

# THE LORD'S PRAYER (CHOICE EXCERPTS)

by Thomas Watson

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*Selected passages from Watson's Lord's Prayer exposition characterizing sin as ingratitude and pollution against God, establishing the need for the prayer's petitions for forgiveness.*

3 Chapters

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## The Lord's Prayer (excerpts)

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The Lord's Prayer By Thomas Watson

CHOICE EXCERPTS A vexing vanity!

"Deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:13

In this petition, we pray to be delivered from the evil world. "He died for our sins, just as God our Father planned—in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live." Galatians 1:4

It is an evil world, as it is a DEFILING world. The opinions and examples of the world are defiling. How easily are we hurried to sin, when we have the tide of natural corruption, and the wind of example to carry us! "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil." Exodus 23:2. Bad examples are contagious. "They mingled among the pagans—and adopted their evil customs." Psalms 106:35.

Living in the world, is like traveling on a dirty road. It requires a high degree of grace to keep ourselves "unspotted by the world." James 1:27.

It is an evil world, as it is an ENSNARING world. The world is full of snares. Company is a snare; recreation is a snare; riches are golden snares. The apostle John speaks of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." 1 John 2:16. The lust of the flesh is beauty; the lust of the eye is money; the pride of life is honor. These are the natural man's trinity.

The world is a flattering enemy. Whom it kisses—it betrays; it is a silken halter. The pleasures of the world, like opium, cast men into the sleep of carnal security. Lysimachus sold his crown for a cup of water. Just so, many part with heaven—for the world. They are enslaved with the world's golden fetters! The world bewitched Demas. 2 Timothy 4:10. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. It is hard to drink the wine of prosperity—and not be giddy. The world, through our innate corruption, is evil, as it is a snare.

It is an evil world, as it is a DEADENING world. It dulls and deadens the affections to heavenly objects. Earthly things choke the seed of the Word. A man entangled in the world is so taken up with secular concerns, that he can no more mind the things above—than an elephant can fly in the air! And even such as have grace in them—when their affections are beslimed with earth, they find themselves much indisposed to meditation and prayer; it is like swimming with a heavy stone around the neck!

It is an evil world, as it is a DECEITFUL world. The world makes us believe it will satisfy our desires—but it only increases them!

It is an evil world, as it is a VEXING world. It is full of trouble. "In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33.

Basil was of opinion that before the fall—the rose grew without prickles; but now every sweet flower of our life has its thorns! There are many things which cause trouble. Some are troubled

that they have no children, others that they have children. The world is a vexing vanity! If a man is poor—he is despised by the rich; if he is rich—he is envied by the poor. If we do not find an ensnaring world, we shall find it an afflicting world; it has more in it to trouble us than tempt us.

The world is a sea, where we are tossed upon the surging waves of sorrow, and often in danger of shipwreck!

The world is a wilderness, full of fiery serpents!

What great need then, have we to pray, "Lord, deliver us from being hurt by this evil world!"

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The Trojan horse

"Deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:13

In this petition, we pray to be delivered from the evil of our heart, that it may not entice us to sin.

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

The cause of all evil lies in a man's own bosom—all sin begins at the heart. Lust is first conceived in the heart—and then it is midwived into the world. Whence comes rash anger? The heart sets the tongue on fire. The heart is the shop where all sin is contrived and hammered out.

The heart is the greatest seducer. "Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust." James 1:14. The devil could not hurt us—if our own hearts did not give consent. All that he can do is to lay the bait—but it is our fault to swallow it! How needful, therefore, is this prayer, "Deliver us from the evil of our hearts!"

It was Augustine's prayer, "Lord, deliver me from that evil man—myself!"

Beware of the bosom traitor—the flesh. The heart of a man is the Trojan horse—out of which comes a whole army of lusts! O let us pray to be delivered

from the lusts and deceits of our own heart!

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Looking for some victim to devour!

"Deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:13

In this petition, we pray to be delivered from the evil of Satan—"the wicked one." Matthew 13:19.

In what respect is Satan the wicked one?

He was the first inventor of evil. John 8:44.

His inclination is only to evil. Ephesians 6:12.

His constant practice is doing evil. 1 Peter 5:8. He has some hand in all the evils and mischief which happen in the world.

He hinders from all good.

He provokes to evil. The devil blows the fire of lust and strife. When men are proud, the old serpent has poisoned them, and makes them swell!

He is a restless adversary—he never sleeps.

Satan is a subtle contriver; there is no place that can secure us from his assaults and inroads.

Satan is a mighty adversary. He is called the "strong man." Luke 11:21. He takes men captive at his pleasure. "Who are taken captive by him at his will." 2 Timothy 2:26.

The devil glories in the damnation of souls. His work is to angle for men's souls; he lays suitable baits.

He allures the ambitious man with honor.

He allures the covetous man with riches; he baits his hook with silver!

He allures the lustful man with beauty; he tempts men to Delilah's lap—to keep them from Abraham's bosom!

How needful then is this prayer, "Lord, deliver us from the evil one!"

"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!" 1 Peter 5:8.

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The burdens of prosperity

People are usually better in adversity, than prosperity. A prosperous condition is not always so safe. True, it is more pleasing to the flesh—but it is not always best. In a prosperous state, there is more burden. Many look at the shining and glittering of prosperity—but not at the burdens of prosperity.

[1] There is the burden of CARE. Therefore God calls riches "cares." Luke 8:14. A rose has its prickles—so have riches. We think them happy, who flourish in their silks and gold—but we do not see the troubles and cares which attend them! A shoe may have silver lace on it—yet pinch the foot. Many a man who goes to his hard labor, lives a more contented life than he who has millions. Disquieting care is the evil spirit which haunts the rich man. When his chests are full of gold—his heart is full of care how to increase them, or how to secure what he has gotten. A large estate, like a long, trailing garment—is often more troublesome than useful.

[2] In a prosperous estate there is the burden of ACCOUNT. Such as are in high places, have a far greater account to give to God than others. "Unto whom much is given—of him shall be much required." The more golden talents any are entrusted with—the more they have to answer for. The more their revenues—the more their reckonings. God will say, "I gave you a great estate—what have you done with it? How have you employed it for My glory?"

[3] A prosperous condition has more DANGER in it. Such as are on the top of the pinnacle of honor—are in more danger of falling. They are subject to many temptations. Their table is often a snare. Millions are drowned in the sweet waters of pleasure.

A large sail overturns the vessel. Many, by having a too large sail of prosperity, have had their souls overturned! He has need of much wisdom and grace, to know how to wisely bear a high condition. It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling—and a full estate without sinning!

Prosperity breeds pride. When the tide rises higher in the river, the boat rises higher; so, when the tide of an estate rises higher, many men's hearts rise higher in pride. Prosperity breeds carnal security. Samson fell asleep in Delilah's lap—so do men in the lap of ease and plenty. The world's golden sands, are quicksands.

God knows what is best for us. If we have less estate, we are in less danger. If we lack the riches and honors of others—so we lack their temptations. "How hard it is for rich people to get into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" Luke 18:24-25.

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The sword which wounds the red dragon!

"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

No grace more bruises the serpent's head—than faith. It is both a shield and a sword, defensive and offensive. It is a shield to guard the head and defend the vitals. The shield of faith prevents the fiery darts of temptation from piercing us through. Faith is also the sword which wounds the red dragon!

How does faith come to be so strong—that it can resist Satan and put him to flight?

Because faith brings the strength of Christ into the soul. Samson's strength lay in his hair—ours lies in Christ. If a child is assaulted—it runs and calls to its father for help. Just so, when faith is assaulted, it runs and calls Christ, and in His strength overcomes!

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Buffeted by Satan's temptations

Why does God allow His people to be buffeted by Satan's temptations? He does it for many wise and holy ends.

God allows His children to be tempted, to test their love. Our love to God is seen, when we can look a temptation in the face—and turn our back upon it. Though the devil comes as a subtle serpent, and offers a golden apple—yet the one who loves God will not touch the forbidden fruit. When the devil offered Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them—such was Christ's love to His Father, that He abhorred the temptation. True love will not be bribed. When the devil's darts are most fiery—a saint's love to God is most fervent. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." John 14:15

God allows His children to be tempted, to test their courage. Many have no heart to resist a temptation. No sooner does Satan come with his solicitations—but they yield. They are like the coward, who as soon as the thief approaches, delivers his purse. He is a valorous Christian, who brandishes the sword against Satan, and will rather die than yield. The heroic spirit of a saint is never more seen than in a battlefield, when he is fighting with the red dragon—and by the power of faith puts the devil to flight!

God allows His children to be tempted, that they may be kept from pride. Pride keeps grace low, so that it cannot thrive. As the head swells—the other parts of the body waste away. Just so, as pride swells—grace wastes away. God resists pride; and, that He may keep His children humble, He sometimes allows them to fall into temptation. "To keep me from getting puffed up, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from getting proud." The thorn in the flesh was to burst the bubble of pride! Better is the temptation which humbles me—than the duty which makes me proud. Rather than a Christian should be proud, God lets him fall into the devil's hands a while—that he may be cured of swelling pride.

God allows His children to be tempted, that they may be fitter to comfort others who are in the same distress, and speak a word in due season to such as are weary. Paul was trained up in the fencing-school of temptation, and was able to acquaint others with Satan's wiles and stratagems, 2 Corinthians 2:11. A man who has ridden over a place where there are quicksands, is the fittest to guide others through that dangerous way. Just so, he who has been buffeted by Satan, and has felt the claws of the roaring lion—is the fittest man to deal with one who is tempted.

God allows His children to be tempted, to make them long more for heaven, where they shall be out of gunshot, and freed from the hissing of the old serpent! Satan vexes and molests the saints. He lays his snares, and throws his fireballs! But this only makes the children of God long to be gone from hence, and pray that they had the wings of a dove, to fly away and be at rest! Heaven is the place of rest—no bullets of temptation fly there! The eagle that soars aloft in the air, and sits perching upon the tops of high trees—is not troubled with the stinging of serpents below. Just so, when believers have got into heaven above, they shall not be stung by the old serpent! The devil is cast out of the heavenly paradise. Heaven is compared to an exceeding high mountain. It is so high, that Satan's fiery darts cannot reach up to it! Death calls the saints off the battlefield, where the bullets of temptation fly thick—so that they may receive a victorious crown!

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To damn them with delights!

"So that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are very familiar with his evil schemes." 2 Corinthians 2:11

The serpent beguiled Eve with his subtlety; let us not be beguiled by his hellish snares and plots.

Satan has a dexterity in subtle contrivances.

He hurts more as a fox than a lion.

His snares are worse than his darts.

His error damns as well as His vice; poison kills as well as a pistol.

Satan bewitches and ensnares men, by setting pleasing baits before them; as the riches, pleasures, and honors of the world. "All these things will I give you." Matthew 4:9. How many does he tempt with this golden apple! Pride, idleness, luxury—are the three worms which are bred by prosperity. "Those who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare." 1 Timothy 6:9. Satan kills with these silver darts! How many are ensnared by his luscious delights!

The pleasures of the world are the great engine by which Satan batters down men's souls. His policy is to tickle them to death—to damn them with delights! The flesh would gladly be pleased, and Satan prevails by this temptation—he drowns them in the sweet waters of pleasure.

Such as have abundance of the world, walk in the midst of golden snares! We had need watch our hearts in prosperity, and pray not to be led into temptation.

We have as much need to be careful that we are not endangered by prosperity—as a man has to be careful at a feast where there are some poisoned dishes of food.

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This lion of hell is ever hunting after his prey!

"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!" 1 Peter 5:8

Consider Satan's diligence in tempting. He neglects no time. He who would have us idle—is always busy himself. This lion of hell is ever hunting after his prey! He compasses sea and land to make a proselyte. He prowls around—he watches where he may throw in the fireball of temptation. He is a restless spirit; if we repulse him, he will not desist—but come again with a new temptation.

Satan's diligence in tempting, is seen in the variety of temptations he uses. He does not confine himself to one kind of temptation—he has more plots than one. He has many tools to work with. If he finds one temptation does not prevail—he will utilize another.

If he cannot tempt to lust—he will tempt to pride. If temptation to covetousness does not prevail—he will tempt to extravagance.

If he cannot make men profane—he will try to make them religious formalists.

If he cannot make them wicked—he will tempt them to be erroneous. Error damns as well as vice. Vice pistols; error poisons!

Satan has acquired long experience in the art of temptation. He has been a tempter for as long as he has been a devil. Having such experience, he knows what the temptations are, which have foiled others, and are most likely to prevail—as the fowler lays those snares which have caught other birds.

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God is either blind or forgetful

"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him." Psalms 32:1-2

All the curses of God stand in full force against an unpardoned sinner. It is astonishing, that an unpardoned man could be merry, who is heir to all God's curses!

Luther professed there were three things which he dared not think of, without Christ: his sins, death, the day of judgment.

Death to a Christless soul, is the "king of terrors." Death is sent to the unpardoned soul with dreadful tidings. Death is God's jailer to arrest him. Death is a prologue to damnation. It takes away all earthly comforts; it takes away sugared morsels; no more mirth or music. "The music of harpists and musicians,

flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again." Revelation 18:22. The sinner shall never more taste of luscious delights, for all eternity; his honey shall be turned into the "gall of asps." Job 20:14.

The sinner dying unpardoned, must go into damnation! This is the second death—an undying death. He must forever bear the anger of a sin-revenging God. As long as God is God—so long the vial of His wrath shall be dropping upon the damned soul.

Oh! how sad, then, is it to live and die unpardoned! You may lay a grave-stone upon that man, and write this epitaph upon it, "It would have been good for that man—if he had never been born!" He will be engulfed in a dreadful a labyrinth of fire and brimstone for all eternity!

Now, if the misery of an unpardoned state is so inexpressible—what is the reason why so few seek after pardon? If they lack health—they go to the physician; but if they lack forgiveness of sin, they seem to be unconcerned, and do not seek after it.

Why is this?

Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness of sin, for lack of conviction. Few are convinced what a dreadful thing sin is—that it is distillation of all evil, that it brings all plagues on the body, and curses on the soul. Unless a man's sins are forgiven, there is not the vilest creature alive—the rat, serpent or toad, which is in a worse condition than the sinner! For when they die they go but into the earth; but he, dying without pardon, goes into hell torments forever! Men are not convinced of this—so they play with the viper of sin!

Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness of sin, because they are seeking other things. They seek the world immoderately. The world is a golden snare. "The riches of the world, are the snares of the devil." The wedge of gold hinders many from seeking after pardon.

Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness of sin, out of hope of impunity. They flatter themselves in sin, and because they have been spared so long, therefore think God never intends to reckon with them. "He has said in his heart—God has forgotten; He hides His face and will never see it." Psalms 10:11.

They think that God is either blind or forgetful. But let sinners know—that long forbearance is not forgiveness. God bore with Sodom a long time, but at last rained down fire and brimstone upon

them he adjourning of the court, does not acquit the prisoner. The longer God is taking the blow—the heavier it will be at last, if sinners repent not!

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They are never separated

"You were sanctified, you were justified." 1 Corinthians 6:11

Justification and sanctification are not the same.

Justification is without us—sanctification is within us. The one is by righteousness imputed—the other is by righteousness imparted. Justification is once and for all—sanctification is gradual. One person is sanctified more than another—but one cannot be more justified than another. One has more grace than another—but he is not more justified than another.

The matter of our justification is perfect, namely, Christ's righteousness; but our sanctification is imperfect, there are the spots of God's children. Our graces are mixed with sin, our duties are defiled.

Thus justification and sanctification are not the same.

Yet, for all that, they are never separated. God never pardons and justifies a sinner—but He also sanctifies him. "This is He who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ." 1 John 5:6. Christ comes to the soul by blood, which denotes remission of sin; and by water, which denotes sanctification. Let no man say he is pardoned, who is not made holy! This I urge against those who talk of their sin being forgiven, and having a part in Christ—and yet remain unconverted, and live in the grossest sins!

Where God pardons, He purifies. Whoever God forgives, He transforms. Let no man say his sins are forgiven—who does not find an inherent work of holiness in his heart. "I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances." Ezekiel 36:27

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Three worms which often breed in prosperity

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

To make us content with "daily bread," though God straitens us in our allowance, think seriously of the danger there is in a high, prosperous condition.

Some are not content with "daily bread," but desire to have their barns filled, and heap up silver as dust; which proves a snare to them. "Those who will be rich fall into a snare." 1 Timothy 6:9. Pride, idleness, and lust—are three worms which often breed in prosperity.

Prosperity often deafens the ear against God. "I spoke unto you in your prosperity, but you said—I will not hear." Jeremiah 22:21. Soft pleasures harden the heart. In the body, the more fat—the less vitality. Just so, the more outward plenty—often the less piety.

Prosperity has its honey—and also its sting! Anxious care is the evil spirit which haunts the rich man—and will not let him rest. When his chests are full of money—his heart is full of care, either how to manage or how to increase, or how to secure what he has gotten.

Should this not make us content with that allowance which God gives us—if we have daily bread, though not dainties? Think of the danger of prosperity! The spreading of a full table may be the spreading of a snare! Many have been sunk to hell, with golden weights!

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

The world's golden sands are quicksands, which should make us take our daily bread, though it be but coarse, contentedly. If we have less prosperity—we have less snares. As we lack the rich provisions of the world—so we lack their temptations. "If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that." 1 Timothy 6:8.

If God keeps us to a spare diet—if He gives us less of temporal things—He has made it up in spiritual things. He has given us the Pearl of great price—the Lord Jesus, who is the quintessence of all good things. To give us Christ, is more than if God had given us all the world. He can make more worlds—but He has no more Christs to bestow. Christ is such a golden mine, that the angels cannot dig to the bottom! His riches are unsearchable! Ephesians 3:8. From Christ we have justification, adoption and glorification!

Consider that it is not having an abundance, which makes us content. It is not a fancy cage which will make the bird sing. Having an abundance may make one less content. One staff may help the traveler—but a bundle of staffs will be a burden to him. A great estate may be like a long trailing garment—more burdensome than useful.

He who can say, "My God," has enough to rock his heart quiet in the lowest condition. What can he lack—who has the all-sufficient God for his portion!

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Hebrews 13:5

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Here is a strange sight!

"Happy is the man whom God corrects." Job 5:17

Affliction is a means to make us happy. It seems strange to flesh and blood—that affliction should make us happy. When Moses saw the bush burning

and not consumed, he said, "I will turn aside and see this strange sight!" Exodus 3:3. Likewise, here is a strange sight—a man afflicted, and yet happy. The world counts them happy—who can escape affliction; but truly happy is the man whom God corrects.

How do afflictions contribute to our happiness?

Afflictions make us happy—as they are a means of bringing us nearer to God. The loadstone of prosperity does not draw us so near to God, as the cords of affliction. When the prodigal was pinched with need, he said, "I will arise—and go to my father!" Luke 15:18. As the deluge brought the dove to the ark—the floods of sorrow make us hasten to Christ, our ark!

Afflictions make us happy—as they are safe guides to glory. The storm drives the ship into the harbor. Blessed storm—which drives the soul into the heavenly harbor! Is it not better—to go through momentary affliction to eternal glory—than to go through momentary pleasure to eternal misery? The wicked must drink a sea of wrath; but the godly have only a cup of affliction.

Think, O Christian—what affliction leads to! It leads to paradise, where rivers of pleasure are always running!

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." 2 Corinthians 4:16-17

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God's file and flail

"God disciplines us for our profit." Hebrews 12:10 What profit is in affliction? Afflictions are disciplinary. Afflictions teach us—they are the school of the cross.

Affliction shows us more of our own hearts. Water in a glass looks clear—but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up. Just so, when God sets us

upon the fire—corruption boils up which we did not discern before. Sharp afflictions are to the soul, as a soaking rain to the house; we do not know that

there are holes in the roof until the shower comes—but then we see it drop down here and there. Just so, we do not know what unmortified lusts are in the soul, until the storm of affliction comes—then the hidden evils of the heart come dropping down in many places. Affliction is a sacred eye-salve, it clears our eyesight. Thus the rod gives wisdom.

Affliction quickens the spirit of prayer. Jonah was asleep in the ship—but at prayer in the whale's belly. Perhaps in a time of health and prosperity we prayed in a cold and formal manner, we put no coals to the incense. Then God sends some affliction or other—to stir us up to take hold of Him. "They poured out a prayer—when Your chastening was upon them." Isaiah 26:16. In times of trouble

we pray feelingly and fervently.

Affliction is a means to purge out our sins. Affliction cures the pestilence of pride—and the fever of lust. Affliction is God's file—to scrub off our rust. Affliction is God's flail—to thresh off our husks. The water of affliction is not to

drown us—but to wash off our spots.

Affliction is a means to wean us the world. The world often proves, not only a spider's web—but a cockatrice egg. Corrupting worldly things, are great enchantments. They hinder us in our passage

to heaven. Affliction sounds a retreat, to call us off the immoderate pursuit of earthly things. When two things are frozen together—the best way to separate them is by fire; so, when the heart and the world are together—God has no better way to separate them than by the fire of affliction. Affliction is a means to purify us. It works us up to

further degrees of sanctity. "God disciplines us for our profit—that we may share in His holiness." Hebrews 12:10. The vessels of mercy are the brighter for scouring. As you pour water on your linen when you would whiten it—so God pours the waters of affliction upon us to whiten our souls. Afflictions are in themselves bitter—but they bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness. Hebrews 12:11.

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God shoots many kinds of arrows

"May Your will be done." Matthew 6:10

We pray here, that we may have grace to submit to God's will patiently—in whatever He inflicts.

Patient submission to God's will, is a gracious frame of soul, whereby a Christian is content to be at God's disposal, and acquiesces in His wisdom. "It is the Lord's will—let Him do what He thinks best." 1 Samuel 3:18

Patient submission to the will of God, lies in seeing His hand in the affliction. "Affliction does not spring from the soil, and trouble does not sprout from the earth." Job 5:6. Affliction does not come by chance! Job eyed God in all that befell him. "The Lord gave me everything I had, and the Lord has taken it away. Praise the name of the Lord!" Job 1:21. Job looks beyond second causes

—he sees God in the affliction! "The Lord has taken it away." There can be no submission to God's will—until there is an acknowledging of God's hand in the affliction.

Patient submission to God's will, lies in justifying God. God is holy and just, not only when He punishes the wicked—but when He afflicts the righteous. "Now we are being punished because of our wickedness and our great guilt. But we have actually been punished far less than we deserve." Ezra 9:13

While we live here in this valley of tears, patient submission to God's will is much needed. The Lord sometimes lays heavy afflictions upon us. "Your arrows have struck deep, and Your blows are crushing me!" Psalms 38:2. God sometimes lays many afflictions upon us. "He multiplies my wounds." Job 9:17. God shoots many kinds of arrows.

God sometimes afflicts with POVERTY—which is a great affliction. To have an estate reduced almost to nothing, is hard to flesh and blood. "The Almighty has

made life very bitter for me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty." Ruth 1:20-21

God sometimes afflicts with REPROACH. Dirt may be cast upon a pearl; and those names may be blotted, which are written in the book of life. Piety shields

from hell—but not from slander.

God sometimes afflicts with the DEATH of loved ones. "Son of man, I am going to take away your dearest treasure. Suddenly she will die!" Ezekiel 24:16

God sometimes afflicts with INFIRMITY of body. Sickness takes away the comfort of life. Sometimes God lets the infirmity continue long. Some diseases

are chronic, and linger and hang about the body for many years. The Lord is pleased to exercise many of His precious ones with chronic affliction.

God tries His people with various afflictions—so that they have need of patient submission to His will.

Murmuring is not consistent with submission to God's will. Murmuring is the height of impatience, it is a kind of mutiny in the soul against God. "They began to murmur against God." Numbers 21:5

When water is hot—then the scum boils up; when the heart is heated with anger against God—then murmuring boils up!

Murmuring springs from pride! Men think they have deserved better at God's hand; and, when they begin to swell with pride—they spit poison!

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Your dying day

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

What little cause have the saints to fear death! Are any afraid of going to a glorious kingdom? What is there in this world that should make us desirous to stay here? Is not this world "a valley of tears"—and do we weep to leave it? Are we not in a wilderness among fiery serpents—and are we afraid to leave these serpents?

God is ever displaying the banner of His love in heaven, and is there any love like His? Are there any sweeter smiles, or softer embraces than His? What hurt can death do to them—but lead them to a glorious kingdom! Let this be a gospel antidote to expel the fear of death.

Christian, your dying day will be your wedding day—and do you fear it? Is a slave afraid to be set free? Is a virgin afraid to be matched into the crown? Death may take away a few worldly comforts—but it gives that which is better; it takes away a flower—and gives a jewel! If the saints possess a kingdom when they die, they have no cause to fear death. A prince would not be afraid to cross the sea, though tempestuous—if he were sure to be crowned as soon as he came to shore!

Faith gives a title to heaven—but death gives a possession of heaven! Death brings us to the end of our sorrow, and the beginning of our joy! Death is the entrance into a blessed eternity!

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

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First she looked—and then she lusted!

"Watch!" Mark 13:37

Many have lost heaven, for lack of watchfulness. Our hearts are ready to decoy us into sin, and the devil lies in ambush with his temptations. We must every day keep sentinel in our souls. "I will stand upon my watch." Habakkuk 2:1.

Watch your eyes! "I made a covenant with my eyes." Job 31:1. Much sin comes in by the eye. First Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes—then she took and ate it! First she looked—and then she lusted. The eye, by beholding an impure object, sets the heart on fire. The devil often creeps in, at the window of the eye! Watch your eyes!

Watch your ears! Much poison is conveyed through the ear. Let your ear be open to God—and shut to sin!

Watch your hearts! "The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked." Jeremiah 17:9.

Watch your heart when you are about holy things—it will be slipping out to vanity. When Christ had been praying and fasting, the devil tempted Him. Matthew 4:3. After combating with Satan in prayer, we are apt to grow secure and take our spiritual armor off—and then the devil falls on us and wounds us!

Watch your hearts when you are in bad company. The breath of the wicked is infectious. Nay, watch your hearts when you are in good company. The devil is subtle, and he can as well creep into the dove—as he did once into the serpent. Satan tempted Christ by an apostle.

Watch your hearts in prosperity. Now you are in danger of pride! The higher men's estates rise—the higher their hearts are lifted up in pride. It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling. Just so, it is hard to carry a full, prosperous estate without sinning. As Samson fell asleep in Delilah's lap—so many have fallen so fast asleep in the lap of prosperity, that they never awoke until they awoke in hell!

Oh, if you would get to heaven, be always upon your watch-tower! Keep close sentinel in your souls. Who would not watch—when it is for a glorious kingdom!

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The Delilah in the bosom!

If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of indulging any sin. One millstone will drown, as well as more. One sin lived in will damn, as well as more. If any one sin reigns—it will keep you from reigning in the kingdom of heaven.

Especially keep from sins of your natural constitution; your darling sin. "I kept myself from my iniquity"—that sin which my heart would soonest decoy and flatter me into. As in the hive there is one master bee—so in the heart there is one master-sin. Oh, take heed of this!

How may this darling-sin be known?

1. That sin for which a man cannot endure the arrow of a reproof, is the bosom-sin. Men can be content to have other sins declaimed against; but if a minister puts his finger upon the sore, and touches upon that one special sin—then their eyes flash with fire, they are enraged, and spit the venom of malice!

2. That sin which a man's heart runs out most to, and he is most easily captivated by—is the Delilah in the bosom! One man is overcome with wantonness, another by worldliness. It is a sad thing for a man to be so bewitched by a beloved sin that he will part with the whole kingdom of heaven—to gratify that lust!

3. That sin which a man is least inclined to part with, is the endeared sin. Of all his sons, Jacob could most hardly part with Benjamin. "Will you take Benjamin away!" Genesis 42:35. So says the sinner, "This and that sin I have left—but must Benjamin go too? Must I part with this delightful sin? That goes to my heart!"

Take heed especially of this master-sin. The strength of sin lies in the beloved sin, which, like a cancer striking at the heart, brings death.

I have read of a monarch, who being pursued by the enemy, threw away the crown of gold on his head—that he might run the faster. Just so, the sin which you wore as a crown of gold must be thrown away—that you may run the faster to the kingdom of heaven.

Oh, if you would not lose glory, mortify the beloved sin! Set it, as Uriah—in the forefront of the battle to be slain. By plucking out this right eye—you will see the better to go to heaven!

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The world's golden sands!

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

If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of worldly-mindedness. A covetous spirit chokes holy affections, as the earth puts out the fire.

"The riches of the world, are the snares of the devil!"

Riches are golden snares! If a man were to climb up a steep rock, and had weights tied to his legs—it would hinder him in his ascent. Just so, many golden weights will hinder us from climbing up the steep rock which leads to heaven.

The world is no friend to grace. The more the babe sucks—the weaker the mother is. Just so, the more the world sucks—the weaker our grace is.

Had a man a monopoly of all the wealth of the world; could he heap up riches to the stars—yet his heart would not be filled. Covetousness is never satisfied. Joshua could stop the course of the sun—but could not stop Achan in his covetous pursuit of the wedge of gold. He whose heart is locked up in his chest, will be locked out of heaven!

Some ships which have escaped the rocks—have been wrecked upon the sands. Just so, many who have escaped gross sins—have been wrecked upon the world's golden sands!

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An eyesore to the damned in hell

"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves

thrown out!" Luke 13:28

A great aggravation of the loss of heaven will be to look upon others who have gained the kingdom. The happiness of the godly in heaven, will be an eyesore

to the damned in hell. When the wicked shall see those whom they hated and scorned—exalted to the kingdom, and shine with robes of glory, and they themselves miss the kingdom—it will be a dagger at the heart, and make them gnash their teeth for envy!

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The prosperity of the wicked

"I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 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." Psalms 73:3, Psalms 73:12-13

The children of God have little cause to envy the prosperity of the wicked. They may have all they can desire; nay, they may have "more than heart can wish." Psalms 73:7. They steep themselves in pleasure! "They sing to the music of tambourine and harp; they make merry to the sound of the flute." Job 21:12. The wicked are high—when God's people are low in the world.

The goats scramble up the mountains of prosperity; when Christ's sheep are below in the valley of tears! The wicked are clothed in purple; while the godly

are in sackcloth. The prosperity of the wicked is a great stumbling block. But there is no cause to envy them, if we consider two things:

First—that this is all they have! "Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things"—you had all your heaven here.

Secondly—that God has laid up better things for His children. He has prepared a kingdom of glory for them! They shall have the beatific vision; they shall be crowned with the pleasures of paradise forever! Oh, then do not envy the fleeting prosperity of the wicked!

The wicked go through a pleasant way—to execution! The godly go through a foul way—to coronation!

See how happy all the saints are at death! They go to a kingdom! They shall see God's face, which shines ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian glory. The godly at death shall be installed into their honor, and have the royal crown set upon their head. They have in the kingdom of heaven—the quintessence of all delights. They shall lie in Christ's bosom, that bed of spices.

There is such a pleasant variety in the happiness of heaven, that after millions of years it will be as fresh and desirable as the first hour's enjoyment! In the kingdom of heaven, the saints are

crowned with all those perfections which they are capable of. The desires of the glorified saints are infinitely satisfied; there is nothing absent which they could wish might be enjoyed; there is nothing present which they could wish might be removed. In the kingdom of heaven there is . . .

knowledge without ignorance,

holiness without sin,

beauty without blemish,

strength without weakness,

light without darkness,

riches without poverty,

ease without pain,

liberty without restraint,

rest without labor,

joy without sorrow,

love without hatred,

plenty without surfeit,

honor without disgrace,

health without sickness,

peace without discord,

contentment without cessation,

glory in its highest elevation!

Oh, the happiness of those who die in the Lord! They go into this blessed kingdom!

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True faith

True faith is joined with holiness. As a little musk sweetens, so a little faith purifies. Though faith does but touch Christ—it fetches a healing virtue from Him. Justifying faith does that in a spiritual sense, which miraculous faith does—it removes the mountains of sin, and casts them into the sea of Christ's blood!

True faith is prolific. It brings forth fruit; it has Rachel's beauty—and Leah's fruitfulness. Faith is full of good works. It believes as if it did not work—and it works as if it did not believe. Faith is the spouse-like grace which marries Christ; and good works are the children which it bears!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The fire, the worm, the prison are eternal!

"And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25:46

See what opposite ways, the godly and the wicked go at death! The godly go to a glorious kingdom; the wicked go to a loathsome prison! The devil is the jailer,

and they are bound with the chains of darkness. Jude 1:6. What are these chains? Not iron chains—but worse; the chain of God's decree, decreeing them to righteous torment; and the chain of God's power, whereby He binds them fast under eternal wrath!

The deplorable condition of impenitent sinners, is that when they die—they go to a dreadful dungeon. Oh, think what horror and despair will possess the wicked,

when they see themselves engulfed in misery, and their condition hopeless, helpless, endless! They are in a fiery prison—and there is no possibility of getting out!

A servant under the law, who had a hard master—at every seventh year might go free. But in hell there is no year of release when the damned shall go free—

the fire, the worm, the prison are eternal!

If the whole world, from earth to heaven, were filled with grains of sand, and once in a thousand years an angel should come and fetch away one grain—how many millions of ages would pass before that vast heap of sand would be spent! Yet, if after all this time the sinner might come out of hell, there would be some hope. But this word "forever!" breaks the heart with despair!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ My sweet pomegranate wine

"Christ's love compels us." 2 Corinthians 5:14

True love to love God turns the soul into a seraphim; it makes it burn in a flame of affection. Love is the truest touchstone of sincerity.

Love is the queen of the graces; it commands the whole soul. If our love to God is genuine, we let Him have the supremacy of our love. We will set Him in the highest place of our soul. We will give Him the purest of our love. "I would give You spiced wine to drink, my sweet pomegranate wine." Song of Solomon 8:2. If the spouse had anything better—a cup more juicy and spiced—Christ would drink of that!

We give the creature the milk of our love; but God gets the cream!

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No serpent of sin will breed there

"Nothing impure will ever enter it." Revelation 21:27

The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in holiness. Earthly kingdoms are for the most part unholy; there is a common sore of luxury and uncleanness running in them. Earthly kingdoms are stages for sin to be acted on. "All the tables are covered with vomit and there is not a spot without filth." Isaiah 28:8. But the kingdom of heaven is so holy—that it will not mix with any corruption. It is so pure a soil—that no serpent of sin will breed there. There, beauty is not stained with lust, and honor is not swelled with pride. Holiness is the brightest jewel of the crown of heaven.

"Nothing impure will ever enter it." Revelation 21:27

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What would the damned in hell give, for one hour's sleep!

"Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath!" 1 Thessalonians 1:10

In the kingdom of heaven—we shall be freed from the torments of hell.

Consider the multiplicity of those torments. In this life, the body is usually exercised with only one pain at one time; but in hell there is a diversity of torments. There is . . .

darkness to affright,

fire to burn,

a lake of sulphur to choke,

chains to bind, and

the worm to gnaw!

The torments of hell will seize upon every part of the body and soul. The eye shall be tortured with the sight of devils; and the tongue that has sworn so many oaths, shall be tortured. "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue." Luke 16:24. The memory will be tormented to remember the mercies that have been abused, and seasons of grace neglected. The conscience will be tormented with self-accusations.

The pains of hell are unmitigated, with no mixture of mercy. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy. But in hell there is no alleviation or lessening of the pains. In hell, there is no oil of mercy to assuage the sufferings of the damned.

In the pains of hell, there is no intermission. "The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they will have no rest day or night!" Revelation 14:11. What would the damned in hell give, for one hour's sleep! They are perpetually on the rack. There is no expiration in the pains of hell; they must always lie scorching in flames of wrath!

But in the heavenly kingdom, the elect shall be freed from all infernal torments. "Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath!" A prison is not made for the King's children. Christ drank that bitter cup of God's wrath—that the saints might never drink it!

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Desiring God

We may know the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts—by having true desires after God. By the beating of this pulse—we conclude there is life.

A true desire after God is sincere. We desire God for Himself, for His intrinsic excellencies. The savor of the ointment of Christ's graces draws the virgins' desires after Him. Song of Solomon 1:3. A true saint desires God not only for what He has—but for what He is; not only for His rewards—but for His holiness. No hypocrite can thus desire God. He may desire Him for His

jewels—but not for His beauty!

A true desire after God is insatiable. It cannot be satisfied without God; let the world heap her honors and riches—they will not satisfy. No flowers or music will content him who is thirsty. Just so, nothing will quench the soul's thirst—but the blood of Christ! He faints away, his heart breaks with longing for God. Psalms 84:2; Psalms 119:20.

A true desire after God is active. It flourishes into endeavor. "With my soul have I desired you in the night; yes, with my spirit within me will I seek you early." Isaiah 26:9. A soul that desires aright says, "I must have Christ! I must have grace! I must have heaven, though I take it by storm!"

A true desire after God is supreme. We desire Christ, not only more than the world—but more than heaven! "Whom have I in heaven but You?" Psalms 73:25. Heaven itself would not satisfy—without Christ. Christ is the diamond in the ring

of glory!

A true desire after God is increasing. A little of God will not satisfy—but the pious soul desires still more. A drop of water is not enough for the thirsty traveler. Though a Christian is thankful for the least degree of grace—yet he is not satisfied with the greatest degree of grace. He still thirsts for more of Christ, and His Spirit. A saint would have more knowledge, more sanctity, more of Christ's presence. A glimpse of Christ through the lattice of an ordinance is sweet; but the soul will never stop longing—until it sees Him face to face! It desires to have grace perfected in glory! It desires to be wholly plunged into the sweetness of God. We would be swallowed up in God, and be forever bathing ourselves in those perfumed waters of pleasure, which run at His right hand!

Surely this sincere desire after God is a blessed sign that the kingdom of grace has come into our hearts. The beating of this pulse shows life! "Desires for God—are from God." If iron moves upwards contrary to its nature—it is a sign some magnet has been drawing it. Just so, if the soul moves towards God in sincere desires—it is a sign the magnet of the Spirit has been drawing it!

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Satan's workshop!

"May Your kingdom come." Matthew 6:10

When we pray, "May Your kingdom come," we pray that the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts. "The kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21.

Why is grace called a kingdom? Because, when grace comes, there is a kingly government set up in the soul. Grace rules the will and affections, and brings the whole man in subjection to Christ. Grace . . .

kings it in the soul,

sways the scepter,

subdues mutinous lusts, and

keeps the soul in a spiritual decorum.

Unless the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts—our purest offerings are defiled. They may be good as to the matter—but not as to the manner; they lack that which would meliorate and sweeten them. Until the kingdom of grace is in our hearts, our good works do not purify us—but we pollute them! Even

the prayer of an ungracious person is sin. "The Lord hates the sacrifice of the wicked." Proverbs 15:8.

A sinner's best works are 'opera mortua'—dead works! And those works which are dead, cannot please God. A dead flower has no sweetness. Hebrews 11:6.

Unless the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts—we are loathsome in God's eyes. "My soul loathed them." Zechariah 11:8. A heart void of grace looks blacker than hell. Sin transforms man into a devil. So deformed is a graceless person, that when once he sees his own filth and leprosy, the first thing he does is to loathe and abhor himself. "You shall loathe yourself in your own sight for all your evils!" Ezekiel 20:43. Unless the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts—

we are of the bastard brood of the old serpent—and so cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven! "You are the children of your father the Devil!" John 8:44.

Unless the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts—the kingdom of Satan is set up in them! They are said to be under "the power of Satan." Acts 26:18. Satan

commands the will—by his subtle temptations he can draw it. He is said to take men captive "at his will." 2 Timothy 2:26.

The sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house. "I will return into my house." Matthew 12:44. The sinner's heart is Satan's workshop, where he works. "Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air, who now works in the children of disobedience." Ephesians 2:2. The members of the body are the tools with which Satan works. He possesses men. In Christ's time many had their bodies possessed—but it is far worse to have the souls possessed. One is possessed with an impure devil, another with a revengeful devil, another with a covetousness devil, etc.

The ship goes full sail when the wind blows. Just so, men go full sail in sin when the devil, the prince of the air, blows them! Thus, until the kingdom of grace comes—men are under the power of Satan, who writes all his laws in blood.

Unless the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts—we are exposed to the wrath of God. What will it be—when God stirs up all His anger? So inconceivably torturing is God's wrath, that the wicked call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from it. Revelation 6:16. The hellish torments are compared to a fiery lake. Revelation 20:15. Other fire is but painted fire—in comparison with this! This lake of fire burns forever. Mark 9:44. God's breath kindles this fire. Isaiah 30:33. Where shall we find buckets to quench it? Time will not finish it; tears will not quench it. To this fiery lake men are doomed—until the kingdom of grace is set up in them. Hell follows death!

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He welcomes them to hell

"The prince of this world." John 16:11

The devil has a kingdom. His throne is set up in the hearts of men. Satan does not care for their purses—but their hearts! Satan's empire is very large. Most people in the world pay tribute to him.

His kingdom has two characters:

[1] Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of IMPIETY. Nothing but sin goes on in his kingdom. Murder and heresy, lust and treachery, oppression and division—are the constant trade driven in his dominions. He is called "the unclean spirit."

Nothing else but iniquity is propagated in his kingdom.

[2] Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of SLAVERY. He makes all his subjects—slaves. The sinner is held captive under the grim tyranny of the devil!

Satan is a tyrant—and a worse tyrant than any other! Other tyrants do but rule over the body: but Satan rules over the soul! He rides his captives—as we ride upon horses.

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

wearies them out to do his drudgery. "They weary themselves to commit iniquity." Jeremiah 9:5. When men have served him to their utmost strength—he welcomes them to hell with fire and brimstone! Thus he is the worst of tyrants.

Men are willing slaves to Satan! They will fight and die for him! Therefore he is not only called "the prince of this world," but "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), to show what power he has over men's souls.

O let us pray that "they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will." 2 Timothy 2:26

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Sharp arrows!

"Our Father in heaven." Matthew 6:9

If God is our Father, then however He treats His children, is done in love. If He frowns; if He dips His pen in gall, and writes bitter things; if He disciplines—it is all done in love! "For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and punishes every

son whom He receives." Hebrews 12:6

A father loves his child as well when he chastises and disciplines him—as when he settles his inheritance on him! "Those whom I love—I rebuke and discipline."

Revelation 3:19. "Afflictions are sharp arrows—but they are shot from the hand of a loving Father!"

Correction is God's gymnasium. Correction is God's school of character. God afflicts His children—in love! He does it to humble and purify. Gentle correction is as necessary as daily bread! There is love in all! God smites—that He may save! "God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness." Hebrews 12:10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The epitome of misery!

Hell is the epitome of misery!

Surely sin must be the greatest evil—which separates us from the greatest good.

"Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his demons." Matthew 25:41

"Depart from Me."

Why, sinners might plead, "Lord, if we must depart from You, let us have Your blessing." "No! Depart—you who are cursed."

"Lord, if we must depart from You, let it be into some place of ease and rest."

"No! Depart into fire!"

"Lord, if we must go into fire, let it be for a short time—let the fire be quickly put out." "No! Go into everlasting fire!"

"Lord, if it is so, that we must be there, let us be with good company."

"No! Go with the devil and his demons!"

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We have no inherent power

"Deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:13

To keep us from falling into sin, let us be much in prayer. We have no inherent power to keep ourselves from sin. Let us pray the prayers of David,

"Hold me up—and I shall be safe!" Psalms 119:117. "Hold up my goings in your paths, that my footsteps slip not." Psalms 17:5. "Keep back Your servant from

presumptuous sins." Psalms 19:13.

The child is safe in the father's arms. Just so, we are only safe from falling into sin—while we are held up in the arms of Christ and free grace! "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ What an odious thing

What an odious thing sin is! Sin is the accursed thing. Joshua 7:13. It is the abominable thing which God hates. "Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate." Jeremiah 44:4. Sin is called filthiness. James 1:21. If all the evils in the world were put together, and their essence strained out, they could not make a thing so filthy as sin is! So odious is a sinner, that God loathes the sight of

him. "My soul loathed them!" Zechariah 11:8.

He who defiles himself with avarice, what is he but a serpent licking the dust!

He who defiles himself with lust, what is he but a swine with a man's head!

He who defiles himself with pride, what is he but a bubble which the devil has blown up!

He who defiles himself with drunkenness, what is he but a staggering beast!

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Remedies and antidotes against sin

"Your Word have I hid in my heart—that I might not sin against You." Psalms 119:11

If you would be kept from the evil of sin—be well versed in Scripture. The Word is a two-edged sword, to cut asunder men's lusts!

When the fogs and vapors of sin begin to rise, let but the light of Scripture shine in the soul, and it dispels them.

The Word shows the damnable evil of sin. It also furnishes us with precepts, which are so many remedies and antidotes against sin. When Christ had a temptation to sin, he beat back the tempter, and wounded him three times with the sword of the Spirit! "It is written!"

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly." Colossians 3:16

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He is always fishing for our souls

"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!" 1 Peter 5:8

Satan continually lies in ambush, and watches to draw us to sin. The devil stands girded for battle. He is always fishing for our souls. He is either laying snares—or shooting darts. Therefore we have need to watch him—that we be not decoyed into sin.

Most sin is committed for lack of watchfulness.

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Watch your eyes!

If we would be kept from actual sins—let us be careful to avoid all the inlets and occasions of sin.

Do not run into evil company. He who would not catch the plague—must not go into an infected house.

Guard your senses, which may be the inlets to sin. Keep the two portals, the eye and the ear. Especially guard your eyes. Much sin comes in by the eye; the

eye is often an inlet to sin; sin takes fire at the eye. The first sin in the world, began at the eye. "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for

food and pleasing to the eye—she took some and ate it." Genesis 3:6. Looking begat lusting! Intemperance begins at the eye. Looking on the wine when it is red and gives its color in the glass, causes excess of drinking. Proverbs 23:31.

Covetousness begins at the eye. "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold, I coveted them and took them." Joshua 7:21.

The fire of lust begins to kindle at the eye. David walking upon the roof of his house saw a woman washing herself, and she was, says the text, "beautiful to look upon," and he sent messengers and took her, and defiled himself with her. 2 Samuel 11:2.

Therefore watch your eyes! Job made a covenant with his eyes. Job 31:1. If the eye is once inflamed, it will be hard to stand out long against sin. If the outworks are taken by the enemy, there is great danger of the whole castle being taken.

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There is no fear of God before their eyes!

"Through the fear of the Lord, a man avoids evil." Proverbs 16:6

If you would be kept from actual sins—get the fear of God planted in your hearts. The fear of God is a bridle to sin—and a spur to holiness. The fear of God puts a holy awe upon the heart and binds it to godly behavior. When the Empress Eudoxia threatened to banish Chrysostom, "Tell her," said he, "I fear nothing but sin!" The fear of God stands as a porter at the door of the soul, and keeps sin from entering.

All sin is committed for lack of the fear of God. "Their throat is an open grave; they deceive with their tongues. Vipers' venom is under their lips. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and wretchedness are in their paths, and the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes!" Romans 3:13-18. Holy fear stands

sentinel, and is ever watching against carnal security, pride, and wantonness. The fear of God is the Christian's lifeguard to defend him against the fiery darts of temptation!

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God's love tokens

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline." Revelation 3:19

Afflictions are God's love tokens. Afflictions are sharp arrows—but shot from the hand of a loving Father. If a man should throw a bag of money at another, and it should bruise him a little, he would not be offended—but take it as a fruit of love. Just so, when God bruises us with affliction, it is to enrich us with the

golden graces of His Spirit, and all is in love!

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Draw the deformed face of sin!

"Deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:13

Here we pray to be delivered from the evil of SIN. Not that we pray to be delivered from the presence and indwelling of sin, for that cannot be in this life;

we cannot shake off this viper. But we pray that God would deliver us more and more from the power and practice, from the scandalous acts of sin. Sin is the

deadly evil which we pray against.

With what pencil shall I be able to draw the deformed face of sin! I shall endeavor to show you what a vile monster sin is. Sin, as the apostle says, is "exceedingly sinful." Romans 7:13. Sin is the very distillation of evil; it is called the "accursed thing." Joshua 7:13.

Sin fetches its pedigree from hell. It is of the devil. John 8:44. It calls the devil "father". Sin is the poison which the old serpent has spit into our virgin nature.

Look upon sin in its NATURE, and it is evil. See what the Scripture compares it to. It has got a bad name. It is compared to the vomit of dogs (2 Peter 2:22); to a menstruous cloth (Isaiah 30:22); and to a gangrene (2 Timothy 2:17). People with these diseases, we would be averse to eat and drink with. Sin is evil in its nature, because it is transgression against God. It is a breach of his royal law. It is high treason against heaven. What greater injury can be offered to a prince, than to trample upon his royal edicts? "They cast Your law behind their backs." Nehemiah 9:26. Sin is an affront to God, as it is walking contrary to Him. Leviticus 26:40. The Hebrew word for sin signifies rebellion. It flies in the face of God. "He stretches out his hand against God." Job 15:25. We ought not to lift up a thought against God, much less to lift up a hand against Him; but the sinner does both. Sin is the killing of God. Sin would not only unthrone God—but ungod Him! If sin could help it, God would no longer be God!

## The Lord's Prayer (excerpts) cont'd1

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### The Lord's Prayer (excerpts) cont'd

Sin is an act of high INGRATITUDE to God. He feeds a sinner, screens off many evils from him; and yet he not only forgets his mercies—but abuses them! "It was I who gave her everything she has—the grain, the wine, the olive oil. Even the gold and silver she used in worshiping the god Baal were gifts from me!" Hosea 2:8. God may say, I gave you wit, health, riches, which you have employed against me. A sinner makes an arrow of God's mercies—and shoots at Him! "Is this your kindness to your friend?" 2 Samuel 16:17. Did God give you life—to sin? Did He give you wages—to serve the devil? Oh, what an ungrateful thing is sin!

Sin is a FOOLISH thing. Is it not foolish to prefer a short lust—before an eternal inheritance? A sinner prefers the pleasures of sin for a season—before those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? Sin gratifies Satan. Men's sins feast the devil. Is it not folly for a man to be guilty of his own destruction, to give himself poison? A sinner has a hand in his own death. "They lay wait for their own blood." Proverbs 1:18. No creature did ever willingly kill itself, but man.

Sin is a POLLUTING thing. It is not only a defection, but a pollution; it is as rust to gold, as a stain to beauty. It is called "filthiness of flesh and spirit." 2 Corinthians 7:1. It makes the soul red with guilt—and black with filth! This filth of sin is internal. A spot in the face may easily be wiped off—but to have the liver and lungs tainted, is far worse. Sin has gotten into the conscience. Titus 1:15. It defiles all the faculties—the mind, memory, affections, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted.

Sin is a DEBASING thing. It degrades us of our honor. Sin blots a man's name. Nothing so turns a man's glory into shame, as sin. It makes a man like a beast. Psalms 49:20. It is worse to be like a beast than to be a beast; it is no shame to be a beast—but it is a shame for a man to be like a beast. Lust makes a man brutish, and anger makes him devilish.

Sin is an ENSLAVING thing. A sinner is a slave when he sins most freely. Sin makes men the devil's servants. Satan bids them sin—and they do it. When a man commits sin, he is the devil's lackey, and runs on his errand. Those who serve Satan have such a bad master, that they will be afraid to receive their wages.

Sin is an OFFENSIVE thing. "They have all together become filthy;" in the Hebrew, they have become stinking. Psalms 14:3. Sin is very offensive to God. He will not come near the dunghill sinner, who has such a foul stench coming from him.

Sin is a PAINFUL thing. It costs men much labor and pains to accomplish their wicked designs. "They weary themselves to commit iniquity." Jeremiah 9:5. "Sin is its own punishment." How they tire themselves out in sin's drudgery! A wicked man sweats at the devil's plough—and is at great pains to damn himself!

Thus you see what an evil sin is in the nature of it, and what need we have to pray, "Deliver us from evil."

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Satan takes off his lion's skin

Satan carries on his evil designs against us, under the highest pretenses of friendship. He puts silver upon his bait, and dips his poisoned pills in sugar, as some courtiers who make the greatest pretenses of love, where they have the most deadly hatred.

Satan takes off his lion's skin, and comes in sheep's clothing; he pretends kindness and friendship, and pleads what might be for our good. Thus he came to Christ, "I see that you are hungry, and there is no food for you in the wilderness; I, therefore, pitying your condition, wish you to get something to eat. Turn stones to bread, that your hunger may be satisfied." But Christ spied the temptation, and with the sword of the Spirit, wounded the old serpent!

Thus Satan came to Eve, and tempted her under the notion of a friend. "Eat of this tree, and it will make you omniscient, you shall be as gods." What a kind deceitful devil was here! But it was a subtle temptation. She greedily swallowed the bait—and ruined herself and all her posterity. Let us fear his fallacious flatteries!

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Satan's drag-net

Ungodly men presume that God will be merciful to them. Satan soothes men in their sins; he preaches to them, "God is merciful" and deludes them with golden dreams. "How many with vain hope—go down to hell!" Presumption is Satan's drag-net, by which he drags millions to hell.

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Ignorant people

Satan tempts some people more than others. Some are like wet tinder, who will not so soon take the fire of temptation as others. Satan tempts most where he thinks his policies will most easily prevail.

Satan most broods upon ignorant people with his temptations. The devil can lead these into any snare. You may lead a blind man anywhere. Satan knows it is easy to put a temptation in the way of the blind, at which they shall stumble into hell. The bird that is blind is soon shot by the fowler. Satan, the god of this world, blinds men—and then shoots them! An ignorant man cannot see the devil's snares!

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He wraps his poisonous pills in sugar

"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness." 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

Satan, in tempting, baits his hook with religion. He can tempt to sin under pretenses of piety. Sometimes he is the white devil, and transforms himself into an angel of light. Celsus wrote a book full of error, and he entitled it, "The Book of Truth." So Satan can write the title of "religion" upon his worst temptation. Thus he wraps his poisonous pills in sugar. Who would suspect him when he comes as a minister, and quotes Scripture?

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An old serpent!

Satan is a very subtle tempter. The Greek word to tempt, signifies to deceive. Satan, in tempting, uses many subtle plots to deceive. We read . . .

of the "depths of Satan",

of his "devices and stratagems",

of his "snares and darts".

He is called a lion for his cruelty—and an old serpent for his subtlety. He has several sorts of subtlety in tempting.

Satan observes the natural temper and constitution of men. He does not know the hearts of men—but he may feel their pulse, know their temper—and can apply himself accordingly. As the farmer knows what seed is proper to sow in such a soil—so Satan, finding out the temper of a man, knows what temptations are proper to sow in his heart. He blows the wind of temptation in the same way the tide of a man's constitution runs. Satan tempts . . .

the ambitious man with a crown,

the lustful man with beauty,

the covetous man with a wedge of gold.

He provides savory food—such as the sinner loves!

Satan chooses the fittest season to tempt in. As a cunning angler casts in his bait when the fish will bite best—so the devil knows the best time when temptation is likeliest to prevail.

When we have broken out of his prison in conversion, he will pursue us with violent temptations. The devil labors to strangle the new-born soul with temptation! When the first buddings and blossoms of grace begin to appear, the devil would nip the tender buds with the sharp blasts of temptation.

The devil tempts, when he finds us idle. When the fowler sees a bird sit still and perch upon the tree, he shoots it. Just so, when Satan observes us sitting still, he shoots his fiery darts of temptation at us! "While men slept, his enemy sowed tares;" so, while men sleep in sloth, Satan sows his tares. When David was walking idly on the housetop—the devil set a tempting object before him—and it prevailed!

Satan tempts when he sees us weakest. He breaks over the hedge—where it is lowest.

Satan tempts us—when we are alone; as he came to Eve when her husband was away, and she the less able to resist his temptation. Satan's policy is to give his poison privately—when no one is by to reveal the treachery. He is like a cunning suitor who woos the daughter when the parents are from away home.

When we are alone—the devil comes wooing with a temptation, and hopes to have the match struck!

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God's will

"May Your will be done" Matthew 6:10

(1) God's will is SOVEREIGN. He has a supreme right and dominion over His creatures—to dispose of them as He pleases. A man may do with his own, as he desires. "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own?" Matthew 20:15. A man may cut his own timber as he will. God may do with us as He sees good. He is not accountable to any creature for what He does. "He gives no account of any of His matters." Job 33:13. Who shall call God to account? Who is higher than the highest? Ecclesiastes 5:8. What man or angel dare summon God to his bar? God will take an account of our conduct towards Him—but He will give no account of His conduct towards us. He has an absolute jurisdiction over us, as

a sovereign—to do with us whatever He pleases. We are not to dispute with God—but to submit to God.

God's will is WISE. He knows what is conducive to the good of His people. "The Lord is a God of judgment," that is, He is able to judge what is best for us; therefore rest in His wisdom and acquiesce in His will. Isaiah 30:18. Did we but study how wisely He steers all occurrences, and how He often brings us to heaven by a cross wind—it would much quiet our spirits, and make us say, "May Your will be done." God's will is guided by wisdom. Should He sometimes let us have our will—we would undo ourselves! Did He let us carve for ourselves—we would choose the worst piece! Lot chose Sodom because it was well watered—but God rained fire upon it!

God's will is JUST. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Genesis 18:25. God's will is the rule and measure of justice. The wills of men are corrupt, therefore unfit to give law; but God's will is a holy and unerring will. Psalms 97:2. God may cross us—but He cannot wrong us. He may be severe with us—but never unjust.

(4) God's will is GOOD and GRACIOUS. It promotes our interest. If it is His will to afflict us, He shall make us say at last, "it was good for us, that we were afflicted." His flail shall only thresh off our husks. That which is against our will, shall not be against our profit.

(5) God's will is IRRESISTIBLE. We may oppose it—but we cannot hinder it. The rising up of our will against God—cannot stop the execution of His will. "Who has resisted His will?" Romans 9:19. Who can stop the sun in its movements? Who can hinder the progress of God's will? Therefore it is in vain to contest with God. His will shall take place! There is no way to overcome Him—but by lying at His feet.

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A voluminous mercy

"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him!" Psalms 32:1-2

Forgiveness of sin is a choice blessing, as it lays a foundation for other mercies. It is a leading mercy. Forgiveness of sin never comes alone—but has other spiritual blessings attending it. Those whom God pardons—He sanctifies, adopts, and crowns!

Forgiveness of sin is a voluminous mercy, it draws the silver link of grace, and the golden link of glory after it. God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss.

God forgives—not because we are worthy—but because He is gracious. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." Exodus 34:6. He forgives out of his mercy. Acts of pardon are acts of grace.

What worthiness was there in Paul before conversion? He was a blasphemer, and so he sinned against the first table of the law; he was a persecutor, and so he sinned against the second table of the law; but free grace sealed his pardon! "I obtained mercy," that is, "I was all bestrewed with mercy!" 1 Timothy 1:13.

What worthiness was in the woman of Samaria? She was ignorant. John 4:22. She was immoral; John 4:18. She was morose and churlish, she would not give Christ so much as a cup of cold water; John 4:9. "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" What worthiness was here? Yet Christ overlooked all, and pardoned her ingratitude; and though she denied him water out of the well—yet He gave her the water of life.

Free grace does not find us worthy—but makes us worthy!

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Some have two hells

Suffering Christian—remember that this is all the hell you shall have. Some have two hells. They suffer now in their body and conscience, which is one hell; and they will suffer eternally in another hell to come, in unquenchable fire!

Judas had two hells—but a child of God has but one. Lazarus had all his hell here on earth; he was full of sores—but had a convoy of angels to carry him to heaven when he died. Say, then, "Lo! if this is the worst I shall have, if this is all my hell—I will patiently acquiesce. May Your will be done."

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The red lines of Christ's blood

To forgive sin, is for God to blot it out. "I am He who blots out your transgressions." Isaiah 43:25. The Hebrew word, to blot out, alludes to a creditor

who, when his debtor has paid him, blots out the debt, and gives him an acquittance. Just so, when God forgives sin, He blots out the debt, He draws the red lines of Christ's blood over it, and so crosses the debt-book!

To forgive sin, is for God to cast our sins into the depths of the sea, which implies burying them out of sight, that they shall not rise up in judgment against us. "You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Micah 7:19. God will throw them in, not as cork which rises again—but as lead which sinks to the bottom!

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Five things which are never satisfied

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

Learn to be contented with the allowance which God gives. If we have the necessities of life—let us rest satisfied. We pray but for bread, "Give us our daily bread." We must not pray for superfluities—but for bread which supports life. Though we have not so much as others—so full a crop—so rich an estate; yet if we have daily bread, let us be content. "If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that." 1 Timothy 6:8.

Most people are herein faulty. Though they pray that God would give them bread, as much as He sees is expedient for them—yet they are not content with His allowance—but greedily covet more, and with the daughters of the horse-leech, cry, "Give! Give!" Proverbs 30:15. This is a vice naturally engrafted in us.

Many pray Agur's first prayer, "Give me not poverty," but few pray his last prayer, "Give me not riches." Proverbs 30:8. They are not content with "daily bread," but have the cancer of covetousness; they are still craving for more.

There are, says Agur, four things which are never satisfied: the grave, the barren womb, the thirsty desert, the blazing fire. And I may add a fifth thing—the heart of a covetous man. Proverbs 30:15.

Covetousness is called, "The root of all evil." 1 Timothy 6:10. The Greek word for covetousness, signifies an inordinate desire of getting. Covetousness is not only in getting riches unjustly—but in loving them inordinately!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ To bite the hand that feeds us!

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

God gives to His very enemies. Who will send provisions to his enemies? Men spread nets for their enemies, God spreads a table. The dew drops on the thistle, as well as the rose; the dew of God's bounty drops upon the worst.

God puts bread in the mouths that are opened against Him. Oh, the royal bounty of God! "The goodness of God endures continually." Psalms 52:1. He puts jewels upon swinish sinners, and feeds them every day.

If all is a gift, see the odious ingratitude of men who sin against their giver! God feeds them, and they fight against him; he gives them bread, and they give him affronts. How vile is this! Thus do

sinner deal ungratefully with God! They not only forget His mercies—but abuse them. "When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery." Jeremiah 5:7. Oh, how horrid is it to sin against a bountiful God—to bite the hand that feeds us! How many make a dart of God's mercies—and shoot at Him! He gives them wit, and they serve the devil with it!

He gives them strength, and they waste it among harlots! He gives them bread to eat, and they lift up the heel against Him. "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." Deuteronomy 32:15. They are like Absalom, who, as soon as David his father kissed him, plotted treason against him. 2 Samuel 15:10. They are like the mule that kicks the mother after she has given it milk.

Those who sin against their giver, and abuse God's royal favors—the mercies of God will come in as witnesses against them. What is smoother than oil? But if it is heated, what more scalding? What is sweeter than mercy? But if it is abused, what more dreadful? It turns to fury!

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A humbling consideration

"Give us this day our daily bread." Matthew 6:11

See our own poverty and indigence. We all live upon God's alms and upon free gifts. All we have is from the hand of God's royal bounty. We have nothing but

what He gives us out of His storehouse. We cannot have one bit of bread—but from God.

This is a humbling consideration.

Is all a gift? Then we are to seek every mercy from God by prayer. "Give us this day." The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit unless shaken by the hand of prayer.

If all is a gift—then take notice of God's goodness. There is nothing in us that can deserve or requite God's kindness; yet such is the sweetness of His nature, that he gives us rich provision, and feeds us with the finest of the wheat. God has rained down golden mercies upon us.

God is never weary of giving. The honeycomb of God's bounty is still dropping. God delights in giving. "He delights in mercy." Micah 7:18. As the mother delights to give the child the breast, God loves that we should have the breast of mercy in our mouth.

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It might have been the burning lake!

"I will correct you in measure." Jeremiah 30:11

Suffering Christian, there is no condition so bad, but it might be worse. When it is dusk, it might be darker. God does not make our cross so heavy as He might—He does not stir up all His anger. Psalms 78:38. He does not put so many nails in our yoke—so much wormwood in our cup—as He might.

Does God chastise your body? He might torture your conscience. Does he cut you short? He might cut you off. The Lord might make our chains heavier. Is it a burning fever? It might have been the burning lake! Does God use the pruning knife to lop you? He might bring His axe to hew

you down! Do the waters of affliction come up to the ankles? God might make them rise higher; nay, he might drown you in the waters! God uses the rod when He might use the scorpion!

Remember—that your case is not so bad as others, who are always upon the rack, and spend their years with sighing. Psalms 31:10. Have you a gentle illness?

Others cry out of the severe pain of cancer. Do you bear the wrath of men? Others bear the wrath of God. You have but a single trial; others have several of them mingled together. God shoots but one arrow at you, He shoots a shower of arrows at others. We are apt to say, "Never has any suffered like we do!" Was it not worse with Lazarus, who was so full of sores that the dogs took pity on him—and licked his sores! Nay, was it not worse with Christ, who lived poor—and died cursed! It is in kindness that God deals not so severely with us, as with others.

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The drop of sorrow

Sometimes affliction is preventive. God, by His afflictive stroke—would prevent some sin. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was to prevent his being lifted up in pride. Affliction is sometimes sent for the punishing of sin, at other times for the prevention of sin.

Prosperity exposes to much evil. It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling—and a full estate without sinning. God's people know not how much they are indebted to their afflictions. They might have fallen into some scandalous sin—had not God set a hedge of thorns in their way to stop them. What kindness is this! God lets us fall into sufferings—to prevent falling into sinful snares!

God by affliction, would prevent damnation! We are corrected in the world, "that we should not be condemned with the world." 1 Corinthians 11:32.

A man, by falling into briers, is saved from falling into the river. Just so, God lets us fall into the briers of affliction, that we may not be drowned in perdition! It is a great favor when a less punishment is inflicted, to prevent a greater punishment. Is it not mercy in the judge, when he lays some light penalty on the prisoner, and saves his life? So it is, when God lays upon us light affliction, and saves us from wrath to come.

As Pilate said, "I will punish him—and let him go." Just so, God punishes his children and lets them go, frees them from eternal torment. What is the drop

of sorrow which the godly taste—compared to that sea of wrath the wicked shall be drinking to all eternity? Oh! what kindness is here!

Say then, "Lord, do as it seems good in your sight—may Your will be done."

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Corrosives to eat out the proud flesh

"Man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward." Job 5:7

Troubles arise like sparks out of a furnace.

The present state of life is subject to afflictions. Man comes into the world with a cry—and goes out with a groan!

Afflictions are some of the thorns which the earth brings forth. We may as well think to stop the sun in its swift motion—as put a stop to troubles. The consideration of a life exposed to troubles and sufferings, should make us say with patience, "May Your will be done."

It is vain to quarrel with instruments. Wicked men are but a rod in God's hand! "O Assyria, the rod of My anger." Isaiah 10:5. Whoever brings an affliction—God sends it! The consideration of this should make us say, "May Your will be done." What God does, He sees a reason for. This believed, would rock the heart quiet. Shall we mutiny at that which God does? We may as well quarrel with God's works of creation—as with God's works of providence.

Consider that there is a necessity for affliction. "If need be, you are in heaviness." 1 Peter 1:6. It is needful that some things are kept in brine.

Afflictions are needful to keep us humble. Often there is no other way to have the heart low—but by being brought low. When Manasseh "was in affliction, he

humbled himself greatly." 2 Chronicles 33:12. Corrections are corrosives to eat out the proud flesh. "Remembering my misery, the wormwood and the gall; my soul is humbled in me." Lamentations 3:19-20. Shall not we quietly submit, and say, "Lord, I see there is a necessity for it. May Your will be done!"

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The Trojan horse

"Whatever a man sows, he will also reap." Galatians 6:7

We have brought our troubles upon ourselves; we have put a rod into God's hand to chastise us.

Christian, God lays your afflictive cross on you—but it is of your own making. If you reap a bitter crop of affliction—it is what you yourself have sown. The cords which pinch you, are of your own twisting.

If children will eat green fruit—they may blame themselves if they are sick. Just so, if we eat the forbidden fruit—no wonder that we feel it gripe.

Sin is the Trojan horse which lands a multitude of afflictions upon us. "Your own conduct and actions have brought this upon you. This is your punishment. How bitter it is! How it pierces to the heart!" Jeremiah 4:18. This should make us patiently submit to God in affliction, and say, "May Your will be done." We have

no cause to complain of God; it is nothing but what our sins have merited. "Have not you procured this unto yourself?" Jeremiah 2:17. The afflictive cross, though it be of God's laying—is of our making. Say, then, as Micah (Micah 7:9), "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him."

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It will heat hell the hotter!

"May Your will be done." Matthew 6:10

We pray that we may do God's will actively, subscribe to all His commands, and lead holy lives. This is the sum of all true religion. The knowledge of God's will is not enough, without doing it. If one had a system of divinity in his head; if he had "all knowledge," yet, if obedience were lacking, his knowledge were lame, and would not carry him to heaven. Knowing God's will may make a man admired—but it is doing it, which makes him blessed! Knowing God's will without doing it—will not crown us with eternal happiness.

Knowing without doing God's will—will make the case worse. It will heat hell the hotter! "That servant who knows his master's will and does not do what his master wants, will be beaten with many blows." Luke 12:47 Many a man's knowledge is a torch to light him to hell. You who have knowledge of God's will, but do not obey it, wherein do you excel the devil? It is improper to call such Christians, who are knowers of God's will—but not doers of it. "May Your will be done."

The Word of God is not only a rule of what we are to believe—but what we are to practice.

To be employed in doing God's will, is the highest honor that a mortal creature is capable of. Obedience to Christ's precepts do not burden us—but adorn us!

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They feared hell would be full

"They weary themselves to commit iniquity." Jeremiah 9:5

Sinners hire themselves out in the devil's service. What pains some men take to satisfy their unclean lusts! They waste their estates, wear the shameful marks of their sin about them, and visit the harlot's house, though it stands the next door to hell. "Her house is the way to hell." Proverbs 7:27. The devil blows the horn and men run speedily to hell—as if they feared hell would be full before they could get there.

Do the ungodly take all these pains for hell—and shall not we take pains for the kingdom of heaven? Oh, let it never be said, that the ungodly serve the devil better—who rewards them only with fire and brimstone; than we serve God—who rewards us with a glorious kingdom!

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No hive for drones!

"Making the most of your time time." Ephesians 5:16

Time spent unprofitably is not time lived—but time lost. Those who have misspent their golden hours, they have not only been slothful servants—but wasteful servants.

"Warn those who are idle." 1 Thessalonians 5:14

The devil himself cannot be charged with idleness. He "walks about." 1 Peter 5:8.

An idle person is a cipher in the world; and God writes down no ciphers in the book of life! Heaven is no hive for drones! An idle person is an easy target for temptation. When the bird sits still upon the bough—it is in danger of being shot. Just so, when one sits still in sloth—the devil shoots him with a temptation. Standing water putrefies.

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The lottery!

"I have observed something else in this world of ours. The fastest runner doesn't always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn't always win the battle. The wise are often poor, and the skillful are not necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don't always lead successful lives." Ecclesiastes 9:11

We cannot make sure of life. When we breathe out—we don't know whether we shall ever breathe in again! How many are taken away suddenly! "Why, you do

not even know what will happen tomorrow! What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes away!" James 4:14

We cannot make sure of riches. It is uncertain whether we shall ever get them. The world is like a lottery—in which everyone is not sure to get a prize. If we do get riches, we are not sure to keep them! "Riches make themselves wings—they fly away!" Proverbs 23:5. But even if men should keep their estates a while—death strips them of all! When death's gun goes off—away flies the estate! "We didn't bring anything with us when we came into the world, and we certainly cannot carry anything with us when we die!" 1 Timothy 6:7

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God." 1 Timothy 6:17

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When others were at their amusements The more pains we have taken for heaven—the sweeter heaven will be when we come there. When a farmer has long been working hard—it is pleasant to enjoy the fruit of his labors. Just so, when in heaven, we shall remember our former

zeal and earnestness for the kingdom—which will sweeten heaven.

It will add to the joy of heaven, for a Christian to ponder, "Such a day I spent in examining my heart. Such a day I was weeping for sin. When others were at their amusements—I was at prayer. And now, have I lost anything by my devotion? No! My tears are wiped away, and the wine of paradise cheers my heart. I now enjoy Him whom my soul loves! I am possessed of a glorious kingdom! My labor is over—but my joy remains forever!"

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A bowl which will soon be broken!

"What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes away!" James 4:14

Time passes on apace! Our time is very short and uncertain. It will not be long, "before the silver cord of life snaps and the golden bowl is broken." Ecclesiastes 12:6. The skull wherein the brains are enclosed, is a bowl which will soon be broken!

Our soul is in the body, as the bird in the shell, which soon breaks—and the bird flies out. The shell of the body is soon broken—and the soul flies into eternity! We know not whether we shall live another day. Before we hear another sermon-bell ring, our death-bell may ring. Our life runs as a swift stream—into the ocean of eternity!

Brethren, if our time is so short and transient; if the candle of life is so soon consumed, or perhaps blown out by an unexpected death—how should we use all our strength, that we may obtain the kingdom of glory! If time is so short, why do we waste it on trivial things—and neglect the "one thing needful"? A man who has a great work to be done, and but one day for doing it, needs to work hard. We have a great work to do, we are striving for a kingdom, and alas! we are not certain of one day to work in!

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Like ants on an anthill

"Seek first the kingdom of God." Matthew 6:33

First in time—before all things; and first in affection—above all things.

The great purpose for which God sent us into the world, is to prepare for this heavenly kingdom.

Great care is taken for securing worldly things. To see people laboring for the earth, like ants on an anthill, would make one think that this was the only purpose they were here for. But, alas! what is all this, compared to the kingdom of heaven? When we enjoy worldly things, peace and plenty, and have our baskets full, we should say to ourselves, "this is not the kingdom we are to look after, this is not heaven!"

It is wisdom to remember our great purpose in life. It will be but sad upon a death-bed, for a man to find he has busied himself about trifles, played with a feather, and neglected the main thing he came into the world for.

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He is either watching or fighting!

"Be faithful unto death—and I will give you a crown of life." Revelation 2:10

"It is the one who has endured to the end, who will be saved." Matthew 10:22

Is there such a thing as persevering until we come to heaven? That anyone endures to the kingdom of heaven, is a wonder, if you consider:

(1) What a great mass of sin and corruption is mingled with grace. Grace is apt to be stifled, as the coal to be choked with its own ashes. Like a spark in the sea, it is a wonder that grace is not quenched.

(2) The implacable malice of Satan. He envies that we should have the kingdom of heaven, when he himself is cast out. It cuts him to the heart, to see a piece of dust and clay made a bright star in glory—and he himself a demon of darkness! He will work with all the powers of hell—to hinder us from the kingdom! Satan spits his venom, shoots his fiery darts, raises a storm of persecution; yes, and prevails against some.

(3) The blandishments of riches. The young man in the gospel went very far—but he had rich possessions, and these golden weights hindered him from the kingdom. Luke 18:23. Jonathan pursued the battle until he came to the honeycomb, and then he stood still. 1 Samuel 14:27. Many are forward for heaven, until they taste the sweetness of the world; but when they come to the honeycomb, they stand still, and go no further. "The gain of money is the ruin of the soul!" Those who have escaped the rocks of gross sins—have been wrecked upon the golden sands!

(4) It is a wonder that any hold out in grace, and do not tire in their march to heaven, if you consider the difficulty of the Christian's work. He has no time to waste. He is either watching or fighting! While he does one duty, he seems to cross another. He must come with holy boldness to God in prayer—yet must serve him with fear. He must mourn for sin—yet rejoice. He must be contented—yet covet the greater gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:31. He must condemn men's impieties—and yet reverence their authority. What difficult work is this!

(5) To this I might add, the evil examples all around us, which are so attractive, that we may say that the devils have come among us in the likeness of men!

What a wonder is it that any soul perseveres until he comes to the kingdom of heaven! But great as the wonder is, there is such a thing as perseverance.

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The sugared bait men bite at

"They sing with tambourine and harp. They make merry to the sound of the flute." Job 21:12

If you would not miss the heavenly kingdom, take heed of the delights and pleasures of the flesh. Soft pleasures harden the heart. Many people cannot endure a serious thought—but are for comedies and romances; they play away their salvation. "Men are caught by pleasure, as fish by the hook." Pleasure is the sugared bait men bite at—but there is a hook under it!

The pleasures of the world, keep many from the pleasures of paradise! Many while hunting after the sweet pleasures of the world, lose the kingdom of heaven. "It is one of the worst sights—to see a sinner go laughing to hell."

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How dreadful is that!

"The wicked shall be turned into hell!" Psalms 9:17

He who leaps short of the bank—falls into the river; such as come short of heaven—fall into the river of fire and brimstone!

"Who knows the power of Your anger?" Psalms 90:11

What will it be to have mountains of God's wrath thrown upon the soul? When the bitter vials of God's wrath are poured out, damnation follows. Dives cries out, "I am tormented in this flame." Luke 16:24. In hell there is not a drop of

mercy. In hell there is no oil of mercy to assuage the sufferings of the damned, nor anything to appease God's wrath. How dreadful is that!

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Today you will be with Me in paradise!

"I desire to depart—and be with Christ." Php 1:23

There is a speedy passage from death to glory; no sooner is the soul of a believer divorced from the body—but it immediately goes to Christ! The saints

shall enter upon the kingdom of glory, immediately after death. Before their bodies are buried—their souls shall be crowned. "Absent from the body—present with the Lord." Quick as a wink—and they shall see God. It will not only be a blessed change to a believer—from a desert to a paradise, from a bloody battle to a victorious crown—but a sudden change. No sooner did Lazarus die—but he had a convoy of angels to conduct his soul to the kingdom of glory. You who now are full of bodily diseases, with scarcely a pain-free day, saying, "My life is spent with grief!" (Psalms 31:10); be of good comfort, you may be eternally happy before you are aware! Before another week or month is over—you may be in the kingdom of glory, and then all tears shall be wiped away! "I assure you: Today you will be with Me in paradise!" Luke 23:43

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Eternal pleasures!

"Enter into the joy of your Lord." Matthew 25:23

This kingdom of heaven exceeds all earthly kingdoms in joy and pleasure, and is therefore called paradise. For delight, there are all things to cause pleasure; there is the water of life clear as crystal; there is the honeycomb of God's love dropping.

Separation from sin shall be complete—and then joy follows. There can be no more sorrow in heaven—than there is joy in hell.

God gives the saints a taste of joy here; but the fullness of joy is kept until they come to heaven. Not only the physical parts, the outward senses, the eye, ear, taste; but the heart of a glorified saint shall be filled with joy. The understanding, will, and affections—are such a triangle as none can fill, but the Trinity. There must needs be infinite joy—where nothing is seen but beauty; where nothing is tasted but love!

"You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand!" Psalms 16:11

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Satan cannot put his cloven foot in there

The kingdom of heaven excels in unity. All the inhabitants agree together in love. Love will be the perfume and music of heaven. As love to God will be intense—so to the saints. As perfect love casts out fear—so it casts out envy and discord. Those Christians who could not live quietly together on earth (which was the blemish of their profession) in heaven shall be all love! The fire of strife shall cease! There shall be no vilifying, or censuring one another, or raking into one another's sores—but all shall be tied together with the heart-strings of love. Satan cannot put his cloven foot in there, to make divisions. There shall be perfect harmony and concord, and not one jarring string in the saints' music. It were worth dying—to be in that kingdom!

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Too much pleasure is a pain!

The glories of heaven are constantly exhilarating and refreshing. There is fullness—but no excess. Worldly comforts, though sweet—yet grow stale in time. A down-bed pleases a while—but soon we are weary and must rise. Too much pleasure is a pain! But the glory of heaven never surfeits or nauseates; because, as there are all imaginable rarities, so every moment fresh delights spring from God into the glorified soul.

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There is no bitter ingredient

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Revelation 21:4

The glories of heaven are pure and unmixed. The streams of paradise are not muddied. All are clear—all are delightful. Heaven's gold has no alloy. There is no bitter ingredient in that glory—all are as pure as the honey which drops

from the comb. There, the rose of Sharon grows without thorns. There is—  
ease without pain, honor without disgrace, life without death.

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If we go to the creature for happiness

The glory of heaven, is that it is satisfying. "With You is the fountain of life." Psalms 36:9. How can they not be satisfied—who are at the fountainhead? "When I awake, I shall be satisfied with Your likeness," that is, when I awake in the

morning of the resurrection, having some of the beams of Your glory shining in me—I shall be satisfied. Psalms 17:15.

The creature says, concerning satisfaction, "It is not in me." Job 28:14. If we go to the creature for happiness, we go to the wrong place.

Heaven's glory alone, is commensurate to the vast desires of an immortal soul. A Christian bathing in these rivers of pleasures, cries out in divine ecstasy, "I have enough!" The soul is never satisfied until it has God for its portion, and heaven for its haven. Dissatisfaction arises from some defect.

But God is an infinite good, and there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

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Most delicious

The kingdom of heaven implies a glorious fruition of all good. Had I as many tongues as hairs on my head, I could not fully describe this. It is a place where there is no lack of anything. It is called "the excellent glory." 2 Peter 1:17. I might as well measure the skies, or drain the ocean—as set forth the glory of this kingdom. The kingdom of heaven is above all hyperbole. Were the sun ten thousand times brighter than it is, it could not parallel the luster of this kingdom. I can but give you the shadowings of it. Do not expect to see it in all its orient colors—until you are mounted above the stars!

We shall have an immediate communion with God Himself, who is the inexhaustible sea of all happiness. This, divines call "the beatific vision." The psalmist triumphed in the enjoyment he had of God in this life. "Whom have I in heaven but You?" Psalms 73:25. If God, enjoyed by faith, gives so much comfort to the soul—how much more when He is enjoyed by immediate vision! Here we see God darkly; but in the kingdom of heaven we shall see Him "face to face." 1 Corinthians 13:12.

To see and enjoy God will be most delicious; in him are beams of majesty, and affections of mercy. God has all excellencies centered in Him—the good in which are all good things. If one flower should have the sweetness of all flowers—how sweet would that flower be!

All the beauty and sweetness which lies scattered in the creature—is infinitely to be found in God. To see and enjoy Him, therefore, will ravish the soul with delight! We shall have this sweet communion with Him—He shall be "all in all;" light to the eye, manna to the taste, and music to the ear. 1 Corinthians 15:28.

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We were troubled on every side

"We were troubled on every side." 2 Corinthians 7:5

In this life we are subject to troubles and fluctuations. We are like a ship on the sea having the waves beating on both sides; but in the kingdom of heaven there is rest. Hebrews 4:9. How welcome is rest to a weary traveler! When death cuts asunder the string of the body—the soul, as a dove, flies away, and is at rest! This rest is when the saints shall lie on Christ's bosom—that hive of sweetness, that bed of perfume.

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The world is like a painted landscape

In the kingdom of heaven—we shall be freed from the vanity and dissatisfaction of the creature. Take things most pleasing and from which we promise ourselves most contentment, still, of the spirit and essence of them all—we shall say, "Behold, all was vanity!" Ecclesiastes 2:11.

God never did, nor ever will—put a satisfying virtue into any creature. In the sweetest music the world makes, either some string is lacking, or out of tune. But in the kingdom of heaven, we shall

be freed from these dissatisfactions.

The world is like a painted landscape, in which you may see gardens with fruit trees, beautifully drawn—but you cannot enter them. But into the joys

of heaven, you may enter. "Enter into the joy of your Lord." The soul shall be satisfied while it bathes in those rivers of pleasure at God's right hand. "I will

be fully satisfied, for I will see You face to face!" Psalms 17:15

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Christ's lily is among thorns

In the kingdom of heaven—we shall be freed from all society with the wicked. Here we are sometimes forced to be in their company. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar." Psalms 120:5. Kedar was Ishmael's son, whose children dwelt in Arabia; they were a profane, barbarous people.

Here the wicked are still raising persecutions against the godly, and crucifying their ears with their oaths and curses. Christ's lily is among thorns; but in the heavenly kingdom there shall be no more any pricking brier. "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will weed out of His kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil." Matthew 13:41.

As Moses said, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord! For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall never see them again forever!" So will God say, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God; these your enemies, that vex and molest you, you shall never see them again forever!" Exodus 14:13. At that day, God will separate the precious from the vile; Christ will thoroughly purge his threshing floor; he will gather the wheat into the garner; and the wicked, which are the chaff—shall be blown into hell!

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When the kingdom of grace is set up

We may know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts, by having a metamorphosis or change wrought in the soul—which is called the "new creation." The faculties are not new—but there is a new nature. When the kingdom of grace is set up, there is . . .

light in the mind,

order in the affections,

pliability in the will,

tenderness in the conscience.

Those who can find no such change of heart, and are the same as they were—as vain, as earthly, as unclean as ever—have no evidence of God's kingdom of grace in them.

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Remainders of corruption

The best of saints have remainders of corruption. In the regenerate, though the dominion of sin is taken away—yet the life of sin is prolonged for a season. What pride was there in Christ's own disciples, when they strove who should be greatest! The life of sin will not be quite stopped, until death.

The Lord is pleased to let the in-dwelling of sin continue—to humble His people, and make them prize Christ more. Because you find corruptions stirring, do not therefore presently unsaint yourselves, and deny the kingdom of grace to be come into your souls. That you feel sin—is an evidence of spiritual life; that you mourn for sin—is a fruit of love to God; that you have a combat with sin—argues antipathy against it. Those sins which you once wore as a crown on your head, are now as fetters on the leg. Is not all this from the Spirit of grace in you? Sin is in you, as poison in the body, which you are sick of, and use all

Scripture antidotes to expel.

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They pluck the crown from His head

It is a sign that the kingdom of grace has come into the heart, when it reigns there by universal obedience. Hypocrites would have Christ to be their Savior—but they pluck the crown from His head—and will not have Him rule. But he who has the kingdom of God within him, submits cheerfully to every command of God. He will do what God will have him do. He will be what God will have him be. He puts a blank paper into God's hand, and says, "Lord, write what you will—I will obey."

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I hate every false way!

"I hate every false way!" Psalms 119:104 Hatred is implacable. Anger may be reconciled—hatred cannot. A true Christian has antipathy and opposition against every known sin. A gracious soul not only forsakes sin—but hates sin. He not only hates sin for hell—but he hates it as hell, as being contrary to God's holiness and happiness.

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Hypocrites are like the snake

Many have begun some reformation, therefore now they surely think that the kingdom of grace has come into their hearts! But a man may leave his oaths and drunkenness—and still be in love with sin. He may leave his sin—out of fear of hell, or because it brings shame and poverty—but still his heart goes after it,

"They set their heart on their iniquity" (Hosea 4:8); as Lot's wife left Sodom—but still her heart was in Sodom.

Hypocrites are like the snake which casts off her skin, but keeps her poison. They keep the love of sin, as one who has long been an unsuccessful suitor to

another, yet still he has a hankering love to her.

It may be a partial reformation. He may leave off one sin and live in another. He may refrain from drunkenness, and live in covetousness. He may refrain from swearing, and live in the sin of slandering. One devil may be cast out—and another as bad may come in its place!

A man may forsake gross sins—but have no reluctance against heart sins—such as proud, lustful thoughts. Though he dams up the stream, he lets the fountain alone!

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You know not where you are going!

"For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:13-14 Every natural man, is in the kingdom of darkness.

(1) He is under the darkness of ignorance. "Having the understanding darkened." Ephesians 4:18. Ignorance is a black veil drawn over the mind. Men by nature may have a deep understanding in the things of the world—and yet be

ignorant of the things of God. Nahash the Ammonite would make a covenant with Israel to thrust out their right eyes. 1 Samuel 11:2. Since the fall, only our left eye remains—that is—a deep insight into worldly matters. But our right eye is thrust out—we have no saving knowledge of God. Some things we know by nature; but nothing as we ought to know. 1 Corinthians 8:2. Ignorance draws the curtains round about the soul. 1 Corinthians 2:14.

2. Natural man is under the darkness of pollution. Hence sinful actions are called "works of darkness." Romans 13:12. Pride and lust darken the glory of the soul. A sinner's heart is a dark conclave—which looks blacker than hell.

(3) A natural man is under the darkness of misery; he is exposed to divine vengeance; and the sadness of this darkness is, that men are not sensible of it. They are blind—yet they think they see! The darkness of Egypt was such thick darkness as "might be felt." Exodus 10:21. Men by nature are in thick darkness. But here is the misery—the darkness cannot be felt! They will not believe they are in the dark—until they are past recovery!

See what the state of nature is—a "kingdom of darkness," and it is a bewitching darkness. "Men loved darkness rather than light." John 3:19. Darkness of sin leads to "eternal chains in darkness." Jude 1:6. What comfort can such take in earthly things? The Egyptians might have food, gold, silver; but they could take but little comfort in them, while they were in such darkness as might be felt. Just so, the natural man may have riches and friends to delight in—yet he is in the kingdom of darkness, and how dead are all these comforts!

You who are in the kingdom of darkness, do not know where you are going. As the ox is driven to the shambles—but knows not where he is going; so the devil is driving you before him to hell—but you know not where you are going! Should you die in your natural state, while you are in the kingdom of darkness—blackness of darkness is reserved for you! "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever!" Jude 1:13.

Be sensible of your dark, damned estate—that you have not one spark of fire to give you light! Go to Christ to enlighten you! "Christ shall give you light;" He will not only bring your light to you—but open your eyes to see it. Ephesians 5:14.

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May Your kingdom come

"May Your kingdom come." Matthew 6:10

A twofold kingdom is meant.

(1) The kingdom of grace, which God exercises in the consciences of His people. This is God's lesser kingdom. When we pray, "May Your kingdom come," we pray that the kingdom of grace may be set up and increased in our hearts.

(2) We pray also, that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may, in God's good time, be translated into it.

These two kingdoms of grace and glory, differ not in nature—but in degree only.

The kingdom of grace is nothing but the beginning of the kingdom of glory.

The kingdom of grace—is glory in the seed; the kingdom of glory—is grace in the flower.

The kingdom of grace—is glory in the daybreak, and the kingdom of glory—is grace in the full meridian.

The kingdom of grace—is glory militant, and the kingdom of glory—is grace triumphant. There is such an inseparable connection between these two kingdoms, grace and glory, that there is no passing into the one but by the other.

At Athens there were two temples, a temple of virtue and a temple of honor; and there was no going into the temple of honor—but through the temple of virtue.

Just so, the kingdoms of grace and glory are so closely joined together, that we cannot go into the kingdom of glory—but through the kingdom of grace. Many people aspire after the kingdom of glory—but never look after grace; but these two, which God has joined together, may not be put asunder.

The kingdom of grace leads to the kingdom of glory!

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He has bent His bow

"Hallowed be Your name." Matthew 6:9

Men in this age sin at that rate, as if either they did not believe there were a hell, or as if they feared hell would be full before they could get there! "We live in the dregs of time," wherein the common sewer of wickedness runs. Physicians call it cachexia, when there is no part of the body free from distemper. England has such a disease. "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint." Isaiah 1:5. As black vapors rising out of the earth cloud and darken the sun, so the sins of

people in our age, like hellish vapors—cast a cloud upon God's glorious name. O that our eyes were rivers of water of holy tears, to see how God's name, instead of being hallowed, is polluted and profaned! May we

not justly fear some heavy judgments on this account?

Can God put up with our affronts any longer? Can He endure to have His name reproached? Will a king allow his crown-jewels to be trampled in the dust? Do we not see the symptoms of God's anger? Do we not see His judgments hovering over us? Surely God is whetting His sword, He has bent His bow,

and is preparing his arrows to shoot!

To show how base the wicked are in God's esteem, He compares them to things most vile—to chaff (Psalms 1:4); to dross (Psalms 119:119); to the filth that foams out of the sea (Isaiah 57:20). As God vilely esteems such as do not hallow His name, so He sends them to a vile place at last! Vagrants are sent to the house of correction; and hell is the house of correction to which the wicked are sent when they die!

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Death is but going to your Father!

"Our Father in heaven." Matthew 6:9

Death is but going to your Father! Well might Paul say, "death is yours!" 1 Corinthians 3:22. Death is your friend—which will carry you home to your Father! How glad are children when they are going home! It was Christ's comfort at death that he was going to His Father. "I am leaving the world—and am going to the Father." John 16:28. "I ascend unto My Father." John 20:17. If God is our Father, we may with comfort, at the day of death, resign our souls into His hand. Thus did Christ. "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit." Luke 23:46. If a child has any jewel, he will in time of danger put it into his father's hands, where he thinks it will be kept most safe; so the soul, which is our richest jewel, we may resign at death into God's hands, where it will be safer than in our own keeping. "Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit." What a comfort it is, that death carries a believer to his Father's house, where are delights unspeakable and full of glory! Death is a triumphant chariot, to carry every child of God to his Father's mansion-house!

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I have everything I need

"Those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing." Psalms 34:10.

God is sometimes pleased to keep His children on hard fare—but it is good for them. As sheep thrive best on short pasture—so God sees that too much may not be good for His people; plenty might breed surfeit. God sees it good sometimes, to diet His children, and keep them light—that they may run the heavenly race the better.

God's children sometimes see the world's emptiness, that they may acquaint themselves more with Christ's fullness. If God sees it to be good for them to have more of the world—they shall have

it! He will not let them lack any really good thing.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need." Psalms 23:1

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The cup of affliction

"I will correct you, in measure." Jeremiah 30:11

This He will do two ways. It shall be in measure—for the kind. He will not lay upon us more than we are able to bear. 1 Corinthians 10:13. He knows our frame. Psalms 103:14. He knows we are not steel or marble, therefore will deal gently—He will not over-afflict. As the wise physician, who knows the temper of the body, will not give too strong a medicine for the body, nor give one grain too much; so God, who is not only the great Physician—but has the affections of a loving father, will not lay too heavy burdens on His children.

God will correct in measure—for duration; He will not let the affliction lie too long. "I will not contend forever." Isaiah 57:16. Our heavenly Father will love forever—but He will not contend forever. The torments of the damned are forever. "The smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever." Revelation 14:11. The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath; but God's children only taste of the cup of affliction.

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He puts a finger upon the scar!

"Our Father in heaven." Matthew 6:9

Since God is our Father—He will take notice of the least good He sees in His children. If there is but a sigh for sin—He hears it. "My groaning is not hidden

from You." Psalms 38:9. If there is but a penitential tear which comes out of the eye—He sees it. "I have seen your tears." Isaiah 38:5. If there is but a good intention, He takes notice of it. "Since it was your desire to build a temple for My name, you have done well to have this desire." 1 Kings 8:18.

God takes notice of the least spark of grace in His children. "Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." 1 Peter 3:6. The Holy Spirit does not mention Sara's

unbelief, or laughing at the promise. He puts a finger upon the scar—and only takes notice of the good that was in her.

More—that good which the saints scarcely take notice of in themselves, God in a special manner observes. "I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink. Then the righteous will answer Him—Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink?" Matthew 25:35, Matthew 25:37. They as it were, overlooked and disclaimed their own works of charity! But Christ takes notice of them, "I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat."

What comfort is this! God spies the least good in His children! He can see a grain of corn, hidden under much chaff. He can see a little grace, hidden under much corruption!

Those duties which we ourselves censure—He will crown. When a child of God looks over his best duties, he sees so much sin cleaving to them—that he is confounded. "Lord," he says, "there is more sulphur than incense, in my prayers." But for your comfort, if God is your Father, He will crown those duties which you yourselves censure. He sees there is sincerity in the hearts of His children. Though there may be many defects in the services of His children, He will not cast away their offering.

An earthly father kindly receives a letter from his young child—though there are blots and bad spelling in it. What blottings are there in our holy things! Yet our Father in heaven accepts them. "It is my child!" God says, "I will look upon him, through Christ—with a merciful eye!"

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What a miracle of mercy is this!

"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!" 1 John 3:1

See the amazing goodness of God, that He is pleased to enter into the sweet relation of a Father to us. He had no need not to adopt us. He did not need a son; but we needed a Father!

He showed His power in being our Maker; He showed His mercy in being our Father!

When we were enemies, and our hearts stood out as garrisons against God—He conquered our stubbornness, and made us His children! He wrote His name, and put His image upon us—and bestowed a kingdom of glory on us! What a miracle of mercy is this!

See the deplorable case of the wicked! They cannot say, "Our Father in heaven." They may say, "Our Judge," but not "Our Father." They fetch their pedigree from hell—"You are of your father—the devil." John 8:44. Such as are unclean and worldly—are the vile brood of the old serpent—and it would be blasphemy for them to call God their Father! God is not their Father! He disclaims all kindred with them. The wicked, dying in their sins, can expect no mercy from God! "I never knew you! Depart from Me—you who work iniquity." Matthew 7:23.

But will God be a Father to me—who has been such a great sinner?

If you will now at last seek God by prayer, and break off your sins—He has the affections of a Father for you, and will never cast you out! When the prodigal arose and went to his father, "his father had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him!" Though you have been a prodigal, and spent all upon your lusts—yet if you will give a bill of divorce to your sins, and flee to God by repentance, know that He has the affections of a Father! He will embrace you in the arms of His mercy, and seal your pardon with a kiss!

What though your sins have been heinous? Your wound is not so broad—as the plaster of Christ's blood! The sea covers great rocks. Just so, the sea of God's compassion can drown your great sins! Therefore be not discouraged! Go to God—resolve to cast yourself upon his Fatherly compassion! "No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you as clean

as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you as white as wool!" Isaiah 1:18

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Our father, who is in hell

"Our Father, who is in heaven" Matthew 6:9

All cannot say, "Our Father." The Jews boasted that God was their Father. "We have one Father, even God." John 8:41. Christ tells them their true pedigree, "You are of your father—the devil!" They should have said, "Our father, who is in hell."

How may we know, that God is our Father?

We know God is our Father, by having the leading of the Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God—they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14.

God's Spirit does not only quicken us in regeneration; but leads us on until we come to the end of our faith. As the Israelites had the cloud and pillar of fire to go before them, and be a guide to them—so God's Spirit is a guide to go before us—and lead us into all truth—and counsel us in all our doubts—and influence us in all our actions. None can call God their Father, but such as have the leading of the Spirit. Such as are led by a spirit of envy, lust, and avarice—are not led by the Spirit of God! It would be blasphemy for them to call God their Father! They are led by the spirit of Satan, and may say, "Our father, who is in hell!"

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Resembling Him

"Our Father, who is in heaven" Matthew 6:9

How may we know, that God is our Father?

By having a childlike disposition, which is seen in resembling Him. The child is his father's picture. Herein God's adopted children and man's adopted children differ. A man adopts one for his son and heir, who does not at all resemble him; but whoever God adopts for His child—is like Him; he not only bears his heavenly Father's name—but His image! He who has God for his Father—resembles Him in holiness, which is the glory of the Godhead. Exodus 15:11. The holiness of God is the intrinsic purity of His essence. He who has God for his Father, partakes of the divine nature; though not of the divine essence—yet of the divine likeness. As the seal sets its print and likeness upon the wax, so he who has God for his Father, has the print and image of His holiness stamped upon him.

Wicked men desire to be like God hereafter in glory—but do not want to be like Him here in grace. They say that God is their Father—yet have nothing of God to be seen in them. They are not only without His image, but hate it.

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## The Lord's Prayer (excerpts) cont'd2

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The Lord's Prayer (excerpts) cont'd A gracious thaw in the heart

"Our Father, who is in heaven" Matthew 6:9

How may we know, that God is our Father?

By having a childlike disposition, which is seen in melting in tears for SIN, as a child weeps for offending his father.

It is a sign that God is our Father—when the heart of stone is taken away—and there is a gracious thaw in the heart; and it melts into tears for sin. He who has a childlike heart, mourns for sin in a spiritual manner—as it is sin he grieves for, as it is an act of pollution.

Sin deflowers the virgin soul.

Sin defaces God's image.

Sin turns beauty into deformity.

Sin is the plague of the heart. 1 Kings 8:38.

A child of God mourns for the defilement of sin; sin has to him a blacker aspect than hell.

He who has a childlike heart, grieves for sin, as it is an act of enmity towards God. Sin is diametrically opposed to God. It is called walking contrary to God.

Sin does all it can to spite God; if God is of one mind—sin will be of another. Sin would not only unthrone God—but strike at His very being! If sin could help it—God would no longer be God!

A childlike heart grieves for this; "Oh! that I should have so much enmity in me, that my will should be no more subdued to the will of my heavenly Father!" This springs a leak of godly sorrow.

A childlike heart weeps for sin, as it is an act of ingratitude. It is an abuse of God's love; it is taking the jewels of His mercies—and making use of them to sin. To sin against kindness, makes sin crimson. Nothing so melts a childlike heart in tears, as sins of unkindness. "Oh, that I should sin against the blood of a Savior—and the affections of a Father!" This opens a vein of godly sorrow—and makes the heart bleed afresh.

Certainly it evidences God to be our Father, when He has given us a childlike frame of heart—to weep for sin as it is sin, an act of pollution, enmity and

ingratitude. A wicked man may mourn for the bitter fruit of sin—but only a child of God can grieve for the odious nature of sin!

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Two loadstones

If you would be preserved from sin—get your hearts fired with love to God. Love has great force in it; it is "as strong as death;" it breaks the league between the heart and sin.

Meditate on the astonishing love of God to you. What a wonder of love was it—for God to give His Son out of His bosom—and lay such a jewel to pawn for our redemption! The glories of God's beauty, and the magnitude of His love, like two loadstones, draw our love to God! If we love Him, we shall not sin against Him. He who loves his friend, will not by any means displease him.

I have read of four men meeting together, who asked one another what it was that kept them from sinning. The first one said, "the fear of hell." The second said, "the joys of heaven." The third said, "the odiousness of sin." The fourth said, "that which keeps me from sin, is love to God. Shall I sin against so loving a God? Shall I abuse His love?" Love to God is the best curbing-bit to keep from sin.

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." John 14:15

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Pandora's box

Sin is worse than affliction. There is more evil in a drop of sin—than in a sea of affliction!

Sin brings all harmful things—it has death and hell in its womb.

Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, and wastes the body. The poets feigned that when Pandora's box was opened, it filled the world full of diseases. When Adam broke the box of original righteousness, it caused all the evils in the world! Sin is the evil which sets the world on fire. Sin turned the angels out of heaven—and Adam out of paradise! The sword of God's justice lies quietly in the scabbard—until sin draws it out and sharpens it!

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Galloping to hell!

Some go at a slower pace to hell—but such as run themselves into temptation,

go galloping to hell! We have too many of these in this debauched age, who, as if they thought they could not sin fast enough—tempt the devil to tempt them!

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The picture of him who would murder you

"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!" 1 Peter 5:8 There is a story of a Jew who would have poisoned Luther—but a friend sent to Luther the picture of the Jew, warning him to take heed of such a man when he saw him; by which means Luther recognized the murderer, and escaped his hands. I have taught you the subtle devices of Satan in tempting; I have shown you the picture of him who would murder you. Being forewarned, I beseech you to take heed of the murderer!

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Death surprised them!

Satan persuades men to delay repenting and turning to God. This temptation is the devil's draw-net by which he draws millions to hell; it is a dangerous temptation.

"Sin is a sweet poison." The longer poison lies in the body—the more deadly it is. Just so, by delay of repentance, sin strengthens, and the heart hardens. The longer ice freezes, the harder it is to be broken. Just so, the longer a man freezes in impenitency, the more difficult it will be to have his heart broken. When sin has settled in the heart—it is not easily driven away.

Besides, the danger of delaying repentance appears in this—that life is hazardous, and may suddenly expire. What security have you, that you shall live another day? Life is made up of a few flying minutes. Life is a candle, which is soon blown out. "What is your life? It is even a vapor." James 4:14. How dangerous therefore is it to procrastinate and put off turning to God by repentance! Many now in hell purposed to repent—but death surprised them!

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He can stand your small shot

Satan labors to keep us from serious meditation. He will let men profess, or pray and hear in a formal manner—which does him no hurt and them no good.

He can stand your small shot, if you do not put in this bullet of meditation. He does not care how much you hear preaching or read Scripture—but how much you meditate. Meditation is chewing the cud—it makes the Word digest and turn to nourishment; it is the bellows of the affections. The devil is an enemy to this.

Satan will thrust in worldly business—something or other to keep men off from holy meditation.

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This hellish serpent!

"The devil has come down unto you, having great wrath." Revelation 12:12

Satan is a malicious revengeful spirit! This hellish serpent is swelled with the poison of malice!

Satan envies man's happiness. To see a clod of dust so near to God; and himself, once a glorious angel, cast out of the heavenly paradise—makes him pursue mankind with inveterate hatred. If there is anything this infernal spirit can delight in—it is to ruin souls, and to bring them into the same damnation as himself! He is enraged, and lays his snares and shoots his darts against us!

This malice of Satan in tempting, must needs be great, if we consider that Satan, though full of torment, should tempt others. One would think that he would scarcely have a thought but of his own misery; and yet such is his rage and malice that, while God is punishing him—he is tempting others!

His malice is great, because though knowing his tempting men to sin will increase his own torment in hell—he will not leave it off! Every temptation makes his chain heavier and his fire hotter—and yet he will tempt!

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Wonder and astonishment!

How shall we know that our sins are pardoned?

Christ's blood quenches the flames of hell. The pardoned sinner is a great weeper. The sense of God's love melts his heart. "That free grace should ever look upon me—that such crimson sins as mine should be washed away in Christ's blood—makes my heart melt and my eyes drop with tears!"

Never did any man read his pardon with dry eyes. "She stood at his feet weeping." Luke 7:38. Mary's tears were more precious to Christ than her ointment; her eyes, which before sparkled with lust, now became a fountain, and washed Christ's feet with her tears! She was a true penitent, and had her pardon. "Therefore, I say, her sins, which are many, are forgiven;" Luke 7:47.

Pardon of sin, will make the hardest heart soften, and cause the stony heart to bleed. Is it thus with us? Have we been dissolved into tears for sin? God seals

His pardons upon melting hearts.

When God shows a man how near he was falling into hell, how that gulf is passed, and all his sins are pardoned, he is amazed, and cries out, "Who is a God like You, who pardons my iniquity! That God should pardon me and pass by others—that I should be taken and others left—fills my soul with wonder and astonishment!"

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When God seems most unkind

It should make us cheerfully submit to God's will, to consider that in every afflictive path of providence, we may see His footstep of kindness. There is kindness in affliction, when God seems most unkind.

There is kindness in affliction—in that God deals with us as His children. "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons." Hebrews 12:7. God has one

Son without sin—but no son without stripes! Affliction is a badge of adoption. Shall not we then say, "Lord, there is kindness in the cross, you treat us as your children. The rod of discipline is to fit us for the inheritance. May Your will be done."

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Holy complaint

"May Your will be done." Matthew 6:10

We pray that we may have grace to submit to God's will patiently, in whatever He inflicts.

A Christian may be deeply sensible of affliction, and yet patiently submit to God's will. We ought not to be Stoics, insensible and unconcerned with God's dealings; as if we were begotten of a stone. Christ was sensible when He sweat great drops of blood—but there was submission to

God's will. "Nevertheless, not as I will—but as you will." We are bid to humble ourselves under God's hand,

which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it.

A Christian may weep under an affliction, and yet patiently submit to God's will. God allows tears. Grace makes the heart tender; weeping gives vent to sorrow; grief is poured out in tears.

A Christian may complain in his affliction, and yet be submissive to God's will. "I cry out to the Lord; I plead for the Lord's mercy. I pour out my complaints before Him and tell Him all my troubles." Psalms 142:1-2. We may, when under affliction, tell God how it is with us. Shall not the child complain to his father when he is afflicted? Holy complaint may agree with patient submission to God's will; but though we may complain to God, we must not complain of God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Do it as the angels do it

"May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

We do God's will as it is done in heaven, when we do it as the angels do it.

We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels—when we do it regularly, without wavering.

We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels—when we do it entirely—when we do all God's will.

We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels—when we do it sincerely, and without pretense.

We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels—when we do it willingly, and without complaint. Though we cannot serve God perfectly, we serve Him willingly.

We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels—when we do it fervently, and without slackness.

We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels—when we give God the best in every service.

We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels—when we do it readily and swiftly.

We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels—when we do it constantly.

"May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

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He is weary of his weariness

A hypocrite may be able to do some right things—yet he has no delight in duty; he does it rather out of fear of hell than love to God. When he does God's will it is against his own will. Cain brought his sacrifice—but grudgingly; his worship was rather a task than an offering, rather penance than a sacrifice; he did God's will—but against his own will.

We must be carried upon the wings of delight in every duty. We must read and hear the Word with delight. "Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your

Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16. A pious soul goes to the Word as to a feast, or as one would go with delight to hear music.

Not that a truly regenerate person is always in the same cheerful temper of obedience; he may sometimes find an indisposition and weariness of soul—but his weariness is his burden; he is weary of his weariness; he prays, weeps, uses all means to regain the alacrity and freedom in God's service that he was accustomed to have.

To do God's will acceptably, is to do it willingly. Delight in duty is better than duty itself. The musician is not commended for playing long—but well; it is not how much we do—but how much we love. "O, how I love Your law!" Psalms 119:97. Love perfumes obedience, and makes it go up to heaven as a sweet incense.

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Rivers of pleasure!

"May Your kingdom come." Matthew 6:10

We are compassed with a body of sin—should we not long to shake off this viper? We are in a valley of tears—is it not better to be in a glorious kingdom?

Here we are combating with Satan—should we not desire to be called out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, that we may receive

a victorious crown? O, breathe after the heavenly kingdom! We should anxiously desire to be always sunning ourselves in the light of God's countenance.

Think what it will be—to be forever with the Lord! Are there any sweeter smiles or embraces than His! Is there any bed so soft as Christ's bosom! Is there any such joy as to have the golden banner of Christ's love displayed over us! Is there any such honor as to sit upon the throne with Christ! O, then, long for the

celestial kingdom!

God will be a deep sea of blessedness, and the glorified saints shall forever bathe themselves in this ocean! "And they will reign forever and ever!" Revelation 22:5. Heaven will make amends for all.

O let this be our support under all the calamities and sufferings in this life. What a vast difference is there between a believer's sufferings, and his reward! "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18. For a few tears—we shall receive

rivers of pleasure!

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" Luke 12:32

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A jewel which few Christians wear

If you hope to shortly enter the glorious kingdom of heaven—be content though you have but a little of the world!

Contentment is a rare thing, it is a jewel which few Christians wear.

Were you to take an estimate of a man's estate, how would you value it? By what he has in his house, or by his land? Perhaps he has little money or jewels in his house—but he owns vast lands—there lies his worth.

A believer has but a little oil in the cruse, and meal in the barrel—but he has a title to the glorious kingdom of heaven—and may not this satisfy him?

If a man who lived here in England, had a great estate beyond the seas, and perhaps had no more money at present but just to pay for his voyage, he is content; he knows when he comes to his estate he shall have money enough. Just so, you who are a believer have a kingdom befallen you; though you have but little in your purse—yet if you have enough for your voyage to heaven, it

is sufficient. God has given you grace, which is the fore-crop, and will give you glory, which is the after-crop; and may not this make you content?

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Drops the holy oil into the ear

"If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even if someone rises from the dead!" Luke 16:31

If the Word preached does not work upon men, nothing will; not judgment, nor miracles; no, not though one should rise from the dead!

If you would get to heaven—attend to the Word preached. It was by the ear—by our first parents listening to the serpent, that we lost paradise. And it is by the ear—by hearing of the Word, that we get to heaven. "Hear, and your soul shall live." God sometimes in the preaching of the Word—drops the holy oil into the ear, which softens and sanctifies the heart! The Word preached is called the "ministry of the Spirit," because the Spirit of God makes use of the engine to convert souls.

If you intend to get to heaven, be swift to hear: for "faith comes by hearing." Peter let down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls! If you would have heaven's door opened to you—wait at the posts of wisdom's door.

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The tongue

Every member of the body is infected with sin, as every branch of wormwood is bitter; but "the tongue is full of deadly poison." James 3:8. Some care not what they say in their anger; they will censure, slander, and wish evil to others. How can Christ be in the heart—when the devil has taken possession of the tongue? Anger disturbs reason, it is a temporary insanity. Water, when

hot, soon boils over. Just so, when the heart is heated with anger, it soon boils over in fiery passionate speeches. Let those whose tongues are set on fire, take heed that they do not one day in hell desire a drop of water to cool them! Oh, if you would not miss the heavenly kingdom, beware of giving way to unbridled passions. Some say, "words are but wind;" but they are such a wind as may blow them to hell!

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We would be overwhelmed!

"You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand." Psalms 16:11

Nothing is lacking in heaven, which may complete the saints' happiness; for, wherein does happiness consist?

Is it in knowledge? We "shall know as we are known."

Is it in royal fare? We shall be at the "marriage supper of the Lamb."

Is it in rich apparel? We shall be "clothed in long white robes."

Is it in exquisite music? We shall hear the choir of angels singing.

Is it in dominion? We shall reign as kings, and judge angels.

Is it in pleasure? We shall enter into the joy of our Lord!

Would God give us a vision of heaven for a moment, as he did Stephen, who saw "the heavens opened" (Acts 7:56), we would be overwhelmed!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Christ's blood is the key which opens the gates of heaven!

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He still loves sin

"They set their heart on their iniquity." Hosea 4:8

A man may forsake his open sins—and yet come short of heaven. He may forsake gross sins, and yet have no reluctance to heart sins—such as pride, unbelief, malice and lust. Though he dams up the stream—he lets alone the fountain! Though he lops and prunes the branches—he does not strike at the root of it!

Though he leaves sin for fear of hell, or because it brings shame or poverty—yet he still loves sin; as if a snake would cast off her skin—and yet retain her poison!

It is but a partial forsaking of sin; though he leaves one sin—he lives in some other. Herod reformed very much. "He did many things," but he lived in incest. Mark 6:20. Some leave drunkenness, and live in covetousness. Some forbear swearing—and live in slandering. It is but a partial reformation, and so they miss of the kingdom of glory.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The earth swallowed them up!

"Their mind is on earthly things." Php 3:19

The world is the great Diana which the ungodly cry up; as if they would fetch happiness out of the earth which God has cursed; they labor for honor and riches. Like Korah's household, "The earth swallowed them up!" Numbers 16:32. It swallows up their time and thoughts. Like the serpent, they lick the dust!

Oh, what is there in the world that we should so idolize it; and Christ and heaven are to be disregarded as worthless? What has Christ done for you? Died for your sins! What will the world do for you? Can it pacify an angry conscience? Can it procure God's favor? Can it purchase for you a place in the kingdom of heaven? Oh, how are men bewitched with worldly profits and honors—that for these things they will forfeit paradise! It was a good prayer of Bernard, "Let us so possess temporal things, that we do not lose eternal things."

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These fools will lose heaven!

See the folly of those who, for vain pleasures and profits, will lose such a glorious kingdom!

Lysimachus, for a draught of water, lost his empire; just so, for a draught of sinful pleasure, these fools will lose heaven! We too much resemble our grandfather, Adam, who for an apple lost paradise! Many for trifles—will venture the loss of heaven. It will be an aggravation of the sinner's torment, to think how foolishly he was undone; that for a flash of impure joy—he lost an eternal

weight of glory! Would it not vex a king, to think he would lose his kingdom—for a feather! Such are those who let heaven go—for a song. This will make the devil insult at the last day, to think how he has befooled men, and made them lose their souls and their happiness for "lying vanities." If Satan could make good his brag, in giving all the glory and kingdoms of the world, it could not countervail the loss of the celestial kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven!

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A worm which is ever feeding at the root of our gourd!

"Neither can they die any more." Luke 20:36

This kingdom of heaven excels all others in healthfulness. Death is a worm which is ever feeding at the root of our gourd! Earthly kingdoms are often hospitals of sick people; but the kingdom of heaven is a most healthful climate. There are no physicians there—for there is no sickness there. In the heavenly climate, there are no ill vapors to breed diseases; but a sweet, aromatic healing

fragrance coming from Christ; all His garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia.

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Confined to a small cottage

The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in magnitude; it is of vast dimensions! Though the gate of the kingdom is narrow, and we must pass into it through the narrow gate of mortification—yet, when once we are in it, it is very large. Though there are an innumerable company of saints and angels—yet there is room enough for them all.

You who are now confined to a small cottage, when you come into the celestial kingdom, shall not be straitened for room. As every star has a vast orb

to move in, so it shall be with the saints, when they shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven.

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Living by faith

"I live by faith in the Son of God." Galatians 2:20.

The kingdom of grace flourishes in the heart, when a Christian has learned to live by faith. For a Christian to live on the promises, as a bee on the flower, and suck out the sweetness of them; to trust in God's heart—where we cannot trace His hand; to believe His love through a frown; to persuade ourselves, when He has the face of an enemy—that He has the heart of a Father; when we are

arrived at this, the kingdom of grace is flourishing in our souls.

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If there is either justice in heaven, or fire in hell

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap!" Galatians 6:7

If there is either justice in heaven, or fire in hell—the ungodly shall not be unpunished!

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Children's bread!

"Heirs of the promise." Hebrews 6:17.

A wicked man can lay claim to nothing in the Bible, but the curses! The promises are children's bread! They are the breasts of the gospel, milking out consolations! And who are to suck these breasts—but God's children? The promise of pardon is for them. "I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against Me." Jeremiah 33:8. The promise of healing is for them. Isaiah 57:19. The promise of salvation is for them. Jeremiah 23:6. The promises are the supports of faith; they are a Christian's cordial. Oh, the heavenly comforts which are distilled from the promises! Chrysostom compares the Scripture to a garden: the promises are the fruit trees which grow in this garden. A child of God may go to any promise in the Bible, and pluck comfort from it! He is an heir of all the promises!

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Until God teaches us

"Our Father in heaven." Matthew 6:9

Wherein lies the happiness, of having God for our Father?

"I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit." Isaiah 48:17

If God is our Father—He will teach us. What father will refuse to counsel his son? Does God command parents to instruct their children—and will not He instruct His children? "O God, you have taught me from my youth." Psalms 71:17. If God is our Father, He will give us the teachings of His Spirit.

"The natural man receives not the things of God, neither can he know them." 1 Corinthians 2:14. The natural man may have excellent notions in theology—but God must teach us to know the mysteries of the gospel after a spiritual manner. A man may see the figures upon a dial, but he cannot tell the time of day, unless

the sun shines. Just so, we may read many truths in the Bible—but we cannot know them savingly—until God by his Spirit shines upon our soul. God teaches

not only our ear—but our heart! He not only informs our mind—but inclines our will. We never learn anything—until God teaches us!

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It files off the ruggedness

"Our Father, who is in heaven" Matthew 6:9

How may we know, that God is our Father?

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Matthew 5:9

If God is our Father, we are of peaceable spirits. Grace infuses a sweet, amicable disposition. It files off the ruggedness of men's spirits; it turns the lion-like fierceness into a lamb-like gentleness. Those who have God to be their

Father, follow peace as well as holiness. God the Father is the God of peace, Hebrews 13:20: God the Son, is the Prince of peace, Isaiah 9:6: God the Spirit, is the Spirit of peace; Ephesians 4:3.

The more peaceable, the more like God. God is not the Father of those who are fierce and cruel—as if they had sucked the milk of a wolf! "The way of peace have they not known." These furies may not call God their Father, though they may call the devil their father!

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The key of heaven

Prayer is the key of heaven, and faith is the hand which turns it.

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