**MORE PEARLS FROM PHILPOT

Some beloved idol?**

"**Because the whole land is filled with idols, and the
people are madly in love with them.**" Jer50:38

Have we not all in our various ways,
**set up some beloved idol** . . .
something which **engaged our affections**,
something which **occupied our thoughts**,
something to which we **devoted all the energies of our minds**,
something for which we were **willing to labor** night and day?

Be it **money**,
be it **power**,
be it **esteem of men**,
be it **respectability**,
be it **worldly comfort**,
be it **literary knowledge**,
there was **a secret setting up of SELF in one or
more of its various forms, and a bowing down
to it as an idol.**

The man of business makes **money** his god.

The man of pleasure makes the **lust of the flesh** his god.

The proud man makes **his adored SELF** his god.

The Pharisee makes **self-righteousness** his god.

The Arminian makes **free-will** his god.

The Calvinist makes **dry doctrine** his god.

All in one way or other, however they may differ
in the object of their idolatrous worship, agree in
this: that they give a preference in their esteem
and affection to their peculiar idol, above the one
true God.

"**Idols will be utterly abolished and destroyed.**"
Isa2:18

There is, then, a time to break down these
idols which our fallen nature has set up.

And have not we experienced some measure of
this breaking down, both externally and internally?

Have not our idols been in a measure smashed
before our eyes, our prospects in life cut up and
destroyed, our airy visions of earthly happiness
and our romantic paradises dissolved into thin air,
our creature-hopes dashed, our youthful affections
blighted, and the objects from which we had fondly
hoped to reap an enduring harvest of delight
removed from our eyes?

And likewise, as to **our religion** . . .
our good opinion of ourselves,
our piety and holiness,
our wisdom and our knowledge,
our understanding and our abilities,
our consistency and uprightness;
have they not all been broken down, and
made a heap of ruins before our eyes?

**That monstrous creature within us!**

"**I abhor the pride of Jacob.**" Amo6:8

O cursed **pride**, that is ever lifting up its head in our
hearts! Pride would even pull down God that it might
sit upon His throne. Pride would trample under foot
the holiest things to exalt itself!

Pride is **that monstrous creature within us**, of such
ravenous and indiscriminate gluttony, that the more
it devours, the more it craves!

Pride is that **chameleon** which assumes every color;
that **actor** which can play every part; and yet which
is faithful to no one object or purpose, but **to exalt
and glorify self!**

"I will put an end to the pride of the mighty." "God
will bring down their pride." (Eze7:24, Isa25:11)
 **God means to kill man's pride!** And oh, what cutting
weapons the Lord will sometimes make use of to kill
a man's pride!

How He will bring him sometimes into the depths
of temporal poverty, that He may make a stab at
his **worldly pride!**

How He will bring to light the iniquities of his youth,
that He may mortify his **self-righteous pride!**

How He will allow sin to break forth, if not openly,
yet so powerfully within, that piercing convictions
shall kill his **spiritual pride!**And what deep discoveries of internal corruption will
the Lord sometimes employ, to dig down to the root,
and cut off the core of **that poisonous tree, pride!**

The Searcher of hearts dissects and anatomizes **this
inbred evil**, cuts down to it through the quivering and
bleeding flesh, and pursues with His keen knife its
multiplied windings and ramifications.

"The day is coming when **your pride will be brought
low** and the Lord alone will be exalted." Isa2:11

"The arrogance of all people will be brought low.
**Their pride will lie in the dust**. The Lord alone
will be exalted!" Isa2:17

"The Lord Almighty has done it to **destroy your pride**
and show His contempt for all human greatness."
Isa23:9

**Salvation**

And they were shouting with a mighty shout,
"**Salvation** comes from our God on the throne
and from the Lamb!" Rev7:10

The sweetest song that heaven ever proclaimed,
the most blessed note that ever melted the soul,
is **salvation**.  **Saved FROM . . .**
death and hell;
the worm which never dies;
the fire which is never quenched;
the sulphurous flames of the bottomless pit;
the companionship of tormenting fiends and
all the foul wretches under which earth has groaned;
blaspheming God in unutterable woe;
an eternity of misery without end or hope!

**Saved INTO . . .**
heaven;
the sight of Jesus as He is;
perfect holiness and happiness;
the blissful company of holy angels and glorified saints;
and all this during the countless ages of a blessed eternity!

What tongue of men or angels can describe the
millionth part of what is contained in the word **salvation**?

**The soul's natural element**

Before the soul can know anything about salvation,
it must learn deeply and experimentally the nature
of sin, and of itself, as stained and polluted by sin.

It is proud, and needs to be humbled.

It is careless, and needs to be awakened.

It is alive, and needs to be killed.

It is full, and requires to be emptied.

It is whole, and needs to be wounded.

It is clothed, and requires to be stripped.

**The soul is, by nature . . .**
self-righteous;
self-seeking;
buried deep in worldliness and carnality;
utterly blind and ignorant;
filled with . . .
presumption,
arrogance,
conceit
and enmity;
hateful to all that is heavenly and spiritual.

**Sin, in all its various forms, is
the soul's natural element.**

Some of the features of the unregenerate
nature of man are . . .
covetousness,
lust,
worldly pleasure,
desire of the praise of men,
an insatiable thirst after self-advancement,
a complete abandonment to all that can please
and gratify every new desire of the heart,
an utter contempt and abhorrence of everything that
restrains or defeats its mad pursuit of what it loves.

Education,
moral restraints,
or the force of habit,
may restrain the outbreaking of inward corruption,
and dam back the mighty stream of indwelling sin,
so that it shall not burst all its bounds, and desolate
the land. But no moral check can alter human nature.

A chained tiger is a tiger still.

"The Ethiopian cannot change his
skin, nor the leopard his spots."

To make man the direct contrary of what
he originally is; **to make him . . .**
love God instead of hating Him;
fear God, instead of mocking Him;
obey God, instead of rebelling against Him;
to do this mighty work, and to effect this wonderful
change, requires the implantation of a new nature
by the immediate hand of God Himself.

Natural light,
natural love,
natural faith,
natural obedience,
in a word, **all natural religion,
is here useless and ineffectual.**

**Godly sorrow**

**Godly sorrow** springs from a view of a suffering
Savior, and manifests itself by . . .
hatred of self,
abhorrence of sin,
groaning over our backslidings,
grief of soul for being so often entangled by our lusts and passions,
**and is accompanied by . . .**
softness,
meltings of heart,
flowings of love to the Redeemer,
indignation against ourselves,
and earnest desires never to sin more.

 **But our coward flesh shrinks from them!**
"I have refined you but not in the way silver
is refined. Rather, **I have refined you in** **the
furnace of suffering.**" Isa48:10
 **What benefit is there in afflictions?**

Does God send them without an object in view?

Do they come merely, as the men of the world think,
**by chance?** No! There is benefit intended by them.

The branch cannot bear fruit unless it be pruned.

The love of sin cannot be cast out; the soul cannot
be meekened, humbled, softened, and made contrite;
the world cannot be embittered; the things of time
and sense cannot be stripped of their false hue and
their magic appearance--**except through affliction.**

Our greatest **blessings** usually spring from our greatest
**afflictions**--they prepare the heart to receive them; they
empty the vessel of the poisonous ingredients which
have filled it, and fit it to receive gospel wine and milk.

To be without . . .
these afflictions,
these griefs,
these trials,
these temptations,
is to write ourselves destitute of grace.  **But our coward flesh shrinks from them!**
We are willing to walk to heaven; but not to walk
there in God's way. Though we see in the Scripture
that **the path to glory is a rough and rugged way**;
yet when our feet are planted in **that painful and
trying path**, we shrink back; our coward flesh refuses
to walk in that road.

God therefore, as a sovereign, brings those afflictions
upon us which He sees most fit for our profit and His
glory, without ever consulting us, without ever allowing
us a choice in the matter.

And He will generally cause our afflictions to come from
the most unexpected source, and in a way most cutting
to our feelings--in the way that of all others we would
least have chosen--and yet in a way which of all others,
**is most for our profit.**

God deals with us like a surgeon dealing with a
diseased organ. **How painful the operation!

How deep the knife cuts!**

How long it may be before the wound is healed!

Yet every stroke of the knife is indispensable!
A skillful and faithful surgeon would not do his
duty if he did not dissect it to the very bottom.

As pain before healing is necessary, and must be
produced by the knife; so spiritually, we must be
wounded and cut in our souls, **as long, and as
deeply as God sees needful**, that in His own
time we may receive the consolation.

Do the afflictions we pass through humble us?

Do they deaden the love of the world in our hearts?

Do they purge out hypocrisy?

Do they bring us more earnestly to the throne of grace?

Do they discover to us sins that we have not before seen?

Do they penetrate into our very hearts?

Do they lay bare the corrupt fountain that we carry within us?

Do they search and test us before a heart-searching God?

Do they meeken and soften our spirit?

"I have refined you but not in the way silver
is refined. Rather, **I have refined you in** **the
furnace of suffering.**" Isa48:10

The filthy holes and puddles in which it grovels

"**The human heart** is most deceitful and desperately
wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Jer17:9

The sin of our fallen nature is a very **mysterious** thing.
We read of "the mystery of iniquity". Sin has **depths**
which no human plumbline ever fathomed, and **lengths**
which no mortal measuring line ever yet measured out.

Thus the way in which sin sometimes seems to sleep;
and at other times to awake with renewed strength;
its active, irritable, impatient, restless nature;
the many shapes and colors it wears;
**the filthy holes and puddles in which it grovels**;
the corners into which it creeps;
its deceitfulness;
its hypocrisy;
its craftiness;
its persuasiveness;
its intense selfishness;
its utter recklessness;
its desperate madness;
its insatiable greediness;
are secrets, painful secrets,
only learned by bitter experience.

"**The human heart** is most deceitful and desperately
wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Jer17:9

**The Lord's secret power in our souls?**

"**He gives power** to those who are tired and worn
out; and **increases strength** to the weak." Isa40:29

The Lord's people are often in the state that they have
no might. All their power seems exhausted, and their
strength completely drained away; sin appears to have
gotten the mastery over them; and they feel as if they
had neither will nor ability to run the race set before
them, or persevere in the way of the Lord.

Now what has kept us to this day? Some of you have
made a profession ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years.

**What has kept us?**

When powerful temptations were spread for our feet,
what preserved us from falling headlong into them?

When we felt the workings of strong lusts, what kept
us from being altogether carried captive by them?

When we look at the **difficulties** of the way, the
**perplexities** which our souls have had to grapple with,
the **persecutions** and hard blows from sinners and
saints that we have had to encounter--what has still
kept in us a desire to fear God, and a heart in some
measure tender before Him?

**When we view the . . .**
infidelity,
unbelief,
carnality,
worldly-mindedness,
hypocrisy,
pride, and
presumption of our fallen nature,
**what has kept us still . . .**
believing,
hoping,
loving,
longing,
and looking to the Lord?

**When we think of our . . .**
deadness,
coldness,
torpidity,
rebelliousness,
perverseness,
love to evil,
aversion to good, and
all the abounding corruptions of our nature,
what has kept us from giving up the very profession
of religion, and swimming down the powerful current
that has so long and so often threatened to sweep
us utterly from the Lord? **Is it not the putting forth
of** **the Lord's secret power in our souls?**

Can we not look back, and recall to mind our first
religious companions; those with whom we started
in the race; those whom we perhaps envied for their
greater piety, zeal, holiness, and earnestness; and
with which we painfully contrasted our own sluggishness
and carnality; admiring them, and condemning ourselves?

**Where are they all, or the greater part of them?**
Some have embraced soul-destroying errors; others
are buried in a worldly religious system; and others
are wrapped up in delusion and fleshly confidence.

Thus, while most have fallen into the snares of the devil;
God, by putting forth **His secret power in the hearts of His
fainting ones**, keeps His fear alive in their souls; holds up
their goings in His paths that their footsteps slip not; brings
them out of all their temptations and troubles; delivers them
from every evil work; and preserves them unto His heavenly
kingdom. **He thus secures the salvation of His people by
His own free grace.**

**How sweet and precious it is . . .**
to have our strength renewed;
to have fresh grace brought into the heart;
to feel the mysterious sensations of renovated life;
to feel the everlasting arms supporting the soul . . .
fighting our battles for us,
subduing our enemies,
overcoming our lusts,
breaking our snares, and
delivering us out of our temptations!

**God's house?**

In the New Testament Scriptures, we find mention
made in several places of "the house of the God."
The New Testament never, in any one instance,
means, by "the house of God," any material building.

It has come to pass, through the traditions
received from the fathers, that . . .
buildings erected by man,
collections of bricks and mortar,
piles of squared and cemented stones,
are often called "the house of God."

In ancient Popish times they invested a consecrated
building with the title of "**God's house**", thus endeavoring
to make it appear as though it were a holy place in which
God specially dwelt. They thus drew off the minds of the
people from any internal communion with God, and
possessed them with the idea that He was only to be
found in some holy spot, consecrated and sanctified
by rites and ceremonies.

The same leaven of the Pharisees has infected the
Church of England; and thus she calls her consecrated
buildings, her piles of stone and cement, "churches,"
and "houses of God."

And even those who profess a purer faith, who dissent
from her unscriptural forms, have learned to adopt the
same carnal language, and even they, through a
misunderstanding of what "the house of God" really
is, will call such a building as we are assembled in
this morning, "the house of God."

How frequently does the expression drop from the
pulpit, and how continually is it heard at the prayer
meeting, "coming up to the house of God," as though
any building now erected by human hands could be
called the house of the living God.

It arises from a misunderstanding of the Scriptures,
and is much fostered by that priestcraft which is in
the human heart, inciting us to believe that God is
to be found only in certain buildings set apart for
His service.

When the Holy Spirit preaches the gospel

We often know the **theory** of the gospel,
before we know the **experience** of the gospel.

We often receive the doctrines of grace into
our **judgment**, before we receive the grace of
the doctrines into our **soul**.

**We therefore need to be . . .**
brought down,
humbled,
tried,
stripped of every prop;
**that the gospel may be to us . . .**
more than a sound,
more than a name,
more than a theory,
more than a doctrine,
more than a system,
more than a creed;
**that it may be . . .**
soul enjoyment,
soul blessing,
and soul salvation.

**When the Holy Spirit preaches the gospel**
to the poor in spirit, the humbled, stripped,
and tried--it is a gospel of glad tidings indeed
to the sinner's broken heart.

**We get entangled with some idol**

Wherever the grace of God is, it constrains its
partaker to desire to live to His honor and glory.

But he soon finds the difficulty of so doing.
Such is . . .
the weakness of the **flesh**,
the power of **sin**,
the subtlety of **Satan**,
the strength of **temptation**, and
the **snares** spread on every side for our feet,
that we can neither **do** what we want, nor **be**
what we want. Before we are well aware, **we
get entangled with some idol**, or drawn aside
into some indulgence of the flesh, which brings
darkness into the mind, and may cut us out
some bitter work for the rest of our days.

But we thus learn not only the weakness of the
flesh, but where and in whom all our strength lies.

And as the **grace of the Lord Jesus**, in its suitability,
in its sufficiency and its super-aboundings, becomes
manifested in and by the weakness of the flesh; a
sense of His wondrous love and care in so bearing
with us, in so pitying our case, and manifesting mercy
where we might justly expect wrath, constrains us
with a holy obligation to walk in His fear and to live
to His praise.

**The sins and slips of the saints?**
The Scriptures faithfully record
**the falls of believers . . .**
the drunkenness of Noah,
the incest of Lot,
the unbelief of Abraham,
the peevishness of Moses,
the adultery of David,
the idolatry of Solomon,
the pride of Hezekiah,
the cowardice of Mark and
the cursing and swearing of Peter.

But why has the Holy Spirit left on record
**the sins and slips of the saints?**

First, that it might teach us that they were
saved by grace as poor, lost, and ruined sinners;
in the same way as we hope to be saved.

Secondly, that their **slips and falls** might be
so many beacons and warnings, to guard the
people of God against being overtaken by
the same sins; as the apostle speaks, "All
these events happened to them as examples
for us. They were written down to warn us."

And thirdly, that the people of God, should
they be overtaken by sin, might not be cast
into despair; but that from seeing recorded
in the Scripture the **slips and failings** of the
saints of old, they might be lifted up from
their despondency, and brought once more
to hope in the Lord.

**Cain, Esau, Saul, Ahab, Judas**
"**Godly sorrow** brings repentance that
leads to salvation and leaves no regret,
but **worldly sorrow** brings death."
2Co7:10

These **two kinds of repentance** are to be carefully
distinguished from each other; though they are often
sadly confounded. **Cain, Esau, Saul, Ahab, Judas,** **all
repented.** But their repentance was the remorse of
natural conscience, not the godly sorrow of a broken
heart and a contrite spirit. They trembled before God
as an angry Judge, but were not melted into contrition
before Him as a forgiving Father.

They neither hated their sins nor forsook them.

They neither loved holiness nor sought it.

**Cain** went out from the presence of the Lord.

**Esau** plotted Jacob's death.

**Saul** consulted the witch of Endor.

**Ahab** put honest Micaiah into prison.

**Judas** hanged himself.

How different from this forced and false repentance
of a reprobate, is the repentance of a child of God;
that true repentance for sin, that godly sorrow, that
holy mourning which flows from the Spirit's gracious
operations!

**Godly sorrow** does not spring from a sense of the
wrath of God in a broken law, but from His mercy
in a blessed gospel; from a view by faith of the
sufferings of Christ in the garden and on the cross;
from a manifestation of pardoning love; and is always
attended with self-loathing and self-abhorrence; with
deep and unreserved confession of sin and forsaking
it; with most hearty, sincere and earnest petitions to
be kept from all evil; and a holy longing to live to the
praise and glory of God.

**Here, and here alone**

**Standing then at the cross of our adorable Lord**,
**we may see . . .**
the law thoroughly fulfilled,
its curse fully endured,
its penalties wholly removed,
sin eternally put away,
the justice of God amply satisfied,
all His perfections gloriously harmonized,
reconciliation completely effected,
redemption graciously accomplished,
and the church everlastingly saved.

**Here, and here alone**, we see **sin** in its blackest
colors, and **holiness** in its most attractive beauties.

**Here, and here alone**, we see the **love of God**
in its tenderest form, and the **anger of God** in
its deepest expression.

**Here, and here alone**, we see the eternal and
unalterable displeasure of the Almighty against sin,
and the rigid demands of His inflexible justice, and
yet the tender compassion and boundless love of
His heart to the election of grace.

**Here, and here alone**, are obtained pardon and peace.

**Here, and here alone**, penitential grief and
godly sorrow flow from heart and eyes.

**Here, and here alone**, is . . .
sin subdued and mortified,
holiness communicated,
death vanquished,
Satan put to flight, and
happiness and heaven begun in the soul.

What **a holy meeting-place** for repenting sinners
and a sin-pardoning God! What **a healing-place**
for guilty, yet repenting and returning backsliders!
What **a door of hope** in the valley of Achor for the
self-condemned and self-abhorred! What **a safe
spot** for seeking souls! And what **a blessed
resorting-place** for the whole family of grace
in this valley of grief and sorrow.

**Experimental knowledge**

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know
You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ,
whom You have sent." Joh17:3

An **experimental knowledge** of Christ in
the soul, is **the only relief for sin's . . .**
poverty,
guilt,
leprosy,
bankruptcy,
and damnation.

This is the true way of preaching Christ crucified;
not the mere doctrine of the Cross, but a crucified
Jesus **experimentally known** to the soul.

I am deeply conscious of my own . . .
baseness,
ignorance,
blindness
and folly.
But my malady is too deeply rooted to be healed by
dry doctrines and speculative theological opinions.

The blood of the Lamb, spiritually and supernaturally
sprinkled and applied, is **the only healing balm for a
sin-sick soul.**

**Friend, can you understand my riddle?**

I find that **sin** has such power over me, that
though I call on the Lord again and again for
deliverance, I seem to be as weak as ever
when temptation comes.

**If a window were placed in my bosom**,
what filth and vileness would be seen by all.

"O you hideous monster **sin**,
What a curse, have you brought in!"

I love it; I hate it.

I want to be delivered from the power of it;
and yet am not satisfied without drinking
down its poisoned sweets.

Sin is my hourly companion; and my daily curse.

Sin is the breath of my mouth; and the cause of my groans.

Sin is my incentive to prayer; and my hinderer of it.

Sin made my Savior suffer; and makes my Savior precious.

Sin spoils every pleasure; and adds a sting to every pain.

Sin fits a soul for heaven; and ripens a soul for hell.

**Friend, can you understand my riddle?**

Is your heart, as my heart?

Alas! Alas! We feel sin's power daily and hourly.
We sigh and groan at times, to be delivered from
the giant strength of our corruptions, which seem
to carry us captive at their will. Though sin is a
sweet morsel to our carnal mind, it grieves our soul.

I am sure I must be **a monument of grace and mercy**,
if saved from the guilt, curse, and power of sin!

**My greatest enemy?**

I have ever found **myself** to be **my greatest
enemy**. I never had a foe that troubled me so
much as **my own heart**; nor has any one ever
wrought me half the mischief or given me half
the plague that I have felt and known within.
And it is a daily sense of this which makes me
dread **myself** more than anybody that walks
upon the face of the earth!

Keep a watchful eye upon every inward foe;
and if you fight, fight against the enemy that
lurks and works in your own breast!

 **There are many devices in a man's heart**
"**There are many devices in a man's heart**;
**nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that
shall stand.**" Pro19:21.

**The devices of our heart** are generally to find some
easy, smooth, flowery path. Whatever benefits we
have derived from **affliction**, whatever mercies we
have experienced in **tribulation**, the flesh hates and
shrinks from such a path with complete abhorrence.

And, therefore, there is always **a secret
devising in a man's heart . . .**
to escape the cross,
to avoid affliction, and
to walk in some flowery meadow,
away from the rough road which cuts
his feet, and wearies his limbs.

Another "device in a man's heart" is, that he shall
have worldly prosperity; that his children shall grow
up around him, and when they grow up, he shall be
able to provide for them in a way which shall be best
suited to their station in life; that they shall enjoy
health and strength and success; and that there shall
not be any cutting affliction in his family, or fiery trial
to pass through.

Now these devices the Lord frustrates. What grief,
what affliction, what trouble, is the Lord continually
bringing into some families! Their dearest objects of
affection removed from them, at the very moment
when they seemed clasped nearest around their hearts!

And those who are spared, perhaps, growing up in such
a searedness of conscience and hardness of heart, and,
perhaps, profligacy of life, that even their very presence
is often a burden to their parents instead of a blessing;
and the very children who should be their comfort,
become thorns and briars in their sides!

Oh, how the Lord overturns and brings to nothing the
"devices of a man's heart" **to make a paradise here
upon earth.**

When a man is brought to the right spot, and is in a
right mind to trace out the Lord's dealings with him from
the first, he sees it was **a kind hand** which "blasted his
gourds, and laid them low;" it was **a kind hand** that swept
away his worldly prospects; which reduced him to natural
as well as to spiritual poverty; which led him into exercises,
trials, sorrows, griefs, and tribulations; because, in those
trials he has found the Lord, more or less, experimentally
precious.

"**There are many devices in a man's heart**."

Now you have all your devices; that busy workshop is
continually putting out some new pattern; some new
fashion is continually starting forth from the depths of
that ingenious manufactory which you carry about with
you; and you are wanting this, and expecting that, and
building up airy castles, and looking for that which shall
never come to pass; for "**there are many devices in a
man's heart**; **nevertheless the counsel of the Lord,
that shall stand.**"

And so far as you are children of God, that counsel is
a counsel of **wisdom** and mercy. The purposes of God's
heart are purposes of **love** and **affection** toward you,
and therefore you may bless and praise God, that
whatever be the devices of your hearts against God's
counsel, they shall be frustrated, that He may do His
will and fulfill all His good pleasure.

**All are more or less deeply infected with it**

"**Are you seeking great things for yourself?**
**Don't do it!**" Jer45:5

As we are led aside by the powerful workings
of our corrupt nature, **we are often seeking
great things for ourselves.**

Riches,
worldly comforts,
respectability,
to be honored, admired, and esteemed by men,
are the objects most passionately sought after
by the world. And so far as the children of God
are under the influence of a worldly principle,
do they secretly desire similar things.

Nor does this ambition depend upon station in life.
**All are more or less deeply infected with it**, until
delivered by the grace of God. The poorest man
in these towns has a secret desire in his soul after
"great things," and a secret plotting in his mind
how he may obtain them.

But the Lord is determined that His people shall
not have great things. **He has purposed to pour
contempt upon all the pride of man.** He therefore
nips all their hopes in the bud, crushes their
flattering prospects, and makes them for the most
part, poor, needy, and despised in this world.

Whatever schemes or projects the Lord's people may
devise that they may prosper and get on in the world,
He rarely allows their plans to thrive. He knows well
to what consequences it would lead; that this ivy
creeping round the stem would, as it were, suffocate
and strangle the tree.

**The more that worldly goods increase . . .**
the more the heart is fixed upon them,
the more the affections are set upon idols,
the more is the heart drawn away from the Lord.
He will not allow His people to have their portion
here below. He has in store for them a better city,
that is a heavenly one, and therefore will not allow
them to build and plant below the skies.

A child of God may be secretly aiming at great
things, such as respectability, bettering his
condition in life, rising step by step in the scale
of society. But the Lord will usually . . .
disappoint these plans,
defeat these projects,
wither these gourds,
and blight these prospects.

He may reduce him to poverty, as He did Job; smite
him with sickness, as He did Lazarus and Hezekiah;
take away wife and children, as in the case of Ezekiel
and Jacob; or He may bring trouble and distress into
his mind by shooting an arrow out of **His unerring
bow** into the conscience.

God has a certain purpose to effect by bringing this
trouble, and that is to pull him down from "seeking
great things." **For what is the secret root of this
ambition? Is it not the pride of the heart?** When
the Lord, then, would lay this ambition low, He
makes a blow at the root. He strips away fancied
hopes, and breaks down rotten props, the great
things (so through ignorance esteemed) sought
for previously, and perhaps obtained, fall to pieces.

"**Are you seeking great things for yourself?
Don't do it!**" Jer45:5

**Ministers are often desirous of . . .**

"**Are you seeking great things for yourself?**
**Don't do it!**" Jer45:5

**Ministers are often desirous of . . .**
a greater gift in preaching,
a readier utterance,
a more abundant variety,
a more striking delivery than they possess.
And this, not for the glory of God, but for the
glory of the creature. Not that praise may be
given God, but that pride, cursed pride, may
be gratified; that they may be admired by men.

**My desire and aim is . . .**
not to deceive souls by flattery;
not to please any party;
not to minister to any man's pride or presumption;
but simply and sincerely, with an eye to God's glory,
with His fear working in my heart, to speak to the
edification of His people.

A minister who stands up with any other motives,
and aiming at any other ends than the glory of God,
and the edification of His people, bears no scriptural
marks that he has been sent into the vineyard by
God Himself.

**Have we nothing to give to Christ?**

**Have we nothing to give to Christ?**

Yes!
Our sins,
our sorrows,
our burdens,
our trials, and above all
the salvation and sanctification of our souls.

**And what has He to give us?** What? Why . . .
everything worth having!
everything worth a moment's anxious thought!
everything for time and eternity!

**O self! Self!**
Oh, to be kept from myself; my . . .
vile,
proud,
lustful,
hypocritical,
worldly,
covetous,
presumptuous,
obscene self.

**O self! Self!**
Your desperate wickedness,
your depravity,
your love of sin,
your abominable pollutions,
your monstrous heart wickedness,
your wretched deadness, hardness,
blindness, and indifference.

**You are a treacherous villain**,
and, I fear, always will be such!

**Continual salvation?**

"I cried unto You; **save me**, and I shall
keep Your testimonies." Psa119:146

If you know anything for yourself,
inwardly and experimentally of . . .
the evils of your heart,
the power of sin,
the strength of temptation,
the subtlety of your unwearied foe,
and that daily conflict between nature and
grace, the flesh and the spirit, which is the
peculiar mark of the living family of heaven;
you will find and feel **your need of salvation
as a daily reality.** There is **present salvation**:
an inward, experimental, and **continual salvation**
communicated out of the fullness of Christ as
a risen Mediator.

You need to be daily and almost
hourly saved from the . . .
guilt,
filth,
power,
love, and
practice
of indwelling sin.

"I cried unto You; **save me**, and I shall
keep Your testimonies." Psa119:146

 **Have we not leaned upon a thousand things?**

"Who is this that comes up from the wilderness,
**leaning upon her Beloved**?" Son8:5

**Have we not leaned upon a thousand things?**
And what have they proved? Broken reeds that
have run into our hands, and pierced us!

Our own strength and resolutions; the world and
the church; sinners and saints; friends and enemies;
have they not all proved, more or less, broken reeds?
The more we have leaned upon them, like a man
leaning upon a sword, the more have they pierced
our souls!

**The Lord Himself has to wean us . . .**
from leaning on the **world**,
from leaning on **friends**,
from leaning on **enemies**,
from leaning on **self**,
in order to bring us to lean upon Himself.

And every prop He will remove, sooner or later,
that we may lean wholly and solely upon Him.

**Superabounding grace**

"But where sin abounded, grace did much
more abound." Rom5:20

What are all the gilded toys of time compared
with the solemn, weighty realities of eternity!

But, alas! what wretches are we when left to
sin, self, and Satan! How unable to withstand
the faintest breath of temptation! How bent
upon backsliding!

Who can fathom the depths of the human heart?

Oh, what but grace, **superabounding grace**,
can either suit or save such wretches?

"But where sin abounded, grace did much
more abound." Rom5:20

**Job's religion**

"Oh that I knew where I might find Him!" Job23:3

What a mere shallow pretense to vital godliness
satisfies most ministers, most hearers, and most
congregations!

**But there was a reality in Job's religion.**

It was not of a flimsy, notional, superficial nature.
It was not merely a sound Calvinistic creed, and
nothing more. It was not a religion of theory and
speculation, nor a well-compacted system of
doctrines and duties. There was something deeper,
something more divine in Job's religion than any
such mere pretense, delusion, imitation, or hypocrisy.

And if our religion be of the right kind, there will be
something deeper in it, something more powerful,
spiritual, and supernatural, than notions and doctrines,
theories and speculations, merely passing to and fro
in our minds, however scriptural and correct.

**There will be a divine reality in it**, if God the Spirit be
the author of it. And there will be no trifling with the
solemn things of God, and with our own immortal souls.

 **The heart of God's child**

**There is much . . .**
presumption,
pride,
hypocrisy,
deceit,
delusion,
formality,
superstition and
self-righteousness
to be purged out of **the heart of God's child**.

**But all these things . . .**
keep him low,
mar his pride,
crush his self-righteousness,
cut the locks of his presumption,
stain his self conceit,
stop his boasting,
preserve him from despising others,
make him take the lowest room,
teach him to esteem others better than himself,
drive him to earnest prayer,
fit him as an object of mercy,
break to pieces his free will, and  **lay him low at the feet of the Redeemer, as
one to be saved by sovereign grace alone!

The way in which the Spirit of God works**
As pride rises, it must be broken down.

As self-righteousness starts up, it must be brought low.

As the wisdom of the creature exalts itself against
the wisdom of God, it must be laid prostrate.

**The way in which the Spirit of God works** is to lay
the creature low, by bringing it into nothingness,
and crushing it into self-abasement and self-loathing,
so as to press out of it everything on which the
creature can depend.

Like a surgeon, who will run his lancet into the abscess,
and let out the gory matter, in order to effect a thorough
cure; so the Spirit of the Lord thrusting His sharp sword
into the heart, lets out the inward corruption, and never
heals the wound until He has thoroughly probed it.

And when He has laid bare the heart, He heals it by
pouring in the balmy blood of Jesus, as that which,
by its application, cleanses from all sin.

**The world passes away, and the lust thereof**
"**The world passes away, and the lust thereof**."
1Jn2:17

The world and all that is in it comes to an end.
**Where** are the great bulk of the men and women
who fifty, sixty, or seventy years ago trod London
streets? **Where are they** who rode about in their
gay carriages, gave their splendid entertainments,
decked themselves with feathers and jewels, and
enjoyed all the pleasures of life?
 **Where are they?**The grave holds their bodies, and hell holds their souls.

"The world passes away." It is like a pageant, or a
gay and splendid procession, which passes before
the eye for a few minutes, then turns the corner of
the street, and is lost to view. It is now to you who
had looked upon it just as if it were not, and is gone
to amuse other eyes.

So, could you go on for years . . .
enjoying all your natural heart could wish;
lay up money by thousands;
ride in your carriage;
deck your body with jewelry;
fill your house with splendid furniture;
enjoy everything that earth can give;
then there would come, some day or other, sickness
to lay you upon a dying bed. To you the world has
now passed away with all its lusts; with you all is
now come to an end; and now you have, with a
guilty soul, to face a holy God.

"**The world passes away, and the lust thereof**."

All these lusts for which men have sold body and soul,
half ruined their families, and stained their own name;
all these lusts for which they were so mad that they
would have them at any price, snatch them even from
hell's mouth; all these lusts are passed away, and **what
have they left?** A gnawing worm; a worm that can never
die, and the wrath of God as an unquenchable fire.

That is all which the love of the world can do for you,
with all your toil and anxiety, or all your amusement
and pleasure.

You have not gained much perhaps of this world's goods,
with all your striving after them. But could the world fill
your heart with enjoyment, and your money bags with
gold, as the dust of the grave will one day fill your mouth,
it would be much to the same purpose. If you had got all
the world, you would have got nothing after your coffin
was screwed down, but gravedust in your mouth.

Such is the end of the world.

"**The world passes away, and the lust thereof**."

**DEATH is the great and final extinguisher of all human
hopes and pleasures.** Look and see how man sickens
and dies, and is tumbled into the cemetery, where his
body is left to the worms, and his soul to face an angry
God, on the great judgment day.

"**The world passes away, and the lust thereof**."

**Weary?**

"Then Jesus said, "Come to Me, all of you
who are **weary** and carry heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest." Mat11:28

The Lord's purpose in laying burdens upon
us is **to weary us out**. We cannot learn our
religion in any other way. We cannot learn
it from the Bible, nor from the experience of
others. It must be a personal work, wrought
in the heart of each; and we must be brought,
all of us, if ever we are to find rest in Christ,
to be absolutely **wearied out of sin and self**,
and to have no righteousness, goodness, or
holiness of our own.

The effect, then, of all spiritual labor is to bring
us to this point: to be **weary** of the **world**, for we
feel it, for the most part, to be a valley of tears;
to be **weary** of **self**, for it is our greatest plague;
**weary** of **professors**, for we cannot see in them
the grace of God, which alone we prize and value;
**weary** of the profane, for their ungodly conversation
only hurts our minds; **weary** of our **bodies**, for they
are often full of sickness and pain, and always
clogs to our soul; and **weary** of **life**, for we see
the emptiness of those things which to most
people make life so agreeable.

By this painful experience we come to this point:
to be **worn out and wearied**; and there we must
come, before we can rest entirely on Christ.

As long as we can rest in the **world**, we shall
rest in it. As long as the things of time and
sense can gratify us, we shall be gratified in
them. As long as we can find anything pleasing
in **self**, we shall be pleased with it. As long as
anything visible and tangible can satisfy us,
we shall be satisfied with them.

But when we get **weary** of all things visible,
tangible, and sensible--**weary** of ourselves,
and of all things here below--then we want
to rest upon Christ, and Christ alone.

"Then Jesus said, "Come to Me, all of you
who are **weary** and carry heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest." Mat11:28

**Oh, how religious he once used to be!**

"And I, the Son of Man, have come to seek
and save **those who are LOST**." Luk19:10

**Oh, how religious he once used to be!**

How comfortably he could walk to church with his
Bible under his arm, and look as devout and holy
as possible! How regularly also, he could read the
Scriptures, and pray in his manner, and think
himself pretty well, with one foot in heaven.

**But a ray of heavenly light** has beamed into his soul,
and shown him who and what **God** is; what **sin** and
a sinful heart is; and who and what he **himself** as a
sinner is. The keen dissecting knife of God has come
into his heart, laid it all bare, and let the gory matter
flow out. When his conscience is bleeding under the
scalpel, and is streaming all over with the gore and
filth thus let out, **where is the clean heart once
boasted of?**

**Where is his religion now?**All buried beneath a load of filth!
 **Where is all his holiness gone?** His . . .
holy looks,
holy expressions,
holy manners,
holy gestures,
holy garb;
where are they all gone?
All are flooded and buried. The sewer has broken
out, and the filthy stream has discharged itself
over his holy looks, holy manners, holy words and
holy gestures; and he is, as Job says, 'in the ditch.'

We never find the right **religion**, until we have lost
the wrong one. We never find **Christ**, until we have
lost SELF. We never find **grace**, until we have lost
our own pitiful self-holiness.

"And I, the Son of Man, have come to seek
and save **those who are LOST**." Luk19:10

**It is a creature of many lives!**

**Man is a strange compound.** A sinner, and
the worst of sinners, and yet a Pharisee!

A wretch, and the vilest of wretches, and
yet pluming himself on his good works!

Did not experience convince us to the contrary,
we would scarcely believe that a monster like man,
a creature, as someone has justly said, **"half beast
and half devil,"** should dream of pleasing God by his
obedience, or of climbing up to heaven by a ladder
of his own righteousness.

**Pharisaism** is firmly fixed in the human heart.
Deep is the root,
broad the stem,
wide the branches,
but poisonous the fruit,
of this gigantic tree, planted by pride
and unbelief in the soil of human nature.

**Self-righteousness** is not peculiar to only certain
individuals. It is interwoven with our very being.
It is the only religion that human nature . . .understands,
relishes, or
admires.

Again and again must the heart be ploughed up,
and its corruptions laid bare, to keep down the
growth of **this pharisaic spirit.

It is a creature of many lives!** It is not one blow,
nor ten, nor a hundred that can **kill** it. **Stunned** it
may be for a while, but it revives again and again!

Pharisaism can live and thrive under any profession.
Calvinism or Arminianism is the same to it. It is not
the garb he wears, nor the mask he carries, that
constitutes the man.

**The believer's chief troubles**

As earth is but a valley of tears, the Christian has many
**tribulations** in common with the world. **Family troubles**
were the lot of Job, Abraham, Jacob and David. **Sickness**
befell Hezekiah, Trophimus and Epaphroditus. **Reverses
and losses** fell upon Job. **Poverty and famine** drove
Naomi into the land of Moab.

**Trouble**, then, is in itself no sign of grace; for it
inevitably flows from, and is necessarily connected
with, man's fallen state.

But we should fix our eye on two things, as especially
marking **the temporal afflictions of the Lord's family**:
1. That they are all weighed out and timed by special
appointment. For though "man is born to trouble as the
sparks fly upwards," yet "affliction comes not forth of
the dust, neither does trouble spring out of the ground."
Job5:6
2. That they are specially sanctified, and made to
"work together for good" to those who love God.

**But the believer's chief troubles** **are internal**,
and arise from . . .
the assaults of Satan,
powerful temptations,
the guilt of sin laid on the conscience,
doubts and fears about a saving interest in Christ, and
a daily, hourly conflict with a nature ever lusting to evil.

**A religion that satisfies thousands.**

"Having **a form of godliness** but denying its power."
2Ti3:5

Much that passes for religion,
is not true religion at all.

Much that goes for hopes of salvation,
is nothing but lying refuges.

Much is palmed off for the teaching of the Spirit,
which is nothing but delusion.

**Vital godliness is very rare.**

There are very few people spiritually taught of God.

There are very few ministers who really preach the truth.

Satan is thus daily deceiving thousands, and tens of thousands.

A living soul, however weak and feeble in himself,
cannot take up with **a religion in the flesh**.

He cannot rest on the opinions of men, nor be
deceived by Satan's delusions. He has a secret
gnawing of conscience, which makes him dissatisfied
with **a religion that satisfies thousands.**

**Then down they sink to the bottom!**

"**Until the pit is dug for the wicked.**" Psa94:13

In Eastern countries, the ordinary mode of catching
wild beasts is to dig a pit, and fix sharp spears in the
bottom. And when the pit has been dug sufficiently
deep, it is covered over with branches of trees, earth,
and leaves, until all appearances of the pitfall are
entirely concealed. What is the object? That the wild
beast intent upon bloodshed--the tiger lying in wait
for the deer, the wolf roaming after the sheep, the
lion prowling for the antelope, not seeing the pitfall,
but rushing on and over it, may not see their doom
until they break through and fall upon the spears at
the bottom.

**What a striking figure is this!**

Here are the ungodly, all intent upon their purposes;
prowling after evil, as the wolf after the sheep, or the
tiger after the deer, thinking only of . . .
some worldly profit,
some covetous plan,
some lustful scheme,
something the carnal mind delights in;
but on they go, not seeing any danger until the moment
comes when, as Job says, "they go down to the bars of
the pit."

The Lord has been pleased to hide their doom from them.
The pit is all covered over with leaves of trees, grass, and
earth. The very appearance of the pit was hidden from the
wild beasts; they never knew it until they fell into it, and
were transfixed.

So it is with the wicked; both with religious professors
and the profane. There is no fear of God, no taking heed
to their steps, no cry to be directed, no prayer to be shown
the way; no pausing, no turning back. On they go, on they
go; heedlessly, thoughtlessly, recklessly; pursuing some
beloved object. On they go, on they go; until in a moment
they are plunged eternally and irrevocably into the pit!

There are many such both in the professing church as well
as in the ungodly world. The Lord sees what they are, and
where they are. He knows where the pit is. He knows their
steps. He sees them hurrying on, hurrying on, hurrying on.
All is prepared for them. The Lord gives them . . .
no forewarning,
no notice of their danger,
no teachings,
no chastenings,
no remonstrances,
no frowns,
no stripes.
They are left to themselves to fill up the measure of
their iniquity, until they approach the pit that has been
dug for them, and **then down they sink to the bottom!**

**Who can come out of the battle alive?**
**"Hold me up, and I shall be safe!"** Psa119:117

We know little of ourselves, and less
of one another. **We do not know . . .**
our own needs,
what is for our good,
what snares to avoid,
what dangers to shun.

**Our path is . . .**
bestrewed with difficulties,
beset with temptations,
surrounded with foes,
encompassed with perils.

At every step there is a snare!

At every turn an enemy lurks!

Pride digs the pit,
carelessness blindfolds the eyes,
carnality drugs and intoxicates the senses,
the lust of the flesh seduces,
the love of the world allures,
unbelief paralyzes the fighting hand and the praying knee,
sin entangles the feet,
guilt defiles the conscience,
and Satan accuses the soul.

Under these circumstances, **who can come out of
the battle alive?** Only he who is kept by the mighty
power of God. **"Hold me up, and I shall be safe!"**

**MERCY!**

"**Look upon me, and be merciful unto me.**" Psa119:132

When shall we ever get beyond the need of God's mercy?

**We feel our need of continual mercy . . .**
as our sins abound,
as our guilt is felt,
as our corruption works,
as our conscience is burdened,
as the iniquities of our heart are laid bare,
as our hearts are opened up in the Spirit's light.

**We need . . .**
mercy for every adulterous look;
mercy for every covetous thought;
mercy for every light and trifling word;
mercy for every wicked movement of our depraved hearts;
mercy while we live;
mercy when we die;
mercy to accompany us every moment;
mercy to go with us down to the portals of the grave;
mercy to carry us safely through the swellings of Jordan;
mercy to land us safe before the Redeemer's throne!

"Look upon **me**, and be merciful unto **me**."

**Why me?**Because I am so vile a sinner.
Because I am so base a backslider.
Because I am such a daring transgressor.
Because I sin against You with every breath that I draw.
Because the evils of my heart are perpetually manifesting themselves.
Because nothing but Your mercy can blot out such
iniquities as I feel working in my carnal mind.

**I need . . .**
inexhaustible mercy,
everlasting mercy,
super-abounding mercy.

Nothing but such mercy as this can suit such a guilty sinner!

**A flowery path?**

Does the road to heaven lie across a smooth,
grassy meadow, over which we may quietly
walk in the cool of a summer evening, and
leisurely amuse ourselves with gathering of
flowers and listening to the warbling of the birds?

No child of God ever found the way to heaven
**a flowery path**. It is the wide gate and broad
way which leads to perdition. It is the **strait
gate** and **narrow way**, the **uphill road**, full of . . .
difficulties,
trials,
temptations,
and enemies,
which leads to heaven, and issues in eternal life.

But our Father manifests mercy and grace. He never
leaves nor forsakes the objects of His choice. He . . .
fulfills every promise,
defeats every enemy,
appears in every difficulty,
richly pardons every sin,
graciously heals every backsliding,
and eventually lands them in eternal bliss!

Toys and playthings of the religious babyhouse

"**I** **will feed My flock.**" Eze34:15

The only real food of the soul must be of God's
own appointing, preparing, and communicating.

You can never deceive a hungry child. You may
give it a plaything to still its cries. It may serve
for a few minutes; but the pains of hunger are
not to be removed by a doll. A toy horse will not
allay the cravings after the mother's breast.

So with babes in grace. A hungry soul
cannot feed upon playthings.

Altars,
robes,
ceremonies,
candlesticks,
bowings,
mutterings,
painted windows,
intoning priests, and
singing men and women;
**these dolls and wooden horses; these** **toys
and playthings of the religious babyhouse**,
cannot feed the soul that, like David, cries out
after the living God. (Psalm 42:23)

Christ, the bread of life, the manna that
came down from heaven, is the only food
of the believing soul. (Joh6:51)

**But oh, the struggle! oh, the conflict!**

"**I will overturn, overturn, overturn it**; and it
shall be no more." Eze21:27

Jesus wants our hearts and affections. Therefore
**every idol must go down**, sooner or later, because
the idol draws away the affections of the soul from
Christ. Everything that is loved in opposition to Him
must sooner or later be taken away, that the Lord
Jesus alone may be worshiped. Everything which
exacts the allegiance of the soul must be overthrown.

Jesus **shall** have our heart and affections, but in
having our heart and affection, He shall have it . . .
wholly,
solely, and
undividedly.
He **shall** have it entirely for Himself.
He **shall** reign and rule supreme.

Now, **here comes the conflict and the struggle.**
**SELF** says, "I will have a part." **Self wants to be . . .**
honored,
admired,
esteemed,
bowed down to.
Self wants to indulge in, and gratify its desires.
Self wants, in some way, to erect its throne in
opposition to the Lord of life and glory.

But Jesus says, "No! I must reign supreme!"

Whatever it is that stands up in opposition to Him,
**down it must go!** Just as Dagon fell down before
the ark, so **self must fall down before Christ . . .**
in every shape,
in every form,
in whatever subtle guise self wears,
down it must come to a wreck and ruin before
the King of Zion!

So, if we are continually building up **SELF**,
Jesus will be continually overthrowing self.

If we are setting up our **idols**,
He shall be casting them down.

If we are continually hewing out "**cisterns**
that can hold no water," He will be continually
dashing these cisterns to pieces.

If we think highly of our **knowledge**,
we must be reduced to total folly.

If we are confident of our **strength**,
we must be reduced to utter weakness.

If we highly esteem our **attainments**, or in
any measure are resting upon the **power of
the creature**, the power of the creature must
be overthrown, so that we shall stand weak
before God, unable to lift up a finger to deliver
our souls from going down into the pit.

In this way does the Lord teach His people the
lesson that **Christ must be all in all**. They learn . . .
not in the way of speculation,
nor in the way of mere dry doctrine,
not from the mouth of others, but
they learn these lessons in painful soul-experience.

And every living soul that is sighing and longing after
a manifestation of Christ and desiring to have Him
enthroned in the heart; every such soul will know,
sooner or later . . .
an utter overthrow of self,
a thorough prostration of this idol,
a complete breaking to pieces of this beloved image,
that the desire of the righteous may be granted, and
that Christ may reign and rule as King and Lord in him
and over him, setting up His blessed kingdom there, and
winning to Himself every affection of the renewed heart.

Are there not moments, friends, are there not some
few and fleeting moments when the desire of our souls
is that Christ should be our Lord and God; when we are
willing that He should have **every affection**; that **every
rebellious thought** should be subdued and brought into
obedience to the cross of Christ; that **every plan** should
be frustrated which is not for the glory of God and our
soul's spiritual profit?

Are there not seasons in our experience when we can
lay down our souls before God, and say "Let Christ be
precious to my soul, let Him come with power to my
heart, let Him set up His throne as Lord and King, and
let self be nothing before Him?" **But oh, the struggle!
oh, the conflict!** when God answers these petitions!  **When our plans are frustrated**, what a
rebellion works up in the carnal mind!

**When self is cast down**, what a rising up of
the fretful, peevish impatience of the creature!

When the Lord does answer our prayers, and
strips off all false confidence; when He does
remove our rotten props, and dash to pieces
our broken cisterns, **what a storm; what a
conflict** takes place in the soul!

But He is not to be moved; He will take His own way.
"I will overturn, let the creature say what it will. I will
overturn, let the creature think what it will. Down it
shall go to ruin! It shall come to a wreck! It shall be
overthrown! My purpose shall be accomplished, and
I will fulfill all My pleasure. Self is a rebel who has
set up an idolatrous temple, and I will overturn and
bring the temple to ruin, for the purpose of manifesting
My glory and My salvation, that I may be your Lord and
your God."

If God has overturned **our bright prospects**, shall we say
it was a cruel hand that laid them low? If He has overthrown  **our worldly plans**, shall we say it was an unkind act? If He
has reduced **our false righteousness** to a heap of rubbish,
in order that Christ may be embraced as our all in all, **shall
we say it was a cruel deed?**

Is he an unkind **father** who takes away poison from
his child, and gives him food? Is she a cruel **mother**
who snatches her boy from the precipice on which he
was playing? No! The kindness was manifested in the
act of snatching the child from destruction!

So if the Lord has broken and overthrown our purposes,
it was a kind act; for in so doing **He brings us to nothing,
that Christ may be embraced as our all in all**, that our
hearts may echo back, "O Lord, fulfill all Your own promises
in our souls, and make us willing to be nothing; that upon the
nothingness of self, the glory and beauty and preciousness
of Christ may be exalted!"

**A snake, a monkey, an onion, a bit of rag**"Dear children, keep yourselves from **idols**." 1Jn5:21 **Idolatry** is a sin very deeply rooted in the human heart.

We need not go very far to find the most convincing
proofs of this. Besides the experience of every age
and every climate, we find it where we would least
expect it—the prevailing sin of a people who had the
greatest possible proofs of its wickedness and folly;
and the strongest evidences of the being, greatness,
and power of God.

It is true that now this sin does not break out exactly
in the same form. It is true that golden calves are not
now worshiped—at least the calf is not, if the gold is.
Nor do Protestants adore images of wood, brass, or
stone.

But that rank, property, fashion, honor, the opinion
of the world, with everything which feeds the lust of
the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;
are as much idolized now, as Baal and Moloch were
once in Judea.

What is an idol?

It is that which occupies that place in our esteem
and affections, in our thoughts, words and ways,
which is due to God only. Whatever is to us, what
the Lord alone should be—that is **an idol to us.**

It is true that **these idols differ** almost as widely
as the peculiar propensities of different individuals.
But as both in ancient and modern times, the grosser
idols of wood and stone were and are beyond all
calculation in number, variety, shape, and size.
So is it in **these inner idols**, of which the outer
idols are mere symbols and representations.

**Nothing has been . . .**
too base or too brutal,
too great or too little,
too noble or too vile,
from the sun walking in its brightness—to **a snake,
a monkey, an onion, a bit of rag**—which man has
not worshiped. And these intended representations
of Divinity were but the **outward symbols** **of what
man inwardly worshiped**. For the inward idol preceded
the outward—and the fingers merely carved what the
imagination had previously devised. The gross material
idol, then, is but a symbol of the inner mind of man.

But we need not dwell on this part of the subject.
There is another form of idolatry much nearer home;
the idolatry not of an ancient Pagan, or a modern
Hindu—but that of a Christian.

Nor need we go far, if we would but be honest
with ourselves, to each find out **our own idol . . .**
what it is,
how deep it lies,
what worship it obtains,
what honor it receives,
and what affection it engrosses.

Let me ask myself, "**What do I most love?**"

If I hardly know how to answer that question, let
me put to myself another, "What do I most think
upon? In what channel do I usually find my thoughts
flow when unrestrained?"—for thoughts flow to the
idol as water to the lowest spot.

If, then, the thoughts flow continually to . . .
the farm,
the shop,
the business,
the investment,
to the husband, wife, or child,
to that which feeds lust or pride,
worldliness or covetousness,
self-conceit or self-admiration;
that is the idol which, as a magnet, attracts
the thoughts of the mind towards it.

**Your idol may not be mine, nor mine yours**; and
yet we may **both** be idolaters! You may despise or
even hate my idol, and wonder how I can be such
a fool, or such a sinner, as to hug it to my bosom!
And I may wonder how a partaker of grace can
be so inconsistent as to love such a silly idol
as yours! You may condemn me, and I condemn
you. And the Word of God, and the verdict of a
living conscience may condemn us both.

**O how various and how innumerable these idols
are!** One man may possess a refined taste and
educated mind. Books, **learning**, literature, languages,
general information, shall be his idol. **Music**—vocal
and instrumental, may be the idol of a second—so
sweet to his ears, such inward feelings of delight
are kindled by the melodious strains of voice or
instrument, that music is in all his thoughts, and
hours are spent in producing those harmonious
sounds which perish in their utterance. Painting,
statuary, architecture, the **fine arts** generally, may
be the Baal, the dominating passion of a third.
**Poetry**, with its glowing thoughts, burning words,
passionate utterances, vivid pictures, melodious
cadence, and sustained flow of all that is beautiful
in language and expression, may be the delight of
a fourth. **Science**, the eager pursuit of a fifth.
These are the highest flights of the human mind.
These are not the base idols of the drunken feast,
the low jest, the mirthful supper—or even that less
debasing but enervating idol—**sleep** and **indolence**,
as if life's highest enjoyments were those of the
swine in the sty.

You middle-class people—who despise art and science,
language and learning, as you despise the ale-house,
and ball field—may still have an idol. Your **garden**, your
beautiful roses, your verbenas, fuchsias, needing all the
care and attention of a babe in arms, may be your idol.
Or your pretty **children**, so admired as they walk in the
street; or your new **house** and all the new furniture; or
your **son** who is getting on so well in business; or your
**daughter** so comfortably settled in life; or your dear
**husband** so generally respected, and just now doing so
nicely in the farm. Or your own still dearer **SELF** that
needs so much feeding, and dressing and attending to.

Who shall count the **thousands of idols** which draw
to themselves those thoughts, and engross those
affections which are due to the Lord alone?

You may not be found out. **Your idol** may be so hidden,
or so peculiar, that all our attempts to touch it, have left
you and it unscathed. Will you therefore conclude that you
have none? Search deeper, look closer; it is not too deep
for the eye of God, nor too hidden for the eyes of a tender
conscience anointed with divine eye-salve.

Hidden diseases the most incurable of all diseases.
Search every fold of your heart until you find it. It may
not be so big nor so ugly as your neighbor's. But an idol
is still an idol, whether so small as to be carried in the
coat pocket, or as large as a gigantic statue.

An idol is not to be admired for its beauty, or loathed
for its ugliness—but to be hated because it is an idol.

"Dear children, keep yourselves from **idols**." 1Jn5:21

**The mother and mistress of all the sins**

"**I hate pride** and arrogance." Pro8:13

"**The Lord detests all the proud of heart**. Be sure
of this: They will not go unpunished." Pro16:5

Of all sins, **pride** **seems most deeply imbedded in the
very heart of man**. Unbelief, sensuality, covetousness,
rebellion, presumption, contempt of God's holy will and
word, deceit and falsehood, cruelty and wrath, violence
and murder—these, and a forest of other sins have
indeed struck deep roots into the black and noxious
soil of our fallen nature; and, interlacing their lofty
stems and gigantic arms, have wholly shut out the
light of heaven from man's benighted soul.

But these and their associate evils do not seem so
thoroughly interwoven into the very constitution of
the human heart, nor so to be its very life-blood,
as pride. The **lust of the flesh** is strong, but there
are respites from its workings. **Unbelief** is powerful,
but there are times when it seems to lie dormant.
**Covetousness** is ensnaring, but there is not always
a bargain to be made, or an advantage to be clutched.

These sins differ also in strength in different individuals.
Some seem not much tempted with the grosser passions
of our fallen nature; others are naturally liberal and
benevolent, and whatever other idol they may serve,
they bend not their knee to the golden calf.

But where lust may have no power, covetousness no
dominion, and anger no sway—there, down, down in
the inmost depths, heaving and boiling like the lava
in the crater of a volcano, works **that master sin—
that sin of sins, pride!**

Pride is **the mother and mistress of all the sins**;
for where she does not conceive them in her ever-
teeming womb, she instigates their movements,
and compels them to pay tribute to her glory.

The 'origin of evil' is hidden from our eyes. Whence
it sprang, and why God allowed it to arise in His fair
creation, are mysteries which we cannot fathom. But
thus much is revealed—that of this mighty fire which
has filled hell with sulphurous flame, and will one
day envelop earth and its inhabitants in the general
conflagration, **the first spark was pride!**

Pride is therefore emphatically **the devil's own sin**.
We will not say his darling sin, for it is his torment,
the serpent which is always biting him, the fire which
is ever consuming him. But it is the sin which hurled
him from heaven, and transformed him from a bright
and holy seraph, into a foul and hideous demon!

How subtle, then, and potent must that **poison** be,
which could in a moment change an angel into a devil!
How black in nature, how concentrated in virulence
that **venom**—one drop of which could utterly deface
the image of God in myriads of bright spirits before
the throne—and degrade them into monsters of
uncleanness and malignity!

**I needed no monkish rules then.**

**A man may . . .**
have a consistent profession of religion,
have a sound, well ordered creed,
be a member of a Christian church,
attend to all ordinances and duties,
seek to frame his life according to God's word,
have his family prayer, and private prayer,
be a good husband, father, and friend,
be liberal and kind to God's cause and people,
and yet with all this bear no fruit Godwards.

What is all this but **pitiful self-holiness**?

**Real gospel fruit** is only produced by the word
of God's grace falling into the heart, watering
and softening it. Without this there is . . .
not one gracious feeling,
not one spiritual desire,
not one tender thought,
not one heavenly affection.

We have tried, perhaps, to **make ourselves holy.**
We have watched our eyes, our ears, our tongues;
have read so many chapters every day out of God's
word; continued so long upon our knees; and so
tried to work a kind of holiness into our own souls.

Many years ago, I used to try to pray for the better
part of an hour; and I am ashamed to say, I have
been glad to hear the clock strike. What was this
but **a monkish, self-imposed rule**, to please God
by the length of my prayers?

But when the Lord was pleased to touch my conscience
with His finger, He gave me a remarkable spirit of grace
and supplication; **I needed no monkish rules then.**

**The strong man sinks down into a babe!**

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;
my God, **my strength**, in whom I will trust." Psa18:2

As long as a man has any **strength** of his own, he will
never have any strength in the Lord; for the strength
of Jesus is made perfect in our weakness.

Oh, what a painful lesson we have to learn to find
all our strength is weakness. **There was a time
when we thought we had strength, and could . . .**
resist Satan,
overcome the world,
endure persecution,
bear the reproach of man,
mortify and keep down pride, and the evils of our heart.

Have we found ourselves able to carry out our fancied
strength? What has been our experience in this matter?
That we have discovered more and more our own weakness;
that we cannot stand against one temptation; **the least
gust blows us down!**

Our besetting lusts, our vile passions, and the wicked
desires of our hearts, so entice our eyes and thoughts;
so entwine themselves around our affections; that **we
give out in a moment**, unless God Himself holds us up!
We cannot stand against sin; our heart is as weak as
water.

Thus we learn our weakness, by feeling ourselves
to be the very weakest of the weak, and the very
vilest of the vile.

As the Lord leads a man deeper down into the
knowledge of his corruptions, it makes him more
and more out of conceit with **his** **righteous, pious,
holy self**. The more the Lord leads a man into the
knowledge of . . .
temptation,
his besetting sin,
the power of his corruptions,
the workings of his vile nature;
the more deeply and painfully he learns what
a poor, helpless, weak, powerless wretch he is.

As the Lord is pleased to unfold before his eyes the
strength, power, and fullness lodged in Jesus Christ;
He draws him, leads him, brings him, encourages him,
and enables him to come to this fullness. And by the
hand of faith he draws supplies out of that fullness.

As the Lord enables the soul to look to Jesus, His
blessed strength is communicated and breathed into
his soul. Then the 'poor worm Jacob' threshes the
mountains, beats down the hills, and makes them
fly before him as chaff. **When the Lord strengthens
him, he can . . .**
stand against temptation,
overcome sin,
bear persecution,
subdue the evils of his heart, and
fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

**When the Lord leaves him**, he is like Samson with
his locks cut. He sinks into all evil, and feels the
helplessness of his fallen nature. Let the Lord but
remove His gracious presence, and **the strong man
sinks down into a babe!** And he that in the strength
of the Lord could thresh the mountains, falls down
**as weak and helpless as a little child**.

Thus the Lord painfully and solemnly teaches us, that
being nothing in ourselves, and feeling our weakness,
helplessness, and wretchedness; **in Him alone we
have strength.**

**Save me, and I shall be saved!**

"**Save me, and I shall be saved!**" Jer17:14

This implies **salvation from the power of sin**;
the secret dominion sin possesses in the heart.

O, what a tyrannical rule does sin sometimes
exercise in our carnal minds! How soon are we
entangled in flesh-pleasing snares! How easily
brought under the secret dominion of some hidden
corruption! And how we struggle in vain to deliver
ourselves when we are caught in the snares of
the devil, or are under the power of any one lust,
besetment, or temptation!

The Lord, and the Lord alone can save us from all
these things. **He saves from the power of sin by . . .**
bringing a sense of His dying love into our hearts,
delivering us from our idols,
raising our affections to things above,
breaking to pieces our snares,
subduing our lusts,
taming our corruptions, and
mastering the inward evils of our dreadfully fallen nature.

Here is this **sin!** Lord, save me from it.

Here is this **snare!** Lord, break it to pieces.

Here is this **temptation!** Lord, deliver me out of it.

Here is this **lust!** Lord, subdue it.

Here is my **proud heart!** Lord, humble it.

None but the Lord can do these things for us . . .
nothing but the felt power of God,
nothing but the putting forth of His mighty arm,
nothing but the shedding abroad of His dying love,
nothing but the operations of His grace upon our soul,
can deliver us from the secret power of evil.

"**Save me, and I shall be saved!**"

**Crush its viper head with the heel of our boot!**

"Whoever will come after Me, let him **deny himself**,
and take up his cross and follow Me" Mar8:34

To deny and renounce **self** lies at the very foundation
of vital godliness.

It is easy in some measure to leave the world; easy
to leave the professing church; but to go forth out of
**self**, there is the difficulty, for this "self" embraces
such a variety of forms.

What varied shapes and forms does **this monster
SELF** assume! How hard to trace his windings! How
difficult to track this wily foe to his hidden den; drag
him out of the cave; and immolate him at the foot of
the cross, as Samuel hewed down Agag in Gilgal.

Proud self,
righteous self,
covetous self,
ambitious self,
sensual self,
deceitful self,
religious self,
flesh-pleasing self.

How difficult to detect, unmask, strip out of its
changeable suits of apparel, **this ugly, misshaped
creature**, and then stamp upon it, as if one would
**crush its viper head with the heel of our boot!**

Who will do such violence to beloved **self**, when every
nerve quivers and shrinks; and the coward heart cries
to the uplifted foot, "Spare, spare!"

But unless there is this **self** crucifixion, there is
no walking hand in hand with Christ, no heavenly
communion with Him; for there can no more be a
partnership between Christ and self, than there
can be a partnership between Christ and sin.

**Poor, moping, dejected creatures**

We are, most of us, **so fettered down by . . .**
the chains of time and sense,
the cares of life and daily business,
the weakness of our earthly frame,
the distracting claims of a family, and
the miserable carnality and sensuality of our fallen nature,
**that we live at best a poor, dragging, dying life.**

Many of us are **poor, moping, dejected creatures**.
We have . . .
a variety of trials and afflictions,
a daily cross and
the continual plague of an evil heart.

We know enough of ourselves to know that in SELF
there is neither help nor hope, and never expect a
smoother path, a better, wiser, holier heart. As then . . .
the **weary** man seeks rest,
the **hungry** man seeks food,
the **thirsty** man seeks drink,
and the **sick** man seeks health,
so do we stretch forth our hearts and arms that we
may embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, and sensibly
realize union and communion with Him.

He discovers the evil and misery of sin that we may
seek pardon in His bleeding wounds and pierced side.

He makes known to us our nakedness and shame,
and, as such, our exposure to God's wrath, that we
may hide ourselves under His justifying robe.

He puts gall and wormwood into the world's choicest
draughts, that we may have no sweetness but in and
from Him.

**What a battlefield is the heart**

I have so much opposition within, so many
temptations, lusts, and follies; so many
snares and besetments; and a vile heart,
dabbling in all carnality and filth.

I am indeed exercised "by sin and grace."

Sin or grace seems continually uppermost;
striving and lusting against one another.
What . . .
lustings, sorrowings;
fallings, risings;
defeats, and victories.

**What a battlefield is the heart**, and there
the fight is lost and won. When sin prevails,
mourning over its wounds and slaughter.
When grace and godly fear beat back
temptation, a softening into gratitude.

How can he travel through this waste howling wilderness?

If you are alive to what you are as a poor, fallen
sinner—you will see yourself surrounded by . . .
enemies,
temptations,
sins, and
snares.

You will feel yourself utterly defenseless, as weak
as water, without any strength to stand against them.
You will see a mountain of difficulties before your eyes.

If you know anything inwardly and experimentally
of yourself of . . .
the evils of your heart,
the power of sin,
the strength of temptation,
the subtlety of your unwearied foe,
and the daily conflict between nature and grace,
the flesh and the Spirit, which are the peculiar marks
of the true child of God—you will find and feel your
**need of** **salvation as a daily reality**.

**How shall you escape** the snares and temptations
spread in your path? How shall you get the better
of all your enemies . . .
external,
internal,
infernal,
and reach heaven's gates safe at last?

There is **present** salvation, an . . .
inward,
experimental,
continual
salvation communicated out of the
fullness of Christ as a risen Mediator.

Don't you need to be daily and almost hourly
saved? But from what? Why, from everything in
you that fights against the will and word of God.

Sin is not dead in you.

If you have a saving interest in the precious blood
of Christ—if your name is written in the Lamb's book
of life, and heaven is your eternal home—that does
not deliver you from the **indwelling** of sin, nor from
the **power** of sin—except as grace gives you present
deliverance from it.

**Sin still works in your carnal mind**, and will
work in it until your dying hour. What then
you need to be saved from is the . . .
guilt,
filth,
power,
love, and
practice
of that sin which ever dwells and ever works
in you, and often brings your soul into hard
and cruel bondage.

Now Christ lives at the right hand of God for His dear
people, that He may be ever saving them by His life.
There He reigns and rules as their glorious covenant
Head, ever watching over, feeling for and sympathizing
with them, and communicating supplies of grace for the
deliverance and consolation for all His suffering saints
spread over the face of the earth. The glorious Head is
in heaven, but the suffering members upon earth; and
as He lives on their behalf, He maintains by His Spirit
and grace, His life in their soul.

Each Christian has to walk through a great and terrible
wilderness, wherein are fiery serpents, and scorpions,
and drought (Deu8:15); where he is surrounded with
temptations and snares—his own evil heart being his
worst foe.

**How can he travel through this waste howling
wilderness** unless he has a Friend at the right hand
of God to send him continual supplies of grace—who
can hear his prayers, answer his petitions, listen to
his sighs, and put his tears into his bottle—who can
help him to see the snares, and give him grace to
avoid them—who observes from his heavenly watch
tower the rising of evil in his heart, and can put a
timely and seasonable check upon it before it bursts
into word or action?

He needs an all-wise and ever-living Friend who can . . .
save him from **pride** by giving him true humility;
save him from **hardness of heart** by bestowing repentance;
save him from **carelessness** by making his conscience tender;
save him from all his **fears** by whispering into his soul, "Fear
not, I have redeemed you."

The Christian has to be continually looking
to the Lord Jesus Christ . . .
to revive his soul when drooping,
to manifest His love to his heart when cold and unfeeling,
to sprinkle his conscience with His blood when guilty and sinking,
to lead him into truth,
to keep him from error and evil,
to preserve him through and amid every storm,
to guide every step that he takes in his onward journey,
and eventually bring him safe to heaven.

We need continual supplies of His grace, mercy, and
love received into our hearts, so as to save us . . .
from the love and spirit of the world,
from error,
from the power and strength of our own lusts,
and the base inclinations of our fallen nature.

These will often work at a fearful rate; but this will
only make you feel more your need of the power and
presence of the Lord Jesus to save you from them all.

**You are a poor, defenseless sheep**, surrounded
by wolves, and, as such, need all the care and
defense of the good Shepherd.

**You are a ship in a stormy sea**, where winds and
waves are all contrary, and therefore need an all
wise and able pilot to take you safe into harbor.

There a single thing on earth or in hell which can
harm you—if you are only looking to the Lord Jesus
Christ, and deriving supplies of grace and strength
from Him.

What trifles, what toys, what empty vanities

**What trifles, what toys, what empty
vanities** do the great bulk of men pursue!

**If God left us for a single hour**

"**Don't leave us!**" Jer14:9

How much is summed up in those three words!

What would it be for God to leave us?  **What and where would we be,**  **if God left us for a single hour?**

**What would become of us?**

We would fall at once into the hands . . .
of sin,
of Satan, and
of the world.

We would be abandoned to our own evil
hearts—abandoned, utterly abandoned to
the unbelief, the infidelity, to all the filth
and sensuality of our wicked nature—to fill
up the measure of our iniquities, until we
sank under His wrath to rise no more!

"**Don't leave us!**" Jer14:9

**An idol is an idol**
"Son of man, these leaders have set **up idols
in their hearts!** They have embraced things
that lead them into sin." Eze14:3

**An idol is an idol**, whether worshiped inwardly
in heart, or adorned outwardly by the knee.

Therefore, give the people of Israel this message
from the Sovereign Lord: "Repent and turn away from
your idols, and stop all your loathsome practices. I,
the Lord, will punish all those, both Israelites and
foreigners, who reject Me and set up **idols in their
hearts**, so that they fall into sin." Eze14:6-7

**A worldly spirit will ever peep out**

"He gave Himself for our sins to rescue us
from the present evil age." Gal1:4

**The first effect of sovereign grace** in its divine
operation upon the heart of a child of God, is to
**separate him from the world** by infusing into him
a new spirit. There is little evidence that grace
ever touched our hearts if it did not separate us
from this ungodly world.

Where there is not this divine work upon a sinner's
conscience—where there is no communication of this
new heart and this new spirit, no infusion of this holy
life, no animating, quickening influence of the Spirit
of God upon the soul—whatever a man's outward
profession may be, **he will ever be of a worldly spirit**.

A set of doctrines, however sound, merely received
into the natural understanding—cannot divorce a man
from that innate love of the world which is so deeply
rooted in his very being. No mighty power has come
upon his soul to revolutionize his every thought, cast
his soul as if into a new mold—and by stamping upon
it the mind and likeness of Christ to change him
altogether. **This worldly spirit may be . . .**
checked by circumstances,
controlled by natural conscience, or
influenced by the example of others;
but **a worldly spirit will ever peep out** from the
thickest disguise, and manifest itself, as occasion
draws it forth, in every unregenerate man.

**What a lesson is here for ministers!**

"And my speech and my preaching were **not
with enticing words of man's wisdom**, but
in demonstration of the Spirit and of power"
1Co2:4

The word "enticing" is as we now say, "persuasive."
It includes, therefore, every branch of skillful oratory,
whether it be logical reasoning to convince our
**understanding**—or appeals to our feelings to stir up
our **passions**—or new and striking ideas to delight
our **intellect**—or beautiful and eloquent language to
please and captivate our **imagination**.

All these "enticing words" of man's wisdom—**the very
things which our popular preachers most speak and aim
at**—this great apostle renounced, discarded, and rejected!

He might have used them all if he liked. He possessed
an almost unequalled share of natural ability and great
learning—a singularly keen, penetrating intellect—a
wonderful command of the Greek language—a flow of
ideas most varied, striking, and original—and powers of
oratory and eloquence such as have been given to few.
He might therefore have used enticing words of man's
wisdom, had he wished or thought it right to do so—but
he would not. He saw what deceptiveness was in them,
and at best they were mere arts of oratory. He saw that
these enticing words—though they might . . .
touch the natural **feelings**,
work upon the **passions**,
captivate the **imagination**,
convince the **understanding**,
persuade the **judgment**, and to a certain extent force
their way into men's minds—yet when all was done that
could thus be done, it was merely **man's wisdom** which
had done it.

Earthly wisdom cannot communicate heavenly faith.
Paul would not therefore use enticing words of man's
wisdom, whether it were force of logical argument, or
appeal to natural passions, or the charms of vivid
eloquence, or the beauty of poetical composition, or
the subtle nicety of well arranged sentences. He would
not use any of these enticing words of man's wisdom
to draw people into a profession of religion—when their
heart was not really touched by God's grace, or their
consciences wrought upon by a divine power.

He came to win souls for Jesus Christ, not converts
to his own powers of oratorical persuasion—to turn
men from darkness to light, and from the power of
Satan unto God—not to charm their ears by poetry
and eloquence—but to bring them out of the vilest
of sins that they might be washed, sanctified, and
justified by the Spirit of God—and **not entertain
or amuse** their minds while sin and Satan still
maintained dominion in their hearts!

All the labor spent in bringing together a church
and congregation of professing people by the power
of logical argument and appeals to their natural
consciences would be utterly lost, as regards fruit
for eternity—for a profession so induced by him and
so made by them would leave them just as they were . . .
in all the depths of **unregeneracy**,
with their sins **unpardoned**,
their persons **unjustified**,
and their souls **unsanctified**.

He therefore discarded all these ways of winning
over converts—as deceitful to the souls of men,
and as dishonoring to God.

It required much grace to do this—to throw aside
what he might have used, and renounce what most
men, as gifted as he, would have gladly used.

**What a lesson is here for ministers!**

How anxious are some men to shine as great
preachers! How they covet and often aim at
some grand display of what they call eloquence
to charm their hearers—and win praise and honor
to **self**!

How others try to argue men into religion, or by
appealing to their natural feelings, sometimes to
frighten them with pictures of hell, and sometimes
to allure them by descriptions of heaven.

But all such arts, for they are no better, must be
discarded by a true servant of God. Only the Spirit
can reveal Christ, taking of the things of Christ, and
showing them unto us, applying the word with power
to our hearts, and bringing the sweetness, reality,
and blessedness of divine things into our soul.

"And my speech and my preaching were not
with enticing words of man's wisdom, **but in
demonstration of the Spirit and of power**."

Unless we have a measure of the same demonstration
of the Spirit, all that is said by us in the pulpit drops to
the ground—it has no real effect—there is no true or
abiding fruit—no fruit unto eternal life. If there be in it
some enticing words of man's wisdom, it may please
the mind of those who are gratified by such arts—it may
stimulate and occupy the attention for the time—but
there it ceases, and all that has been heard fades away
like a dream of the night.

**A peculiar, indescribable, invincible power**

"Our gospel did not come to you **in word only**,
but also with **power**, with the **Holy Spirit** and
with **deep conviction**." 1Th1:5

The gospel comes to some **in word only**. They
hear the word of the gospel, the sound of truth;
but it reaches the outward ear only—or if it touches
the inward feelings, it is merely as the word of men.

But where the Holy Spirit begins and carries on
His divine and saving work, He attends the word
with **a peculiar, an indescribable, and yet an
invincible power.**

It falls as from God upon the heart. He is heard to
speak in it—and in it His glorious Majesty appears
to open the eyes, unstop the ears, and convey a
message from His own mouth to the soul.

**Some hear the gospel as the mere word of men**,
perhaps for years before God speaks in it with a
divine power to their conscience. They thought
they **understood** the gospel—they thought they
**felt** it—they thought they **loved** it. But all this
time they did not see any vital distinction between
receiving it as the mere word of **men**, and as the
word of **God**.

The levity, the superficiality, the emptiness stamped
upon all who merely receive the gospel as the word
of men—is sufficient evidence that **it never sank
deep into the heart, and never took any powerful
grasp upon their soul.**

It therefore never brought with it any real separation
from the world—never gave strength to mortify the least
sin—never communicated power to escape the least snare
of Satan—was never attended with a spirit of grace and
prayer—never brought honesty, sincerity, and uprightness
into the heart before God—never bestowed any spirituality
of mind, or any loving affection toward the Lord of life and
glory. It was merely the reception of truth in the same way
as we receive scientific principles, or learn a language, a
business, or a trade. **It was all . . .**
shallow,
superficial,
deceptive,
hypocritical.

**But in some unexpected moment**, when little looking
for it, the word of God was brought into their conscience
with a **power** never experienced before. A light shone in
and through it which they never saw before . . .
a majesty,
a glory,
an authority,
an evidence
accompanied it which they never knew before. And
under this light, life, and power they fell down, with
the word of God sent home to their heart.

When then Christ speaks the gospel to the heart—
when He reveals Himself to the soul—when His word,
dropping as the rain and distilling as the dew, is
received in faith and love—He is embraced as the
chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely
one—He takes His seat upon the affections and
becomes enthroned in the heart as its Lord and God.

Is there life in **your** bosom?

Has God's power attended the work?

Is the grace of God really in your heart?

Has God spoken to your soul?

Have you heard His voice, felt its power,
and fallen under its influence?

"And we also thank God continually because,
when you received the word of God, which you
heard from us, you accepted it not as **the word
of men**, but as it actually is, **the word of God**,
which is effectually at work in you who believe."
1Th2:13

 **The deep things of God**

"**But God has revealed it to us by His Spirit.**
The Spirit searches all things, even **the deep
things of God**." 1Co2:10

The Spirit of God in a man's bosom searches
**the deep things of God**, so as to lead him into
a spiritual and experimental knowledge of them.

**What depths** do we sometimes see in a single
text of Scripture as opened to the understanding,
or applied to the heart?

**What a depth** in the blood of Christ—how it
"cleanses from all sin,"—even millions of millions
of the foulest sins of the foulest sinners!

**What a depth** in His bleeding, dying love,
that could stoop so low to lift us so high!

**What a depth** in His pity and compassion to extend
itself to such guilty, vile transgressors as we are!

**What depth** in His rich, free, and sovereign grace,
that it should super-abound over all our aggravated
iniquities, enormities, and vile abominations!
 **What depth** in His sufferings—that He should have
voluntarily put Himself under such a load of guilt,
such outbreakings of the wrath of God—as He felt
in His holy soul when He stood in our place to
redeem poor sinners from the bottomless pit—that
those who deserved hell, should be lifted up into
the enjoyment of heaven!

**The religionists of the day**
"And everyone will hate you because of your
allegiance to Me." Luk21:17
 **Professors of religion** have always been the
deadliest enemies of the children of God.

Who were so opposed to the blessed Lord as the
Scribes and Pharisees? It was the religious teachers
and leaders who crucified the Lord of glory!

And so in every age **the religionists of the day**
have been the hottest and bitterest persecutors
of the Church of Christ.

Nor is the case altered now. The more the children
of God are firm in the truth, the more they enjoy its
power, the more they live under its influence, and
the more tenderly and conscientiously they walk in
godly fear, the more will the professing generation
of the day hate them with a deadly hatred.

Let us not think that we can disarm it by a godly life;
for the more that we walk in the sweet enjoyment of
heavenly truth and let our light shine before men as
having been with Jesus, the more will this draw down
their hatred and contempt.

"And the world hates them because they do not
belong to the world, just as I do not." Joh17:14

**My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!**
"**My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me!**"
Isa24:16

There is no more continual source of lamentation
and mourning to a child of God than a sense of his
own barrenness. He would be fruitful in every good
word and work. **But when he contrasts . . .**
his own miserable unprofitableness,
his coldness and deadness,
his proneness to evil,
his backwardness to good,
his daily wanderings and departings from God,
his depraved affections,
his stupid frames,
his sensual desires,
his carnal projects, and
his earthy grovelings,
with what he sees and knows should be the fruit
that should grow upon a fruitful branch in the only
true Vine, he sinks down under a sense of his own
wretched barrenness and unfruitfulness.

Yet what was the effect produced by all this upon
his own soul? To wean him from the creature; to
divert him from looking to any for help or hope, but
the Lord Himself. It is in this painful way that the
Lord often, if not usually, cuts us off from all human
props, even the nearest and dearest, that we may
lean wholly and solely on Himself.

 **Those poor stupid people!**

"**The world knows us not.**" 1Jn3:1

Both the openly profane world, and the
professing world, are grossly ignorant
of the children of God. Their . . .
real character and condition,
state and standing,
joys and sorrows,
mercies and miseries,
trials and deliverances,
hopes and fears,
afflictions and consolations,
are entirely hidden from their eyes.

The world knows nothing of the motives and
feelings which guide and actuate the children
of God. **It views them as a set of gloomy,
morose, melancholy beings**, whose tempers
are soured by false and exaggerated views of
religion—who have pored over the thoughts of
hell and heaven until some have frightened
themselves into despair, and others have puffed
up their vain minds with an imaginary conceit of
their being especial favorites of the Almighty.
"They are really," it says, "no better than other
folks, if so good. But they have such contracted
minds—are so obstinate and bigoted with their
poor, narrow, prejudiced views—that wherever
they come they bring disturbance and confusion."

**But why this harsh judgment?**

Because the world knows nothing of the spiritual
feelings which actuate the child of grace, making
him act so differently from the world which thus
condemns him.

It cannot understand our sight and sense of the
exceeding sinfulness of sin—and that is the reason
why we will not run riot with them in the same
course of ungodliness.

It does not know with what a solemn weight eternal
things rest upon our minds—and that that is the cause
why we cannot join with them in pursuing so eagerly
the things of the world, and living for time as they
do—instead of living for eternity.

Being unable to enter into the spiritual motives and
gracious feelings which actuate a living soul, and the
movements of divine life continually stirring in a
Christian breast, they naturally judge us from their
own point of view, and condemn what they cannot
understand.

You may place a **horse** and a **man** upon the same
hill—while the man would be looking at the woods
and fields and streams—the horse would be feeding
upon the grass at his feet. The horse, if it could
reason, would say, "What a fool my master is! How
he is staring and gaping about! Why does he not sit
down and open his basket of provisions—for I know
he has it with him, for I carried it—and feed as I do?"

So the worldling says, "**Those poor stupid people**,
how they are spending their time in going to chapel,
and reading the Bible in their gloomy, melancholy way.
Religion is all very well—and we ought all to be religious
before we die—but they make so much of it. Why don't
they enjoy more of life? Why don't they amuse themselves
more with its innocent, harmless pleasures—be more gay,
cheerful, and sociable, and take more interest in those
things which so interest us?"

The reason why the world thus wonders at us is
because it knows us not, and therefore **cannot
understand that we have . . .**
sublimer feelings,
nobler pleasures, and
more substantial delights,
than ever entered the soul of a worldling!

Christian! the more you are conformed to the image
of Christ—the more separated you are from the world,
the less will it understand you. If we kept closer to the
Lord and walked more in holy obedience to the precepts
of the gospel, we would be **more misunderstood** than
even we now are! It is our worldly conformity that
makes the world understand many of our movements
and actions so well.

But if our movements were more according to the mind of
Christ—if we walked more as the Lord walked when here
below—we would leave the world in greater ignorance of
us than we leave it now—for the hidden springs of our life
would be more out of its sight, our testimony against it
more decided, and our separation from it more complete.

**We were not always a set of poor mopes**

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set
your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated
at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things
above, not on earthly things. For **you died**, and your
life is now hidden with Christ in God." Col3:1-3

Men's pursuits and pleasures differ as widely as
their station or disposition—but a life of selfish
gratification reigns and rules in all.

Now it is by this **death** that we die unto . . .
the things of time and sense;
to all that charms the natural mind of man;
to the pleasures and pursuits of life;
to that busy, restless world which once held
us so fast and firm in its embrace—and whirled
us round and round within its giddy dance.

Let us look back. **We were not always a set of poor
mopes**—as the world calls us. We were once as merry
and as gay as the merriest and gayest of them.

**But what were we really and truly with all our mirth?**

Dead to God—alive to sin. Dead to everything holy and
divine—alive to everything vain and foolish, light and
trifling, carnal and sensual—if not exactly vile and
abominable.

Our natural life was with all of us a life of gratifying our
senses—with some of us, perhaps, chiefly of pleasure and
worldly happiness—with others a life of covetousness, or
ambition, or self-righteousness.

Sin once put forth its intense power and allured
us—and we followed like the fool to the stocks.

Sin charmed—and we listened to its seductive wiles.

Sin held out its bait—and we too greedily,
too heedlessly swallowed the hook.

"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus
Christ, through which **the world has been crucified to
me, and I to the world**." Gal6:14

**To walk after the flesh**

"There is therefore now **no condemnation** to
those who are in Christ Jesus, **who walk not
after the flesh**, but after the Spirit." Rom8:1

**To walk after the flesh** carries with it the idea of
the flesh going before us—as our leader, guide, and
example—and our following close in its footsteps,
so that wherever it drags or draws we move after
it, as the needle after the magnet.

**To walk after the flesh**, then, is to move
step by step in implicit obedience to . . .
the commands of the flesh,
the **lusts** of the flesh,
the **inclinations** of the flesh,
and the **desires** of the flesh,
whatever shape they assume,
whatever garb they wear,
whatever name they may bear.

**To walk after the flesh** is to be ever pursuing,
desiring, and doing the things that please the
flesh, whatever aspect that flesh may wear or
whatever dress it may assume—whether molded
and fashioned after the grosser and more flagrant
ways of the profane world—or the more refined
and **deceptive religion** of the professing church.

But are the grosser and more manifest sinners the
only people who may be said to walk after the flesh?
Does not all **human religion**, in all its varied forms and
shapes, come under the sweep of this all-devouring
sword? Yes! Every one who is entangled in and led by
**a fleshly religion**, walks as much after the flesh as
those who are abandoned to its grosser indulgences.

Sad it is, yet not more sad than true, that **false
religion has slain its thousands**, if open sin has
slain its ten thousands.

**To walk after the flesh**, whether it be in the
grosser or more refined sense of the term, is
the same in the sight of God.

**The very thought is appalling!**
"Once you were alienated from God and were
**His** **enemies**, separated from Him by your
evil thoughts and actions." Col1:21

All man's sins, comparatively speaking, are but
'motes in the sunbeam' compared with **this giant
sin** **of enmity against God.** A man may be given
up to fleshly indulgences; he may sin against his
fellow creature—may rob, plunder, oppress, even
kill his fellow man. But viewed in a spiritual light,
what are they compared with the dreadful, the
damnable sin of **enmity** against the great and
glorious Majesty of heaven?

**This is a sin that lives beyond the grave!**

Many sins, though not their consequences, die
with man's body, because they are bodily sins.

But this is a sin that goes into eternity with him,
and flares up like a mighty volcano from the very
depths of the bottomless pit! **Yes, it is the very
sin of devils**, which therefore binds guilty man
down with them in the same eternal chains, and
consigns him to the same place of torment!

O the unutterable enmity of the heart against
the living God! **The very thought is appalling!**

How utterly ruined, then, how wholly lost must
that man's state and case be, who lives and
dies as he comes into the world . . .
unchanged,
unrenewed,
unregenerated!

I will not dwell longer upon this gloomy subject,
on this sad exhibition of human wickedness and
misery, though it is needful we should know it for
ourselves, that we should have a taste of this bitter
cup in our own most painful experience, that we may
know the sweetness of the cup of salvation when
presented to our lips by free and sovereign grace.

Nothing but the mighty power of God Himself
can ever turn this **enemy** into a **friend**!

"Once you were alienated from God and were
**His** **enemies**, separated from Him by your
evil thoughts and actions, yet now He has
brought you back as **His friends**. He has done
this through His death on the cross in His own
human body. As a result, He has brought you
into the very presence of God, and you are holy
and blameless as you stand before Him without
a single fault." Col1:21-22

**I will give you rest**

**Are you ever weary . . .**
of the world,
of sin,
of self,
of everything below the skies?

If so, you want something to give you **rest**.

You look to SELF—it is but shifting sand, tossed
here and there with the restless tide, and ever
casting up mire and dirt. No holding ground; no
anchorage; no rest there.

You look to OTHERS—you see what man is, even
the very best of men in their best state—how fickle,
how unstable, how changing and changeable; how
weak even when willing to help; how more likely
to add to, than relieve your distress; if desirous
to sympathize with and comfort you in trouble and
sorrow, how short his arm to help, how unsatisfactory
his aid to relieve! You find no rest there.

You lean upon the WORLD—it is but a broken
reed which runs into your hand and pierces you.
You find no rest there.

So look where you will, there is no rest for the
sole of your foot.

But there is a rest. Our blessed Lord says, "Come to
**Me**, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens,
and **I will give you rest**." Mat11:28

**That which is highly esteemed among men**

"**That which is highly esteemed among men** is
an abomination in the sight of God." Luk16:15

The pride,
the ambition,
the pleasures,
the amusements,
in which we see thousands and tens of thousands
engaged—and sailing down the stream into a dreadful
gulf of eternity—are all an abomination in the sight of
God.

Whereas, such things as . . .
faith,
hope,
love,
humility,
brokenness of heart,
tenderness of conscience,
contrition of spirit,
sorrow for sin,
self-loathing,
self-abasement,
looking to Jesus,
taking up the cross,
denying one's self,
walking in the strait and narrow path that leads to
eternal life—in a word, the power of godliness—**these
things are despised by all**—and by none so much as
mere heady professors who have a name to live while
dead.

"**That which is highly esteemed among men** is
an abomination in the sight of God." Luk16:15

 **Invincibly and irresistibly drawn**

**As the Lord is pleased to enlighten
his mind, the Christian sees . . .**
such a beauty,
such a blessedness,
such a heavenly sweetness,
such a divine loveliness,
such a fullness of surpassing grace,
such tender condescension,
such unwearied patience,
such infinite compassion,
**in the Lord of life and glory**—that he is as
if **invincibly and irresistibly drawn** by these
attractive influences to come to His feet to
learn of Him. So far as the Lord is pleased to
reveal Himself in some measure to his soul,
by the sweet glimpses and glances which he
thus obtains of His Person and countenance,
he is drawn to His blessed Majesty by cords
of love to look up unto Him and beg of Him
that He would drop His word with life and
power into his heart.

**Woman's chief besetting sins**"The Lord will strip away their artful beauty—their
ornaments, headbands, and crescent necklaces;
their earrings, bracelets, and veils. Gone will be
their scarves, ankle chains, sashes, perfumes, and
charms; their rings, jewels, party clothes, gowns,
capes, and purses; their mirrors, linen garments,
head ornaments, and shawls." Isa3:18-23

"The Lord will wash away the **filth** of the women
of Zion." Isa4:4

These women of Zion are typical representatives of
women professing godliness in all ages. The Lord
looked at their hearts, and the motives of their gaudy
attire. There He saw **pride, luxury, love of dress and
admiration**—**woman's chief besetting sins**—and all
this was in His eyes so much **filth!**

But as I do not wish to be too hard upon the women,
I may say, that **we men have our hidden filth** to as
great, or worse degree, than they. In us there are . . .
many secret and powerful lusts,
much hypocrisy, self-righteousness, pride, and
various other sinful and sensual abominations.

**You are not your own!**

"**You are not your own!** For you are bought with
a price—therefore glorify God in your body, and in
your spirit, which are God's." 1Co6:19

Your **eyes** are not your own—that you may feed your
lusts, that you may go about gaping, and gazing, and
looking into every shop window to see the fashions of
the day—learn the prevailing pride of life—and thus lay
up food for your vain mind—either in coveting what
must be unfitting to your profession—or applying your
money to an improper use—or being disappointed
because you cannot afford to buy it.

Your **ears** are not your own—that you may listen to
every foolish tale—drink in every political, worldly, or
carnal report which may fall upon them—and thus feed
that natural desire for news, gossip, and even slander
—which is the very element of the carnal mind.

Your **tongue** is not your own—that you may speak
what you please, and blurt out whatever passes in
the chambers of your heart, without check or fear.

Your **hands** are not your own—that you may use them
as implements of evil—or employ them in any other way
than to earn with them an honest livelihood. Our hands
were not given us for sin—but for godly uses.

Your **feet** are not your own—that you may walk in
the ways of the world—or that they should carry you
to haunts where all around you are engaged upon
errands of vanity and sin.

**All** must be held according to the disposal of God,
and under a sense of our obligations to Him.

But perhaps you will say, in the rebellion of your carnal
mind, "What restraint all this lays upon us. Cannot we
look with our eyes as we like—hear with our ears as we
please—and speak with our tongues as we choose? Will
you so narrow our path that we are to have nothing of
our own—not even our time or money, our body or soul?
Surely we may have a little enjoyment now and then—a
little recreation, a little holiday sometimes, a little
relaxation from being always so strict and so religious—
a little feeding of our carnal mind which cannot bear all
this restraint?"

Well, but what will you bring upon yourself by . . .
the roving eye,
the foolish tongue,
the loose hand,
the straying foot?

Darkness,
bondage,
guilt,
misery,
death!

"But," you say, "we are not to be tied up so
tightly as all this! We have gospel liberty,
but you will not allow us even that!"

Yes, blessed be God, there is gospel liberty, for
there is no real happiness in religion without it;
but not liberty to sin—not liberty to gratify the
lusts of the flesh—not liberty to act contrary to
the gospel we profess, and the precepts of God's
Word—for this is not liberty but licentiousness.

"**You are not your own!** For you are bought with
a price—therefore glorify God in your body, and in
your spirit, which are God's." 1Co6:19

**Do you seek you great things for yourself?**
**"Do you seek you great things for yourself?
Seek them not!"** Jer45:5

O the pride of man's heart! How it will work and show
itself even under a guise of religion and holiness!

Few can see that in religion, what are considered
great things—are really very little; and what are
considered little—are really very great.
How few can see that . . .
a broken heart,
a contrite spirit,
a humble mind,
a tender conscience,
a meek, quiet, and patient bearing of the cross,
a believing submission and resignation to the will of God,
a looking to Him alone, for all supplies in providence and grace,
a continual seeking of His face,
a desiring nothing so much as the visitations of His favor,
a loving, affectionate, forbearing, and forgiving spirit,
a bearing of injuries and reproaches without retaliation,
a liberal heart and hand, and
a godly, holy, and separate life and walk—
are **the things which in God's sight are great.**
While a knowledge of doctrine, clear insight into
gospel mysteries, and a ready speech are really
very **little** things—and are often to be found side
by side and hand in hand with a proud, covetous,
worldly, unhumbled spirit, and a living in what is
sinful and evil.

How many **ministers** are seeking after great gifts**—**
thirsting after popularity, applause, and acceptance
among men! They are not satisfied with being
simply and solely what God may make them by
His Spirit and grace**—**with the blessing which He
may make them to a scattered few here and there.
This inferior position, as they consider it, so beneath
their grace and gifts, their talents and abilities**—**does
not satisfy their restless mind and aspiring desires.
**Their ambition is . . .**
to stand at the very head of their peers,
be looked up to and sought after as a leader and a guide,
have a larger building,
have a fuller congregation,
have a better salary, and
have a wider field for the display of their gifts and abilities.
Gladly would they . . .
stand apart from all others,
brook no rival to their 'pulpit throne', and
be lord paramount at home and abroad.

And what is the **consequence** of this proud, ambitious
spirit? What **envy**, what **jealousy**, what **detraction** do
we see in men who want to stand at the top of the tree!
How, again and again, do they seek to rise by standing,
as it were**—**on the slain bodies of others!

**"Do you seek you great things for yourself?
Seek them not!"** Jer45:5

**We would not be such muck-worms!**

"I pray also that the **eyes of your heart may be
enlightened**—in order that you may know the hope
to which He has called you—what a rich and glorious
inheritance He has given to His people." Eph1:18

If the Spirit would but enlighten the eyes of our heart,
how this would lift us up out of the mud and mire of this
wretched world! **We would not be such muck-worms**,
raking and scraping a few straws together—or **running
about like ants with our morsel of grain!** We would have
our affections fixed more on things above. We would . . .
**know** more of Christ,
**enjoy** more of Christ,
**be** more like Christ,
**walk** more like Christ walked, and
look forward to our glorious inheritance.

If these things were brought into our hearts with divine
power—how they would sweeten every bitter cup, and
carry us through every changing scene, until at last we
were landed above—to see the Lord as He is, in the full
perfection of His infinite glory!

 **The multitude of Your tender mercies**

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your
loving-kindness—according unto **the multitude of
Your tender mercies** blot out my transgressions."
Psa51:1

What a sweet expression it is—and how it seems
to convey to our mind that God's mercies do not
fall 'drop by drop'—but are as innumerable . . ..
as the **sand** upon the sea-shore;
as the **stars** that stud the midnight sky;
as the **drops of** **rain** that fill the clouds before
they discharge their copious showers upon the earth.

It is the **multitude** of His mercies that makes Him so
merciful a God. He does not give but a **drop** or two of
mercy—that would soon be gone, like the rain which
fell this morning under the hot sun. But His mercies
flow like a **river!** There is in Him . . .
a multitude of mercies,
for a multitude of sins,
and a multitude of sinners!

This felt and received in the love of it—**breaks, humbles,
softens, and melts** a sensible sinner's heart—and he says,
"What, sin against such mercies? What, when the Lord has
remembered me in my low estate, and manifested once
more a sense of His mercy? What, shall I go on to provoke
Him again—walk inconsistently again—be entangled in
Satan's snares again? O, forbid it God, forbid it gospel,
forbid it tender conscience, forbid it every constraint of
dying love!"

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your
loving-kindness—according unto **the multitude of
Your tender mercies** blot out my transgressions."
Psa51:1

**Can Christ love one like me?**

"To grasp how wide and long and high and deep
is the love of Christ, and to know this love that
surpasses knowledge." Eph3:17-19
You may wonder sometimes—and it is a wonder that
will fill heaven itself with anthems of eternal praise—
how such a glorious Jesus can ever look down from
heaven upon such crawling reptiles, on such worms
of earth—what is more, upon such sinners who have
provoked Him over and over again by their misdeeds.
Yes, how this exalted Christ, in the height of His glory,
can look down from heaven on such poor, miserable,
wretched creatures as we—this is the mystery that
fills angels with astonishment!

We feel we are such crawling reptiles—such undeserving
creatures—and are so utterly unworthy of the least notice
from Him, that we say, "**Can Christ love one like me?**
Can the glorious Son of God cast an eye of pity and
compassion, love and tenderness upon one like me—who
can scarcely at times bear with myself—who sees and
feels myself one of the vilest of the vile, and the worst
of the worst? O, what must I be in the sight of the
glorious Son of God?"

And yet, He says, "I have loved you with an everlasting
love." His love has breadths, and lengths, and depths,
and heights unknown!

Its breadth exceeds all human span;
its length outvies all creature line;
its depth surpasses all finite measurement;
its height excels even angelic computation!

Because His love is . . .
so wondrous,
so deep,
so long,
so broad,
so high;
it is so suitable to our every want and woe.

"To grasp how wide and long and high and deep
is the love of Christ, and to know this love that
surpasses knowledge." Eph3:17-19

**A woman's best ornament**

"Don't be concerned about the **outward beauty**
that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive
jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be
known for the **beauty that comes from within**,
the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,
which is so precious to God." 1Pe3:3-4

This "**beauty that comes from within**" is that . . .
meekness,
quietness,
gentleness,
brokenness of heart,
contrition of spirit,
humility of mind,
tenderness of conscience,
which are fitting to the children of God.

A gentle and quiet spirit is **a woman's best ornament**.

As to other gay and unbecoming ornaments, let those
wear them, who wish to serve and to enjoy . . .
the lust of the flesh,
the lust of the eyes,
and the pride of life.

Let the "daughters of Zion" manifest they have other
ornaments than what the world admires and approves.
Let them covet . . .
the teachings of God,
the smiles of His love,
the whispers of His favor.
The more they have of these, the less will they care
for the adornments which the "daughters of Canaan"
run so madly after; by which also they often impoverish
themselves, and by opening a way for admiration, too
often open a way for seduction and ruin.

 **O you filthy creature!**

"Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me
from this life that is dominated by sin?" Rom7:24

No doubt you have **your enemies**—and so have we all.

But I will tell you where you have an enemy—and a
greater enemy than ever you have found in others—
**yourself!** I have often felt that I could do myself more
harm in five minutes, than all my enemies could do me
in fifty years! I need not fear what **others** may do or
say—I fear **myself** more than them all—knowing what
I am as a sinner—the strength of sin—and the power
of temptation.

Be sure of this—that **YOU are the worst
enemy you ever had . . .**your sin,
your lust,
your covetousness,
your pride,
your self-righteousness.

God Himself will make you feel your enemy.
You shall see something of his accursed designs;
how sin has deceived you, betrayed you, brought
guilt upon your conscience, and made you a burden
to yourself. You shall be brought to feel, and say,
"There is nothing I hate so much as my own vile
heart—my own dreadfully corrupt nature. O what
an enemy do I carry in my own bosom! Of all my
enemies, he is surely the worst! Of all my foes,
he is the most subtle and strong!"

Have you not sometimes felt as though you could
take your lusts by the neck and dash their heads
against a stone? Have you not felt you could take
out of your breast this vile, damnable heart, lay
it upon the ground, and stamp upon it?
And when tempted with . . .
pride,
or unbelief,
or infidelity,
or blasphemy,
or any hateful lust,
how you have cried out again and again with
anguish of spirit, "O this heart of mine!"

We hate our sins, and would, if possible, have no
more to do with them, and would say to this **lust**,
**idol**, or **temptation**, "**O you filthy creature!** What
an enemy you are to my soul! O that I could
forever be done with you!"

"Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me
from this life that is dominated by sin? Thanks be to
God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord."
Rom7:24-25

**You never knew what real happiness was!**

One false charge against the children of God, is that
they are **a poor, moping, miserable people**, who . . .
know nothing of happiness,
renounce all cheerfulness, mirth, and gladness,
hang their heads down all their days like a bulrush,
are full of groundless fears,
nurse the gloomiest thoughts in a kind of melancholy,
grudge others the least enjoyment of pleasure and happiness,
and try to make everyone else as dull and as miserable as
their dull and miserable selves.

Is not this a false charge?

You know—that you never had any real happiness
in the things of time and sense—that under all your
'pretended gaiety' there was real gloom—that every
'sweet' was drenched with bitterness—that vexation
was stamped upon all that is called pleasure and
enjoyment.

**You never knew what real happiness was**, until you
knew the Lord, and were blessed with His presence,
and some manifestation of His goodness and mercy!

**Were it no bigger than a child's doll**

"**I will cleanse you from all your idols.**" Eze36:25

Idolatry takes a wide range. There are 'respectable' idols
and 'vulgar' idols—just as there are marble statues, and
other objects of worship made up of shells and feathers.

And yet each will still be an idol.

Respectable idols we can admire—vulgar idols we detest.

**But an idol is an idol**—however respectable, or however
vulgar—however admired, or however despised they may be.

But O how numerous are these respectable idols!

Love of money,
ambition,
craving after human applause,
desire to rise in the world;
all these we may think are natural desires that
may be lawfully gratified. But O, what idols may
they turn out to be!

But there are more **secret** and more **dangerous** idols.
You may have a husband, or wife, or child—whom you
love almost as much as yourself—you bestow upon
this idol of yours all the affections of your heart.
Nothing is too good for it, nothing too dear for it.

You don't see how this is an idol.

But, whatever you **love** more than God,
whatever you **worship** more than God,
whatever you **crave** for more than God,
is an idol.

It may lurk in the chambers of imagery—you may
scarcely know how fondly you love it. But let God
take that idol out of your breast—let Him pluck that
idol from its niche—and you will then find how you
have allowed your affections to wander after that
idol and loved it more than God Himself. It is when
the idol is taken away, removed, dethroned—that
we learn what an idol it has been.

How we hug and embrace our idols!

How we cleave to them!

How we delight in them!

How we bow down to them!

How we seek gratification from them!

How little are we aware what affections entwine
around them—how little are we aware that they
claim what God has reserved for Himself when
He said, "My son, give Me your heart."

Many a weeping widow learns for the first time that
her **husband** was an idol. Many a mourning husband learns for the first time how too dearly, how too fondly,
how too idolatrously he loved his **wife**. Many a man
does not know how dearly he loves **money** until he
incurs some serious loss. Many do not know how
dearly they hold **name**, **fame**, and **reputation** until
some slanderous blight seems to touch that tender
spot. Few indeed seem to know how dear **SELF** is,
until God takes it out of its niche and sets Himself
there in its room.

Self,
pride,
reputation,
the love of money
the love of name and fame—
these idols you cannot take with you into the courts
of heaven. **How would God be moved to jealousy** **if
you could you carry an idol**—**were it no bigger than
a child's doll**—**into the courts above!**

"**I will cleanse you from all your idols.**" Eze36:25

**Your filth will be washed away!**

O, what loathsome monsters of iniquity—how
polluted, filthy, and vile do we feel ourselves
to be—when the guilt of our sin is charged home
upon our conscience! Have you not sometimes
loathed yourselves on account of your abominations?
Has not the filth of your sin sometimes disgusted you;
the opening up of that horrible, that ever running
sewer, which you daily carry about with you?

We complain, and justly complain—of a reeking sewer
which runs through a street—or of a ditch filled with
everything disgusting. But do we feel as much—do
we complain as often—of the foul sewer which is
ever running in our soul—of the filthy ditch in our
own bosom?

As the sight of this open sewer meets our eyes—and
its stench enters our nostrils, it fills us with self-loathing
and self-abhorrence before the eyes of a holy God.

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you
will be clean. **Your filth will be washed away!**"
Eze36:25-26

Php3:7

"But whatever was to my profit I now consider
**loss** for the sake of Christ." Php3:7

This includes the loss . . .
of all your fancied **holiness**,
of all your vaunted **strength**,
of all your natural or acquired **wisdom**,
of all your boasted **knowledge**;
in a word, of everything in **creature religion** of which
the heart is proud, and in which it takes delight.

All, all must be counted loss for Christ's sake—all,
all must be sacrificed to His bleeding, dying love.

Our dearest joys,
our fondest hopes,
our most cherished idols,
must all sink and give way to the grace,
blood, and love of an incarnate God.

**Strangers & Pilgrims**

"They confessed that they were **strangers
and pilgrims** on the earth." Heb11:13

You feel yourself a **stranger** in this ungodly world;
it is not your element—it is not your home. You are
in it during God's appointed time—but you wander
up and down this world a **stranger . . .**
to its company,
to its maxims,
to its fashions,
to its principles,
to its motives,
to its lusts,
to its inclinations, and
all in which this world moves as in its native element.

Grace has separated you by God's distinguishing power,
that though you are **in** the world, you are not **of** it. You
feel yourself to be a **stranger** here—as David says, "a
**stranger** and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."

I can tell you plainly . . .
if you are at home in the world;
if the things of time and sense are your element;
if you feel one with . . .
the **company** of the world,
the **maxims** of the world,
the **fashions** of the world,
the **principles** of the world,
grace has not reached your heart—the faith
of God's elect does not dwell in your bosom.

**The first effect of grace is to SEPARATE.**

It was so in the case of Abraham. He was called
by grace to leave the land of his fathers and go
out into a land that God would show him.

And so God's own word to His people is now,
"Come out from among them, and be separate."

Separation, separation, separation from the world
is the grand distinguishing mark of vital godliness!

There may be indeed separation of **body** where there
is no separation of **heart**. But what I mean is . . .
separation of heart,
separation of principle,
separation of affection,
separation of spirit.

And if grace has touched your heart and you are
a partaker of the faith of God's elect—you are a
**stranger** in the world, and will make it manifest
by your life and conduct that you are such.

But they were also **pilgrims**—that is, sojourners
through weary deserts—longing, longing for home,
possessing nothing in which they could take
pleasure—feeling the weariness of a long journey
and anxious for rest.

Are you not at times almost worn out by . . .
sin,
self,
trials,
temptations,
afflictions;
so that you would gladly lay down your weary
body in the grave—that your soul might rest
in the sweet enjoyment of the King of kings?

If such is your spirit, you have something
of the spirit of the **pilgrim** sojourning in a
weary land, and and longing for . . .
rest,
happiness,
and peace
in a better country.

"But they desire a better place—a
heavenly homeland." Heb11:16

**Looking down into a filthy pit!**

"The human heart is most deceitful and desperately
wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?" Jer17:9

Sometimes we are so astonished . . .
at what we **are**,
at what we **have been**, or
at what we **are capable of**.

We stand sometimes and look at our heart, and see  **what a seething, boiling, and bubbling is there!**
And we look at it with indignant astonishment, as
we would look into a pool of filthy black mud, all
swarming and alive with every hideous creature!

**So when a man takes a view of his own heart . . .**
its dreadful hypocrisy,
its vile rebellion,
its alarming deceitfulness,
its desperate wickedness,
of what his heart is capable of plotting,
of what evil it can conceive and imagine,
it is as if he stood **looking down into a filthy pit** and
saw with astonishment, mingled with self-abhorrence,
what his heart is, as the fountain of all iniquity.

A man must have some knowledge of his own heart
to understand such language as this.

You that are so exceedingly 'pious' and so 'extra good',
and from whose heart the veil has never been taken away
to show you what you are, will perhaps think that I am
drawing a caricature of human nature, and painting it as
the haunt of thieves and prostitutes.

**Could you but have the veil taken off your heart**,
you would see that you were capable of doing all
that wickedness that others have done, or can do!

By this sight of **ourselves**, we learn **what a wonderful
God we have to deal with!** Surely none so highly prize
the grace of God as those who are most led into a
knowledge of the fall, and the havoc and ruin, and the
guilt and misery which it has brought into our own hearts.

**The largest slice of the well-sugared cake**

"They confessed that they were **strangers
and pilgrims** on the earth." Heb11:13

Many profess that they are **strangers and pilgrims** here
below. But they take care to have as much of this world's
comforts as they can scrape together by hook and by crook.

They talk about being 'strangers', yet can be in close
friendship with men of the world. And could you see them
at the exchange, at the market, behind the counter, or at
home with their families—**you would not find one mark
to distinguish them from the ungodly!**

Yet they come to chapel—and if called upon to pray, they
will tell the people they are "poor strangers and pilgrims in
a valley of tears"—while all the time their hearts are in the
world—and their eyes stand out with fatness—and they are
as light and trifling as a comic actor—and have no concerns
except to get **the largest slice of the well-sugared cake**
that the world sets before them!

It is not the 'mere profession of the lips'—but 'grace in
the heart', that makes a man a stranger and a pilgrim.

God's people are strangers and sojourners—the world is not
their home—nor can they take pleasure in it. Sin is often a
burden to them—guilt often lies as a heavy weight upon
their conscience—a thousand troubles harass their minds
—a thousand perplexities oppress their souls. They cannot
bury their minds in business and derive all their happiness
from their successes, for they feel that this earth is not their
home. They are often cast down and exercised, because they
have to live with such an ungodly heart in such an ungodly
world.

"They confessed that they were **strangers
and pilgrims** on the earth." Heb11:13

**The things which men despise**
"**The things which are highly esteemed among men**
are an abomination in the sight of God!" Luk16:15

**The pride, ambition, pleasures, and amusements**, in
which we see thousands and tens of thousands engaged
—and sailing down the stream into a dreadful gulf of
eternity—are all an abomination in the sight of God!

Whereas **the things which men despise**, such as . . .
faith,
hope,
love,
humility,
brokenness of heart,
tenderness of conscience,
contrition of spirit,
sorrow for sin,
self-loathing,
self-abasement,
looking to Jesus,
taking up the cross,
denying one's self,
walking in the narrow path that leads to eternal life,
—are despised by all—and by none so much as mere heady
religious professors—who have a name to live, while dead.

"The things which are highly esteemed among men
are an abomination in the sight of God." Luk16:15

Can they beat back this monster to his filthy den?

"**Hold me up, and I shall be safe!**" Psa119:117

The Lord's people are a **tempted** people. **Satan** is ever
waiting at their gate, constantly suggesting every hateful
and improper thought—perpetually inflaming the rebellion
and enmity of their carnal mind—and continually **plaguing**,
**harassing**, and **besieging** them in a thousand ways!

Can they repel him?  **Can they beat back this monster to his filthy den?**

Can they beat back this leviathan? They cannot—they feel
they cannot. They know that nothing but the voice of Jesus,
inwardly speaking with power to their souls, can **beat back
the lion of the bottomless pit!** One whisper, one soft word
from the lips of His gracious Majesty, can and will put every
temptation to flight!
"Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called
you by name—you are Mine! When you go through deep
waters and great trouble—I will be with you! When you
go through rivers of difficulty—you will not drown! When
you walk through the fire of oppression—you will not be
burned up—the flames will not consume you. For I am
the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel—your Savior!"
Isa43:1-3

**When it comes in the guise of a friend**

"Be of good cheer, I have overcome **the world**."

Does not this show that the world is an enemy to
the Lord, and to the Lord's people? and never so
much an enemy—never to be so much dreaded—as
**when it comes in the guise of a friend**. When it . . .
steals upon your **heart**,
engrosses your **thoughts**,
wins your **affections**,
draws away your **mind** from God,
—then it is to be dreaded.

When the world smites us as an enemy—its
blows are not to be feared. It is **when it smiles
upon us as a friend**—it is most to be dreaded.

When our **eyes** begin to drink it in,
when our **ears** begin to listen to its voice,
when our **hearts** become entangled in its fascinations,
when our **minds** get filled with its anxieties,
when our **affections** depart from the Lord
and cleave to the things of time and sense,
—then the world is to be dreaded.

Canaanitish idols and heathenish abominations

"You shall destroy their altars, and break down
their images, and cut down their groves, and burn
their engraved images with fire!" Deuteronomy 7:5

Our hearts are by nature full of **Canaanitish idols and
heathenish abominations**, which must be destroyed!

Lusts after evil things,
adulterous images,
idolatrous desires,
strong hankerings after sin—
along with evils which have **the impudence
to wear a religious garb**—such as . . .
towering thoughts of our own ability,
pleasing dreams of creature holiness,
swellings up of pride—dressed out and painted
in all the tawdy colors of Satanic delusion—how
can these abominations be allowed to run rampant
in the human heart?

The altarsand **religious rites** of Canaanites were to be
destroyed as much as their **idols**! And thus we may say
of **that very religious being—man**, that his false worship
and heathenish notions of God must be destroyed—as well
as his more flagrant, though not more dangerous, lusts
and abominations.

The sentence against both is, "Destroy them!" They
must not stand side by side with Immanuel, who is
to have the preeminence in all things, and who is
"the Alpha and the Omega—the first and the last."

And O what a mercy it is to have both **our FLESHLY and
RELIGIOUS abominations both destroyed!** For I am sure
that **God** and **self** never can rule in the same heart—that
Christ and the devil can never reign in the same bosom
—each claiming the supremacy!

**This inward conflict**

"I know that nothing good lives in me—that is, in
my sinful nature. For I have the **desire** to do what
is good—**but I cannot carry it out**." Romans 7:18

Now it is this which makes the Lord's people such a
burdened people—that makes them so oppressed in
their souls as to cry out against themselves daily,
and sometimes hourly—**that they are what they are**
—that they would be spiritual, yet are carnal—that
they would be holy, yet are unholy—that they would
have sweet communion with Jesus, yet have such
sensual alliance with the things of time and sense—
that they would be Christians in word, thought, and
deed; yet, in spite of all, they feel their carnal mind,
their wretched depravity intertwining, interlacing,
gushing forth—contaminating with its polluted stream
everything without and within—so as to make them
sigh, groan, and cry being burdened, "What a wretched
man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"
Romans 7:24

He would not be entangled in these snares for ten thousand
worlds—he hates the evils of his heart, and mourns over the
corruptions of his nature. They make the tear fall from his
eye, and the sob to heave from his bosom—they make him
a wretched man—and fill him day after day with sorrow,
bitterness, and anguish.

None but a saved soul, under divine teaching, can see
this evil—and mourn and sigh under the depravity, the
corruption, the unbelief, the carnality, the wickedness,
and the deceitfulness of his evil heart.

**This inward conflict**, this sore grief, this internal burden,
that all the family of God are afflicted with—is an evidence
that the life and grace of God are in their bosoms.

"Thank God! **The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord!**
So you see how it is—in my mind I really want to obey
God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a
slave to sin." Rom. 7:25

**Who really knows how bad it is?**

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

Without a knowledge of the corruptions
and abounding evils of our deceitful and
desperately wicked heart . . .
unbelief,
infidelity,
pride,
hypocrisy,
worldly mindedness,
carnality,
sensuality,
selfishness;
**there will be . . .**
no humility,
no self loathing,
no dread of falling,
no desire to be kept,
no knowledge of the super-aboundings
of grace, over the aboundings of sin.

**So many truly sincere and religious people**

"Cornelius and all his family were **devout** and
**God-fearing**; he **gave generously** to those in
need and **prayed to God regularly**." Acts 10:2

Yet Cornelius and his family weren't saved! (Acts 11:14)

–A generous centurion build a synagogue. (Luke 7:3-5)

–A young man keeps the commandments from his
youth up. (Luke 18:21)

–Balaam prophesies. (Numbers 23:16)

–Saul weeps. (1 Samuel 24:16)

–Judas preaches the gospel. (Matthew 10:5-8)

Yet none of these men were saved!

It is at times, enough to fill one's heart with mingled
astonishment and sorrow, to see **so many truly sincere
and religious people**, whose religion will leave them short
of eternal life—because they are destitute of saving grace.

**To see so much . . .**
amiability,
benevolence,
devotedness,
self-denial,
liberality
loveliness of character,
integrity,
consistency of life,
all inescapably dashed against the rock of inflexible justice,
and there shattered and lost—swallowed up with its unhappy
possessors in the raging billows beneath—such a sight, did
we not know that the Judge of the whole earth cannot do
wrong, would indeed stagger us to the very center of our being!

**Sick of SIN, sick of SELF, sick of the WORLD**

"**Delight yourself in the LORD** and He will give
you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

By nature we **delight in SIN**. It is the very element of
our nature—and even after the Lord has called us by
His grace and quickened us by his Spirit—there is the
same love to sin in the heart as there was before.
We **delight** in it—we would **wallow** in it—take our full
**enjoyment** of it—and **swim** in it as a fish swims in
the waters of the sea!

By nature we also are **prone to IDOLATRY**. **Self** is
the grand object of all our sensual and carnal worship.
Our own **exaltation**,
our own **amusement**,
our own **pleasure**,
our own **gratification.
Something whereby SELF may be . . .**
flattered,
admired,
adored,
delighted,
is the grand end and aim of man's natural worship.

By nature we also **delight in the WORLD**. It is . . .
our element,
our home,
what our carnal hearts are intimately blended with.

From all these things, then, which are intrinsically
evil—which a pure and holy God must hate with
absolute abhorrence—we must be **weaned** and
effectually **divorced**—we need to have these
things **embittered** to us.

All the time we are doing homage and worship to
**self**—all the time we are loving the **world**—all the
time we delight in **sin**—all the time we are setting
up **idols** in the secret chambers of imagery—there
is no delighting ourselves in the Lord.

We cannot delight ourselves in the Lord until we are
purged of creature love—until the idolatry of our hearts is
not merely manifested, but hated and abhorred—until by . . .
cutting temptations,
sharp exercises,
painful perplexities,
and various sorrows,
we are brought to this state—to be . . .
**sick of SIN,
sick of SELF,
sick of the WORLD**.

Until we are brought to loathe ourselves, we are not
brought to that spot where none but God Himself can
comfort, please, or make the soul really happy.

Now the very means that God employs to embitter the
world to us are cutting and grievous dispensations—as
unexpected reverses in fortune—or afflictions of body,
of family, or of soul. But these very means that the Lord
employs to divorce our carnal union from the world, stir
up the self-pity, the murmuring, the peevishness, and
the rebelliousness of our nature. So that we think we
are being very harshly dealt with, in being compelled
to walk in this trying path.

But only by these cutting dispensations we are eventually
brought to delight ourselves in Him, who will give us the
desires of our heart.

How **long** you shall be walking in this painful path—
how **heavy** your trials—what their **duration** shall be—how
**deep** you may have to sink—how **cutting** your afflictions
may be in body or soul, God has not defined, and we cannot.
But they must work until they have produced this result—
weaned, divorced, and separated us from all that we
naturally love and idolatrously cleave unto—and all
that we adulterously roam after. If our trials have not
done this, they must go on until they produce that effect.

The burden must be laid upon the back,
affliction must try the mind,
perplexities must encumber the feet,
until we are brought to this point—that **none but the
Lord Himself**, with a taste of His dying love, can comfort
our hearts, or give us that inward peace and joy which
our soul is taught to crave after.

A hundred doctrines floating in the head

**By five minutes real communion** with the Lord . . .
we learn more,
we know more,
we receive more,
we feel more, and
we experience more
than by a thousand years of merely studying
the Scriptures, or using external forms, rites,
and ceremonies.

One truth written by the Spirit in the heart,
will bring forth more fruit in the life, than  **a hundred doctrines floating in the head**.

**However low we may sink**

What a mercy it is to have a faithful, gracious, and
compassionate High Priest who can sympathize with
His poor, tried, tempted family—so that **however
low we may sink** **. . .**
His **piteous** **eye** can see us in our low estate,
His **gracious** **ear** hear our cries,
His **loving** **heart** melt over us, and
His **strong arm** pluckus from our destructions!

Oh, what would we do without such a gracious
and most suitable Savior as our blessed Jesus! **How He seems to rise more and more . . .**
in our estimation,
in our thoughts,
in our desires,
in our affections,  **as we see and feel . . .**
what a wreck and ruin we are,
what dreadful havoc sin has made with us,
what miserable outcasts we are by nature.

But oh, how needful it is, dear friend, to be
brought down in our soul to be the . . .
chief of sinners,
viler than the vilest,
worse than the worst,
that we may really and truly believe in, and cleave
unto, **this most precious and suitable Savior!**Yours affectionately in the Lord,
[J. C. Philpot](http://www.gracegems.org/Philpot/sermons.htm), October 1, 1868

**Nothing but a slave!**

"**Once you were slaves of sin!**" Romans 6:17

What a picture does this draw of our sad state, while
walking in the darkness and death of unregeneracy!

The Holy Spirit here sets forth **Sin as a harsh master**,
**exercising tyrannical dominion over his slaves!** How
this portrays our state and condition in a state of
unregeneracy—slaves to sin!

Just as a master commands his slave to go here and
there—imposes on him certain tasks—and has entire
and despotic authority over him—so **sin . . .**
had a complete mastery over us,
used us at its arbitrary will and pleasure,
drove us here and there on its commands.

But in this point we differed from physical slaves—
that we did not murmur under our yoke—but gladly
and cheerfully obeyed all sin's commands—and
never tired of doing the most servile drudgery!

Thus **some** have had sin as **a very vulgar and
tyrannical master**, who drove them into open acts
of drunkenness, uncleanness, and profligacy—yes,
everything base, vile, and evil.

**Others** have been preserved through education,
through the watchfulness and example of parents,
or other moral restraints, from going into such open
lengths of iniquity—and outward breakings forth of
evil. **But still sin secretly reigned in their hearts** . . .
pride,
worldliness,
love of the things of time and sense,
hatred to God and aversion to His holy will,
selfishness and stubbornness,
in all their various forms, had a complete mastery
over them! And though sin ruled over them more
as a gentleman—he kept them in a more refined,
though not less real or absolute slavery! Whatever
sin bade them do, that they did, as implicitly as the
most abject slave ever obeyed a tyrannical master's
command.

What a picture does the Holy Spirit here draw of
what a man is! **Nothing but a slave!**—and sin, as
his master, first driving him upon upon God's sword,
and then giving him eternal death as his wages!

"**He has** **rescued us from the dominion
of darkness—and He has brought us into
the Kingdom of His dear Son!**" Col. 1:13

**A glory, a beauty, and a sweetness**

**How sweet it is to trace the Lord's hand in providence** . . .
to look back on the chequered path that He has led us by;
to see how His hand has been with us for good;
what difficulties He has brought us through;
in what straits He has appeared;
how in things most trying He has wrought deliverance;
and how He has sustained us to the present hour.

**How sweet are providential favors** when they come
stamped with this inscription, "This is from the Lord!"
**How precious every temporal mercy becomes**—our
very food, lodging, and clothing!

**How sweet is the least thing** when it comes down
to us as from God's hands! A man cannot know the
sweetness of his daily bread until he sees that God
gives it to him—nor the blessedness of any providential
dealing until he can say, "God has done this for me—and
given that to me." **When a man sees the providence of
God stamped on every action of life, it casts** **a glory, a
beauty, and a sweetness** **over every day of his life!**

**Having nothing—and yet possessing all things.**

"**Having nothing—and yet possessing all things.**" 2 Cor. 6:10

**How can this apparent contradiction be reconciled?**

It is resolved thus—
"having nothing" **in self**,
"possessing all things" **in Christ**.

And just in proportion as I have nothing **in** **self**experimentally—so I possess all things **in** **Christ**.

My own **beggary** leads me out of self
into His **riches**.

My own **unrighteousness** leads me out of self
into Christ's **righteousness**.

My own **defilement** leads me out of self
into Christ's **sanctification**.

My own **weakness** leads me out of self
into Christ's **strength**.

My own **misery** leads me out of self
into Christ's **mercy**.

"**Having nothing—and yet possessing all things.**" 2 Cor. 6:10

These two branches of divine truth, so far from clashing with
each other—sweetly, gloriously, and blessedly harmonize.
And just in proportion as we know spiritually, experimentally,
and vitally of "having nothing," **in** **self**—just so much shall we
know spiritually, experimentally, and vitally of "possessing all
things" **in** **Christ.**

**Riches, honors, and comforts**

"But we have this **precious treasure** in earthen vessels."
2 Cor. 4:7

How different is the estimate that **the Christian** makes
of **riches, honors, and comforts**—from that made by
the **world** and the **flesh**!

The world's idea of **riches** are only such as consist in gold
and silver, in houses, lands, or other tangible property.

The world's estimate of **honors**, are only such as **man**has to bestow.

The world's notion of **comfort**, is "fulfilling the
desires of the flesh and of the mind."

But the true Christian takes a different estimate
of these matters, and feels that . . .
the only true **riches** are those of God's grace in the heart,
the only real **honor** is that which comes from **God**,
the only solid **comfort** is that which is imparted by the
Holy Spirit to a broken and contrite spirit.

Now, just in proportion as we are filled by the Spirit
of **God**—shall we take faith's estimate of **riches,
honors, and comforts**. And just so much as we are
imbued with the spirit of the **world**—shall we take
the flesh's estimate of these things.

When the eye of the **world** looked on the Apostles, it
viewed them as a company of poor ignorant men—a set
of wild enthusiasts, who traveled about the country
preaching Jesus, who they said, had been crucified,
and was risen from the dead. The natural eye saw no
beauty, no power, no glory in the truths they brought
forth. Nor did it see that the poor perishing bodies of
these outcast men contained in them **a heavenly
treasure**—and that they would one day shine as the
stars forever and ever—while those who despised
their word would sink into endless woe.

The **spirit of the world** can never understand or love the
things of eternity—it can only look to, and can only rest
upon, the poor perishing things of time and sense.

**The continued teachings of the Spirit**

When once, by **the operation of the Spirit** on
our conscience, we have been stripped of . . .
formality,
superstition,
self-righteousness,
hypocrisy,
presumption,
and the **other delusions of the flesh that hide
themselves under the mask of religion**—we have
felt the difference between having a name to live
while dead, and the power of vital godliness—and
as a measure of divine life has flowed into the
heart out of the fullness of the Son of God—**we
desire no other religion** **but that which stands
in the power of God**—by that alone can we live,
and by that alone we feel that we can die.

And, at last, we are brought to this conviction and
solemn conclusion—that **there is no other true
religion but that which consists in** **the continued
teachings of the Spirit, and the communications
of the life of God to the soul.**

And with the Spirit's teachings are connected . . .
all the actings of **faith** in the soul,
all the anchorings of **hope** in the heart,
all the flowings forth of **love**,
every tear of genuine **contrition** that flows down the cheeks,
every sigh of **godly sorrow** that heaves from the bosom,
every **cry** and **groan** because of the body of sin,
every breath of **spiritual prayer** that comes from the heart,
every **casting** of our souls upon Christ,
all **submission** to Him,
all **communion** with Him,
all **enjoyment** of Him, and
all the inward **embracements** of Him
in His suitability and preciousness.

 **It will come in at every chink and crevice!**
"**I know that nothing good lives in me.**"
Romans 7:18

The world within us is ten thousand times
worse than the world outside of us!

We may shut and bar our doors, and exclude the
outside world—but the world within cannot be so
shut out! More—we might go and hide ourselves
in a hermit's cave, and never see the face of man
again—but even there we would be as carnal and
worldly as if we lived in Vanity Fair!

We cannot shut out the world—**it will come in
at every chink and crevice!** This wretched world
will intrude itself into our every thought and
imagination!

I don't know how it may be with you, but I have no
more power to keep out the workings of sin in my
heart—than I have power by holding up my hand to
stop the rain from coming down to the earth! **Sin will
come in at every crack and crevice**, and manifest
itself in the wretched workings of an evil heart!

The seeds of every crime are in our nature—and
therefore, could your flesh have its full swing—there
would not be a viler wretch in **London** than you!

**At last to cheat the devil!**

If **God** is not your master—the **devil** will be.

If **grace** does not rule—**sin** will reign.

If **Christ** is not your all in all—the **world** will be.

It is not as though we could roam abroad in total
liberty. We must have a master of one kind, or another.

**And which is best?**

A bounteous, benevolent Benefactor,
a merciful, loving, and tender Parent,
a kind, forgiving Father and Friend,
a tender-hearted, compassionate Redeemer?

**OR**

A cruel devil,
a miserable world,
a wicked, vile, abominable heart?

**Which is better?**To live under the sweet constraints of the
dying love of a dear Redeemer—under . . .
gospel influences,
gospel principles,
gospel promises, and
gospel encouragements?

**OR**

To walk in imagined liberty, with sin in our heart,
exercising dominion and mastery there—and binding
us in iron chains to the judgment of the great day?

Even taking the present life—there is more real pleasure,
satisfaction, and solid happiness in half an hour with God,
in sweet union and communion with the Lord of life and
glory, in reading His word with a believing heart, in finding
access to His sacred presence, in knowing something of the
droppings in of His favor and mercy—than in . . .
all the delights of sin,
all the lusts of the flesh,
all the pride of life, and
all the amusements that the world has ever devised
to kill time and cheat self—thinking, by a death-bed
repentance—**at last to cheat the devil!

This is what the Lord says**

**This is what the Lord says**—"**Cursed is the one who
trusts in man**, who depends on flesh for his strength
and whose heart turns away from the Lord." Jer. 17:5

The Lord here does not lay down a man's moral
or immoral character as a test of salvation.
He does **not** say, "Cursed is . . .
the thief,
the adulterer,
the extortioner,
the murderer,
the man that lives in open profanity."

He puts all that aside, and fixes His eye and lays
His hand upon one mark—which may exist with the
greatest morality and with the highest profession
of religion.

"I will tell you," the Lord says, "who are under My
curse—the person who trusts in man—who depends
on flesh for his strength—and in so doing, his heart
turns away from Me."

**This is what the Lord says**—"**Cursed is the one who
trusts in man**, who depends on flesh for his strength
and whose heart turns away from the Lord." Jer. 17:5

 **That hideous idol SELF in his little shrine**

Never again will we say any more to the work
of our hands—"**You are our gods!**" Hosea 14:3

The besetting sin of Israel was the worship of **idols**.

Perhaps, if you have walked into the British Museum,
and seen the idols that were worshiped in former days
in the South Sea Islands, you have been amazed that
rational beings could ever bow down before such ugly
monsters.

But does the heart of a South Sea Islander differ from
the heart of an Englishman? Not a bit! The latter may
have more civilization and cultivation—**but his heart
is the same!** And though you have not bowed down to
these monstrous objects and hideous figures—there
may be as filthy an idol in **your** heart! Where is
there a filthier idol than the lusts and passions of
man's fallen nature?
You need not go to the British Museum to see
filthy idols and painted images. **Look within!**

Where is there a more groveling idol than **Mammon**,
and the **covetousness** of our heart? You need not
wonder at heathens worshiping hideous idols—when
you have **pride**, **covetousness**, and above all **that
hideous idol SELF in his little shrine**, hiding himself
from the eyes of man—but to which you are so often
rendering your daily and hourly worship!

If a person does not see that **the root of all
idolatry** is SELF, he knows but little of his heart.

**Such a perpetual and unceasing conflict?**

"**I do not understand what I do!** For what I want
to do I do not do; but what I hate I do. I know
that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful
nature. For I have the desire to do what is good,
but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the
good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do
—this I keep on doing. So I find this law at work:
When I want to do good, evil is right there with
me. **What a wretched man I am!** Who will rescue
me from this body of death?" Rom. 7:15,18,19,21,24

What a picture of that which passes in a godly
man's bosom! He has in him two distinct  **principles**, two different natures—**one . . .**
holy,
heavenly,
spiritual,
panting after the Lord, and
finding the things of God its element.

**And yet in the same bosom a principle . . .**
totally corrupt,
thoroughly and entirely depraved,
perpetually striving against the holy principle within,
continually lusting after evil,
opposed to every leading of the Spirit in the soul,
and seeking to gratify its filthy desires at any cost!

Now, must there not be a feeling of misery in a man's
bosom to have these two armies perpetually fighting?
That when he desires to do good, evil is present with
him—when he would be holy, heavenly minded, tender
hearted, loving, seeking God's glory, enjoying sweet
communion with Jehovah—there is a base, sensual,
earthly heart perpetually at work—infusing its baneful
poison into every thought, counteracting every desire,
and dragging him from the heaven to which he would
mount, down to the very hell of carnality and filth?

There is a holy, heavenly principle in a man's bosom
that knows, fears, loves, and delights in God. Yet he
finds that sin in himself, which is altogether opposed to
the mind of Christ, and lusts after that which he hates.
Must there not be sorrow and grief in that man's bosom
to feel **such a perpetual and unceasing conflict?**
Is there ever this piteous cry forced by guilt, shame,
and sorrow out of **your** bosom, "O wretched man that
I am!" If not, be assured that you are dead in sin, or
dead in a profession.

**But who is our greatest enemy?**The **pride** of our heart,
the **presumption** of our heart,
the **hypocrisy** of our heart,
the intense **selfishness** of our heart,
are often hidden from us.

This wily devil, **self**, can wear such
masks and assume such forms.

This serpent, **self**, can so creep and crawl,
can so twist and turn, and can disguise
itself under such false appearances,
that it is often hidden from ourselves.

Who is the greatest enemy we have to fear?

We all have our enemies.

**But who is our greatest enemy?**He who you carry in your own bosom—your daily,
hourly, and ever-present companion, that entwines
himself in nearly every thought of your heart—that . . .
sometimes puffs up with pride,
sometimes inflames with lust,
sometimes inflates with presumption, and
sometimes works under feigned humility and fleshly holiness.

God is determined to stain the pride of human
glory. He will never let **self** (which is but another
word for the creature) wear the crown of victory.
It must be crucified, denied, and mortified.

Now this **self** must be overcome. The way to
overcome **self** is by looking out of self to Him
who was crucified upon Calvary's tree—to receive
His image into your heart—to be clothed with His
likeness—to drink into His spirit—and "receive out
of His fullness grace for grace."

 **We need grace, free grace**

**"May grace** and peace **be multiplied unto you**."
2 Peter 1:2

When we see and feel **how** **we need grace every
moment in our lives**, we at once perceive the beauty in
asking for an abundant, overflowing measure of grace.

We cannot walk the length of the street without sin.

Our carnal minds, our vain imaginations, are all on the
lookout for evil. Sin presents itself at every avenue, and
lurks like the prowling night-thief for every opportunity
of secret plunder. In fact, in ourselves, in our fallen nature,
**except as restrained and influenced by grace**, we sin with
well near every breath that we draw. We need, therefore,
grace upon grace, or, in the words of the text, grace to be
"multiplied" in proportion to our sins. Shall I say in
proportion? No! If sin abounds, as to our shame and sorrow
we know it does, **we need grace to much more abound!**

When the 'tide of sin' flows in with its muck and mire,
we need the 'tide of grace' to flow higher still, to carry
out the slime and filth into the depths of the ocean,
so that when sought for, they may be found no more.

**We need grace, free grace . . .**
grace today,
grace tomorrow,
grace this moment,
grace the next,
grace all the day long.

**We need grace, free grace . . .**healing grace,
reviving grace,
restoring grace,
saving grace,
sanctifying grace.

And all this multiplied by all our . . .
wants and woes,
sins,
slips,
falls, and
unceasing and aggravated backslidings.

**We need grace, free grace . . .**
grace to believe,
grace to hope,
grace to love,
grace to fight,
grace to conquer,
grace to stand,
grace to live,
grace to die.

**Every moment of our lives we need . . .**
keeping grace,
supporting grace,
upholding grace,
withholding grace.

**"May grace** and peace **be multiplied unto you**."
2 Peter 1:2

 **Are you seeking great things for yourself?**

**Oh, how many ministers do I see led by . . .**
ambition,
pride,
self-interest, or
covetousness!

How few have singleness of eye to God's glory!

**"Are you seeking great things for yourself?
Don't do it!"** Jeremiah 45:5

**Ministers often seek . . .**
great gifts,
great eloquence,
great knowledge of mysteries,
great congregations,
great popularity and influence.

**"Are you seeking great things for yourself?
Don't do it!"** Jeremiah 45:5

 **We are not flogged into loving Him**

**"Set your affections on things above,
not on things on the earth."** Col. 3:2

**Where are your affections to be set?**

Are they to be set on "things on the earth" . . .
those perishing toys,
those polluting vanities,
those carking cares,
which must ever dampen the life of God in the soul?

The expression, "things on the earth," takes in a wide
scope. It embraces not only the vain toys, the ambitious
hopes, the perishing pleasures in which a gay, unthinking
world is sunk and lost—but even the legitimate calls of
business, the claims of wife and home, family and friends,
with every social tie that binds to earth. Thus . . .
every object on which the eye can rest;
every thought or desire that may spring up in the mind;
every secret idol that lurks in the bosom;
every care and anxiety that is not of grace;
every fond anticipation of pleasure or profit that the
world may hold out, or the worldly heart embrace
—all, with a million pursuits in which man's fallen nature
seeks employment or happiness—are "things on the earth"
on which the affections are not to be set.

We may love our wives and children. We should
pursue our lawful callings with diligence and industry.
We must provide for our families according to the good
providence of God. But we may not so set our affections
on these things, that they pull us down from heaven to
earth. He who is worthy of all our affections claims
them all for Himself. He who is **the Bridegroom of
the soul** demands, as He has fairly won, the unrivaled
love of His bride.

**But how are we to do this?**

Can we do this great work by ourselves? No! it is only the
Lord Himself, manifesting His beauty and blessedness to
our soul, and letting down the golden cord of His love
into our bosom, that draws up our affections, and fixes
them on Himself. In order to do this, **He captivates the
heart** by . . .some look of love,
some word of His grace,
some sweet promise, or
some divine truth spiritually applied.

**When He thus captivates the soul**, and draws it up,
then the affections flow unto Him as the source and
fountain of all blessings.

**We are not flogged into loving Him**, but are **drawn by
love into love.** Love cannot be bought or sold. It is an
inward affection that flows naturally and necessarily
towards its object, and all connected with it. And thus,
as love flows out to Jesus, the affections instinctively
and necessarily set themselves "on things above, and
not on things on the earth."

Jesus must be revealed to our soul by the power of God
before we can see His beauty and blessedness—and so
fall in love with Him as "the chief among ten thousand,
and the altogether lovely One." Then everything that . . .
speaks of Christ,
savors of Christ,
breathes of Christ,
becomes inexpressibly sweet and precious!

In no other way can our affections be lifted up from earth
to heaven. We cannot control our affections—they will run
out of their own accord. If then our affections are **earthly**,
they will run towards earthly objects. If they are **carnal** and
sensual, they will flow towards carnal and sensual objects.

But when the Lord Jesus Christ, by some manifestation
of His glory and blessedness—or the Holy Spirit, by taking
of the things of Christ and revealing them to the soul—sets
Him before our eyes as the only object worthy of, and
claiming every affection of our heart—then the affections
flow out, I was going to say naturally, but most certainly
spiritually, towards Him. And when this is the case, the
affections are set on things above.

**O what a company of lusts!**
**"We are powerless against this mighty army
that is attacking us! We do not know what to
do. But our eyes are upon You!"** 2 Chr. 20:12

There is no use fighting the battle in our own
strength. We have none.

O, when **temptation** creeps like a serpent into the
carnal mind, it winds its secret way and coils around
the heart. As the boa-constrictor is said to embrace
its victim, entwining his coil around it, and crushing
every bone without any previous warning—so does  **temptation often seize us suddenly in its powerful
embrace**. Have we in ourselves any more power to
extricate our flesh from its slimy folds, than the poor
animal has from the coils of the boa-constrictor?

So with the corruptions and lusts of our fallen nature.
Can you always master them? **Can you seize these
serpents by the neck and wring off their heads?**
 **To examine our heart** is something like examining
by the microscope a drop of ditch-water—the more
minutely it is looked into, the more hideous forms
appear. All these strange monsters, too, are in
constant motion, devouring or devoured. And, as
more powerful lenses are put on the microscope,
more and more loathsome creatures emerge into
view, until eye and heart sicken at the sight.

Such is our heart. Superficially viewed—passably fair.
But **examined by the spiritual microscope**, hideous
forms of every shape and size appear—lusts and
desires in unceasing movement, devouring each
other, and yet undiminished—and each successive
examination bringing new monsters to light! **O what
a company of lusts!** How one seems to introduce and
make way for the other! and how one, as among the
insect tribe, is the father of a million!

We must take these lusts and passions by the neck,
and lay them down at the feet of God, and thus bring
the omnipotence of Jehovah against what would destroy
us—"Here are my **lusts**, I cannot manage them. Here are
my **temptations**, I cannot overcome them. Here are my  **enemies**, I cannot conquer them. Lord, I do not know
what to do. Will You not subdue my enemies?"

This is fighting against sin—not in the flesh, but in the
Spirit. Not by the law, but by the gospel. Not by self,
but by the grace of God. And if your soul has had many
a tussle, and many a wrestle, and many a hand-to-hand
conflict with sin, you will have found this out before now
—that nothing but the grace, power, and Spirit of Christ
ever gave you the victory, or the least hope of victory.

**"We are powerless against this mighty army
that is attacking us! We do not know what to
do. But our eyes are upon You!"** 2 Chron. 20:12

 **As if this beautiful viper had no poison fang!**

"Deliver me from all my transgressions!" Psalm 39:7

Ah! how rarely it is that we see sin in its true colors
—that we feel what the apostle calls, "the exceeding
sinfulness of sin!" O how much is the dreadful evil of
sin for the most part veiled from our eyes! Our deceitful
hearts so gloss it over, so excuse, palliate, and disguise
it—**that it is daily trifled, played, and dallied with, as if
this beautiful viper had no poison fang!**
It is only as the Spirit is pleased to open the eyes to
see, and awaken the conscience to feel "the exceeding
sinfulness of sin," and thus discover its dreadful character,
that we have any real sight or sense of its awful nature.

Sins of heart,
sins of lip,
sins of life,
sins of omission,
sins of commission,
sins of ingratitude,
sins of unbelief,
sins of rebellion,
sins of lust,
sins of pride,
sins of worldliness!
As all these transgressions, troop after troop, come
in view, and rise up like spectres from the grave, well
may we cry with stifled voice, "Deliver me, O deliver
me from all my transgressions! Deliver me from . . .
the guilt of sin,
the filth of sin,
the love of sin,
the power of sin, and
the practice of sin!"

**The very remedy for all the maladies
which we groan under!**

**Grace** only suits those who are altogether
guilty and filthy. Grace is completely opposed
to **works** in all its shapes and bearings.

Thus no one can really desire to taste the
sweetness and enjoy the preciousness of grace,
who has not "seen an end of all perfection" in
the creature, and is brought to know and feel
in the conscience, that **his good works would
damn him** as equally with his bad works.

When grace is thus opened up to the soul,
it sees that grace flows only through the
Savior's blood—**and that grace . . .**
superabounds over all the aboundings of sin,
heals all backslidings,
covers all transgressions,
lifts up out of darkness,
pardons iniquity,
and is just **the very remedy for all the
maladies which we groan under!**

 **Weaned from feeding on husks and ashes**

"I will satisfy her **poor** with **bread**." Psalm 132:15

The Lord has given a special promise to Zion's
poor—"I will satisfy her poor with **bread**."  **Nothing else? Bread? Is that all?**

Yes! That is all God has promised—bread,
the staff of life.

But what does He mean by "bread"?

The Lord Himself explains what bread is. He says,
"**I am the Bread of life.** He who comes to Me will
never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will
never be thirsty. **I am the living Bread** who came
down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread,
he will live forever." John 6:35,51

The bread, then, that God gives to Zion's poor is
His own dear Son—fed upon by living faith, under
the special operations of the Holy Spirit in the heart.

"I will satisfy her **poor** with bread." Psalm 132:15

But must not we have an **appetite** before we can
feed upon **bread**? The **rich** man who feasts continually
upon juicy meat and savory sauces, would not live upon
bread. To come down to live on such simple food as bread
—why, one must be really hungry to be satisfied with that.

So it is spiritually. A man fed upon 'mere notions' and a
number of 'speculative doctrines' cannot descend to the
simplicity of the gospel. **To feed upon a crucified Christ,
a bleeding Jesus!**—he is not sufficiently brought down to
the starving point, to relish such spiritual food as this!

Before, then, he can feed upon this Bread of life **he must
be made spiritually poor.** And when he is brought to be
nothing but a mass of wretchedness, filth, guilt, and misery
—when he feels his soul sinking under the wrath of God,
and has scarcely a hope to buoy up his poor tottering heart
—when he finds the world embittered to him, and he has no
one object from which he can reap any abiding consolation
—then the Lord is pleased to open up in his conscience,
and bring the sweet savor of the love of His dear Son
into his heart—and he begins to taste gospel bread.

Being **weaned from feeding on husks and ashes**, and
sick "of the vines of Sodom and the fields of Gomorrah,"
and being brought to relish simple gospel food, he begins
to taste a sweetness in 'Christ crucified' which he never
could know—until he was made experimentally poor.

The Lord has promised to satisfy such.

"I will satisfy her **poor** with **bread**." Psalm 132:15

**That secret loveliness**
"I drew them with My cords of kindness and love."
Hosea 11:4

Where Christ is made in any measure experimentally
known, He has gained the affections of the heart. He
has, more or less, taken possession of the soul. He
has, in some degree, endeared Himself as a bleeding,
agonizing Savior to every one to whom He has in any
way revealed Himself. And, thus, the strong cord of
love and affection is powerfully wreathed around the
tender spirit and broken heart. Therefore . . .
His name becomes as 'ointment poured forth',
there is a preciousness in His blood,
there is a beauty in His Person,
there is **that secret loveliness** in Him,
which wins and attracts and draws out the tender
affections of the soul. And thus this cord of love
entwined round the heart, binds it fast and firm
to the cross of the Lord Jesus.

"I drew them with My cords of kindness and love."
Hosea 11:4

**Lord, I feel my own utter helplessness!**

"O send forth Your light and Your truth,
let them guide me." Psalm 43:3

The Christian is often dissatisfied with his state. He
is well aware of the shallowness of his attainments
in the divine life, as well as of the ignorance and the
blindness that are in him. He cannot perceive the path
of life. He sees and feels so powerfully the workings
of sin and corruption, that he often staggers, and is
perplexed in his mind.

And therefore, laboring under the feeling of . . .
his own shortcomings for the **past**,
his helplessness for the **present**,
and his ignorance for the **future**,
he wants to go forward wholly and solely
in the strength of the Lord, to be . . .
led,
guided,
directed,
kept,
not by **his own** wisdom and power—but by
the supernatural entrance of light and truth
into his soul.

When thus harassed and perplexed, he will at times
and seasons, as his heart is made soft, cry out with
fervency and importunity, as a beggar that will not
take a denial, "O send forth Your light and Your truth,
let them guide me!" As though he would say, "**Lord,
I feel my own utter helplessness!** I know I must go
astray, if You do not condescend to guide me. I have
been betrayed a thousand times when I have trusted
**my own heart**. I have been entangled in my **base
lusts**. I have been puffed up by **presumption**. I have
been carried away by **hypocrisy** and **pride**. I have been
drawn aside into the **world**. I have never taken a single
step aright when left to myself. And therefore feeling
how unable I am to guide myself a single step of the
way, I come unto You, and ask You to send forth Your
light and Your truth, that they may guide me, for **I
am utterly unable to lead myself**."

The child of God—feeling his own ignorance, darkness,
blindness, and sinfulness—causes him to moan, and
sigh, and cry unto God—that he might be . . .
**led** every step,
**kept** every moment,
**guided** every inch.

"O send forth Your light and Your truth,
let them guide me." Psalm 43:3

**O what a way of learning religion!**

"I was caught up into paradise and heard things so
astounding that they cannot be told!" 2 Cor. 12:4

Now, doubtless, the apostle Paul, after he had been
thus favored—thus caught up into paradise—thought
that he would retain the same frame of mind that he
was in when he came down from this heavenly place;
that the savor, the sweetness, the power, the unction,
the dew, the heavenly feeling would continue in his soul.
And no doubt he thought he would walk all through his
life with a measure of the sweet enjoyments that he
then experienced. **But this was not God's way of
teaching religion!**

God had another way which Paul knew nothing of, and
that was—if I may use the expression—to bring him
from the third heaven, where his soul had been blessed
with unspeakable ravishment—down to the very gates
of hell. For he says, "**I was given** **a thorn in my flesh,
a messenger from Satan to BUFFET me**."

The idea "buffeting" is that of a strong man beating
a weak one with violent blows to his head and face
—bruising him into a shapeless mass!  **O what a way of learning religion!**

Now I want you to see the contrast we have here.

The blessed apostle caught up into the third **heavens**,
filled with light, life, and glory—enjoying the presence
of Christ—and bathing his soul in the river of divine
consolation.

Now for a reverse—down he comes to the **earth**.

A messenger of Satan is let loose upon him, who buffets,
beats and pounds this blessed apostle into a shapeless
mummy—no eyes, no nose, no mouth, no features—but
one indistinguishable mass of black and blue!  **Such is the mysterious way in which a man learns religion!**But what was all this for?

Does it not appear very **cruel**—does it not seem very
**unkind** that, after the Lord had taken Paul up into
the third heaven, He would let the devil buffet him?

Does it not strike our natural reason to be as strange
and as unheard of a thing, as if a mother who had been
fondling her babe in her arms, suddenly were to put it
down, and let a large savage dog ravage it—and look
on, without interfering, while he was tearing the child
which she had been a few minutes before dandling in
her lap, and clasping to her bosom?

"But **to keep me from getting puffed up**, I was given
a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to BUFFET
me and **keep me from getting proud**." Here we have
this difficult enigma solved, this mysterious knot untied!

We find that **the object and end of all these severe
dealings was to keep Paul from pride!**

Three times Paul besought his loving and sympathizing
Redeemer, that the trial might be taken away, for it
was too grievous to be borne. The Lord heard his prayer
and answered it—but **not** in the way that Paul expected.

His answer was, "**My grace is sufficient for you.**" As though
He would say, "Paul, beloved Paul, I am **not** going to take
away your trial; it came from Me—it was given by Me. But
My grace shall be sufficient for you, for My strength shall
be made perfect in your weakness. There is a lesson to be
learned, a path to be walked in, an experience to be passed
through, wisdom to be obtained in this path—and therefore
**you must travel in it.** Be content then with this promise
from My own lips—My grace is sufficient for you, for My
strength is made perfect in your weakness."

The apostle was satisfied with this—he wanted no more,
and therefore he burst forth, "Most gladly therefore will
I rather glory in my infirmities—that the power of Christ
may rest upon me."

**O what a way of learning religion!

In a most mysterious and inexplicable manner**

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

I am often **a marvel to myself**, feeling at times . . .
such barrenness,
such leanness,
such deadness,
such carnality,
such inability to any spiritual thought.

It is astonishing to me how our souls are kept alive.

Carried on, and yet so secretly—worked upon,
and yet so mysteriously—and yet led on, guided
and preserved through so many difficulties and
obstacles—**the Christian is** **a miracle of mercy!**

He is astonished how he is preserved amid all his . . .
difficulties,
obstacles,
trials, and
temptations.

Sometimes he seems driven and sometimes drawn,
sometimes led and sometimes carried—but in one
way or another the Spirit of God so works upon him
that, though he scarce knows how, he still presses on!

His very **burdens** make him groan for deliverance.

His very **temptations** cause him to cry for help.

The very **difficulty and ruggedness of the road**
make him want to be carried every step.

The very **perplexity of the path** compels him to cry out
for a guide—so that the Spirit working in the midst of, and
under, and through every **difficulty** and **discouragement**,
still bears him through, and carries him on—and thus brings
him through every **trial** and **trouble** and **temptation** and  **obstacle**—until He sets him in glory!

He will then understand, that he has . . .
not had one **trial** too heavy,
nor shed one **tear** too much,
nor put up one **groan** too many,
but all these things have, **in a most mysterious
and inexplicable manner**, worked together for
his spiritual good!

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

**Wrought with divine power**
"Our gospel came to you not simply with words,
but also with **power**, with the **Holy Spirit** and
with **deep conviction**." 1 Thessalonians 1:5

**Most men's religion is nothing else but
'a round of forms' . . .**
some have their 'doings',
some have their 'doctrines',
and others have their 'duties'.

And when the one has performed his **doings**,
the other learned his **doctrines**, and the third
discharged his **duties**—why, he is as good a
Christian, he thinks, as anybody. While all the
time, the poor deceived creature is thoroughly
ignorant of the kingdom of God, which stands
not in simply in word—but in power.

But as the veil of ignorance is taken off the heart,
we begin to see and feel that there is a power in
vital godliness—a reality in the teachings of the
Spirit—that religion is not to be put on and put
off as a man puts on and off his Sunday clothes.

Where vital godliness is **wrought with divine power**
in a man's heart, and preached by the Holy Spirit into
his conscience—it mingles, daily and often hourly,
with his thoughts—entwines itself with his feelings
—and becomes the very food and drink of his soul.

Now when a man comes to this spot—to see and feel
what a reality there is in the things of God made
manifest in the conscience by the power of the Holy
Spirit—it effectually takes him out of dead churches,
cuts him off from false ministers, winnows the chaff
from the wheat, and brings him into close communion
with the broken-hearted family of God.

"Our gospel came to you not simply with words,
but also with **power**, with the **Holy Spirit** and
with **deep conviction**." 1 Thessalonians 1:5

**The more lovely does Jesus appear!**

The poor believer feels, "I continually find all kinds
of evil working in my mind; every base corruption
crawling in my heart; everything vile, sensual, and
filthy rising up from its abominable deeps. **Can I
think that God can look down in love and mercy
on such a wretch?**"

**When we see . . .**
our vileness,
our baseness,
our carnality,
our sensuality,
how our souls cleave to dust,
how we grovel in evil and hateful things,
how dark our minds,
how earthly our affections,
how depraved our hearts,
how strong our lusts,
how raging our passions;
we feel ourselves, at times, no more
fit for God than Satan himself!

"You see, at just the right time, when we were
utterly helpless, **Christ died for the ungodly!**"
Romans 5:6

Christ does not justify those who are naturally
righteous, holy, and religious.

But He takes the **sinner** as he is, in all his filth
and guilt; **washes** him in the fountain opened
for sin and uncleanness; and **clothes** the naked
shivering wretch, who has nothing to cover him
but filthy rags, in His own robe of righteousness!

The gospel of the grace of God brings glad tidings . . .
of pardon to the **criminal**,
of mercy to the **guilty**, and
of salvation to the **lost!**

That the holy God should look down in love on
wretches that deserve the damnation of hell; that
the pure and spotless Jehovah should pity, save,
and bless enemies and rebels, and make them
endless partakers of His own glory; this indeed
is a mystery, the depth of which eternity itself
will not fathom!

The deeper we sink in self-abasement under a
sense of our vileness, the higher we rise in a
knowledge of Christ. And the blacker we are
in our own view, **the more lovely does Jesus
appear!**

 **Have you not brought this on yourselves?**

"**Have you not brought this on yourselves**
by forsaking the Lord your God when He led
you in the way?" Jeremiah 2:17

"**Have you not brought this on yourselves?**"
says the Lord to His sinning Israel. Who
dares say he has not by . . .
his sins,
his carnality,
his pride,
his covetousness,
his worldly-mindedness,
his unbelief,
his foolishness,
his rebelliousness,
procured to himself many things that
have grieved and distressed his soul?

If indeed we take no notice of the sin that dwells
in us; and pay no regard to our thoughts, desires,
words, and actions; and take our stand on our own
righteousness; **we may refuse to believe that we
are such vile sinners.**

But if we are compelled to look within, and painfully
feel that SIN is an **indweller**, a lodger, whom we are
compelled to harbor; a **serpent** that will creep in and
nestle in our heart, whether we will or not; a **thief**
that will break through and steal, and whom no bolt
nor bar can keep out; a **traitor** in the citadel who will
work by force or fraud, and against whom no resolution
of ours has any avail; if such be our inward experience
and conviction, I believe there is not a man or woman
here who will not confess, "Guilty, guilty! Unclean,
unclean!"

"Some became **fools** through their rebellious ways,
and **suffered affliction because of their iniquities**."
Psalm 107:17

We bring affliction upon ourselves. We procure
suffering by our own iniquities. "O!", says the fool . . .
"my worldly-mindedness,
my pride,
my covetousness,
my carnality,
my neglect of divine things,
my rebelliousness,
my recklessness,
the snares I entangled myself in,
my various besetting sins;
this it is which has provoked the Lord to afflict
me so severely, and leave me, fool that I am,
to reap the fruit of my own devises!"

**A religious animal**

"Men of Athens, I notice that you are **very religious**,
for as I was walking along I saw your **many altars**.
And one of them had this inscription on it—TO AN
UNKNOWN GOD." Acts 17:22-23

Man has been called, and perhaps with some truth,
**a religious animal**. Religion of some kind, at any rate,
seems almost indispensable to his very existence—for
from the most civilized nation, to the most barbarous
tribe upon the face of the earth—we find some form of
religion practiced. Whether this is ingrained into the
very constitution of man, or whether it be received by
custom or tradition—I will not pretend to decide. But
that some kind of religion is almost universally
prevalent, is a fact that cannot be denied.

We will always find these **two kinds of religion** . . .
false and true,
earthly and heavenly,
fleshly and spiritual,
natural and supernatural.

Compare this vital, spiritual, heavenly,
divine, supernatural religion . . .
this work of grace upon the soul,
this teaching of God in the heart,
this life of faith within
—with its flimsy counterfeit.

Compare the actings of . . .
real faith,
real hope,
real love;
the teachings, the dealings, the leadings, and
the operations of the blessed Spirit in the soul
—with rounds of . . .
duties,
superstitious forms,
empty ceremonies, and
a notional religion, however puffed up and varnished.

Compare the life of God in the heart of a true Christian,
amid all his dejection, despondency, trials, temptations,
and exercises; compare that precious treasure, Christ's
own grace in the soul—with all mere . . .
external religion,
superficial religion,
notional religion.

O, it is no more to be compared than a grain of dust
with a diamond! No more to be compared than a criminal
in a dungeon to the King on the throne! In fact, there is
no comparison between them.

**What a contrast!**
"Those who endure to the end will be **saved**." Mark 13:13

**Saved!

Saved from what?**

Saved from hell!

Saved from an eternity of endless misery and horror!

Saved from the worm which never dies!

Saved from the fire which is never quenched!

Saved from the sulphurous flames!

Saved from the companionship of devils and damned spirits!

Saved saved from ever-rolling ages of ceaseless misery and horror!

Have you not thought sometimes about eternity?  **What must an eternity of misery must be**—when
you can scarcely bear the pain of toothache half an
hour! O! to be in torment forever! How it racks the
soul to **think** of it! What tongue, then, can express
the mercy and blessedness of being saved . . .
from hell,
from the billows of the sulphurous lake,
from infinite despair!

When a soul strikes upon the 'rock of perdition',
it is at once swallowed up in a dreadful eternity!

Not only are believers saved **from** all this infinite
and unending misery—but they are saved **into**unspeakable happiness and glory! They are . . .
saved into heaven,
saved into eternal communion with the infinite God,
saved into the eternal enjoyment of His blessed presence,
saved into the perfect enjoyment of that perfect and
everlasting love in those regions of endless bliss where
tears are wiped from off all faces!

What a contrast!

Heaven — hell!

Eternal misery — eternal bliss!

Ages of boundless joy — ages of infinite despair!

But salvation includes not only what we may call  **future** salvation—but **present** salvation. Thus,
there is a being **saved in the present . . .**
from the guilt, filth, love, power, and practice of sin,
from the curse and bondage of the Law,
from the spirit and love of the world,
from inward condemnation,
from the entanglements of Satan,
from worldly anxieties and cares,
from following after idols,
from carelessness,
from coldness,
from carnality,
from every evil way,
from every delusive path.

 **Sweet buy!**

You say, "I am rich—I have acquired wealth and do
not need a thing." But you do not realize that you are
wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you
to **buy from Me white garments, so you can cover
your shameful nakedness.** Revelation 3:17-18

The only qualification is a deep feeling of our necessity,
our nakedness and our shame—and a feeling that there
is no other covering for a needy, naked, guilty soul—but
the robe of the Redeemer's spotless righteousness.

And when the soul is led to His divine feet—full of guilt,
shame, and fear—abhorring, loathing, and mourning over
itself—and comes in the actings of a living faith—in the
sighs and cries of a broken heart—in hungerings, thirstings,
and longings—desiring that the Lord would bestow upon
him that rich robe—then the blessed exchange takes place
—then there is a 'buying'—then the Lord brings out of His
treasure-house, where it has been locked up—the best
robe—puts it upon the prodigal, and clothes him from
head to foot with it!

**Sweet buy!**

**Blessed exchange!**

Our nakedness—for Christ's justifying robe!

Our poverty—for Christ's riches!

Our helplessness and insufficiency—for
Christ's power, grace, and love!

You say, "I am rich—I have acquired wealth and do
not need a thing." But you do not realize that you are
wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you
to **buy from Me white garments, so you can cover
your shameful nakedness.** Revelation 3:17-18

**God's perfect will**

"That good, and acceptable, and **perfect will of God**."
Romans 12:2

God's will is "perfect". In it, there is . . .
no spot,
no stain,
no weakness,
no error,
no instability.

It is and indeed must necessarily be as perfect as God
Himself; for it emanates from Him who is all perfection;
and is a discovery of His mind and character.

But when **God's perfect will** . . .
sets itself against our **flesh**,
thwarts our dearest **hopes**,
overturns our fondest **schemes**,
we cannot see that it is a perfect will. But rather, are
much disposed to fret, murmur, and rebel against it.

**God's perfect will** may . . .
snatch a child from your bosom;
strike down a dear husband;
tear from your arms a beloved wife;
strip you of all your worldly goods;
put your feet into a path of suffering;
lay you upon a bed of pain and languishing;
cast you into hot furnaces or overwhelming floods;
make your life almost a burden to yourself!

How can you, under circumstances so trying and
distressing as these, acknowledge and submit to
**God's perfect will**; and let it reign and rule in
your heart without a murmur of resistance to it?

Look back and see how **God's perfect will** has, in
previous instances, reigned supreme in all points,
for your good. It has ordered or overruled all
circumstances and all events, amid a complication
of difficulties in providence and grace. Nothing has
happened to your injury; but all things have worked
together for your good.

Whatever we have lost, it was better for us that
it was taken away. Whatever . . .
property,
or comfort,
or friends,
or health,
or earthly happiness we have been deprived of,
it was better for us to lose, than to retain them.

Was your **dear child** taken away? It might be
to teach you resignation to God's sacred will.

Has a **dear partner** been snatched from your
embrace? It was that God might be your better
Partner and undying Friend.

Was any portion of your **wo**

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to teach you resignation to God's sacred will.

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embrace? It was that God might be your better
Partner and undying Friend.

Was any portion of your **worldly substance** taken
away? It was that you might be taught to live a
life of faith in the providence of God.

Have your **fondest schemes** been marred; your
youthful hopes blighted; and you pierced in the
warmest affections of your heart? It was . . .
to remove an idol,
to dethrone a rival to Christ,
to crucify the object of earthly love,
so that a purer, holier, and more enduring
affection might be enshrined in its stead.

To tenderly embrace **God's perfect will** is
the grand object of all gospel discipline.

The ultimatum of gospel obedience is to **lie
passive in His hand**, and know no will but His.

"That good, and acceptable, and **perfect will of God**."
Romans 12:2

**This sinner, not the Pharisee**

The **proud** **Pharisee** stood by himself and prayed this
prayer: "I thank you, God, that I am not a **sinner** like
everyone else, especially like that publican over there!
For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery,
I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my
income." Luke 18:11-12

Man unites in himself, what at first sight seem to
be completely opposite things. He is the greatest
of **sinners**--and yet the greatest of **Pharisees**.

Now, what two things can be so opposed to each
other as **sin** and **self-righteousness**? Yet the very
same man who is a **sinner** from top to toe, with the
whole head sick and the whole heart faint--who is
spiritually nothing else but a leper throughout--how
contradictory it appears that the same man has in
his own heart a most stubborn **self-righteousness!**

Now, against these two evils God, so to speak, directs
His whole artillery--He spares neither one nor the other.

But it is hard to say which is the greatest rebellion
against God--the existence of **sin** in man and what he
is as a fallen sinner--or his **Pharisaism**, the lifting up
his head in pride of self-righteousness.

It is not easy to decide **which is the more obnoxious
to God**--the **drunkard** who sins without shame--or the
**Pharisee** puffed up with how pleasing he is to God.

The one is abhorrent to **our** feelings--and, as far as
decency and morality are concerned, **we** would rather
see the Pharisee. But when we come to matters of
true religion, **the Pharisee seems the worst!** At least
our Lord intimated as much when He said the publicans
and harlots would enter the kingdom of God before them.

"But **the publican** stood at a distance and dared not
even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he
beat his chest in sorrow, saying, **'O God, be merciful
to me, for I am a sinner!'**
I tell you, **this sinner, not the Pharisee**, returned home
justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself
will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be
exalted." Luke 18:13-14

**Five devilisms!**

As regards **sin in its workings**, we may say
there are **five devilisms** from which we need
to be saved . . .

1. The GUILT of sin.

2. The FILTH of sin.

3. The LOVE of sin.

4. The DOMINION of sin.

5. The PRACTICE of sin.

1. We need the application of Christ's precious blood
to our conscience, to take away the **guilt** of sin.

2. We need the Spirit of Christ to sanctify and
to wash the soul in the fountain, to cleanse
from the **filth** of sin.

3. We need the love of Christ shed abroad in
our hearts, to take away the **love** of sin.

4. We need the power of Christ, to rescue
us from the **dominion** of sin.

5. We need the grace of Christ, to preserve
us from the **practice** of sin.

It is feeling **sin** in its various workings, which
makes us value **Christ!** Strange mysterious way!
O, strange path! that **to be exercised with sin,
is the path to the Savior!**

Very painful, very mysterious, very inexplicable
--that the more you feel **yourself** a wretched,
miserable sinner; the more you long after **Jesus**,
who is able to save you to the uttermost!

Thus, we shall find that we need all that Christ is.
For we are **no little sinners**; andHe is **no little Savior!**

We are great sinners!

He is a Savior--and a great one!

"He is able to save to the uttermost!" Hebrews 7:25

**This is the struggle!**

"**Oh, what a wretched man I am!** Who will free me
from this body that is dominated by sin?" Rom. 7:24

If a person were to tell me he did not love sin in his carnal
mind, I would say with all mildness, "You do not speak the
truth!" **If your carnal mind does not love sin . . .**

Why do you think of it?

Why do you secretly indulge it in your imagination?

Why do you play with it?

Why do you seek to extract a devilish sweetness out of it?

O, what a mercy it would be, if there were not this
dreadful love of sin in our heart! **This is the struggle**
--that there should be this **traitor** in the camp; that
our carnal mind should be so devilish as to love that
which made the blessed Jesus die; as to love that
which crucified the Lord of glory, and to love it with
a vehement love!

"Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord!"
Romans 7:25

**It is I**

"Take courage! **It is I**. Don't be afraid." Mark 6:50

**It is I** who formed you in the womb, and brought you
forth into your present existence. **It is I**, the Lord your
God, who has fed you, and clothed you from that hour
up to the present moment. **It is I**, the Lord your God,
who has preserved you on every side. When you were
upon a sick bed, **it was I**, the Lord your God, who
visited your soul, raised up your body, and gave you
that measure of health which you do now enjoy. **It is
I**, the Lord your God, who placed you in the situation
of life which you do now occupy.

**It is I**, the Lord your God . . .
who deals out to you every trial,
who allots you every affliction,
who brings upon you every cross,
who works in you everything according
to My own good pleasure.

When we can thus believe that the Lord our God is
about our bed and our path, and spying out all our
ways; when we can look up to Him, and feel that
He is the Lord **our** God, there is no feeling . . .
more sweet,
more blessed,
more heavenly!

"Take courage! **It is I**. Don't be afraid." Mark 6:50

**That sweet grace**

"Remember how the Lord your God led you through the
wilderness for forty years, **to humble you**." Deut. 8:2

**We learn humility by a deep discovery of
what we are**; by an opening up of . . .
the corruption,
the weakness,
the wickedness,
of our fallen nature.

The Lord's way of teaching His people humility is
by placing them first in one trying spot, and then
in another; by allowing . . .
some **temptation** to arise;
some **stumbling block** to be in their path;
some **besetting sin** to work upon their corrupt affections;
some **idol** to be embraced by their idolatrous heart;
something to take place to **draw out the sin** which is
in their heart; and thus make it manifest to their sight.

As a general rule, **we learn humility**, not by hearing
ministers tell us what wicked creatures we are; nor
by merely looking into our bosoms and seeing a whole
swarm of evils working there; but from being compelled
by painful necessity to believe that we are vile, through
circumstances and events time after time **bringing to
light those hidden evils in our heart**, which we once
thought ourselves pretty free from.

We learn humility, not merely by a discovery of what
**we** are, but also by a discovery of what **Jesus** is.

**We need a glimpse . . .**
of Jesus,
of His love,
of His grace,
of His blood.

When these two feelings meet together
in our bosom . . .
our shame, and the Lord's goodness;
our guilt, and His forgiveness;
our wickedness, and His superabounding mercy;
they break us, humble us, and lay us, dissolved in tears
of godly sorrow and contrition, at the footstool of mercy!

**And thus we learn humility, that sweet grace**, that
blessed fruit of the Spirit in real, vital, soul-experience.

**Slaves of Satan!**

"Then they will come to their senses and escape from
**the Devil's trap**. For they have been **held captive by
him to do whatever he wants.**" 2 Timothy 2:26

In our natural state, **we are all** **the slaves of Satan!**

We love our foul master, hug his chain, and delight in his
servitude, little thinking what awful wages are to follow.

This mighty conqueror has with him a numerous train of
captives! This haughty master, the 'god of this world', has
in his fiendish retinue, a whole array of slaves who gladly
do his behests. They obey him cheerfully, though he is
leading them down to the bottomless pit! For though **he
amuses them while here in this world with a few toys
and baubles**, he will not pay them their wages until he
has enticed and flattered them into that ghastly gulf of
destruction, in which he himself has been weltering for
ages.

"Satan, the god of this evil world, has blinded the
minds of those who don't believe." 2 Cor. 4:4

**To keep me from getting puffed up**

"But **to keep me from getting puffed up**, I was
given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan
to torment me and **keep me from getting proud.**
Three different times I begged the Lord to take
it away. Each time He said to me, 'My grace is
sufficient for you, for **My power** is made perfect
in **your weakness**.' Therefore I will boast all the
more gladly about **my weaknesses**, so that
**Christ's power** may rest on me." 2 Cor. 12:7-9

Depend upon it, the Lord's family have to **go through
much tribulation on their way to heaven**. So says the
unerring word of truth, and so speaks the experience
of every God-taught soul. Now . . .
in these seasons of trouble,
in these painful exercises,
in these perplexing trials,
the Lord's people need strength; yet the Lord
sends these trials in order to drain and exhaust
them of 'creature strength'.

Such is the 'self-righteousness' of our heart; such
the 'legality' intertwined with every fiber of our
natural disposition--that we cleave to our own
**righteousness** as long as there is a thread to
cleave to; we stand in our own **strength** as long
as there is a point to stand upon; we lean upon
our own **wisdom** as long as a particle remains!

In order, then, to exhaust us, drain us, strip us, and
purge us of this pharisaic leaven, the Lord sends . . .
trials,
temptations,
sorrows,
perplexities.  **What is their effect?**

To teach us **our weakness**, and bring us to that
one and only spot where God and the sinner
meet--the spot of **creature helplessness**.

In order, therefore, to bring us to this spot, to know
experimentally **the strength of Christ**, and feel it to
be more than a doctrine, a notion, or a speculation--
to know it as an internal reality, tasted by the inward
palate of our soul--to have this experience wrought
into our hearts with divine power, we must be brought
to this spot--to feel **our own utter weakness.

If anyone loves the world**

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

If the love of the Father is in us, we will not
love the world--nor will the world love us!

If your heart and spirit are still in the world,
and you are not separated from . . .
its society,
its amusements,
its pursuits,
its pleasures,
its delights,
its men,
its maxims,
you certainly lack any evidence of a divine
change having been wrought in your soul.

"Anyone who chooses to be **a friend of the
world** becomes an enemy of God." James 4:4