

The Godly Man's Picture

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson's sermon highlights the characteristics of a godly man, emphasizing sincerity, humility, and the value of Christ over worldly pursuits.

Scripture: Matthew 23:27

Topics: "Hypocrisy", "True Godliness"

Description

Thomas Watson presents a vivid portrayal of a godly man, emphasizing the importance of genuine faith over mere outward appearances. He warns against hypocrisy, likening it to whitewashed tombs that appear beautiful but are filled with decay inside. Watson stresses that true godliness is rooted in the heart, characterized by a sincere love for Christ and a commitment to holiness, humility, and the rejection of sin. He encourages believers to continually seek God's grace and to be vigilant against the temptations of the world, ultimately highlighting that a godly man is one who strives to reflect God's character in every aspect of life.

Transcript

The Godly Man's Picture, Drawn with a

Scripture Pencil, or, Some Characteristic

Marks of a Man who is Going to Heaven

By Thomas Watson

CHOICE EXCERPTS

White feathers--but black skin

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you

hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which

look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are

full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." Matthew 23:27-28

Here is a sharp rebuke to such as are "glittering dross" Christians, who only make a show of godliness. These our Savior calls whitewashed tombs. Their beauty is all paint! Many are painted over with a religious profession, whose seeming luster dazzles the eyes of beholders; but within there is nothing but putrefaction!

Hypocrites are like the swan, which has white feathers --but black skin; or like that flower, which has a lovely appearance--but a foul scent.

The hypocrite deceives others while he lives--but deceives himself when he dies! What good will it do a man when he is in hell--that others think he has gone to heaven? Oh, beware of this!

Counterfeit piety is double iniquity. What is this but to abuse God to His face, and to serve the devil in Christ's livery?

To have only a pretense of godliness will yield no comfort after death. Will painted gold enrich a man? Will painted wine refresh him who is thirsty? He who has only a painted holiness shall have only a painted happiness! Let us take heed of this pious pageantry and devout stage-play!

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You blind fools!

"Yes, He is very precious to you who believe!"

1 Peter 2:7

There is nothing in Christ, but what is precious. His name is precious, His virtues are precious, His blood is precious--more precious than the world. The Rose of Sharon is always sweet!

We cannot prize Christ at too high a rate. We may prize other things above their value. That is our sin. We commonly overrate the creature; we think there is more in it than there is; therefore God withers our gourd, because we over-prize it.

But we cannot raise our esteem of Christ high enough.

He is beyond all value! There is no ruby or diamond, but the jeweler can set a fair price on it. But Christ's worth can never be fully known. No seraphim can set a due value on Him. His riches are unsearchable! Ephes. 3:8.

Christ is more precious than heaven!

True Christians prize Christ, as most precious. He is their chief treasure and delight. This reason why millions perish, is because they do not prize Christ.

The ungodly choose things of no value, before Christ!

"You blind fools!" Matthew 23:17. If a person chooses an apple before a priceless diamond--he is judged to be a fool. How many such idiots are there, who choose the gaudy, empty things of this life--before the Prince of Glory!

Give a baby a rattle--and it will not want gold.

Give a worldling his lusts--and he will be content enough without Christ.

We value Christ above honor and riches. This Pearl

of Great Price lies nearest our heart. He who prizes Christ esteems the gleanings of Christ--better than the world's vintage. He counts the worst things of Christ--better than the best things of the world.

Moses "regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt."

Hebrews 11:26

If we are the prizers of Christ, we cannot live without Him. A man may live without music, but not without food. A child of God can lack health and friends--but he cannot lack Christ. "Give me children," said Rachel, "or else I die!" Genesis 30:1. So the soul says, "Give me Christ--or else I shall die! Give me one drop of the water of life to quench my thirst."

If we are prizers of Christ, then we shall not complain at any pains to get Him. He who prizes gold, will dig for it in the mine. "My soul follows hard after God!" Psalm 63:8.

He in whose eye Christ is precious, never rests until he has gained Him: "I sought Him whom my soul loves; I held Him, and would not let Him go!" Canticles 3:1,4

If we are prizers of Christ, then we take great pleasure in Christ. What joy a man takes, in that which he counts his treasure! He who prizes Christ makes Him his greatest joy. He can delight in Christ, when earthly delights are gone. Though a flower in a man's garden dies, he can still delight in his money and jewels. He who esteems Christ, can solace himself in Christ, when there is a dearth of all other comforts.

If we are prizers of Christ, then we will part with our dearest pleasures for Him. He who esteems Christ, will pull out that lust which is as precious as his right eye! He who sets a high value on Christ, will set his feet on the neck of his sins! How can they be said to prize Christ--who will not leave a vanity for Him; or who prefer a damning pleasure before a saving Christ!

"Yes, He is very precious to you who believe!"

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God's palace!

"Your boasting is not good!" 1 Corinthians 5:6

Pride is the greatest sacrilege; it robs God of His glory. What a horrid sin is pride! Chrysostom calls it "the mother of hell." Pride encompasses all vice. Pride is a spiritual drunkenness; it flies up like wine into the brain and intoxicates it. Pride is idolatry; a proud man is a self-worshiper. How odious is this sin to God! "Everyone who is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord!" Proverbs 16:5. "I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13.

Those who look at themselves in the magnifying mirror of self-love, appear better in their own eyes than they are. There is no idol like self; the proud man bows down to this idol.

Many are proud of their riches. Their hearts swell with their estates. Pride is the rich man's cousin.

"Your heart has become proud because of your

wealth." Ezekiel 28:5.

Many are proud of their apparel. They dress in such fashions, as to make the devil fall in love with them!

Painted faces, gaudy attire, naked breasts--what are these, but the banners which sinful pride displays?

Many are proud of their beauty. The body is but dust and blood kneaded together. Solomon says, "Beauty is vain." Proverbs 31:30. Yet some are so vain--as to be proud of vanity! Shall dust exalt itself?

Many are proud of their gifts and abilities. These trappings and ornaments do not approve them in God's eyes. An angel is a creature of great abilities; but take away humility from an angel--and he is a devil! God loves a humble soul. It is not our high birth; but our humble hearts, which God delights in.

Oh, let us search if there is any of this leaven of pride in us! Man is naturally a proud piece of flesh. This sin of pride runs in the blood. There are the seeds of this sin of pride in the best of Christians--but the godly do not allow themselves in it. They strive to kill this weed, by mortification.

But certainly where this sin of pride reigns and prevails, it cannot stand with grace. You may as well call him who lacks wisdom, a prudent man; as him who lacks humility, a godly man. "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." 1 Peter 5:5. Put humility on, as an

embroidered robe. It is better to lack anything, rather than humility.

The more value any man has, the more humble he is.

Feathers fly up--but gold descends! The golden saint descends in humility. Look at a humble Savior --and let the plumes of pride fall off!

A humble heart is God's palace! "For this is what the high and lofty One says; He who lives forever, whose name is holy--I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit."

Isaiah 57:15 A humble heart glories in this--that it is the presence chamber of the great and glorious King!

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They have many scars and spots

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

"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart." Heb. 10:22

If the heart is sincere, God will wink at many failings.

God's love does not make Him blind; He can see our infirmities. But how does God look at a believer's sins?

Not with an eye of revenge--but of pity, as a physician sees a disease in his patient--so as to heal him. God does not see iniquity in Jacob--so as to destroy him; but to heal him!

How much pride, vanity, passion, does the Lord pass by in His sincere ones! He sees the integrity--and pardons the infirmity. We esteem a picture, though it is not drawn full length. Just so, the graces of God's

people are not drawn to their full length. They have many scars and spots--yet being sincere, they shall find mercy. God loves the sincere, and it is the nature of love to cover infirmity.

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"Lord, smite this sin!"

"Your Word is completely pure, and Your servant loves it." Psalms 119:140

Do we love the holiness of the Word? The Word is preached--to beat down sin, and advance holiness.

Do we love it for its spirituality and purity? Many love the Preached Word only for its eloquence and notion. They come to a sermon as to a performance, Ezek. 33:31,32, or as to a garden to pick flowers; but not to have their lusts subdued or their hearts purified. These are like a foolish woman who paints her face--but neglects her health!

Do we love the convictions of the Word? Do we love the Word when it comes home to our conscience and shoots its arrows of reproof at our sins? It is the minister's duty sometimes to reprove. He who can speak smooth words in the pulpit--but does not know how to reprove, is like a sword with a fine handle, but without an edge! "Rebuke them sharply!" Titus 2:15.

Dip the nail in oil--reprove in love--but strike the nail home!

Now Christian, when the Word touches on your sin

and says, "You are the man!" do you love the reproof?

Can you bless God that "the sword of the Spirit" has divided between you and your lusts? This is indeed a sign of grace, and shows that you are a lover of the Word.

A corrupt heart loves the comforts of the Word--but not the reproofs: "You hate the one who reproves... and despise him who tells the truth!" Amos 5:10.

"Their eyes flash with fire!" Like venomous creatures that at the least touch, spit poison! "When they heard these things, they were enraged in their hearts and gnashed their teeth at him!" Acts 7:54. When Stephen touched their sins, they were furious and could not endure it.

How shall we know that we love the reproofs of the Word?

When we desire to sit under a heart-searching ministry.

Who cares for medicines that will not work? A godly man does not choose to sit under a ministry that will not work upon his conscience.

When we pray that the Word may meet with our sins. If there is any traitorous lust in our heart--we would have it found out, and executed. We do not want sin covered; but cured! We can open our heart to the sword of the Word and say, "Lord, smite this sin!"

When we are thankful for a reproof. "Let a righteous man strike me--it is a kindness; let him rebuke me--it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it." Psalm

141:5. David was glad for a reproof.

Suppose a man were in the mouth of a lion, and another should shoot the lion and save the man; would he not be thankful? So, when we are in the mouth of sin, as of a lion, and the minister by a reproof shoots this sin to death--shall we not be thankful?

A gracious soul rejoices, when the sharp lance of the Word has pierced his abscess of sin! He wears a reproof like a jewel on his ear: "Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear." Proverbs 25:12.

To conclude, it is convincing preaching which must do the soul good. A nipping reproof prepares for comfort--as a nipping frost prepares for the sweet flowers of spring.

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Then you will be thankful

If you wish to be thankful, get a heart deeply humbled with the sense of your own vileness.

A broken heart is the best pipe to sound forth God's praise. He who studies his sins, wonders that he has anything, and that God should shine on such a dunghill: "I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man--but I was shown mercy!" 1 Timothy 1:13. How thankful Paul was! How he trumpeted forth free grace!

A proud man will never be thankful. He looks on all his mercies as either of his own procuring or deserving. If he has an estate, this he got by his

wits and industry; not considering that scripture,
"Always remember that it is the Lord your God
who gives you power to become rich" Dt. 8:18.
Pride stops the current of gratitude. O Christian,
think of your unworthiness; see yourself as the
least of saints, and the chief of sinners--and
then you will be thankful.

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The golden bait

Gain is the golden bait, with which Satan fishes
for souls! This was the last temptation he used
with Christ: "All these things will I give You!" But
Christ saw the hook under the bait! Many who have
escaped gross sins, are still caught in a golden net!
A godly man dare not travel for riches, along the
devil's highway. Those are sad gains, which make
a man lose heaven at last!

"What good will it be for a man if he gains the
whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" Mat. 16:26

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The curtain-sinner

A godly man does not indulge himself in any sin.
Though sin lives in him--yet he does not live in sin.
A godly man may step into sin through infirmity--
but he does not keep on that road.

What is it to indulge sin? To indulge sin is to give the
breast to it and feed it. To indulge sin is to commit it

with delight. The ungodly "delight in wickedness,"
2 Thess. 2:12. In this sense, a godly man does not
indulge sin. Though sin is in him--he is troubled at it
and would gladly get rid of it.

There is as much difference between sin in the
wicked, and sin in the godly--as between poison
being in a serpent, and poison being in a man.
Poison in a serpent is in its natural place and is
delightful--but poison in a man's body is harmful
and he uses antidotes to expel it. So sin in a
wicked man is delightful, being in its natural
place--but sin in a child of God is burdensome
and he uses all means to expel it.

A godly man will not allow himself in secret sins.
Some are more modest than to commit open gross
sin. That would be a stain on their reputation. All
will not sin on a balcony--but perhaps they will
sin behind the curtain!

But a godly man dare not sin secretly, for he knows
that God can neither be deceived by our subtlety, nor
excluded by our secrecy. He knows that secret sins are
in some sense worse than others. They reveal more
deceit and atheism. "He knows the secrets of every
heart," Psalm 44:21.

But the curtain-sinner thinks that God does not see:
"Have you seen what the leaders of Israel are doing with
their idols in dark rooms? They are saying--The Lord

doesn't see us!" Ezek. 8:12. How it provokes God, that men's atheism should give the lie to His omniscience! "He who formed the eye--shall He not see?" Psalm 94:9.

A godly man knows that secret sins shall not escape God's justice. A judge on the bench cannot punish the treason of the heart. But the sins of the heart are as visible to God, as if they were written upon the forehead! As God will reward secret duties; so He will revenge secret sins!

A godly man enters his protest against sin: "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin?" Romans 7:24. A child of God, while he commits sin, hates the sin he commits!

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The harlot in your bosom!

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." Heb. 12:1

There is usually one sin that is the favorite--the sin which the heart is most fond of. A godly man will not indulge his darling sin: "I kept myself from my iniquity."

Psalm 18:23. "I will not indulge the sin to which the bias of my heart more naturally inclines."

"Fight neither with small nor great--but only with the king." 1 Kings 22:31. A godly man fights this king sin. If we would have peace in our souls, we must maintain a war against our favorite sin, and never

leave off until it is subdued.

Question: How shall we know what our beloved sin is?

Answer 1: The sin which a man does not love to have reproved--is the darling sin. Herod could not endure having his incest spoken against. If the prophet meddles with that sin--it shall cost him his head! "Do not touch my Herodias!" Men can be content to have other sins reproved--but if the minister puts his finger on the sore, and touches this sin--their hearts begin to burn in malice against him!

Answer 2: The sin on which the thoughts run most, is the darling sin. Whichever way the thoughts go, the heart goes. He who is in love with a person cannot keep his thoughts off that person. Examine what sin runs most in your mind, what sin is first in your thoughts and greets you in the morning--that is your predominant sin.

Answer 3: The sin which has most power over us, and most easily leads us captive--is the one beloved by the soul. There are some sins which a man can better resist. If they come for entertainment, he can more easily put them off. But the bosom sin comes as a suitor, and he cannot deny it--but is overcome by it. The young man in the Gospel had repulsed many sins--but there was one sin which soiled him, and that was covetousness.

Mark what sin you are most readily led captive by--that is the harlot in your bosom! It is a sad thing that a

man should be so bewitched by lust, that if it asks him to part with the kingdom of heaven--he must part with it, to gratify that lust!

Answer 4: The sin which men most defend, is the beloved sin. He who has a jewel in his bosom, will defend it to his death. The sin we advocate and dispute for, is the besetting sin. The sin which we plead for, and perhaps wrest Scripture to justify it --that is the sin which lies nearest the heart.

Answer 5: The sin which a man finds most difficulty in giving up, is the endeared sin. Of all his sons, Jacob found most difficulty in parting with Benjamin. So the sinner says, "This and that sin I have parted with--but must Benjamin go! Must I part with this delightful sin? That pierces my heart!" A man may allow some of his sins to be demolished--but when it comes to one sin, that is the taking of the castle; he will never agree to part with that! That is the master sin for sure.

The besetting sin is, of all others, most dangerous.

As Samson's strength lay in his hair--so the strength of sin, lies in this beloved sin. This is like a poison striking the heart, which brings death. A godly man will lay the axe of repentance to this sin and hew it down! He will sacrifice this Isaac; he will pluck out this right eye--so that he may see better to go to heaven.

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One sin lived in

A godly man considers the mischief which one sin lived in, will do.

1. One sin lived in, gives Satan as much advantage against you as more sins. The fowler can hold a bird by one wing. Satan held Judas fast by one sin.
2. One sin lived in, proves that the heart is not sound. He who hides one rebel in his house is a traitor to the crown. The person who indulges one sin is a traitorous hypocrite!
3. One sin lived in, will make way for more--as a little thief can open the door to more. Sins are linked and chained together. One sin will draw on more. David's adultery made way for murder. One sin never goes alone! If there is only one nest egg--the devil can brood on it!
4. One sin lived in, is as much a breach of God's law as more sins. "Whoever keeps the entire law, yet fails in one point, is guilty of breaking it all" James 2:10. The king may make a law against felony, treason and murder. If a man is guilty of only one of these--he is a transgressor.
5. One sin lived in, prevents Christ from entering. One stone in the pipe keeps out the water. One sin indulged in, obstructs the soul and keeps the streams of Christ's blood from running into it!
6. One sin lived in, will spoil all your good duties. One dead fly will spoil the whole box of precious ointment. A drop of poison will spoil a glass of wine. Abimelech,

a bastard-son, destroyed seventy of his brethren, Judges

9:5. One bastard-sin will destroy seventy prayers.

7. One sin lived in will be a cankerworm to eat out the peace of conscience. "Alas! What a scorpion lies within!"

(Seneca). One sin is a pirate--to rob a Christian of his comfort. One jarring string puts all the music out of tune.

One sin lived in--will spoil the music of conscience.

8. One sin lived in, will damn as well as more sins. One disease is enough to kill. If a fence is made ever so strong, and only one gap is left open; the wild beast may enter and tread down the corn. If only one sin is allowed in the soul, you leave open a gap for the devil to enter! A soldier may have only one gap in his armor--and the bullet may enter there. He may as well be shot there--as if he had no armor on at all. So if you favor only one sin, you leave a part of your soul unprotected--and the bullet of God's wrath may enter there--and shoot you! One sin lived in, may shut you out of heaven! What difference is there, between being shut out of heaven for one sin--or for many sins? One millstone will sink a man into the sea--as well as a hundred!

Therefore, beware of cherishing one sin! Give a certificate of divorce to every sin. Kill the Goliath sin! "Let not sin reign over you." Romans 6:12. In the original it is "Let not sin king it over you." Grace and sin may be together--but grace and the love of sin cannot. Therefore parley with sin no longer--but with the spear of mortification, spill the heart-blood of every sin!

"For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through

the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live."

Romans 8:13.

"So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you."

Colossians 3:5

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Gospel bruising

"He will not break a bruised reed." Matthew 12:20

Will Christ not break a bruised reed? See, then, the gracious disposition of Jesus Christ--He is full of mercy and sympathy. Though He may bruise the soul for sin, He will not break it. The surgeon may lance the body and make it bleed--but he will bind up the wound.

As Christ has beams of majesty, so He has a heart of mercy. Christ has both the lion and the lamb in His escutcheon: the lion--in respect of his fierceness to the wicked (Psalm 50:22), and the lamb--in respect of His mildness to His people. His name is Jesus--a Savior; and His office is a healer (Mal. 4:2). Christ made a plaster of His own blood--to heal a broken heart!

Christ is the quintessence of love. Someone said, "If the sweetness of all flowers were in one flower, how sweet that flower would be!" Christ is that flower! How full of mercy is Christ, in whom all mercy meets! Christ has a skillful hand and a tender heart. "He will not break a bruised reed."

This text is a spiritual honeycomb, dropping consolation into all bruised hearts. This text is comforting to a poor

soul who sits with Job among the ashes, and is dejected at the sense of its unworthiness. "Ah!" says the soul, "I am unworthy of mercy; what am I, that ever God should look on me? Alas! I am unworthy." Does your unworthiness trouble you? What more unworthy than a bruised reed? Though you are despicable in your own eyes--just a poor shattered reed--yet you may be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. Do not let your unworthiness discourage you. If you see yourself as vile and Christ as precious--this promise is yours! Christ will not break you--but will bind up your wounds. "He will not break a bruised reed." But how shall I know that I am savingly bruised? When your spirit is so troubled that you are willing to let go those lusts which brought in the greatest income of pleasure and delight. When not only is sin discarded but you are disgusted with it--then you have been bruised enough. The medicine is strong enough, when it has purged out the disease. The soul is bruised enough, when the love of sin is purged out. Did God ever bring you to your knees? Has your proud heart been humbled? Did you ever see yourself as a sinner and nothing but a sinner? Did you ever, with a weeping eye, look on Christ? (Zech. 12:10) And did those tears drop from the eye of faith? (Mark 9:24) This is gospel bruising. Can you say, "Lord, though I do not see You--yet I love You; though I am in the dark--yet I cast anchor on You!" This is to be a

bruised reed.

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Self-love is self-hatred

"If anyone would come after Me, he must
deny himself and take up his cross daily
and follow Me. Luke 9:23

Self-ease, self-ends, self-love, whatever comes
in competition with (or stands in opposition to)
Christ's glory and interest--must be denied!

Self is the great snare! The rich young man in the
Gospel might have followed Christ--but something
of self hindered him. Self-love is self-hatred.

The man who cannot get beyond himself--will
never get to heaven.

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It is of infinite concern!

"Redeeming the time." Ephesians 5:16

How you spend your time, is a matter of great
importance. Many people fool away their time--
some in idle visits, others in recreations and
pleasures which secretly bewitch the heart, and
take it away from better things. What are our
golden hours for--but to attend to our souls?
Time misspent is not time lived--but time lost!
Time is a precious commodity. As salvation is to
be worked out in it, and a conveyance of heaven
depends on using it well--it is of infinite concern!

Think of your short stay in the world. "We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a shadow--gone so soon without a trace!"

1 Chronicles 29:15

There is only a span between the cradle and the grave!

Solomon says there is "a time to be born and a time to die"--but mentions no time of living--as if that were so short, it was not worth naming!

Time, when it has once gone, can never be recalled.

"My life passes more swiftly than a runner. It flees away, filled with tragedy. It disappears like a swift boat, like an eagle that swoops down on its prey." Job 9:25-26

This Scripture compares time to a flying eagle. Yet time differs from the eagle in this: the eagle flies forward and then back again--but time has wings only to fly forward --it never returns! "Time flies irrevocably."

The serious thoughts of our short stay here in this world, would be a great means of promoting godliness. Whoever considers how flitting and winged his life is--will hasten his repentance.

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Pull off the mask!

"Godliness with contentment is great gain."

1 Timothy 6:6

It is like digging in a gold mine. Godliness makes God Himself our portion! "The Lord is the portion

of my inheritance" Psalm 16:5. If God is our portion--all our estate lies in jewels! Where God gives Himself--He gives everything else. Whoever has the castle, has all the royalties belonging to it. God is a portion that can be neither spent nor lost. "God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!" Psalm 73:26.

Godliness is "profitable for all things." 1 Tim. 4:8.

What else is profitable, besides godliness?

Food will not give a man wisdom;

gold will not give him health;

honor will not give him beauty.

But godliness is profitable for all things:

it fences off all troubles;

it supplies all needs;

it makes soul and body completely happy.

Consider how vain and contemptible other things are, which people void of godliness, busy themselves about.

Men are taken up with the things of this life, and "what profit has he who has labored for the wind?" Can the wind fill? What is gold but dust, which will sooner choke than satisfy! Pull off the mask of the most beautiful thing under the sun--and look what is inside. There is care and vexation! Worldly joys are as fleeting as a bubble floating down the stream.

Godliness is an enduring substance. All worldly delights have a death's-head set on them. They

are only shadows and they are fleeting. Earthly comforts bring a man to his grave--and then take their farewell. But godliness is a possession which we cannot be robbed of. It runs parallel with eternity. Force cannot weaken it; age cannot wither it. It outbraves sufferings; it outlives death. Death may pluck the stalk of the body--but the flower of grace is not hurt.

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He tumbles in!

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked.

A man reaps what he sows." Galatians 6:7

This way of sin seems pleasant--but the end is damnable. The ungodly man treads on the precipice of the bottomless pit; and when death gives him a jog--he tumbles in!

"You fool! You will die this very night!"

Luke 12:20

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Satan is their pilot!

"For those who are after the flesh--do mind the things of the flesh; but those who are after the Spirit--the things of the Spirit." Romans 8:5

The ungodly walk according to the flesh. If a drunken or unclean lust calls--they gratify it!

Lust is the compass they sail by! Satan is their pilot, and hell the port they are bound for!

"For if you live after the flesh--you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body--you shall live." Romans 8:13

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Swim in a sea of mercy!

"The God who fed me all my life long unto this day."

Genesis 48:15

What temporal favors we have received! Every day we see a new tide of mercy coming in. The wings of mercy have covered us; the breast of mercy has fed us! What snares laid for us have been broken! What fears have blown over! He has taken such care of us, as if he had no one else to take care of. Never was the cloud of providence so black--but we might see a rainbow of love in the cloud. We have been made to swim in a sea of mercy! Does not all this call for thankfulness?

That which may put another string into the instrument of our praise, and make it sound louder--is to consider what spiritual blessings God has conferred on us. He has opened the wardrobe of heaven and fetched us out a better garment than any of the angels wear! He has given us the best robe, and put on us the ring of faith, by which we are married to Him. These are mercies of the first magnitude, which deserve to have an asterisk put on them! More--God keeps the best wine until last! Here on earth, He gives us temporal mercies only in

small quantities; but the greatest things are laid up in heaven! Here on earth, there are some honey drops and foretastes of God's love; the rivers of pleasure are reserved for paradise! Well may we take the harp and violin and triumph in God's praise. Who can tread on these hot coals of God's love--and his heart not burn in thankfulness!

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What is godliness?

Godliness is a REAL thing.

It is not a fantasy, but a fact. Godliness is not the feverish fantasy of a sick brain; a Christian is no enthusiast, one whose religion is all made up of theory.

Godliness is an INTRINSIC thing.

It lies chiefly in the heart. The dew lies on the leaf, the sap is hidden in the root. The moralist's religion is all in the leaf; it consists only in externals--but godliness is a holy sap which is rooted in the soul.

"Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; You teach me wisdom in the inmost place" Psalm 51:6.

Godliness is a SUPERNATURAL thing.

By nature we inherit nothing but evil. We sucked in sin as naturally as our mother's milk. But godliness is breathed in from heaven. God must light up the lamp of grace in the heart. Weeds grow by themselves; flowers are planted. Godliness is a celestial plant. A man has no more power to make himself godly, than

to create himself.

Godliness is an EXTENSIVE thing.

It is a sacred leaven which spreads itself into the whole soul. There is light in the understanding, order in the affections, pliability in the will, exemplariness in the life. He who is good only in some part is not godly.

Grace is called "the new man," Col. 3:10, not a new eye, or tongue--but a new man. He who is godly is good all over; though he is regenerate only in part; yet it is in every part.

Godliness is a GLORIOUS thing.

As the jewel to the ring, so is piety to the soul, bespangling it in God's eyes. Godliness is glory in the seed, and glory is godliness in the flower.

Godliness is a PERMANENT thing.

There is a great deal of difference between a stake in the hedge--and a tree in the garden. A stake rots and molders--but a tree, having life in it, abides and flourishes. When godliness has taken root in the soul, it abides to eternity. Godliness being engraved in the heart by the Holy Spirit, as with the point of a diamond, can never be erased.

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A living principle

As gold is the most precious among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Faith cuts us off from the wild olive tree of nature--and grafts us into Christ.

Faith is the vital artery of the soul: "The just shall live by his faith." Such as are destitute of faith may breathe--but they lack spiritual life.

Saving faith is a living principle. Faith enlivens all the graces; not a grace stirs until faith sets it working.

Faith excites repentance. When I believe God's love to me--this makes me weep that I should sin against so good a God.

Faith is the mother of hope; first we believe the promise, then we hope for it. Faith is the oil which feeds the lamp of hope. Faith and hope are two turtledove graces; take away one, and the other languishes. If the sinews are cut, the body is lame; if this sinew of faith is cut, hope is lame.

Faith is the ground of patience; he who believes that God is his God, and that all providences work for his good, patiently yields himself to the will of God.

Faith is a panacea--a remedy against all troubles. It is a godly man's anchor which he casts out into the sea of God's mercy, and is kept from sinking in despair.

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They distill consolation into the soul

"He has given us His very great and precious promises." 2 Peter 1:4

The promises are comforting--for their being suitable

for the Christian's every condition. The promises are like an herb garden. There is no disease but some herb may be found there to cure it. The promises of themselves cannot comfort us--but only as the Spirit enables us to suck consolation from these honeycombs. The promises are like a still full of herbs--but this still will not drop unless the fire is put under it. So when the Spirit of God (who is compared to fire) is put to the still of the promises--then they distill consolation into the soul.

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The devil has entered into these swine!

"If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" Romans 8:9

And if he does not belong to Christ--then whose is he?

To what regiment does he belong? Do those who are malicious and unclean have God's Spirit? It would be blasphemy to say these have the Holy Spirit. Will the blessed Spirit leave his celestial palace to come and live in a foul prison? A sinner's heart is a jail, both for darkness and obnoxiousness, and will God's free Spirit be confined to a prison? (Psalm 51:12) A sinner's heart is the emblem of hell. What would God's Spirit do there?

Wicked hearts are not a temple--but a pigsty, where the unclean spirit makes his abode--"the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience" Eph. 2:2.

We would be loath to live in a house haunted by evil spirits; a sinner's heart is haunted! "After the sop Satan entered" John 13:27. Satan abuses the godly--but enters into the wicked. When the devils went into the herd of swine, "the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water" Matt. 8:32. Why is it that men rush so greedily to the commission of sin--but because the devil has entered into these swine!

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A whispering in God's ear!

"Let everyone who is godly pray to You."

Psalm 32:6

A godly man is a praying man. As soon as grace is poured in--prayer is poured out!

"But I give myself unto prayer" Psalm 109:4.

In the Hebrew it is, "but I prayer." Prayer and I are all one.

Prayer is the soul's communion with heaven.

God comes down to us by His Spirit--and we go up to Him by prayer.

Caligula placed his idols--as whispering in Jupiter's ear;

Prayer is a whispering in God's ear!

A godly man cannot live without prayer. A man cannot live--unless he takes his breath; nor can the soul live--unless it breathes forth its desires to God. As soon as the babe of grace is born, it

cries. No sooner was Paul converted than "behold, he prays!" Acts 9:11. No doubt he prayed before, being a Pharisee--but it was either superficially or superstitiously. But when the work of grace had been done in his soul, behold, now he prays!

A godly man is on the mount of prayer every day. He begins the day with prayer. Before he opens his shop--he opens his heart to God! We burn sweet incense in our houses; a godly man's house is "a house of incense"; he airs it with the incense of prayer. He engages in no business without seeking God. A godly man consults God in everything; he asks God's permission and his blessing. A true saint continually shoots up his heart to heaven, by sacred prayers.

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The devil's tennis ball

"We hear that some among you are idle."

2 Thessalonians 3:11

Piety never did grant a patent for idleness.

An idle person is the devil's tennis ball, which he bandies up and down with temptation--until at last the ball goes out of play!

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Evangelical obedience

Is it possible for anyone to walk according to the full breadth of God's law, and to follow God fully?

There is a twofold obeying of God's law.

The first is perfect, when all is done, which the law requires. This we cannot arrive at in this life.

Secondly, there is an incomplete obedience which is accepted in Christ. This consists in four things:

(1) An approving of all God's commands: "the commandment is holy and just and good . . .

I consent unto the law that it is good"

Romans 7:12, 16.

(2) A sweet delight in God's commands: "I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I have loved" Psalm 119:47.

(3) A cordial desire to walk in all God's commands: "O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes" Psalm 119:5.

(4) A real endeavor to tread in every path of the command: "I turned my feet unto Your testimonies" Psalm 119:59.

Evangelical obedience is true in its essence, though not perfect in its degree; and where it comes short, Christ puts His merits into the scales, and then there is full weight.

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Walking above the earth

"Noah walked with God." Genesis 6:9

The age in which Noah lived was very corrupt:

"the wickedness of man was great in the earth"

(v.5). But the iniquity of the times, could not
put Noah off his walk.

What is it, to walk with God?

Walking with God imports five things:

1. Walking as under God's eye. Noah revered God.

A godly man sets himself as in God's presence, knowing that his Judge is looking on: "I have set the Lord always before me." Psalm 16:8

2. The familiarity and intimacy which the soul has with God. Friends walk together and console themselves with one another. The godly make known their requests to God--and He makes known His love to them. There is a sweet fellowship between God and His people: "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" 1 John 1:3.

3. Walking above the earth. A godly man is elevated above all sublunary objects. The person who walks with God must ascend very high. A dwarf cannot walk among the stars--nor can a dwarfish, earthly soul walk with God.

4. Visible piety. Walking is a visible posture. Grace must be conspicuous to the onlookers. He who reveals something of God in his behavior, walks with God. He shines forth in biblical conduct. He is a walking Bible.

5. Continued progress in grace. It is not only a step--but a walk. There is a going on towards maturity. A godly man does not sit down in the middle of the way--but continues on. He may through infirmity step aside (as Peter did)--

but he recovers by repentance, and goes on in progressive holiness: "The righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger." Job 17:9.

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The new has come!

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

When the truth of grace is in the heart--
the beauty of grace is seen in the walk!

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Spider or bee?

A godly man strives to be an instrument for making others godly. He is not content to go to heaven alone, but wants to take others there. Spiders work only for themselves--but bees work for others.

A godly man is both a diamond and a magnet--a diamond for the sparkling luster of grace; and a magnet for his attractiveness. He is always drawing others to embrace piety. Living things have a propagating virtue.

Where piety lives in the heart, there will be an endeavor to propagate the life of grace in those we converse with.

"My son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds" Philemon 10. Though God is the fountain of grace--yet the saints are the pipes which transmit the living streams to others!

Grace is like fire--which assimilates and turns everything

into its own nature. Where there is the fire of grace in the heart--it will endeavor to inflame others.

Grace is a holy leaven, which will be seasoning and leavening others with divine principles.

Grace makes the heart tender. A godly man pities those who are in the gall of bitterness. He sees what a deadly cup is brewing for the wicked! They must, without repentance, be bound over to God's wrath! The fire which rained on Sodom was but a painted fire--in comparison with hell fire! This is a fire with a vengeance: "Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" Jude 7.

Now when a godly man sees Satan's captives ready to be damned--he strives to convert them from the error of their way: "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men!" 2 Cor. 5:11. A godly man will be careful that his children should know God. He would be very sad if any of his children should burn in hell.

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God's garden

A holy heart is the garden where God plants the flower of His love. God's love to His people is an ancient love, it dates from eternity. (Eph. 1:4)

He loves them with a choice, distinguishing love; they are the "dearly beloved of His soul." Jer. 12:7.

The men of the world have bounty dropping from God's fingers--but the godly have love dropping from God's heart. He gives to one--a golden cup;

to the other--a golden kiss.

God loves the godly, just as He loves Christ (John 17:26). It is the same love in kind, though not in degree. Here the saints merely sip God's love; in heaven they shall drink of rivers of pleasure (Psalm 36:8). The love of God to His people is permanent. Death may take their life away from them--but not God's love: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness!"

Jeremiah 31:3.

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Continually weeding his heart

The ungodly do not understand the iniquity of their own hearts. You will sometimes hear them swear that their heart is good.

But a child of God sees much heart corruption. Though some flowers of grace grow there, he still sees how fast the weeds of sin grow--and is therefore continually weeding his heart by repentance and mortification.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psalms 139:23-24

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Satan's kindness

"We are not ignorant of his devices" 2 Cor. 2:11

The godly foresee a temptation, and will not come
near. They see a snake under the beautiful flowers!
They know that Satan's kindness--is craftiness!
The godly set their feet--where worldly men set
their heart!

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Most receive the mark of the beast!
Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people
going to be saved?" He said to them, "Make every
effort to enter through the narrow door, because
many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be
able to." Luke 13:23-24

There are only a few godly people. Most receive
the mark of the beast! The devil keeps open
house for all comers, and he is never without guests!
If the number of the saints is so small, how we
should strive to be found among these pearls!
It is better to go to heaven with the few--
than to hell in the crowd! Christ's flock is a
little one. "Don't be afraid, little flock, because
your Father delights to give you the kingdom!"

Luke 12:32

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If their fall had not knocked their brains out!
Godliness is most rational. If, while he remains in
nature's soil, he is poisoned with sin--no more actually
fit for communion with God, than a toad is fit to be

made an angel--then it is the highest act of reason,
to become a Christian.

It is rational because this change is for the better. Will
not anyone be willing to exchange a dark prison--for a
king's palace? Will he not exchange his brass--for gold?

You who become godly, change for the better: you change
your pride--for humility; you change your uncleanness--for
holiness. You change a lust which will damn you--for a
Christ who will save you!

If men were not besotted, if their fall had not knocked
their brains out--they would see that it is the most
rational thing in the world to become godly.

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A Christian's joy

Godliness does not destroy a Christian's
joy--but refines it.

"I have spoken these things to you so that
My joy may be in you, and your joy may
be complete." John 15:11

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Kills with her golden darts!

"Love not the world." 1 John 2:15

Take heed of the world. Many would like to be
godly--but the honors and profits of the world
divert them. Where the world fills both head
and heart--there is no room for Christ. The
world eats the heart out of godliness, as the

ivy eats the heart out of the oak. The world
kills with her golden darts!

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It would produce a wonderful alteration

"I thought on my ways, and turned my
feet unto Your testimonies" Psalm 119:59

By holy thoughts, the head grows clearer and
the heart better. Serious meditation represents
everything in its true color. It shows the evil of
sin, and the luster of grace. If men would step
aside a little out of the noise and hurry of life,
and spend only half-an-hour every day thinking
about their souls and eternity, it would
produce a wonderful alteration in them!

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The day we eat of this tree

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right
to eat from the tree of life, which is in the
paradise of God" Revelation 2:7

This tree of life is the Lord Jesus. This tree
infuses life--and prevents death. The day
we eat of this tree--our eyes shall indeed
be opened--to see God!

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God laid you steeping in Christ's blood

You who are enriched with the treasures of
godliness--bless God for it! This flower does

not grow in nature's garden!

You had enlisted yourselves under the devil and taken pay on his side, fighting against your own happiness--and then God came with converting grace and put forth a loving and gentle violence, causing you to espouse His cause against Satan!

You had lain many years soaking in wickedness, as if you had been parboiled for hell--and then God laid you steeping in Christ's blood and breathed holiness into your heart!

Oh, what cause you have to write yourselves down --as eternal debtors to free grace! Oh, acknowledge the sovereign love of God! Admire distinguishing mercy! Set the crown of your praise--on the head of free grace! It is good that there is an eternity coming, when the saints shall make His praise glorious!

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A heap of stones and a hammer

In hell there is nothing to be seen, but a heap of stones and a hammer. A heap of stones--that is hard hearts; a hammer--that is God's power and justice, breaking them in pieces.

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Inter-weavings of sin and grace

As fire may be hidden in the embers, so grace may be hidden under many disorders of soul.

Often in the godly, a little grace is mingled with much corruption. There are, in the best saints, inter-weavings of sin and grace:

a dark side with the light;

much pride mixed with humility;

much earthliness with heavenliness.

No, in many of the regenerate there is more corruption than grace! So much passion that you can hardly see any meekness. Jonah, a peevish prophet, quarrels with God, no--he justifies his anger: "I do well to be angry, even unto death!" Jonah 4:9. Here there was so much anger, that it was hard to see any grace.

A Christian in this life is like a glass which has more froth than wine, or like a diseased body that has more illness than vigor. It may humble the best Christian--to consider how much corruption is mingled with his grace.

The trembling soul thinks it will be swallowed up by sin. But God preserves a little quantity of grace in the heart--no, no, He makes that spark prevail over corruption! God sees the sincerity--and overlooks many infirmities. He nourishes the least sparks of grace, and blows them gently with the breath of His Spirit until they break forth into a flame. A little grace is grace--though it is smothered under much corruption.

I confess it is a matter of astonishment, that grace should not be wholly annihilated, especially if we consider two things:

(1) The malice of Satan. He is a malignant spirit and lays barriers in our way to heaven. The devil, with the wind of temptation, tries to blow out the spark of grace in our hearts. If this will not do, he stirs up wicked men and raises the militia of hell against us. What a wonder it is that this bright star of grace, should not be swept down by the tail of the dragon!

(2) The world of corruption in our hearts. Sin makes up the major part in a Christian. There are more dregs than grace in the holiest heart. The heart swarms with sin. What a great deal of pride there is in the soul! Now is it not astonishing, that this lily of grace should be able to grow among so many thorns? It is as great a wonder that a little grace should be preserved in the midst of so much corruption--as to see a candle burning in the sea and not extinguished!

But though grace lives with so much difficulty, like the infant that struggles for breath--yet being born of God, it is immortal. Grace conflicting with corruption is like a ship tossed and beaten by the waves--yet it weathers the storm and at last gets to the desired haven.

But how is it that grace, even the least degree of it, is not quenched? It is from the mighty operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God, who is the source, continually excites and awakens grace in the heart. He is at work in a believer every day. He pours in oil, and keeps the lamp of grace burning. Grace is compared to a river of life, John 7:38. The river of grace can never be dried up, for the Spirit of God is the spring which feeds it.

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Gunpowder!

Preserve a holy watchfulness over your hearts.

The man who has gunpowder in his house, fears lest it should catch fire and explode. Sin in the heart is like gunpowder! It may make us fear lest a spark of temptation should fall on us and blow us up!

There are two things which may make us always watchful of our hearts: the deceits of our hearts, and the lusts of our hearts.

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The hypocrite picks and chooses

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices--mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness" Matthew 23:23

This is one great difference between a child of God and a hypocrite. The hypocrite picks and chooses in religion. He will perform some duties which are easier,

and gratify his pride or interest--but other duties he takes no notice of.

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Kissing and hugging their dolls

"For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears--many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things."

Philippians 3:18-19

To be godly and earthly, is a contradiction. Those who are eaten up with the world will be rejected, as ungodly, at the bar of judgment. We read that the earth swallowed up Korah alive, Numb. 16:32. This judgment is on many--the earth swallows up their time, thoughts and discourse. They are buried twice; their hearts are buried in the earth before their bodies. How sad it is that the soul, that princely thing, which is made for communion with God and angels, should be put to the mill to grind, and made a slave to the earth! How like the prodigal the soul has become, choosing rather to converse with swine and feed upon husks--than to aspire after communion with the blessed Deity! Thus does Satan befool men, and keep them from heaven by making them seek a heaven here on earth.

God himself sounds a retreat to us to call us off the

world. "Love not the world" 1 John 2:15. "Be not conformed to this world" Romans 12:2. Do not hunt after its honors and profits.

Consider how much below a Christian it is to be earthly-minded. We sometimes laugh at children when we see them busying themselves with toys, kissing and hugging their dolls, etc.--when we do the same thing! At death, what will all the world be, which we so hug and kiss--but like a rag doll? It will yield us no more comfort then. How far it is below a heaven-born soul to be taken up with these things!

Consider what a poor, contemptible thing the world is. It is not worth setting the affections on; it cannot fill the heart. The creature will no more fill the soul than a drop will fill the bucket. That little sweet which we suck from the creature, is intermixed with bitterness. And this imperfect sweet will not last long: "the world passes away." The world constantly changes. It is never constant except in its disappointments. How quickly we may remove our lodgings and make our pillow in the dust! The world is but a great inn where we are to stay a night or two, and then be gone. What madness it is so to set our heart upon our inn--as to forget our eternal home!

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Christ is precious in His benefits

By Christ all dangers are removed.

Through Christ all mercies are conveyed.

In His blood flows--

justification (Acts 13:39);

sanctification (Heb. 9:14);

fructification (John 1:16);

pacification (Rom. 5:1);

adoption (Gal. 4:5);

perseverance (Heb.12:2);

glorification (Heb. 9:12).

This will be a matter of sublimest joy for all eternity.

We shall sing hallelujahs to the Lamb who has redeemed us from sin and hell, and has translated us into that glorious paradise, where we shall see God forever and ever.

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A Godlike disposition

"Partakers of the divine nature" 2 Peter 1:4

A godly man is like God. He has the same judgment as God; he thinks of things as God does. He has a Godlike disposition. A godly man bears both God's name and image. Godliness is Godlikeness. It is one thing to profess God, another thing to resemble Him. Where God sees His likeness, there He gives His love.

A godly man is like God in holiness. Holiness is the most brilliant pearl in the King of Heaven's crown:

"glorious in holiness" Exodus 15:11.

God's power makes Him mighty;
His mercy makes Him lovely; but
His holiness makes Him glorious.

The holiness of God is the intrinsic purity of His nature and his abhorrence of sin. A godly man bears some kind of analogy with God in this.

Holiness is the badge and mark of Christ's people:

"The people of Your holiness" Isaiah 63:18. The godly are a holy, as well as a royal priesthood.

They have written upon their heart, "Holiness to the Lord". The holiness of the saints consists in their conformity to God's will, which is the rule and pattern of all holiness.

The godly set themselves against evil, both in purpose and in practice. They are fearful of that which looks like sin (1 Thess. 5:22).

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Eaten up with self-love

"People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." 2 Timothy 3:2,4

People are for the most part eaten up with self-love; they love their ease, their worldly profit, their lusts--but they do not have a drop of true love to God.

A soul devoid of divine love is a temper which best suits damned spirits.

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God has two hands

The ungodly are vile people. Sin makes men base; it blots their name; it taints their blood. "They are all together become filthy" Psalm 14:3. In the Hebrew it is "they have become stinking." If you call wicked men ever so bad, you cannot call them worse than their name deserves: they are swine (Matt. 7:6); vipers (Matt. 3:7); devils (John 6:70). The wicked are dross and refuse (Psalm 119:119), and heaven is too pure to have any dross mingled with it.

The ungodly, while they live, are exposed to the wrath of God. "He who believes not, the wrath of God abides on him" John 3:36. Over his head hangs the sword of God's justice; and under him hell-fire burns!

God has two hands: one of mercy and one of justice. With the one, He will draw the godly to heaven; with the other, He will thrust the sinner to hell. The ungodly at death, must undergo God's fury and indignation. "The wicked shall be turned into hell" Psalm 9:17.

And oh, how dreadful is that place! It is called a fiery lake (Rev. 20:15). That is, a lake to denote the many torments in hell, a fiery lake to show the fierceness of the punishment. Fire is the most torturing element. Strabo in his "Geography" mentions a lake in Galilee of such a pestiferous nature that it scalds off the skin of whatever is thrown into it. But alas, that lake is cool, compared with this fiery lake into which the damned are thrown.

This fire is inextinguishable: the wicked shall be choked in the flames, though not consumed: "And they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" Rev. 20:10. See the deplorable condition of all ungodly people! In the eternal world, they shall have a life which always dies, and a death which always lives. May this not frighten men off their sins and make them become godly, unless they are resolved to feel how hot hell-fire is?

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It will vent itself at the lips!

A godly man is heavenly in his speech. His words are sprinkled with salt to season others (Col. 4:6). As soon as Christ had risen from the grave--He was "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" Acts 1:3. No sooner has a man risen from the grave of unregeneracy--than he is speaking of heaven. "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious" Eccles. 4:12. He speaks in such a heavenly manner--as if he were already in heaven. The love he has for God, will not allow him to be silent. The spouse being sick with love, her tongue was like the pen of a ready writer: "My beloved is white and ruddy, his head is as the most fine gold . . ." Song 5:10,11. Where there is a principle of godliness in the heart--it will vent itself at the lips!

How can they be termed godly--who are possessed with a dumb devil? They never have any good discourse. They are fluent and discursive enough in secular things: they can speak of their wares and shops, they can tell what a good crop they have--but in matters of religion they are as if their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth! There are many people in whose company you cannot tell what to make of them--whether they are Turks or atheists, for they never speak a word of Christ!

How can they be termed godly--whose tongues are set on fire by hell? Their lips do not drop honey--but poison, to the defiling of others! Plutarch says that speech ought to be like gold, which is of most value when it has least dross in it. Oh, the unclean, malicious words that some people utter! What an unsavory stench comes from these dunghills! Those lips which gallop so fast in sin, need David's muzzle. "I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin; I will put a muzzle on my mouth" Psalm 39:1. Can the body be healthy--when the tongue is black? Can the heart be holy--when the devil is in the lips? A godly man speaks "the language of Canaan". "Those who feared the Lord spoke often one to another" Mal. 3:16.

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A dumb minister

Godly ministers must be:

(1) Painstaking. "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction" 2 Tim. 4:2. The minister must not be idle. Sloth is as inexcusable in a minister, as sleeping in a sentry. John the Baptist was a "voice crying" Matt. 3:3. A dumb minister is of no more use, than a dead physician. A man of God must work in the Lord's vineyard. It was Augustine's wish that Christ might find him at his coming either praying or preaching.

(2) Knowledgeable. "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction--because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty" Mal. 2:7. The prophets of old were called "seers" 1 Sam. 9:9. It is absurd to have blind seers. Christ said to Peter, "Feed my sheep" John 21:16. But how sad it is when the shepherd needs to be fed! Ignorance in a minister is like blindness in an optometrist. Under the law, he who had the plague in his head, was unclean, Lev. 13:44.

(3) A plain preacher, suiting his matter and style to the capacity of his audience (1 Cor. 14:19). Some ministers, like eagles, love to soar aloft in abstruse metaphysical notions, thinking they are most admired when they are least understood. Those who preach in the clouds, instead of hitting their people's conscience, shoot over their heads.

(4) Zealous in reproofing sin. "Rebuke them sharply" Titus 1:13. A man of God must suck the fire of zeal out of the breasts of Scripture! Zeal in a minister is as proper as fire on the altar. Some are afraid to reprove, like the swordfish which has a sword in his head, but is without a heart. So they carry the sword of the Spirit with them--but have no heart to draw it out in reproof against sin. How many have sown pillows under their people, Ezek. 13:18, making them sleep so securely, that they never awoke until they were in hell!

(5) Hol

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