

A Divine Cordial

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson's sermon emphasizes the importance of loving God above all else and understanding the role of grace and temptation in the Christian life.

Scripture: Ruth 1:21, 2 Samuel 7:18, Job 5:17, Job 23:16, Psalm 116:12, Psalm 119:71, Micah 6:9, Micah 7:19, Romans 8:28

Topics: "Gods Love", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches about the transformative power of God's love and mercy in the lives of believers, highlighting how afflictions, when sanctified, draw them closer to God, teach them valuable lessons, and make them more upright. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining love for God, being thankful in all circumstances, and using prayer as a powerful tool to connect with God and receive His blessings. Watson also discusses how God's mercies humble, melt, and make the heart fruitful and thankful, while His power subdues and breaks the stronghold of sin in believers' lives.

Transcript

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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." Mt. 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.

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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."
Psalm 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?

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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 Cor. 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 Cor. 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 Cor. 2:11). Thus he was able to acquaint others with Satan's cursed wiles (1 Cor. 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" (Heb. 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 7:37). 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" (Matt. 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 (Eph. 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 (Heb. 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 Cor. 13:8). Faith is the 'staff' which we walk with in this life. "We walk by faith" (2 Cor. 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 Sam. 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?" (Matt. 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" (Psalm 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!" (Jer. 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.

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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!" (Psalm 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" (Phil. 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 Pet. 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" (Eph. 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 8:51). Besides indisposition to holiness, there is opposition to holiness.

We are in a state of pollution. "I saw you polluted in your blood" (Ezek. 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 (Rev. 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!" Psalm 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" Psalm 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 Cor. 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 Cor. 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" (Thess. 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 (Rev. 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!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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" (Psalm 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" (Eccles. 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!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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." (Psalm 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.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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 Tim. 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?" (Psalm 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.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-watson/a-divine-cordial/>

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