

# TREASURE FROM THOMAS WATSON

by Thomas Watson

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*A curated collection of excerpts from Thomas Watson's works highlighting themes of free grace, God's preserving mercy, and the danger believers would face without divine protection.*

18 Chapters

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## **00 Choice Excerpts from Thomas Watson**

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Choice Excerpts from the following books from Thomas Watson: A Divine Cordial Body of Practical Divinity The Beatitudes The Christian Soldier The Doctrine of Repentance The Duty of Self-Denial The Godly Man's Picture The Lord's Prayer The Mischief of Sin The Ten Commandments

## 01 A Divine Cordial

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A Divine Cordial

by Thomas Watson

CHOICE EXCERPTS

If God left us!

The sins of the ungodly are looking-glasses in which we may see our own hearts. Do we see a heinous, impious wretch? Behold a picture of our own hearts! Such would we be—if God left us! What is in wicked men's practice—is in our nature. Sin in the wicked—is like fire which flames and blazes forth. Sin in the godly—is like fire hid in the embers. Christian, though you do not break forth into a flame of scandalous sin—yet you have no cause to boast, for there is as much sin in the embers of your nature! You have the root of all sin in you, and would bear as hellish fruit as any ungodly wretch—if God did not either curb you by His power, or change you by His grace!

Why might not God have left you—to the same excess of wickedness? Think with yourself, O Christian—why should God be more merciful to you, than to another? Why should He snatch you, as a brand plucked out of the fire—and not him? How should this make you to

adore free grace! What the Pharisee said boastingly, we may say thankfully—"God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers, etc."

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

plague—how thankful are we, that God has preserved us from it! Much more when we see others under the power of Satan—how thankful we should be, that this is no longer our condition!

"For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, captives of various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful . . . ." Titus 3:3

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It is better to go to heaven with the few

"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose the easy way. But the gateway to life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it." Matthew 7:13-14

It is better to go to heaven with the few—than to hell in the crowd! We must walk in an opposite course to the people of the world.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A beast with a man's head!

Love to God is an expansion of soul, or the inflaming of the affections—by which a Christian breathes after God as the supreme and sovereign good.

"There is nothing on earth that I desire besides You." Psalms 73:25. The Christian loves God above all other objects. God is the quintessence of all good things; He is superlatively good. The soul admiring in Him that constellation of all excellencies—is carried out in love to Him in the highest degree. God, who is the chief of our happiness—must have the chief of

our affections. The creature may have the milk of our love—but God must have the cream! Though some drops of love may run to our kindred and friends—yet the full torrent must run out after Christ. Relations may lie on the bosom—but Christ must lie in the heart!

We set a high value upon God as being the most sublime and infinite good. We so esteem God, as that if we have Him—we do not care though we lack all other things. The stars vanish, when the sun appears. All creatures vanish in our thoughts, when the Sun of righteousness shines in His full splendor. The soul that loves God, rejoices in Him as in his treasure—and rests in Him as his center. The heart is so set upon God—that it desires no more.

We must love God more for what He is (His intrinsic excellencies)—than for what He bestows. True love is not mercenary. You need not hire a mother to love her child. Just so, a soul deeply in love with God needs not be hired by rewards. It cannot but love Him—for that luster of beauty which sparkles forth in Him!

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God." Romans 8:28

Despisers and haters of God—have no lot or part in this privilege. It is children's bread—it belongs only to those who love God.

This is a sharp reproof to those who do not love God, to such as have not a grain of love to God in their hearts—and are there such reprobates alive? He who does not love God—is a beast with a man's head! Oh wretch! Do you live upon God's bounty every day—yet not love Him! These are monsters in nature—devils in the shape of men! Let them read their doom: "If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed!" 1 Corinthians 16:22

How can he expect love from God—who shows no love to Him? Will God ever lay such a viper in His bosom—as casts forth the poison of malice and enmity against Him?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Temptations work for our good

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Even temptations are overruled for good, to the children of God. A tree which is shaken by the wind is more settled and rooted. Just so, the blowing of a temptation does but settle a Christian the more in grace.

Temptations are overruled for good in eight ways:

(1.) Temptation sends the soul to prayer. The more furiously Satan tempts, the more fervently the saint prays. The deer being shot with the dart—runs faster to the water. When Satan shoots his

fiery darts at the soul—it then runs faster to the throne of grace. When Paul had the messenger of Satan to buffet him, he says, "Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me" (2 Corinthians 12:8). That which makes us pray more, works for good.

(2.) Temptation to sin, is a means to keep from the perpetration of sin. The more a child of God is tempted—the more he fights against the temptation. The more Satan tempts to blasphemy, the more a saint trembles at such thoughts, and says, "Away from me, Satan!" When Joseph's mistress tempted him to lust—the stronger her temptation was, the stronger was his opposition. That temptation which the devil uses as a spur to sin—God makes a bridle to keep back a Christian from sin!

(3.) Temptation works for good—as it abates the swelling of pride. "To keep me from getting puffed up, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from getting proud!" (2 Corinthians 12:7). The thorn in the flesh was to puncture the puffing up of pride! Better is that temptation which humbles me—than that duty which makes me proud! Rather than a Christian shall be haughty minded—God will let him fall into the devil's hands awhile, to be cured of his swelling pride!

(4.) Temptation works for good—as it is a touchstone to try what is in the heart. The devil tempts—that he may deceive us; but God allows us to be tempted—that He may try us. Temptation is a trial of our sincerity. It argues that our heart is chaste and loyal to Christ—when we can look a temptation in the face, and turn our back upon it. Many have no heart to resist temptation. No sooner does Satan come with his bait—but they yield; like a coward who, as soon as the thief approaches, gives him his purse. But he is the valorous Christian, who brandishes the sword of the Spirit against Satan, and will rather die than yield. The valor and courage of a saint is never more seen than on a battlefield, when he is fighting the red dragon, and by the power of faith puts the devil to flight. That grace is tried gold, which can stand in the fiery trial, and withstand Satan's fiery darts!

(5.) Temptations work for good—as God makes those who are tempted, fit to comfort others in the same distress. A Christian must himself be under the buffetings of Satan, before he can speak a word in due season to him who is weary. Paul was well-versed in temptations. "We are very familiar with his evil schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:11). Thus he was able to acquaint others with Satan's cursed wiles (1 Corinthians 10:13). A man who has ridden over a place where there are bogs and quicksands—is the fittest to guide others through that dangerous way. He who has felt the claws of Satan, the roaring lion, and has lain bleeding under those wounds—is the fittest man to deal with one who is tempted. None can better discover Satan's subtle devices—than those who have been long in the fencing school of temptation.

(6.) Temptations work for good—as they stir up fatherly compassion in God to those who are tempted. The child who is sick and bruised—is most looked after. When a saint lies under the bruising of temptations, Christ prays, and God the Father pities. When Satan puts the soul into a fever, God comes with a cordial; which made Luther say, that "temptations are Christ's embraces," because He then most sweetly manifests Himself to the soul.

(7.) Temptations work for good—as they make the saints long more for heaven. There they shall be out of gunshot; heaven is a place of rest, no bullets of temptation fly there. The eagle which

soars aloft in the air, and sits upon high trees—is not troubled with the stinging of the serpent. Just so, when believers are ascended to heaven, they shall not be molested by the old serpent, the devil. In this life, when one temptation is over, another comes. This makes God's people wish for death—to call them off the battlefield where the bullets fly so quick—and to receive a victorious crown, where neither the drum nor cannon—but the harp and violin, shall be eternally sounding.

(8.) Temptations work for good—as they engage the strength of Christ. Christ is our Friend, and when we are tempted, He sets all His power working for us. "Since He Himself has gone through suffering and temptation, He is able to help us when we are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). If a poor soul was to fight alone with the Goliath of hell, he would be sure to be vanquished! But Jesus Christ brings in His auxiliary forces—He gives fresh supplies of grace. "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us!" (Romans 8:37). Thus the evil of temptation is overruled for our good.

Question. But sometimes Satan foils a child of God. How does this work for good?

Answer. I grant that, through the suspension of divine grace, and the fury of a temptation—a saint may be overcome; yet this foiling by a temptation shall be overruled for good. By this foil, God makes way for the augmentation of grace. Peter was tempted to self-confidence; he presumed upon his own strength; and Christ let him fall. But this wrought for his good—it cost him many a tear. "He went out, and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75). And now he grows less self-reliant. He dared not say he loved Christ more than the other apostles. "Do you love me more than these?" (John 21:15). He dared not say so—his fall into sin broke the neck of his pride!

The foiling by a temptation causes more circumspection and watchfulness in a child of God. Though Satan did before decoy him into sin—yet for the future he will be the more cautious. He will beware of coming within the lion's chain any more! He is now more vigilant and fearful of the occasions of sin. He never goes out without his spiritual armor—and he girds on his armor by prayer. He knows he walks on slippery ground, therefore he looks wisely to his steps. He keeps close sentinel in his soul, and when he spies the devil coming—he grasps his spiritual weapons, and displays the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16). This is all the hurt the devil does when he foils a saint by temptation—he cures him of his careless neglect; he makes him watch and pray more. When wild beasts get over the hedge and damage the grain—a man will make his fence the stronger. Just so, when the devil gets over the hedge by a temptation, a Christian will be sure to mend his fence; he will become more fearful of sin, and careful of duty. Thus the being worsted by temptation, works for good.

Objection. But if being foiled works for good, this may make Christians careless whether they are overcome by temptations or not.

Answer. There is a great difference between falling into a temptation, and running into a temptation. The falling into a temptation shall work for good—not the running into it. He who falls into a river is fit for help and pity—but he who desperately runs into it, is guilty of his own death. It is madness running into a lion's den! He who runs himself into a temptation is like king Saul—who fell upon his own sword.

From all that has been said, see how God disappoints the old serpent—by making his temptations turn to the good of His people. Luther once said, "There are three things which make a godly

man—prayer, meditation, and temptation." The wind of temptation is a contrary wind to that of the Spirit; but God makes use of this cross wind, to blow the saints to heaven!

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Charging God with wrongdoing

"It is the Lord's will. Let Him do what He thinks best." 1 Samuel 3:18

One who genuinely loves God, interprets all His dealings in the best sense. Though He afflicts sharply—the soul takes all well. This is the language of a gracious spirit: "My God sees what a hard heart I have, therefore He drives in one wedge of affliction after another—to break my heart. He knows how full I am of the cancer of covetousness, or the swelling of pride, or the fever of lust—therefore He gives me bitter remedies, to save my

life. This severe dispensation is either to mortify some corruption—or to exercise some grace. How good is God, who will not let me alone in my sins—but smites my body to save my soul!" Thus genuine piety puts a good gloss upon all God's afflictive dealings. It is Satan who makes us have high thoughts of ourselves, and hard thoughts of God. "Take away everything he has—and he will surely curse You to Your face!" Job 1:11

"Then Job fell to the ground in worship and said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.' In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing." Job 1:20-22

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Five sharp stings!

Many love sin, more than God. "They are haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They are forever inventing new ways of sinning." (Romans 1:30)

What is there in sin—that any should love it?

Sin is a debt. "Forgive us our debts" (Matthew 6:12). Sin is a debt which binds over to the wrath of God! And will you love sin? Does any man love to be in debt?

Sin is a disease. "The whole head is sick" (Isaiah 1:5). And will you love sin? Will any man hug a disease? Will he love his plague sores?

Sin is a pollution. The apostle calls it "filthiness" (James 1:21).

It is compared to leprosy and to poison of asps!

God's heart rises against sinners. "My soul loathed them!" (Zechariah 11:8).

Sin is a hideous monster. Lust makes a man brutish; malice makes him devilish! What is in sin to be loved? Shall we love deformity?

Sin is an enemy. It is compared to a "serpent". Sin has five sharp stings: shame, guilt, horror, death, damnation!

Will a man love that which seeks his death? Surely then it is better to love God than sin. God will save you—but sin will damn you! Is he not a fool—who loves damnation! But love to God will never let sin thrive in the heart. The love of God withers sin. The flower of love kills the weed of sin! How should we labor for that grace of love to God—which is the only corrosive to destroy sin!

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We shall leave this staff at heaven's door

Love is the most abiding grace. This will stay with us, when other graces take their farewell. In heaven we shall need no repentance—because we shall have no sin. In heaven we shall not need patience—because there will be no affliction. In heaven we shall need no faith—because faith looks at unseen things (Hebrews 11:1). Then we shall see God face to face; and where there is vision, there is no need of faith.

But when the other graces are out of date, love continues. And in this sense the apostle says that love is greater than faith or hope—because it abides the longest. "Love will last forever" (1 Corinthians 13:8). Faith is the 'staff' which we walk with in this life. "We walk by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:7). But we shall leave this staff at heaven's door—and only 'love' shall enter. Thus love carries away the crown from all the other graces. Love is the most long-lived grace—it is a blossom of eternity. How should we strive to excel in this grace, which alone shall live with us in heaven, and shall accompany us to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

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A little honey in its mouth—but it has wings!

It is better to love God, than the world.

If you set your love on worldly things, they will not satisfy. You may as well satisfy your body with air—as your soul with earth! If the globe of the world were yours—it would not fill your soul. Will you set your love on that which will never give you contentment? Is it not better to love God? He will give you that which shall satisfy your soul to all eternity!

If you love worldly things, they cannot remove trouble of mind. If there is a thorn in the conscience—all the world cannot pluck it out. King Saul, being perplexed in mind, all his crown jewels could not comfort him (1 Samuel 28:15). But if you love God, He can give you peace when nothing else can. He can apply Christ's blood to refresh your soul. He can whisper His love by the Spirit, and with one smile scatter all your fears and disquiets.

If you love the world, you love that which may keep you out of heaven. "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23). Prosperity, to many, is like a large sail to a small boat, which quickly overturns it. By loving the world, you love that which will endanger you. But if you love God, there is no fear of losing heaven. He will be a Rock to hide you—but not to hurt you. By loving Him, we come to enjoy Him forever.

You may love worldly things—but they cannot love you in return. You love gold and silver—but your gold cannot love you in return. You give away your love to the creature—and receive no love back. But if you love God, He will love you in return. "If any man loves Me, My Father will love him,

and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23). God will not be behindhand in love to us. For our drop of love to Him—we shall receive an ocean of His love!

While you love the world, you love that which is infinitely below the worth of your souls. When you lay out your love upon the world, you hang a pearl upon a swine—you love that which is inferior to yourself. As Christ speaks in another sense of the birds of the air, "Are you not much better than they?" (Matthew 6:26), so I say of worldly things, Are you not much better than they? You love a fair house, or a beautiful garment—are you not much better than they? But if you love God, you place your love on the most noble and sublime object—you love that which is better than yourselves. God is better than the soul, better than angels, better than heaven!

You may love the world, and receive hatred for your love. Would it not vex one, to lay out money upon a piece of ground which, instead of bringing forth grain or fruit, should yield nothing but nettles? Thus it is with all earthly things—we love them, and they prove nettles to sting us! We meet with nothing but disappointment. But if we love God, He will not return hatred for love. "I love those who love Me" (Proverbs 7:17). God may chastise His children—but He cannot hate them. Every believer is part of Christ, and God can as well hate Christ, as hate a believer.

You may over-love the creature. You may love wine too much, and silver too much; but you cannot love God too much. It is our sin that we cannot love God enough. How weak is our love to God! If we could love God far more than we do—yet it can never be proportionate to His worth; so there is no danger of excess in our love to God.

You may love worldly things—and they die and leave you. Riches take wings! Relations drop away! There is nothing here abiding. The creature has a little honey in its mouth—but it has wings! It will soon fly away. But if you love God, He is "a portion forever" (Psalms 73:26). As He is called a Sun for comfort, so a Rock for eternity. Thus we see, that it is better to love God than the world.

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A sea of sin—and not a drop of sorrow!

One sign of genuine love to God—is grief for sin. Where there is love to God—there is a grieving for our sins of unkindness against Him. A child who loves his father, cannot but weep for offending him. The heart which burns in love—melts in tears. "Oh! that I should abuse the love of so dear a Savior! Shall I give Him more gall and vinegar to drink? How disloyal and hypocritical have I been! How have I grieved His Spirit, trampled upon His royal commands, slighted His blood!"

This opens a vein of godly sorrow, and makes the heart bleed afresh. "Peter went out, and wept bitterly!" That Peter should deny Christ after he had received such amazing love from Him—this broke his heart with grief! "He went out, and wept bitterly!"

By this, let us test our love to God. Do we shed the tears of godly sorrow? Do we grieve for our unkindness against God, our abuse of His mercy, our non-improvement of the talents which He has given us? How far are they from loving God—who sin daily, and their hearts never smite them! They have a sea of sin—and not a drop of sorrow! They are so far from being troubled, that they make merry with their sins. "When you engage in your wickedness, then you rejoice!" (Jeremiah 11:15). Oh wretch! Did Christ bleed for sin—and do you laugh at it!

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The daughter helps to destroy the mother

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Afflictions work for good to the godly, as they are destructive to sin. Sin is the 'mother', affliction is the 'daughter'; the daughter helps to destroy the mother.

Sin is like the tree which breeds the worm; and affliction is like the worm that eats the tree.

There is much corruption in the best heart; affliction does by degrees work it out, as the fire works out the dross from the gold, "The Lord did this to purge away his sin." (Isaiah 37:9)

What if we have more of the rough file—if we have less rust! Afflictions carry away nothing but the dross of sin. Afflictions are the medicines which God uses to cure our spiritual diseases. Afflictions cure . . .the swelling of pride, the fever of lust, the cancer of covetousness.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The chain which fastened Jesus to the cross!

"Because of His great love for us." Ephesians 2:4

Love made Jesus suffer for us. Love was the chain which fastened Jesus to the cross! "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail." Lamentations 3:22

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Glittering sins!

Our best works are but glittering sins!

"We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away." Isaiah 64:6

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Monuments of mercy

Admire and adore God's free grace in saving you—that God should pass over so many, that He should pass by the wise and noble, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you! That He should take you out of a state of vassalage, from grinding the devil's mill—and should set you above the princes of the earth, and call you to inherit the throne of glory! Fall upon your knees, break forth into a thankful triumph of praise! Let your hearts be ten stringed instruments, to sound forth the memorial of God's saving mercy. There are none so deep in debt to free grace—as you are; and none should be so high mounted upon the pinnacle of thanksgiving. Say as the sweet singer; "I will extol You, O God my King, every

day will I bless You, and I will praise Your name forever!" (Psalms 145:1-2). Those who are monuments of mercy—should be trumpets of praise! O long to be in heaven, where your thanksgivings shall be purer and shall be raised a note higher!

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The idol of self-righteousness

"Not having my own righteousness" (Php 3:9).

He whose heart God has touched by His Spirit, lays down the idol of self-righteousness at Christ's feet, for Him to tread upon. The true Christian denies not only sinful self—but righteous self. He becomes moral and pious—but he does not trust to his morality or piety. Noah's dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety.

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God calls us to glory and virtue

"In His kindness God called you to His eternal glory." 1 Peter 5:10

This effectual call is a GLORIOUS call. We are called to the enjoyment of the ever blessed God. It is as if a man were called out of a prison—to sit upon a throne! Curtius writes of one, who while digging in his garden, was called to be king. Thus God calls us to glory and virtue (2 Peter 1:3) First to virtue, then to glory. At Athens there were two temples, the temple of Virtue, and the temple of Honor; and no man could go to the temple of Honor—but through the temple of Virtue. Just so, God calls us first to virtue, and then to glory.

What is the glory among men, which most so hunt after—but a feather blown in the air? What is it, compared to the weight of eternal glory? God would have us part with nothing

for Him—but that which will damn us if we keep it. He has no design upon us—but to make us happy. He calls us to salvation, He calls us to a heavenly kingdom! Oh, how should we then, with Bartimeus, throw off our ragged coat of sin, and follow Christ when He calls!

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He opens the heart!

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

This is an inward and effectual call, when God wonderfully overpowers the heart, and draws the will to embrace Christ. God, by the outward call, blows a trumpet in the ear; by the inward call, He opens the heart, as He did the heart of Lydia (Acts 16:14). The outward call may bring men to a profession of Christ—the inward call brings them to a possession of Christ. The outward call curbs a sinner—the inward call changes him!

See our deplorable condition before we are called—

We are in a state of bondage. Before God calls a man, he is the devil's slave. He is at the command of Satan, as the donkey is at the command of the driver.

We are in a state of darkness. "You were once darkness" (Ephesians 5:8) Darkness is very disconsolate. A man in the dark is full of fear, he trembles every step he takes. Darkness is dangerous. He who is in the dark may quickly go out of the right way, and fall into rivers or

whirlpools. Just so, in the darkness of ignorance, we may quickly fall into the whirlpool of hell.

We are in a state of impotency. "When we were without strength" (Romans 5:6). We had no strength to resist a temptation, or grapple with a corruption. Sin cut the lock where our strength lay (Judges 16:20). Nay, there is not only impotency—but obstinacy, "You always resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51). Besides indisposition to holiness, there is opposition to holiness.

We are in a state of pollution. "I saw you polluted in your blood" (Ezekiel 16:6). The mind coins only earthly thoughts; the heart is the devil's forge, where the sparks of lust fly.

We are in a state of damnation. We are born under a curse. The wrath of God abides on us (John 3:36).

This is our condition before God is pleased by a merciful call to bring us near to Himself, and free us from that misery in which we were before engulfed.

God effectually calls His people by His Spirit. The Word is the instrumental cause of our conversion, the Spirit is the efficient cause of our conversion. The ministers of God are only the pipes and organs; it is the Spirit blowing in them, which effectually changes the heart. "While Peter spoke, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word" (Acts 10:44) It is not the farmer's industry in ploughing and sowing, which will make the ground fruitful, without the early and latter rain. Just so, it is not the seed of the Word that will effectually convert, unless the Spirit puts forth His sweet influence, and drops as rain upon the heart. Therefore the aid of God's Spirit is to be implored, that He would put forth His powerful voice, and awaken us out of the grave of unbelief. If a man knocks at a gate of brass, it will not open; but if he comes with a key in his hand, it will open. Just so, when God, who has the key of David in His hand (Revelation 3:7) comes, He opens the heart, though it be ever so fast locked against Him!

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A crown which is unfading!

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God." Romans 8:28

If we love God, everything in the world shall conspire for our good. We know not what fiery trials we may meet with—but to those who love God, all things shall work for good. Those things which work against them, shall work for them; their cross shall make way for a crown! Every crosswind shall blow them to the heavenly port!

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined—what God has prepared for those who love Him!" 1 Corinthians 2:9

The eye has seen rare sights, the ear has heard sweet music; but eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor can the heart of man imagine—what God has prepared for those who love Him! Such glorious rewards are laid up that, as Augustine says, "faith itself is not able to comprehend them!" God has promised a crown of life to those who love Him (James 1:12). This crown encircles within it, all blessedness—riches, and glory, and delight, and it is a crown which is unfading! 1 Peter 5:4

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## Prize their gold above God

One sign of genuine love to God, is crucifixion to the world. He who is a lover of God—is dead to the world. "The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Galatians 6:14). That is, "I am dead to the honors and pleasures of the world."

He who is in love with God is not much in love with anything else. The love of God, and ardent love of the world—are incompatible. "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15) Love to God swallows up all other love—as Moses' rod swallowed up the Egyptian rods.

If a man could live as high as the sun—what a small point would all the earth be. Just so, when a man's heart is raised above the world in the admiring and loving of God—how poor and diminutive are these things below! They seem as nothing in his eye. Test your love to God by this.

What shall we think of those who never have enough of the world? They have the cancer of covetousness, thirsting insatiably after riches: "Who pant after the dust of the earth!" (Amos 2:7). "Never talk of your love to Christ," says Ignatius, "when you prefer the world before the Pearl of great price!" Are there not many such, who prize their gold above God? If they have a good farm—they care not for the water of life. They will sell Christ and a good conscience for money. Will God ever bestow heaven upon those who so basely undervalue Him, preferring glittering dust before the glorious Deity?

What is there in the earth, that we should so set our hearts upon it? The devil makes us look upon it through a magnifying glass! The world has no real intrinsic worth; it is but paint and deception!

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## He never thinks of God

The first sign of genuine love to God—is the musing of the mind upon God. He who is in love—his thoughts are ever upon the object of his love. He who loves God is ravished and transported with the contemplation of God. "When I awake, I am still with You!" Psalms 139:18 God is the treasure, and where the treasure is—there is the heart.

By this we may test our love to God. What are our thoughts most upon? Can we say we are ravished with delight, when we think on God? Have our thoughts gotten wings? Are they fled aloft? Do we contemplate Christ and glory? Oh, how far are they from being lovers of God—who scarcely ever think of God! "God is not in all his thoughts" Psalms 10:4. A sinner crowds God out of his thoughts. He never thinks of God—unless with horror, as the prisoner thinks of the judge!

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## How can we glorify God?

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory." 1 Corinthians 10:31

## How can we glorify God?

(1.) We glorify God—when we aim at His glory—when we make Him the first in our thoughts, and the end of our life. As all the rivers run into the sea, and all the lines meet in the center—so all our actions should terminate and center in God!

(2.) We advance God's glory—by being fruitful in grace. "Herein is my Father glorified—that you bring forth much fruit" (John 15:8). Barrenness reflects dishonor upon God. We glorify God when we grow . . . in beauty as the lily, in tallness as the cedar, in fruitfulness as the vine.

(3.) We glorify God—when we give the praise and glory of all we do unto God. When the silk worm weaves her curious work, she hides herself under the silk—and is not seen. Just so, when we have done our best, we must vanish away in our own thoughts—and transfer the glory of all to God. The apostle Paul said, "I labored more abundantly than them all" (1 Corinthians 15:10). One would think this speech savored of pride; but the apostle pulls off the crown from his own head—and sets it upon the head of free grace, "Yet not I—but the grace of God which was with me!"

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Why so?

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

See what cause the saints have to be frequent in the work of thanksgiving. In this, Christians are defective, though they are much in supplication—yet little in thanksgiving. The apostle says, "In everything giving thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Why so? Because God makes everything work for our good. We thank the physician, though he gives us a bitter medicine which makes us sick, because it is to make us well. We thank any man who does us a good turn; and shall we not be thankful to God, who makes everything work for good to us?

God loves a thankful Christian. Job thanked God when He took all away: "The Lord has taken away—blessed be the name of the Lord!" (Job 1:21). Many will thank God when He gives; Job thanks Him when He takes away, because he knew God would work good out of it. We read of saints with harps in their hands (Revelation 14:2), an emblem of praise. We meet many who have tears in their eyes, and complaints in their mouths! But there are few with their harps in their hands, who praise God in affliction.

To be thankful in affliction is a work peculiar to a saint. Every bird can sing in spring—but some birds will sing in the dead of winter. Everyone, almost, can be thankful in prosperity—but a true saint can be thankful in adversity. A godly man will bless God, not only at sun-rise—but at sun-set. Well may we, in the worst which befalls us, have a psalm of thankfulness, because all things work for good. Oh, be much in blessing of God—who befriends us—and makes all things work out to our good.

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Let us not nourish this angry viper in our bosom!

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Learn how little cause we have then to be discontented at outward trials and troubles! What! Discontented at that which shall do us good! All things shall work for good.

There are no sins God's people are more subject to, than unbelief and impatience. They are ready either to faint through unbelief—or to fret through impatience. When men fly out against God by discontent and impatience, it is a sign they do not believe this text. Discontent is an irrational sin, because afflictions work for good. The devil blows the coals of discontent—and then warms himself at the fire.

Oh, let us not nourish this angry viper in our bosom! Let this text produce patience, "All things work for good to those who love God!" Shall we be discontented at that which works for our good? If one friend should throw a bag of money at another, and in throwing it, should graze his head—he would not be troubled much, seeing by this means he had got a bag of money. Just so, the Lord may bruise us by afflictions—but it is to enrich us. These light afflictions work for us an eternal weight of glory—and shall we be discontented!

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A divine chemistry

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

See here the wisdom of God, who can make the worst things imaginable, turn to the good of the saints. He can by a divine chemistry—extract gold out of dross! God enriches by impoverishing; He causes the augmentation of grace by the diminution of an estate. When the creature goes further from us, it is that Christ may come nearer to us. God works strangely. He brings order out of confusion, and harmony out of discord. God often helps when there is least hope, and saves His people in that way which they think will destroy. He made use of the high priest's malice and Judas' treason—to redeem the world.

We are apt to find fault with God's dealings with us—which is as if an illiterate man should censure learning, or a blind man find fault with the work in a landscape. "Vain man would be wise" (Job 11:12). Silly men will be calling the wisdom of God to the bar of human reason. God's ways are "past finding out" (Romans 9:33). They are rather to be admired than fathomed.

How stupendous and infinite is that wisdom, that makes the most adverse dispensations work for the good of His children!

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Good things work for hurt

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

To those who are godly—evil things work for good; to those who are ungodly—good things work for hurt. Notice the miserable condition of wicked men. Riches and prosperity are not benefits, but snares to them. Worldly things are given to the wicked, as Michal was given to David—for a snare (1 Samuel 18:21). Their mercies are like poisoned bread; their tables are sumptuously spread—but there is a hook under the bait! "Let their table become a snare" (Psalms 69:22).

Pride and luxury are the twin offspring of prosperity. Riches are not only like the spider's web, unprofitable—but like the cockatrice's egg, pernicious. "Riches kept for the hurt of the owner" (Ecclesiastes 5:13). The common mercies wicked men have, are not loadstones to draw them nearer to God—but millstones to sink them deeper in hell (1 Timothy 6:9). Their delicious dainties are like Haman's banquet; after all their lordly feasting, death will bring in the bill, and they must pay it in hell!

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Spiritual declension

"You have left your first love" (Revelation 2:4)

Satan labors to blow out this flame of love to God. Of all graces, love is most apt to decay; therefore we had need to be the more careful to preserve it. If a man has a precious jewel, he will keep it safe. What care then should we have to keep this precious jewel, of love to God! It is sad to see professors declining in their love to God; many are in a spiritual declension—their love is decaying.

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How do afflictions make us happy?

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

How do afflictions make us happy? We reply that, being sanctified, they bring us nearer to God.

The magnet of mercy does not draw us so near to God as the cords of affliction. When God sets our worldly comforts on fire, then we run to Him, and make our peace with Him. When the prodigal was pinched with need, then he returned home to his father (Luke 15:13). When the dove could not find any rest for the sole of her foot, then she flew to the ark. When God brings a deluge of affliction upon us, then we fly to the ark—Christ.

Thus affliction makes us happy, in bringing us nearer to God. Faith can make use of the waters of affliction—to swim faster to Christ.

Thus we see afflictions are not harmful—but beneficial, to the saints. We should not so much look at the evil of affliction, as the good. The worst that God does to His children—is to whip them to heaven!

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God draws, and the world draws

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Afflictions work for good, as they are the means of making the heart more upright. In prosperity the heart is apt to be divided (Hosea 10:2). The heart cleaves partly to God—and partly to the world. It is like a needle between two loadstones: God draws, and the world draws. Now God takes away the world—that the heart may cleave more to Him in sincerity.

As we sometimes hold a crooked rod over the fire to straighten it; so God holds us over the fire of affliction to make us more straight and upright. Oh, how good it is, when sin has bent the soul awry from God, that affliction should straighten it again!

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Hear the rod

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Affliction works for good, as it is our preacher and teacher—"Hear the rod" (Micah 6:9). Luther said that he could never rightly understand some of the Psalms—until he was in affliction.

Affliction teaches what sin is. In the word preached, we hear what a dreadful thing sin is, that it is both defiling and damning—but we fear it no more than a painted lion; therefore God lets loose affliction—then we feel sin bitter in the fruit of it. A sick-bed often teaches more than a sermon. We can best see the ugly visage of sin in the looking-glass of affliction!

Affliction teaches us to know ourselves. In prosperity we are for the most part strangers to ourselves. God afflicts us—that we may better know ourselves. We see that corruption in our hearts, in the time of affliction, which we would not believe was there. Water in the

glass looks clear—but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up. Just so—in prosperity, a man seems to be humble and thankful, the water looks clear; but set this man a little on the fire of affliction, and the scum boils up—much impatience and unbelief appear. "Oh," says a Christian, "I never thought I had such a bad heart, as now I see I have! I never thought my

corruptions had been so strong, and my graces so weak."

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The Lord gave—and the devil took away

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Afflictions work for good, to the godly. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." (Psalms 119:71)

Afflictions to the godly, are medicinal. Out of the most poisonous drugs God extracts our salvation. Those afflictive providences which seem to be harmful—are beneficial.

It is a heart-quieting consideration in all the afflictions which befall us—to know that God has a special hand in them: "The Almighty has afflicted me!" (Ruth 1:21)

Job eyed God in his affliction; therefore, he does not say, "The Lord gave—and the devil took away," but, "The Lord gave—and the Lord has taken away." Whoever brings an affliction to us—it is God who sends it.

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The saints' graces are . . . weapons to defend them, wings to elevate them, jewels to enrich them, spices to perfume them, stars to adorn them, cordials to refresh them, evidences for heaven.

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### Prayer

Prayer is the bellows of the affections; it blows up holy desires and ardors of soul.

Prayer has power with God. It is the key which unlocks the treasury of God's mercy.

Prayer keeps the heart open to God—and shut to sin.

Prayer assuages the swellings of lust.

Prayer is the Christian's gun, which he discharges against his enemies.

Prayer is the sovereign medicine of the soul.

Prayer sanctifies every mercy (1 Timothy 4:5).

Prayer is the dispeller of sorrow—by venting the grief, it eases the heart. When Hannah had prayed, "she went away, and was no more sad" (1 Samuel 1:18)

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### The mercies of God

The mercies of God humble. "Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and prayed—Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, that You have brought me this far?" (2 Samuel 7:18)

So says a gracious heart, "Lord, who am I, with all my unworthiness, that it should be better with me than others? Who am I, that I should have those mercies which others lack, who are better than me? The mercies of God make a sinner proud—but a saint humble.

The mercies of God have a melting influence upon the soul; they dissolve it in love to God.

God's judgments make us fear Him—but His mercies make us love Him. Such a melting influence has God's mercy—it makes the eyes drop with tears of love.

The mercies of God make the heart fruitful. When you lay out more cost upon a field, it bears a better crop. A gracious soul honors the Lord with his substance. The golden showers of Gods' mercy, cause fertility.

The mercies of God make the heart thankful. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" (Psalms 116:12) Every mercy is an gift of free grace; and this enlarges the soul in gratitude. A godly Christian is not a grave to bury God's mercies—but a temple to sing His praises.

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Those goliath lusts

"He will subdue our iniquities." Micah 7:19

The power of God subdues our corruptions.

Is your sin strong? God is powerful—He will break the head of this leviathan!

Is your heart hard? God will dissolve that stone in Christ's blood! "The Almighty makes my heart soft" Job 23:16

When we say as Jehoshaphat, "We have no might against this great army!"—the Lord goes up with us, and helps us to fight our battles. He strikes off the heads of those goliath lusts which are too strong for us!

## 02 Body of Practical Divinity

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Body of Practical Divinity By Thomas Watson

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

Mirror and fountain

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A lamp for my feet

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

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

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

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Why is salvation by faith?

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

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

Why is salvation by faith?

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

God's believing people are a humble people. "Be clothed with humility." God's people shrink into nothing in their own thoughts. David cries out, "I am a worm, and not a man!" Though a saint, though a king--yet a worm! When Moses' face shined, he covered it with a veil. When God's people shine most in grace--they are covered with the veil of humility. Abraham the father of the faithful, confesses, "I am nothing but dust and ashes." "God resists the proud." Surely, God will not take to be with Himself in glory, such as whom He resists.

God's believing people are a willing people. Though they cannot serve God perfectly--they serve Him willingly. They do not grudge God a little time spent in His worship. They do not murmur at sufferings. They will go through a sea and a wilderness--if God calls. "Your people shall be a willing people." This spontaneity

and willingness is from the attractive power of God's Spirit. The Spirit does not force--but sweetly draws the will. This willingness makes all our services acceptable. God sometimes accepts of willingness without the work--but never the work without willingness.

God's believing people are a consecrated people. They have "holiness to the Lord" written upon them. "You are a holy people to the Lord your God." God's people are separated from the world--and sanctified by the Spirit. The priests under the law were not only to wash in the laver--but were arrayed with glorious apparel. This was typical, to show that God's people are not only washed from gross sins--but adorned

with holiness of life. They bear not only God's name--but His image! Holiness is God's stamp; if He does not see this stamp upon us, He will not own us for His believing people.

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Worse than a dog!

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

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

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

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

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See its ugly face!

What a heinous and execrable thing is sin! Sin is the distillation of all evil. The Scripture calls it the "accursed thing." It is compared to the venom of serpents, and the stench of sepulchers. The devil

would paint sin with the pleasing colors of pleasure and profit--that he may make it look fair; but I shall pull off the paint, that you may see its ugly face! We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, and say to it, as Lot of Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" But sin is a great evil.

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

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

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

Sin stamps the devil's image on a man. Malice is the devil's eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot. Sin turns a man into a devil. "One of you is a devil!" John 6:70

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

Sin strikes at the very Deity. Sin is God's would-be murderer. Sin would not only unthrone God--but un-God Him. If the sinner could help it, God would no longer be God.

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

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

Sin is an irrational thing. It makes a man act not only wickedly--but foolishly. It is absurd and irrational to prefer the less, before the greater. The sinner prefers the passing pleasures of sin, before eternal rivers of pleasures. Is it rational to lose heaven--for the indulging of a lust? Is it rational to gratify an enemy? When sin burns in the soul, Satan warms himself at this fire. Men's sins feast the devil.

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

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

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

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Well-colored dirt

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

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

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

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

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

God's own people often suffer great afflictions.

"This is what the wicked are like--always carefree, they increase in wealth. Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence. For I am afflicted all day long!" Psalms 73:12-14

How can this be consistent with God's justice?

'God's ways of judgment are sometimes secret, but never unjust!' The Lord never afflicts His people without a cause; He cannot be unjust towards them.

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

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

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

The trials and sufferings of the godly, are to refine and purify them. God's furnace is in Zion. Is it any injustice in God to put His gold into the furnace to purify it? Is it any injustice in God, by afflicting His people, to make them partakers of His holiness? What more proclaims God's

faithfulness--than to take such a course with them as may make them more holy?

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A sleeping lion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy." Romans 9:15-16

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

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

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

God sits as judge in the highest court, and is not bound to give a reason for His proceedings. "He puts down one, and raises up another." He has salvation and damnation in His power. He has the key of justice in His hand, to lock up whomever he will, in the fiery prison of hell! And He has the key of mercy in His hand, to open heaven's gate to whomever He pleases! The name engraved upon His vesture is, "King of kings, and Lord of lords!" He sits Lord paramount, and who can call Him to account? The world is God's house, and shall not He do what He desires in His own house?

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

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

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God bottles every tear!

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

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

"Because there is some good thing in him." God sees some good thing in His people--when they can see no good in themselves; and though they judge themselves

harshly, He will forgive their sins and infirmities.

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God sees through these fig-leaves!

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

If God is a God of infinite knowledge, then see the folly of hypocrisy. Hypocrites carry it fair with men--but care not how bad their hearts are; they live in secret sin. "They say--How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?" "What does

God know? Can He judge through thick darkness?" "God has forgotten, He hides His face, He will never see it!"

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

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

The hypocrite hopes he shall color over his sin, and make it look very good. Absalom masks over his treason with the pretense of a religious vow. Judas cloaks his covetousness, with the pretense of "charity to the poor." Jehu makes religion a cloak for his selfish design. But God sees through

these fig-leaves!

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

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

"Will he even assault the queen right here in the palace, before my very eyes? the king roared." Esther 7:8. Will we sin when our Judge looks on? Would men speak so

vainly, if they considered God overheard them? What care would people have of their words, if they remembered that God heard, and His pen was writing everything down in heaven? Would they commit immorality, if they believed God was a spectator of their wickedness, and would punish them in hell for it? Would they defraud in their dealings, and use false weights, if they knew God saw them; and

for making their weights lighter--would make their damnation heavier?

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

appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

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

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

Woe to all such, as have God against them. He lives forever to be avenged upon them. "Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with you?" Such as oppose His people, trampling these jewels in the dust; and such as live in contradiction to God's Word--engage the Infinite Majesty of heaven against them! How dreadful will their case be! "As surely as I live, when I sharpen My flashing sword and begin to carry out justice, I will bring vengeance on My enemies and repay those who hate Me!"

If it is so dreadful to hear the lion roar, what must it be when he begins to tear his prey? "Consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces!" Oh that men would think of this--who go on in sin! Shall we engage the great God against us? God strikes slow--but heavy! "Have you an arm like God?" Can you strike such a blow? God is the best friend--but the worst enemy! If He can look men into their grave, how far can He throw them? "Who knows the power of His wrath?" What fools are they, who, for a drop of pleasure--drink a sea of wrath!

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

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What is the chief end of man?

Question: What is the chief end of man?

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

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

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

Lust is an inordinate desire or impulse, provoking the soul to that which is evil. Lust, like a feverish heat, puts the soul into a flame. Aristotle calls sensual lusts, brutish,

because, when any lust is violent--reason and conscience cannot be heard. These lusts besot and brutalize the man.

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A weeping creature

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

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

A godly heart grieves that it is not more holy. It troubles him that he falls short of the rule and standard which God has set. "I should", he says, "love the Lord with all my heart. But how defective my love is! How far short I come of what I should be, no, of what I might have been!"

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

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

deny Christ. This made him go out and 'weep bitterly.' He baptized himself, as it were, in his own tears.

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

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

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

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

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If our hearts are not rocks

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

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

Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a poor condition; and His undergoing . . .the miseries of this life, the cursed death of the cross, and the wrath of God.

The prime cause of Christ's humiliation was free grace! Love was the intrinsic motive. Christ came to us, out of pity and love. Not our deserts--but our misery,

caused Christ to humble Himself. This was a plot of free grace--a design of pure love! Christ incarnate, is nothing but 'love' covered with flesh! As Christ's assuming our human nature was a masterpiece of wisdom, so it also was a monument of free grace!

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

Consider where Jesus came from. He came from heaven, and from the richest place in heaven--His Father's bosom, that hive of sweetness.

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

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

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

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

Consider the place Jesus was born in--a feeding trough was His cradle, the cobwebs were His curtains, the beasts were His companions!

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

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

He was poor--that we might become rich!

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

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

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

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

And what was all this, but love? If our hearts are not rocks, this love of Christ should affect us.  
"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you

will never fully understand it!" Ephesians 3:19

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Do not be proud of your fine feathers!

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

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

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

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

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

Christian! Learn to be humble! Do you see Christ humbling Himself--and are you proud? It is the humble saint, who is Christ's picture! Christians, do not be proud of your fine feathers! Have you an estate? Do not be proud. The earth you tread on is richer than you! It has mines of gold and silver in its depths. Have you beauty? Do not be proud. It is but water mingled with dirt! Have you skill and abilities? Be humble. Lucifer has more knowledge than you! Have you grace? Be humble. It is not of your own making--it was given to you by God. You have more sin than grace; more spots than beauty. Oh look on Christ--this rare pattern of humility--and be humbled! It is a sad sight, to see God humbling Himself--and man exalting himself; to see a humble Savior--and a proud sinner! God hates the very semblance of pride! "I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13

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

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Walking pictures of Christ!

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

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

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

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

#### 1. Be like Christ in DISPOSITION.

He was of a most sweet disposition. He has a heart to pity us. He has breasts to feed us. He has wings to cover us.

He would not break our heart--but with mercy. Let us be like Him in sweetness of disposition. Do not be of a morose spirit. It was said of Nabal, "He's so ill-tempered

that no one can even talk to him!" Some are so sour, and breathe forth nothing but revenge! Or they are like those two men in the gospel, "possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs. They were so violent that no one could pass that way." Let us be like Christ in mildness and sweetness. Let us pray for our enemies--and conquer them by love. David's kindness melted Saul's heart. A frozen heart will be thawed, with the fire of love.

#### 2. Be like Christ in HUMILITY.

"He humbled himself." He left the bright robes of His glory--to be clothed with the rags of our humanity--a wonder of humility! Let us be like Christ in this grace.

Humility is the glory of a Christian. We are never so lovely in God's eyes--as when we are black in our own eyes. In this let us be like Christ. Indeed, what cause have we to be humble--if we look within us, about us,

below us, and above us!

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

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

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

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

If we look above us; there is that which may humble us. If we look up to heaven, there we may see God resisting the proud. God pursues the proud in vengeance. He threw proud Lucifer out of

heaven! The proud man is the mark which God shoots at--and He never misses the mark! Oh then--be like Christ in humility!

3. Be like Christ, in the contempt of the WORLD.

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

Let us be made like Him--in heavenliness and contempt of the world. Let us not be ambitious for the empty honors and glories of the world. Let us not purchase the world--with the loss of our soul. What wise man would damn himself--to grow rich? or throw his soul down to hell--to build up an earthly estate?

Be like Christ in a holy contempt of the world.

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

A Christian should be both a magnet and a diamond! A magnet--in drawing others to Christ; a diamond--in casting a sparkling luster of holiness, in his life. Oh let us be . . .so just in our dealings, so true in our promises, so devout in our worship, so unblamable in our lives; that we may be the walking pictures of Christ!

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How shall we know if we have saving faith?

By the noble fruits and effects of saving faith.

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

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

True faith is an obediential grace. "The obedience of faith." Faith melts our will into God's. It runs at God's call. If God commands duty (though cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys. "By faith Abraham obeyed." Faith is not an idle grace. As it has an eye to see Christ--so it has a hand to work for Him. It not only believes God's promises--but obeys His commands. It is not having

knowledge that will evidence you to be believers; the devil has knowledge, but lacks obedience--and that makes him a devil. The true obedience of faith, is a cheerful obedience. God's commands do not seem

grievous. Have you obedience, and obey cheerfully? Do you look upon God's command as your burden--or privilege; as an iron fetter about your leg--or as a gold chain about your neck?

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

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

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

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Lord has two heavens

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

God is not drawn to any person's outward beauty, great abilities, noble blood or worldly grandeur. But He is drawn to a heart embellished with holiness. Christ never admired anything but the beauty of holiness. He slighted the glorious buildings of the temple--but admired the woman's faith, and said, "O woman, great is your faith!" As a king delights to see his image upon a piece of coin; so where God sees His likeness--He gives His love! The Lord has two heavens to dwell in--and the holy heart is one of them!

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Spiritual joys

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

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

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

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

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

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

Spiritual joys are SATISFYING joys. "Ask, that your joy may be full." Worldly joys can no more fill the heart, than a drop can fill an ocean! They may please the palate

or imagination--but cannot satisfy the soul. "No matter how much we see--we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear--we are not content." Ecclesiastes 1:8. But the joys of God satisfy. "Your comforts delight my soul." Psalms 94:19. There is as much difference between spiritual joys and earthly joys--as between a banquet which is eaten--and one which is painted on the wall!

Spiritual joys are STRONGER joys than worldly joys. "Strong consolation." Hebrews 6:18. They are strong joys indeed, which can bear up a Christian's heart in trials

and afflictions. "Having received the word in much affliction--with joy." These joys are roses which grow in winter! These joys can sweeten the bitter waters of Marah! He who has these joys--can gather grapes from thorns, and fetch honey out of the carcass of a lion! At the end of the rod--a Christian tastes honey! "As sorrowing--yet always rejoicing."

Spiritual joys are UNWEARIED joys. Other joys, when in excess, often cause loathing; too much honey nauseates. One may be tired of pleasure--as well as labor. King Xerxes offered a reward to him who could find out a new pleasure. But the joys of God, though they satisfy--yet they never glut. A drop of joy is sweet--but the more of this wine the better! Such as drink of the joys of heaven--are never glutted. Their

satiety is without loathing, because they still desire more of the joy with which they are satiated.

Spiritual joys are ABIDING joys. Worldly joys are soon gone. Such as bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure--may have joys which seem to be sweet--but they are swift. They are like

meteors--which give a bright and sudden flash, and then disappear. But the joys which believers have are abiding; they are a blossom of eternity--a pledge of those rivers of pleasure which run at God's right hand! "In Your

presence is abundant joy; in Your right hand are eternal pleasures!" Psalms 16:11

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

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You have but a little way to go!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[2] "For to me, to live is Christ," that is--Christ is the END of my life. I live not for myself--but for Christ. All my living, is to do service to Christ. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord." Romans 14:8. We lay out ourselves wholly for Christ. The design of our life is to exalt Christ, and to make the crown upon His head flourish. In this sense, Christ is the end of my life--when my whole life is a living for Christ.

[3] "For to me, to live is Christ," that is--Christ is the JOY of my life. Psalms 43:4, "God my exceeding joy," or the cream of my joy. A Christian can rejoice in Christ,

when worldly joys are gone. When the tulip in a garden withers--a man still rejoices in his jewels which are locked up in the house. Just so--when worldly joys are gone--a saint can rejoice in Christ, the pearl of great price. In this sense, Christ is the joy of my life--if Christ were gone, my life would be a death to me.

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

conclude, "and to die is gain!"

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

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

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

There is majesty sparkling in every line of Scripture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine!

If God is infinite, see what a full portion the saints have. They have Him who is infinite, for their portion! His fullness is an infinite fullness; and He is infinitely sweet, as well as infinitely full. He is infinitely full of beauty and of love. His riches are called unsearchable, because they are infinite. Stretch your thoughts as much as you can, there is that in God which exceeds; it is an infinite fullness.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine!" Ephesians 3:20. What can an ambitious person ask? He can ask crowns and kingdoms,

millions of worlds; but God can give more than we can ask, nay, more than we can imagine, because He is infinite!

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

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

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

to satisfy them. God has land enough to give to all His heirs. There can be no lack, in that which is infinite.

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Totus oculus

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

God's knowledge is infallible; there is no mistake in His knowledge. Human knowledge is subject to error. A physician may mistake the treatment of a disease;

but God's knowledge is unerring. He can neither deceive, nor be deceived. He cannot deceive--because He is truth; nor be deceived--because He has infinite wisdom.

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

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

God is totus oculus, "All eye!"

It ought to be so; for He is the "Judge of all the world." There are so many causes to be brought before Him, and so many people to be tried, that He must have a perfect

knowledge--or He could not do justice. A human judge cannot proceed without a jury; the jury must search the cause, and give in the verdict. But God can judge without a jury. He knows all things in and of Himself, and needs no witnesses to inform Him. A human judge judges only matters of fact--but God judges the heart! He not only judges wicked actions--but wicked designs! He sees the treason of the heart, and punishes it.

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Enough to put them into a cold sweat!

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

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

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

Here is thunder and lightning to the wicked. God is eternal, therefore the torments of the wicked are eternal! God lives forever; and as long as God lives, He will be punishing the damned! Remember, one of God's names is Eternal, and as long as God is eternal, He has time enough to reckon with all His enemies!

Origen erroneously thought, that after a thousand years, the damned would be released out of their misery. But the worm, the fire, the prison--are all eternal.

Eternity is a sea without bottom and banks. After millions of years, there is not one minute in eternity spent; and the damned must be ever burning--but never consumed; always dying--but never dead. "They shall seek death--but shall not find it."

The fire of hell is such, as multitudes of tears will not quench it; and length of time will not finish it! The vial of God's wrath will be always dropping upon the sinner! As long as God is eternal, He lives to be avenged upon the wicked.

Oh eternity! eternity! who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths of the sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake, (Isaiah 30:33) where shall we get buckets to quench that fire?

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A divine chemistry

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

The wisdom of God is seen in making the most desperate evils, work to the good of His children. As several poisonous ingredients, wisely tempered by the skill of the apothecary, make a sovereign medicine--so God makes the most deadly afflictions

work together for the good of His children. He uses severe afflictions to purify them, and prepare them for heaven.

These hard frosts hasten the spring flowers of glory! The wise God, by a divine chemistry, turns our afflictions into cordials. He makes His people gainers by losses; and turns their crosses into blessings!

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Sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly

See the evil effects of sin!

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

Sin disquiets the peace of the soul. "But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." Isaiah 57:20-21. Whatever defiles, disturbs. As poison corrupts the blood, so sin corrupts the soul. Sin breeds a trembling at the heart; it creates fears, and there is "torment in fear." Sin makes sad convulsions in the conscience. Judas was so terrified with guilt and horror, that he hanged himself to quiet his conscience. In order to ease his conscience--he threw himself into hell.

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

loved ones.

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

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

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

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

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The devil's workshop

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The effectual call

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

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

foundation of effectual calling is election--and not merit.

The effectual call is powerful. God puts forth infinite power in calling home a sinner to Himself. He not only puts forth His voice--but His arm! He conquers the pride of the heart, and makes the stubborn will, to yield and stoop to His grace; He makes the stony heart bleed. The effectual call is mighty and powerful. God puts forth a divine energy, nay, a kind of omnipotence; it is such a powerful call, that the will of man has no power effectually to resist.

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

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

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

When two are living together--husband and wife, or father and child--that God should call one by His grace, and leave the other in his sins, and let the other perish

eternally--oh infinite rich grace! How should they that are called be affected with God's sovereign love! How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness!

Such as are trophies of mercy, should be trumpeters of praise. Thus Paul, being effectually called by God, and seeing what a debtor he was to free grace, breaks forth into admiration and gratitude, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15

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There are many roaring devils around us!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Losers!

"The hopes of the godly result in happiness, but the expectations of the wicked are all in vain." Proverbs 10:28

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

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

(2.) They lose their souls. Matthew 16:26-27. The soul is more precious than the whole world! But the sinner's soul is lost; not that the souls of the wicked are annihilated at death--but tormented!

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

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

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

"The desire of the righteous ends only in good, but the hope of the wicked only in wrath." Proverbs 11:23

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## 02 Body of Practical Divinity cont'd

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Body of Practical Divinity cont'd The best friend!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

tents of Kedar!

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The sweetest hours

Be exhorted to prize the written Word.

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

David valued the Word more than gold.

The Word is the field where Christ the pearl of great price is hidden! In this sacred mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold--but for a weight of glory! The Scripture is a sacred eye-salve to illuminate us. Proverbs 6:23, 'The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.' The Scripture is the chart and compass by which we sail to the new Jerusalem.

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

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

The Scripture will make us wise. Wisdom is above rubies. Psalms 119:104, 'By Your precepts I get understanding.' The Scriptures teach a man to know himself. They unmask Satan's snares and stratagems. 2 Corinthians 2:2. 'They make one wise to salvation.' 2 Timothy 3:15. They show us the way to the heavenly kingdom.

David counted the Word 'more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb.' Psalms 19:10. There is that in Scripture which may breed delight. Well then may we count those the sweetest hours, which are spent in reading the holy Scriptures; well may we say with the prophet, 'Your words were found, and I ate them. Your words became a delight to me and the joy of my heart.' Jeremiah 15:16

Oh, then, highly prize the Scriptures.

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True 'holy water'

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

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

To worship God in spirit, is to worship Him without ceremonies. The ceremonies of the law, which God Himself ordained, are now abrogated, and out of date. Christ the substance being come, the shadows fly away; and therefore the apostle calls the legal ceremonies, carnal rites.

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

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

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

Prayer is not the tuning of the voice into a heartless confession, or counting over a few prayer beads; but it consists in sighs and groans, Romans 8:26. When the fire of fervency is put to the incense of prayer--then it ascends as a sweet fragrance to God.

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They are never out of His eye

God is infinite. He fills all places, and is everywhere present. This is dreadful to the wicked. God is their enemy, and they cannot escape Him, nor flee from Him--for He is everywhere present! They are never out of His eye, nor out of His reach. "Your hand shall find out all your enemies." What caves or thickets can men hide in--that God cannot find them? Go where they will--He is present.

"Where shall I flee from Your presence?" If a man owes a debt to another he may make his escape, and flee into another land, where the creditor cannot find him. "But

where shall I flee from Your presence?" God is infinite, He is in all places; so that He will find out His enemies and punish them!

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The diamond in the ring!

God is eternal, therefore He lives forever to reward the godly. "To those who seek for glory and honor, eternal life." The people of God are now in a suffering condition. The wicked are clad in purple, and fare deliciously, while the godly suffer. The goats climb upon high mountains, while Christ's sheep are in the valley of slaughter. But

here is the comfort--God is eternal, and He has appointed eternal recompenses for the saints. In heaven are fresh delights, and sweetness without excess. That which is the crown and zenith of heaven's happiness, is--that it is "eternal." Were there but the least suspicion that this glory must cease, it would much eclipse, yes, embitter it; but it is eternal. "An eternal weight of glory."

What angel can span eternity? The saints shall bathe themselves in the rivers of divine pleasure; and these rivers can never be dried up. "At Your right hand are

pleasures for evermore." This is the highest strain in the apostle's rhetoric--"Forever with the Lord!" In heaven, there is . . . peace without trouble, ease without pain, glory without end!

Let this comfort the saints in all their troubles; their sufferings are but short--but their reward is eternal!

Eternity makes heaven to be heaven! Eternity is the diamond in the ring! Oh blessed day, which shall have no night! The sunlight of glory shall rise upon the soul, and never set!

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

The crown of eternity shall be set upon their head!

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A good antidote against sin

Thoughts of eternal torments, are a good antidote against sin. Sin tempts with its

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

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What a strong appetite!

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

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

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

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

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

fruit.

Consider the universality of sin. It has, as poison, diffused itself

into all the parts and powers of the soul. "The whole head is sick,

and the whole heart is faint." Isaiah 1:5. Like a sick patient, that has no part sound, his liver is swelled, his feet are gangrened, his lungs are withered. Such infected, gangrened souls we have; until Christ, who has made a medicine of His blood, cures us!

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Three keys

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

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The diamond in the ring

"For God has reserved a priceless inheritance for His children. It is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay!" 1 Peter 1:4

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

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He turns the wolf into a lamb

The whole world is divided into two classes--the sons of God, and the heirs of hell.

"He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will." Ephesians 1:5

Adoption is a mercy spun out of the affections of free grace. All by nature are strangers to God, therefore have no right to sonship. God is pleased to adopt one,

and not another; to make one a vessel of glory--another a vessel of wrath!

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

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

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

excels all earthly kingdoms.

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

See the amazing love of God, in making us His sons. It is love in God to feed us--but more to adopt us!

God did not adopt us when we were bespangled with the jewels of holiness--but when we were deformed with sin, and diseased as lepers!

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

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

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#### Evangelical obedience

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

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

Obedience must be done from a right principle, from the noble principle of faith. "The obedience of faith." A crab-tree may bear fruit fair to the eye--but it is sour

because it does not come from a good root. A moral person may give God outward obedience, which to the eyes of others may seem glorious; but his obedience is sour because it comes not from the sweet and pleasant root of faith. A child of God gives Him the obedience of faith, and that meliorates and sweetens his services.

All God's commands have the same stamp of divine authority upon them. If I obey one precept because my heavenly Father commands me, by the same rule I must obey all. A child of God obeys one command, as well as another. "I have respect unto all Your commandments." To obey God in some things--and not in others, shows an unsound heart. Child-like obedience moves towards every command of God, as the needle points that way which the magnet draws. If God calls to duties which are cross to flesh and blood, if we are children--we shall still obey our Father. "I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey Your Word."

Though a believer cannot obey every precept perfectly; yet he does evangelically. He approves of every command. "I consent to the law, that it is good." He delights in every command. "O how love

I Your law!" His desire is to obey every command. "Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying Your decrees!" Wherein he comes short--he looks up to Christ's blood to supply his defects. This is evangelical obedience; which, though we are not satisfied with it, God accepts it.

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Satan's picture!

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

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

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

Sanctification makes us resemble God. It was Adam's sin--that he aspired to be like God in omniscience; but we must endeavor to be like Him in sanctity. It is a holy

heart--in which something of God can be seen. Nothing of God can be seen in an unsanctified man--but you may see Satan's picture in him! Envy is the devil's eye,

hypocrisy his cloven foot; but nothing of God's image can be seen in him.

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Feathers fly up--but gold descends!

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

Paul had assurance. Is he proud of this jewel? No! "To me who am less than the least of all saints." The more love a Christian receives from God, the more he sees himself a debtor to free grace; and the sense of his debt keeps his heart humble!

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ To die is gain!

As the wicked have a worm which never dies, so the elect have an unfading crown of glory. 'Forever' is a short word--but it has no end.

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain!" Php 1:21

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

Believers at death, shall bid an eternal farewell to all sins and troubles. They shall be in a state of impeccability. Sin expires with their life. I think sometimes what a happy state that will be, never to have another sinful thought, and to have a quietus from all troubles. Here David cried out, "My life is spent with griefs, and my years with sighing." "Long life is merely long torment," said Augustine.

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

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

saints, to see the amiable aspects and smiles of God's face.

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

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

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

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Miser ego homo!

Death frees a believer from sin. There are in the best believers, the remnants of sin--some remainders and relics of corruption. "O wretched man who I am! who

shall deliver me from this body of death?" By the body of death is meant the mass and lump of sin. It may well be called a body--for its weightiness; and a body of death for its harmfulness.

(1.) Sin weighs us down. Sin hinders us from doing good. Like a bird that would be flying up--but has a chain tied to its legs to hinder it--a Christian would be flying up to heaven with the wings of desire--but sin hinders him! He is like a ship under sail, and at anchor! Grace would sail forward--but sin is the anchor that holds it back!

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

(3.) Sin sometimes gets the mastery, and leads a saint captive. "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing." Romans 7:19. Paul was like a man carried down the stream, and could not bear up against it. How often is a child of God overpowered with pride and passion! Therefore Paul calls sin, "a law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members." Romans 7:23. Sin binds as a law; it has a kind of jurisdiction over the soul, as Caesar had over the senate.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Believers at death are made perfect in holiness. "The spirits of just men made perfect." At death the souls of believers recover their virgin purity. Oh! what a blessed privilege is this--to be without spot or wrinkle; to be purer than the

sunbeams; to be as free from sin as the angels! This makes a believer desirous to have his passport, and to be gone from his sin! He would gladly live in that pure air, where no black vapors of sin arise!

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Seven eyes and an iron rod

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

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

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

This will be terrible to the wicked. How can a guilty prisoner endure the sight of the judge? The Lamb of God will then be turned into a Lion, the sight of whom will strike terror into sinners. They, being convicted, will be speechless. Then follows the

dismal sentence: "Depart from Me, you cursed ones, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"--a dreadful, but a righteous sentence. The sinner himself shall cry, "Guilty!" Though he has a sea of wrath--he has not one drop of injustice.

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My sheep

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

"My sheep"--there is election.

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

"I know them"--there is justification.

"They follow Me"--there is sanctification.

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

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

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The devil's peace

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

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

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### The very hinge and pillar of Christianity

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

abundantly satisfied than if we had suffered the pains of hell forever.

Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity. An error about justification is dangerous, like a defect in a foundation. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life. To have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring is damnable.

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

The cause, the motive or ground of justification, is the free grace of God: "being justified freely by his grace." The first wheel that sets all the rest running, is the love

and favor of God; as a king freely pardons a delinquent. Justification is a mercy spun out of the affections of free grace. God does not justify us because we are worthy; but by justifying us makes us worthy.

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### Redeemed

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

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

A justified person is redeemed from the curse due to sin. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Galatians 3:13. Christ said to His Father, as Rebecca to Jacob, "Upon Me, upon Me be the curse; let the blessing be upon them--but upon Me be the curse."

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### The sum and quintessence of the gospel!

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

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

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Minerva's eyes were upon him

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

"The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed." Among other of his orient excellencies, this is not the least--"the Lord is a God of knowledge." He has a full idea and cognizance of all things; the world is to Him a transparent body.

He makes a heart-anatomy. "I am He who searches the thoughts and the heart." The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain--to draw between us and His sight. "Even in darkness I cannot hide from You. To You the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are both alike to You."

There is not a word we whisper but God hears it. "There is not a word in my tongue--but lo, O Lord, You know it altogether." There is not the most subtle thought that comes into our mind--but God perceives it. "I know their thoughts." Thoughts speak as loud in God's ears--as words do in ours. All our actions, though ever so subtly contrived, and secretly conducted, are visible to the eye of Omniscience. "I know their works." Achan hid the Babylonish garment in the earth--but God brought it to light. Minerva was so lively painted, that whichever way one turned, Minerva's eyes were upon him. Just so, whichever way we turn ourselves, God's eye is upon us!

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Baptized heathen?

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

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

Ignorance is the nurse of impiety.

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

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Blown to hell!

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

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

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### The silkworm

When Herod had made an oration, and the people gave a shout, saying, 'It is the voice of a God, and not of a man!' 'Immediately, because Herod did not give glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.' Acts 12:23.

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

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

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

As one used to write the name of Christ over his door--so should we write the name of Christ over our duties. Let Him wear the garland of praise!

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### Diamonds and magnets

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

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Either leap over them, or tread upon them!

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me!" Matthew 10:37

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

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### Feathery Christians

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

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

To be unsettled in religion, argues lightness. As feathers will be blown every way, so will feathery Christians. Therefore such are compared to infants. Children are fickle; sometimes of one mind, sometimes of another; nothing pleases them long. Just so, unsettled Christians are childish; the truths they embrace at one time, they reject at another.

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Let us be content that God should rule the world

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let us be content that God should rule the world. Learn to acquiesce in His will, and submit to His providence.

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

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

### 03 The Beatitudes (choice excerpts)

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The Beatitudes Thomas Watson, 1660

#### CHOICE EXCERPTS

God has two fires

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

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

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

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

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

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There are nails in that cross!

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

Luke 9:23

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

Self-denial is the foundation of godliness, and if this foundation is not well-laid, the whole building will fall. If there is any lust in our souls which we cannot deny—it will turn at length, either to scandal or apostasy. Self-denial is the thread which must run along through the whole work of piety. A man must deny self-esteem. Every man by nature has a high opinion of himself. He is drunk with spiritual pride. A proud man disdains the cross. He thinks himself too good to suffer. Oh deny self-esteem! Let the plumes of pride fall off!

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

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

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

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ This perfume of free grace!

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

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

He who is poor in spirit—is a Christ-admirer. He has high thoughts of Christ. He sees himself naked—and flies to Christ, to be clothed in the garments of His righteousness. He sees himself wounded—and as the wounded deer runs to the water—so he thirsts for Christ's blood, the water of life. "Lord!" says he, "give me Christ or I die!" His conscience has turned into a fiery serpent and has stung him; now he will give all the world—for a brazen serpent! He sees himself in a state of death; and how precious is one leaf of the tree of life, which is both for food and medicine! The poor in spirit sees that all his riches lie in Christ—"wisdom, righteousness, sanctification" In every need, he flies to this storehouse! He adores the all-fullness in Christ.

He who is poor in spirit—is an exalter of free grace. None so magnify God's mercy—as the poor in spirit. The poor are very thankful. When Paul had tasted mercy—how thankfully does he adore free grace! "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant" (1 Timothy 1:14). It was super-exuberant grace! He sets the crown of his salvation—upon the head of free grace! As a man who is condemned and has a pardon sent to him—how greatly he proclaims the goodness and mercifulness of his prince! So Paul displays free grace in its magnificent colors. He interlines all his epistles with free grace! As a vessel which has been perfumed, makes the water taste of it—so Paul, who was a vessel perfumed with mercy, makes all his epistles to taste of this perfume of free grace! Those who are poor in spirit, bless God for the least crumb which falls from the table of free grace! Labor for poverty of spirit. Christ begins with this, and we must begin here if ever we are saved. Poverty of spirit is the foundation stone, on which God lays the superstructure of eternal glory!

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

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Worms should be made kings!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Only the blood of Christ can soften it!

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

Oh the misery of a hard heart!

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

A heart of stone is inflexible. A stone will not bend. Just so, the hard heart will not comply with God's command. It will not stoop to Christ's scepter. A heart of stone will sooner break, than bend by repentance. It is so far from yielding to God, that like the anvil—it beats back the hammer. A heart of stone will "always resist the Holy Spirit." (Acts 7:51)

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

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

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

Hardness of heart makes a man's condition worse than all his other sins besides. If one is guilty of great sins—yet if he can mourn, there is hope. But hardness of heart binds guilt fast upon the soul. It seals a man under wrath. It is not heinousness of sin—but hardness of heart—which damns!

Oh the misery of a hard heart!

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

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

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View sin in the red glass

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

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

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

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

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

Tears for sin, are blessed tears.

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

Mourning also fences us against the devil's temptations. Temptations are called 'fiery darts' (Ephesians 6:16), because indeed they set the soul on fire. Temptations enrage anger, and inflame lust. Now the waters of holy mourning, quench these fiery darts! Wet gunpowder will not

easily catch fire. Just so, when the heart is wetted and moistened with sorrow—it will not so easily catch the fire of temptation.

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

Surely, God delights much in tears—else He would not keep a bottle for them. "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in Your bottle. You have recorded each one in Your book." Psalms 56:8. Tears are powerful orators for God's mercy. Tears melt the heart of God. When a man comes weeping in prayer and smites on his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"—this melts God's heart towards him. Tears, though they are silent—yet have a voice, "The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping!" (Psalms 6:8). Tears in the child's eye sometimes move the angry father to spare the child. Penitential tears melt God's heart and bind His hand. Tears have a mighty influence upon God.

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

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

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

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

There is but one way to blessedness, and that is through the valley of tears. If you do not go this way, you will miss Paradise. "I tell you, unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). There is only one way leading to heaven, and that is a tear dropping from the eye of faith. A man may have a disease in his body, which twenty medicines will heal. But only the medicine of repentance, will heal the mortal disease of sin.

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

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The way to be like Jesus

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

"Blessed are the meek." Matthew 5:5

Meekness is a grace whereby we are enabled by the Spirit of God, to moderate our angry passions. Meekness has a divine beauty and sweetness in it. This meekness consists in three things: the bearing of injuries, the forgiving of injuries, the recompensing good for evil.

Meekness is opposed to: anger, malice, revenge and evil-speaking.

Meekness is a great ornament to a Christian. "The ornament of a meek spirit—which is so precious to God!" (1 Peter 3:4). How lovely is a saint in God's eye, when adorned with this jewel! No garment is more befitting to a Christian, than meekness. Therefore we are bid to put on this garment, "Put on therefore as the elect of God—meekness." (Colossians 3:12)

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

corrupt nature. But to turn against nature—to resist anger, to "overcome evil with good"—this is truly Christian.

Meekness is the best way to conquer and melt the heart of an enemy. Meekness melts and thaws the heart of others. The greatest victory is to overcome an enemy—without striking a blow! Mildness prevails more than fierceness. Anger makes an enemy of a friend. Meekness makes a friend of an enemy.

Meekness is the way to be like Jesus—"Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Matthew 11:29. It is not profession which makes us like Jesus—but imitation. Where meekness is lacking—we are like brutes. Where it is present—we are like Jesus.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The hypocrite's desire

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

This was Balaam's desire. The hypocrite, when he is about to die and can keep his sins no longer—now he desires a passport to carry him to heaven! Such desires as these are found among the damned.

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

The hypocrite would have . . . heaven—and his sins too, heaven—and his pride too, heaven—and his covetousness too. "They have gone astray and have followed the path of Balaam—who loved the wages of unrighteousness." 2 Peter 2:15

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

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

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

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Cruel mercy

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

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

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

That is a cruel mercy—when we see men go on in sin, and we let them alone. And that is a merciful cruelty—when we are sharp against men's sins and will not let them go to hell quietly.

Fond sentimentality is no better than cruelty.

The surgeon cuts and lances the flesh—but it is in order to a cure. They are healing wounds. So when we lance men's consciences and let out the blood of sin, we exercise spiritual surgery. This is showing mercy.

"Rescue others by snatching them from the fire!" (Jude 1:23). If a man had fallen into the fire, though you hurt him a little in pulling him out—he would be thankful and take it as a kindness.

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The children which faith bears

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

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

The lamp of faith must be filled with the oil of charity. Faith alone justifies—but justifying faith is never alone. You may as well separate weight from lead, or heat from fire—as works from faith.

Good works, though they are not the causes of salvation—yet they are evidences of salvation.

Though they are not the foundation—yet they are the superstructure. Faith must not be built upon works—but works must be built upon faith. "You are married to Christ—that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Romans 7:4. Faith is the grace which marries Christ, and good works are the children which faith bears.

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

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

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

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

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Strewing flowers on a dead corpse!

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

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

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

Morality is but strewing flowers on a dead corpse!

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

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

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

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

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

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How befilthyng a thing it is

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

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

By nature, we are all in a filthy and cursed condition. We are a lump of clay and sin mingled together. Sin not only blinds us—but defiles us. It is called filthiness (James 1:21). And to show how befilthyng a thing it is, it is compared . . . to a plague of the heart (1 Kings 8:38), to corruption (Deuteronomy 32:5), to vomit (2 Peter 2:22), to a menstrual cloth (Isaiah 30:22).

If all the evils in the world were put together and their quintessence strained out—they could not make a thing so black and polluted as sin is! A sinner is a devil in a man's shape! When Moses' rod was turned into a serpent—he fled from it. If God would open men's eyes and show them their deformities and damnable spots—they would fly from themselves, as from serpents!

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

"Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own." Christ shed His blood—to wash off our filth. The cross was both an altar and a laver. Jesus died not only to save us from wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10)—but to save us

from sin! (Matthew 1:21). Out of his side came water which signifies our cleansing—as well as blood which signifies our justifying (1 John 5:6).

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Caterers for their lusts!

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

What is it to regard iniquity in the heart?

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

Others HIDE their sins. Many deal with their sins as Moses' mother dealt with her son. She hid him in the basket, as if she had left him—but her eye was still upon him—and in the end, she became his nurse (Exodus 2:9). Just so, many seem to leave their sins—but they only hide them from the eye of others. Their heart still goes after them, and at last they nurse and give breast to their sins.

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

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ If death gives them a jog

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

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

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

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### 03 The Beatitudes (choice excerpts) cont'd

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The Beatitudes (choice excerpts) cont'd

Run to this heavenly Father!

"The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort." 2 Corinthians 1:3

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

We should run to our Father with our sins, as that sick child who, as soon as he found himself ill—he ran to his father to help him, "My head! My head!" 2 Kings 4:19 So in case of sin—run to God and say: "My heart! My heart! O this dead heart—Father, quicken it! This hard heart—Father, soften it! Father, my heart, my heart!"

We should run to our Father with our temptations. A child, when another strikes him, runs to his father. So when the devil strikes us with his temptations, let us run to our Father: "Father, Satan assaults and hurls in his fiery darts at me! Father, it is Your child who is

assaulted by this red dragon! Father, take off the tempter!"

"Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares about you!" 1 Peter 5:7. What a sweet privilege is this! When any burden lies upon our hearts—we may go to our Father and unload all our cares and griefs into His loving bosom! "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He will support you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken!" Psalms 55:22

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Sin first enslaves—and then damns!

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

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

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

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

Sin first enslaves—and then damns!

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

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"They wear themselves out with all their sinning!" Jeremiah 9:5

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

"Virtue is easier than vice." Temperance is easier than drunkenness. Doing justice is less burdensome than crime. There is more difficulty and perplexity in the contrivement and pursuit of wicked ends—than in obeying the sweet and gentle precepts of Christ.

Hence it is, that a wicked man is said to 'pregnant with evil and conceives trouble' (Psalms 7:14), to show what anxious pain and trouble he has in bringing about his wickedness! Many have gone with more pain to hell—than others have to heaven!

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God is still the same God

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

God is still the same God.

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

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He is precious

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

See the preciousness in Christ.

His name is precious; it is as ointment poured forth. His blood is precious; it is as balm poured forth. His love is precious; it is as wine poured forth.

Jesus Christ is made up of all sweets and delights. He Himself is all that is desirable. He is . . . light to the eye, honey to the taste, joy to the heart.

"Yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" Song of Solomon 5:16

We truly love Christ, when we love Him for His loveliness, namely—that infinite and superlative beauty which shines in Him.

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When we were bitten by the old serpent

"Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her!" Ephesians 5:25

Love made our dear Lord suffer for us. The pelican out of her love to her young ones, when they are bitten by serpents, feeds them with her own blood to recover them. Just so, when we were bitten by the old serpent, Christ fed us with His own blood, that He might recover us.

"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it!" Ephesians 3:19

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Such a wonder-working grace

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

"Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world—even our faith." 1 John 5:4

Why is faith such a wonder-working grace?

Faith unites the soul to Christ, and that blessed Head sends forth grace into the members. "I can do all things through Christ, who give me strength!" Php 4:13. Faith goes to Christ—and fetches His strength into the soul.

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

Faith shows the world in its night-dress, having all its jewels pulled off. Faith makes the world appear in its true state. Faith shows the soul better things than the world. It gives a sight of Christ and eternal glory. It gives a prospect of heaven. Faith climbs up above sense

and reason, into heaven and sees Christ—and the soul, having once viewed His superlative excellencies, becomes crucified to the world. Says the Christian, "Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ!" Php 3:8

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

Faith gives the soul a right notion of suffering. Faith draws the true picture of sufferings. What is suffering? Faith says, "it is but the suffering of the body—which must shortly by

the course of nature, drop into the dust." Thus faith gives the soul a just measure of sufferings—which enables a Christian to prostrate his life at the feet of Christ.

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

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A lovely garment

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

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

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The scars and infirmities of God's children!

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

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

"He has not seen iniquity in Jacob." Numbers 23:21 God's love does not make Him blind. He sees sin in His people—but not with an eye of revenge. He sees their sins with an eye of pity. He sees sin in His children as a physician sees a disease in his patient. He has not seen iniquity in Jacob, so as to destroy him. God may use the rod (2 Samuel 7:14), not the scorpion. O how much is God willing to pass by in His children—because they are His children!

God takes notice of the good that is in His children—and passes by the infirmity. God does quite contrary to us. We often take notice of the evil that is in others and overlook the good. Our eye is upon the flaws of others. But God takes notice of the good that is in His children.

God sees their faith—and winks at their failings! "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord." The Holy Spirit does not mention her unbelief and laughing at the promise—but takes notice of the good in her. God puts his finger upon the scars and infirmities of His children!

How much did God wink at, in Israel His firstborn! Israel often provoked Him with their murmurings—but God answered their murmurings with mercies. He spared them—as a father

spares his son.

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The sacred ointment

They godly often spot themselves with sin.

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

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They are not eagles—but earthworms!

Those who are God's children, are of a more noble and celestial spirit than men of the world. They "set their minds on things above, not on earthly things"(Colossians 3:2). 'Whoever is born of God, overcomes the world' (1 John 5:4). The children of God live in a higher region. They are compared to eagles (Isaiah 40:31) in regard of their sublimeness and heavenly mindedness. Their souls are fled aloft. Christ is in their heart (Colossians 1:27) and the world is under their feet (Revelation 12:1).

Men of the world are ever tumbling in thick clay. They are 'sons of earth'. They are not eagles—but earthworms! The saints are of another spirit. They are born of God and walk with God as the child walks with the father. "Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). God's children show their high pedigree in their heavenly life (Php 3:20).

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Our father, which art in hell

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

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

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

the wax—so does God stamp the print and image of His own beauty upon His children.

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God is either ignorant, or impotent

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

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

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

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

There was a gracious thaw upon his heart. So says a child of God, "Lord, who am I—a piece of dust and sin kneaded together—that the orient beams of free grace should shine upon me? Who am I, that You should pity me when I lay in my blood—and spread the golden wings of mercy over me!" The soul is overcome with God's goodness—the tears drop, and the love flames. God's mercy has a melting influence upon the soul.

[3] A tender heart trembles under God's threatenings. "My flesh trembles in fear of You!" (Psalms 119:120). If the father is angry—the child trembles. When ministers denounce

the threats of God against sin—tender souls sit in a trembling posture. This trembling frame of heart, God delights in. "To this man will I look, even to him who trembles at Your word!"

(Isaiah 66:2). A wicked man, like the Leviathan, 'is made without fear' (Job 41:33). He neither believes God's promises—nor dreads God's threatenings. Let judgment be denounced against sin—he laughs. He thinks that God is either ignorant and does not see—or impotent and cannot punish. "The mountains quake before Him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at His presence!" (Nahum 1:5). But the hearts of the ungodly are more obdurate than the rocks! A hardened sinner like Nebuchadnezzar has "the heart of a beast given to him" (Daniel 4:16). A childlike heart is a tender heart. The heart of stone is taken away.

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More odious to God than a serpent!

"You are of purer eyes than to behold evil." Habakkuk 1:13

God is holy. Purity is the chief robe with which God adorns Himself. Will this holy God endure to have an impure heart come near Him? Will a man lay a viper in his bosom! God's image consists in holiness. To those who do not have this image and superscription

upon them, He will say "I never knew you!" God delights in no heart, but where He may see His own likeness. Love is founded upon likeness. God loves the pure in heart.

The holy God and the unrepentant sinner—cannot dwell together. None can dwell together but friends—but there is no friendship between God and the sinner, both of them being of a contrary judgment and disposition. An impure heart is more odious to God than a serpent! God gave the serpent its venom—but Satan fills the heart with sin. 'Satan has filled your heart!' Acts 5:3. The Lord abhors a sinner! He will not come near him—having his plague-sores running. 'My soul loathed them!' Zechariah 11:8

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

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

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A dead wife cannot please her husband

"Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, because their minds and consciences are defiled." Titus 1:15

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

Under the law, whatever a leper touched was unclean. If he had touched the altar or sacrifice, the altar would not cleanse him—but he would defile the altar.

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

A pure stream running through muddy ground, is polluted. Just so, the holiest duties, running through an impure heart, are polluted. A sinner's works are called "dead works" (Hebrews 6:1) And those works which are dead, cannot please God. A dead wife cannot please her husband.

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There goes an idolater!

"Covetousness which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5

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

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

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

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

When you see a covetous man, you may say, "There goes an idolater!"

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An evil heart of unbelief

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

An unbelieving heart is evil in the highest degree. It is full of the poison of hell. Unbelief is the foul medley of all sins—the root and receptacle of sin.

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

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

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Let that room be washed with holy tears!

Holiness is the angels' glory. They are pure virgin-spirits. Take away purity from an angel—and he is but a devil!

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

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

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

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

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

The pure heart is God's paradise where He delights to walk. It is God's lesser heaven. The dove delights in the purest air. The Holy Spirit who descended in the likeness of a dove, delights in the purest soul. God says of the pure in heart, as of Zion, "This is My rest forever, here will I dwell" (Psalms 132:14).

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

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

(Isaiah 49:5). How may this raise the esteem of purity!

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Before conversion

Before conversion, the sinner is compared . . . to a stone for his hardness of heart (Zechariah 7:12), to a wolf for his savageness (Matthew 7:15) to a lion for his fierceness (Isaiah 11:6),

to a bee for his sting (Psalms 118:12), to an adder for his poison (Psalms 140:3).

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Fading, not filling

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

Here is the excellency of righteousness above all other things. A man may hunger after the world and not be filled. The world is fading, not filling. Cast three worlds into the heart—yet the heart is not full. But righteousness is a filling thing; nay, it so fills that it satisfies!

A man may be filled and not satisfied. A sinner may take his fill of sin—but that is a sad filling. It is far from satisfaction. He shall have his belly full of sin; he shall have enough of it—but this is not a filling to satisfaction. This is such a filling that the damned in hell have! They shall be full of the fury of the Lord!

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Oh, take heed of this sweet poison!

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

It is worse to love sin than to commit it. A man may be overtaken with sin (Galatians 6:1). He

who has stumbled upon sin unawares will weep—but the love of sin hardens the heart and keeps the devil in possession. In true mourning there must be a grieving for sin. But how can a man grieve for that sin which his heart is in love with? Oh, take heed of this sweet poison! The love of sin freezes the soul in impenitence.

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

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

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

when the goodness of God, which should 'lead to repentance' (Romans 2:4), leads to presumption.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

balls—which are bandied up and down from one to another. They are like a bouquet of flowers—which withers while you are smelling it. They are like ice—which melts away while it is in your hand.

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

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Most fish

Most fish go to the Devil's net! "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it!" Matthew 7:13-14

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A godly man hates

A righteous person breathes after holiness (Psalms 119:5). Though sin cleaves to his heart—yet his heart does not cleave to sin. "I do the very thing I hate!" (Romans 7:15). A godly man hates the sin to which Satan most tempts, and his heart most inclines (Psalms 119:128).

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

"Behold! How great is the love the Father has lavished on us—that we should be called children of God!" 1 John 3:1

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

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

2. As we did not deserve to be made God's children, so neither did we DESIRE it. No rich man will force another to become his heir against his will. If a king should go to adopt

a beggar and make him heir of the crown, if the beggar should refuse the king's favor and say, 'I had rather be a beggar still—I do not want your riches'; the king would take it in high

contempt of his favor, and would not adopt him against his will. Thus it was with us. We had no willingness to be made God's children. We desired to be beggars still—but God out

of his infinite mercy and indulgence, not only offers to make us children—but makes us willing to embrace the offer (Psalms 110:3). What stupendous love was this!

3. It is the wonder of love that God should adopt us for His children, when we were ENEMIES. No man would adopt an enemy to be his heir. But that God should make

us His children—when we were His enemies; that He should make us heirs to the crown—when we were traitors to the crown—oh amazing, astonishing love!

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

Let us admire His wondrous love. When we were breathing forth enmity against God—He conquered our stubbornness with kindness, and not only pardoned—but adopted us! It is

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

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

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Pharisaic purity

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

If the heart is not pure, we differ nothing from a Pharisaic purity. The Pharisees' holiness consisted chiefly in externals. Theirs was an 'outside purity'. They never minded the inside of the heart. 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity!' (Matthew 23:25, Matthew 23:27). The Pharisees were good only on the surface. They were like a rotten post, overlaid with fine paint.

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

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ For every crumb of His patience

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

God forbears punishing—therefore men forbear repenting. He does not smite upon their back by correction—therefore they do not smite upon their thigh by humiliation (Jeremiah 31:19). The sinner thinks thus: "God has spared me all this while; surely He will not punish me." "He says to himself—God has forgotten; He covers His face and never sees!" (Psalms 10:11).

In infinite patience God sometimes adjourns His judgments a while longer. He is not willing to punish (2 Peter 3:9). God is like the bee, which naturally gives honey—but stings only when it is provoked. But alas, how is His patience abused! God's patience hardens most. Because God stops the vial of His wrath—sinners stop the conduit of tears!

To be hardened under God's patience, makes our condition far worse. Incensed justice will revenge abused patience! God was patient towards Sodom—but when they did not repent, He made the fire and brimstone flame about their ears! Sodom, which was once the wonder of God's patience—is now a standing monument of God's severity. Long forbearance is no forgiveness. God may keep off the stroke awhile—but His justice is not dead—but only

sleeps. God has leaden feet but iron hands. The longer God is taking His blow—the sorer it will be when it comes. The longer a stone is falling—the heavier it will be at last. The longer God is whetting his sword—the sharper it cuts!

How dreadful will their condition be—who sin because God is patient with them. For every crumb of His patience—God puts a drop of wrath into His vial. The longer God forbears

with a sinner—the more interest he is sure to pay in hell.

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

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

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

Gospel-mourning must be purifying. Our tears must make us more holy. We must so weep for sin, as to weep out sin. Our tears must drown our sins. We must not only mourn—but turn. "Turn to me with weeping" (Joel 2:12). What good is it, to have a watery eye and a whorish heart? True tears are cleansing. They are like a flood that carries away all the rubbish of our sins away with it. The waters of holy mourning are like the river Jordan,

wherein Naaman washed and was cleansed of his leprosy. Though our sins be as scarlet—yet by washing in this river of repentance, they become white as snow.

Gospel-mourning must be joined with hatred of sin. We must not only abstain from sin—but abhor sin. The dove hates the least feather of the hawk. A true mourner hates the least motion to sin. A true mourner is a sin-hater. He looks upon sin as the most deadly evil—as the essence of all evil. Sin looks more ghastly than death or hell. A true mourner is implacably incensed against sin. He

will never admit of any terms of peace. Anger may be reconciled—hatred cannot. True mourning begins in the love of God—and ends in the hatred of sin.

There is that in the best Christian, which is contrary to God. There is that in him, which deserves hell—and shall he not mourn? A ship that is always leaking must have the water continually pumped out. While the soul leaks by sin, we must be still pumping at the leak by repentance. The washing of our souls daily in the brinish waters of repentance, is the best way both to prevent and cure the falling into relapses.

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Set your affection on things above

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

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

## 04 The Christian Soldier

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The Christian Soldier, or Heaven Taken by Storm by Thomas Watson, 1669 A practical handbook on Christian living, showing the holy violence a Christian is to put forth in the pursuit after glory.

"The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Matthew 11:12

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

How do I mortify the flesh?

The flesh is a bosom traitor; it is like the Trojan horse within the walls, which does all the mischief. The flesh is a sly enemy—it kills by embracing. The embraces of the flesh are like the ivy embracing the oak; which sucks out the strength of it for its own leaves and berries. So the flesh by its soft embraces, sucks out of the heart all good.

The pampering of the flesh, is the quenching of God's Spirit. The flesh chokes and stifles holy motions—the flesh sides with Satan. There is a party within us, which will not pray, which will not believe. The flesh inclines us more to believe a temptation than a promise. The flesh is so near to us, its counsels are more attractive. There is no chain of adamant which binds so tightly—as the chain of lust.

In the best of saints, do what they can, sin will fasten its roots in them, and spring out sometimes with inordinate desires. There is always something which needs mortifying. "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5.

How do I mortify the flesh?

1. Withdraw the fuel that may make lust burn. Avoid all temptations. Take heed of that which nourishes sin. Those who pray that they may not be led into temptation—must not lead themselves into temptation.

2. Fight against fleshly lusts with spiritual weapons—faith and prayer. The best way to combat with sin is—upon our knees. Beg strength from Christ. Samson's strength lay in his hair; our strength lies in our head—Christ. This is a mystery to the major part of the world—who gratify the flesh rather than mortify it.

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He wounded the old serpent three times!

What an infinite mercy it is, that God has blessed us with the Scriptures! The barbarous Indians have their golden mines—but not the Scriptures, which are 'more to be desired than much fine gold.'

Our Savior bids us 'search the Scriptures'. We must not read these holy lines carelessly, as if they did not concern us, or run over them hastily—but peruse them with reverence and seriousness. The noble Bereans 'searched the Scriptures daily.' The Scripture is the treasury of divine knowledge;

it is the rule and touchstone of truth; out of this well—we draw the water of life.

Read the Word as a book made by God Himself. Other books may be written by holy men—but this book is inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is the library of the Holy Spirit!

Read the Word as the perfect rule of faith; it contains all things essential to salvation. The Word teaches us how to please God; and how to order our lives in the world. It instructs us in all things that belong either to prudence or piety, and is 'able to make us wise unto salvation.'

When you read the Word, look on it as a soul-enriching treasury. Search it as for 'hidden treasure!' In this Word are scattered many divine sayings—gather them up as so many jewels! This blessed book will enrich you—it fills your head with divine knowledge, and your heart with divine grace! In this field, the Pearl of price is hidden! What are all the world's riches compared to these? Islands of spices, coasts of pearl, rocks of diamonds? These are but the riches which reprobates may have—but the Word gives us those riches which angels have!

Look upon the Word as a spiritual armory, out of which you fetch all your weapons to fight against sin and Satan.

Here are weapons to fight against SIN. The Word of God is a holy sword, which cuts asunder the lusts of the heart! When pride begins to lift up itself, the sword of the Spirit destroys this sin! When passion vents itself, the Word of God, like Hercules' club, beats down this angry fury! When lust boils, the Word of God cools that intemperate passion!

Here are weapons to fight against SATAN. When the devil tempted Christ, He wounded the old serpent three times with the sword of the Spirit—"It is written!" Satan soon foils the Christian when he is unarmed, and without Scripture weapons.

Look upon the Word as a spiritual looking-glass to dress yourselves by! It is a mirror for the blind—'The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes!' In other mirrors you may see your faces; in this mirror you may see your hearts! This mirror of the Word clearly represents Christ. He is . . .most precious; altogether lovely; a wonder of beauty; a paradise of delight!

Look upon the Word as a shop of spiritual antidotes and remedies. If you find yourself dead in duty—here is a medicine. If you find your heart hard—the Word will soften and mollify it. If you are poisoned with sin—here is an herb to expel it.

Look upon the Word as a sovereign elixir to comfort you in distress. It comforts you against all your sins, temptations, and afflictions. What are the promises—but divine cordials to revive fainting souls.

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It makes men so filthy!

It is a part of our Christian profession—to fight under Christ's banner—against the world.

The world is a flattering enemy. It shows its golden apple. It is given to some—as a snare. Take heed of being drowned in the world's luscious delights!

It must be a strong brain that can bear heady wine. He had need have a great deal of wisdom and grace, who knows how to maintain a great estate. Riches often send up intoxicating fumes, which make men's heads giddy with pride. It is hard to climb up the hill of God—with too many golden weights!

The world shows its two breasts of pleasure and profit—and many fall asleep with the breast in their mouth!

The world never kisses us—except with an intention to betray us.

The world is a silken halter.

The world is no friend to grace; it chokes our love for heavenly things—the earth puts out the fire.

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

O let us take heed of being entangled in this pleasing snare! Many who have escaped the rock of scandalous sins—yet have sunk in the world's golden quicksands!

The sin is not in using the world—but in loving it. "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15

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

They are in the world—but not of it. A true saint is crucified in his affections, to the world, Galatians 6:14. He is dead to the honors and pleasures of it. What delight does a dead man take in pictures or music?

Jesus Christ gave Himself "to redeem us from this present evil world." Galatians 1:4

Living fish swim against the stream. We must swim against the world, else we shall be carried down the stream, and fall into the dead sea of hell!

The world is DECEITFUL. Our Savior calls it, "The deceitfulness of riches." Matthew 13:22. The world promises happiness—but gives weariness. It promises us Rachel—but gives us bleary-eyed Leah! The world promises to satisfy our desires—but only increases them. The world gives poisoned pills—but wraps them in sugar!

The world is POLLUTING. "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: . . . to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." It is called filthy lucre—because it makes men so filthy!

Men will damn themselves to get the world. Ahab would have Naboth's vineyard, though he swam to it in blood.

The world is PERISHING. "The world and its desires pass away." The world is like a flower—which withers while we are smelling it!

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One of you is a devil!

"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?" 2 Corinthians 13:5

Self-examination is a necessary—but difficult work.

Self-examination is the setting up a court in conscience and keeping a register there, that by strict scrutiny a man may know how things stand between God and his own soul. By a serious scrutiny of our hearts, we come to know to what prince we belong—whether to the Prince of Peace, or the prince of darkness.

Self-searching is a heart-anatomy. As a surgeon, when he makes a dissection in the body, discovers the inward parts, the heart, liver, and arteries—just so, a Christian anatomizes himself.

Sentimentality and public opinion are false rules to go by. We must judge the state of souls by the light of Scripture.

Many have foolish, presumptuous hopes. They fancy their state to be good; and while they weigh themselves in the balance of presumption, they pass the test.

Many take their salvation on trust. The foolish virgins thought they had oil in their lamps, the same as the wise. How confident are some of salvation—yet never examine their title to Heaven.

Many rest in the good opinions of others. How vain is this! Alas, one may be gold and pearl in the eye of others—yet God may judge him to be reprobate silver! Others may think him a saint—and God may write him down in His black book! Judas was looked upon by the rest of the Apostles as a true believer—yet he was a traitor! "Then Jesus replied—Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" John 6:70

Others can but see the outward behavior—but they cannot tell what evil is in the heart. Fair streams may run on the top of a river—but vermin may lay at the bottom!

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We must either leap over them, or tread upon them!

"A man's enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:36-38

Take heed of the snare in your family! It is one of the Devil's great subtleties—to hinder us from piety by our nearest relations—and to shoot us with our own rib!

He tempted Adam by his wife. Who would have suspected the Devil there? He tempted Job by his wife, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" Job 2:9 Thus would the Devil have cooled Job's love for God; but the shield of his faith quenched this fiery dart!

Take heed of such tempters! It is better to go to Heaven with their hatred—than to Hell with their love! If our dearest friends and family lie in our way to Heaven—we must either leap over them, or tread upon them!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The rat gets into his belly and eats his entrails

Take heed of a slothful, lazy disposition. A slothful person would gladly have Heaven—but is loathe to take it by storm. Sloth is the soul's sleep. Many, instead of working out salvation, sleep away salvation! Such as will not labor, must be put at last to beg. They must beg, as Dives in hell—for one drop of water.

God never made Heaven as a hive for drones! Sloth is a disease apt to grow upon men—shake it off!

A sluggish ship is a prey to the pirate. A sluggish soul is a prey to Satan!

When the crocodile sleeps with his mouth open—the rat gets into his belly and eats his entrails. Just so, while men are asleep in sloth—the Devil enters and devours them!

Our sleeping time is Satan's tempting time!

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Stunted in grace

It is a pitiful thing, to be contented with feeble grace. Weak grace may live in the heart—but is sickly, and does not flourish into lively acts. Weak grace will not withstand strong temptations, or carry us through great sufferings. Little grace will not do God much service. A tree which has but little sap—will not have much fruit. It may be said that some Christians are stunted in grace.

Oh, labor to grow to further degrees of sanctity. The more grace—the more strength! "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever! Amen." 2 Peter 3:18

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If you live after the flesh

"If you live after the flesh—you shall die! But if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body—you shall live!" Romans 8:13

Take heed of the flesh! As good consult with the Devil, as with the flesh. The flesh is a bosom traitor. An enemy within the walls, is the worst enemy! The flesh cries out, "There is a lion in the way!" The flesh says as Judas, "Why all this waste?" "Why all this praying and wrestling? Why do you waste your strength? Why all this waste?"

The flesh cries out for ease—it is loathe to put its neck under Christ's yoke. The flesh is for pleasure—it would rather be playing games—than running the heavenly race.

Here is a description of fleshly pleasures, "You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions."

Amos 6:4-6. These are the delights of the flesh.

There was one who tried to please all of his five senses at once. He had a room richly decorated with beautiful pictures; he had the most delectable music; he had all the choice aromatics and perfumes; he had all the sumptuous candies of the confectioner; he was lodged in bed with a beautiful paramour. Thus he indulged the flesh, and swore that he would spend all his estate to live one week like this—though he were sure to be damned in hell the next day.

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. . . In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire!'" Luke 16:19, Luke 16:23-24

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They save one sin—and lose one soul!

Take heed of indulging any lust. Indulging in sin will spoil all effort for Heaven. Sin enfeebles; it is like the cutting of Samson's hair—then the strength departs. Sin is the soul's sickness. Sickness takes a man off his legs and so dispirits him, that he is unfit for any holy exercise. A sick man cannot run a race.

Therefore lay the axe to the root! Let sin be hewn down! Do not only abstain from sin in the act—but let the love of sin be mortified, and let every sin be put to the sword! Many will leave all their sins but one. They save one sin—and lose one soul! One sin is a fetter! A man may lose

the race as well by having one fetter on his leg, just as if he had many. I have read of a great monarch, who, fleeing from his enemy, threw away the crown of gold on his head—that he might run the faster. So, that sin which you wore as a crown of gold—throw it away that you may run the faster to the heavenly kingdom!

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All on fire for the world!

Take heed of too much pursuit after the world. The world cools holy affections. The earth puts out the fire.

The world hindered the young man from following Christ, "he went away sorrowful!" Whereupon, says our Savior, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" Luke 18:24. Demas' piety was buried in the earth, "Demas has forsaken me—having loved this present world." 2 Timothy 4:10

The world so blinds men's eyes—that they do not see the narrow way to heaven! It so fetters their feet—that they do not run in the way of God's commandments.

Mithridates, king of Pontus, being beaten by the Romans, and fearing he would not escape them—he caused a great deal of silver and gold to be scattered in the way, which while the Roman soldiers were busy gathering, he got away from them. Satan uses a similar strategy; knowing

what tempting things riches are—he throws them as baits, in men's way, that while they are eagerly gathering these, he may hinder them in their pursuit of eternal happiness!

It would hinder a man to climb up a steep rock, with heavy weights tied to his legs. Men's golden weights hinder them in climbing up this steep rock which leads to salvation!

A man cannot seek both Heaven and earth at the same time. He cannot love both Christ and the world, 1 John 2:15. He who is all on fire for the world—will be all ice for Heaven! Take heed of engaging your affections too far in these earthly things. Use the world as your servant—but do not follow it as your master.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Though the sinner shall drink a sea of wrath—yet he shall not drink one drop of injustice!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The glory of heaven!

If the mountains were gold; if every sand of the sea were a diamond; if the whole globe were a shining gem; it would all still be infinitely beneath the glory of heaven!

1. In heaven, there shall be freedom from sin. Here on earth, sin keeps house with us; it is as natural to us to sin as to breathe. The soul that is most refined, and cleansed by grace, is not without some dregs of corruption. But a sinful thought shall not creep in to heaven. There is beauty which is not stained with lust, and honor which is not swelled with pride. "Nothing impure will ever enter

it!" Revelation 21:27

2. In heaven, there shall be freedom from the assaults of the red dragon. It is sad to have Satan daily soliciting us by his temptations, and laboring to trick us into sin. But the old serpent is cast out of the heavenly Paradise!

3. In heaven, there shall be freedom from all afflictions. Our lives now are interlined with troubles. "My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak." Psalms 31:10. There are many things to occasion disquiet; sometimes poverty afflicts; sometimes sickness tortures; sometimes unkindness of friends

breaks the heart. Our lives, like the seas, are full of tempests. But in the kingdom of Heaven, there is nothing to give grief. There, all is serene and calm; nothing within to trouble, or without to molest.

4. The delights of the heavenly kingdom are unmixed. The comforts here below, are checkered. Honor may be stained with disgrace; joy interwoven with sorrow. Our skies are mixed with clouds.

But the delicacies of heaven are pure as well as pleasant. There is honey, which has not one drop of gall. The crystal spring of joy has no settlings of sorrow at the bottom. The rose in that paradise, is without prickles; the sun in that horizon, is without eclipse.

Heaven will make amends for all our labor and pains!

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Then the Devil shoots him with his fiery darts!

"While everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat." Matthew 13:25

While men are idle in the vineyard, they are a prey to every temptation. Satan sows most of his seeds of temptation in hearts which lie fallow. When he sees people unemployed, he will find work for them to do—he will stir them up to one sin or other. When Satan finds men in a drowsy condition, their sleeping time is his tempting time!

By watching and praying, we prevent the Devil's design—we are so busy with salvation that we have no leisure to listen to temptation.

When the bird is flying—it is safe; but when it sits still on the bough—it is in danger of being shot! When a Christian sits still and is inactive—then the Devil shoots him with his fiery darts!

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation!" Matthew 26:41

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A divine magnet!

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness." Romans 8:26

The Spirit helps us in all the duties of piety. The promises encourage us—and the Spirit enables us. In all earthly races a man runs in his own strength; but in the race to Heaven we have the Spirit of God helping us! He not only gives us the crown, when we have finished running—but He gives us legs to run! He gives us quickening and assisting grace!

The Spirit of God helping us, makes our work easy. If another helps us to carry a burden—it is less difficult. If the magnet draws the iron—it is not hard for the iron to move. If the Spirit of God, as a divine magnet—draws and moves the heart in obedience, then the work goes on with more ease.

"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:29-31

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## 04 The Christian Soldier (choice excerpts) cont'd

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The Christian Soldier (choice excerpts) cont'd A pleasant, easy way to Heaven

Someone asked Him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to!" Luke 13:23-24

Though Heaven is given us freely—yet we must take pains for it. Canaan was given Israel freely—but they had to fight with the Canaanites. It is not a lazy wish, or a sleepy prayer—which will bring us to Heaven.

We have a long race from earth to Heaven—but a little time to run; it will soon be sunset. In a race there's not only a laying aside of all weights which hinder—but a putting forth of all the strength of the body; a straining every joint that men may press on with all swiftness to lay hold on the prize.

Many have made themselves unfit to run this blessed race; they are drunk with the pleasures of the world. A drunken man is unfit to run a race.

Others neglect to run this race all their life; and when sickness and death approach—now they will begin! A sick man is very unfit to walk, much less to run a race! I acknowledge that true repentance is never too late; but when a man can hardly move his hand, or lift up his eyes—that is a very unfit time to begin the race from earth to Heaven.

The Lord has in his eternal decree joined the end and the means together—striving and entering; the race and the crown. And a man can no more think to come to Heaven without striving, than he can think to come to the end of his journey, who never sets a step in the way! Who expects a harvest without plowing and sowing? How can we expect the harvest of glory without labor?

Though our salvation with respect to Christ is a purchase—yet with respect to us, it is a conquest.

We have a precious soul to save! What pains do we take for the feeding and enriching of the body, the brutish part? O then what pains should we use for the saving of the soul? The body is but a ring of clay; the soul is the diamond. If Christ thought the soul was worth the shedding of His blood, well may we think it worth spending our sweat.

We have a heavenly kingdom to gain! What pains are used for earthly crowns and empires; men will wade to the crown through blood! Heaven is a kingdom which should make us strive for it—even to blood. The hopes of a kingdom (says Basil) should carry a Christian cheerfully through all labors and sufferings.

Some imagine that there is a pleasant, easy way to Heaven—an idle wish, a deathbed tear. But it is not so easy a thing as men imagine. There are . . .so many precepts to obey; so many promises to believe; so many rocks to avoid, so many sins to mortify; so many temptations to resist; so many graces to quicken— that it is a difficult matter to be saved.

Alas, there is a great work to be done; the bias of the heart must be changed. Man by nature does not only lack grace—but hates it! He has an envenomed spirit against God, and is angry with converting grace! Is it easy for the proud heart to be made humble? Is it easy for the earthly heart to be made heavenly? Can this be done without effort? It is all up hill to Heaven, and it will make us sweat before we get to the top of the hill.

Is salvation-work so easy? Can a man be saved by a faint wish? Can he leap out of the Devil's arms—into Abraham's bosom? Oh no! there must be striving.

A Christian must charge through the whole army of his lusts, every one of which is stronger than Goliath! He has no time to drowse; he must be either praying or watching.

Some think free grace will save them; but it must be in the use of means. "Watch and pray." Others say, the promises will bring them to Heaven; but the promises of the Word are not to be separated from the precepts. The promise tells us of a crown—but the precept says, "Run in such a way as to get the prize!" 1 Corinthians 9:24. The promises are made to encourage faith, not to nourish sloth. But others say, Christ has died for sinners; and so they leave Him to do all for them and they will do nothing.

Our salvation cost Christ blood; it will cost us sweat. The boat may as well get to shore without rowing, as we can get to Heaven without effort.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Not whom he may bite—but devour!

We read in Scripture of Satan's snares and darts; he hurts more by his snares than by his darts!

Satan opposes us both by open violence, and secret treachery.

1. Satan opposes by open violence—so he is called the Red Dragon. He labors to storm the castle of the heart; he stirs up passion, lust, and revenge. These are called "fiery darts," Ephesians 6:16, because they often set the soul on fire. Satan in regard to his fierceness, is called a lion, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour!" 1 Peter 5:8. Not whom he may bite—but devour! Yes, there is "a lion in the way," but we must resolve upon fighting.

2. Satan opposes by secret treachery—so he is called the Old Serpent. What he cannot do by force,

he will endeavor to do by fraud. Satan has several subtle devices in tempting:

Satan suits his temptations to the temper of the individual. Satan studies our dispositions, and lays suitable baits. He knew Achan's covetous heart, and tempted him with a wedge of gold. He tempts the youthful man with lust.

Satan tempts to sin gradually. He steals into the heart by degrees. He is at first, more modest.

He did not say to Eve at first, "Eat the apple!" No! but he goes more subtly to work. He puts forth a question, "Has God said? Surely Eve, you are mistaken; the bountiful God never intended to debar one of the best trees of the garden. Has God said? Surely, either God did not say it; or if He did, He never really intended it." Thus by degrees he wrought her to distrust God, and then she took of

the fruit and ate. Oh, take heed of Satan's first motions to sin, which seem more modest. He is first a fox, and then a lion.

Satan tempts to evil in lawful things. It was lawful for Noah to eat the fruit of the grape; but he took too much, and so sinned. Excess turns that which is good—into evil. Eating and drinking may turn to intemperance. Industry in one's calling, when excessive, becomes covetousness. Satan draws men to an immoderate love of the creature, and then makes them sin in that which they love—as Agrippina poisoned her husband Claudius, in that food which he loved most.

Satan puts men upon doing good out of evil ends. If he cannot hurt them by scandalous actions—he will by virtuous actions. Thus he tempts some to espouse religion out of ulterior motives. He tempts others to give to charity, for applause, that others may see their good works.

"Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one!" Ephesians 6:16. We must resist the devil by faith. Faith is a wise, intelligent grace. Faith can see a hook under the bait! Faith keeps the castle of the heart, so that it does not yield. Faith beats back the temptation. Faith holds the promise in one hand, and Christ in the other. The promise encourages faith, and Christ strengthens it; so faith beats the enemy out of the field!

We overcome Satan upon our knees! A Christian by prayer fetches in auxiliary forces from Heaven. In all temptations, go to God by prayer. "Lord, teach me to use every piece of the

spiritual armor—how to hold the shield, how to wear the helmet, how to use the sword of the Spirit. Lord, strengthen me in the battle; let me rather die a conqueror—than be taken prisoner, and led captive by Satan!"

Remember that Christ has given Satan his death-wound upon the cross. He has bruised the head of the old Serpent! He is a chained enemy, and a conquered enemy; therefore do not fear him. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you!" James 4:7. "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under

your feet!" Romans 16:20

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Suck out the sweetness of a truth

Meditation is a holy exercise of the mind; whereby we bring the truths of God to remembrance, and seriously ponder upon them and apply them to ourselves. It is a work which cannot be done in a crowd. A Christian must retire from the world, to have serious thinking upon God. It is not a few transient thoughts that are quickly gone; but a fixing and staying of the mind upon heavenly objects.

As the bee sucks the honey from the flower, so by meditation we suck out the sweetness of a truth. It is not the receiving of food into the mouth, but the digesting of it which makes it nutritious. So it is not the receiving of the most excellent truths in the ear, which nourishes our souls—but the digesting of them by meditation.

Satan does what he can to hinder this duty. He is an enemy of meditation. The devil does not care not how much we read—so long as we do not meditate on what we read. Reading begets

knowledge—but meditation begets devotion.

"Oh, how I love Your law! I meditate on it all day long." Psalms 119:97

Holy meditation quickens the affections. The reason why our affections are so cold to heavenly things is because we do not warm them at the fire of holy meditation. As the musing on worldly objects makes the fire of lust burn; the musing on injuries makes the fire of revenge burn; just so, meditating on the transcendent beauties of Christ, would make our love to Christ flame forth.

Meditation has a transforming power in it. The reading of the Word may affect us—but the meditating upon it transforms us. Meditation stamps the impression of divine truths upon our hearts. By meditating on God's holiness, we grow holy. While by meditation we look upon God's purity, we are changed into His likeness.

Meditation produces reformation. "I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to Your statutes." Psalms 119:59. If men would spend but one quarter of an hour every day in contemplating heavenly objects, it would leave a mighty impression upon them!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The looking-glass of self-love

"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

The heart is the greatest impostor.

Little does a man know what secret atheism, pride, and lust is in his heart.

As ignorance blinds, so self-love flatters.

Every man is ready to think the best of himself.

What Solomon says of love to our neighbor is most true of self-love; "it hides a multitude of sins." When a man looks upon himself in the looking-glass of self-love—his virtues appear greater than they are, and his sins less. Self-love makes one rather excuse what is amiss, than correct it.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalms 139:23-24

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He came hewing and cutting down men's sins!

"Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is near!" Matthew 3:2

Hence learn, what kind of ministry is likely to do most good, namely, that which works upon the consciences of men. John the Baptist lifted up his voice like a trumpet, he preached the doctrine of repentance with power! He came hewing and cutting down men's sins, and afterwards preached Christ to them. First, he poured in the vinegar of the law, then the wine of the gospel. This was that preaching which made men studiously seek after heaven. John did not so much preach to please—as to profit; he chose rather to reveal men's sins—than to show his own eloquence. The best mirror is not that which is most ornate, but that which shows the truest face. That preaching is to be preferred which makes the truest discovery of men's sins, and shows them their hearts!

It is the greatest mercy, to have a soul-searching ministry. If one had a desperate wound, he would desire to have it probed to the bottom. Who would not be content to have their souls searched, so they may have them saved?

John the Baptist was a burning and shining light; he did burn in his doctrine and shine in his life; and therefore men pressed into heaven. John 5:35

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Error damns as well as vice

Error is the adultery of the mind; it stains the soul. Error damns as well as vice. A man may as well die by poison—as by pistol.

Truth distinguishes a Christian from the world, as chastity distinguishes a virtuous woman from a harlot. We have not a richer jewel to trust God with than our souls; nor He a richer jewel to trust us with than His truths.

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God's severity against sin

Meditate on God's severity against sin.

Every arrow in God's quiver is shot against sin.

Sin burned Sodom, and drowned the old world.

Sin kindles hell.

The meditation of this would frighten us out of our sins. There cannot be so much sweetness in sin—as there is sting. How dreadful is God's anger! "Who knows the power of His wrath?" All fire, compared with the fire of God's wrath—is but painted and imaginary fire.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Our words show what our heart is

"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." Luke 6:45

Our discourse demonstrates what our heart is. As the looking-glass shows what the face is—whether it be fair or foul; just so, our words show what our heart is. Vain discourse reveals a light, feathery heart. Gracious discourse reveals a gracious heart. The water of the conduit shows what the spring is.

Holy discourse is very edifying. It enlightens the mind when it is ignorant—and settles it when it is wavering. A godly life adorns religion; godly discourse propagates it.

Gracious discourse makes us resemble Christ. His words were perfumed with holiness: "grace was poured into His lips." Levi made Him a feast—and Christ feasted him with holy discourse. The more holy our discourse is, the more we are like Christ.

God takes special notice of every good word we speak when we meet. "Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in His presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored His name." Malachi 3:16.

When men entertain bad discourse, Satan draws near, and makes one of the company; but when they have holy and gracious discourse, Jesus Christ draws near, and wherever He comes, He brings a blessing along with Him.

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." Colossians 4:6

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Go in a feather-bed to Hell

Slothful professors are settled on their lees. They make a lazy profession of piety—but use no diligence. They are like the lilies, which neither toil, nor do they spin. They have some faint wishes, "Oh that I had Heaven!" But a man may desire venison, and lack it—if he does not hunt for it. "The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied." Proverbs 13:4

Men would be content to have the kingdom of Heaven; but they are loath to fight for it. They choose rather to go in a feather-bed to Hell, than to be carried to Heaven in a "fiery chariot" of zeal and diligence. How many sleep away, and play away, their time—as if they were made merely to rest, or amuse themselves!

Such as have accustomed themselves to an idle, lazy disposition, will find it hard to shake off, "I have taken off my robe—must I put it on again?" Song of Solomon 5:3. The spouse had laid herself upon the bed of sloth, and though Christ knocked at the door, she was reluctant to rise and let Him in.

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Enslaved

"Enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures." Titus 3:3

Lust is an inordinate desire or impulse, provoking the soul to the gratifying of its carnal desires. Aristotle calls them 'brutish lusts' because when lusts are violent, they will not let reason or conscience be heard; but a man is carried brutishly to the satisfying of the flesh.

Men are enslaved by their drunken lusts. Though death is in the cup, they will drink it up. One having almost lost his eye-sight, the physician told him there was no cure for him, unless he would leave off his excessive drinking. "Then," replied he, "farewell sweet light!"

Men are enslaved by their impure lusts. Men are said to "burn in lusts," Romans 1:27. The apostle intimates that lust is a kind of fever. Feverish heats are not more deadly to the body, than lust is to the soul. O what folly is it—for a drop of pleasure to drink a sea of wrath!

Men are enslaved by their covetous lusts. Covetousness is the soul's idolatry. Their God is made of gold, and to it they bow down. Those who bowed down on their knees to drink of the waters,

were accounted unfit soldiers for Gideon. So are those unfit for Christ, who stoop immoderately to the

care of earthly things. Those who are enslaved by the world, what have they but the wind? "What does he gain, since he toils for the wind?" Ecclesiastes 5:16. The world cannot enrich the soul, it cannot remove pain. If pangs of conscience come, the world can no more give comfort, than a crown of gold can cure a head-ache.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The dregs of old age!

Someone asked Him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to." Luke 13:23-24

Many put off seeking for heaven, until old age. When they are fit for no other work, then they will begin this taking heaven by storm.

No man says, "I will learn my trade when I am old."

It is imprudence for one to begin to work for Heaven, when he is past his time for labor. There is a night of sickness and death coming, and our Savior says, "The night comes, when no man can work." Surely a man can put forth but little effort for Heaven when old age, and old sins are upon him. Besides, how unworthy and insincere it is—to give the Devil the flower of youth; and God the dregs of old age! There is little hope of their salvation—who are never seek for Heaven, until they are on the borders of eternity.

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Many seek heaven hypocritically

Many seek heaven hypocritically. They would have Heaven and their lusts too. But let not such seekers ever think to find happiness; let them not think they can lie in Delilah's lap—and go to Abraham's bosom when they die.

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What makes men so loathe to die?

Because their conscience accuses them that they are not fit for heaven—so now death looks ghastly! They are afraid death will carry them as prisoners to hell!

At the hour of death, sinners will awaken out of their lethargy—and fall into a frenzy of horror and despair!

But the Christian who has been active in piety, and has spent his time in the service of God, can look death in the face with comfort. Death shall do him no hurt; it shall not be a destruction, but a deliverance! It shall purge out sin and perfect glory!

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He who digs in a gold mine sweats

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

Love to Christ made Paul labor more than all the other apostles. A man will only strive for that which he loves. Why are men so eager in their pursuit after gold—but because they love it? Love causes delight, and delight causes diligence. Love is like oil to the wheels. Get love for Christ and piety—and you will never be weary; you will count those the best hours which are spent with God.

When a man has warmed himself by this fire, he is fittest for holy work.

He who digs in a gold mine sweats—yet love for the gold makes his labor delightful.

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It cost more to redeem us, than to make us

Great was the work of creation; but greater the work of redemption. It cost more to redeem us, than to make us. In the one, there was only the speaking a Word, Psalms 148:5 in the other, the shedding of blood, Hebrews 9:22. The creation was the work of God's fingers, Psalms 8:3; the redemption was the work of his arm, Luke 1:5. In creation God gave us ourselves; in redemption He gives us Himself!

## 05 The Doctrine of Repentance (choice excerpts)

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The Doctrine of Repentance (choice excerpts) By Thomas Watson, 1668

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

If any ingredient is left out

"Unless you repent, you will also perish." Luke 13:5

Repentance is a grace of God's Spirit, whereby a sinner is inwardly humbled and outwardly reformed. Repentance is a spiritual medicine made up of six special ingredients:

1. Sight of sin
2. Sorrow for sin
3. Confession of sin
4. Shame for sin
5. Hatred for sin
6. Turning from sin

If any ingredient is left out, it loses its virtue.

"I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds."  
Acts 26:20

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When we are lepers in our own eyes!

"Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices!" Ezekiel 36:31

A true penitent is a sin-loather. If a man loathes that which makes his stomach sick, much more will he loathe that which makes his soul sick! It is greater to loathe sin—than to leave it. The nauseating and loathing of sin, argues a detestation of it.

Christ is never loved—until sin is loathed.

Heaven is never longed for—until sin is loathed.

When the soul sees its filthiness, he cries out, "Lord, when shall I be freed from this body of death! When shall I put off these filthy garments of sin—and be arrayed in the robe of Your perfect righteousness! Let all my self-love be turned into self-loathing!"

We are never more precious in God's eyes—than when we are lepers in our own eyes!

The more bitterness we taste in sin—the more sweetness we shall taste in Christ!

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The damned in hell would be most penitent

"Unless you repent, you will also perish." Luke 13:5

There are several counterfeits of repentance.

A man has gone on long in sin. At last God arrests him, shows him what desperate hazard he has run—and he is filled with anguish! But after a while, the tempest of conscience is blown over, and he is quiet. Then he concludes that he is a true penitent because he has felt some bitterness in sin.

Do not be deceived! This is not true repentance! Both Ahab and Judas had great trouble of mind. It is one thing to be a terrified sinner—and another to be a repenting sinner. Sense of guilt is enough to breed terror in the conscience. Only infusion of divine grace, breeds true repentance. If pain and trouble were sufficient to repentance—then the damned in hell would be most penitent, for they are most in anguish.

"Men gnawed their tongues in agony, and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done!" Revelation 16:10-11

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A voyage to hell

"Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings!" Isaiah 33:14

Sin is like oil, and God's wrath is like fire. As long as the damned continue sinning—so long will the fire continue scorching! "They cursed the God of heaven for their pains and sores. But they refused to repent of all their evil deeds!" Revelation 16:11

But men question the truth of this, and are like impious Devonax who, being threatened with hell for his villainies, mocked at it and said, "I will believe there is a hell when I come there—and not before!" We cannot make hell enter into men—until they enter into hell.

If, for all this, men will persist in sin and are resolved upon a voyage to hell—who can hinder their damnation? They have been told what a soul-damning rock sin is—but if they will voluntarily run upon it and damn themselves—their blood is upon their own head!

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Satan warms himself at the fire!

Sin is a foolish thing. What greater foolishness is there, than to gratify an enemy! Sin gratifies Satan. When lust or anger burn in the soul—Satan warms himself at the fire! Men's sins feast the devil.

Samson was called out to amuse the Philistines. Likewise the sinner amuses the devil! Nothing more satisfies him—than to see men sin. How he laughs to see them hazarding their souls for the

world, as if one would trade diamonds for straws; or would fish for gudgeons with golden hooks!

Every wicked man shall be indicted as a fool, at the day of judgment. "But God said to him—You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" Luke 12:20

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Ask him now how he likes his bargain!

"The deceitfulness of sin" Hebrews 3:13

Sin is a mere cheat. While it pretends to please us, it beguiles us! Sin does as Jael did. First she brought the milk and butter to Sisera, then she pounded the tent peg through his head! (Judges 5:26). Sin first courts, and then kills! It is first a fox—and then a lion. Whoever sin betrays—it kills!

Those locusts in Revelation are fit emblems of sin: "They had gold crowns on their heads . . . They had tails that stung like scorpions, with power to torture people" (Revelation 9:7-10).

Judas pleased himself with the thirty pieces of silver—but they proved deceitful riches.

Ask him now how he likes his bargain!

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Worse than the torments of hell

Sin is worse than hell. Torment has its epitome in hell—yet nothing in hell is as bad as sin.

Hell is of God's making—but sin is not of God's making. Sin is the devil's creature.

The torments of hell are a burden only to the sinner—but sin is a burden to God.

In the torments of hell, there is something which is good, namely, the execution of divine justice. There is justice to be found in hell—but sin is a piece of the highest injustice. Sin would rob God of his glory, Christ of his purchase, the soul of its happiness.

Sin is the most hateful thing—for it is worse than the torments of hell.

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A holy antipathy against sin

There is no better sign of true repentance—than a holy antipathy against sin. Sound repentance begins in love to God—and ends in the hatred of sin.

How may true hatred of sin be known?

When a man's HEART is set against sin. Not only does the tongue protest against sin—but the heart abhors it. However lovely sin is painted—we find it odious—just as we abhor the picture of one whom we mortally hate, even though it may be well drawn.

Suppose a dish be finely cooked and the sauce good—yet if a man has an antipathy against the meat, he will not eat it. So let the devil cook and dress sin with pleasure and profit—yet a true

penitent has a secret abhorrence of it, is disgusted by it, and will not meddle with it.

True hatred of sin is UNIVERSAL. There is a dislike of sin not only in the judgment—but in the will and affections. Many a one is convinced that sin is a vile thing, and in his judgment has an aversion to it—yet he tastes sweetness in it—and has a secret delight in it. Here is a disliking of sin in the judgment—and an embracing of it in the affections! Whereas in true

repentance, the hatred of sin is in all the faculties, not only in the mind—but chiefly in the will: "I do the very thing I hate!" (Romans 7:15). Paul was not free from sin—yet his will was against it.

He who truly hates one sin—hates all sins. He who hates a serpent—hates all serpents. "I hate every false way!" (Psalms 119:104). Hypocrites will hate some sins which mar their credit. But a true convert hates all sins—gainful sins, complexion sins, the very stirrings of corruption.

A holy heart detests sin for its intrinsic pollution. Sin leaves a stain upon the soul. A regenerate person abhors sin not only for the curse—but for the contagion. He hates this serpent not only for its sting but for its poison. He hates sin not only for hell—but as hell.

Those who have no antipathy against sin, are strangers to repentance. Sin is in them—as poison in a serpent, which, being natural to it, affords delight. How far are they from repentance who, instead of hating sin—love sin! To the godly—sin is as a thorn in the eye; to the wicked—sin is as a crown on the head! "They actually rejoice in doing evil!" (Jeremiah 11:15).

Loving of sin is worse than committing it. What is it, which makes a swine love to tumble in the mire? Its love of filth. O how many there are—who love the forbidden fruit! They love their sin—and hate holiness.

There should be a deadly antipathy between the heart and sin. What is there in sin, which may make a penitent hate it?

Sin is the accursed thing, the most deformed monster! Look upon the origin of sin, from whence it comes. It fetches its pedigree from hell: "He who commits sin is of the devil!" (1 John 3:8). Sin is the devil's special work. How hateful is it to be doing that which is the

special work of the devil—indeed, that which makes men into devils!

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Powerful orators for mercy

"Mary knelt behind Him at His feet, weeping. Her tears fell on His feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing His feet and putting perfume on them." Luke 7:38

Mary brought two things to Christ—perfume and tears. Her tears were better than her perfume. Tears are powerful orators for mercy. They are silent—yet they have a voice. "The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping." Psalms 6:8

They say that tears have four qualities: tears are hot, moist, salty, and bitter. It is true of repenting tears. They are . . . hot—to warm a frozen conscience; moist—to soften a hard heart; salty—to season a soul putrefying in sin; bitter—to wean us from the love of the world. And I will add a fifth.

They are sweet, in that they make the heart inwardly rejoice "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy!"  
John 16:20

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The devil has two places he dwells in

"I love foreign gods, and I must go after them!" Jeremiah 2:25

A hard heart is a dwelling for Satan. As God has two places He dwells in—heaven and a humble heart; so the devil has two places he dwells in—hell and a hard heart.

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Worse than affliction

Sin is worse than affliction. There is more malignity in a drop of sin—than in a sea of affliction—for sin is the cause of affliction, and the cause is more than the effect. The sword of God's justice lies quiet in the scabbard—until sin draws it out!

Affliction is good for us: "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted" (Psalms 119:71).

Affliction causes repentance (2 Chronicles 33:12). The viper, being stricken, casts up its poison.

Just so, when God's rod strikes us with affliction, we spit away the poison of sin!

Affliction betters our grace. Gold is purest, and juniper sweetest—when in the fire.

Affliction prevents damnation. "We are being disciplined—so that we will not be condemned with the world." (1 Corinthians 11:32).

Thus, affliction is in many ways for our good—but there is no good in sin. Manasseh's affliction brought him to humiliation and repentance—but Judas' sin brought him to desperation and damnation. Affliction only reaches the body—but sin goes further—it

poisons the mind, disorders the affections. Affliction is corrective; sin is destructive. Affliction can but take away the life; sin takes away the soul (Luke 12:20).

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You cannot make a beast blush

"The wicked know no shame." Zephaniah 3:5

Many have sinned away shame. It is a great shame, not to be ashamed. "Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush!" (Jeremiah 6:15). The devil has stolen shame from men. When men have hearts of stone and foreheads of brass—it is a sign that the devil has taken full possession of them!

There is no creature capable of shame but man. The brute beasts are capable of fear and pain—but not of shame. You cannot make a beast blush. Those who cannot blush for sin, do too much resemble the beasts. There are some so far from this holy blushing, that they are proud of their sins. They are so far from being ashamed of sin, that they glory in their sins! They look on sin as a piece of gallantry. The swearer thinks his speech most graceful when it is interlarded with oaths. The drunkard counts it a glory that he is mighty to drink. But when men shall be cast into the

fiery furnace, heated seven times hotter by the breath of the Almighty—then let them boast of sin!

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A swine with a man's head

Sinners are compared . . . to foxes (Luke 13:32), to wolves (Matthew 7:15), to donkeys (Job 11:12), to swine (2 Peter 2:22).

A sinner is a swine with a man's head. He who was once little less than the angels in dignity—has now become like the beasts! The ungodly are, in a manner—wholly brutified! They do not act rationally, but are carried away by the violence of their lusts and passions. Our sins have taken away that noble, holy spirit which once we had. The crown has fallen

from our head. God's image is defaced, reason is eclipsed, conscience stupified!

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Sin must drown

"Unless you repent, you will also perish." Luke 13:5

The two great graces essential to a saint in this life, are faith and repentance. These are the two wings by which he flies to heaven.

Moist tears of repentance dry up sin—and quench the wrath of God. Repentance is the nourisher of piety—and the procurer of mercy.

Worldly tears fall to the earth; but godly tears of repentance are kept in a bottle. "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book." Psalms 56:8.

Either sin must drown in the tears of repentance—or the soul must burn in hell.

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Lose Christ and heaven

"How long will you love what is worthless?" Psalms 4:2

An unbeliever would rather lose Christ and heaven—than his lusts!

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The cancer of the soul

"Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep" Proverbs 19:15

Sloth is the cancer of the soul. Men had rather go sleeping to hell—than weeping to heaven! When Satan has by his witcheries lulled men asleep in sloth—then he destroys them!

## 06 The Duty of Self-Denial (self excerpts)

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The Duty of Self-Denial (self excerpts)

Thomas Watson, 1675

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

A bad Jacob's ladder to climb up to heaven!

A Christian must deny his own righteousness—his moralities, duties, and good works. The spider weaves a web out of her own body. A hypocrite would spin a web of salvation out of

his own righteousness. But Paul, like the bee, sucked salvation from the flower of Christ's righteousness. "That I may be found in Him—not having my own righteousness." Php 3:9

Put gold in the fire—and out comes the dross. Our most golden services are mixed with sin. "Our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6

We must never trust in our duties—but only in Christ's righteousness, for salvation. Noah's dove made use of her wings to fly—but trusted the ark for safety!

And if we must deny our holy things in point of justification, then much more our civilities and moralities. A stake may be finely painted—but it has no root. A man maybe painted with morality—and yet have no root of grace. A moral person is only externally washed—not internally changed. The life may be civil to men—when the heart is wicked against God; just as the sea may be calm—when the water is salty. The Pharisee could say he was no adulterer—but he could not say he was not proud. Luke 18:11

The moral person may have a secret antipathy against godliness. He may hate grace—as much as vice. Morality is but a cracked title to heaven. A piece of brass may shine—but, lacking the King's image—it will not pass as currency. A man may shine with moral

virtues—but lacking the image of God, consisting in holiness—he will not pass as currency at the day of judgment. Morality is good, but God will say, "You still lack one thing!" Luke 18:22. Morality is a good Jacob's staff to walk with among men—but it is a bad

Jacob's ladder to climb up to heaven!

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Blown down with a breath of a young girl!

"Peter replied—Even if all fall away on account of You, I never will." Matthew 26:33

But how soon was his self-confidence shaken and blown down with a breath of a young girl! "He denied it with an oath, saying, I don't know the man!" Peter's denying of Christ, was the result of not denying his self-confidence.

Deny self-confidence. It is just with God, that he who trusts himself—should be left to himself! The vine being weak—twists around the oak to support it. A godly man, being conscious of his own imbecility—twists by faith around Christ. Sampson's strength lay in his hair. Ours lies in our head, Christ. "I can do all things through Christ's strengthening me." Php 4:13

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High, supercilious thoughts of yourselves

"Vain man would be wise." Job 11:12

In the Hebrew it is "Empty man!" Man is a proud piece of flesh! He is apt to have a high opinion of himself.

Such as view themselves in the flattering looking-glass of self-love, appear bigger in their own eyes than they are! They think their spark—is a sun! They think their drop—is a sea!

That you may deny all high, supercilious thoughts of yourselves, consider that self-conceit is a great sin. Chrysostom calls it "the mother of hell." It is a kind of idolatry, a self-worshipping. This should pull down the plumes of pride and self-conceit!

"What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?" 1 Corinthians 4:7

Consider that, whatever noble endowments you have, are borrowed. What wise man would be proud of a jewel which was lent to him? The moon has no cause to be proud of her borrowed light.

Consider what a hell of sin you carry about you! Sin is the accursed thing, Joshua 5:13. It is the quintessence of evil. It was typified by the menstrual cloth, which was the most unclean thing under the Law. This may demolish all proud imaginations.

Grace can never thrive where pride and self-conceit grow. As a body with cancer cannot thrive—so neither can the soul thrive, which is cancered with pride and self-conceit. A proud head—makes a barren heart!

A supercilious conceitedness is odious to God. The more one values himself—the less God values him. Such as have a high opinion of their own excellencies, are on the fast track to eternal ruin! The Lord sometimes lets vain, conceited people fall—not only foully, but finally! "The doves," says Pliny, "take pride in their feathers, and in their flying high. But they soar so high, that they are prey to the hawk!" Just so, when men fly high in pride, they become prey to the prince of the air!

All this should make us kill the worm of self-conceit!

Let Paul be our pattern. Though he was the chief of the Apostles, he says, "I am less than the least of all God's people." Ephesians 3:8. "I am nothing." 2 Corinthians 12:11. This illustrious Apostle, a star of the first magnitude, shrank into nothing in his own eyes!

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Many dig their graves, with their teeth!

A Christian must deny his appetite.

More are hurt by excess in lawful things—than by meddling with sinful things. More are killed by wine—than by poison. Many make their belly their god, Php 3:19. And to this god, they pour their drink offerings!

One writes of a fish whose heart is in his belly. This is an emblem of epicures—whose heart is in their belly; they are devoted to their appetite. Excess in food or drink—clouds the mind, chokes holy affections, provokes lust, and shortens life!

Many dig their graves, with their teeth!

Seneca could say he was born to higher things, than to be a slave to his body. What a shame is it—that the soul, that princely part, which sways the scepter of reason, should be enslaved to the brutish part! What has God given conscience for—but to be a golden bridle to check

the inordinacy of the appetite! Deny the sinful cravings of the flesh!

"I beat my body and make it my slave." 1 Corinthians 9:27

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Take life easy!

"Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry!" Luke 12:19

A Christian must deny his ease. "Ease slays the simple." The flesh is prone to sloth and softness. It is loath to take pains for heaven. Weeds and vermin grow in untilled ground; and all vices grow in an idle, untilled heart.

How can they expect to reap a harvest of glory—who never sowed any seed? Is Satan so busy in his diocese, 1 Peter 5:8, and are Christians idle? Are they like the lilies—which neither toil, nor spin? O deny your ease! We must force our way to paradise.

God puts no difference between the slothful servant and the wicked servant, "You wicked and lazy servant!" Matthew 25:26.

Those slothful people in Etureia, who like drones enter into the hive and consumed the honey, were expelled from others and condemned to exile. Such as idle away the day of grace and fold their hands to sleep when they should be working out salvation—God will condemn to a perpetual exile in hell.

Let us shake off sloth—as Paul did the viper!

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Pull down these flags of vanity!

A Christian must deny sinful fashions. Romans 12:2, "Be not conformed to this world." That is—do not be conformed to the fashions and mode of it.

If the old Christians were to rise out of their graves—our new fashions might frighten them into their graves again!

Was there ever such excess in hair? 1 Corinthians 11:14, "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair it is a disgrace to him." More money is often laid out for a wig to cover one head—than would clothe twenty poor people. One asked Pastor Dod why he did not preach against 'those ruffians who wore long hair'. He replied, "If grace comes into their heart—it will make them cut off their hair."

Nor can the women be excused for their excess in apparel. "The Lord will strip away their artful beauty—their ornaments, headbands, and crescent necklaces; their earrings, bracelets, and veils of shimmering gauze. Gone will be their scarves, ankle chains, sashes, perfumes, and charms; their rings, jewels, party clothes, gowns, capes, and purses; their mirrors, linen garments, head ornaments, and shawls." Isaiah 3:18-23.

Seneca complained of those in his time who hung two or three houses on their ears! Some wear half their incomes upon their backs! Lysander would not allow his daughters to be too gorgeously attired, saying "it would make them more common—than lovely.

What painted faces and bare shoulders appear in the congregations! That professors should conform and comply with others in their antic dresses, is a reproach of piety! A tear in the eye—would more adorn than a tower on the head. O deny yourselves! Pull down these flags of vanity! 1 Timothy 2:9, "I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes." Let the hidden man of the heart, be beautified and bespangled with grace. "The king's daughter is all glorious within." Psalms 45:13

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Blown to hell with the breath of popular applause!

A Christian must never aim at fame, or self-applause. He must not look with one eye at piety—and aim at himself with the other eye.

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them." Matthew 6:1. They prayed and gave alms—that they might be seen by men. The oil of vain-glory fed their lamp!

It is a saying of Spanhemius, that there is in every man by nature—a measure of Pharisaism—a seeking after the glory and applause of the world. "Everything they do is

done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them, Rabbi."

Matthew 23:5-7. Luther confessed that, although he was never tempted with covetousness—yet he was sometimes with vain-glory!

The moth breeds in the finest cloth; and self-seeking is apt to breed in the best duties. Sinister aims corrupt piety. A good aim will not make a bad action, good—but a bad aim will make a good action, bad.

Some ships which have escaped the rocks, have been wrecked upon the sands. Many who have escaped the rocks of gross scandals have been wrecked upon the sands of self-seeking.

Popular applause is the golden arrow which glitters in the eye—but wounds the heart! How many have been blown to hell with the breath of popular applause!

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There are nails in that cross!

Some think of reigning with Christ—but not of suffering with Christ. The cross leads to the crown!  
"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." 2 Timothy 2:12

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."  
Luke 9:23

Christ shows us His cross. If we will not have Him upon these terms, the match is not likely to go on. Sufferings are waiting for us, Acts 20:23. "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." The devil has not grown kinder. "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour!" 1 Peter 5:8

The flesh cries out, "That cross is painful! There are nails in that cross which tear me!"

Can wicked men be content to suffer for their lusts—and shall we not suffer for Christ?

The prophet Isaiah sawn in half. Jeremiah was killed by stoning. Amos was killed with an iron bar. Luke was hanged on an olive tree.

I read that Irenaeus was carried to a place where a cross was set on one side—and an idol on the other. He was given a choice either to bow to the idol—or suffer on the cross. He chose the latter.

Basil speaks of a virgin condemned to the fire. She was offered her life and estate if she would bow down to an image. She answered, "Let life and money go; welcome Christ!"

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He will go laughing to hell

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."  
Luke 9:23

This justly indicts those who live in a contradiction to the text, who instead of denying themselves—they let loose the reins and give themselves up to all manner of pleasure and licentiousness. Pleasure enchants men's minds, and transforms them into beasts!

There is a place in Africa called Tombutium, where the inhabitants spend all their time in singing and dancing. And have we not many who consume their hours in plays and brothels? As if God has made them like the leviathan—to play in the sea. How will their countenances be changed when God shall say, "Give an account of your stewardship!" These frolicking sensualists live as if there were no world to come. They pamper their bodies—but starve their souls! As if one should feed his dog—but starve his wife!

Do epicures deny themselves? Indeed, in one sense they do. Enjoying their lusts—they deny themselves a part in heaven!

In the country of Sardinia there is an herb-like balm, that if a man eats of it—he shall die laughing. Such an herb is 'pleasure'. If one feeds immoderately on it—he will go laughing to hell.

Esau lost the blessing while he was hunting. O! How many, while they are hunting after worldly pleasures, lose eternal blessedness? There is a 'sin cup' brewing which will spoil the

sinner's mirth. Psalms 75:8, "For the Lord holds a cup in His hand; it is full of foaming wine mixed with spices. He pours the wine out in judgment, and all the wicked must drink it,

draining it to the dregs!" This wine is the wrath of God, and it is mixed; the never-dying worm and the eternal fire are mixed the cup! The Lord will proportion a sinner's torment

to his pleasure. Revelation 18:7, "She has lived in luxury and pleasure, so match it now with torments and sorrows!"

## 07 The Godly Man's Picture

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The Godly Man's Picture, Drawn with a Scripture Pencil, or, Some Characteristic Marks of a Man who is Going to Heaven By Thomas Watson

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

White feathers—but black skin

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." Matthew 23:27-28

Here is a sharp rebuke to such as are "glittering dross" Christians, who only make a show of godliness. These our Savior calls whitewashed tombs. Their beauty is all paint! Many are painted over with a religious profession, whose seeming luster dazzles the eyes of beholders; but within there is nothing but putrefaction!

Hypocrites are like the swan, which has white feathers—but black skin; or like that flower, which has a lovely appearance—but a foul scent.

The hypocrite deceives others while he lives—but deceives himself when he dies! What good will it do a man when he is in hell—that others think he has gone to heaven? Oh, beware of this!

Counterfeit piety is double iniquity. What is this but to abuse God to His face, and to serve the devil in Christ's livery?

To have only a pretense of godliness will yield no comfort after death. Will painted gold enrich a man? Will painted wine refresh him who is thirsty? He who has only a painted holiness shall have only a painted happiness! Let us take heed of this pious pageantry and devout stage-play!

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You blind fools!

"Yes, He is very precious to you who believe!" 1 Peter 2:7

There is nothing in Christ, but what is precious. His name is precious, His virtues are precious, His blood is precious—more precious than the world. The Rose of Sharon is always sweet!

We cannot prize Christ at too high a rate. We may prize other things above their value. That is our sin. We commonly overrate the creature; we think there is more in it than there is; therefore God withers our gourd, because we over-prize it.

But we cannot raise our esteem of Christ high enough. He is beyond all value! There is no ruby or diamond, but the jeweler can set a fair price on it. But Christ's worth can never be fully known. No

seraphim can set a due value on Him. His riches are unsearchable! Ephesians 3:8. Christ is more precious than heaven!

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

The ungodly choose things of no value, before Christ! "You blind fools!" Matthew 23:17. If a person chooses an apple before a priceless diamond—he is judged to be a fool. How many such idiots are there, who choose the gaudy, empty things of this life—before the Prince of Glory!

Give a baby a rattle—and it will not want gold. Give a worldling his lusts—and he will be content enough without Christ.

We value Christ above honor and riches. This Pearl of Great Price lies nearest our heart. He who prizes Christ esteems the gleanings of Christ—better than the world's vintage. He counts the worst things of Christ—better than the best things of the world. Moses "regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt." Hebrews 11:26

If we are the prizers of Christ, we cannot live without Him. A man may live without music, but not without food. A child of God can lack health and friends—but he cannot lack Christ. "Give me children," said Rachel, "or else I die!" Genesis 30:1. So the soul says, "Give me Christ—or else I shall die! Give me one drop of the water of life to quench my thirst."

If we are prizers of Christ, then we shall not complain at any pains to get Him. He who prizes gold, will dig for it in the mine. "My soul follows hard after God!" Psalms 63:8. He in whose eye Christ is precious, never rests until he has gained Him: "I sought Him whom my soul loves; I held Him, and would not let Him go!" Song of Solomon 3:1; Song of Solomon 3:4

If we are prizers of Christ, then we take great pleasure in Christ. What joy a man takes, in that which he counts his treasure! He who prizes Christ makes Him his greatest joy. He can delight in Christ, when earthly delights are gone. Though a flower in a man's garden dies, he can still delight in his money and jewels. He who esteems Christ, can solace himself in Christ, when there is a dearth of all other comforts.

If we are prizers of Christ, then we will part with our dearest pleasures for Him. He who esteems Christ, will pull out that lust which is as precious as his right eye! He who sets a high value on Christ, will set his feet on the neck of his sins!

How can they be said to prize Christ—who will not leave a vanity for Him; or who prefer a damning pleasure before a saving Christ!

"Yes, He is very precious to you who believe!"

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God's palace!

"Your boasting is not good!" 1 Corinthians 5:6

Pride is the greatest sacrilege; it robs God of His glory. What a horrid sin is pride! Chrysostom calls

it "the mother of hell." Pride encompasses all vice. Pride is a spiritual drunkenness; it flies up like wine into the brain and intoxicates it. Pride is idolatry; a proud man is a self-worshiper. How odious is this sin to God! "Everyone who is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord!" Proverbs 16:5. "I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13.

Those who look at themselves in the magnifying mirror of self-love, appear better in their own eyes than they are. There is no idol like self; the proud man bows down to this idol.

Many are proud of their riches. Their hearts swell with their estates. Pride is the rich man's cousin.

"Your heart has become proud because of your wealth." Ezekiel 28:5.

Many are proud of their apparel. They dress in such fashions, as to make the devil fall in love with them! Painted faces, gaudy attire, naked breasts—what are these, but the banners which sinful pride displays?

Many are proud of their beauty. The body is but dust and blood kneaded together. Solomon says, "Beauty is vain." Proverbs 31:30. Yet some are so vain—as to be proud of vanity! Shall dust exalt itself?

Many are proud of their gifts and abilities. These trappings and ornaments do not approve them in God's eyes. An angel is a creature of great abilities; but take away humility from an angel—and he is a devil! God loves a humble soul. It is not our high birth; but our humble hearts, which God delights in.

Oh, let us search if there is any of this leaven of pride in us! Man is naturally a proud piece of flesh. This sin of pride runs in the blood. There are the seeds of this sin of pride in the best of Christians—but the godly do not allow themselves in it. They strive to kill this weed, by mortification.

But certainly where this sin of pride reigns and prevails, it cannot stand with grace. You may as well call him who lacks wisdom, a prudent man; as him who lacks humility, a godly man. "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud, but gives grace

to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5. Put humility on, as an embroidered robe. It is better to lack anything, rather than humility.

The more value any man has, the more humble he is. Feathers fly up—but gold descends! The golden saint descends in humility. Look at a humble Savior—and let the plumes of pride fall off!

A humble heart is God's palace! "For this is what the high and lofty One says; He who lives forever, whose name is holy—I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit." Isaiah 57:15 A humble heart glories in this—that it is the presence chamber of the great and glorious King!

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They have many scars and spots

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

"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart." Hebrews 10:22

If the heart is sincere, God will wink at many failings. God's love does not make Him blind; He can see our infirmities. But how does God look at a believer's sins? Not with an eye of revenge—but of pity, as a physician sees a disease in his patient—so as to heal him. God does not see iniquity in Jacob—so as to destroy him; but to heal him!

How much pride, vanity, passion, does the Lord pass by in His sincere ones! He sees the integrity—and pardons the infirmity. We esteem a picture, though it is not drawn full length. Just so, the graces of God's people are not drawn to their full length. They have many scars and spots—yet being sincere, they shall find mercy. God loves the sincere, and it is the nature of love to cover infirmity.

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"Lord, smite this sin!"

"Your Word is completely pure, and Your servant loves it." Psalms 119:140

Do we love the holiness of the Word? The Word is preached—to beat down sin, and advance holiness. Do we love it for its spirituality and purity? Many love the Preached Word only for its eloquence and notion. They come to a sermon as to a performance, Ezekiel 33:31-32, or as to a garden to pick flowers; but not to have their lusts subdued or their hearts purified. These are like a foolish woman who paints her face—but neglects her health!

Do we love the convictions of the Word? Do we love the Word when it comes home to our conscience and shoots its arrows of reproof at our sins? It is the minister's duty sometimes to reprove. He who can speak smooth words in the pulpit—but does not know how to reprove, is like a sword with a fine handle, but without an edge! "Rebuke them sharply!" Titus 2:15. Dip the nail in oil—reprove in love—but strike the nail home!

Now Christian, when the Word touches on your sin and says, "You are the man!" do you love the reproof? Can you bless God that "the sword of the Spirit" has divided between you and your lusts? This is indeed a sign of grace, and shows that you are a lover of the Word.

A corrupt heart loves the comforts of the Word—but not the reproofs: "You hate the one who reproves...and despise him who tells the truth!" Amos 5:10. "Their eyes flash with fire!" Like venomous creatures that at the least touch, spit poison! "When they heard these things, they were enraged in their hearts and gnashed their teeth at him!" Acts 7:54. When Stephen touched their sins, they were furious and could not endure it.

How shall we know that we love the reproofs of the Word?

When we desire to sit under a heart-searching ministry. Who cares for medicines that will not work? A godly man does not choose to sit under a ministry that will not work upon his conscience.

When we pray that the Word may meet with our sins. If there is any traitorous lust in our heart—we would have it found out, and executed. We do not want sin covered; but cured! We can open our heart to the sword of the Word and say, "Lord, smite this sin!"

When we are thankful for a reproof. "Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it." Psalms 141:5.

David was glad for a reproof.

Suppose a man were in the mouth of a lion, and another should shoot the lion and save the man; would he not be thankful? So, when we are in the mouth of sin, as of a lion, and the minister by a reproof shoots this sin to death—shall we not be thankful?

A gracious soul rejoices, when the sharp lance of the Word has pierced his abscess of sin! He wears a reproof like a jewel on his ear: "Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear." Proverbs 25:12.

To conclude, it is convincing preaching which must do the soul good. A nipping reproof prepares for comfort—as a nipping frost prepares for the sweet flowers of spring.

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Then you will be thankful

If you wish to be thankful, get a heart deeply humbled with the sense of your own vileness. A broken heart is the best pipe to sound forth God's praise. He who studies his sins, wonders that he has anything, and that God should shine on such a dunghill: "I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man—but I was shown mercy!" 1 Timothy 1:13. How thankful Paul was! How he trumpeted forth free grace!

A proud man will never be thankful. He looks on all his mercies as either of his own procuring or deserving. If he has an estate, this he got by his wits and industry; not considering that scripture, "Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you power to become rich" Deuteronomy 8:18.

Pride stops the current of gratitude. O Christian, think of your unworthiness; see yourself as the least of saints, and the chief of sinners—and then you will be thankful.

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The golden bait

Gain is the golden bait, with which Satan fishes for souls! This was the last temptation he used with Christ: "All these things will I give You!" But Christ saw the hook under the bait! Many who have escaped gross sins, are still caught in a golden net!

A godly man dare not travel for riches, along the devil's highway. Those are sad gains, which make

a man lose heaven at last!

"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" Matthew 16:26

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The curtain-sinner

A godly man does not indulge himself in any sin.

Though sin lives in him—yet he does not live in sin. A godly man may step into sin through infirmity—but he does not keep on that road.

What is it to indulge sin? To indulge sin is to give the breast to it and feed it. To indulge sin is to commit it with delight. The ungodly "delight in wickedness," 2 Thessalonians 2:12. In this sense, a godly man does not indulge sin. Though sin is in him—he is troubled at it and would gladly get rid of it.

There is as much difference between sin in the wicked, and sin in the godly—as between poison being in a serpent, and poison being in a man. Poison in a serpent is in its natural place and is delightful—but poison in a man's body is harmful and he uses antidotes to expel it. So sin in a wicked man is delightful, being in its natural place—but sin in a child of God is burdensome and he uses all means to expel it.

A godly man will not allow himself in secret sins. Some are more modest than to commit open gross sin. That would be a stain on their reputation. All will not sin on a balcony—but perhaps they will sin behind the curtain!

But a godly man dare not sin secretly, for he knows that God can neither be deceived by our subtlety, nor excluded by our secrecy. He knows that secret sins are in some sense worse than others. They reveal more deceit and atheism. "He knows the secrets of every heart," Psalms 44:21.

But the curtain-sinner thinks that God does not see: "Have you seen what the leaders of Israel are doing with their idols in dark rooms? They are saying—The Lord doesn't see us!" Ezekiel 8:12. How it provokes God, that men's atheism should give the lie to His omniscience! "He who formed the eye—shall He not see?" Psalms 94:9.

A godly man knows that secret sins shall not escape God's justice. A judge on the bench cannot punish the treason of the heart. But the sins of the heart are as visible to God, as if they were written upon the forehead! As God will reward secret duties; so He will revenge secret sins!

A godly man enters his protest against sin: "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin?" Romans 7:24 A child of God, while he commits sin, hates the sin he commits!

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The harlot in your bosom!

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with

perseverance the race marked out for us." Hebrews 12:1

There is usually one sin that is the favorite—the sin which the heart is most fond of. A godly man will not indulge his darling sin: "I kept myself from my iniquity." Psalms 18:23. "I will not indulge the sin to which the bias of my heart more naturally inclines."

"Fight neither with small nor great—but only with the king." 1 Kings 22:31. A godly man fights this king sin. If we would have peace in our souls, we must maintain a war against our favorite sin, and never leave off until it is subdued.

Question: How shall we know what our beloved sin is?

Answer 1: The sin which a man does not love to have reprov'd—is the darling sin. Herod could not endure having his incest spoken against. If the prophet meddles with that sin—it shall cost him his head! "Do not touch my Herodias!" Men can be content to have other sins reprov'd—but if the minister puts his finger on the sore, and touches this sin—their hearts begin to burn in malice against him!

Answer 2: The sin on which the thoughts run most, is the darling sin. Whichever way the thoughts go, the heart goes. He who is in love with a person cannot keep his thoughts off that person. Examine what sin runs most in your mind, what sin is first in your thoughts and greets you in the morning—that is your predominant sin.

Answer 3: The sin which has most power over us, and most easily leads us captive—is the one beloved by the soul. There are some sins which a man can better resist. If they come for entertainment, he can more easily put them off. But the bosom sin comes as a suitor, and he cannot deny it—but is overcome by it. The young man in the Gospel had repulsed many sins—but there was one sin which soiled him, and that was covetousness.

Mark what sin you are most readily led captive by—that is the harlot in your bosom! It is a sad thing that a man should be so bewitched by lust, that if it asks him to part with the kingdom of heaven—he must part with it, to gratify that lust!

Answer 4: The sin which men most defend, is the beloved sin. He who has a jewel in his bosom, will defend it to his death. The sin we advocate and dispute for, is the besetting sin. The sin which we plead for, and perhaps wrest Scripture to justify it—that is the sin which lies nearest the heart.

Answer 5: The sin which a man finds most difficulty in giving up, is the endeared sin. Of all his sons, Jacob found most difficulty in parting with Benjamin. So the sinner says, "This and that sin I have parted with—but must Benjamin go! Must I part with this delightful sin? That pierces my heart!" A man may allow some of his sins to be demolished—but when it comes to one sin, that is the taking of the castle; he will never agree to part with that! That is the master sin for sure.

The besetting sin is, of all others, most dangerous. As Samson's strength lay in his hair—so the strength of sin, lies in this beloved sin. This is like a poison striking the heart, which brings death. A godly man will lay the axe of repentance to this sin and hew it down! He will sacrifice this Isaac; he will pluck out this right eye—so that he may see better to go to heaven.

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One sin lived in

A godly man considers the mischief which one sin lived in, will do.

1. One sin lived in, gives Satan as much advantage against you as more sins. The fowler can hold a bird by one wing. Satan held Judas fast by one sin.

2. One sin lived in, proves that the heart is not sound. He who hides one rebel in his house is a traitor to the crown. The person who indulges one sin is a traitorous hypocrite!

3. One sin lived in, will make way for more—as a little thief can open the door to more. Sins are linked and chained together. One sin will draw on more. David's adultery made way for murder. One sin never goes alone! If there is only one nest egg—the devil can brood on it!

4. One sin lived in, is as much a breach of God's law as more sins. "Whoever keeps the entire law, yet fails in one point, is guilty of breaking it all" James 2:10. The king may make a law against felony, treason and murder. If a man is guilty of only one of these—he is a transgressor.

5. One sin lived in, prevents Christ from entering. One stone in the pipe keeps out the water. One sin indulged in, obstructs the soul and keeps the streams of Christ's blood from running into it!

6. One sin lived in, will spoil all your good duties. One dead fly will spoil the whole box of precious ointment. A drop of poison will spoil a glass of wine. Abimelech, a bastard-son, destroyed seventy of his brethren, Judges 9:5 One bastard-sin will destroy seventy prayers.

7. One sin lived in will be a cankerworm to eat out the peace of conscience. "Alas! What a scorpion lies within!" (Seneca). One sin is a pirate—to rob a Christian of his comfort. One jarring string puts all the music out of tune. One sin lived in—will spoil the music of conscience.

8. One sin lived in, will damn as well as more sins. One disease is enough to kill. If a fence is made ever so strong, and only one gap is left open; the wild beast may enter and tread down the corn. If only one sin is allowed in the soul, you leave open a gap for the devil to enter! A soldier may have only one gap in his armor—and the bullet may enter there. He may as well be shot there—as if he had no armor on at all. So if you favor only one sin, you leave a part of your soul unprotected—and the bullet of God's wrath may enter there—and shoot you! One sin lived in, may shut you out of heaven! What difference is there, between being shut out of heaven for one sin—or for many sins? One millstone will sink a man into the sea—as well as a hundred!

Therefore, beware of cherishing one sin! Give a certificate of divorce to every sin. Kill the Goliath sin! "Let not sin reign over you." Romans 6:12. In the original it is "Let not sin king it over you." Grace and sin may be together—but grace and the love of sin cannot. Therefore parley with sin no longer—but with the spear of mortification, spill the heart-blood of every sin!

"For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live." Romans 8:13.

"So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you." Colossians 3:5

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Gospel bruising

"He will not break a bruised reed." Matthew 12:20

Will Christ not break a bruised reed? See, then, the gracious disposition of Jesus Christ—He is full of mercy and sympathy. Though He may bruise the soul for sin, He will not break it. The surgeon may lance the body and make it bleed—but he will bind up the wound.

As Christ has beams of majesty, so He has a heart of mercy. Christ has both the lion and the lamb in His escutcheon: the lion—in respect of his fierceness to the wicked (Psalms 50:22), and the lamb—in respect of His mildness to His people. His name is Jesus—a Savior; and His office is a healer (Malachi 4:2). Christ made a plaster of His own blood—to heal a broken heart!

Christ is the quintessence of love. Someone said, "If the sweetness of all flowers were in one flower, how sweet that flower would be!" Christ is that flower! How full of mercy is Christ, in whom all mercy meets! Christ has a skillful hand and a tender heart. "He will not break a bruised reed."

This text is a spiritual honeycomb, dropping consolation into all bruised hearts. This text is comforting to a poor soul who sits with Job among the ashes, and is dejected at the sense of its unworthiness. "Ah!" says the soul, "I am unworthy of mercy; what am I, that ever God should

look on me? Alas! I am unworthy." Does your unworthiness trouble you? What more unworthy than a bruised reed? Though you are despicable in your own eyes—just a poor shattered reed—yet you may be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. Do not let your unworthiness discourage you. If you see yourself as vile and Christ as precious—this promise is yours! Christ will not break you—but will bind up your wounds. "He will not break a bruised reed."

But how shall I know that I am savingly bruised?

When your spirit is so troubled that you are willing to let go those lusts which brought in the greatest income of pleasure and delight. When not only is sin discarded but you are disgusted with it—then you have been bruised enough. The medicine is strong enough, when it has purged out the disease. The soul is bruised enough, when the love of sin is purged out.

Did God ever bring you to your knees? Has your proud heart been humbled? Did you ever see yourself as a sinner and nothing but a sinner? Did you ever, with a weeping eye, look on Christ? (Zechariah 12:10) And did those tears drop from the eye of faith? (Mark 9:24) This is gospel bruising. Can you say, "Lord, though I do not see You—yet I love You; though I am in the dark—yet I cast anchor on You!" This is to be a bruised reed.

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Self-love is self-hatred

"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. Luke 9:23

Self-ease, self-ends, self-love, whatever comes in competition with (or stands in opposition to)

Christ's glory and interest—must be denied!

Self is the great snare! The rich young man in the Gospel might have followed Christ—but something of self hindered him. Self-love is self-hatred. The man who cannot get beyond

himself—will never get to heaven.

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It is of infinite concern!

"Redeeming the time." Ephesians 5:16

How you spend your time, is a matter of great importance. Many people fool away their time—some in idle visits, others in recreations and pleasures which secretly bewitch the heart, and take it away from better things. What are our golden hours for—but to attend to our souls? Time misspent is not time lived—but time lost!

Time is a precious commodity. As salvation is to be worked out in it, and a conveyance of heaven depends on using it well—it is of infinite concern!

Think of your short stay in the world. "We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a shadow—gone so soon without a trace!" 1 Chronicles 29:15

There is only a span between the cradle and the grave! Solomon says there is "a time to be born and a time to die"—but mentions no time of living—as if that were so short, it was not worth naming!

Time, when it has once gone, can never be recalled.

"My life passes more swiftly than a runner. It flees away, filled with tragedy. It disappears like a swift boat, like an eagle that swoops down on its prey." Job 9:25-26

This Scripture compares time to a flying eagle. Yet time differs from the eagle in this: the eagle flies forward and then back again—but time has wings only to fly forward—it never returns! "Time flies irrevocably."

The serious thoughts of our short stay here in this world, would be a great means of promoting godliness. Whoever considers how flitting and winged his life is—will hasten his repentance.

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Pull off the mask!

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Timothy 6:6

It is like digging in a gold mine. Godliness makes God Himself our portion! "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance" Psalms 16:5. If God is our portion—all our estate lies in jewels! Where God gives Himself—He gives everything else. Whoever has the castle, has all the royalties belonging to it. God is a portion that can be neither spent nor lost. "God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!" Psalms 73:26.

Godliness is "profitable for all things." 1 Timothy 4:8. What else is profitable, besides godliness? Food will not give a man wisdom; gold will not give him health; honor will not give him beauty. But godliness is profitable for all things: it fences off all troubles; it supplies all needs; it makes soul

and body completely happy.

Consider how vain and contemptible other things are, which people void of godliness, busy themselves about. Men are taken up with the things of this life, and "what profit has he who has labored for the wind?" Can the wind fill? What is gold but dust, which will sooner choke than satisfy! Pull off the mask of the most beautiful thing under the sun—and look what is inside. There is care and vexation! Worldly joys are as fleeting as a bubble floating down the stream.

Godliness is an enduring substance. All worldly delights have a death's-head set on them. They are only shadows and they are fleeting. Earthly comforts bring a man to his grave—and then take their farewell. But godliness is a possession which we cannot be robbed of. It runs parallel with eternity. Force cannot weaken it; age cannot wither it. It outbraves sufferings; it outlives death. Death may pluck the stalk of the body—but the flower of grace is not hurt.

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He tumbles in!

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." Galatians 6:7

This way of sin seems pleasant—but the end is damnable. The ungodly man treads on the precipice of the bottomless pit; and when death gives him a jog—he tumbles in!

"You fool! You will die this very night!" Luke 12:20

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Satan is their pilot!

"For those who are after the flesh—do mind the things of the flesh; but those who are after the Spirit—the things of the Spirit." Romans 8:5

The ungodly walk according to the flesh. If a drunken or unclean lust calls—they gratify it! Lust is the compass they sail by! Satan is their pilot, and hell the port they are bound for!

"For if you live after the flesh—you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body—you shall live." Romans 8:13

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Swim in a sea of mercy!

"The God who fed me all my life long unto this day." Genesis 48:15

What temporal favors we have received! Every day we see a new tide of mercy coming in. The wings of mercy have covered us; the breast of mercy has fed us! What snares laid for us have been broken! What fears have blown over! He has taken such care of us, as if he had no one else to take care of. Never was the cloud of providence so black—but we might see a rainbow of love in

the cloud. We have been made to swim in a sea of mercy! Does not all this call for thankfulness?

That which may put another string into the instrument of our praise, and make it sound louder—is to consider what spiritual blessings God has conferred on us. He has opened the wardrobe of heaven and fetched us out a better garment than any of the angels wear! He has given us the best robe, and put on us the ring of faith, by which we are married to Him. These are mercies of the first magnitude, which deserve to have an asterisk put on them! More—God keeps the best wine until last! Here on earth, He gives us temporal mercies only in small quantities; but the greatest things are laid up in heaven! Here on earth, there are some honey drops and foretastes of God's love; the rivers of pleasure are reserved for paradise! Well may we take the harp and violin and triumph in God's praise. Who can tread on these hot coals of God's love—and his heart not burn in thankfulness!

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## 07 The Godly Man's Picture (choice excerpts)

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The Godly Man's Picture (choice excerpts) cont'd

What is godliness?

Godliness is a REAL thing. It is not a fantasy, but a fact. Godliness is not the feverish fantasy of a sick brain; a Christian is no enthusiast, one whose religion is all made up of theory.

Godliness is an INTRINSIC thing. It lies chiefly in the heart. The dew lies on the leaf, the sap is hidden in the root. The moralist's religion is all in the leaf; it consists only in externals—but godliness is a holy sap which is rooted in the soul. "Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place" Psalms 51:6.

Godliness is a SUPERNATURAL thing. By nature we inherit nothing but evil. We sucked in sin as naturally as our mother's milk. But godliness is breathed in from heaven. God must light up the lamp of grace in the heart. Weeds grow by themselves; flowers are planted. Godliness is a celestial plant. A man has no more power to make himself godly, than to create himself.

Godliness is an EXTENSIVE thing. It is a sacred leaven which spreads itself into the whole soul. There is light in the understanding, order in the affections, pliability in the will, exemplariness in the life. He who is good only in some part is not godly. Grace is called "the new man," Colossians 3:10, not a new eye, or tongue—but a new man. He who is godly is good all over; though he is regenerate only in part; yet it is in every part.

Godliness is a GLORIOUS thing. As the jewel to the ring, so is piety to the soul, bespangling it in God's eyes. Godliness is glory in the seed, and glory is godliness in the flower.

Godliness is a PERMANENT thing. There is a great deal of difference between a stake in the hedge—and a tree in the garden. A stake rots and molders—but a tree, having life in it, abides and flourishes. When godliness has taken root in the soul, it abides to eternity. Godliness being engraved in the heart by the Holy Spirit, as with the point of a diamond, can never be erased.

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A living principle

As gold is the most precious among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Faith cuts us off from the wild olive tree of nature—and grafts us into Christ. Faith is the vital artery of the soul: "The just shall live by his faith." Such as are destitute of faith may breathe—but they lack spiritual life.

Saving faith is a living principle. Faith enlivens all the graces; not a grace stirs until faith sets it working.

Faith excites repentance. When I believe God's love to me—this makes me weep that I should sin against so good a God.

Faith is the mother of hope; first we believe the promise, then we hope for it. Faith is the oil which feeds the lamp of hope. Faith and hope are two turtledove graces; take away one, and the other languishes. If the sinews are cut, the body is lame; if this sinew of faith is cut, hope is lame.

Faith is the ground of patience; he who believes that God is his God, and that all providences work for his good, patiently yields himself to the will of God.

Faith is a panacea—a remedy against all troubles. It is a godly man's anchor which he casts out into the sea of God's mercy, and is kept from sinking in despair.

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They distill consolation into the soul

"He has given us His very great and precious promises." 2 Peter 1:4

The promises are comforting—for their being suitable for the Christian's every condition. The promises are like an herb garden. There is no disease but some herb may be found there to cure it. The promises of themselves cannot comfort us—but only as the Spirit enables us to suck consolation from these honeycombs. The promises are like a still full of herbs—but this still will not drop unless the fire is put under it. So when the Spirit of God (who is compared to fire) is put to the still of the promises—then they distill consolation into the soul.

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The devil has entered into these swine!

"If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" Romans 8:9

And if he does not belong to Christ—then whose is he? To what regiment does he belong? Do those who are malicious and unclean have God's Spirit? It would be blasphemy to say these have the Holy Spirit. Will the blessed Spirit leave his celestial palace to come and

live in a foul prison? A sinner's heart is a jail, both for darkness and obnoxiousness, and will God's free Spirit be confined to a prison? (Psalms 51:12) A sinner's heart is the emblem of hell. What would God's Spirit do there? Wicked hearts are not a temple—but a pigsty, where

the unclean spirit makes his abode—"the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience" Ephesians 2:2.

We would be loath to live in a house haunted by evil spirits; a sinner's heart is haunted! "After the sop Satan entered" John 13:27. Satan abuses the godly—but enters into the wicked. When the devils went into the herd of swine, "the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water" Matthew 8:32. Why is it that men rush so greedily to the commission of sin—but because the devil has entered into these swine!

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A whispering in God's ear!

"Let everyone who is godly pray to You." Psalms 32:6

A godly man is a praying man. As soon as grace is poured in—prayer is poured out!

"But I give myself unto prayer" Psalms 109:4. In the Hebrew it is, "but I prayer." Prayer and I are all one.

Prayer is the soul's communion with heaven. God comes down to us by His Spirit—and we go up to Him by prayer.

Caligula placed his idols—as whispering in Jupiter's ear;

Prayer is a whispering in God's ear!

A godly man cannot live without prayer. A man cannot live—unless he takes his breath; nor can the soul live—unless it breathes forth its desires to God. As soon as the babe of grace is born, it cries. No sooner was Paul converted than "behold, he prays!" Acts 9:11. No doubt he prayed before, being a Pharisee—but it was either superficially or superstitiously. But when the work of grace had been done in his soul, behold, now he prays!

A godly man is on the mount of prayer every day. He begins the day with prayer. Before he opens his shop—he opens his heart to God! We burn sweet incense in our houses; a godly man's house is "a house of incense"; he airs it with the incense of prayer. He engages in no business without seeking God. A godly man consults God in everything; he asks God's permission and his blessing. A true saint continually shoots up his heart to heaven, by sacred prayers.

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The devil's tennis ball

"We hear that some among you are idle." 2 Thessalonians 3:11

Piety never did grant a patent for idleness.

An idle person is the devil's tennis ball, which he bandies up and down with temptation—until at last the ball goes out of play!

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Evangelical obedience

Is it possible for anyone to walk according to the full breadth of God's law, and to follow God fully?

There is a twofold obeying of God's law.

The first is perfect, when all is done, which the law requires. This we cannot arrive at in this life.

Secondly, there is an incomplete obedience which is accepted in Christ. This consists in four things:

(1) An approving of all God's commands: "the commandment is holy and just and good . . .

I consent unto the law that it is good" Romans 7:12, Romans 7:16.

(2) A sweet delight in God's commands: "I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I have loved" Psalms 119:47.

(3) A cordial desire to walk in all God's commands: "O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes" Psalms 119:5.

(4) A real endeavor to tread in every path of the command: "I turned my feet unto Your testimonies" Psalms 119:59.

Evangelical obedience is true in its essence, though not perfect in its degree; and where it comes short, Christ puts His merits into the scales, and then there is full weight.

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Walking above the earth

"Noah walked with God." Genesis 6:9

The age in which Noah lived was very corrupt: "the wickedness of man was great in the earth" (Genesis 6:5). But the iniquity of the times, could not put Noah off his walk.

What is it, to walk with God? Walking with God imports five things:

1. Walking as under God's eye. Noah revered God. A godly man sets himself as in God's presence, knowing that his Judge is looking on: "I have set the Lord always before me." Psalms 16:8
2. The familiarity and intimacy which the soul has with God. Friends walk together and console themselves with one another. The godly make known their requests to God—and He makes known His love to them. There is a sweet fellowship between God and His people: "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" 1 John 1:3.
3. Walking above the earth. A godly man is elevated above all sublunary objects. The person who walks with God must ascend very high. A dwarf cannot walk among the stars—nor can a dwarfish, earthly soul walk with God.
4. Visible piety. Walking is a visible posture. Grace must be conspicuous to the onlookers. He who reveals something of God in his behavior, walks with God. He shines forth in biblical conduct. He is a walking Bible.
5. Continued progress in grace. It is not only a step—but a walk. There is a going on towards maturity. A godly man does not sit down in the middle of the way—but continues on. He may through infirmity step aside (as Peter did)—but he recovers by repentance, and goes on in progressive holiness: "The righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger." Job 17:9.

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The new has come!

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

When the truth of grace is in the heart—the beauty of grace is seen in the walk!

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Spider or bee?

A godly man strives to be an instrument for making others godly. He is not content to go to heaven alone, but wants to take others there. Spiders work only for themselves—but bees work for others.

A godly man is both a diamond and a magnet—a diamond for the sparkling luster of grace; and a magnet for his attractiveness. He is always drawing others to embrace piety. Living things have a propagating virtue. Where piety lives in the heart, there will be an endeavor to propagate the life of grace in those we converse with."My son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds" Philemon 1:10. Though God is the fountain of grace—yet the saints are the pipes which transmit the living streams to others!

Grace is like fire—which assimilates and turns everything into its own nature. Where there is the fire of grace in the heart—it will endeavor to inflame others.

Grace is a holy leaven, which will be seasoning and leavening others with divine principles.

Grace makes the heart tender. A godly man pities those who are in the gall of bitterness. He sees what a deadly cup is brewing for the wicked! They must, without repentance, be bound over to God's wrath! The fire which rained on Sodom was but a painted fire—in comparison with hell fire! This is a fire with a vengeance: "Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" Jude 1:7.

Now when a godly man sees Satan's captives ready to be damned—he strives to convert them from the error of their way: "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men!"

2 Corinthians 5:11. A godly man will be careful that his children should know God. He would be very sad if any of his children should burn in hell.

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God's garden

A holy heart is the garden where God plants the flower of His love. God's love to His people is an ancient love, it dates from eternity. (Ephesians 1:4) He loves them with a choice, distinguishing love; they are the "dearly beloved of His soul." Jeremiah 12:7.

The men of the world have bounty dropping from God's fingers—but the godly have love dropping from God's heart. He gives to one—a golden cup; to he other—a golden kiss.

God loves the godly, just as He loves Christ (John 17:26) It is the same love in kind, though not in degree. Here the saints merely sip God's love; in heaven they shall drink of rivers of pleasure (Psalms 36:8). The love of God to His people is permanent. Death may take their life away from them—but not God's love: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness!" Jeremiah 31:3.

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Continually weeding his heart

The ungodly do not understand the iniquity of their own hearts. You will sometimes hear them swear that their heart is good.

But a child of God sees much heart corruption. Though some flowers of grace grow there, he still sees how fast the weeds of sin grow—and is therefore continually weeding his heart by repentance and mortification.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalms 139:23-24

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Satan's kindness

"We are not ignorant of his devices" 2 Corinthians 2:11

The godly foresee a temptation, and will not come near. They see a snake under the beautiful flowers! They know that Satan's kindness—is craftiness!

The godly set their feet—where worldly men set their heart!

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Most receive the mark of the beast!

Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to." Luke 13:23-24

There are only a few godly people. Most receive the mark of the beast! The devil keeps open house for all comers, and he is never without guests!

If the number of the saints is so small, how we should strive to be found among these pearls! It is better to go to heaven with the few—than to hell in the crowd! Christ's flock is a little one. "Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom!" Luke 12:32

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If their fall had not knocked their brains out!

Godliness is most rational. If, while he remains in nature's soil, he is poisoned with sin—no more actually fit for communion with God, than a toad is fit to be made an angel—then it is the highest act of reason, to become a Christian.

It is rational because this change is for the better. Will not anyone be willing to exchange a dark prison—for a king's palace? Will he not exchange his brass—for gold? You who become godly, change for the better: you change your pride—for humility; you change your uncleanness—for

holiness. You change a lust which will damn you—for a Christ who will save you!

If men were not besotted, if their fall had not knocked their brains out—they would see that it is the most rational thing in the world to become godly.

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A Christian's joy

Godliness does not destroy a Christian's joy—but refines it.

"I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete."  
John 15:11

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Kills with her golden darts!

"Love not the world." 1 John 2:15

Take heed of the world. Many would like to be godly—but the honors and profits of the world divert them. Where the world fills both head and heart—there is no room for Christ. The world eats the heart out of godliness, as the ivy eats the heart out of the oak. The world

kills with her golden darts!

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It would produce a wonderful alteration

"I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Your testimonies" Psalms 119:59

By holy thoughts, the head grows clearer and the heart better. Serious meditation represents everything in its true color. It shows the evil of sin, and the luster of grace. If men would step aside a little out of the noise and hurry of life, and spend only half-an-hour every day thinking about their souls and eternity, it would produce a wonderful alteration in them!

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The day we eat of this tree

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" Revelation 2:7

This tree of life is the Lord Jesus. This tree infuses life—and prevents death. The day we eat of this tree—our eyes shall indeed be opened—to see God!

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God laid you steeping in Christ's blood

You who are enriched with the treasures of godliness—bless God for it! This flower does

not grow in nature's garden!

You had enlisted yourselves under the devil and taken pay on his side, fighting against your own happiness—and then God came with converting grace and put forth a loving and gentle violence, causing you to espouse His cause against Satan!

You had lain many years soaking in wickedness, as if you had been parboiled for hell—and then God laid you steeping in Christ's blood and breathed holiness into your heart!

Oh, what cause you have to write yourselves down—as eternal debtors to free grace! Oh, acknowledge the sovereign love of God! Admire distinguishing mercy! Set the crown of your praise—on the head of free grace! It is good that there is an eternity coming, when the saints shall make His praise glorious!

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A heap of stones and a hammer

In hell there is nothing to be seen, but a heap of stones and a hammer. A heap of stones—that is hard hearts; a hammer—that is God's power and justice, breaking them in pieces.

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Inter-weavings of sin and grace

As fire may be hidden in the embers, so grace may be hidden under many disorders of soul.

Often in the godly, a little grace is mingled with much corruption. There are, in the best saints, inter-weavings of sin and grace: a dark side with the light; much pride mixed with humility; much earthliness with heavenliness.

No, in many of the regenerate there is more corruption than grace! So much passion that you can hardly see any meekness. Jonah, a peevish prophet, quarrels with God, no—he justifies his anger: "I do well to be angry, even unto death!" Jonah 4:9. Here there was so much anger, that it was hard to see any grace.

A Christian in this life is like a glass which has more froth than wine, or like a diseased body that has more illness than vigor. It may humble the best Christian—to consider how much corruption is mingled with his grace.

The trembling soul thinks it will be swallowed up by sin. But God preserves a little quantity of grace in the heart—no, no, He makes that spark prevail over corruption! God sees the sincerity—and overlooks many infirmities. He nourishes the least sparks of grace, and blows them gently with the breath of His Spirit until they break forth into a flame. A little grace is grace—though it is smothered under much corruption.

I confess it is a matter of astonishment, that grace should not be wholly annihilated, especially if we consider two things:

(1) The malice of Satan. He is a malignant spirit and lays barriers in our way to heaven. The devil, with the wind of temptation, tries to blow out the spark of grace in our hearts. If this will not do, he stirs up wicked men and raises the militia of hell against us. What a wonder it is that this bright star of grace, should not be swept down by the tail of the dragon!

(2) The world of corruption in our hearts. Sin makes up the major part in a Christian. There are more dregs than grace in the holiest heart. The heart swarms with sin. What a great deal of pride there is in the soul! Now is it not astonishing, that this lily of grace should be able

to grow among so many thorns? It is as great a wonder that a little grace should be preserved in the midst of so much corruption—as to see a candle burning in the sea and not extinguished!

But though grace lives with so much difficulty, like the infant that struggles for breath—yet being born of God, it is immortal. Grace conflicting with corruption is like a ship tossed and beaten by the waves—yet it weathers the storm and at last gets to the desired haven.

But how is it that grace, even the least degree of it, is not quenched? It is from the mighty operation of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God, who is the source, continually excites and

awakens grace in the heart. He is at work in a believer every day. He pours in oil, and keeps the lamp of grace burning. Grace is compared to a river of life, John 7:38. The river of grace can never be dried up, for the Spirit of God is the spring which feeds it.

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Gunpowder!

Preserve a holy watchfulness over your hearts. The man who has gunpowder in his house, fears lest it should catch fire and explode. Sin in the heart is like gunpowder! It may make us fear lest a spark of temptation should fall on us and blow us up!

There are two things which may make us always watchful of our hearts: the deceits of our hearts, and the lusts of our hearts.

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The hypocrite picks and chooses

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness" Matthew 23:23

This is one great difference between a child of God and a hypocrite. The hypocrite picks and chooses in religion. He will perform some duties which are easier, and gratify his pride or interest—but other duties he takes no notice of.

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Kissing and hugging their dolls

"For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears—many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their

shame. Their mind is on earthly things." Php 3:18-19

To be godly and earthly, is a contradiction. Those who are eaten up with the world will be rejected, as ungodly, at the bar of judgment. We read that the earth swallowed up Korah alive, Numbers 16:32. This judgment is on many—the earth swallows up their time, thoughts and discourse. They are buried twice; their hearts are buried in the earth before their bodies. How sad it is that the soul, that princely thing, which is made for communion with God and angels, should be put to the mill to grind, and made a slave to the earth! How like the prodigal the soul has become, choosing rather to converse with swine and feed upon husks—than to aspire after communion with the blessed Deity! Thus does Satan befool men, and keep them from heaven by making them seek a heaven here on earth.

God himself sounds a retreat to us to call us off the world. "Love not the world" 1 John 2:15. "Be not conformed to this world" Romans 12:2. Do not hunt after its honors and profits.

Consider how much below a Christian it is to be earthly-minded. We sometimes laugh at children when we see them busying themselves with toys, kissing and hugging their dolls, etc.—when we do the same thing! At death, what will all the world be, which we so hug and kiss—but like a rag doll? It will yield us no more comfort then. How far it is below a heaven-born soul to be taken up with these things!

Consider what a poor, contemptible thing the world is. It is not worth setting the affections on; it cannot fill the heart. The creature will no more fill the soul than a drop will fill the bucket. That little sweet which we suck from the creature, is intermixed with bitterness. And this imperfect sweet will not last long: "the world passes away." The world constantly changes. It is never constant except in its disappointments. How quickly we may remove our lodgings and make our pillow in the dust! The world is but a great inn where we are to stay a night or two, and then be gone. What madness it is so to set our heart upon our inn—as to forget our eternal home!

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Christ is precious in His benefits By Christ all dangers are removed. Through Christ all mercies are conveyed. In His blood flows—justification (Acts 13:39); sanctification (Hebrews 9:14); fructification (John 1:16); pacification (Romans 5:1); adoption (Galatians 4:5); perseverance (Hebrews 12:2); glorification (Hebrews 9:12).

This will be a matter of sublimest joy for all eternity. We shall sing hallelujahs to the Lamb who has redeemed us from sin and hell, and has translated us into that glorious paradise, where we shall see God forever and ever.

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A Godlike disposition

"Partakers of the divine nature" 2 Peter 1:4

A godly man is like God. He has the same judgment as God; he thinks of things as God does. He has a Godlike disposition. A godly man bears both God's name and image. Godliness is Godlikeness. It is one thing to profess God, another thing to resemble Him.

Where God sees His likeness, there He gives His love.

A godly man is like God in holiness. Holiness is the most brilliant pearl in the King of Heaven's crown: "glorious in holiness" Exodus 15:11. God's power makes Him mighty;

His mercy makes Him lovely; but His holiness makes Him glorious.

The holiness of God is the intrinsic purity of His nature and his abhorrence of sin. A godly man bears some kind of analogy with God in this.

Holiness is the badge and mark of Christ's people: "The people of Your holiness" Isaiah 63:18. The godly are a holy, as well as a royal priesthood. They have written upon their heart, "Holiness to the Lord". The holiness of the saints consists in their conformity to God's will, which is the rule and pattern of all holiness.

The godly set themselves against evil, both in purpose and in practice. They are fearful of that which looks like sin (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

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Eaten up with self-love

"People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." 2 Timothy 3:2, 2 Timothy 3:4

People are for the most part eaten up with self-love; they love their ease, their worldly profit, their lusts—but they do not have a drop of true love to God.

A soul devoid of divine love is a temper which best suits damned spirits.

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God has two hands

The ungodly are vile people. Sin makes men base; it blots their name; it taints their blood. "They are all together become filthy" Psalms 14:3. In the Hebrew it is "they have become stinking." If you call wicked men ever so bad, you cannot call them worse than their name deserves: they are swine (Matthew 7:6); vipers (Matthew 3:7); devils (John 6:70). The wicked are dross and refuse (Psalms 119:119), and heaven is too pure to have any dross mingled with it.

The ungodly, while they live, are exposed to the wrath of God. "He who believes not, the wrath of God abides on him" John 3:36. Over his head hangs the sword of God's justice; and under him hell-fire burns!

God has two hands: one of mercy and one of justice. With the one, He will draw the godly to heaven; with the other, He will thrust the sinner to hell. The ungodly at death, must undergo God's fury and indignation. "The wicked shall be turned into hell" Psalms 9:17.

And oh, how dreadful is that place! It is called a fiery lake (Revelation 20:15). That is, a lake to denote the many torments in hell, a fiery lake to show the fierceness of the punishment. Fire is the most torturing element. Strabo in his "Geography" mentions a lake in Galilee of such a pestiferous

nature that it scalds off the skin of whatever is thrown into it. But alas, that lake is cool, compared with this fiery lake into which the damned are thrown.

This fire is inextinguishable: the wicked shall be choked in the flames, though not consumed: "And they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" Revelation 20:10. See the deplorable condition of all ungodly people! In the eternal world, they shall have a life which always dies, and a death which always lives. May this not frighten men off their sins and make them become godly, unless they are resolved to feel how hot hell-fire is?

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It will vent itself at the lips!

A godly man is heavenly in his speech. His words are sprinkled with salt to season others (Colossians 4:6). As soon as Christ had risen from the grave—He was "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" Acts 1:3. No sooner has a man risen from the grave of unregeneracy—than he is speaking of heaven. "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious" Ecclesiastes 4:12. He speaks in such a heavenly manner—as if he were already in heaven. The love he has for God, will not allow him to be silent. The spouse being sick with love, her tongue was like the pen of a ready writer: "My beloved is white and ruddy, his head is as the most fine gold . . ." Song of Solomon 5:10-11. Where there is a principle of godliness in the heart—it will vent itself at the lips!

How can they be termed godly—who are possessed with a dumb devil? They never have any good discourse. They are fluent and discursive enough in secular things: they can speak of their wares and shops, they can tell what a good crop they have—but in matters of religion they are as if their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth! There are many people in whose company you cannot tell what to make of them—whether they are Turks or atheists, for they never speak a word of Christ!

How can they be termed godly—whose tongues are set on fire by hell? Their lips do not drop honey—but poison, to the defiling of others! Plutarch says that speech ought to be like gold, which is of most value when it has least dross in it. Oh, the unclean, malicious words that some people utter! What an unsavory stench comes from these dunghills! Those lips which gallop so fast in sin, need David's muzzle. "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth" Psalms 39:1. Can the body be healthy—when the tongue is black? Can the heart be holy—when the devil is in the lips? A godly man speaks "the language of Canaan". "Those who feared the Lord spoke often one to another" Malachi 3:16.

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A dumb minister

Godly ministers must be:

The Godly Man's Picture (choice excerpts) cont'd(1) Painstaking. "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" 2 Timothy 4:2. The minister must not be idle. Sloth is as inexcusable in a minister, as sleeping in a sentry. John the Baptist was a "voice crying" Matthew 3:3. A dumb minister is of no

more use, than a dead physician. A man of God must work in the Lord's vineyard. It was Augustine's wish that Christ might find him at his coming either praying or preaching.

(2) Knowledgeable. "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction—because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty" Malachi 2:7. The prophets of old were called "seers" 1 Samuel 9:9. It is absurd to have blind seers. Christ said to Peter, "Feed my sheep" John 21:16. But how sad it is when the shepherd needs to be fed! Ignorance in a minister is like blindness in an optometrist. Under the law, he who had the plague in his head, was unclean, Leviticus 13:44.

(3) A plain preacher, suiting his matter and style to the capacity of his audience (1 Corinthians 14:19). Some ministers, like eagles, love to soar aloft in abstruse metaphysical notions, thinking they are most admired when they are least understood. Those who preach in the clouds, instead of hitting their people's conscience, shoot over their heads.

(4) Zealous in reproofing sin. "Rebuke them sharply" Titus 1:13. A man of God must suck the fire of zeal out of the breasts of Scripture! Zeal in a minister is as proper as fire on the altar. Some are afraid to reprove, like the swordfish which has a sword in his head, but is without a heart. So they carry the sword of the Spirit with them—but have no heart to draw it out in reproof against sin. How many have sown pillows under their people, Ezekiel 13:18, making them sleep so securely, that they never awoke until they were in hell!

(5) Holy in heart. How sad it is for a minister to preach that to others, which he never felt in his own soul; to exhort others to holiness and himself be a stranger to it. Oh, that this were not too often so! How many blow the Lord's trumpet with foul breath!

(6) Holy in life. Under the law, before the priests served at the altar, they washed in the laver. Such as serve in the Lord's house, must first be washed from gross sin in the laver of repentance. The life of a minister should be a walking Bible. A minister must imitate John the Baptist, who was not only "a voice crying"—but "a light shining" John 5:35. Those who live in contradiction to what they preach, disgrace this excellent calling. And though they are angels by office—yet they are devils in their lives! (Jeremiah 23:15).

## 08 The Lord's Prayer (choice 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. The 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

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

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The Lord's Prayer (excerpts) cont'd

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 Sin is an act of high

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 sinners 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 briars, is saved from falling into the river. Just so, God lets us fall into the briars 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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## 08 The Lord's Prayer (choice excerpts) cont'd1

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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.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 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!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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.

## 09 The Mischief of Sin

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The Mischief of Sin by Thomas Watson, 1671

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

When you were marching to hell!

"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy." 1 Timothy 1:13

Literally, "I was bemergied." Christians, why might not you have been in the number of those who persist in sinning? Because God has bemiraced you with mercy!

See what cause you have to admire the stupendous goodness of God, who has wrought a change in you—and checked you in your full career of sin!

Christians, you who are vessels of election—were by nature as wicked as others—but God had compassion on you and plucked you as brands out of the fire! He stopped you in your course of sinning—when you were marching to hell! He turned you back to Him by sincere repentance. Oh, here is the banner of love displayed over you!

Behold sovereign grace! Let your hearts melt in love to God. Admire His royal bounty. Set the crown of all your praises, upon the head of free grace! "By the grace of God I am what I am!" 1 Corinthians 15:10

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Another stick to heat hell

See what vast treasures of wrath are laid up for unrepentant sinners. "Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed." Romans 2:5

As guilt increases—so does wrath. Every sin committed, is another stick to heat hell—and make it burn the hotter!

It is a thing to be lamented—that men should live in the world, only to increase their torments in hell. While they commit new sins, they are burdening themselves with more iron chains, which will be so heavy at last, that they will not be able to bear them—or avoid them.

Oh, sinner! Know that for every sin, you are only adding to your torment! Every dish Satan serves you—will only increase your fatal reckoning, and make your condemnation heavier.

Every sin is a drop of oil upon hell's eternal furnace!

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Linked together with adamantine chains!

Sin is the womb of sorrow—and the grave of comfort! Sin turns the body into a hospital.

It causes fevers, ulcers, and cancers.

Sin is the Trojan horse, out of which a whole troop of afflictions come.

Sin drowned the old world, and burnt Sodom.

Sin and punishment are linked together with adamantine chains! Sin as naturally draws punishment to it—as the magnet draws iron!

Sin is a coal which not only blackens—but burns!

Sin draws hell at its heels. "The wicked shall be turned into hell." Psalms 9:7

Sin lays men low in the grave, and in hell too—without repentance.

Sin first tempts—and then damns!

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They tempt the devil to fall in love with them!

"I hate pride and arrogance." Proverbs 8:13

Pride runs in the blood.

Augustine calls pride, "the mother of all sin!"

Some people would be better—if they could pluck the worm of pride out of their head!

Pride ruins our virtues—and poisons our mercies.

Some are proud of their estates. Riches are fuel for pride. Ezekiel 28:5, "Your heart has become proud because of your wealth." Men's hearts rise with their estates.

Some take pride in their abilities. The Lord enriches them with wit and talents—and pride fumes from their heart into their head—and makes them giddy.

Some are proud of their bodies. Pride is seen in long and meticulous dressings. They spend that time between the comb and the looking-glass, which should be spent in prayer and holy meditation.

Pride is seen in painting their faces—overlying God's work with the devil's colors! But virtue is most beautiful to God. "Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within—the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God." 1 Peter 3:3-4

Pride is seen in the outlandish fashions with which some people dress—or rather disguise themselves. They clothe themselves like the rainbow. Adam was ashamed of his nakedness; these should be ashamed of their clothing. They are so plumed and gaudily attired—that they

tempt the devil to fall in love with them!

"The Lord detests all the proud of heart! Be sure of this—They will not go unpunished!" Proverbs 16:5

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The devils are scrambling for his soul!

"Covetousness, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5

Covetousness is the cancer of the soul.

Covetousness is a key which opens the door to further wickedness. 1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows!"

And what is one the better for all his wealth—at death? 1 Timothy 6:10, "We brought nothing into the world—and it is certain that we can carry nothing out." When the rich miser dies—what scrambling is there!

His friends are scrambling for his money!

The worms are scrambling for his body!

The devils are scrambling for his soul!

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Milk-white!

"The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sin!" 1 John 1:7

Christ's blood is a CLEANSING blood.

As the merit of Christ's blood pacifies God—so the virtue of it purifies us. Christ's blood is heaven's bath. It is a laver to wash in. It washes a crimson sinner—milk-white!

The Word of God is a looking-glass to show us our spots—and the blood of Christ is a fountain to wash them away! "On that day a fountain will be opened—to cleanse them from all their sins and defilement!" Zechariah 13:1

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

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Make us 'clods of earth' into 'stars of glory'

Christ is that golden pipe—through which the golden oil of salvation is transmitted to us.

"Because of His great love that He had for us" Ephesians 2:4

Nothing could fasten Jesus to the cross—but the golden link of love!

The emperor Trajan tore off a piece of his own robe to bind up one of his soldier's wounds. But Christ tore off His own flesh for us!

"He gave Himself for us to redeem us." Titus 2:14. Christ gave Himself for us—what more could He give? If He had anything to part with of more worth—He would have bestowed it upon us!

What astonishing love—that Christ should die for such as we are. What are we? Not only vanity—but enmity!

When we were rebelling—He was dying! When we had weapons in our hands—then He had the spear in His side! This is the very quintessence of love! "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us!" Romans 5:8. When we were engulfed in misery and had lost our beauty—then Christ died for us. O amazing love, which should swallow up all our thoughts!

What astonishing love—that Christ should die for us—rather than for the fallen angels. They were creatures of a more noble extraction and, in all probability, might have brought greater revenues of glory to God. Yet, that Christ should pass by those golden vessels, and make us 'clods of earth' into 'stars of glory'—O the hyperbole of Christ's love!

What a stupendous love is this!

Who can meditate upon His love—and not be in ecstasy!

We may behold the odiousness of sin—in the red looking-glass of Christ's sufferings. Sin is to be abominated, since it turned Adam out of paradise and threw the angels down to hell. Sin is the birthplace of our sorrows—and the grave of our comforts. But that which may

most of all disfigure the face of sin and make it appear abominable is this—It crucified our Lord Jesus!

O let us look upon sin with indignation! When a temptation to sin comes—let us say, "Is not this the sin which poured out Christ's blood!" Let our hearts be enraged against sin!

When the senators of Rome showed the people Caesar's bloody robe, they were incensed against those who slew him. Sin has rent the white robe of Christ's flesh—and died it a crimson color! Let us, then, seek to be avenged of our sins!

Under the Law, if an ox gored a man so that he died—the ox was to be killed, Exodus 21:28. Sin has gored and pierced our Savior! Let it die!

Let us be deeply affected with the great love of Christ for us. Who can tread upon these hot coals—and his heart not burn? Cry out with Ignatius, "Christ, my love, is crucified!"

If a friend would die for us—would not our hearts be much affected with his kindness? That the God of heaven would die for us—how should this stupendous mercy have a melting influence upon us! The body of Christ broken—is enough to break the most flinty heart. At our Savior's passion, "the rocks split apart!" He who is not affected with Christ's love—has a heart harder than the rocks!

How should we be affected with Christ's kindness who, to spare our life—lost His own! Let us pray that, as Christ was fastened to the cross—so He may be fastened to our hearts!

"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it!"  
Ephesians 3:19

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The fire will make them forget the pleasure!

"Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." 2 Timothy 3:4

"Reveling in their pleasures." 2 Peter 2:13

"They actually rejoice in doing evil!" Jeremiah 11:15

It is worse to love sin—than to commit it. He who loves sin—his heart is in the sin. He follows it with delight—like a man hunts his game.

Sinners say they hate the devil—but they love that which will bring them to the devil! Lovers of sin shall have more of hell torment. The fire will make them forget the pleasure! Oh, who would, for a cup of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath! "Don't be deceived:

God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap." Galatians 6:7

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A private back door to hell

"Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord." Jeremiah 23:24

Let me not only speak to scandalous sinners, who seem to have 'damnation' written upon their foreheads—but to secret sinners.

"Cursed is he who makes an idol and puts it in a secret place." Deuteronomy 27:15. Some of the Jews would not be seen openly bowing to an idol—but they would put it in their closet or some other secret place and there worship it.

There are many in like manner who will not sin on the balcony, or be like Absalom and sin in the sight of all Israel, 2 Samuel 16:22. But they shut up their windows, and commit their sin in secret. They have a private back door to hell—which nobody knows of!

Perhaps they live in secret adultery, or secret envy and malice, or secret neglect of duty. God knows that they are living in secret sins. What an aggravation of sin is this! These desperate, heaven-daring sinners, though they see the flaming sword of God's justice before them, resolutely venture on in sin!

"I have been watching!" declares the Lord. Jeremiah 7:11

"I have seen your detestable acts! Woe to you! How long will you be unclean?" Jeremiah 13:27

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A never-dying appetite for sin

"They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify Him. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused

to repent of what they had done." Revelation 16:9; Revelation 16:11

If men would men live forever—they would sin forever.

Some think it harsh that for the sins committed in a few years—they should undergo eternal torment. But here lies the justice and equity of it—it is because sinners have an everlasting principle of sin in them. Their stock of corruption is never spent. They have a never-dying

appetite for sin—which is justly punished with a never-dying worm! "Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched!" Mark 9:44

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They commit their filthy sins against Him!

"In spite of all this, they kept on sinning!" Psalms 78:32

See the sordid ingratitude of sinners. Notwithstanding the fact that they had such eminent and signal favors from God—the pillar of fire to lead them, the rock split to give them water—yet God's mercy could not, with all its oratory, prevail with them to leave their

iniquities. "They kept on sinning!"

God would draw men from sin by His mercies—yet they will indulge their lusts. Oh, how ungrateful! It is an ill nature—which will not be won with love. Beasts are wrought upon with kindness, Isaiah 1:3—but sinners are not! The wicked are worse for God's mercies! They,

like vultures—draw sickness from these perfumes!

The wicked deal with God as we do with the Thames. The Thames brings us in our riches—our gold, silks and spices—and we throw all our filth into the Thames. Just so do the wicked deal with God. He gives them all their mercies—and they commit their filthy sins against Him! "They kept on sinning!"

If mercy is not a magnet to draw us nearer to God—it will be a millstone to sink us deeper into hell. Nothing is so cold as lead—yet nothing is more scalding when it is melted. Nothing is so sweet as God's mercy—yet nothing is so dreadful, when it is abused!

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Take these three spears

Do with your sin—as Joab did with Absalom. He took three spears and thrust them through the heart of Absalom! 2 Samuel 18:14

Take these three spears—the Word of God, prayer, and mortification—and strike through the heart of your lusts, so that they die!

What is the end of all a Christian's duties, praying, and hearing—but to weaken and mortify lust! Why is this spiritual medicine taken—but to kill the child of sin! Sin will insinuate itself and plead for a reprieve—but show it no mercy!

Saul's sparing Agag lost him the kingdom—and your sparing sin will lose you the kingdom of heaven. Do with your sin, what Samuel did to Agag, "He hacked Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal." 1 Samuel 15:33.

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Nothing will convince them

If we could see hell-fire in every sin—it would make us fear to commit it! The fiercest creatures dread fire. When Moses' rod was turned into a serpent, he was afraid and fled from it. Sin will prove to be a stinging serpent. Oh, fly from it!

Most people are like the leviathan—a creature devoid of fear, Job 41:33. They play upon the hole of the asp. Sinners never fear hell—until they feel hell! Nothing will convince them

—but fire and brimstone!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A shortcut to hell!

The unchaste heart is a volcano—burning with lust! Immorality is the shipwreck of chastity—and the murder of conscience.

Immorality is a brutish sin. "They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife." Jeremiah 5:8

Immorality is a costly sin; it proves a purgatory to the purse. Proverbs 6:26, "The prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life." "You will lose your honor and hand over to merciless people everything you have achieved in life. Strangers will obtain your wealth, and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor. Afterward you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your body!" Proverbs 5:9-11

Immorality is a foolish sin. Proverbs 5:20. "The man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul!" Proverbs 6:32

The immoral person hastens his own death. "She seduces him with her persistent pleading; she lures with her flattering talk. He follows her impulsively like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer bounding toward a trap until an arrow pierces its liver, like a bird darting into a snare—he doesn't know it will cost him his life!" Proverbs 7:21-23. By an early death—the immoral person takes a shortcut to hell!

The fire of lust—kindles the fire of God's anger.

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

"Outside are the dogs, the sexually immoral." Revelation 22:15

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The heart of a beast

"Man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water!" Job 15:16

People sin with greediness, "Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more." Ephesians 4:19. They have grown rampant in wickedness, having laid aside the veil of modesty.

"The wicked know no shame." Zephaniah 3:5

We read that Nebuchadnezzar had the heart of a beast given to him, Daniel 4:16. If all who have the hearts of beasts, had the faces of beasts—men would be very scarce!

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Were our sins engraved upon our foreheads, we would be ashamed to look up!

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Worldly things can no more relieve a troubled mind—than a silk stocking can ease a broken leg!

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A father who chastises his child with tears

"When My anger is spent and I have vented My wrath on them—I will be comforted." Ezekiel 5:13

God does not take delight in punishing. Judges 10:16, "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." He is like a father who chastises his child with tears. But God was so provoked with the Jews, that it seemed a delight to Him to afflict. "When My anger is spent and I have vented My wrath on them—I will be comforted." Oh, what a venomous, accursed thing sin is—which makes a merciful God take comfort in the destruction of His own creature!

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It will soften a stone!

Christ's blood is a SOFTENING blood.

There is nothing so hard, that it cannot be softened by this blood. It will soften a stone! Water will soften the earth—but it will not soften a stone; but Christ's blood mollifies a stone. It softens a heart of stone. It turns a flint into a spring. The heart, which before was like a piece hewn out of a rock, being steeped in Christ's blood—becomes soft, and the

waters of repentance flow from it.

How was the jailer's heart dissolved and made tender when the blood of sprinkling was upon it! "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30. His heart was now like melting wax. God might now set whatever seal and impression He desired, upon it.

"I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart." Ezekiel 36:26

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Keep this medicine next to your heart

"The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey." Exodus 16:31

The manna was a lively type and emblem of Christ, for manna was sweet. It was a delicious food—and was called angel's food for its excellency. Psalms 78:25. So Christ, the sacramental manna, is sweet to a believer's soul. "His fruit was sweet to my taste," Song of Solomon 2:3. Everything of Christ is sweet. His name is sweet. His virtue is sweet. This manna sweetens the bitter waters of Marah.

Nay, Christ's flesh excels manna. Manna was food—but not medicine. If an Israelite had been sick, manna could not have cured him. But this blessed manna is not only for food—but for medicine! Christ has healing under His wings, Malachi 4:2. He heals the blind eye, and the hardheart. Keep this medicine next to your heart—and it will heal you of all your spiritual distempers.

Also, manna was corruptible. It ceased when Israel came to Canaan. But this blessed manna will never cease! The saints will feed with infinite delight and soul satisfaction upon Christ—to all eternity! The joys of heaven would cease—if this manna would cease.

Every crumb of this Bread of life is precious!

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Must we have our bracelets and diamonds, when Christ had the nails and spear going to His heart!

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The scum

Murmuring against God is not the way to get out of trouble—but rather to go lower into trouble! What does the child get by struggling—but more blows? Oh, do not lisp out a murmuring word against God! Murmuring is the scum which boils off from a discontented heart!

"I was silent; I would not open my mouth—for You are the one who has done this!" Psalms 39:9  
David's ear was open to hear the voice of the rod—but his mouth was not open in complaining.

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That duty which makes me proud!

"I hate pride and arrogance." Proverbs 8:13

Some take pride in their duties. This worm of pride, breeds in sweet fruit. They have said so many prayers, heard so many sermons. Luke 18:12, "I fast twice a week, and give a tenth of all I get." Now they think they have made God amends—that He is indebted to them and they shall be accepted for their religious performances. What is this but pride? Is this not to

make a Christ of our duties? The devil destroys some by making them neglect duty, and others by making them idolize duty. Better is that infirmity which humbles me—than that duty which makes me proud!

Some take pride in their graces. They look down on others whom they think are inferior to them in grace.

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The more bitterness we taste in sin —the more sweetness we shall taste in Christ!

## 10 The Ten Commandments (choice excerpts)

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The Ten Commandments (choice excerpts) by Thomas Watson

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

The afflictions of the godly

How do the afflictions of the godly, differ from the afflictions of the wicked?

(1) The afflictions of the godly are but corrections; but those on the wicked are punishments. The one come from a Father; the other from a Judge.

(2) The afflictions of the godly are fruits of covenant mercy. Afflictions on the wicked are effects of God's wrath. Afflictions on the wicked are the pledge of hell; they are like the shackling of a malefactor, which presages his execution.

(3) The afflictions of the godly make them better; but afflictions on the wicked make them worse. The godly pray more; "Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord." Psalms 130:1. The wicked blaspheme more. "Men were scorched with great heat—and blasphemed the name of God." Revelation 16:9.

Affliction on the godly is like bruising spices—which makes them give off a most sweet and fragrant aroma. Affliction on the wicked is like pounding weeds with a pestle—which makes them give off a foul stench.

It is a sign the affliction is sanctified, when the heart is brought to a sweet submissive frame.

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Mercy swims to us through Christ's blood!

Every link in the golden chain of salvation, is wrought and interwoven with free grace!

God's love is free. "I will love them freely." Hosea 14:4

Election is free. "He has chosen us in Him according to the good pleasure of His will." Ephesians 1:5

Justification is free. "Being justified freely by His grace." Romans 3:24

God's saving MERCY is free and spontaneous. To set up merit—is to destroy mercy. We do not deserve mercy, because of our enmity. We may force God to punish us—but not to love us! If God would show mercy only to such as deserve it—He would show mercy to none!

Mercy is an innate propensity in God to do good to distressed sinners. Mercy proceeds primarily, and originally from God. He is called the "Father of mercies." 2 Corinthians 1:3

God's saving mercy is powerful. How powerful is that mercy—which softens a heart of stone! Mercy changed Mary Magdalene's heart, out of whom seven devils were cast. She who was an inflexible adamant—was made a weeping penitent!

God's mercy works sweetly—yet irresistibly. It allures—yet conquers! The law may terrify—but mercy mollifies. Of what sovereign power and efficacy is that mercy, which

subdues the pride and enmity of the heart, and beats off those chains of sin, in which the soul is held!

God's mercy is superabundant. The Lord has treasures of mercy in store, and therefore is said to be "plenteous in mercy" (Psalms 86:5), and "rich in mercy" (Ephesians 2:4). The vial of God's

wrath, only drops—but the fountain of His mercy, runs. The sun is not so full of light—as God is of mercy. His mercy is over-flowing and ever-flowing. His mercy is infinite—without bounds, and without end. "His mercy endures forever." Psalms 136:1-26. Every time we draw our breath—we suck in mercy!

We are all living monuments of God's mercy! He shows mercy to us in daily supplying us. He supplies us with health. Health is the sauce which makes life sweeter. How those who are chained to a sick-bed, would prize this mercy! God supplies us with provisions. "God who fed me all my life long." Genesis 48:15. Mercy spreads our tables, and carves for us every bit of bread

we eat! We never drink, but in the golden cup of mercy!

God shows mercy in restraining us from sin. Lusts within—are worse than lions without! The greatest sign of God's anger, is to give men up to their sins. "So I gave them up to their own hearts' lust." Psalms 81:12. While the ungodly sin themselves to hell, God has laid the bridle of restraining grace upon us! As God said to Abimelech, "I withheld you from sinning against Me." Genesis 20:6 Just so, God has withheld us from those sins which might have made us a prey to Satan, and a terror to ourselves!

God shows mercy in guiding and directing us. He guides our affairs for us; and chalks out the way He would have us to walk. "You shall guide me with Your counsel." Psalms 73:24. God leads

us with the oracles of His Word, and the guidance of His Spirit. He guides our heads to keep us from error; and He guides our feet to keep us from scandal. Oh, what mercy it is—to have God

to be our guide and pilot!

God shows mercy in correcting us. He is angry—in love. He smites—that He may save. His rod is not a rod of iron to break us—but a fatherly rod to humble us. "God disciplines us for our good—that we may share in His holiness." Hebrews 12:10 In our afflictions—God will mortify some corruption, or exercise some grace.

God shows mercy in saving us. "According to His mercy, He saved us." Titus 3:5. This is the top-stone of mercy! Here mercy displays itself in all its orient colors. Mercy is mercy indeed, when God perfectly refines us from all the lees and dregs of corruption; when our bodies are made like Christ's glorious body, and our souls like the angels. Saving mercy is crowning mercy. It is not merely to be freed from hell—but enthroned in a kingdom! What rich mercy will it be—to fully

possess God, to see His smiling face, and to lay in His bosom forever! This will fill us with "a glorious, inexpressible joy!" 1 Peter 1:8. God's saving mercy, is the diamond in the ring!

Mercy more overflows in God—than sin in us. His mercy can drown great sins—as the sea covers great rocks! Christ's blood is "a fountain to cleanse them from all their sins and defilement." Zechariah 13:1. Some of the Jews who had their hands imbrued in Christ's blood—were

saved by that blood! God loves to magnify His mercy, and display the trophies of free grace!

How may I know that my sins are pardoned? Whenever God removes the guilt of sin—He breaks the power of sin. "He will have compassion; He will subdue our iniquities." Micah 7:19. With pardoning love—God gives subduing grace.

If we would have saving mercy, it must be through Christ. Outside of Christ, there is no saving mercy. We read in the old law, that none might come into the holy of holies, where the mercy-seat stood—but the high-priest. This signifies that we have nothing to do with mercy—but through Christ our High-priest. That the high-priest might not come near the

mercy-seat without blood, is to show that we have no right to mercy—but through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood, Leviticus 16:14. If we would have mercy, we must be in Christ. Mercy swims to us through Christ's blood!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The queen of graces

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment." Matthew 22:37-38

Love to God is a holy expansion or enlargement of soul, by which it is carried with delight after God, as the chief good—"a delight in God, as our treasure."

Love is the soul of religion; it is a momentous grace. If love is lacking, there can be no true religion in the heart. All else is but pageantry—merely a devout compliment to God.

Love ameliorates and sweetens all the duties of religion; it makes them savory food, which God delights in.

As to the excellence of this grace—love is the first and great commandment. Love is the queen of graces; it outshines all others, as the sun outshines the planets.

Love is the most durable grace. Faith and hope will shortly cease—but love will remain. Thus love carries away the garland from all other graces, as it is the most long-lived grace. Love is a bud of eternity!

Love to God must be pure and genuine. He must be loved chiefly for Himself. We must love God, not only for His benefits—but for those intrinsic excellencies with which He is crowned.

We must love God—not only for the good which flows from Him—but for the good which is in Him. True love is not mercenary; he who is deeply in love with God, needs not be hired with

rewards, he cannot but love God for the beauty of His holiness. Though it is not unlawful to look for benefits, we must not love God for His benefits alone—for then it is not love of God, but

self-love.

Love to God must be with all the heart. We must not love God a little—give Him a drop or two of our love; but the main stream must flow to Him.

The mind must think of God, the will must choose Him, the affections must pant after Him.

God will not have the heart divided. We must love Him with our whole heart. Though we may love the creature—yet it must be a subordinate love. Love to God must be highest, as oil swims above the water.

Love to God must be flaming. To love coldly, is the same as not to love. The spouse is said to be, "love-sick." Song of Solomon 2:5. The seraphim are so called, because of their burning love. Love turns saints into seraphim; it makes them burn in holy love to God. Many waters cannot quench this love.

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How may we know whether we love God?

He who loves God desires His presence. Lovers cannot be long asunder, they soon have their fainting fits, for lack of a sight of the object of their love. A soul deeply in love with God desires the enjoyment of Him. David was ready to faint away, when he had not a sight of God. "My soul

faints for God." Psalms 84:2

He who loves God, does not love sin. "You who love the Lord—hate evil." Psalms 97:10. The love of God—and the love of sin, can no more mix together than iron and clay. Every sin loved, strikes at the being of God. He who loves God, has an antipathy against sin. He who would part two lovers is a hateful person. God and the believing soul are two lovers; sin parts between them, therefore the soul is implacably set against sin. By this try your love to God. How can he say he loves God, who loves sin—which is God's enemy?

He who loves God is not much in love with anything else. His love is very cool to worldly things. The love of the world eats out the heart of piety; it chokes holy affections, as earth

puts out the fire. He who loves God—uses the world but chooses God. The world engages him—but God delights and satisfies him. He says as David, "God, my exceeding joy!" Psalms 43:4. "God is the cream of my joy!"

He who loves God cannot live without Him. Things we love, we cannot be without. A man can do without music or flowers, but not food. Just so, a soul deeply in love with God looks upon

himself as undone without Him. "Hide not Your face from me, lest I be like those who go down into the pit." Psalms 143:7. If God is our chief good—we cannot live without Him! Alas! how do they show they have no love to God—who can do well enough without Him! Let them have but food and drink, and you shall never hear them complain of the lack of God.

He who loves God will be at any pains to get Him. What pains the merchant takes, what hazards he runs—to have a rich return. Jacob loved Rachel, and he could endure the heat by day, and the frost by night—that he might enjoy her. A soul that loves God will take any pains for the fruition of

Him. "My soul follows hard after You." Psalms 63:8. The soul is much in prayer; it strives as in agony, that he may obtain Him whom his soul loves. "I will seek Him whom my soul loves." Song of Solomon 3:2.

He who loves God, prefers Him before estate. "For Whom I have suffered the loss of all things." Php 3:8. Who that loves a rich jewel—would not part with a flower for it?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ For a drop of pleasure

"You shall not murder." Exodus 20:13

Many murder their own souls! They willfully damn themselves, and throw themselves into hell!

Who are those who murder their own souls?

They willfully murder their souls—who have no sense of God, or the world to come, and are past feeling. Tell them of God's holiness and justice—and they are not affected at all. "They made their hearts as an adamant stone." Zechariah 7:12. Sinners have adamant hearts—nothing will work upon them, neither ordinances nor judgments. They do not believe in God; they laugh at hell. Thus they murder their own souls, and throw themselves into hell as fast as they can!

They willfully murder their own souls—who resign themselves to their lusts, let what will, come of it. "Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more." Ephesians 4:19. Let ministers speak to them about their sins, let conscience speak, let afflictions speak—they will have their lusts, even though they go to hell for them! Do not these murder their own souls? Many say in their hearts, "let our sins damn us—just so that they but please us!" Herod will have his incestuous lusts—though it costs him his soul. For a drop of pleasure—men will drink a sea of wrath!

These massacre and damn their own souls!

"A wicked man's iniquities entrap him; he is entangled in the ropes of his own sin. He will be lost because of his great stupidity." Proverbs 5:22-23

Oh! take heed of murdering your own souls!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ She is a common sewer!

"You shall not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14 This commandment is set up as a hedge to keep out impurity; and those who break this hedge—a serpent shall bite them! The fountain of this sin is lust. God is a pure, holy being, and has an infinite antipathy against all impurity. We must take heed of running on the rock of impurity, and so making shipwreck of our chastity. The meaning of the commandment is not only that we should not stain our bodies with immorality—but that we should keep our souls pure. To have a chaste body—but an unclean soul, is like a beautiful face with a cancerous heart. "Be holy, for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:16.

There is a mental adultery. "Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matthew 5:28. As a man may die of an inward bleeding—so he may be damned for the inward boilings of lust, if it is not mortified. That I may deter you from the sin of adultery, let me show you the great evil of it.

(1) Adultery is a thievish sin. It is the highest sort of theft. The adulterer steals from his neighbor, that which is more than his goods and estate; he steals away his wife from him!

(2) Adultery debases a person. It makes him resemble the beasts; therefore the adulterer is described like a horse neighing. "Everyone neighed after his neighbor's wife." Jeremiah 5:8. It is worse than brutish; for some creatures which are void of reason—yet by the instinct of nature, observe some decorum and chastity. The turtle-dove is a chaste creature, and keeps to its mate. And the stork, wherever he flies, comes into no nest but his own. Naturalists write that if a stork, leaving his own mate, joins with any other, all the rest of the storks fall upon it, and pull its feathers from it. Adultery is worse than brutish, it degrades a person of his honor.

(3) Adultery pollutes. The devil is called an unclean spirit. Luke 11:24. The adulterer is the devil's first-born; he is unclean; he is a moving quagmire. He is all over ulcerated with sin; his eyes sparkle with lust; his mouth foams out filth; his heart burns like mount Etna, in unclean desires. He is so filthy, that if he dies in this sin, all the flames of hell will never purge away his immorality! And, as for the adulteress, who can paint her black enough? The Scripture calls her a deep ditch. Proverbs 23:27. She is a common sewer! The body of a harlot is a walking dung-hill, and her soul a lesser hell!

(4) Adultery is destructive to the body. "Afterward you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your body." Proverbs 5:11. Immorality turns the body into a hospital, it brings foul diseases, and eats the beauty of the face. As the flame wastes the candle, so the fire of lust consumes the body. The adulterer hastens his own death. "So she seduced him with her pretty speech. With her flattery she enticed him. He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter or like a trapped stag, awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost him his life!" Proverbs 7:21-23.

(5.) Adultery is a drain upon the purse; it wastes not the body only—but the estate. "Keeping you from the immoral woman, from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life!" Proverbs 6:24-26. Whores are the devil's horse-leeches, sponges that suck in money. The prodigal son spent his inheritance, when he fell among harlots. Luke 15:30. The concubine of King Edward III, when he was dying, got all she could from him, and even plucked the rings off his fingers.

(6) Adultery destroys reputation. "But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul. Wounds and constant disgrace are his lot. His shame will never be erased!" Proverbs 6:32-33. Wounds of reputation—no physician can heal. When the adulterer dies, his shame lives. When his body rots underground, his name rots above ground. His bastard children are living monuments of his shame.

(7) Adultery impairs the mind. It steals away the understanding; it stupefies the heart. "Whoredom and wine take away the heart." Hosea 4:11. It eats all purity out of the heart. Solomon besotted himself with women, and they enticed him to idolatry.

(8) Adultery incurs temporal judgments. The Mosaic law made the penalty for adultery, to be death. "The adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death;" and the usual death was stoning. Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:24. The Salons commanded people guilty of this sin, to

be burnt. The Romans caused their heads to be stricken off. Like a scorpion—this sin carries a sting in its tail. "For jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge!" Proverbs 6:34. The adulterer is often killed in the act of his sin. "Lust's practice is to make a joyful entrance—but she leaves in misery." I have read of two in London, who, having defiled themselves with adultery, were immediately struck dead with lightening from heaven. If all who are now guilty of this sin were to be punished in this manner, it would rain fire again, as on Sodom.

(9) Adultery, without repentance, damns the soul. "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor homosexual offenders . . . will inherit the kingdom of God!" 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. The fire of lust, brings to the fire of hell. "God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral!" Hebrews 13:4. Though men may neglect to judge them—yet God will judge them! He will judge them assuredly; they shall not escape the hand of justice; and He will punish them severely. The harlot's breasts keeps from Abraham's bosom! "The delight lasts a moment—the torment an eternity!" Who for a cup of pleasure—would drink a sea of wrath! "Her guests are in the depths of hell." Proverbs 9:18. The harlot is perfumed with powders, and lovely to look on—but poisonous and damnable to the soul! "She has cast down many wounded, yes, many strong men have been slain by her." Proverbs 7:26.

(10) The adulterer does all he can, to destroy the soul of another—and so kills two at once! He is worse than the thief; for, suppose a thief robs a man, yes, and also takes away his life—the man's soul may be happy; he may go to heaven as well as if he had died in his bed. But he who commits adultery, endangers the soul of another, and does all he can, to deprive her of salvation. What a fearful thing it is—to be an instrument to draw another to hell!

(11) The adulterer is abhorred of God. "The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit; he who is abhorred by the Lord, will fall into it." Proverbs 22:14. What can be worse than to be abhorred by God? God may be angry with His own children; but for God to abhor a man—is the highest degree of hatred! The immoral person stands upon the threshold of hell; and when death gives him a push—he tumbles in!

All this should sound a warning in our ears, and call us off from the pursuit of so damnable a sin as immorality. Hear what the Scriptures say: "Her house is the way to hell." Proverbs 7:27.

I shall give some directions, by way of antidote, to keep from the infection of this sin.

(1) Do not come into the company of a whorish woman; avoid her house, as a seaman does a rock. "Run from her! Don't go near the door of her house!" Proverbs 5:8. He who would not have the plague, must not come near infected houses; every whore-house has the plague in it. Not to avoid the occasion of sin, and yet pray, "Lead us not into temptation," is, as if one should put his finger into the candle, and yet pray that it may not be burnt!

(2) Look to your eyes. Much sin comes in by the eye. "Having eyes full of adultery." 2 Peter 2:14. The eye tempts the imagination, and the imagination works upon the heart. A lustful amorous eye, may usher in sin. Eve first saw the tree of knowledge—and then she took. Genesis 3:6. First she looked—and then she loved. The eye often sets the heart on fire; therefore Job laid a law upon his eyes. "I made a covenant with my eyes—not to look with lust upon a young woman." Job 31:1.

(3) Look to your lips. Take heed of any unclean word which may enkindle unclean thoughts in yourselves or others. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." 1 Corinthians 15:33. Impure discourse, is the bellows to blow up the fire of lust. Much evil is conveyed to the heart by the tongue. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth!" Psalms 141:3.

(4) Look in a special manner to your heart. "Guard your heart with all diligence." Proverbs 4:23. Every person has a tempter in his own bosom! "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adultery, all other sexual immorality." Matthew 15:19. Thinking of sin, makes way for the act of sin. Suppress the first risings of sin in your heart. As the serpent, when danger is near—guards his head, so keep your heart, which is the spring from whence all lustful motions proceed.

(5) Look to your attire. We read of the attire of a harlot. Proverbs 7:10. A wanton dress is a provocation to lust. A painted face, and half-naked breasts, are allurements to immorality. Where the sign is hung out—people will go in and taste the liquor. Jerome says, "those who by their lascivious attire endeavor to draw others to lust, though no evil follows—are tempters—and shall be punished, because they offered the poison to others, even though they would not drink."

(6) Take heed of evil company. Sin is a very contagious disease; one person tempts another to sin, and hardens him in it. There are three cords which draw men to immorality:

the inclination of the heart,

the persuasion of evil company, and

the embraces of the harlot. This threefold cord is not easily broken. "A fire was kindled in their company." Psalms 106:18. The fire of lust is kindled in bad company.

(7) Beware of going to theaters and plays. A playhouse is often a preface to a whorehouse. "Plays furnish the seeds of wickedness." We are bid to avoid all appearance of evil; and are not plays the appearance of evil? Such sights are there, which are not fit to be beheld with chaste eyes. A learned divine observes, that many have on their death-beds confessed, with tears, that the pollution of their bodies has been occasioned by going to plays.

(8) Take heed of mixed dancing. "Dances are instruments of lust and wantonness." From dancing, people come to dalliance with another, and from dalliance to immorality. "There is," says Calvin, "for the most part, some unchaste behavior in dancing." Dances draw the heart to immorality—by wanton gestures, by unchaste touches, and by lustful looks. Chrysostom inveighed against mixed dancing in his time. "We read," he says, "of a marriage feast—but of dancing there—we read not." Matthew 25:7. Many have been ensnared by dancing. "Dancing is not the conduct of a chaste woman—but of the adulteress," says Ambrose. Chrysostom says, "Where dancing is, there the devil is!"

(9) Take heed of lascivious books and pictures, which provoke to lust. As the reading of the Scripture stirs up love to God, so reading vile books stirs up the mind to wickedness. To lascivious books I may add lascivious pictures, which bewitch the eye, and are incendiaries to lust! They secretly convey poison to the heart.

(10) Take heed of excess in diet. When gluttony and drunkenness lead the van, immorality and wantonness bring up the rear. "Wine inflames lust." "Sodom's sins were pride, laziness, and

gluttony." Ezekiel 16:49. The foulest weeds grow out of the fattest soil. Immorality proceeds from excess. "When I had fed them to the full, everyone neighed after his neighbor's wife." Jeremiah 5:8. Get the "golden bridle of temperance." God allows the refreshment of nature, and what may fit us the better for his service; but beware of surfeit. Excess in temporal things—clouds the mind, chokes good affections, and provokes lust. "I discipline my body and bring it under strict control." 1 Corinthians 9:27. The flesh pampered—is liable to immorality.

(11) Take heed of idleness. When a man is idle, he is ready to receive any temptation. The devil sows most of his seeds of temptation in fallow ground. Idleness is the cause of sodomy and immorality. "Sodom's sins were pride, laziness, and gluttony." Ezekiel 16:49. When David was idle on the top of his house, he espied Bathsheba, and committed adultery with her. 2 Samuel 11:4. Jerome gave his friend counsel to be always well employed in God's vineyard, that when the devil came, he might have no leisure to listen to temptation.

(12) To avoid fornication and adultery, let every man have a chaste, entire love to his own wife. Ezekiel's wife was the desire of his eyes. Ezekiel 24:16. When Solomon had dissuaded from immoral women, he prescribed a remedy against it. "Rejoice with the wife of your youth." Proverbs 5:18. It is not having a wife—but loving a wife—which makes a man live chastely. He who loves his wife, whom Solomon calls his fountain, will not go abroad to drink of muddy, poisoned waters. Pure marital love is a gift of God, and comes from heaven; but, like the vestal fire, it must be nourished, so that it does not go out. He who does not love his wife, is the likeliest person to embrace the bosom of a harlot.

(13) Labor to get the fear of God into your hearts. "By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil." Proverbs 16:6. As the embankment keeps out the water, so the fear of the Lord keeps out immorality. Such as lack the fear of God, lack the bridle which should check them from sin! How did Joseph keep from his mistress' temptation? The fear of God pulled him back! "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!" Genesis 39:9. Bernard calls holy fear, "the door-keeper of the soul." As a nobleman's porter stands at the door, and keeps out vagrants, so the fear of God stands and keeps out all sinful temptations from entering.

(14) Take delight in the Word of God. "How sweet are Your words unto my taste." Psalms 119:103. Chrysostom compares God's Word to a garden. If we walk in this garden, and suck sweetness from the flowers of the promises, we shall never care to pluck the "forbidden fruit." "Let the Scriptures be my pure pleasure," says Augustine. The reason why people seek after unchaste, sinful pleasures—is because they have nothing better. Caesar riding through a city, and seeing the women play with dogs and parrots, said, "Surely, they have no children." So those who sport with harlots, have no better pleasures. He who has once tasted Christ in a promise, is ravished with delight; and he would scorn a temptation to sin! Job said, that the Word was his "appointed food." Job 23:12. No wonder then, that he made a "covenant with his eyes."

(15) If you would abstain from adultery, use serious consideration.

[1] Consider that God sees you in the act of sin! He sees all your curtain wickedness. He is totus oculus—"all eye." The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain—to hide you from God's eye! Whenever you sin—your Judge looks on! "I have seen your detestable acts—your adulteries and your neighings." Jeremiah 13:27. "They have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives. I

know it and am a witness to it! declares the Lord." Jeremiah 29:23.

[2] Consider that few who are entangled in the sin of adultery, ever recover from the snare. "None that go to her return again." Proverbs 2:19. This made some of the ancients conclude that adultery was an unpardonable sin; but it is not so. David repented. Mary Magdalene was a weeping penitent; upon her amorous eyes which sparkled with lust, she sought to be revenged, by washing Christ's feet with her tears! Some, therefore have recovered from this snare. "None that go to her return," that is, "very few." It is rare to hear of any who are enchanted and bewitched with the sin of immorality, who recover from it. "I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare." Ecclesiastes 7:26. Her "heart is a trap," that is, she is subtle to deceive those who come to her; and "her hands are chains," that is her embraces are powerful to hold and entangle her lovers. This consideration should make all fearful of this sin. Soft pleasures, harden the heart.

[3] Consider what Scripture says, which may lay a barricade in the way to this sin. "I will be a swift witness against the adulterers." Malachi 3:5. It is good when God is a witness "for us", when He witnesses to our sincerity, as He did to Job's; but it is sad to have God as a "witness against us." "I," says God, "will be a swift witness against the adulterer." And who shall disprove God's witness? He is both witness and judge! "God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery." Hebrews 13:4.

[4] Consider the sad farewell, which the sin of adultery leaves. It leaves a hell in the conscience. "The lips of an immoral woman are as sweet as honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil. But the result is as bitter as poison, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to hell." Proverbs 5:3-5. The goddess Diana was so artfully drawn, that she seemed to smile upon those who came into her temple—but frown on those who went out. So the harlot smiles on her lovers as they come to her—but at last, they come to the frown and the sting! "Until an arrow pierces his liver." Proverbs 7:23. "Her end is bitter." When a man has been virtuous, the labor is gone—but the comfort remains; but when he has been wicked and immoral, the pleasure is gone—but the sting remains. "He gains momentary pleasure—but after that, eternal torment," says Jerome. When the senses have been feasted with unchaste pleasures, the soul is left to pay the reckoning. Stolen waters are sweet; but, as poison, though sweet in the mouth, it torments the conscience. Sin always ends in tragedy! Sad is that which Fincelius reports of a priest in Flanders, who enticed a young girl to immorality. When she objected how vile a sin it was, he told her that by authority from the Pope, he could commit any sin; so at last he drew her to his wicked purpose. But when they had been together a while, in came the devil, and took away the harlot from the priest's side, and, notwithstanding all her crying out, carried her away! If the devil should come and carry away all who are guilty of immorality in this nation—I fear more would be carried away, than would be left behind!

(16) Pray against this sin. Luther gave a lady this advice, that when any lust began to rise in her heart, she should go to prayer. Prayer is the best armor against sin; it quenches the wild fire of lust. If prayer will "cast out the devil," it will certainly cast out those lusts which come from the devil.

O let us labor for soul purity! To keep the soul pure—have recourse to the blood of Christ, which is the "fountain open, to cleanse from sin and impurity." Zechariah 13:1. A soul steeped in the briny

tears of repentance, and bathed in the blood of Christ—is made pure! Say, "Lord, my soul is defiled! I pollute all I touch! O purge me with hyssop—let Christ's blood sprinkle me, let the Holy Spirit anoint me. O make me pure, that I may be taken to heaven—where I shall be as holy as You would have me to be—and as happy as I can desire to be!"

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You may smite another—and never touch him!

The tongue which at first was made to be an organ of God's praise—has now become an instrument of unrighteousness. God has set two natural fences to keep in the tongue—the teeth and lips.

"Not slanderers." 1 Timothy 3:11

In the Greek it is, "not devils." The same word signifies both a slanderer and a devil. Some think it is no great matter, to misrepresent and slander others; but it is to act the part of a devil. This is a great sin; and I wish I could say it is not common.

The heathen, by the light of nature, abhorred the sin of slandering. Diogenes used to say, "Of all wild beasts, a slanderer is the worst." Antonius made a law, that if a person could not prove the crime he reported another to be guilty of, he should be put to death.

The Scripture calls slandering, smiting with the tongue. "Come, and let us smite him with the tongue." Jeremiah 18:18 You may smite another—and never touch him!

The scorpion carries his poison in his tail; the slanderer carries his poison in his tongue!

Job calls slander "the scourge of the tongue." As a rod scourges the back, so the slanderer's tongue scourges the name.

Eminence is commonly blasted by slander.

Holiness itself is no shield from slander. The lamb's innocence will not preserve it from the wolf. Christ, the most innocent upon earth, was reported to be "a glutton and a drunkard." Matthew 11:19

"The tongue inflicts greater wounds than the sword."

No physician can heal the wounds of the tongue!

To pretend friendship to a man, and slander him, is most odious.

We must not only not raise a false report—but refuse to hear it. He who raises a slander—carries the devil in his tongue! He who receives a slander—carries the devil in his ear!

You may kill a man in his name as well as in his person. Some are reluctant to take away their neighbor's goods; but better take their wares out of their shop—than take away their good name! This is a sin for which no reparation can be made; a blot in a man's name, being like a blot on white paper, which can never be gotten out.

Surely God will punish this sin. If idle words shall be accounted for, shall not unjust slanders? Oh therefore, take heed of this sin!

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It pulls down the plumes of his pride!

The true Christian cannot keep God's law perfectly. "There is certainly no righteous man on the earth who does good and never sins." Ecclesiastes 7:20. There is in the best actions of a godly man—that which is damnable—if God should weigh him in the balance of justice. Alas! He cannot pray without wandering, nor believe without doubting. "For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it." Romans 7:18. Paul, though a saint of the first magnitude, was better at desiring than at performing.

The regenerate have a desire to obey God perfectly; but they lack strength; their obedience is weak and sickly. The mark they are to shoot at, is perfection of holiness. But though they take a right aim, and do what they can—they come short of the mark!

A Christian, while serving God, is like the rower who plies the oar, and rows hard—but is hindered, for a gust of wind carries him back again! So says Paul, "For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do." Romans 7:19 "I am driven back by temptation!"

God permits this inability in His people—to humble us. Man is a self-exalting creature; and if he has but anything of worth, he is ready to be puffed up! But when he comes to see his deficiencies and failings, and how far short he comes of that holiness and perfection which God requires—it pulls down the plumes of his pride, and lays them in the dust! He weeps over his inability!

He blushes over his leprous spots! He says with Job, "I abhor myself in dust and ashes!"

God allows this inability be upon us—that we may have recourse to Christ—to obtain pardon for our defects, and to sprinkle our best duties with His blood. When a man sees that he owes perfect obedience to the law—but has nothing to pay, it makes him flee to Christ, to answer for him all the demands of the law, and set him free in the court of Divine justice.

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Jesus Christ went into the furnace of His Father's wrath

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." Galatians 6:7

God's wrath is just. The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath—but not one drop of injustice!

God is justified in condemning sinners at the last day. They deserve wrath, and it is no injustice to give them that which they deserve. If a malefactor deserves death, the judge does him no wrong in condemning him.

See what a great evil sin is—which exposes a person to God's wrath forever! You may know what an evil sin is, by the wrath and curse it brings! When you see a man brought to the gallows, you conclude he is guilty of some heinous crime, which brings such a punishment. So when

a man lies under the fierce anger of God's wrath, and roars out in flames—you must say, "How horrid an evil sin is!" Those who now see no evil in sin—will see how vile it is—in the looking-glass of hell-torments!

See here, that which may check a sinner's mirth. He is now brisk and frolicsome; he "sings idle songs to the sound of the harp." Amos 6:5. "But know that for all these things, God will bring you to judgment!" Ecclesiastes 11:9. Let him remember that the wrath and curse of God hang over him, which will shortly, if he does not repent—be executed upon him!

The sword of God's justice hangs over a sinner, and when the slender thread of life is cut asunder—it falls upon him! For a drop of pleasure—he must drink a sea of wrath! His momentary pleasure cannot be so sweet—as God's eternal wrath is bitter! Better lack

the devil's honey—than be stung with the eternal wrath of God!

"None considers in his heart." See the stupidity of sinners! Though the fierce wrath of God is ready to fall upon them—they have no concern! Though a beast has no shame, it has fear—it is afraid of fire. But sinners are worse than brutish—for they do not fear the "fire of hell"—until they are in it! When they shall feel the vials of God's wrath dropping, they will cry out as Dives, "Oh! I am tormented in this flame!" Luke 16:24.

"Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come." 1 Thessalonians 1:10 Christ is the only screen to stand between us and the wrath of God; He felt God's wrath—that those who believe in Him should never feel it.

Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a type of God's wrath, and that furnace did not singe the garments of the three Hebrew children, nor did they have "the smell of fire upon them." Daniel 3:27. Jesus Christ went into the furnace of His Father's wrath—and the smell of the fire of hell shall never pass upon those who believe in Him!

To you who have a well-grounded hope that you shall not feel this wrath, which you have deserved—let me exhort you to be very thankful to God, who has given His Son to save you from this tremendous wrath. The Lamb of God was scorched in the fire of God's wrath for you! Christ felt the wrath which He did not deserve—that you might escape the wrath which you have deserved!

Pliny observes, that there is nothing better to quench fire, than blood. Christ's blood has quenched the fire of God's wrath for you! "Upon me be your curse," said Rebekah to

Jacob. Just so, Christ said to God's justice, "Upon Me be the curse—that My elect may inherit the blessing!"

Be patient under all the afflictions which you endure. Affliction is sharp—but it is not wrath, it is not hell. Who would not willingly drink the cup of affliction—who knows he shall never drink in the cup of damnation! Who would not be willing to bear the wrath of man—who knows he

shall never feel the wrath of God!

Christian, though you may feel God's rod—you shall never feel God's bloody axe! Augustine once said, "Strike, Lord, where You will—so long as my sin pardoned." You should say, "Afflict me, Lord, as You will in this life—seeing I shall escape the wrath to come!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The knife which killed her husband!

The Lord's Supper is the looking-glass in which we see Him whom our souls love; it is the chariot by which we are carried up to Christ. God has appointed the Lord's Supper to cheer and revive our sad hearts. When we look on our sins—we have cause to mourn; but when we see Christ's blood shed for our sins—we rejoice!

In the Lord's Supper our spiritual needs are supplied, our strength is renewed; there we meet with Christ—and He says to us, "All I have is yours! My love is yours, to pity you! My mercy is yours, to save you!" Christ's blood is the key which opens heaven—else we had all been shut out!

The end of the Lord's Supper, is to work in us an endeared love to Christ. When Christ bleeds for us, well may we say, "Behold how He loved us!" That is a heart of stone—which Christ's love will not melt!

Another end of the Lord's Supper is the mortifying of corruption. To see Christ crucified for us—is a means to crucify sin in us. How can a wife endure to see the knife which killed her husband! How can we endure those sins—which made Christ veil His glory and shed

His blood! Sin has rent the white robe of Christ's flesh, and dyed it of a crimson color. The thoughts of this should make us seek to be avenged on our sins!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Lord, dig the earth out of my heart!

"You shall not covet." Exodus 20:17

Observe the holiness and perfection of God's law, which forbids the first motions and risings of sin in the heart. The laws of men take hold of actions; but the law of God goes further—it forbids not only sinful actions—but sinful desires. These lusts and desires after the forbidden fruit are sinful.

The world is an idol. It is lawful to use the world, yes, and to desire so much of it as may keep us from the temptation of poverty; and as may enable us to honor God with works of mercy. But the danger is—when the world gets into the heart! Water is useful for the sailing of the ship; the danger is—when the water gets into the ship.

What is it to covet? It is an insatiable desire of getting the world; or an inordinate love of the world.

(1) A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when his thoughts are wholly taken up with the world. A godly man's thoughts are in heaven; he is thinking of Christ's love and eternal recompense. "When I awake I am still with You," that is, in divine contemplation. Psalms 139:18. A covetous man's thoughts are in the world; his mind is wholly taken up with it; he can think of nothing but his shop or farm. The imagination is a mint-house, and most of the thoughts in a covetous man's mint are worldly. He is always plotting and projecting about worldly things. "Their mind is on earthly things." Php 3:19

(2) A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when he takes more pains for getting earth than for getting heaven. He will take many a weary step for the world; but will take no pains for Christ or heaven. A covetous man, having had a relish of the world, pursues after it, and never ceases until he has got it; but he neglects the things of eternity. He hunts for the world—but he only wishes for heaven.

(3) A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when all his discourse is about the world. "He who is of the earth, speaks of the earth." John 3:31. It is a sign of godliness to be speaking of heaven, to have the tongue tuned to the language of Canaan. "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious;" he speaks as if he had been already in heaven. So it is a sign of a man given to covetousness to speak always of secular things, of his wares and business. A covetous man's breath, like a dying man's, smells strong of the earth. As it was said to Peter, "Your speech betrays you;" so a covetous man's speech betrays him. He is like the fish in the gospel, which had a piece of money in its mouth. Matthew 17:27. "The words are the looking-glass of the heart," they show what is within. "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." Luke 6:45.

(4) A man is given to covetousness when he so sets his heart upon worldly things, that for the love of them, he will part with heaven. For the "wedge of gold," he will part with the "pearl of great price." When Christ said to the young man in the gospel, "Sell all, and come and follow Me", "He went away sorrowful." Matthew 19:22. He would rather part with Christ than with his earthly possessions. Cardinal Bourbon said, he would forego his part in paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris. When they will rather part with Christ and a good conscience than with their estate, it is a clear case that they are possessed with the demon of covetousness! "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." 2 Timothy 4:10

(5) A man is given to covetousness, when he overloads himself with worldly business. When a man does not have time for his soul, he is under the power of covetousness.

(6) He is given to covetousness whose heart is so set upon the world, that, to get it, he cares not what unlawful means he uses. He will have the world by fair means or foul; he will wrong and defraud, and raise his estate upon the ruins of another. Pope Sylvester II sold his soul to the devil for a popedom.

The DANGER of covetousness. "Take heed and beware of covetousness!" Luke 12:15. It is a direct breach of the tenth commandment. It is a moral vice, it infects and pollutes the whole soul.

(1) Covetousness is a SUBTLE sin. It is a sin that many cannot so well discern in themselves. This sin can dress itself in the attire of virtue. It is called the "cloak of covetousness." 1 Thessalonians 2:5. It is a sin which wears a cloak, it cloaks itself under the name of frugality and good taste. It has many pleas and excuses for itself; more than any other sin—such as providing for one's family.

(2) Covetousness is a DANGEROUS sin. It checks all that is good. It is an enemy to grace; it damps holy affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The hedgehog, in the fable, came to the cony-burrows, in stormy weather, and desired harbor; but when once he had got admission, he set up his prickles, and never ceased until he had thrust the poor conies out of their burrows! Just so, covetousness, by fair pretenses, winds itself into the heart; but as soon as you have let it in, it will never leave until it has choked all good beginnings, and thrust all piety out of your hearts. "Covetousness hinders the efficacy of the Word preached."

In the parable of the sower, the thorns, which Christ expounded to be the cares of this life—choked the good seed. Matthew 13:22. Many sermons lie dead and buried in earthly hearts. We preach to men to get their hearts in heaven; but where covetousness is predominant, it chains

them to earth, and makes them like the woman which Satan had bent down for eighteen years, so that she was unable to stand up straight. Luke 13:11. You may as well bid an elephant fly in the air—as a covetous man live by faith. We preach to men to give freely to Christ's poor; but covetousness makes them like the man in the gospel, who had "a withered hand." Mark 3:1. They have a withered hand, and cannot stretch it out to the poor. It is impossible to be earthly-minded and charitably-minded. Covetousness obstructs the efficacy of the Word, and makes it prove abortive. Those whose hearts are rooted in the earth, will be so far from profiting by the Word, that they will be ready rather to deride it. The Pharisees, who were covetous, "derided Him." Luke 16:14.

(3) Covetousness is a MOTHER sin. It is a radical vice. "The love of money is the root of all evil." 1 Timothy 6:10. "O accursed lust for gold! what crimes do you not urge upon the human heart!" Virgil. He who has an earthly itch, a greedy desire of getting the world, has in him the root of all sin. Covetousness is a mother sin. Covetousness breaks the first commandment; "You shall have no other gods but one." The covetous man has more gods than one; Mammon is his God. He has a god of gold, therefore he is called an idolater. Colossians 3:5. The mammonist covets his neighbor's house and goods, and endeavors to get them into his own hands. Thus you see how vile a sin covetousness is!

(4) Covetousness is a DISHONORABLE sin to religion. For men to say their hopes are above—while their hearts are below; to profess to be above the stars—while they "lick the dust" of the serpent; to be born of God—while they are buried in the earth; how dishonorable is this to religion! The lapwing, which wears a little coronet on its head, and yet feeds on dung, is an emblem of such as profess to be crowned kings and priests unto God, and yet feed immoderately on earthly dunghill comforts. The higher grace is, the less earthly should Christians be; as the higher the sun is, the shorter is the shadow.

(5) Covetousness is a DAMNING sin. It exposes us to God's abhorrence. "The covetous, whom the Lord abhors." Psalms 10:3. A king abhors to see his statue abused, so God abhors to see man, made in His image, having the heart of a beast. Who would live in such a sin—as makes him abhorred of God? Whom God abhors He curses, and His curse blasts wherever it comes!

Covetousness brings men to eternal ruin, and shuts them out of heaven. "This you know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Ephesians 5:5. What could a covetous man do in heaven? God can no more converse with him—than a king can converse with a swine! "Those who will be rich fall into a snare, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition." 1 Timothy 6:9. A covetous man is like a bee that gets into a barrel of honey, and there drowns itself. As a ferry-man, to increase his fare, takes in too many passengers, that he sinks his boat; so a covetous man takes in so much gold to increase his estate, that he drowns himself in perdition! I have read of some inhabitants near Athens, who, living in a very dry and barren island, took much pains to draw a river to the island to water it and make it fruitful; but when they had opened the passages, and brought the river to it, the water broke in with such force, that it drowned the land, and all the people in it. This is an emblem of a covetous man, who labors to draw riches to him, and at last they come in such abundance, that they drown him in perdition! How many, to build up an estate, pull down their souls! Oh, then, flee from covetousness!

The CURE for covetousness.

(1) Faith. "This is the victory that overcomes the world—even our faith." 1 John 5:4. The root of covetousness is distrust of God's providence. Faith believes that God will provide; that He who feeds the birds will feed His children; that He who clothes the lilies will clothe His lambs; and thus faith overcomes the world. Faith is the cure of care. It not only purifies the heart—but satisfies it; it makes God our portion, and in Him we have enough. Faith, by a divine chemistry, extracts comfort out of God. A little, with God—is sweet. Thus faith is a remedy against covetousness; it overcomes, not only the fear of the world—but the love of the world.

(2) The second remedy is, judicious considerations. Ah, what poor things, are these earthly things—that we should covet them! We covet that which will not satisfy us. "He who loves silver, shall not be satisfied with silver." Ecclesiastes 5:10. Solomon had put all the creatures in a scale, and distilled out their essence, and behold—"All was vanity!" Ecclesiastes 2:11. A man with dropsy—"the more water he drinks, the more he craves." Just so, the more a covetous man has of the world, the more he thirsts. Worldly things cannot remove trouble of mind. When King Saul was perplexed in conscience, his crown jewels could not comfort him. 1 Samuel 28:15.

The things of the world can no more ease a troubled spirit—than a gold cap can cure the headache! The things of the world cannot continue with you. The creature has a little honey in its mouth—but it has wings to fly away. Earthly things either leave us—or we leave them! What poor things are they to covet!

(3) The third remedy for covetousness is to covet spiritual things more. Covet grace, for it is the best blessing, it is the seed of God. Covet heaven, which is the region of perfect happiness—the most pleasant climate. If we covet heaven more—we shall covet earth less! To those who stand on the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem but as small villages; so if our hearts were more fixed upon the Jerusalem above, all worldly things would disappear, would diminish, and be as nothing in our eyes. We read of an angel coming down from heaven, and setting his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth. Revelation 10:2. Had we been in heaven, and viewed its superlative glory, how would we, with holy scorn, trample with one foot upon the earth and with the other foot upon the sea! O covet after heavenly things! There is the tree of life, the mountains of spices, the rivers of pleasure, the honeycomb of God's love dropping, the delights of angels, and the flower of joy, fully ripe and blown. There is the pure air to breathe in; no fogs or vapors of sin arise to infect that air—but the Sun of Righteousness enlightens the whole horizon continually with His glorious beams. O let your thoughts and delights be always taken up with the city of pearls, the paradise of God! Were our hearts raised by the power of the Holy Spirit up to heaven, we would not be much absorbed with earthly things.

(4) The best remedy for covetousness is contentment. Be content! "In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well-fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need." Php 4:12. The best way to be contented, is to believe that condition to be best, which God by His providence carves out to you. If He had seen fit for us to have more—we would have had it. Perhaps we could not manage a great estate. It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling—and a full estate without sinning! Great estates may be snares! There is no better antidote against coveting that which is another's—than being content with that which is our own.

(5) Pray for a heavenly mind. "Lord, let the loadstone of Your Spirit draw my heart upward. Lord, dig the earth out of my heart! Teach me how to possess the world, and not love it; how to hold it in my hand, and not let it get into my heart!"

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How did those swine run!

"Then 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.

Men naturally are enslaved to Satan. Satan is called the prince of this world, John 14:30; and the god of this world, 2 Corinthians 4:4; because he has power to command and enslave his dupes. Though he shall one day be a fellow prisoner in chains—yet now he insults and tyrannizes over the souls of men. Sinners are under his rule, he exercises a jurisdiction over them. He fills men's heads with error—and their hearts with malice. "Why has Satan filled your heart?" Acts 5:3. A sinner's heart is the devil's mansion house. "I will return into my house." Matthew 12:44

Satan is a comprehensive tyrant.

He rules men's minds, he blinds them with ignorance. "The God of this world has blinded the minds of those who believe not." 2 Corinthians 4:4.

He rules their memories. They remember that which is evil, and forget that which is good. Their memories are like a strainer, which lets go all the pure—and retains only the dregs.

He rules their wills. Though he cannot force the will, he draws it. "You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father—you will do." John 8:44. He has control over their hearts, and they willingly obey him. His strong temptations draw men to evil—more than all the promises of God can draw them to good.

This is the state of every man by nature—the devil has him in his power! A sinner grinds in the devil's mill! He is at the command of Satan—as the donkey is at the command of the driver.

How did those swine run—when the devil entered into them! "They entered the swine. And suddenly the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water!" Matthew 8:32

It is a dreadful and dismal case, to be under the power and tyranny of Satan! He wholly possesses them. If people should see their pets bewitched and possessed by the devil, they would be much troubled; and yet, though their souls are possessed by Satan, they are not sensible of it! What can be worse, than for men to be in bondage to the devil, and him hurry them on in their lusts—to perdition! Yet they are willingly enslaved to Satan! They love their gawler!

What an infinite mercy it is—when God brings poor souls out of this house of bondage, when He gives them a deliverance from the prince of darkness.

As David rescued a lamb out of the lion's mouth—so Christ rescues souls out of the mouth of the roaring lion! Oh, what a mercy it is—to be turned "from the power of Satan, unto God," Acts 26:18, to be brought out of the house of bondage, from being Satan's captives—to be made subjects of

the Prince of Peace!

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Why must there be a hell?

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

"How can you escape the damnation of hell?" Matthew 23:33

God has built hell built on purpose, for the damned to lie in.

See the dreadfulness of that place! Hell is the epitome of misery! Besides "the punishment of loss," which is the exclusion of the soul from the gloried sight of God, which some think is the worst part of hell—there will be "the punishment of sense."

In hell there will be a plurality of torments: There will be the "chains of darkness." 2 Peter 2:4.

There will be the "never-dying worm." Mark 9:48. This is the worm of conscience. There will be the "lake of fire." Revelation 20:15. Other fire is but 'painted fire'—compared to this.

This house of hell is haunted with devils! Matthew 25:41. Anselm says, "I had rather endure all torments, than see the devil with bodily eyes." Such as go to hell, must not only be forced to behold the devil—but must be shut up with this lion in his den! They must keep the devil company! This red dragon is full of spite—and will spit fire in men's faces!

The torments of hell abide forever! "The smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever." Revelation 14:2. Time cannot finish hell. Tears cannot quench hell. Mark 9:44. The wicked will always live in the fire of hell—but never be consumed. After they have lain millions of years in hell, their punishment is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning! If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousandth year a bird should come, and take away one grain—it would be a long time before that vast heap would be removed! Yet, if after all that time the damned might come out of hell—there would be some hope; but this word FOREVER breaks the heart!

If anyone should ask, where is hell? I wish he may never know experimentally. "Let us not so much," says Chrysostom, "labor to know where hell is—as how to escape it."

Why must there be a hell? Because there must be a place for the execution of divine justice. Earthly monarchs have their prison for criminals—and shall not God have His? Sinners are criminals, they have offended God. It would not be consistent with His holiness and justice—to have His laws infringed, and not inflict penalties.

How does it seem to comport with God's justice—to punish a sin committed in a moment—with eternal torment?

1. Because there is an eternity of sin in man's nature. They will continue to sin in hell. "Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done." Revelation 16:10-11

2. Because sin is "committed against an infinite majesty," and therefore the sin itself is infinite, and proportionally the punishment must be infinite.

3. Because a finite creature cannot satisfy infinite wrath, he must be eternally paying what he can never pay.

"Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath!" 1 Thessalonians 1:10 What infinite cause have they to bless God—who are delivered from hell! Jesus Christ suffered the torments of hell in His soul—that believers should not suffer them. Oh, how should we bless God to be preserved from the wrath to come!

It may cause more thankfulness in us, to realize that most people go to hell when they die. To be of the number of those few who are delivered from hell—is matter of infinite thankfulness. "Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Matthew 7:13-14

"Divide the world," says one, "into thirty-one parts, nineteen parts of it are Jews and Turks, and seven parts are heathen; so that there are but five parts of professing Christians—and among these, so many deceived Papists on the one hand, and so many formal Protestants on the other—that we may conclude that the major part of the world goes to hell.

Scripture compares the wicked to "the mire in the streets." Isaiah 10:6. Few precious jewels are in the street—but you cannot go a step without meeting with mire! The wicked are as common as the dirt in the street! The devil has most of the harvest—and God has only a few gleanings. Oh, then, such as are delivered from hell, have infinite cause to admire and bless God. How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness! When most others are carried as prisoners to

hell—they are delivered from the wrath to come!

How shall I know if I am delivered from hell?

(1) Those whom Christ saves from hell—He saves from sin. "He shall save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. Has God delivered you from the power of corruption, from pride, malice, and lust? If He has delivered you from the hell of sin, He has delivered you from the hell of torment.

(2) If you prize, trust and love Christ—you are delivered from hell and damnation. "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1. If you are in Christ, He has put the garment of His righteousness over you—and hell-fire can never singe it!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A bundle of ridiculous ceremonies!

"Flee from idolatry!" 1 Corinthians 10:14

It is idolatry, not only to worship a false god—but to worship the true God in a false manner.

See the goodness of God to our nation, in delivering us from popery, which is Romish idolatry—and causing the light of His truth to break forth gloriously among us. In former times, England was overspread with idolatry. We had . . . purgatory, indulgences, the idolatrous mass, prayers to saints and angels, and image-worship.

What is the popish religion, but a bundle of ridiculous ceremonies! Their candles, beads, crucifixes; what are these but Satan's policy, to dress up a carnal worship, fitted to carnal minds! Oh! what cause have we to bless God for delivering us from popery! It was a mercy to be delivered from the Spanish invasion; but it is a far greater mercy to be delivered from the popish religion!

"What have I to do any more with idols?" Hosea 14:8

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## 10 The Ten Commandments (choice excerpts) cont'd

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The Ten Commandments (choice excerpts) cont'd The sweetest friend—but the most dreadful enemy!

What does every sin deserve?

God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and in that which is to come.

"Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!" Matthew 25:41.

God's wrath is irresistible. "Who knows the power of Your anger?" Psalms 90:2. Sinners may oppose God's ways—but not His wrath. Shall the briars contend with the fire? Shall finite contend with infinite? "Have you an arm like God?" Job 40:9.

God's wrath is dreadful. We are apt to have slight thoughts of God's wrath; but it is very tremendous and dismal, as if scalding lead should be dropped into one's eyes. The Hebrew word for wrath signifies heat. To show that the wrath of God is hot, therefore it is compared to fire in the text. Fire, when in its rage, is dreadful. So the wrath of God is like fire, it is most dreadful. Other fire is but painted fire, compared to this. What will it be, when God shall "stir up all His wrath!" Psalms 78:38.

Solomon says, "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion." Proverbs 19:12. What then is God's wrath? When God musters up all His forces, and sets Himself in battalia against a sinner—how can his heart endure? "Will your courage endure or your hands be strong in the day I deal with you?" Ezekiel 22:14. Who is able to lie under mountains of wrath? God is the sweetest friend—but the most dreadful enemy!

The wrath of God shall seize upon every part of a sinner. The wrath of God shall seize upon the BODY of a reprobate. The body, which was so tender that it could not bear heat or cold, shall be tormented in the wine press of God's wrath! Those eyes which before could behold amorous objects, shall be tormented with the sight of devils! Those ears, which before were delighted with music, shall be tormented with the hideous shrieks of the damned!

The wrath of God shall seize upon the SOUL of a reprobate. Ordinary fire cannot touch the soul. God's wrath burns the soul. The memory will be tormented to remember what means of grace have been abused. The conscience will be tormented with self-accusations. The sinner will accuse himself for presumptuous sins, for misspending his precious hours, and for resisting the Holy Spirit.

The wrath of God is without intermission. Hell is an abiding place—but no resting place; there is not a minute's rest. Our earthly pains have some abatement; but the torments of the damned have no intermission; he who feels God's wrath never says, "I am at ease."

The wrath of God is eternal. So says the text. "Eternal fire!" No tears can quench the flame of God's anger; no, though we could shed rivers of tears. In all pains of this life, men hope for cessation; but the wrath of God is always feeding upon the sinner. The terror of natural fire is, that it consumes what it burns; but what makes the fire of God's wrath dreadful is, that it does not consume what it burns. The sinner will forever be in the furnace! After innumerable millions of years, the wrath of God is as far from ending—as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousand years a little bird should come, and take away a grain of sand, it would be a long while before that vast heap of sand were emptied; but if, after all that time, the damned might come out of hell—there would be some hope; but this word "FOREVER" breaks the heart!

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He is worse than dead!

"You were dead in your transgressions and sins." Ephesians 2:1

An unregenerate man cannot perfectly obey all God's commands. He may as well touch the stars, or walk across the ocean—as yield exact obedience to the law.

He is spiritually DEAD. How can he, being dead, keep the commandments of God perfectly? A dead man is not fit for action. A sinner has the symptoms of death upon him. He has no sense; he has no sense of the evil of sin, of God's holiness and veracity; therefore he is said to be without feeling. Ephesians 4:19. He has no strength. Romans 5:6. What strength has a dead man? A natural man has no strength to deny himself, or to resist temptation. He is dead!

He is not only dead—but he is worse than dead! A dead man does no hurt. A natural man not only cannot keep the law through weakness—but he breaks it through willfulness! He is BORN in sin, and LIVES in sin. Psalms 51:5. "He drinks iniquity like water." Job 15:16. All the imaginations of his thoughts are evil—and only evil. Genesis 6:5.

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Ministers are murderers!

"You shall not murder." Exodus 20:13

Soul-murder is the greatest murder of all. The soul is said to be murdered, when it is deprived of its eternal happiness, and is forever in torment. How many are soul-murderers!

Soul-murderers are those who corrupt others by bad example.

Soul-murderers are those who entice others to sin.

Ministers are murderers—who either starve, or poison, or infect souls. They may poison people with error. The basilisk poisons herbs and flowers by breathing on them; so the breath of heretical ministers poisons souls. Error is as damnable as vice!

"When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I

will hold you accountable for his blood." Ezekiel 3:18.

There are many ministers who infect their people with their bad life; they preach one thing—and live another. They are murderers, and the blood of souls will cry against them at the last day! How sad will it be for those who have not only their own sins—but the blood of others to answer for!

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Sinful nature refined and cultivated

"You shall have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:3

What is it to have other gods besides the true God? I fear upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.

If we trust in our MORALITY, we make it a god. Many trust to this. None can charge them with gross sin. Morality is but sinful nature refined and cultivated. A man may be outwardly washed—and not inwardly changed. His life may be moral—and yet there may be some reigning sin in his heart! The Pharisee could say, "I am no adulterer" (Luke 18:11); but he could not say, "I am not proud." To trust to one's morality, is to trust to a spider's web.

"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away!" Isaiah 64:6

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A lackey to every base lust!

"I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt—out of the house of bondage." Exodus 20:2

Sin is the true bondage—it enslaves the soul. Sin is the enslaver; it is called a law—because it has a binding power over a man (Romans 7:23). It is said to reign—because it exercises a tyrannical power (Romans 6:12). And men are said to be the servants of sin, because they are so enslaved by it. Romans 6:17.

Israel was not so enslaved in the iron furnace—as the sinner is by sin. They are worse slaves and vassals—who are under the power of sin, than those are who are under the power of earthly tyrants.

Other slaves have only tyrants ruling over their bodies; but the sinner has his soul tyrannized over. That princely part, the soul, which sways the scepter of reason, and was once crowned with perfect knowledge and holiness; is now enslaved, and made a lackey to every base lust!

Other slaves have some pity shown them: the tyrant gives them food, and lets them have hours for their rest. But sin is a merciless tyrant, it will let men have no rest. How does a man wear himself out in the service of sin—waste his body, break his sleep, distract his mind! A wicked man does sin's drudgery-work every day!

Other slaves are forced against their will. Israel groaned under slavery (Exodus 2:23); but sinners are willing to be slaves of sin! They love their chains! They will not take their freedom; they

"glory in their shame." Php 3:19. They wear their sins, not as their fetters—but their ornaments! They rejoice in iniquity. Jeremiah 11:15.

Sin's slaves are brought to damnation. Other slaves lie in the iron furnace: sin's slaves lie in the fiery furnace! What freedom of will has a sinner—when he can do nothing but what sin commands him? He is enslaved.

But God takes His elect out of the house of bondage! He beats off the chains and fetters of sin; He rescues them from their slavery; He makes them free, by bringing them into "the glorious liberty of the children of God." Romans 8:21. The law of love now rules, not the law of sin. Though the life of sin is prolonged; yet not the dominion of sin! The saints are made spiritual kings, to rule and conquer their corruptions. It is matter of the highest praise and thanksgiving, to be taken out of the house of bondage, to be freed from enslaving lusts, and made kings to reign in glory forever!

"I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt—out of the house of bondage." Exodus 20:2

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God's flail

God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions. They have no charter of exemption from trouble, in this life. While the wicked are kept in sugar, the godly are often kept in brine.

And, indeed, how could God's power be seen in bringing them out of trouble—if He did not sometimes bring them into it? How could God wipe away the tears from their eyes in heaven—if on earth they shed none?

Doubtless, God sees there is need that His children should be sometimes in the house of bondage. "If need be, you are in heaviness." 1 Peter 1:6. The body sometimes needs a bitter portion—more than a sweet one.

"You refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs." Psalms 66:10-11

Why does God bring His people into an afflicted state?

God gives affliction—to purge our corruption. The eye, though a tender part—yet when infected, we put sharp medicines into it, to purge out the disease. Just so, though the people of God are dear to Him as the apple of His eye—yet, when corruption begins to grow in them, He will apply the sharp medicine of affliction—to purge out the disease.

Affliction is God's flail to thresh off our husks.

Affliction is a means God uses to purge out sloth, luxury, pride, and love of the world.

God's furnace is not to consume—but to refine.

God gives us more affliction—that we may have less sin!

God also gives affliction to increase our graces. Grace thrives most in the iron furnace. Grace in the saints is often as fire hidden in the embers; affliction is the bellows to blow it up into a flame!

The more the diamond is cut—the more it sparkles. The more God afflicts us—the more our graces cast a sparkling luster!

The stones which are cut out for a building, are first hewn and squared. The godly are called "living stones." 1 Peter 2:5. God hews and polishes them by affliction, that they may be fit for the heavenly building.

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Let us examine our ways

"Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord." Lamentations 3:40

By self-examination, a man may see how matters stand between God and his soul. It is a spiritual inquisition—a heart-anatomy.

Self-examination is difficult, because it is an inward work—it lies with the heart. External acts of devotion are easy. To lift up the eye, to bow the knee, to read over a few prayers—is as easy as for the Papists to count over a few rosary beads! But to examine a man's self, to take the heart in pieces, to make a Scripture-trial of our hearts, is not easy. It is easy to spy the faults of others—but it is hard to find out our own faults! Self-examination is difficult, with regard to self-love. As ignorance blinds, so self-love flatters! To a man looking upon himself in the flattering looking-glass of self-love—his virtues appear greater than they are—and his sins less!

Self-examination is needful, because without it we may easily have a cheat put upon us. "The heart is deceitful above all things." Jeremiah 17:9. "The heart is a great impostor."

Self-examination is needful, because of the secret corruption in the heart—which will not be found out, without searching. There are in the heart, "hidden pollutions." It is with a Christian, as with Joseph's brethren, who, when the steward accused them of having the cup, were ready to swear they had it not; but upon search it was found in one of their sacks. Little does a Christian think what pride, atheism, immorality is in his heart—until he searches it! If there is therefore, such hidden wickedness, like a spring running under ground, we had need examine ourselves, that finding out our secret sin, we may be humbled and repent.

Hidden sins, if not searched out, defile the soul. If corn lies long in the chaff, the chaff defiles the corn. Just so, sins long hidden defile our duties.

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If a damned spirit should come from hell

"I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment!" Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them." "No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead!" Luke 16:27-31

If an angel should come to you out of heaven, and preach of the excellency of the glorified state, and the joys of heaven, and that in the most moving manner—if the Word preached does not persuade, neither would you be wrought upon, by such an oration from heaven!

If a damned spirit should come from hell, and preach to you in flames, and tell you what a place hell is, and roar out the torments of the damned—it might make you tremble—but it would not convert you—if the preaching of the Word will not do it!

If the Word preached is not effectual to men's conversion—it will be effectual to their condemnation. The Word will be effectual one way or other; if it does not make your hearts

better, it will make your chains heavier! Dreadful is their case—who go loaded with sermons to hell!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A panacea The Scripture is a golden epistle, written by the Holy Spirit—and sent to us from heaven!

The Scripture is a spiritual looking-glass, to dress our souls by. It shows us heart-sins, vain thoughts, unbelief, etc. It not only shows us our spots—but washes them away!

The Scripture is an armory, out of which we may fetch spiritual artillery to fight against Satan. When our Savior was tempted by the devil, he fetched armor and weapons from Scripture; "it is written!"

The Scripture is a panacea, or universal medicine for the soul; it gives a recipe to cure deadness of heart, Psalms 119:50; pride, 1 Peter 5:5; and infidelity, John 3:36. It is a garden of remedies, where we may gather an herb or antidote, to expel the poison of sin.

The Scripture is "the only standard of conduct"—the rule and platform by which we are to square our lives. It contains in it all things needful to salvation; what duties we are to do, and what sins we are to avoid.

"When Your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight." Jeremiah 15:16. All true solid comfort is fetched out of the Word. The Word is a spiritual garden, and the promises are the fragrant flowers or spices in this garden. How should we delight to walk among these beds of spices!

The Scripture is a sovereign elixir, or comfort, in an hour of distress. "Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles." Psalms 119:50.

If we would have the Scripture effectual, let us labor not only to have the light of it in our heads; but its power in our hearts!

"I have hidden Your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You." Psalms 119:11. The Word, locked up in the heart—is a preservative against sin. As one would carry an antidote with him when he comes near an infected place—so David carried the Word in his heart as a sacred antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin.

When we read the holy Scriptures—let us look up to God for a blessing. Let us pray that God would not only give us His Word as a rule of holiness—but His grace as a principle of holiness! It is

said, that the alchemist can draw oil out of iron. God's Spirit can produce grace in the most obdurate heart!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The devil for its father

Consider what evil there is in sin. It is the "accursed thing." Joshua 7:11. It is compared to a plague-sore. 1 Kings 8:38. Without repentance sin tends to final damnation. "The moment of sin passes, the guilt remains." Sin unrepented of, ends in tragedy.

Sin has . . .the devil for its father, shame for its companion, and death and damnation for its wages!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Repenting tears

True repentance works a change in the life. Though repentance begins at the heart, it does not end there—but goes into the life. It begins at the heart. If the spring is corrupt—no pure stream can run from it.

What a change did it make in Mary Magdalene! She who before kissed her lovers with wanton embraces—now kisses Christ's feet! She who used to braid her hair, and dress it with costly jewels, now makes it a towel to wipe Christ's feet! She whose eyes used to sparkle with lust, and with impure glances to entice her lovers—now become fountains of tears to wash her Savior's feet! She whose tongue that used to speak vainly and loosely—now is an instrument set in tune to praise God. When her head was a fountain to weep for sin—Christ's side was a fountain to wash away sin!

There is much sweetness in repenting tears. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John 16:20. Christ turns the water of tears—into wine!

The true penitent breaks off from all sin. One disease may kill—as well as more. One sin lived in—may damn as well as more. The real penitent breaks off secret, gainful, habitual sins; he takes the sacrificing knife of mortification—and runs it through the heart of his dearest lusts!

If you break off your sins—God will become a friend to you! All that is in God shall be yours!

His power shall be yours—to help you! His wisdom shall be yours—to counsel you! His Spirit shall be yours—to sanctify you! His promises shall be yours—to comfort you! His mercy shall be yours—to save you!

Though repentance seems at first to be thorny and bitter—yet from this thorn, a Christian gathers grapes! These considerations may open a vein of godly sorrow in our souls—that we may both weep for sin, and turn from it.

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You shall do no hurt to yourself

"You shall not murder." Exodus 20:13

You shall do no hurt to yourself. One may be indirectly guilty of self-murder, by intemperance or excess in diet.

Glutting shortens life.

More perish by drink—than by the sword.

Many dig their grave with their teeth.

Too much oil chokes the lamp.

The cup kills more than the cannon.

Excessive drinking causes untimely death.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God writes down no ciphers in the book of life!

"Six days you shall labor." Exodus 20:9

God would not have any live without working. True religion gives no warrant for idleness. "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'If a man will not work, he shall not eat.' We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat." 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12. A Christian must not only mind heaven—but his vocation. While the pilot has his eye to the star, he has his hand to the helm. Without labor, the pillars of a commonwealth will dissolve, and the earth, like the sluggard's field, will be overrun with briars. Proverbs 24:31. Adam in innocence, though monarch of the world, must not be idle—but must dress and till the ground. Genesis 2:15. Piety does not exclude industry. Standing water putrefies.

Inanimate creatures are in motion. The sun goes its circuit, the fountain runs, and the fire sparkles.

Animate creatures work. Solomon sends us to the ant to learn labor. Proverbs 6:6; Proverbs 30:25. The bee is the emblem of industry; some of the bees trim the honey, others work the wax, others frame the honeycomb, others lie sentinel at the door of the hive to keep out the drone. And shall not man much more labor?

That law in paradise was never repealed. "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread." Genesis 3:19. Such professors are to be excluded, who talk of living by faith—but live without working; they are like the lilies which "toil not, neither do they spin." Matthew 6:28. It is a speech of holy and learned Mr. Perkins, "Let a man be endowed with excellent gifts, and hear the Word with reverence, and receive the sacrament—yet if he does not work—all is but hypocrisy." What is an idle person good for? What benefit is a ship which lies always on the shore? What benefit is armor which hangs up and rusts?

To live without working, exposes a person to temptation. Melanchthon calls idleness "the Devil's bath," because he bathes himself with delight in an idle soul. Satan sows most of his seed of temptation, in idle people. Idleness is the nurse of vice! An idle person stands for a cipher in the world; God writes down no ciphers in the book of life!

An idle person can give no good account of his time. Time is a talent to trade with. The slothful person "hides his talent in the earth;" he does no good; his time is not lived—but lost! An idle person lives unprofitably, he cumpers the ground. God calls the slothful servant "wicked." "You wicked and slothful servant." Matthew 25:26.

Draco, whose laws were written in blood, deprived those of their life, who would not work for their living. In Hetruria, they caused such idle people to be banished. Idle people live in the breach of the commandment, "Six days shall you labor." Let them take heed they are not banished from heaven! A man may as well go to hell for not working—as for not believing!

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### Creation and Redemption

Great was the work of creation—but greater was the work of redemption. The glory of the redemption was greater than the glory of the creation. Great wisdom was seen in making us—but more miraculous wisdom in saving us. Great power was seen in bringing us out

of nothing—but greater power in helping us when we were worse than nothing. It cost more to redeem than to create us. In creation it was but speaking a word; in redeeming there was shedding of blood! Creation was the work of God's fingers, Psalms 8:3, redemption was the work of His arm. Luke 1:51. In creation, God gave us ourselves; in the redemption, He gave us Himself. By creation, we have life in Adam; by redemption, we have life in Christ. By creation, we had a right to earth; by redemption, we have a title to a heavenly kingdom.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The devil has two false mirrors

The devil has two false mirrors, which he sets before men's eyes. The one is a little mirror, in which the sin appears so small that it can hardly be seen; which the devil sets before men's eyes when they are going to commit sin. You who say that your sin is small—when God shall open the eye of your conscience, you will see it to be great, and worthy of damnation!

The other is a large magnifying glass, wherein sin appears so big that it cannot be forgiven; which the devil sets before men's eyes after they have sinned.

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### We take God's name in vain

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes His name in vain." Exodus 20:7

The thing here insisted on is, that great care must be had, that the holy and reverend name of God is not profaned by us, or taken in vain. When we speak slightly of God or His works, He interprets it as a contempt, and taking His name in vain.

We take God's name in vain, when we use God's name in idle discourse. God is not to be spoken of, but with a holy awe upon our hearts. How many are guilty here! Though they have God in their mouths—they have the devil in their hearts. It is a wonder that fire does not come out from the Lord to consume them, as it did Nadab and Abihu!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The incense which perfumes our holy things

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, who takes His name in vain." Exodus 20:7

We take God's name in vain, when we worship Him with our lips—but not with our hearts. God calls for the heart, "My son, give Me your heart." Proverbs 23:26. The heart is the chief thing in religion; it draws the will and affections after it. The heart is the incense which perfumes our

holy things. The heart is the altar which sanctifies the offering. When we seem to worship God—but withdraw our heart from Him, we take His name in vain. "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain." Matthew 15:8-9

Hypocrites take God's name in vain—their religion is a lie; they seem to honor God—but they do not love Him; their hearts go after their lusts. "They set their heart on their iniquity." Hosea 4:8. Their eyes are lifted up to heaven—but their hearts are rooted in the earth!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Why so?

"You shall have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:3

What is it to have other gods besides the true God? I fear upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.

To LOVE anything more than God, is to make it a god.

If we love our estate more than God, we make it a god. The young man in the gospel loved his gold better than his Savior; the world lay nearer his heart than Christ. Matthew 19:22. "This gold with its glitter blinds the eyes." The covetous man is called an idolater. Ephesians 5:5. Why so? Because he loves his estate more than God, and so makes it his god. Though he does not bow down to an idol, if he worships the engraved image in his coins, he is an idolater.

That which has most of the heart, we make a god of.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Man makes a god of the dust of the earth!

"You shall have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:3

What is it to have other gods besides the true God? I fear upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.

If we trust in our RICHES, we make riches our God. We may take comfort in riches—but not put confidence in them. It is a foolish thing to trust in them. They are deceitful riches, and it is foolish to trust to that which will deceive us. They have no solid consistency, they are like golden dreams, which leave the soul empty when it awakens, or comes to itself.

They are not what they promise! They promise to satisfy our desires—and they increase them! They promise to stay with us—and they take wings.

They are hurtful. "I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: wealth hoarded to the harm of its owner." Ecclesiastes 5:13. It is foolish to trust to that which will hurt oneself. Who would take hold of

the edge of a razor?

Riches are often fuel for pride and lust. Ezekiel 28:5; Jeremiah 5:7.

It is folly to trust in our riches; but how many do, and make money their god! God made man of the dust of the earth, and man makes a god of the dust of the earth! Money is his creator, redeemer, comforter. Money is his creator, for if he has money—he thinks he is made. Money is his redeemer, for if he is in danger, he trusts to his money to redeem him. Money is his comforter, for if he is sad, money is the golden harp to drive away the evil spirit. Thus by trusting to money, we make it a god.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He deifies himself!

"You shall have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:3

What is it to have other gods besides the true God? I fear upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.

If we trust in our WISDOM, we make it a god. "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom." Jeremiah 9:23. Boasting is the height of confidence. Many a man makes an idol of his wit and abilities—he deifies himself! But how often does God take the wise in their own craftiness!

"He catches those who think they are wise in their own cleverness, so that their cunning schemes are thwarted." Job 5:13

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Our lives should be walking Bibles!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A thousand prayers and praises

"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams." 1 Samuel 15:22

A thousand prayers and praises do not honor God so much—as the mortifying of one lust!

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God must have the cream!

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength." Deuteronomy 6:5

The nature of love consists in delighting in an object. Love to God, is a holy fire kindled in the affections, whereby a Christian is carried out strongly after God as the supreme good.

The summary of our duty to God, is love. Love is the soul of religion, and that which constitutes a genuine Christian. Love is the queen of graces; it shines and sparkles in God's eye!

Scripture knowledge always precedes love. The Spirit shines upon the understanding, and reveals the beauties of wisdom, holiness, and mercy in God. These are the magnet to entice and draw out love to God. Those who do not know God, cannot love Him.

If it is a sincere love, we love God "with all our heart." God will have the whole heart. We must not divide our love between Him, and sin. The true mother would not have the child divided, nor will God have the heart divided; it must be the whole heart.

We must love God for Himself, for His own intrinsic excellencies. We must love Him for His loveliness. "It is a harlot's love to love the portion, more than the person." Hypocrites love God because He gives them corn and wine. The sincere Christian loves God for Himself; for those shining perfections which are in Him.

We must love God "with all our strength", in the Hebrew text, "with all our vehemency." We must love God—as much as we are able. Christians should be like seraphim, burning in holy love. We can never love God as much as He deserves. Even the angels in heaven cannot love God as much as He deserves.

Love to God must be active in its sphere. Love is an industrious affection! It sets—the head studying for God, the hands working, the feet running in the ways of His commandments. It is called "the labor of love." 1 Thessalonians 1:3. Mary Magdalene loved Christ—and poured her ointments on Him. We think we never do enough, for the person whom we love.

Love to God must be superlative. God is the essence of beauty—a whole paradise of delight. He must have a priority in our love. Our love to God must be above all other things—as the oil swims above the water. We must love God above estate and relations. We may give the creature the milk of our love—but God must have the cream! The spouse keeps the juice of her pomegranates, for Christ. Song of Solomon 8:2.

Our love to God must be constant. Love must be like the motion of the pulse, which beats as long as there is life. "Many waters cannot quench love." Song of Solomon 8:7.

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Satan's masterpiece, his dragnet

Why is it, that men do not obey God?

The not obeying God, is for lack of faith. "Who has believed our report?" Isaiah 53:1 : Did men believe—that sin were so bitter, and that hell followed at its heels—would they go on in sin? Did they believe there was such a reward for the righteous, and that godliness was great gain—would they not pursue it? But they are atheists, and do not fully believe these things; hence it is that they do not obey God.

Satan's masterpiece, his dragnet by which he drags millions to hell, is to keep them in unbelief! He knows, if he can but keep them from believing the truth—he is sure to keep them from obeying it.

The not obeying God, is also for lack of self-denial. God commands one thing, and men's lusts command another; and they will rather die, than deny their lusts. If lust cannot be denied—God cannot be obeyed.

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As the bee sucks sweetness from the flower—so faith sucks all its strength and comfort from Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The golden key which opens heaven!

Prayer is the golden key which opens heaven!

The tree of promise will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer.

All the benefits of Christ's redemption, are handed over to us by prayer.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

If they had it in their power

To malign holiness is diabolical. It is a sin to lack grace, it is worse to hate it! Some have an antipathy against God because of His purity. "Rid us of the Holy One of Israel!" Isaiah 30:11. Sinners, if it lay in their power, would not only unthrone God—but annihilate Him! If they had it in their power—God would no longer be God. Thus sin is boiled up to a great height.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The frozen snake

Those sins are of greater magnitude, which are mixed with ingratitude. Of all things—God cannot endure to have His kindness slighted. His mercy is seen in reprieving men so long, in wooing them by His Spirit and ministers to be reconciled, in crowning them with so many temporal blessings. And to abuse all this love—when God has been filling up the measure of his mercy, for men to fill up the measure of their sins—is high ingratitude, and makes their sins of a deeper crimson!

Some are worse for God's mercy. "The vulture," says Aelian, "draws sickness—from perfumes." So the sinner contracts evil—from the sweet perfumes of God's mercy. Mr. Parry, being condemned to die, Queen Elizabeth sent him her pardon. And after he was pardoned—he conspired and plotted the queen's death! Just so, some deal with God—He bestows mercy, and they plot treason against Him. "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." Isaiah 1:2. In the fable, the frozen snake, after being warmed, stung him who gave it warmth! Certainly, sins against God's mercy, are more heinous.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ An idle person

An idle person tempts the devil to tempt him! The devil hires such as stand idle, and puts them to his work.

"Escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will." 2 Timothy 2:26

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ When He does not punish!

"Happy is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty." Job 5:17

The godly have some good in them—therefore the devil afflicts them; and some evil in them—therefore God afflicts them.

The holiness of the saints will not excuse them from sufferings. Christ was the holy one of God —yet He was in the iron furnace. His spouse is "a lily among thorns." Song of Solomon 2:2

Affliction is not always the sign of God's anger. We are apt to judge and censure those who are in an afflicted state. When the barbarians saw the viper on Paul's hand, they said, "No doubt this man is a murderer!" Acts 28:4. So, when we see the viper of affliction fasten upon the godly, we are apt to censure them, as greater sinners than others. But this rash censuring is for lack of wisdom.

God's afflicting is so far from evidencing His hatred, that His not afflicting is an evidence of His hatred. "I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom." Hosea 4:14. God punishes most—when He does not punish! His hand is heaviest—when it seems to be lightest. The judge will not burn him in the hand—whom he intends to execute at the stake!

"Ephraim is attached to idols; leave him alone!" Hosea 4:17

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God sanctifies all our afflictions

God sanctifies all our afflictions. They shall not be destructive punishments—but medicines!

They shall corrode and eat out the venom of sin; they shall polish and refine our grace. The more the diamond is cut—the more it sparkles.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Your Husband

"Your Maker is your Husband." Isaiah 54:5

God is our husband. He esteems us as precious to Him, as the apple of His eye! Zechariah 2:8. He imparts His secrets to us! (Psalms 25:14) He bestows a kingdom upon us for our dowry! (Luke 12:3)

God calls His people, the "dearly beloved of my soul." (Jeremiah 12:7) He rejoices over them with joy. (Zephaniah 3:17) They are His refined silver (Zechariah 13:9); His jewels (Malachi 3:17); His royal diadem (Isaiah 62:3). He gives them the cream and flower of His love. He not only opens His hand and fills them—but opens His heart and fills them.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He would only have this flower

It is nothing but your love, which God desires.

The Lord might have demanded your children to be offered in sacrifice; He might have bid you cut and lance yourselves, or lie in hell awhile! But He only desires your love—He would only have this flower.

Is it a hard request, to love God? Was ever any debt easier paid, than this? Is it any labor for the wife to love her husband? Love is delightful.

What is there in our love—that God should desire it? Why would a king desire the love of a woman who is in debt and diseased? God does not need our love. There are angels enough in heaven to adore and love Him. What is God the better for our love? It adds not the least cubit to His essential blessedness. He does not need our love, and yet He seeks it.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ My own special treasure!

Obedience is the beauty of a Christian. Obedience makes us precious to God—His favorites. "Now if you will obey Me and keep my covenant—you will be My own special treasure!"

Exodus 19:5. You shall be My portion, My jewels, the apple of My eye. "You are honored, and I love you." Isaiah 43:4.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It mellows and ripens them

Our obedience to God must be free and cheerful—or it is penance, not sacrifice. "If you are willing and obedient." Isaiah 1:19. Though we serve God with weakness, it must be with willingness.

Hypocrites obey God grudgingly, and against their will; they do good, but not willingly. Cain brought his sacrifice—but not his heart. It is a true rule—whatever the heart does not do, is not done.

Willingness is the soul of obedience. God sometimes accepts of willingness without the work—but never of the work without willingness. Cheerfulness shows that there is love in the duty. And love is to our services, what the sun is to fruit—it mellows and ripens them, and makes them come off with a better relish.

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