

Body of Practical Divinity

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of Scripture, the necessity of faith for salvation, and the serious nature of sin in the life of a believer.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Scripture", "Sin and Redemption"

Description

Thomas Watson emphasizes the significance of Scripture as both a mirror reflecting our sins and a fountain of Christ's blood that cleanses us. He urges believers to live according to the Word, highlighting that true faith is humble, willing, and leads to holiness. Watson warns against the dangers of sin, illustrating its pervasive nature and the necessity of recognizing its ugliness. He reassures the faithful of God's infinite knowledge and mercy, encouraging them to trust in His justice and grace. Ultimately, he calls for a life that glorifies God, rooted in the joy of knowing Christ.

Transcript

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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.

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A lamp for my feet

"Teach me Your ways, O Lord, that I may

live according to Your truth!" Psalm 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." Psalm 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

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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!"

Psalm 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 Chr. 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." Deut. 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." Psalm 119:75

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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

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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."

Psalm 115:3

"The Lord does whatever He pleases in heaven and
on earth, in the seas and all the depths." Psalm 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!" Psalm 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 Sam. 16:7

Men judge the heart--by the actions.

God judges the actions--by the heart.

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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?" Psalm 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?

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A weeping creature

"Open to Me, My sister, My darling, My dove,
My flawless one." Song of Songs 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." Philippians 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!" Philippians 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.

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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." Eccles. 1:8.

But the joys of God satisfy. "Your comforts delight my soul." Psalm 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!" Psalm 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

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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!" Philippians 1:21
"For to me, to live is Christ." That is, "Christ is my life!"
Or thus, "My life is made up of Christ." As a wicked man's
life is made up of sin, so Paul's life was made up of Christ
--he was full of Christ. That I may give you the sense of
the text more fully, take it in these three particulars:
[1] "For to me, to live is Christ," that is--Christ is the
PRINCIPLE of my life. I fetch my spiritual life from Christ,
as the branch fetches its sap from the root. "Christ lives in me."
Gal. 2:20. Jesus Christ sends forth life into me, to quicken me
to every holy action. Thus, Christ is the principle of my life;
from His fullness I live--as the branch lives from the root.
[2] "For to me, to live is Christ," that is--Christ is the
END of my life. I live not for myself--but for Christ. All
my living, is to do service to Christ. "Whether we live, we

live unto the Lord." Rom. 14:8. We lay out ourselves wholly for Christ. The design of our life is to exalt Christ, and to make the crown upon His head flourish. In this sense, Christ is the end of my life--when my whole life is a living for Christ.

[3] "For to me, to live is Christ," that is--Christ is the JOY of my life. Psalm 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!"

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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." Rev. 14:11

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake, (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!

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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?

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A dish which men cannot refrain from

"How long will you love vanity?" Psalm 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." Psalm 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."

Zech. 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.

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The devil's workshop

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

Sin has defiled the heart. The heart is deadly wicked.

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

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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 Cor. 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 ri

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