

THE BEATITUDES (CHOICE EXCERPTS)

by Thomas Watson

Selected passages from Watson's Beatitudes exposition emphasizing running to God the Father of mercies with sins and temptations, finding comfort in His unfailing compassion.

2 Chapters

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The Beatitudes (choice excerpts)

The Beatitudes Thomas Watson, 1660

CHOICE EXCERPTS

God has two fires

"I have refined you in the furnace of affliction." Isaiah 48:10

"Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his demons! And they will go away into eternal punishment!" Matthew 25:41, Matthew 25:46

God has two fires—one where He puts His gold, one where He puts His dross.

The fire where He puts His gold, is the fire of affliction—to purify them.

The fire where He puts His dross, is the fire of damnation—to punish them.

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There are nails in that cross!

"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

Luke 9:23

Self-denial is the highest sign of a sincere Christian. Hypocrites may have great knowledge and make large profession—but it is only the true-hearted saint who can deny himself for Christ.

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

A man must deny self-esteem. Every man by nature has a high opinion of himself. He is drunk with spiritual pride. A proud man disdains the cross. He thinks himself too good to suffer. Oh deny self-esteem! Let the plumes of pride fall off!

A man must deny carnal self. This I take to be the chief sense of the text. He must deny carnal ease.

The flesh cries out for ease. It is loath to put its neck under Christ's yoke or stretch itself upon the cross. The flesh cries out, "Oh! the cross of Christ is heavy! There are nails in that cross which will lacerate, and fetch blood!" We must deny our self-ease, and be as a deaf adder, stopping our ears to the charmings of the flesh! Those who lean on the soft pillow of sloth, will hardly take up the cross.

This self-denying frame of heart is very hard. This is "to pluck out the right eye." It is easier to overcome men and devils, than to overcome self. "Stronger is he who conquers himself, than he who conquers the strongest walled city."

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

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ This perfume of free grace!

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

Only those who are poor in spirit, are capable of receiving grace. He who is swollen with self-excellency and self-sufficiency—is not fit for Christ. He is full already. If the hand is full of pebbles—it cannot receive gold. The glass is first emptied, before you pour in wine. God first empties a man of himself, before He pours in the precious wine of His grace.

He who is poor in spirit—is a Christ-admirer. He has high thoughts of Christ. He sees himself naked—and flies to Christ, to be clothed in the garments of His righteousness. He sees himself wounded—and as the wounded deer runs to the water—so he thirsts for Christ's blood, the water of

life. "Lord!" says he, "give me Christ or I die!" His conscience has turned into a fiery serpent and has stung him; now he will give all the world—for a brazen serpent! He sees himself in a state of death; and how precious is one leaf of the tree of life, which is both for food and medicine! The poor in spirit sees that all his riches lie in Christ—"wisdom, righteousness, sanctification" In every need, he flies to this storehouse! He adores the all-fullness in Christ.

He who is poor in spirit—is an exalter of free grace. None so magnify God's mercy—as the poor in spirit. The poor are very thankful. When Paul had tasted mercy—how thankfully does he adore free grace! "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant" (1 Timothy 1:14). It was super-exuberant grace!

He sets the crown of his salvation—upon the head of free grace! As a man who is condemned and has a pardon sent to him—how greatly he proclaims the goodness and mercifulness of his prince! So Paul displays free grace in its magnificent colors. He interlines all his epistles with free grace! As a vessel

which has been perfumed, makes the water taste of it—so Paul, who was a vessel perfumed with mercy, makes all his epistles to taste of this perfume of free grace! Those who are poor in spirit,

bless God for the least crumb which falls from the table of free grace! Labor for poverty of spirit. Christ begins with this, and we must begin here if ever we are saved. Poverty of spirit is the foundation stone, on which God lays the superstructure of eternal glory!

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3

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Worms should be made kings!

"Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom!" Luke 12:32

See here the mercy and bounty of God, who has prepared a kingdom for His people. It is a favor that we poor worms should be allowed to live. But that worms should be made kings—this is divine bounty! It is mercy to pardon us—but it is rich mercy to crown us! 'Behold, what kind of love is this!'

Earthly princes may bestow great gifts on their subjects—but they keep the kingdom to themselves. Though Pharaoh advanced Joseph to honor and gave him a ring from his finger—yet he kept the kingdom to himself. 'Only in the throne will I be greater than you' (Genesis 41:40). But God gives a kingdom to His people—He sets them upon the throne!

How David admires the goodness of God in bestowing upon him a temporal kingdom. 'Then king David went in, and sat before the Lord and said—Who am I, O Lord God—and what is my house, that You have brought me hitherto?' (2 Samuel 7:18). He wondered that God should take him from the sheepfold—and set him on the throne—that God should turn his shepherd's staff into a king's scepter! O then, how may the saints admire the riches of grace—that God should give them a glorious kingdom above all the princes of the earth—nay, far above all heavens!

God thinks nothing too good for His children. We many times think much of a tear, a prayer, or to sacrifice a sin for Him—but He does not think a kingdom is too much to bestow upon us! How will the saints read over the lectures of free grace in heaven, and trumpet forth the praises of that God, who has crowned them with such astonishing loving-kindness!

See here, that which may make the people of God long for death. Then, they shall enter upon their glorious kingdom! Indeed the wicked may fear death. It will not lead them to a kingdom—but to a horrid prison. Hell is the jail where they must lie rotting forever with the devil and his demons!

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Only the blood of Christ can soften it!

"I will take away their hearts of stone and give them tender hearts!" Ezekiel 11:19

Oh the misery of a hard heart!

A heart of stone is insensible. A stone is not sensible of anything. Lay a heavy weight upon it; or grind it to powder—it does not feel. So it is with a hard heart—it is insensible to both its own sin and God's wrath. The stone in the kidneys is felt—but not the stone in the heart. "Having lost all sensitivity" (Ephesians 4:19).

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

repentance. It is so far from yielding to God, that like the anvil—it beats back the hammer. A heart of stone will "always resist the Holy Spirit." (Acts 7:51)

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

melting. The plough of the Word will not penetrate a hard heart!

A hard heart is good for nothing—but to make fuel for hellfire. "Because of your hardness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath!" (Romans 2:5).

Hell is full of hard hearts—there is not one soft heart there! There is much weeping there—but no softness. We read of "vessels of wrath—prepared for destruction" (Romans 9:22). Hardness of heart, fits these vessels for hell, and makes them like withered wood, which is fit only to burn!

Hardness of heart makes a man's condition worse than all his other sins besides. If one is guilty of great sins—yet if he can mourn, there is hope. But hardness of heart binds guilt fast upon the soul. It

seals a man under wrath. It is not heinousness of sin—but hardness of heart—which damns!

Oh the misery of a hard heart!

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

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

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View sin in the red glass

View sin in the red glass of Christ's sufferings. The least sin cost His blood. Would you take a true view of sin? Go to Golgotha! Jesus Christ poured out His soul, as an offering for sin! Read the greatness of your sin—in the deepness of Christ's wounds! Let not Satan cast such a mist before your eyes—that you cannot see sin in its right colors! Remember, not only do great sins carry men to hell—but lesser sins as well. "The wages of sin is death!" Every sin is damnable. There is death and hell in every sin. The least sin without repentance—will be a lock and bolt to shut men out of heaven.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A tear dropping from the eye of faith

"Blessed are those who mourn." Matthew 5:8

It is a sign that the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon us, when our frozen hearts thaw and melt for sin. Weeping for sin is a sign of the new birth. As soon as the child is born—it weeps. Mourning shows a 'heart of flesh' (Ezekiel 36:26). A stone will not melt. When the heart is in a melting frame—it is a sign the heart of stone is taken away.

"Let your tears flow like a river. Give yourselves no rest from weeping day or night." Lamentations 2:18

Tears for sin, are blessed tears.

Tears poison our corruptions. Salt-water kills worms. Just so, the brinish water of repenting tears will help to kill that worm of sin which would gnaw the conscience.

Mourning also fences us against the devil's temptations. Temptations are called 'fiery darts' (Ephesians 6:16), because indeed they set the soul on fire. Temptations enrage anger, and inflame lust. Now the waters of holy mourning, quench these fiery darts! Wet gunpowder will not easily catch fire. Just so, when the heart is wetted and moistened with sorrow—it will not so easily catch the fire of temptation.

Penitential tears are precious. Tears dropping from a mournful, penitent eye, are like water dropping from the roses—very sweet and precious to God. A fountain in the garden makes it pleasant. That heart is most delightful to God—which has a fountain of sorrow running in it. 'Mary stood at Christ's feet weeping' (Luke 7:38). Her tears were more fragrant than her ointment. The incense, when it is broken, smells sweetest. When the heart is broken for sin, then our services give forth their sweetest perfume.

Surely, God delights much in tears—else He would not keep a bottle for them. "You keep track of all

my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in Your bottle. You have recorded each one in Your book." Psalms 56:8. Tears are powerful orators for God's mercy. Tears melt the heart of God. When a man comes weeping in prayer and smites on his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"—this melts God's heart towards him. Tears, though they are silent—yet have a voice, "The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping!" (Psalms 6:8). Tears in the child's eye sometimes move the angry father to spare the child. Penitential tears melt God's heart and bind His hand. Tears have a mighty influence upon God.

Repentant tears are sweet. Mourning is the way to solid joy. A Christian thinks himself sometimes in the suburbs of heaven—when he can weep. Sugar when it melts is sweetest. When a Christian melts in tears, now he has the sweetest joy. When the daughter of Pharaoh descended into the river—she found a babe there among the reeds. Just so, when we descend into the river of repenting tears—we find the babe Jesus there, who shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.

Tears water our graces and make them flourish. Where the springs of sorrow run—there the heart bears a fruitful crop. The tender-eyed Christian usually brings forth more of the fruit of the Spirit. A weeping eye is the water-pot to water our graces!

If there is so much profit and benefit in gospel-sorrow, then let every Christian wash his face every morning in the laver of tears.

Our mourning for sin here—will prevent mourning in hell. Hell is a place of weeping (Matthew 8:12). The damned mingle their drink with weeping. God is said to have His bottle for our tears. Those who will not shed a bottle-full of tears—shall hereafter shed rivers of tears. "Woe to you who laugh now—for you shall mourn and weep!" (Luke 6:25) You have sometimes seen sugar lying in a damp

place, dissolve into water. Just so, all the sugared joys of the wicked, dissolve at last into the water of tears!

There is but one way to blessedness, and that is through the valley of tears. If you do not go this way, you will miss Paradise. "I tell you, unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). There is only one way leading to heaven, and that is a tear dropping from the eye of faith. A man

may have a disease in his body, which twenty medicines will heal. But only the medicine of repentance, will heal the mortal disease of sin.

Think what a sinner you have been. You have filled God's book with your debts—and what need you have to fill His bottle with your tears!

He who weeps here is a blessed mourner. He who weeps in hell is a cursed mourner. If God's bottle is not filled with tears—His vial will be filled with wrath!

Repentant tears are but finite. It is but a short time that we shall weep. After a few showers fall from our eyes, we shall have a perpetual sunshine. "God shall wipe away all tears!" (Revelation 7:17). When sin shall cease—tears shall cease! "Weeping may endure for a night—but joy comes in the morning!" (Psalms 30:5)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The way to be like Jesus

To render evil for evil is brutish; to render evil for good is devilish; to render good for evil is Christian.

"Blessed are the meek." Matthew 5:5

Meekness is a grace whereby we are enabled by the Spirit of God, to moderate our angry passions.

Meekness has a divine beauty and sweetness in it. This meekness consists in three things: the bearing of injuries, the forgiving of injuries, the recompensing good for evil.

Meekness is opposed to:

anger,

malice,

revenge and

evil-speaking.

Meekness is a great ornament to a Christian. "The ornament of a meek spirit—which is so precious to God!" (1 Peter 3:4). How lovely is a saint in God's eye, when adorned with this jewel!
No garment

is more befitting to a Christian, than meekness. Therefore we are bid to put on this garment, "Put on therefore as the elect of God—meekness." (Colossians 3:12)

Meekness is a noble and excellent spirit. A meek man is a valorous man. He gets a victory over himself! Anger arises from weakness of character. The meek man is able to conquer his fury. "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; controlling one's temper is better than capturing a city." (Proverbs 16:32). To yield to one's anger is easy—it is swimming along with the tide of corrupt nature. But to turn against nature—to resist anger, to "overcome evil with good"—this is truly

Christian.

Meekness is the best way to conquer and melt the heart of an enemy. Meekness melts and thaws the

heart of others. The greatest victory is to overcome an enemy—without striking a blow! Mildness prevails more than fierceness. Anger makes an enemy of a friend. Meekness makes a friend of an enemy.

Meekness is the way to be like Jesus—"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Matthew 11:29.

It is not profession which makes us like Jesus—but imitation. Where meekness is lacking—we are like brutes. Where it is present—we are like Jesus.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The hypocrite's desire

"Let me die the death of the righteous!" Numbers 23:10

This was Balaam's desire. The hypocrite, when he is about to die and can keep his sins no longer—

now he desires a passport to carry him to heaven! Such desires as these are found among the damned.

Hypocrites have desires—but no endeavors. They would like to go to heaven—but they will take no pains. But true desire is always quickened into endeavor.

The hypocrite would have . . .

heaven—and his sins too,

heaven—and his pride too,

heaven—and his covetousness too.

"They have gone astray and have followed the path of Balaam—who loved the wages of unrighteousness." 2 Peter 2:15

The true Christian says, "Give me Christ on any terms. Let God propound whatever articles He will—I will subscribe to them. Would He have me deny myself? Would He have me mortify sin? I am content to do anything—just so that I may have Christ!" Hypocrites would have Christ—but they will not part with their beloved lust for Him!

The hypocrite does not desire grace for itself. He desires grace—only as a bridge to lead him over to heaven. He does not so much search after grace—as glory. He does not so much desire the way of righteousness—as the crown of righteousness. His desire is not to be made like Christ—but to reign with Christ. This is the hypocrite's desire.

But a child of God desires grace for itself, and Christ for Himself. To a believer, not only is heaven precious—but Christ is precious, "Yes, He is very precious to you who believe!" 1 Peter 2:7

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Cruel mercy

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Matthew 5:7

When the sun shines—the ice melts. When the Sun of righteousness once shines with beams of grace upon the soul—then it melts in mercy and tenderness.

Mercifulness is a melting disposition whereby we lay to heart the miseries of others, and are instrumental for their good. We must chiefly be merciful to the SOULS of others. Indeed soul-mercy is the chief of mercies. The soul is the most precious thing; it is a rich diamond set in a ring of clay. Had we seen that madman in the gospel cutting himself with stones—it would have moved our pity (Mark 5:5). To see a sinner stabbing himself and having his hands imbrued in his own blood, should cause us to sincerely pity him.

That is a cruel mercy—when we see men go on in sin, and we let them alone. And that is a merciful

cruelty—when we are sharp against men's sins and will not let them go to hell quietly.

Fond sentimentality is no better than cruelty.

The surgeon cuts and lances the flesh—but it is in order to a cure. They are healing wounds. So when

we lance men's consciences and let out the blood of sin, we exercise spiritual surgery. This is showing mercy.

"Rescue others by snatching them from the fire!" (Jude 1:12). If a man had fallen into the fire, though

you hurt him a little in pulling him out—he would be thankful and take it as a kindness. Some men, when we tell them of sin say, 'O, you are unloving!' No! it is showing mercy. If a man's house were on fire, and another should see it and not tell him of it, for fear of waking him—would not this be cruelty? When we see others sleeping in their sin, and the fire of God's wrath ready to burn them up—and we are silent—is not this cruelty?

They are unmerciful ministers who, instead of breaking the bread of life—fill their people's heads with airy speculations and notions! Some ministers endeavor only to be admired. They go into the pulpit only to amuse the people. Such ministers give poison to their people in a golden cup! They are the devil's ambassadors, who ride up and down, and with Satan compass the earth—to deceive and devour souls!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The children which faith bears

"Those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works." Titus 3:8

Grace does not lie as a sleepy habit in the soul, but will put forth itself in vigorous and glorious actings. Grace can no more be concealed, than fire. Grace does not lie in the heart as a stone in the earth—but as seed in the earth. It will spring up into good works! "Our people must also learn to devote themselves to good works." Titus 3:14

The lamp of faith must be filled with the oil of charity. Faith alone justifies—but justifying faith is never alone. You may as well separate weight from lead, or heat from fire—as works from faith. Good works, though they are not the causes of salvation—yet they are evidences of salvation. Though they are not the foundation—yet they are the superstructure. Faith must not be built upon works—but works must be built upon faith. "You are married to Christ—that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Romans 7:4. Faith is the grace which marries Christ, and good works are the children which faith bears.

Works are distinct from faith—as the sap in the vine is different from the clusters of fruit which grow upon it.

Works are the touchstone of faith. "Show me your faith by your works." James 2:18

Works honor faith. These fruits adorn the 'trees of righteousness'. This queen—faith, has the handmaids of good works waiting upon her.

Good works are more visible and conspicuous than faith. Faith is a more hidden grace. It may lie hidden in the heart and not be seen—but when works are joined with it, now it shines forth in its native beauty! Though a garden is ever so decked with flowers—yet they are not seen until the light comes. So the heart of a Christian may be enriched with faith—but it is like a flower in the night. It is not seen until works come. When this light shines before men, then faith appears in its orient colors!

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Strewing flowers on a dead corpse!

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

External morality is not heart-purity. A person may be clothed with great moral virtues, such as justice, charity, prudence, and temperance—and yet go to hell.

We must not rest in mere outward morality. A swine may be washed—yet be a swine still. Morality does but wash a man—grace changes him. Morality may shine in the eyes of the world—but it differs as much from purity, as a pebble differs from a diamond!

Morality is but strewing flowers on a dead corpse!

A man who is but highly moral—is but a tame devil.

How many have made 'morality' their Savior! Morality will damn—as well as vice! A boat may be sunk with gold—as well as with dung.

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

The snake has a fine appearance—but has a deadly sting! Just so, the moral man is fair to look on—but has a secret antipathy against the holy ways of God.

Morality is not to be rested in. The heart must be pure. God would have Aaron wash the inner parts of the sacrifice (Leviticus 9:14). Morality does but wash the outside; the inside must be washed. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

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How befiling a thing it is

"Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood!" Revelation 1:5

We are all loathsome to God, before we are washed pure in the blood of Christ!

By nature, we are all in a filthy and cursed condition. We are a lump of clay and sin mingled together. Sin not only blinds us—but defiles us. It is called filthiness (James 1:21). And to show how befiling a thing it is, it is compared . . .

to a plague of the heart (1 Kings 8:38),

to corruption (Deuteronomy 32:5),

to vomit (2 Peter 2:22),

to a menstrual cloth (Isaiah 30:22).

If all the evils in the world were put together and their quintessence strained out—they could not make a thing so black and polluted as sin is! A sinner is a devil in a man's shape! When Moses'

rod was turned into a serpent—he fled from it. If God would open men’s eyes and show them their deformities and damnable spots—they would fly from themselves, as from serpents!

When grace comes—it washes off this hellish filth! It turns ravens into swans. It makes those who are as black as hell—to become as white as snow!

"Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that

are His very own." Christ shed His blood—to wash off our filth. The cross was both an altar and a laver. Jesus died not only to save us from wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10)—but to save us from sin! (Matthew 1:21).

Out of his side came water which signifies our cleansing—as well as blood which signifies our justifying (1 John 5:6).

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Caterers for their lusts!

"If I regard iniquity in my heart" Psalms 66:18

What is it to regard iniquity in the heart?

When we INDULGE in sin. When sin not only lives in us—but when we live in sin. Some will leave all their sins, but one. Jacob would let all his sons go, but Benjamin. The fowler holds the bird fast enough by one claw. Just so, Satan can hold a man by one sin.

Others HIDE their sins. Many deal with their sins as Moses’ mother dealt with her son. She hid him in the basket, as if she had left him—but her eye was still upon him—and in the end, she became his

nurse (Exodus 2:9). Just so, many seem to leave their sins—but they only hide them from the eye of others. Their heart still goes after them, and at last they nurse and give breast to their sins.

To regard iniquity is to DELIGHT in iniquity. Though a child of God sins—yet he does not take a delight in sin. "I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15). But the wicked make a recreation of sin. They "delight in wickedness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12). Never did one feed with more delight on a meal he loves—than a wicked man does upon the forbidden fruit!

To regard iniquity is to make PROVISION for sin. "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." (Romans 13:14). The wicked are caterers for their lusts. This is to make provision for the flesh—when one studies to satisfy the flesh and provide fuel for lust. Thus Amnon made provision for the flesh (2 Samuel 13:5). He pretends to be sick, and his sister Tamar, must be his nurse. She must serve his food to him—by which means he defiled her virginity. It is sad when men’s concern is not to be holy—but to satisfy lust!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ If death gives them a jog

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that to face judgment." Hebrews 9:27

The wicked tread upon the banks of the bottomless pit. If death gives them a jog—they tumble in!

"Prepare to meet your God!" Amos 4:12

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The Beatitudes (choice excerpts) cont'd

cont'd

Run to this heavenly Father!

"The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort."

2 Corinthians 1:3

Christians should look upon God under this notion—the Father of all mercy, sitting upon a throne of grace. We should run to this heavenly Father in all conditions!

We should run to our Father with our sins, as that sick child who, as soon as he found himself ill—he ran to his father to help him, "My head! My head!" 2 Kings 4:19

So in case of sin—run to God and say: "My heart! My heart! O this dead heart—Father, quicken it! This hard heart—Father, soften it! Father, my heart, my heart!"

We should run to our Father with our temptations.

A child, when another strikes him, runs to his father.

So when the devil strikes us with his temptations, let us run to our Father: "Father, Satan assaults and hurls in his fiery darts at me! Father, it is Your child who is assaulted by this red dragon! Father, take off the tempter!"

"Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares about you!" 1 Peter 5:7. What a sweet privilege is this! When any burden lies upon our hearts—we may go to our Father and unload all our cares and griefs into His loving bosom! "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will support you; He will never allow the righteous to

be shaken!" Psalms 55:22

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Sin first enslaves—and then damns!

"I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." John 8:34

"You are of your father the Devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires!" John 8:44

It is the sad misery of an unregenerate person, that he is in a state of vassalage. He is under the tyranny of sin. "It is the greatest slavery in the world for a man to be a slave to his own passions!"

A wicked man is as much a slave—as he who works in the galley! Look into his heart—and there are legions of lusts ruling him! He must do what sin will have him to do. A slave is at the service of a usurping tyrant. If he bids him dig in the mine, or hew in the quarries, or tug at the oar—he must do it. Thus every wicked man must do what corrupt nature, inspired by the devil, bids him to do. If sin bids him to be drunk, or to be unchaste—he is at the command of sin, as the donkey is at the command of the driver.

Sin first enslaves—and then damns!

"But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life." Romans 6:22

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"They wear themselves out with all their sinning!"

Jeremiah 9:5

Sin lays a heavy yoke upon men. The commands of

sin are burdensome. Let a man be under the power and rage of any lust (whether it be covetousness or ambition), how he tires and excruciates himself! What hazards does he run, even to the endangering of his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lust!

"Virtue is easier than vice." Temperance is easier than drunkenness. Doing justice is less burdensome than crime. There is more difficulty and perplexity in the contrivement and pursuit of wicked ends—than in obeying the sweet and gentle precepts of Christ. Hence it is, that a wicked man is said to 'pregnant with evil and conceives trouble' (Psalms 7:14), to show what anxious pain and trouble he has in bringing about his wickedness! Many have gone with more pain to hell—than others have to heaven!

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God is still the same God

"Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are Mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." Isaiah 43:1-3

God is still the same God.

He has as much love in His heart to pity us,
and as much strength in His arm to help us!

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He is precious

"To you who believe, He is precious." 1 Peter 2:7

See the preciousness in Christ.

His name is precious; it is as ointment poured forth.

His blood is precious; it is as balm poured forth.

His love is precious; it is as wine poured forth.

Jesus Christ is made up of all sweets and delights.

He Himself is all that is desirable. He is . . .

light to the eye,

honey to the taste,

joy to the heart.

"Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved,

and this is my Friend!" Song of Solomon 5:16

We truly love Christ, when we love Him for His

loveliness, namely—that infinite and superlative
beauty which shines in Him.

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When we were bitten by the old serpent

"Christ loved the church and gave Himself

up for her!" Ephesians 5:25

Love made our dear Lord suffer for us. The pelican

out of her love to her young ones, when they are

bitten by serpents, feeds them with her own blood

to recover them. Just so, when we were bitten by

the old serpent, Christ fed us with His own blood,

that He might recover us.

"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so

great you will never fully understand it!" Ephesians 3:19

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Such a wonder-working grace

"In every situation take the shield of faith,
and with it you will be able to extinguish the
flaming arrows of the evil one!" Ephesians 6:16

"Everyone born of God overcomes the world.

This is the victory that has overcome the
world—even our faith." 1 John 5:4

Why is faith such a wonder-working grace?

Faith unites the soul to Christ, and that blessed
Head sends forth grace into the members. "I can
do all things through Christ, who give me strength!"

Php 4:13. Faith goes to Christ—and fetches
His strength into the soul.

Faith works a contempt of the world into the heart.

Faith gives a true map of the world, "When I surveyed
all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to
achieve—everything was meaningless, a chasing after
the wind; nothing was gained under the sun!" Ecclesiastes 2:11

Faith shows the world in its night-dress, having all its
jewels pulled off. Faith makes the world appear in its
true state. Faith shows the soul better things than the
world. It gives a sight of Christ and eternal glory. It
gives a prospect of heaven. Faith climbs up above sense
and reason, into heaven and sees Christ—and the soul,
having once viewed His superlative excellencies, becomes
crucified to the world. Says the Christian, "Yes, everything
else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of
knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything
else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ!"

Php 3:8

Faith gets strength from God's promises. Faith lives upon the promises. Take the fish out of the water—and it dies. Take faith out of a promise—and it cannot live. The promises are breasts of consolation. The child by sucking the breast, gets strength. Faith gets strength by sucking the breast of a promise. When faith begins to be weak and is ready to faint in the day of battle, then the promises muster their forces together, and all come in for faith's relief—and now it is able to hold out in the fiery trial.

Faith gives the soul a right notion of suffering. Faith draws the true picture of sufferings. What is suffering? Faith says, "it is but the suffering of the body—which must shortly by the course of nature, drop into the dust." Thus faith gives the soul a just measure of sufferings—which enables a Christian to prostrate his life at the feet of Christ.

Faith picks sweetness out of suffering. The bee gathers the sweetest honey from the bitterest herb. So faith gathers the sweetest comforts, from the sharpest trials.

Faith looks upon suffering as God's love-token! "Afflictions are sharp arrows—but they are shot from the hand of a loving Father!" Faith can taste honey at the end of the afflicting rod. Faith fetches joy out of suffering, "Your sorrow will turn to joy!" John 16:20. Faith gets honey from the belly of the lion. Faith finds a jewel under the cross! "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

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A lovely garment

"Be clothed with humility." 1 Peter 5:5

Humility is a lovely garment. Let a child of God look at his face every morning in the looking-glass of God's Word, and see his sinful spots. This will make him walk humbly all the day after. God cannot endure to see his children grow proud. He allows them to fall into sin, as he did Peter, that their plumes of pride may fall off, and that they may walk humbly.

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The scars and infirmities of God's children!

"I will spare them as a father spares an obedient and dutiful child." Malachi 3:17

God will bear with many infirmities in His children.

A father bears much with a child he loves. We often grieve the Spirit, and abuse His kindness. God will pass by much disobedience in His children.

"He has not seen iniquity in Jacob." Numbers 23:21

God's love does not make Him blind. He sees sin in His people—but not with an eye of revenge. He sees their sins with an eye of pity. He sees sin in His children as a physician sees a disease in his patient. He has not seen iniquity in Jacob, so as to destroy him. God may use the rod (2 Samuel 7:14), not the scorpion. O how much is God willing to pass by in His children—because they are His children!

God takes notice of the good that is in His children—and passes by the infirmity. God does quite contrary to us.

We often take notice of the evil that is in others and overlook the good. Our eye is upon the flaws of others. But God takes notice of the good that is in His children. God sees their faith—and winks at their failings! "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord." The Holy Spirit does not mention her unbelief and laughing at the promise—but takes notice of the good in her. God puts his finger upon the scars and infirmities of His children! How much did God wink at, in Israel His firstborn! Israel often provoked Him with their murmurings—but God answered their murmurings with mercies. He spared them—as a father spares his son.

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The sacred ointment

They godly often spot themselves with sin. Though sin is in itself deadly—but being tempered with repentance and mixed with the sacred ointment of Christ's blood—the venomous damning nature of it is taken away!

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They are not eagles—but earthworms! Those who are God's children, are of a more noble and celestial spirit than men of the world. They "set their minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Colossians 3:2). 'Whoever is born of God, overcomes the world' (1 John 5:4). The children of God live in a higher region. They are compared to eagles (Isaiah 40:31) in regard of their sublimeness and heavenly mindedness. Their souls are fled aloft. Christ is in their

heart (Colossians 1:27) and the world is under their feet (Revelation 12:1).

Men of the world are ever tumbling in thick clay.

They are 'sons of earth'. They are not eagles—but earthworms! The saints are of another spirit.

They are born of God and walk with God as the child walks with the father. "Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). God's children show their high pedigree in their heavenly life (Php 3:20).

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Our father, which art in hell

"You have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator." Colossians 3:9-10

The child resembles the father. God's children are like their heavenly Father. They bear His very image and impress.

Wicked men say they are the children of God—but there is too great an unlikeness. The Jews bragged that they were Abraham's children—but Christ disproves them by this argument, because they were not like Him. "You are determined to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things!" (John 8:40). "You—Abraham's children, and go about to kill Me! You are more like Satan, than Abraham!" "You are of your father the devil!" (verse 44). Such as are proud, earthly, and malicious may truly say, "Our father which art in hell." It is blasphemy to call God our Father, and make the devil our pattern! God's children resemble

Him in meekness and holiness. They are His walking pictures. As the seal stamps its print and likeness upon the wax—so does God stamp the print and image of His own beauty upon His children.

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God is either ignorant, or impotent

All mankind are divided into two ranks—either they are the children of God, or the children of the devil.

The first sign of heavenly sonship, is tenderness of heart.

"Because your heart was tender" (2 Chronicles 34:27). A childlike heart is a tender heart. He who before had a flinty heart—has now a fleshy heart. A tender heart is like melting wax to God. He may set whatever seal He will upon it. This tenderness of heart shows itself three ways.

[1] A tender heart grieves for sin. A child weeps for offending his father. Peter showed a tender heart when Christ looked upon him and he remembered his sin, and wept like a child. It is reported that Peter never heard a rooster crow, but he wept. The least hair makes the eye weep. The least sin makes the heart smite.

[2] A tender heart melts under mercy. The heart is never so kindly dissolved, as under the sunbeams of God's mercy. See how David's heart was melted with God's kindness: "Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that You have brought me this far?" (2 Samuel 7:18)

There was a gracious thaw upon his heart. So says a child of God, "Lord, who am I—a piece of dust and sin kneaded together—that the orient beams of free grace should shine upon me? Who am I, that You should pity

me when I lay in my blood—and spread the golden wings of mercy over me!" The soul is overcome with God's goodness—the tears drop, and the love flames. God's mercy has a melting influence upon the soul.

[3] A tender heart trembles under God's threatenings.

"My flesh trembles in fear of You!" (Psalms 119:120). If the father is angry—the child trembles. When ministers denounce the threats of God against sin—tender souls sit in a trembling posture. This trembling frame of heart, God delights in. "To this man will I look, even to him who trembles at Your word!" (Isaiah 66:2). A wicked man, like the Leviathan, 'is made without fear' (Job 41:33). He neither believes God's promises—nor dreads God's threatenings. Let judgment be denounced against sin—he laughs. He thinks that God is either ignorant and does not see—or impotent and cannot punish. "The mountains quake before Him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at His presence!" (Nahum 1:5). But the hearts of the ungodly are more obdurate than the rocks! A hardened sinner like Nebuchadnezzar has "the heart of a beast given to him" (Daniel 4:16). A childlike heart is a tender heart. The heart of stone is taken away.

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More odious to God than a serpent!

"You are of purer eyes than to behold evil."

Habakkuk 1:13

God is holy. Purity is the chief robe with which God adorns Himself. Will this holy God endure to have an impure heart come near Him? Will a man lay a viper in his bosom! God's image consists in holiness.

To those who do not have this image and superscription upon them, He will say "I never knew you!" God delights in no heart, but where He may see His own likeness. Love is founded upon likeness. God loves the pure in heart.

The holy God and the unrepentant sinner—cannot dwell together. None can dwell together but friends—but there is no friendship between God and the sinner, both of them being of a contrary judgment and disposition. An impure heart is more odious to God than a serpent! God gave the serpent its venom—but Satan fills the heart with sin. 'Satan has filled your heart!' Acts 5:3. The Lord abhors a sinner! He will not come near him—having his plague-sores running. 'My soul loathed them!'

Zechariah 11:8

Heaven is a pure place. It is an "undefiled inheritance" 1 Peter 1:4. No unclean beasts shall come into the heavenly ark! "Nothing evil will be allowed to enter!" Revelation 21:27

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8. Purity of heart is the jewel which is hung only upon the elect! Chastity distinguishes a virtuous woman from a harlot. Just so, the true Christian is distinguished from the hypocrite—by his heart-purity.

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A dead wife cannot please her husband

"Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences

are defiled." Titus 1:15

Until the heart is pure—all our holy things (that is—our religious duties) are polluted. They are but splendid sins!

Under the law, whatever a leper touched was unclean.

If he had touched the altar or sacrifice, the altar would not cleanse him—but he would defile the altar.

A filthy hand defiles the purest water. Just so, an impure heart defiles all religious duties—he drops poison upon them all.

A pure stream running through muddy ground, is polluted.

Just so, the holiest duties, running through an impure heart, are polluted. A sinner's works are called "dead works" (Hebrews 6:1)

And those works which are dead, cannot please God.

A dead wife cannot please her husband.

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There goes an idolater!

"Covetousness which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5

Covetousness is the root of idolatry. The covetous person bows down to the image of gold. His money is his god—for he puts his trust in it.

Money is his creator. When he has abundance of wealth, then he thinks he is 'made'.

Money is his redeemer. If he is in any trouble, he flies to his money and that must redeem him.

Money is his comforter. When he is sad he counts over his money, and with this golden harp he drives away the evil spirit.

When you see a covetous man, you may say,

"There goes an idolater!"

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An evil heart of unbelief

"An evil heart of unbelief." Hebrews 3:12

An unbelieving heart is evil in the highest degree.

It is full of the poison of hell. Unbelief is the foul medley of all sins—the root and receptacle of sin.

Unbelief is a God-affronting sin. It calls in question God's power, mercy and truth. "The one who does not believe God, is actually calling God a liar!" Can a greater affront be cast upon the God of glory!

Unbelief hardens the heart. These two sins are linked together—"He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart" (Mark 16:14). Unbelief breeds the stone of the heart. He who does not believe God's threatenings—will never fear Him. He who does not believe God's promises—will never love Him. What is said of the Leviathan, is true of the unbeliever. "Its heart is as hard as rock, as hard as a millstone!" (Job 41:24). Unbelief first pollutes the heart—and then hardens it!

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Let that room be washed with holy tears!

Holiness is the angels' glory. They are pure virgin-spirits.

Take away purity from an angel—and he is but a devil!

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

The heart must especially be kept pure, because the heart is the chief seat or place of God's residence. God dwells in the heart. He takes up the heart for His own

lodging, therefore it must be pure and holy.

A king's palace must be kept from defilement, and especially his throne. How holy ought that to be! If the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the heart is the holy of holies! Oh take heed of defiling the room where God chiefly dwells! Let that room be washed with holy tears!

The heart must especially be pure, because it is the heart which sanctifies all that we do. If the heart is holy, all is holy—our affections holy, our duties holy.

Purity of heart is that which beautifies a soul in God's eye. You are but a spiritual leper—until you are pure in heart. God is in love with the pure heart, for He sees His own picture drawn there. The pure in heart, have the embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Spirit upon them.

The pure heart is God's paradise where He delights to walk. It is God's lesser heaven. The dove delights in the purest air. The Holy Spirit who descended in the likeness of a dove, delights in the purest soul.

God says of the pure in heart, as of Zion, "This is My rest forever, here will I dwell" (Psalms 132:14).

God loves the loveliest complexion. The pure in heart is Christ's bride, decked and bespangled with the jewels of holiness. "You have ravished My heart with one of your eyes!" (Song of Solomon 4:9). Your eyes, that is, your graces; these as a chain of diamonds, have drawn My heart to you.

Of all hearts, God loves the pure heart best. You who dress yourself by the looking-glass of the Word and adorn 'the hidden person of your heart', are most precious in God's eyes, though you may be as bleary eyed as Leah, or as lame as Barzillai. Yet being 'pure in heart', you are the mirror of beauty and may say "Yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord!" (Isaiah 49:5). How may this raise the esteem of purity!

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Before conversion

Before conversion, the sinner is compared . . .
to a stone for his hardness of heart (Zechariah 7:12),
to a wolf for his savageness (Matthew 7:15)
to a lion for his fierceness (Isaiah 11:6),
to a bee for his sting (Psalms 118:12),
to an adder for his poison (Psalms 140:3).

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Fading, not filling

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." Matthew 5:6

Here is the excellency of righteousness above all other things. A man may hunger after the world and not be filled. The world is fading, not filling.

Cast three worlds into the heart—yet the heart is not full. But righteousness is a filling thing; nay, it so fills that it satisfies!

A man may be filled and not satisfied. A sinner may take his fill of sin—but that is a sad filling.

It is far from satisfaction. He shall have his belly

full of sin; he shall have enough of it—but this is not a filling to satisfaction. This is such a filling that the damned in hell have! They shall be full of the fury of the Lord!

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Oh, take heed of this sweet poison!

The love of sin makes sin taste sweet, and this sweetness in sin bewitches the heart.

It is worse to love sin than to commit it. A man may be overtaken with sin (Galatians 6:1). He who has stumbled upon sin unawares will weep—but the love of sin hardens the heart and keeps the devil in possession. In true mourning there must be a grieving for sin. But how can a man grieve for that sin which his heart is in love with?

Oh, take heed of this sweet poison! The love of sin freezes the soul in impenitence.

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Suck damnation out of the sweet flower of God's mercy!

"I will have peace even though I follow my own stubborn heart." Deuteronomy 29:19

How many, spider-like, suck damnation out of the sweet flower of God's mercy! "Oh," says one, "Christ died for me!" Many a bold sinner plucks death from the tree of life, and through presumption, goes to hell by that ladder of Christ's blood—by which others go to heaven! It is sad when the goodness of God, which should 'lead to repentance' (Romans 2:4),

leads to presumption.

O sinner, do not hope yourself into hell. Take heed of being damned upon a presumption! You say "God is merciful"—and therefore you go on securely in sin. But who is mercy for—the unrepentant sinner or the mourning sinner? 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him' (Isaiah 55:7). No mercy without forsaking sin!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 288 opinions about the way to happiness In what does happiness consist?

Millions of people mistake both the nature of happiness, and the way there. Some of the learned have noted 288 opinions about the way to happiness—and all have shot wide of the mark!

How do men thirst after the world—as if the pearl of happiness hung upon an earthly crown! "Oh," says one, "if I had but such an estate—then I would be happy! Had I but such a comfort—then I would sit down satisfied!" Well, God gives him that comfort and lets him suck the very juice out of it—but, alas, it falls short of his expectation. It cannot fill the emptiness and longing of his soul!

Happiness does not lie in the acquisition of worldly things. Happiness cannot by any chemistry—be extracted from the world. Christ does not say, 'Happy are the rich,' or 'Happy are the noble.' Yet too many idolize these things. How ready is man to terminate his happiness in external worldly things! If they have but worldly accommodations, they are ready to say with that brutish fool in the gospel, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years, take your ease—eat, drink and be merry!"

But alas! The tree of happiness does not grow in an earthly paradise. Has not God 'cursed the ground' because of sin? Yet many are digging for happiness here—as if they would fetch a blessing out of a curse! A man may as well think to extract oil out of a stone, or fire out of water—as happiness out of earthly things!

King Solomon had more worldly things than any man. His crown was hung full of jewels. He had treasuries of gold. He had the flower and quintessence of all delights—sumptuous fare, stately edifices, vineyards, lands, all sorts of music to enchant and ravish the senses with joy. If there were any rarity—it was present in king Solomon's court. Thus did he bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure.

Never did the world cast a more smiling aspect upon any man! Yet when he comes to give his impartial verdict, he tells us that the world has 'vanity' written upon its frontispiece; and all those golden delights he enjoyed, were but a painted felicity—a glorious misery! "Behold! All was vanity!" Happiness is too noble and delicate a plant, to grow in this world's soil. Worldly joys are but sugared lies—pleasant deceits—which have not one grain of true happiness! Nothing on earth can satisfy the soul's desires!

"The world passes away!" (1 John 2:17). Worldly delights are winged. They may be compared to a flock of birds in the garden—which stay a little while—but when you come near to them—they take their flight and are gone! Just so, "riches make themselves wings; they fly away like an eagle toward heaven!" They are like a meteor which blazes—but soon burns out. They are like a castle made of snow—lying under the fiery beams of the sun. Worldly comforts are like tennis balls—which are bandied up and down from one to another. They are like a bouquet of flowers—which withers while you are smelling it. They are like ice—which melts away while it is in your hand.

Those things which do more vex than comfort—cannot make a man truly happy. As riches are compared to wind—to show their vanity; so they are compared to thorns—to show their vexation. Thorns are not more apt to tear our garments—than riches to tear our hearts! They are thorns in the gathering—and they prick with anxious care. They pierce the head with care of getting, so they wound the heart with fear of losing. Happiness is not to be fetched out of the earth! Worldly comforts cannot make you happy. You might live rich—and die cursed! You might treasure up an estate—and God might treasure up wrath!

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Most fish

Most fish go to the Devil's net! "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it!"

Matthew 7:13-14

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A godly man hates

A righteous person breathes after holiness (Psalms 119:5).

Though sin cleaves to his heart—yet his heart does not cleave to sin. "I do the very thing I hate!" (Romans 7:15).

A godly man hates the sin to which Satan most tempts, and his heart most inclines (Psalms 119:128).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The depth of mercy, and the height of love!

"Behold! How great is the love the Father has lavished on us—that we should be called children of God!"

1 John 3:1

God showed power in making us His creatures—but love

in making us His sons. Plato gave God thanks that He had made him a man and not a beast—but what cause have they to adore God's love—who has made them His children! That we may the better behold God's love in making us His children, consider three things.

1. We were deformed—so did not DESERVE to be made God's children. God did not adopt us when we were clothed with the robe of innocence in paradise, when we were hung with the jewels of holiness; but when we were in our blood and had our leprous spots upon us! The time of our loathing—was the time of God's loving!

2. As we did not deserve to be made God's children, so neither did we DESIRE it. No rich man will force another to become his heir against his will. If a king should go to adopt a beggar and make him heir of the crown, if the beggar should refuse the king's favor and say, 'I had rather be a beggar still—I do not want your riches'; the king would take it in high contempt of his favor, and would not adopt him against his will. Thus it was with us. We had no willingness to be made God's children. We desired to be beggars still—but God out of his infinite mercy and indulgence, not only offers to make us children—but makes us willing to embrace the offer (Psalms 110:3). What stupendous love was this!

3. It is the wonder of love that God should adopt us for His children, when we were ENEMIES. No man would adopt an enemy to be his heir. But that God should make us His children—when we were His enemies; that He should make us heirs to the crown—when we were traitors to the crown—oh amazing, astonishing love!

We had done God all the injury and spite we could, defaced His image, violated His law, trampled upon His mercies—but when we had angered Him, He adopted us! What stupendous love was this! Such love was never shown to the angels! When they fell, God did not make them children—but prisoners. They were heirs only to 'the treasures of wrath'! (Romans 2:5).

Let us admire His wondrous love. When we were breathing forth enmity against God—He conquered our stubbornness with kindness, and not only pardoned—but adopted us! It is hard to say which is greater—the mystery, or the mercy.

This is such amazing love as we shall be searching into and adoring to all eternity! The bottom of it cannot be fathomed by any angel in heaven. God's love in making us His children is a rich love. It is love in God to feed us—but it is rich love to adopt us! It is love to give us a crumb—but it is rich love to make us heirs to a crown!

It is a distinguishing love, that when God has passed by so many millions, He should cast a favorable aspect upon you! Most are made vessels of wrath, and fuel for hell. And that God should say to you, 'You are My son!'—here is the depth of mercy, and the height of love! Who, O who, can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God!

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Pharisaic purity

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

If the heart is not pure, we differ nothing from a Pharisaic purity. The Pharisees' holiness consisted chiefly in externals. Theirs was an 'outside purity'.

They never minded the inside of the heart. 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity!' (Matthew 23:25, Matthew 23:27).

The Pharisees were good only on the surface. They were like a rotten post, overlaid with fine paint.

"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven!" Matthew 5:20

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ For every crumb of His patience

"When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong." (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

God forbears punishing—therefore men forbear repenting.

He does not smite upon their back by correction—therefore they do not smite upon their thigh by humiliation (Jeremiah 31:19).

The sinner thinks thus: "God has spared me all this while; surely He will not punish me." "He says to himself—God has forgotten; He covers His face and never sees!" (Psalms 10:11).

In infinite patience God sometimes adjourns His judgments a while longer. He is not willing to punish (2 Peter 3:9). God is like the bee, which naturally gives honey—but stings only when it is provoked. But alas, how is His patience abused!

God's patience hardens most. Because God stops the vial

of His wrath—sinners stop the conduit of tears!

To be hardened under God's patience, makes our condition far worse. Incensed justice will revenge abused patience! God was patient towards Sodom—but when they did not repent, He made the fire and brimstone flame about their ears! Sodom, which was once the wonder of God's patience—is now a standing monument of God's severity. Long forbearance is no forgiveness. God may keep off the stroke awhile—but His justice is not dead—but only sleeps. God has leaden feet but iron hands. The longer God is taking His blow—the sorer it will be when it comes. The longer a stone is falling—the heavier it will be at last. The longer God is whetting his sword—the sharper it cuts!

How dreadful will their condition be—who sin because God is patient with them. For every crumb of His patience—God puts a drop of wrath into His vial. The longer God forbears with a sinner—the more interest he is sure to pay in hell.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A watery eye and a whorish heart

"Blessed are those who mourn." Matthew 5:4

Gospel-mourning is joined with self-loathing. The sinner admires himself—the penitent loathes himself.

"You shall loath yourselves in your own sight for all your evils." Ezekiel 20:43 A true penitent is troubled not only for the shameful consequence of sin—but for the loathsome nature of sin; not only the sting of sin—but the deformed face of sin. The true mourner cries out, "O these impure eyes! O this heart which is a conclave of wickedness!" He not only leaves sin—but loathes sin.

Gospel-mourning must be purifying. Our tears

must make us more holy. We must so weep for sin,
as to weep out sin. Our tears must drown our sins.

We must not only mourn—but turn. "Turn to me
with weeping" (Joel 2:12). What good is it, to
have a watery eye and a whorish heart? True
tears are cleansing. They are like a flood that carries
away all the rubbish of our sins away with it. The
waters of holy mourning are like the river Jordan,
wherein Naaman washed and was cleansed of his
leprosy. Though our sins be as scarlet—yet by
washing in this river of repentance, they become
white as snow.

Gospel-mourning must be joined with hatred of sin.

We must not only abstain from sin—but abhor sin.

The dove hates the least feather of the hawk. A true
mourner hates the least motion to sin. A true mourner
is a sin-hater. He looks upon sin as the most deadly
evil—as the essence of all evil. Sin looks more ghastly
than death or hell. A true mourner is implacably incensed
against sin. He will never admit of any terms of peace.

Anger may be reconciled—hatred cannot. True mourning
begins in the love of God—and ends in the hatred of sin.

There is that in the best Christian, which is contrary to
God. There is that in him, which deserves hell—and shall
he not mourn? A ship that is always leaking must have
the water continually pumped out. While the soul leaks by
sin, we must be still pumping at the leak by repentance.

The washing of our souls daily in the brinish waters of
repentance, is the best way both to prevent and cure

the falling into relapses.

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Set your affection on things above

"Set your affection on things above, not
on things on the earth." Colossians 3:2

He who has a heavenly spirit—shall go to the heavenly
kingdom. Do you live above the world? The eagle does
not catch flies—she soars aloft in the air. Do you pant
after glory and immortality? Do you abhor that which is
sordid and carnal? Can you trample upon all sublunary
things? Is heaven in your eye—and Christ in your heart
—and the world under your feet

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