith!" As a king delights to see his image upon a piece of coin; so where

God sees His likeness--He gives His love! The Lord has two heavens to dwell in--and the holy heart is one of them!

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Spiritual joys

What are the differences between worldly joys and spiritual joys? The gleanings of spiritual joys, are better than the vintage of the worldly joys.

Spiritual joys help to make us BETTER; worldly joys often make us worse. "I spoke unto you in your prosperity; but you said--I will not hear." Pride and luxury are the two worms which are bred from worldly pleasures.

But spiritual joy is cordial medicine, which not only comforts, but purifies--it makes a Christian more holy; it causes an antipathy against sin; it infuses strength to live and suffer for Christ. Some colors not only delight the eye--but strengthen the sight. Just so, the joys of God not only refresh the soul--but strengthen it. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

Spiritual joys are INWARD, they are heart joys. "Your heart shall rejoice." True joy is hidden within; worldly joy lies on the outside, like the dew which wets the leaf. "Laughter can conceal a heavy heart; when the laughter ends, the grief remains." Like a house which has a gilded frontispiece--but all the rooms within are in shambles. But spiritual joy lies most within. "Your heart shall rejoice." Divine joy is like a spring of water, which runs underground. Others can see the sufferings of a Christian--but they cannot see his joy. His joy is hidden manna--hidden from the eye of the world; he has joyful music which others cannot hear. The marrow lies within--the best joy is within the heart.

Spiritual joys are SWEETER than worldly joys. "Your love is sweeter than wine!" Spiritual joys are a Christian's festival; they are the golden pot, and the sweet manna. They are so sweet, that they make everything else sweet! Spiritual joys sweeten health and estate, as sweet water poured on flowers makes them more fragrant and aromatic. Divine joys are so delicious and ravishing, that they put our mouth out of taste for earthly delights; just as he who has been drinking cordials, tastes little sweetness in water. Paul had so tasted these divine joys, that his mouth was out of taste for worldly things. The world was crucified to him--it was like a dead thing, he could find no sweetness in it.

Spiritual joys are more PURE; they are not tempered with any bitter ingredients. A sinner's joy is mixed with dregs--it is embittered with fear and guilt--he drinks wormwood wine. But spiritual joy is not muddied with guilt--but like a crystal stream, it runs pure. Spiritual joy is a rose without prickles; it is honey without wax.

Spiritual joys are SATISFYING joys. "Ask, that your joy may be full." Worldly joys can no more fill the heart, than a drop can fill an ocean! They may please the palate or imagination--but cannot satisfy the soul. "No matter how much we see--we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear--we are not content." Ecc 1:8. But the joys of God satisfy. "Your comforts delight my soul." Psa 94:19. There is as much difference between spiritual joys and earthly joys--as between a banquet which is eaten--and one which is painted on the wall!

Spiritual joys are STRONGER joys than worldly joys. "Strong consolation." Heb 6:18. They are strong joys indeed, which can bear up a Christian's heart in trials and afflictions. "Having received the word in much affliction--with joy." These joys are roses which grow in winter! These joys can sweeten the bitter waters of Marah! He who has these joys--can gather grapes from thorns, and fetch honey out of the carcass of a lion! At the end of the rod--a Christian tastes honey! "As sorrowing--yet always rejoicing."

Spiritual joys are UNWEARIED joys. Other joys, when in excess, often cause loathing; too much honey nauseates. One may be tired of pleasure--as well as labor. King Xerxes offered a reward to him who could find out a new pleasure. But the joys of God, though they satisfy--yet they never glut.

A drop of joy is sweet--but the more of this wine the better! Such as drink of the joys of heaven--are never glutted. Their satiety is without loathing, because they still desire more of the joy with which they are satiated.

Spiritual joys are ABIDING joys. Worldly joys are soon gone. Such as bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure--may have joys which seem to be sweet--but they are swift. They are like meteors--which give a bright and sudden flash, and then disappear. But the joys which believers have are abiding; they are a blossom of eternity--a pledge of those rivers of pleasure which run at God's right hand! "In Your presence is abundant joy; in Your right hand are eternal pleasures!" Psa 16:11

If God gives His people such joy in this life, oh! then, what glorious joy will He give them in heaven! "Enter into the joy of your Lord!" God keeps His best wine until last. What joy will that be--when the soul shall forever bathe itself in the pure and pleasant fountain of God's love! What joy will that be--to see the orient brightness of Christ's face, and have the kisses of those lips which drop sweet-smelling myrrh! How may this set us all longing for that place where sorrow cannot live--and where joy cannot die!

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You have but a little way to go!

"Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." Rom 13:11

You are within a few days march of heaven! Salvation is near to you. Christians, it is but a little while, and you will be done weeping and praying--and be triumphing! You shall put off your mourning garments--and put on white robes! You shall put off your battle armor--and put on a victorious crown! You are almost ready to commence eternal glory!

When a man is almost at the end of a race--will he tire, or faint away? You have but a little way to go--and you will set your foot in heaven! Though the way is uphill and full of thorns; yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, and shortly shall rest from your labors!

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom!" Luk 12:32

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ For to me, to live is Christ

Paul was a great admirer of Christ. He desired to know nothing but Christ, and Him crucified. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain!" Php 1:21

"For to me, to live is Christ." That is, "Christ is my life!" Or thus, "My life is made up of Christ." As a wicked man's life is made up of sin, so Paul's life was made up of Christ--he was full of Christ. That I may give you the sense of the text more fully, take it in these three particulars:

[1] "For to me, to live is Christ," that is--Christ is the PRINCIPLE of my life. I fetch my spiritual life from Christ, as the branch fetches its sap from the root. "Christ lives in me." Gal 2:20. Jesus Christ sends forth life into me, to quicken me to every holy action. Thus, Christ is the principle of my life; from His fullness I live--as the branch lives from the root.

[2] "For to me, to live is Christ," that is--Christ is the END of my life. I live not for myself--but for Christ. All my living, is to do service to Christ. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord." Rom 14:8. We lay out ourselves wholly for Christ. The design of our life is to exalt Christ, and to make the

crown upon His head flourish. In this sense, Christ is the end of my life--when my whole life is a living for Christ.

[3] "For to me, to live is Christ," that is--Christ is the JOY of my life. Psa 43:4, "God my exceeding joy," or the cream of my joy. A Christian can rejoice in Christ, when worldly joys are gone. When the tulip in a garden withers--a man still rejoices in his jewels which are locked up in the house. Just so--when worldly joys are gone--a saint can rejoice in Christ, the pearl of great price. In this sense, Christ is the joy of my life--if Christ were gone, my life would be a death to me.

"For to me, to live is Christ!" Christ is the principle of my life, the end of my life, the joy of my life. If we can say, "For to me, to live is Christ," we may comfortably conclude, "and to die is gain!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A love letter sent to you from God

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Col 3:16

STUDY the Scripture. It is a copy of God's will. Be Scripture-men, Bible-Christians. Search the Scripture, as for a vein of silver. This blessed Book will fill your head with knowledge, and your heart with grace!

There is majesty sparkling in every line of Scripture.

There is a melody in Scripture. This is that blessed harp which drives away sadness of spirit. How sweetly does this harp of Scripture sound, what heavenly music does it make in the ears of a distressed sinner, especially when the finger of God's Spirit touches this instrument!

There is divinity in Scripture. It contains the marrow and quintessence of true religion. It is a rock of diamonds, a mystery of piety. The lips of Scripture have grace poured into them. The Scripture speaks of faith, self-denial, and all the graces which, as a chain of pearls, adorns a Christian.

Oh, then, search the Scripture! Had I the tongue of angels, I could not sufficiently set forth the excellency of Scripture. It is a spiritual telescope, in which we behold God's glory; it is the tree of life, the oracle of wisdom, the rule of manners, the heavenly seed of which the new creature is formed.

'The two Testaments,' says Austin, 'are the two breasts which every Christian must suck, that he may get spiritual nourishment.' These holy leaves of Scripture are for the healing of our souls.

The Scripture is profitable for all things. If we are deserted--here is spiced wine that cheers the heavy heart; if we are pursued by Satan--here is the sword of the Spirit to resist him; if we are diseased with sin's leprosy--here are the waters of the sanctuary, both to cleanse and cure. Oh, then, search the

Scriptures!

Read the Bible with reverence. Think, in every line you read--that God is speaking to you. The ark wherein the Word was put was overlaid with pure gold, and was carried on bars, that the Levites might not touch it. Exo 25:14. Why was this--but to give reverence to the Word?

Read with seriousness. It is matter of life and death; by this Word you must be tried and judged.

Read the Word with affection. Get your hearts quickened with the Word. Labor that the Word may not only be a lamp to direct--but a fire to warm. Read the Scripture, not only as a history--but as a love letter sent to you from God, which may affect your hearts. Pray that the same Spirit who wrote the Word may assist you in reading it; that God's Spirit would show you the wonderful things of His law, so that the Word will become effectual.

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Immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine!

If God is infinite, see what a full portion the saints have. They have Him who is infinite, for their portion! His fullness is an infinite fullness; and He is infinitely sweet, as well as infinitely full. He is infinitely full of beauty and of love. His riches are called unsearchable, because they are infinite.

Stretch your thoughts as much as you can, there is that in God which exceeds; it is an infinite fullness.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine!" Eph 3:20. What can an ambitious person ask? He can ask crowns and kingdoms, millions of worlds; but God can give more than we can ask, nay, more than we can imagine, because He is infinite!

We can imagine--what if all the dust were turned to silver; what if every flower were a ruby; what if every sand in the sea were a diamond; yet God can give more than we can imagine, because He is infinite. Oh, how rich are they who have the infinite God for their portion! Well might David say, "Surely I have a delightful inheritance!"

We may go with the bee from flower to flower--but we shall never have full satisfaction until we come to the infinite God! Jacob said: "I have enough!" In the Hebrew it is, "I have all!" because he had the infinite God for his portion!

God being an infinite fullness, there is no fear of lack for any of the heirs of heaven. Though there are millions of saints and angels who have a share in God's riches, yet He has enough for them all--because He is infinite! Though a thousand men behold the sun--there is light enough for them all. Put ever so many buckets into the sea--there is water enough to fill them. Though an innumerable company of saints and angels are to be filled out of God's fullness, yet God, being infinite, has enough to satisfy them. God has land enough to give to all His heirs. There can be no lack, in that which is infinite.

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Totus oculus

"Him who is perfect in knowledge." Job 37:16

God's knowledge is infallible; there is no mistake in His knowledge. Human knowledge is subject to error. A physician may mistake the treatment of a disease; but God's knowledge is unerring. He can neither deceive, nor be deceived. He cannot deceive--because He is truth; nor be deceived--because He has infinite wisdom.

God's knowledge is instantaneous. Our knowledge is successive--one thing after another. God knows things past, present, and to come--at once. They are all before Him in one entire prospect.

God's knowledge is retentive; He never loses any of His knowledge; He remembers as well as understands. Many things elapse out of our minds--but God's knowledge is eternalized. Things transacted a thousand years ago, are as fresh to Him as if they were done but the last minute! Thus He is perfect in knowledge.

God is totus oculus, "All eye!"

It ought to be so; for He is the "Judge of all the world." There are so many causes to be brought before Him, and so many people to be tried, that He must have a perfect knowledge--or He could not do justice. A human judge cannot proceed without a jury; the jury must search the cause, and give in the verdict. But God can judge without a jury. He knows all things in and of Himself, and needs no witnesses to inform Him. A human judge judges only matters of fact--but God judges the heart! He not only judges wicked actions--but wicked designs! He sees the treason of the heart, and punishes it.

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Enough to put them into a cold sweat!

The sinner takes liberty to sin; he breaks God's laws with greediness, as if he could not sin fast enough.

Remember--the pleasures of sin are but for a season, but the torments of the wicked are forever! Sinners have a short feast--but a long reckoning!

"The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night." Rev 14:11

Here is thunder and lightning to the wicked. God is eternal, therefore the torments of the wicked are

eternal! God lives forever; and as long as God lives, He will be punishing the damned! Remember, one of God's names is Eternal, and as long as God is eternal, He has time enough to reckon with all

His enemies!

Origen erroneously thought, that after a thousand years, the damned would be released out of their

misery. But the worm, the fire, the prison--are all eternal.

Eternity is a sea without bottom and banks. After millions of years, there is not one minute in eternity

spent; and the damned must be ever burning--but never consumed; always dying--but never dead.

"They shall seek death--but shall not find it."

The fire of hell is such, as multitudes of tears will not quench it; and length of time will not finish it!

The vial of God's wrath will be always dropping upon the sinner! As long as God is eternal, He lives to be avenged upon the wicked.

Oh eternity! eternity! who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths of the

sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake, (Isa 30:33) where shall we get buckets to quench that fire?

Oh eternity! If all the body of the earth and sea were turned to sand, and all the air up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand--and a little bird should come every thousand years, and fetch away in her bill but the tenth part of a grain of all that heap of sand; what numberless years would be spent before that vast heap of sand would be fetched away! Yet, if at the end of all that time, the sinner might come out of hell--there would be some hope. But that word "Forever" breaks the heart!

What a terror is this to the wicked--enough to put them into a cold sweat--to think, as long as God is eternal, He lives forever to be avenged upon them!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A divine chemistry

"For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory!" 2Co 4:17

The wisdom of God is seen in making the most desperate evils, work to the good of His children.

As several poisonous ingredients, wisely tempered by the skill of the apothecary, make a sovereign

medicine--so God makes the most deadly afflictions work together for the good of His children. He uses severe afflictions to purify them, and prepare them for heaven.

These hard frosts hasten the spring flowers of glory! The wise God, by a divine chemistry, turns our

afflictions into cordials. He makes His people gainers by losses; and turns their crosses into blessings!

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Sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly

See the evil effects of sin!

Sin has degraded us of our honor. God made us in His own image; but sin has debased us. Sin has plucked off our coat of innocence, and now it has debased us, and turned our glory into shame.

Sin disquiets the peace of the soul. "But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." Isa

57:20-21. Whatever defiles, disturbs. As poison corrupts the blood, so sin corrupts the soul. Sin breeds a trembling at the heart; it creates fears, and there is "torment in fear." Sin makes sad convulsions in the conscience. Judas was so terrified with guilt and horror, that he hanged himself to quiet his conscience. In order to ease his conscience--he threw himself into hell.

Sin produces all temporal evil. It is the Trojan horse, which has sword, and famine and pestilence, in its belly. Sin is a coal, which not only blackens--but burns. Sin creates all our troubles; it puts gravel into our bread, and wormwood in our cup. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, buries loved ones.

Sin unrepented of, brings final damnation. The canker which breeds in the rose is the cause of its perishing; just so--the corruptions which breed in men's souls are the cause of their damning. Sin's pleasure will turn to sorrow at last; like the book the prophet ate--sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. Sin brings the wrath of God--what tears can quench that fire?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A dish which men cannot refrain from

"How long will you love vanity?" Psa 4:2

How strange it is, that anyone should love such a deadly evil as sin! Sin is a dish which men cannot refrain from, though it makes them sick. What pity it is, that so sweet an affection as love, should be poured upon so filthy a thing as sin! Sin brings a sting in the conscience, and a curse in the estate; yet men love it. A sinner is the greatest self-denier; for his sin he will deny himself a part in heaven.

Do anything rather than sin. Oh, hate sin! There is more evil in the least sin--than in the greatest bodily evils which can befall us. There is more evil in a drop of sin--than in a sea of affliction! Affliction is like a rip in a coat--but sin a stab at the heart! In affliction there is some good--in this lion there is some honey to be found. "It is good for me that I was afflicted." Psa 119:71. "Affliction is God's flail to thresh off our husks. Affliction does not consume--but refines." (Augustine) But there is no good in sin; it is the quintessence of evil. Sin is worse than hell; for the pains of hell are a burden to the creature only; but sin is a burden to God!

Is sin so great an evil? Then how thankful should you be to God, if He has taken away your sin! "I have taken away your sins." Zec 3:4. If you had a disease on your body--how thankful would you be to have it taken away! Much more to have sin taken away. God takes away the guilt of sin by pardoning grace, and the power of sin by mortifying grace.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The devil's workshop

"The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Jer 17:9

Sin has defiled the heart. The heart is deadly wicked. It is a lesser hell. In the heart are legions of lusts, obdurateness, infidelity, hypocrisy, sinful lusts. It boils as the sea--with passion and revenge. "The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live." Ecc 9:3. The heart is the devil's workshop, where all mischief is framed.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The effectual call

"Those He predestined, He also called." Rom 8:30

The cause of the effectual call is God's electing love. It is not because some are more worthy to partake of the heavenly calling than others. What worthiness is in us? What worthiness was there in Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were cast? What worthiness in the Corinthians, before God called them by His gospel? They were "idol worshipers, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, abusers, and swindlers." 1Co 6:9-10. Before effectual calling, we are not only "without strength," but "enemies to God." So that the foundation of effectual calling is election--and not merit.

The effectual call is powerful. God puts forth infinite power in calling home a sinner to Himself. He not only puts forth His voice--but His arm! He conquers the pride of the heart, and makes the stubborn will, to yield and stoop to His grace; He makes the stony heart bleed. The effectual call is mighty and powerful. God puts forth a divine energy, nay, a kind of omnipotence; it is such

a powerful call, that the will of man has no power effectually to resist.

Consider what you were before God called you! "You were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins!" Eph 2:1. When God called Paul, he found him persecuting; when he called Zacchaeus, he found him using extortion. When God calls a man by His grace, He finds him seeking after his lusts; as when Saul was called to the kingdom, he was seeking the donkeys. Admire God's love, exalt His praise--that He should call you when you were in the hot pursuit of sin!

What mercy is this--that God should call you, and pass by others! "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight!" That God should pass by wise and noble people; or people of sweeter disposition, better morals, greater abilities, guilty of less vice--and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you--oh, the astonishing love of God!

As God so governs the clouds, that He makes them rain upon one place, and not upon another--just so, at a sermon the Lord opens the heart of one, and another is no more affected with it than a deaf man with the sound of music! Here the banner of free grace is displayed!

When two are living together--husband and wife, or father and child--that God should call one by His grace, and leave the other in his sins, and let the other perish eternally--oh infinite rich grace! How should they that are called be affected with God's sovereign love! How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness! Such as are trophies of mercy, should be trumpeters of praise. Thus Paul, being effectually called by God, and seeing what a debtor he was to free grace, breaks forth into admiration and gratitude, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" 2Co 9:15

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There are many roaring devils around us!

There is nothing that more troubles a child of God, than that he fears he shall never hold out. "These weak legs of mine," he says, "will never carry me to heaven." But he is kept by the power of God! Once in Christ--forever in Christ. A believer may fall from some degrees of grace; but not from the state of grace.

How despairing is the Arminian doctrine of falling from grace! Today a saint--tomorrow a reprobate; today a Peter--tomorrow a Judas! This is like boring a hole in a vessel--to make all the wine of his joy run out. Were the Arminian doctrine true, what comfort would it be--to have one's name written in the book of life--if it might be blotted out again? But be assured, for your comfort, that grace--if it is true--though ever so weak, shall persevere.

"Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 1Pe 1:5

See whence it is--that believers persevere in holiness. It is to be ascribed solely to the power of God. It is a wonder that any Christian perseveres, if you consider:

(1.) Corruption within. There is more sin than grace; yet grace is habitually predominant. Grace is like a spark in the sea--it is a wonder that it is not quenched! It is a wonder that sin does not destroy grace.

(2.) Temptations without. Satan envies us happiness, and he raises his militia, and stirs up persecution. He shoots his fiery darts of temptations--which are called darts for their swiftness, fiery for their terribleness. We are every day beset with devils! As it was a wonder that Daniel was kept alive in the midst of the roaring lions, so there are many roaring devils around us--and yet we are not torn in pieces! Now, whence is it, that we stand against these powerful temptations? We are kept by the power of God!

(3.) The world's old snares--riches and pleasure. How many have been shipwrecked upon these golden rocks! "Demas has deserted me, because he loved this present world." 2Ti 4:10

What a wonder any persevere in holiness--that the earth does not choke the fire of all holy affections! Whence is this, but from the power of God? We are kept by His power.

"My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish--ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand!" John 10:27-29

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Losers!

"The hopes of the godly result in happiness, but the expectations of the wicked are all in vain."

Pro 10:28

See the great difference between the death of the godly and the wicked. The godly are great gainers at death--but the wicked are great losers at death. They lose four things:

(1.) They lose the world; and that is a great loss to the wicked. They laid up their treasure upon earth, and to be turned out of it all at once is a great loss.

(2.) They lose their souls. Mat 16:26-27. The soul is more precious than the whole world!

But the sinner's soul is lost; not that the souls of the wicked are annihilated at death--but tormented!

(3.) They lose heaven. Heaven is the region of happiness and perfection.

(4.) They lose all hope. Though they lived wickedly, they hoped God would be merciful, and they hoped they would go to heaven. Their hope was not an anchor--but a spider's web! At death they lose their hopes, and see they did but flatter themselves into hell! "Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless. What he trusts in is fragile; what he relies on is a spider's web." Job 8:13-14. It is dreadful to have life and hope cut off together!

"When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes." Pro 11:7

"The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but the hope of the wicked only in wrath."

Pro 11:23

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## Body of Practical Divinity(choice excerpts) contd

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cont'd The best friend!

"Man is born to trouble." Job 5:7

He is heir to trouble, it is his birthright. You may as well separate weight from lead, as trouble from the life of man.

Death frees a believer from all the troubles and encumbrances to which this life is subject. "Sin is the seed sown--and trouble is the harvest reaped!" Euripides. Life and trouble are married together. There is more in life to trouble us, than to tempt us! Parents divide a portion of sorrow to their children, and yet leave enough for themselves.

King Henry's emblem was a crown hung in a bush of thorns. There is a far greater proportion of bitterness, than pleasure in this life. "I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon." Pro 7:17. For one sweet ingredient there were two bitter; for the sweet cinnamon, there were bitter myrrh and aloes.

A man's grace will not exempt him from troubles. "My years have been few and difficult." Gen 47:9. Thus said a godly patriarch, though he had met with God. "I have seen God face to face!" and yet he had his troubles. There are many things to embitter life and cause trouble--but death frees us from them all!

(1.) Death frees a believer from CARE. The mind is full of perplexed thoughts--how to bring about such a design; or how to prevent such an evil. The Greek word for care comes from a primitive in the Greek, which signifies, to cut the heart in pieces. Care torments the mind; wastes the spirits. Care is a spiritual canker, which eats out the comfort of life. Death is its only cure!

(2.) Death frees a believer from FEAR. Fear is the epilepsy of the soul, which sets it shaking. "There is torment in fear." Fear is like Prometheus' vulture gnawing the heart. There is a mistrustful fear--a fear of lack; and a distracting fear--a fear of danger; and a discouraging fear--a fear that God does not love us. These fears leave dreadful impressions upon the mind. But at death, a believer is freed from these torturing fears! He is as far from fear--as the damned are from hope. The grave buries a Christian's fear!

(3.) Death frees a believer from LABOR. "All things are wearisome, more than one can say." Ecc 1:8. Some labor with their bodies--others with their minds. God has made a law, "In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread." But death gives a believer a quietus--it takes him off from his hard labor. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord: they rest from their labors." They no longer need to work--for they have entered upon their reward! They no longer need to fight--for they have the crown set on their head! "They rest from their labors."

(4.) Death frees a believer from SUFFERING. Believers are as a lily among thorns; or as the dove among vultures. The wicked have an antipathy against them; and secret hatred will often break

forth into open violence. "He who was born after the flesh, persecuted him who was born after the Spirit." The dragon is described with seven heads and ten horns. j. He plots with the seven heads, and pushes with the ten horns. But at death, the godly shall be freed from the molestations of the wicked! They shall never more be pestered with these vermin! "There the wicked cease from troubling." Job 3:17. Death does to a believer, as Joseph of Arimathea did to Christ--it takes him down from the cross. The eagle which flies high, cannot be stung with the serpent. Death gives the soul the wings of an eagle--to fly above all the venomous serpents here below!

(5.) Death frees a believer from TEMPTATION. Though Satan is a conquered enemy--yet he is a restless enemy. "Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour." 1Pe 5:8. He prowls about--he is always going about his diocese. He has his snares and his darts! One he tempts with riches, another with beauty. It is a great trouble to be continually followed with temptations; it is as bad as for a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted. But death will free a child of God from temptation, so that he shall never again be vexed with the old serpent! After death has shot its dart--the devil will be done shooting his! Grace puts a believer out of the devil's possession--but only death frees him from the devil's temptation!

(6.) Death frees a believer from SORROW. A cloud of sorrow often gathers in the heart--and drops into tears! "My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing." It was part of the curse, "In sorrow you shall bring forth." Gen 3:16. Many things occasion sorrow: sickness, lawsuits, treachery of friends, disappointment of hopes, and loss of estate. "Don't call me Naomi (that is, pleasant). Instead, call me Mara (that is, bitter), for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me." Ruth 1:20.

Sorrow is the evil spirit which haunts us! "The people wept loudly. So they named that place Bochim (that is, weeping)." Jdg 2:4-5. The world is a Bochim! Rachel wept for her children; some grieve that they have no children, and others grieve that their children are unkind. Thus we spend our years with sighing. The world is a valley of tears! But death is the funeral of all our sorrows! "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes!" Rev 7:17. Then Christ's spouse puts off her mourning garments; for "how can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them?" Mat 9:15. Thus death gives a believer his quietus--it frees him from sin and trouble. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death." 1Co 15:26. Though the apostle calls death the last enemy--yet it is the best friend! "To me to die is gain!"

See here that which may make a true saint willing to die. Death will set him out of gunshot, and free him from sin and trouble! There is no cause for weeping--to leave a valley of tears--to leave the stage on which sin and misery are acted. Believers are here in a strange country, why then should they not be willing to leave it? Death beats off their fetters of sin, and sets them free! Who goes weeping--when released from a jail?

Besides our own sins, there are the sins of others. The world is a place where Satan's throne is; a place where we see God daily dishonored. Lot, who was a bright star in a dark night, felt his righteous soul tormented with the filthy lives of the wicked. 2Pe 2:7. To see God's truths adulterated, and His glory eclipsed--wounds a godly heart. It made David cry out, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar." Kedar was Arabia, where Ishmael's posterity lived. It was a cut to David's heart to dwell there. O then, be willing to depart out of the

tents of Kedar!

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The sweetest hours

Be exhorted to prize the written Word.

"I have treasured the words of His mouth  
more than my daily bread." Job 23:12

David valued the Word more than gold.

The Word is the field where Christ the pearl  
of great price is hidden! In this sacred mine  
we dig, not for a wedge of gold--but for a  
weight of glory! The Scripture is a sacred  
eye-salve to illuminate us. Prov. 6:63, 'The  
commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.'

The Scripture is the chart and compass by  
which we sail to the new Jerusalem.

The Word is a sovereign cordial in all distresses.

What are the promises, but the water of life to  
renew fainting spirits? Is it sin which troubles  
you? Here is a Scripture cordial.

Do outward afflictions disquiet you? Here is  
a Scripture cordial. Psa 91:15, 'I will be  
with him in trouble, I will deliver him.' Thus,  
as manna was laid up in the ark, so promises  
are laid up in the ark of Scripture.

The Scripture will make us wise. Wisdom is  
above rubies. Psa 119:104, 'By Your precepts  
I get understanding.' The Scriptures teach a  
man to know himself. They unmask Satan's  
snares and stratagems. 2Co 2:2. 'They

make one wise to salvation.' 2Ti 3:15.

They show us the way to the heavenly kingdom.

David counted the Word 'more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb.' Psa 19:10. There is that in Scripture which may breed delight. Well then may we count those the sweetest hours, which are spent in reading the holy Scriptures; well may we say with the prophet, 'Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became a delight to me and the joy of my heart.'

Jer 15:16

Oh, then, highly prize the Scriptures.

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True 'holy water'

"True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:23-24

See how God is delighted with spiritual worship.

This is the savory meat which God loves. How few mind this! They give Him more dregs than souls; they think it enough to bring their duties, but not their hearts!

To worship God in spirit, is to worship Him without ceremonies. The ceremonies of the law, which God Himself ordained, are now abrogated, and out of date.

Christ the substance being come, the shadows fly away; and therefore the apostle calls the legal ceremonies, carnal rites.

To worship God in spirit, is to worship Him with the utmost zeal and intenseness of soul. The more spiritual any service is--the more excellent it is. The spiritual part of duty is the fat of the sacrifice: it is the soul and quintessence of true religion. It is not pomp of worship--but purity, which God accepts.

Repentance is not in the outward severities used to the body--such as penance, fasting, and chastising the body--but it consists in the sacrifice of a broken heart. The true 'holy water' is not that which the pope sprinkles--but is distilled from the penitent eye.

Thanksgiving does not stand in church-music, the melody of an organ--but rather in making melody in the heart to the Lord. Eph 5:19.

Prayer is not the tuning of the voice into a heartless confession, or counting over a few prayer beads; but it consists in sighs and groans, Rom 8:26.

When the fire of fervency is put to the incense of prayer--then it ascends as a sweet fragrance to God.

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They are never out of His eye

God is infinite. He fills all places, and is everywhere present. This is dreadful to the wicked. God is their enemy, and they cannot escape Him, nor flee from Him--for He is everywhere present! They are never out of His eye, nor out of His reach. "Your hand shall

find out all your enemies." What caves or thickets can men hide in--that God cannot find them? Go where they will--He is present.

"Where shall I flee from Your presence?" If a man owes a debt to another he may make his escape, and flee into another land, where the creditor cannot find him. "But where shall I flee from Your presence?" God is infinite, He is in all places; so that He will find out His enemies and punish them!

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The diamond in the ring!

God is eternal, therefore He lives forever to reward the godly. "To those who seek for glory and honor, eternal life." The people of God are now in a suffering condition. The wicked are clad in purple, and fare deliciously, while the godly suffer. The goats climb upon high mountains, while Christ's sheep are in the valley of slaughter. But here is the comfort--God is eternal, and He has appointed eternal recompenses for the saints. In heaven are fresh delights, and sweetness without excess. That which is the crown and zenith of heaven's happiness, is--that it is "eternal." Were there but the least suspicion that this glory must cease, it would much eclipse, yes, embitter it; but it is eternal. "An eternal weight of glory."

What angel can span eternity? The saints shall bathe themselves in the rivers of divine pleasure; and these rivers can never be dried up. "At Your right hand are pleasures for evermore." This is the highest strain in the apostle's rhetoric--"Forever with the Lord!"

In heaven, there is . . .  
peace without trouble,  
ease without pain,  
glory without end!

Let this comfort the saints in all their troubles; their sufferings are but short--but their reward is eternal! Eternity makes heaven to be heaven! Eternity is the diamond in the ring! Oh blessed day, which shall have no night! The sunlight of glory shall rise upon the soul, and never set!

The saints' crown is eternal, "You shall receive a crown of glory, which never fades away!" The wicked have a never-dying worm; and the godly a never-fading crown! Oh how should this be a spur to virtue! How willing should we be to work for God! Though we have nothing here on earth, God has time enough to reward His people. The crown of eternity shall be set upon their head!

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A good antidote against sin  
Thoughts of eternal torments, are a good  
antidote against sin. Sin tempts with its  
pleasure; but when we think of eternity, it  
may cool the intemperate heat of lust. Shall  
I, for the pleasure of sin for a season--endure  
eternal pain? Shall I venture eternal wrath?  
Is sin committed so sweet--as lying in hell  
forever is bitter? This thought would make  
us flee from sin, as from a serpent!

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What a strong appetite!

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." Rom 5:12

Not only is the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to us--but the depravity and corruption of his nature is transmitted to us, as poison is carried from the fountain to the cistern. This is that which we call original sin. "In sin did my mother conceive me." Psa 51:5. Adam's leprosy cleaves to us, as Naaman's leprosy did to Gehazi. 2Ki 5:27.

Sin has contaminated and defiled our virgin nature. Sin has poisoned the spring of our nature, it has turned beauty into leprosy; it has turned the azure brightness of our souls, into midnight darkness.

In sin there is an aversion from good. Man has a desire to be happy--yet opposes that which would promote his happiness. He has a disgust of holiness, he hates to be reformed. Since we fell from God, we have no mind to return to Him.

We have a propensity to evil. Men roll sin as honey under their tongue. "They drink iniquity as water," Job 15:16. They thirst for sin. Though they are tired out in committing sin--yet they sin. "Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more." Eph 4:19. "They weary themselves to commit iniquity"; as a man who follows his game while he is weary--yet delights in it, and cannot leave it off. Jer 9:5. Though God has set so many flaming swords in the way to stop men in their sin--yet they go on in it; which all shows what a strong appetite they have to the forbidden fruit.

Consider the universality of sin. It has, as poison, diffused itself into all the parts and powers of the soul. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint." Isa 1:5. Like a sick patient, that has no part sound, his liver is swelled, his feet are gangrened, his lungs are withered. Such infected, gangrened souls we have; until Christ, who has made a medicine of His blood, cures us!

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Three keys

Christ has three keys in His hand--  
the key of the grave, to open the graves  
of men at the resurrection;  
the key of heaven, to open the kingdom  
of heaven to whomever He will;  
the key of hell, to lock up the damned  
in that fiery prison!

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The diamond in the ring

"For 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!" 1Pe 1:4

But that which is the diamond in the ring, the glory of this inheritance--is the eternal sight and fruition of the blessed God! The sight of God will be a most alluring, heart-ravishing object! "We shall see Him as He is!" Oh, what will it be to see Him in glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun! And not only see Him--but enjoy Him forever! All this blessedness, has Christ purchased for us, through His death on the cross!

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He turns the wolf into a lamb

The whole world is divided into two classes--

the sons of God, and the heirs of hell.

"He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will."

Eph 1:5

Adoption is a mercy spun out of the affections of free grace. All by nature are strangers to God, therefore have no right to sonship. God is pleased to adopt one, and not another; to make one a vessel of glory-- another a vessel of wrath!

God adopts us from a state of sin and misery. He adopts us from slavery; it is a mercy to redeem a slave--but it is more to adopt him!

It would be much for God to take a clod of dust--and make it into a star. But it is more for Him to take a piece of clay and sin--and adopt it for His heir!

God adopts all His sons to a glorious inheritance.

"It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" Adoption ends in coronation! The kingdom God gives to His adopted sons and heirs, excels all earthly kingdoms.

All whom God adopts as His sons--He makes saints.

Those whom God adopts--He sanctifies. He not only gives a new name--but a new nature. He turns the wolf into a lamb; He makes the heart humble and gracious.

See the amazing love of God, in making us His sons.

It is love in God to feed us--but more to adopt us!  
God did not adopt us when we were bespangled with  
the jewels of holiness--but when we were deformed  
with sin, and diseased as lepers!

It is amazing that God should adopt His enemies!  
For God to have pardoned His enemies would have  
been much; but to adopt them for His heirs--this  
astonishes the angels in heaven! All this proclaims  
the wonder of God's love in adopting us.

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on  
us, that we should be called children of God! And  
that is what we are!" 1Jn 3:1

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Evangelical obedience

A true Christian not only believes God's promise--but  
obeys His command. When God says "Do not drink  
from sin's enchanted cup," the believer says, "my  
heavenly Father has commanded me--and I dare  
not drink!"

Obedience must have the Word of God for its rule. This  
is the touchstone. "To the law and to the testimony!" If  
our obedience is not according to the Word, it is offering  
up strange fire; and God will say, "Who has required this  
at your hand?" Child-like obedience is that which is  
consistent with our Father's revealed will.

Obedience must be done from a right principle, from  
the noble principle of faith. "The obedience of faith."

A crab-tree may bear fruit fair to the eye--but it is sour  
because it does not come from a good root. A moral

person may give God outward obedience, which to the eyes of others may seem glorious; but his obedience is sour because it comes not from the sweet and pleasant root of faith. A child of God gives Him the obedience of faith, and that meliorates and sweetens his services. All God's commands have the same stamp of divine authority upon them. If I obey one precept because my heavenly Father commands me, by the same rule I must obey all. A child of God obeys one command, as well as another. "I have respect unto all Your commandments." To obey God in some things--and not in others, shows an unsound heart. Child-like obedience moves towards every command of God, as the needle points that way which the magnet draws. If God calls to duties which are cross to flesh and blood, if we are children--we shall still obey our Father. "I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey Your Word."

Though a believer cannot obey every precept perfectly; yet he does evangelically. He approves of every command. "I consent to the law, that it is good." He delights in every command. "O how love I Your law!" His desire is to obey every command. "Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying Your decrees!" Wherein he comes short--he looks up to Christ's blood to supply his defects. This is evangelical obedience; which, though we are not satisfied with it, God accepts it.

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Satan's picture!

"Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good." Tit 2:13-14

Jesus Christ has died for our sanctification. Christ shed His blood to wash off our impurity. The cross was both an altar and a laver. Christ died, not only to save us from wrath--but from sin!

"Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written--Be holy, because I am holy."

1Pe 1:15-16

Sanctification makes us resemble God. It was Adam's sin--that he aspired to be like God in omniscience; but we must endeavor to be like Him in sanctity. It is a holy heart--in which something of God can be seen. Nothing of God can be seen in an unsanctified man--but you may see Satan's picture in him! Envy is the devil's eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot; but nothing of God's image can be seen in him.

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Feathers fly up--but gold descends!

True assurance of salvation, always keeps the heart in a lowly posture. "Lord," says the soul, "what am I, that, passing by so many others, the golden beams of Your love should shine upon me?"

Paul had assurance. Is he proud of this jewel? No!

"To me who am less than the least of all saints."

The more love a Christian receives from God, the more he sees himself a debtor to free grace; and

the sense of his debt keeps his heart humble!

But presumption is bred from pride. He who presumes, thinks himself better than others. "The proud Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: I thank You, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, I fast twice a week, and I give You a tenth of my income." Luk 18:11-12.

Feathers fly up--but gold descends! Just so, the heart of him who has this golden assurance, descends in humility. Pride estranges God from the soul. Be low in humility. Paul had assurance, and he baptized himself with the name, "chief of sinners!" The jewel of assurance is best kept in the cabinet of a humble heart.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ To die is gain!

As the wicked have a worm which never dies, so the elect have an unfading crown of glory.

'Forever' is a short word--but it has no end.

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain!"

Php 1:21

To show fully what a believer's gains are at death, would be a task too great for an angel; all hyperboles fall short of it; the reward of glory exceeds our imagination.

Believers at death, shall bid an eternal farewell to all sins and troubles. They shall be in a state of impeccability. Sin expires with their life. I think sometimes what a happy state that will be, never

to have another sinful thought, and to have a quietus from all troubles. Here David cried out, "My life is spent with griefs, and my years with sighing." "Long life is merely long torment," said Augustine.

Life begins with a cry, and ends with a groan; but at death all troubles die. How delightful will it be, to be freed from all our sinful corruptions, pride, envy, passion and censoriousness--which as scars, disfigured us here!

Believers at death, shall gain the glorious sight of God. The sight of God will be very delightful; for the terror of God's essence will be taken away; His majesty will be mixed with beauty, and sweetened with mercy. It will be infinitely delightful to the saints, to see the amiable aspects and smiles of God's face.

The saints at death shall not only have a sight of God--but shall enjoy His love. There shall be no more a veil on God's face, nor shall His smiles be chequered with frowns--but His love shall discover itself in all its orient beauty and fragrant sweetness. Here the saints pray for His love, and they have a few drops; but there they shall have as much as their vessels can receive. To know the love that passes knowledge, will cause a jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the saints, as are superlative, and would soon overwhelm them, if God did not make them able to bear it.

Forever in Christ's bosom is the highest strain of the saint's glory! We should be ambitious of being with Christ. "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!" Php 1:23. We should be content to live--but willing to die. Is it not a blessed thing to be freed from sin, and to lie forever in the bosom of divine love? Does not the bride desire the marriage day, especially if she has the prospect of a crown? What is the place we now live in--but a place of banishment from God? We are in a wilderness! Here we are combating with Satan--should we not desire to be out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly fast--and receive a victorious crown? Think what it will be, to have always a smiling look from Christ's face! to be brought into the banqueting-house, and have the banner of His love displayed over us! O you saints, desire death--it is your ascension-day to heavenly glory!

"Always thanking the Father, who has enabled you to share the inheritance that belongs to God's holy people, who live in the light. For He has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and He has brought us into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Col 1:12-13

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Miser ego homo!

Death frees a believer from sin. There are in the best believers, the remnants of sin--some remainders and relics of corruption. "O wretched man who I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" By the body of death is meant the mass and lump of sin. It may

well be called a body--for its weightiness; and a body of death for its harmfulness.

(1.) Sin weighs us down. Sin hinders us from doing good.

Like a bird that would be flying up--but has a chain tied to its legs to hinder it--a Christian would be flying up to heaven with the wings of desire--but sin hinders him! He is like a ship under sail, and at anchor! Grace would sail forward--but sin is the anchor that holds it back!

(2.) Sin is more active in its sphere, than grace. How stirring was lust in David, when his grace lay dormant!

(3.) Sin sometimes gets the mastery, and leads a saint captive. "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing."

Rom 7:19. Paul was like a man carried down the stream, and could not bear up against it. How often is a child of God overpowered with pride and passion! Therefore Paul calls sin, "a law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members." Rom 7:23. Sin binds as a law; it has a kind of jurisdiction over the soul, as Caesar had over the senate.

(4.) Sin defiles the soul. Like a stain to beauty--sin turns the soul's azure brightness into darkness.

(5.) Sin debilitates us, disarms us of our strength. "I am this day weak, though anointed king." Though a saint is crowned with grace, and anointed a spiritual king--he is weak.

(6.) Sin is ever restless. "The flesh lusts against the spirit." Gal 5:17. Sin is an inmate that is always quarreling--it will never be quiet.

(7.) Sin adheres to us, we cannot get rid of it. It may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall, the roots of which are pulled up--but some fibers of it are left in the joints of the stone-work, which cannot be gotten out.

(8.) Sin mingles with our duties and graces. It makes a child of God weary of his life, and makes him water his couch with his tears--to think that sin is so strong an inhabitant, and that he often offends the God he loves. This made Paul cry out, Miser ego homo! "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin?" Rom 7:24. He did not cry out because of his affliction, or his prison-chains--but for the body of sin!

Now a believer at death is freed from sin! He shall never again have a vain, proud thought! He shall never again grieve the Spirit of God! Sin brought death into the world --and death shall carry sin out of the world.

The Persians had a certain day in the year in which they killed all serpents and venomous creatures; such a day will the day of death be to a believer. Death will destroy all his sins--which, like so many serpents, have stung him! Death smites a believer as the angel did Peter--and made his chains fall off. Acts 12:7.

Believers at death are made perfect in holiness. "The spirits of just men made perfect." At death the souls of believers recover their virgin purity. Oh! what a blessed privilege is this--to be without spot or wrinkle; to be purer than the sunbeams; to be as free from sin as the angels! This makes a believer desirous to have his passport, and to be gone

from his sin! He would gladly live in that pure air, where  
no black vapors of sin arise!

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Seven eyes and an iron rod

"The Father has committed all judgment  
to the Son." John 5:22

He who once hung upon the cross--shall sit upon the  
throne of judgment! He is of infinite knowledge to  
understand all causes brought before Him; and of  
infinite power to execute offenders. He is described  
with seven eyes, Zec 3:9, to denote His wisdom;  
and an iron rod, Psa 2:9, to denote His power.

He is so wise that He cannot be deceived,  
and so strong that He cannot be resisted.

This will be terrible to the wicked. How can a guilty  
prisoner endure the sight of the judge? The Lamb  
of God will then be turned into a Lion, the sight of  
whom will strike terror into sinners. They, being  
convicted, will be speechless. Then follows the  
dismal sentence: "Depart from Me, you cursed ones,  
into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his  
angels!"--a dreadful, but a righteous sentence. The  
sinner himself shall cry, "Guilty!" Though he has a  
sea of wrath--he has not one drop of injustice.

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My sheep

"My sheep hear My voice; I know them, and  
they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and  
they shall never perish." John 10:27-28

"My sheep"--there is election.

"Hear My voice"--there is effectual calling.

"I know them"--there is justification.

"They follow Me"--there is sanctification.

"I give them eternal life"--there is glorification.

"They shall never perish"--there is preservation.

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The devil's peace

"There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." Isa 57:21

The wicked may have something which looks like peace; but it is not. They only have a stupefied conscience. This is the devil's peace. He rocks men to sleep in the cradle of carnal security; he cries, "Peace, peace!" when men are on the precipice of hell. The seeming peace, which a sinner has, arises from the ignorance of his danger.

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The very hinge and pillar of Christianity

Justification is an act of God's free grace, whereby He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight--only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone. By Christ's death and merits, God's justice is more abundantly satisfied than if we had suffered the pains of hell forever.

Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity.

An error about justification is dangerous, like a defect in a foundation. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life. To have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast

into this spring is damnable.

God, in justifying a person, pronounces him to be righteous, and looks upon him as if he had not sinned.

The cause, the motive or ground of justification, is the free grace of God: "being justified freely by his grace."

The first wheel that sets all the rest running, is the love and favor of God; as a king freely pardons a delinquent.

Justification is a mercy spun out of the affections of free grace. God does not justify us because we are worthy; but by justifying us makes us worthy.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Redeemed

A justified person is redeemed from the guilt of sin --though not the stain of sin. Christ has redeemed a justified person from the guilt of sin; He has discharged his debts. Christ says to God's justice, as Paul to Philemon, "If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything --charge that to My account."

A justified person is redeemed from the power and dominion of sin--though not from the presence of sin.

Sin may rage in a child of God--but not reign.

Lust raged in David, and fear in Peter--but it did not reign; they recovered themselves by repentance. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Sin lives in a child of God--but is deposed from the throne; it lives not as a king--but a captive.

A justified person is redeemed from the curse due to sin.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Gal 3:13. Christ said to His Father,

as Rebecca to Jacob, "Upon Me, upon Me be the curse; let the blessing be upon them--but upon Me be the curse."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The sum and quintessence of the gospel!

Jesus Christ is the sum and quintessence of the gospel! He is the wonder of angels; and the joy and triumph of saints. The name of Christ is sweet--it is as music in the ear, honey in the mouth, and a cordial at the heart!

"His name shall be called Jesus." Mat 1:21. The word for JESUS signifies a Savior; and whom He saves from hell, He saves from sin. Where Christ is a Savior, He is a sanctifier. There is no other Savior. "Neither is there salvation in any other." Acts 4:12. As there was but one ark to save the world from drowning--so there is but one Jesus to save sinners from damning.

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Minerva's eyes were upon him

God's glory lies chiefly in his attributes, which are the several beams by which the divine nature shines forth.

"The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed." Among other of his orient excellencies, this is not the least--"the Lord is a God of knowledge."

He has a full idea and cognizance of all things; the world is to Him a transparent body.

He makes a heart-anatomy. "I am He who searches the thoughts and the heart." The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain--to draw between us and His sight.

"Even in darkness I cannot hide from You. To You the

night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are both alike to You."

There is not a word we whisper but God hears it.

"There is not a word in my tongue--but lo, O Lord, You know it altogether." There is not the most subtle thought that comes into our mind--but God perceives it. "I know their thoughts." Thoughts speak as loud in God's ears--as words do in ours. All our actions, though ever so subtly contrived, and secretly conducted, are visible to the eye of Omniscience. "I know their works."

Achan hid the Babylonish garment in the earth--but God brought it to light. Minerva was so lively painted, that whichever way one turned, Minerva's eyes were upon him. Just so, whichever way we turn ourselves, God's eye is upon us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Baptized heathen?

"The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's feeding-trough, but Israel does not know; My people do not understand." Isa 1:3

Are there not many in our churches, who are no better than baptized heathen?

Ignorance is the nurse of impiety.

Where ignorance reigns in the understanding, lust rages in the affections. When people's minds are covered with ignorance, it is a fatal forerunner of destruction.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Blown to hell!

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them." Mat 6:1

Many do religious duties for their own glory. They want to be set upon a theater for others to admire them. The oil of vainglory feeds their lamp. How many by the wind of popular breath--have been blown to hell! Whom the devil cannot destroy by intemperance, he does by vainglory! If there is either justice in heaven, or fire in hell--they shall not go unpunished.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The silkworm

When Herod had made an oration, and the people gave a shout, saying, 'It is the voice of a God, and not of a man!' '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.' Acts 12:23.

We glorify God, when we sacrifice the praise and glory of all we do--to Him. 1Co 15:10. 'I have worked harder than all the other apostles,' is a speech, one would think, which savored of pride. But the apostle pulls the crown from his own head--and sets it upon the head of free grace! 'Yet it was not I but God who was working through me by His grace.'

As Joab, when he fought against Rabbah, sent for King David, that David might carry away the crown of the victory; so a Christian, when he has gotten power over any corruption or temptation, sends for Christ, that He may carry away the crown of the victory.

As the silkworm, when she weaves her curious work,  
hides herself under the silk, and is not seen; so when  
we have done anything praiseworthy--we must hide  
ourselves under the veil of humility, and transfer the  
glory of all we have done to God.

As one used to write the name of Christ over his door--  
so should we write the name of Christ over our duties.

Let Him wear the garland of praise!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Diamonds and magnets

We glorify God by laboring to draw others to God,  
by seeking to convert others, and so make them  
instruments of glorifying God. We should be both  
diamonds and magnets; diamonds for the luster  
of grace, and magnets for attractive virtue in drawing  
others to Christ. It is a great way of glorifying God,  
when we break open the devil's prison, and turn men  
from the power of Satan to God.

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Either leap over them, or tread upon them!

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than  
Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son  
or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me!"

Mat 10:37

If relations lie in our way to heaven, we must  
either leap over them, or tread upon them!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Feathery Christians

A man may go to hell as well for heresy, as adultery!

"Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming." Eph 4:14

To be unsettled in religion, argues lightness. As feathers will be blown every way, so will feathery Christians.

Therefore such are compared to infants. Children are fickle; sometimes of one mind, sometimes of another; nothing pleases them long. Just so, unsettled Christians are childish; the truths they embrace at one time, they reject at another.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Let us be content that God  
should rule the world

Better is the loss that makes you humble,  
than the success that makes you proud.

If God will give His people a kingdom when  
they die--he will not deny them daily bread  
while they live!

God's providences are wise and regular,  
though to us they seem very strange and  
crooked.

Providence is a Christian's diary--but not his Bible.

If other people do not act as we would have them  
act, they shall act as God would have them act.

It may be, we think sometimes we could order things  
better, if we had the government of the world in our  
hands; but alas! should we be left to our own choice,  
we would choose those things that are hurtful for us!

Let us be content that God should rule the

world. Learn to acquiesce in His will, and submit to His providence.

Does any affliction befall you? Remember God sees it is that which is fit for you--or it would not come. God's providence may sometimes be secret--but it is always wise. We should learn to be silent under His displeasure.

"I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for You are the one who has done this." Psa 39:9

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