Puritan Writers

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by Hamilton Smith, Brethren

Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford.

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**Preface**

"Alas! I see not what service I can do to Him, except it be to talk a little, and babble upon a piece of paper concerning the love of Christ."

Thus wrote Samuel Rutherford, from his prison, in 1637. For a period of seventeen months he was confined to the city of Aberdeen, inhibited from all public ministry. But though his lips were sealed, his heart was welling forth with "a good matter," and hence he acquired the pen of a ready writer.

The following extracts from his letters will enable the reader to test the quality of the babbling stream that flowed from his palace-prison to cheer the saints of God for well-nigh three hundred years. And if a draught at this refreshing stream makes Christ, and His love that passeth knowing, more real, and more precious to some thirsty soul, it will not be in vain that a poor prisoner of Christ once babbled, upon a piece of paper, concerning the love of Christ.

H. S. 1913.

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Samuel Rutherford may be regarded as Preacher, Controversialist, or Letter-writer. As *the Preacher,*he was homely, pithy, moving, and affectionate, appealing almost exclusively to the congregations of his day. As *the Controversialist,*he was the profound scholar, presenting his ecclesiastical convictions with all the religious fervour of his fiery nature; and as such he was, in a large degree, the servant of a party. As *the Letter-writer,*he was the heavenly-minded saint, appealing to the affections of God's people for all time.

Rutherford was born about the year 1600, in a village of Roxburghshire. Of his conversion no details have been recorded, save only, that he himself tells us, "Like a fool as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heavens, and near afternoon, before ever I took the gate." Probably it was about 1625, at the close of his brilliant college career, that he took the strait gate and the narrow way which leadeth to life.

In 1627 he was settled at "fair Anwoth by the Solway," a land of secluded valleys and wooded hills. For nine years he ministered, as Preacher and Pastor, to a scattered and rural flock. His habit was to rise at three in the morning and commence his day alone with God in prayer and meditation. It was said of him, "He is always praying, always preaching, always visiting the sick, always catechising, always writing and studying." He is described by his contemporaries as a man who, whether walking or preaching, held "aye his face upward," as if he already saw the King in His beauty, and beheld the Land that is very far off. Little wonder that a hearer testified of his preaching, "He showed me the loveliness of Christ."

Such ministry, richly blessed to large congregations, could hardly escape the opposition of the Devil. In 1636 the storm burst. Rutherford's persistent refusal to conform to Episcopacy, and the publication of his work against Arminianism, made him highly obnoxious to the Ecclesiastical Authorities of the day. He was summoned before a High Commission Court at Wigtown, presided over by Sydserff, the intolerant Bishop of Galloway, and later before the Court at Edinburgh. By these Courts he was deposed from his ministerial office, forbidden to preach in any part of Scotland, and banished to Aberdeen to remain within the precincts of the city during the King's pleasure.

The opposition had apparently succeeded. In reality the devil had outwitted himself. True, the preaching of Christ, to limited congregations, was for the moment silenced, but only to give place to a ministry of Christ, that has been for the blessing and comfort of the generation of God's people for all the succeeding years. At first his "silent Sabbaths" weighed heavily upon his spirit. But the gloom passed, and so feasted was he with the love of Christ that he can write, "My prison is a palace to me, and Christ's banqueting house."

Of his three hundred and sixty-two letters that have been preserved, two hundred and nineteen were written during the seventeen months he was confined in "Christ's prison palace" of Aberdeen.

In 1638, taking advantage of the national rising against Episcopacy, Rutherford left his place of exile. For a short time he returned to his beloved Anwoth. In 1639 he reluctantly accepted the position of Professor of Divinity in the New College at St. Andrews University — making it a condition that he should be allowed to continue his preaching.

From November, 1643, until November, 1647, we find Rutherford residing in London, in attendance upon the Westminster Assembly, as one of the representatives of the Church of Scotland.

Returning to St. Andrews, he was appointed Principal of the New College, and, four years later, Rector of the University. During the years that followed, while zealously performing his official duties, he never ceased to engage in the work he had most at heart — the preaching of Christ. But they were years of stress and conflict. The clouds of religions persecution were again gathering over the land. Soon after the restoration of the dissolute Charles II the persecution began.

James Guthrie, on his way to the martyr's crown, was imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, together with other protesting ministers. One so prominent as Rutherford was not likely to escape. His work "Lex Rex" was highly obnoxious to Charles and his arbitrary government. It was condemned as a seditious and treasonable book, and publicly burned by the hangman at the cross of Edinburgh, and later under the windows of Rutherford's College at St. Andrews. Rutherford, himself, was deposed from all his offices, and summoned to appear before the next Parliament to answer to the charge of treason.

But the summons came too late. For Rutherford the sands of time were sinking. The messengers found him already on his death-bed. He calmly sent back the message, "I have got a summons already before a superior Judge and judicatory, and I behove to answer my first summons, and ere your day arrive I will be where few Kings and great folks come."

With incredible meanness the enraged Parliament voted that he should not be permitted to die in the College. Lord Burleigh raised a protest: "Ye have voted," said he, "that honest man out of his college, but ye cannot vote him out of heaven."

His preaching finished, and weary of conflict, the dying man turned with longing heart to "Immanuel's high and blessed land" where, as he says, "no wind bloweth but the breathings of the Holy Ghost, no seas nor floods but the pure water of life, that proceedeth from under the throne and from the Lamb! no planting but the Tree of Life that yieldeth twelve manner of fruits every month." When asked, "What think ye now of Christ?" he replied, "I shall live and adore Him. Glory, glory to my Creator and Redeemer for ever. Glory shineth in Immanuel's land." To some brother ministers he said, "My Lord is the chief of ten thousands of thousands. None is comparable to Him, in heaven or on earth. Dear brethren, do all for Him. Pray *for Christ*. Preach *for Christ*. Feed the flock committed to your charge *for Christ*. Do all *for Christ*. Beware of men pleasing, there is too much of it. The Chief Shepherd will shortly appear." To one who spoke in praise of his ministry he said, "I disclaim all. The port I would be in at is redemption and forgiveness of sins through His blood."

On the last day of his life, March 28, 1661, he said, "This night shall close the door and put my anchor within the veil, and I shall go away in a sleep by five o'clock in the morning." And so it came to pass. At the dawn of the day he answered to the summons from on high, and passed into the presence of his Lord,

"Where glory — glory dwells
In Immanuel's land."

H. S.

1 THE WORD OF WARNING

"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." — [Revelation 3:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation 3.1&t=DBY).

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." — [Revelation 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation 3.18&t=DBY).

*To the Sinner.*Draw by the lap of time's curtain, and look in through the window to great and endless eternity, and consider if a worldly price (suppose this little round clay globe of this ashy and dirty earth, the dying idol of the fools of this world, were all your own) can be given for one smile of Christ's God-like and soul-ravishing countenance. In that day when so many joints and knees of thousand thousands wailing shall stand before Christ, trembling, shouting, and making their prayers to hills and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb, oh, how many would sell lordships and kingdoms that day, and buy Christ! But, oh, the market shall be closed and ended ere then!

Beware of a beguile in the matter of your salvation. Woe, woe for evermore, to them that lose that prize. For what is behind, when the soul is once lost, but that sinners warm their bits of clay houses at a fire of their own kindling, for a day or two (which doth rather suffocate with its smoke than warm them); and at length they lie down in sorrow, and are clothed with everlasting shame! … O, alas! the greater part of this world run to the place of torment rejoicing and dancing, eating, drinking, and sleeping. … Fy upon this condemned and foolish world, that would give so little for salvation! Oh, if there were a free market for salvation proclaimed in that day when the trumpet of God shall awake the dead, how many buyers would be then! … It is a dry and hungry bairn's part of goods that Esaus are hunting for here. I see thousands following the chase, and in the pursuit of such things, while in the meantime they lose the blessing; and, when all is done, they have caught nothing to roast for supper, but lie down hungry. And, besides, they go to bed, when they die, without a candle; for God says to them, "This ye shall have at My hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." And truly this is as ill-made a bed to lie upon as one could wish; for he cannot sleep soundly, nor rest sweetly, who has sorrow for his pillow. … I am sure that they never got Christ, who were not once sick at the yolk of the heart for Him. Too, too many whole souls think that they have met with Christ, who had never a wearied night for the want of Him: but, alas! what richer are men, that they dreamed the last night they had much gold, and, when they awoke in the morning, they found it was but a dream? What are all the sinners in the world, in that day when heaven and earth shall go up in a flame of fire, but a number of beguiled dreamers? Every one shall say of his hunting and his conquest, "Behold, it was a dream!" Every man in that day will tell his dream. I beseech you, in the Lord Jesus, beware, beware of unsound work in the matter of your salvation. … Then after this day, convene all your lovers before your soul, and give them their leave; and strike hands with Christ, that thereafter there may be no happiness to you but Christ, no hunting for anything but Christ, no bed at night, when death comes, but Christ. Christ, Christ, who but Christ! … I protest before men and angels that Christ cannot be exchanged, that Christ cannot be sold, that Christ cannot be weighed.

If ye never had a sick night and a pained soul for sin, ye have not yet lighted upon Christ.

No loss is comparable to the loss of the soul; there is no hope of regaining that loss.

*To the Professor.*All come not home at night who suppose that they have set their face heavenward. It is a woful thing to die, and miss heaven, and to lose house-room with Christ at night: it is an evil journey where travellers are benighted in the fields. I persuade myself that thousands shall be deceived and ashamed of their hope. Because they cast their anchor in sinking sands they must lose it. … Oh, how many a poor professor's candle is blown out and never lighted again! I see that ordinary profession, and to be ranked amongst the children of God, and to have a name among men, is now thought good enough to carry professors to heaven. But certainly a name is but a name, and will never bide a blast of God's storm. I counsel you not to give your soul or Christ rest, nor your eyes sleep, till ye have gotten something that will abide the fire, and stand out the storm.

Time, custom, and a good opinion of ourselves, our good meaning, and our lazy desires, our fair shows, and the world's glistering lustres, and these broad passments and buskings\* of religion, that bear bulk in the kirk, is that wherewith most satisfy themselves. But a bed watered with tears, a throat dry with praying, eyes as a fountain of tears for the sins of the land, are rare to be found among us. Oh, if we could know the power of godliness!

\*External decorations.

I may be a bookman, and yet be an idiot and stark fool in Christ's way! Learning will not beguile Christ. The Bible beguiled the Pharisees, and so may I be misled.

To live as others do, and to be free of open sins that the world crieth shame upon, will not bring you to heaven.

Many are beguiled with this, that they are free of scandalous and crying abominations; but the tree that bringeth forth not good fruit is for the fire. The man that is not born again cannot enter the kingdom of God. Common honesty will not take men to heaven.

Remember, many go far on and reform many things, and can find tears, as Esau did and suffer hunger for truth, as Judas did and wish and desire the end of the righteous, as Balaam did; and profess fair, and fight for the Lord, as Saul did; and desire the saints of God to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; and prophesy and speak of Christ, as Caiaphas did; and walk softly and mourn for fear of judgments, as Ahab did; and put away gross sins and idolatry, as Jehu did; and hear the word of God gladly, and reform their life in many things according to the word, as Herod did; and say to Christ, "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest," as the man who offered to be Christ's servant; and may taste of the virtues of the life to come, and be partaker of the wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit, and taste of the good word of God, as the apostates who sin against the Holy Ghost. And yet all these are but like gold in clink and colour, and watered brass, and base metal. These are written that we should try ourselves, and not rest till we be a step nearer Christ than sunburnt and withering professors can come.

I see many professors for the fashion, professors of glass; I would make a little knock of persecution, ding\* them in twenty pieces, and the world would laugh at the shreds. Therefore, make fast work; see that Christ be the ground-stone of your profession. The sore wind and rain will not wash away His building; His work has no less date than to stand for evermore.

\*Knock violently.

*The Young Man.*I must first tell you that there is not such a glassy, icy, and slippery piece of way betwixt you and heaven as Youth; and I have experience to say with me here, and to seal what I assert. The old ashes of the sins of my youth are new fire of sorrow to me. I have seen the devil, as it were, dead and buried, and yet rise again, and be a worse devil than ever he was; therefore, my brother, beware of a green young devil, that has never been buried. The devil in his flowers (I mean the hot, fiery lusts and passions of youth) is much to be feared: better yoke with an old grey-haired, withered, dry devil. For in youth he findeth dry sticks, and dry coals, and a hot hearthstone; and how soon can he with his flint cast fire, and with his bellows blow it up, and fire the house! — Sanctified thoughts, thoughts made conscience of, and called in, and kept in awe, are green fuel that burn not, and are a water for Satan's coal.

There is nothing out of heaven so necessary for you as Christ. And ye cannot be ignorant but your day will end, and the night of death shall call you from the pleasures of this life: and a doom given out in death stands for ever — as long as God lives! Youth, ordinarily, is a post and ready servant for Satan, to run errands; for it is a nest for lust, cursing, drunkenness, blaspheming of God, lying, pride, and vanity. Oh, that there were such an heart in you as to fear the Lord, and to dedicate your soul and body to His service! When the time comes that your eye-strings shall break, and your face wax pale, and legs and arms tremble, and your breath shall grow cold, and your poor soul look out at your prison house of clay, to be set at liberty; then a good conscience, and your Lord's favour, shall be worth all the world's glory. Seek it as your garland and crown.

It is hardly credible what a nest of dangerous temptations youth is; how inconsiderate, foolish, proud, vain, heady, rash, profane, and careless of God, this piece of your life is; so that the devil findeth in that age a garnished and well-swept house for himself. … For then affections are on horseback, lofty and stirring; then the old man has blood, lust, much will, and little wit, and hands, feet, wanton eyes, profane ears, as his servants, and as a king's officers at command, to come and go at his will. Then a green conscience is as supple as the twig of a young tree. It is for every way, every religion; every lewd course prevaileth with it. And, therefore, oh, what a sweet couple, what a glorious yoke, are youth and grace, Christ and a young man! This is a meeting not to be found in every town. None who have been at Christ can bring back … a report answerable to His worth; for Christ cannot be spoken of, or commended according to His worth. "Come and see," is the most faithful messenger to speak of Him.

Give your will, wit, humour, the green desires of youth's pleasures off your hand to Christ. It is not possible for you to know, till experience teach you, how dangerous a time youth is. It is like green and wet timber. When Christ casteth fire on it, it takes not fire. There is need here of more than ordinary pains, for corrupt nature has a good back-friend of youth. And sinning against light will put out your candle, and stupify your conscience, and bring upon it more coverings and skin, and less feeling and sense of guiltiness; and when that is done, the devil is like a mad horse that has broken his bridle, and runneth away with his rider whither he listeth. Learn to know that which the Apostle knew, the deceitfulness of sin. Strive to make prayer, and reading, and holy company, and holy conference your delight; and when delight comes in, ye shall by little and little smell the sweetness of Christ, till at length your soul be over head and ears in Christ's sweetness. Then shall ye be taken up to the top of the mountain with the Lord, to know the ravishments of spiritual love, and the glory and excellency of a seen, revealed, felt, and embraced Christ: and then ye shall not be able to loose yourself off Christ, and to bind yourself to old lovers. Then, and never till then, are all the paces, motions, walkings, and wheels of your soul in a right tune, and in a spiritual temper.

*To the Earthly-Minded.*Alas! that the sharp and bitter blasts on face and sides, which meet us in this life, have not learned us mortification, and made us dead to this world! We buy our own sorrow, and we pay dear for it, when we spend out our love, our joy, our desires, our confidence, upon an handful of snow and ice, that time will melt away to nothing, and go thirsty out of the drunken inn when all is done. Alas! that we inquire not for the clear fountain, but are so foolish as to drink foul, muddy, and rotten waters, even till our bedtime. And then in the resurrection, when we shall be awakened, our yesternight's sour drink and swinish dregs shall rift up upon us; and sick, sick shall many a soul be then.

May-flowers, and morning vapour, and summer mist, posteth not so fast away as these worm-eaten pleasures which we follow. We build castles in the air, and night-dreams are our daily idols that we doat on. … When ye and I shall lie lumps of pale clay upon the ground, our pleasures, that we now naturally love, shall be less than nothing in that day. … Betake you to Christ without further delay. Ye will be fain at length to seek Him, or do infinitely worse.

This world thinketh heaven but at the next door, and that godliness may sleep in a bed of down till it come to heaven! But that will not do it.

Let not salvation be your by-work or your holy-day's talk only, or a work by the way. For men think this may be done in three days' space on a feather bed, when death and they are fallen in hands together, and that with a word or two they shall make their soul-matters right. Alas! this is to sit loose and unsure in the matters of our salvation. … Oh, when will men learn to be that heavenly-wise as to divorce from and free their soul of all idol-lovers, and make Christ the only, only One, and trim and make ready their lamps while they have time and day!

2 THE TROUBLED SOUL

But flowers need night's cool darkness,
The moonlight and the dew;
So Christ, from one who loved Him,
His shining oft withdrew;
And then for cause of absence,
My troubled soul I scann'd —
But glory, shadeless, shineth
In Immanuel's land.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." [Psalm 42:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 42.11&t=DBY).

*The cloudy and dark day.*Believe under a cloud, and wait for Him when there is no moonlight nor starlight. … Faith's eyes, that can see through a millstone, can see through a gloom of God, and under it read God's thoughts of love and peace. Hold fast Christ in the dark; surely ye shall see the salvation of God.

When Christ hideth Himself, wait on, and make din till He return; it is not time then to be carelessly patient. I love to be grieved when He hideth His smiles. Yet believe His love in a patient onwaiting and believing in the dark. Ye must learn to swim and hold up your head above the water, even when the sense of His presence is not with you to hold up your chin.

*The hour of temptation.*I find My Lord going and coming seven times a day. His visits are short; but they are both frequent and sweet. … I hear ill tales, and hard reports of Christ, from the Tempter and my flesh; but love believes no evil. I may swear that they are liars, and that apprehensions make lies of Christ's honest and unalterable love to me. … Temptations, that I supposed to be stricken and to be laid upon their backs, rise again and revive upon me; yea, I see that while I live, temptations will not die.

I find it to be most true, that the greatest temptation out of hell is to live without temptations. … Faith is the better of the free air, and of the sharp winter storm in its face. Grace withereth without adversity. The devil is but God's master fencer, to teach us to handle our weapons.

*Self-occupation*. I am like one travelling in the night, who sees a spirit, and sweateth for fear, and careth not to tell it to his fellow, for fear of increasing his own fear.

I observe many who think it holiness enough to complain, and set themselves at nothing: as if to say "I am sick" could cure them. They think complaints a good charm for guiltiness.

Let your bleeding soul and your sores be put in the hand of this expert Physician; let young and strong corruption and His free grace be yoked together, and let Christ and your sins deal it betwixt them. I shall be loath to put you off your fears, and your sense of deadness: I wish it were more. There be some wounds of that nature, that their bleeding should not be soon stopped. Ye must take a house beside the Physician. It will be a miracle if ye be the first sick man whom He put away uncured, and worse than He found you. … "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." Take ye that. It cannot be presumption to take that as your own, when you find that your wounds stound\* you. Presumption is ever whole at the heart, and has but the truant sickness, and groaneth only for the fashion. Faith has sense of sickness, and looking to Christ therein, is glad to see a known face. Christ is as full a feast as ye can have to hunger. … He is a miracle and a world's wonder, to a seeking and a weeping sinner; but yet such a miracle as shall be seen by them who will come and see. The seeker and sigher is at last a singer and enjoyer.

\*Overpower with pain.

Ye complain that ye want a mark of the sound work of grace and love in your soul. For answer, consider for your satisfaction (till God send more) [1 John 3:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John 3.14&t=DBY). And as for your complaint of deadness and doubtings, Christ will, I hope, take your deadness and you together. They are bodies full of holes … and broken bones which need mending, that Christ the Physician takes up: whole vessels are not for the Mediator Christ's art. Publicans, sinners, harlots, are ready market-wares for Christ. The only thing that will bring sinners within a cast of Christ's drawing arm is that which ye write of some feeling of death and sin. … A soul bleeding to death, till Christ were sent for, and cried for in all haste, to come and stem the blood, and close up the hole in the wound with His own hand and balm, were a very good disease, when many are dying of a whole heart.

All the truly regenerated cannot determinately tell you the measure of their dejections; because Christ beginneth young with many, and stealeth into their heart, ere they wit of themselves, and becometh homely with them, with little din or noise. I grant that many are blinded, in rejoicing in a good-cheap conversion, that never cost them a sick night. … But for that; I would say, if other marks be found that Christ is indeed come in, never make plea with Him because He will not answer, "Lord Jesus, how camest Thou in? whether in at door or window?" Make Him welcome, since He is come. "The wind bloweth where it listeth"; all the world's wit cannot perfectly render a reason why the wind should be a month in the east, six weeks possibly in the west, and the space of only an afternoon in the south or north. Ye will not find out all the nicks and steps of Christ's way with a soul, do what ye can; for sometimes He will come in stepping softly, like one walking beside a sleeping person, and slip to the door, and let none know He is there.

Ye challenge yourself that some truths find more credit with you than others. Ye do well; for God is true in the least, as well as in the greatest, and He must be so to you. Ye must not call Him true in the one page of the leaf, and false in the other, for our Lord in all His writings never contradicted Himself yet. Although the best of the regenerate have slipped here, always labour ye to hold your feet.

Ye complain of Christ's short visits, that He will not bear your company one night; but when ye lie down warm at night, ye rise cold at morning. Answer: I cannot blame you (nor any other that knows that sweet Guest), to bemoan His withdrawings, and to be most desirous of His abode and company; for He would captivate and engage the affections of any creature that saw His face. Since He looked on me, and gave me a sight of His fair love, He gained my heart wholly, and got away with it. … He shall keep it long, ere I fetch it from Him. But I shall tell you what ye should do; treat Him well, give Him the chair and the board-head, and make Him welcome to the mean portion ye have. A good supper and kind entertainment makes guests love the inn the better. Yet sometimes Christ has an errand elsewhere, for mere trial; and then, though ye give Him King's cheer, He will away; as is clear in desertions for mere trial and not for sin.

I would have written ere now, but people's believing there is in me that which I know there is not, has put me out of love with writing to any. For it is easy to put religion to a market and public fair; but, alas! it is not so soon made eye-sweet for Christ. My Lord sees me a tired man, far behind. I have gotten much love from Christ, but I give Him little or none again. My white side comes out on paper to men; but at home and within I find much black work, and great cause of a low sail, and of little boasting.

3 THE WAY OF PEACE

Oh! I am my Belovèd's,
And my Beloved is mine!
He brings a poor vile sinner
Into His "House of wine."
I stand upon His merit,
I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwells
In Immanuel's land.

"By grace are ye saved through faith … not of works." — [Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians 2.8-9&t=DBY).

*Free Grace*. Grace, grace, free grace, the merits of Christ for nothing, white and fair, and large Saviour-mercy (which is another sort of thing than creature-mercy, or law-mercy, yea, a thousand degrees above angel-mercy), have been, and must be, the rock that we drowned souls must swim to.

I wish all professors to fall in love with grace. All our songs should be of His free grace. We are but too lazy and careless in seeking of it; it is all our riches we have here, and glory in the bud. I wish that I could set out free grace. I was the law's man, and under the law, and under a curse; but grace brought me from under that hard lord, and I rejoice that I am grace's freeholder. I pay tribute to none for heaven, seeing that my land and heritage holdeth of Christ, my new King. Infinite wisdom has devised this excellent way of freeholding for sinners.

I know no sweeter way to heaven than through free grace and hard trials together; and one of these cannot well want another.

Let us be ballasted with grace, that we be not blown over, and that we stagger not. Yet a little while, and Christ and His redeemed ones shall fill the field, and come out victorious. … He shall not faint nor be discouraged, till He has brought forth judgment to victory.

*Faith.*Consent and say "Amen" to the promises, and ye have sealed that God is true and Christ is yours. This is an easy market. Ye but look on with faith; for Christ suffered all, and paid all.

When the truth is come to your hand, hold it fast; go not again to make a new search and inquiry for truth. It is easy to cause conscience to believe as ye will, not as ye know.

*Christ alone*. I am glad to hear that Christ and ye are one, and that ye have made Him your "one thing," whereas many are painfully toiled in seeking many things, and their many things are nothing. It is only best that ye set yourself apart … for Christ alone; for ye are good for no other thing than Christ; and He has been going about you these many years, by afflictions, to engage you to Himself. It were a pity and a loss to say Him nay. … Let us, then, go on to meet with Him, and to be filled with the sweetness of His love. Nothing will hold Him from us. He has decreed to put time, sin, hell, devils, men, and death out of the way, and to rid the rough way betwixt us and Him, that we may enjoy one another. It is strange and wonderful … that He would have the company of sinners to solace and delight Himself withal in heaven.

I know that you are looking to Christ and I beseech you to follow your look.

Howbeit this day be not yours and Christ's, the morrow will be yours and His. I would not exchange the joy of my bonds and imprisonment for Christ, with all the joy of this dirty and foul-skinned world.

Make tight work at the bottom, and your ship shall ride against all storms, if withal your anchor be fastened on good ground; I mean within the veil. And verily I think this is all, to gain Christ. All other things are shadows, dreams, fancies, and nothing.

Poor folks must either beg or borrow from the rich; and the only thing that commendeth sinners to Christ is extreme necessity and want. Christ's love is ready to make and provide a ransom, and money for a poor body who has lost his purse. Ho, ye that have no money, come and buy ([Isa. 55:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 55.1&t=DBY)), that is the poor man's market.

The sweetest and safest course is, for this short time of the afternoon of this old and declining world, to stand for Jesus. He has said it, and it is our part to believe it, that ere it be long, "Time shall be no more, and the heaven shall wax old, as a garment."

*Christ the believer's security.*The Nail fastened in a sure place cannot be broken, nor can the smallest vessel fail to find sweet security in dependence upon Him, since all the weight of heaven and earth, of redeemed saints and confirmed angels, is upon His shoulder, I am a fool, and brutish to imagine that I can add anything to Christ's special care of and tenderness to His people. He who keepeth the basins and knives of His house, and bringeth the vessels again to the second temple, must have a more tender care of His redeemed ones than of a spoon, or of Peter's old shoes,\* which must yet not be lost in his captivity.

\*Alluding to [Ezra 1:7-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezra 1.7-11&t=DBY); [Acts 12:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 12.8&t=DBY).

*Submission*. O blessed soul, that could sacrifice his will, and go to heaven, having lost his will and made resignation of it to Christ! I would seek no more than that Christ were absolute King over my will, and that my will were a sufferer in all crosses, without meeting Christ with such a word, "Why is it thus?"

Oh, what wisdom is it to believe, and not to dispute; to subject the thoughts to His court, and not to repine at any act of His justice? He has done it: all flesh be silent! It is impossible to be submissive and religiously patient, if ye stay your thoughts down among the confused rollings and wheels of second causes as, "Oh, the place!" "Oh, the time!" "Oh, if this had been, this had not followed!" Oh, the linking of this accident with this time and place! Look up to the master-motion and the first wheel.

Oh, how hard it is to get the intentions so cut off from and raised above the creature, as to be without mixture of creature and carnal interest, and to have the soul, in heavenly actings, only, only eyeing Himself, and acting from love to God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ!

*A good conscience.*Keep the conscience whole without a crack! If there be a hole in it, so that it take in water at a leak, it will with difficulty mend again. It is a dainty, delicate creature, and a rare piece of the workmanship of your Maker; and therefore deal gently with it, and keep it entire, that amidst this world's glory you may learn to entertain Christ.

4 THE PRESENT EVIL WORLD

Oh! well it is for ever,
Oh! well for evermore,
My nest hung in no forest
Of all this death-doom'd shore:
Yea, let the vain world vanish,
As from the ship the strand,
While glory — glory dwells
In Immanuel's land.

"The fashion of this world passeth away." — [1 Corinthians 7:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians 7.31&t=DBY).

"All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." — [1 John 2:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John 2.16&t=DBY).

Step over this hand-breadth of world's glory into our Lord's new world of grace, and ye will laugh at the feathers that children are chasing in the air. I verily judge that this inn, which men are building their nest in, is not worth a drink of cold water. It is a rainy and smoky house: best we come out of it, lest we be choked with the smoke thereof.

Build your nest upon no tree here; for ye see God has sold the forest to death; and every tree whereupon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may fly and mount up, and build upon the Rock. … There is less sand in your glass now than there was yester-night. This span-length of ever-posting time will soon be ended.

All that is under this vault of heaven, and betwixt us and death, and on this side of sun and moon, is but toys, night-visions, head-fancies, poor shadows, watery froth, godless vanities at their best, and black hearts, and salt and sour miseries, sugared over and confected with an hour's laughter or two, and the conceit of riches, honour, vain, vain court, and lawless pleasures. If ye look both to the laughing side and to the weeping side of this world, and if ye look not only upon the skin and colour of things, but into their inwards, and the heart of their excellency, ye shall see that one look of Christ's sweet and lovely eye, one kiss of His fairest face, is worth ten thousand worlds of such rotten stuff as the foolish sons of men set their hearts upon. … Turn your heart to the other side of things, and get it once free of these entanglements, to consider eternity. … As a flood carried back to the sea, so doth the Lord's swift post, Time, carry you and your life with wings to the grave. Ye eat and drink, but time stands not still; ye laugh, but your day fleeth away; ye sleep, but your hours are reckoned and put by hand. Oh, how soon will time shut you out of the poor, and cold, and hungry inn of this life! And then what will yesterday's short-born pleasures do to you, but be as a snowball melted away many years since? Or worse, for the memory of these pleasures useth to fill the soul with bitterness. Time and experience will prove this to be true; and dying men, if they could speak, would make this good. … Your love, if it were more than all the love of angels in one, is Christ's due: other things worthy in themselves, in respect of Christ, are not worth a windlestraw, or a drink of cold water.

I know a man who wondered to see any in this life laugh or sport. Surely our Lord seeketh this of us, as to any rejoicing in present perishing things. … For I think the men of this world are like children in a dangerous storm in the sea, that play and make sport with the white foam of the waves thereof, coming in to sink and drown them; so are men making fool's sports with the white pleasures of a stormy world, that will sink them. But, alas! what have we to do with their sports which they make? If Solomon said of laughter, that it was madness, what may we say of this world's laughing and sporting themselves with gold and silver, and honours, and court, and broad large conquests, but that they are poor souls, in the height and rage of a fever gone mad? Then a straw, a fig, for all created sports and rejoicing out of Christ! Nay, I think that this world, at its prime and perfection, when it is come to the top of its excellency and to the bloom, might be bought with an half-penny; and that it would scarce weigh the worth of a drink of water. There is nothing better than to esteem it our crucified idol (that is, dead and slain), as Paul did. Then let pleasures be crucified, and riches be crucified, and court and honour be crucified. And since the apostle says that the world is crucified to him, we may put this world to the hanged man's doom, and to the gallows: and who will give much for a hanged man? as little should we give for a hanged and crucified world. Yet, what a sweet smell has this dead carrion to many fools in the world! and how many wooers and suitors findeth this hanged carrion! Fools are pulling it off the gallows, and contending for it. Oh, when will we learn to be mortified men, and to have our fill of those things that have but their short summer quarter of this life! If we saw our Father's house, and that great and fair city, the New Jerusalem, which is up above sun and moon, we would cry to be over the water, and to be carried in Christ's arms out of this borrowed prison.

How soon will some few years pass away! and then, when the day is ended, and this life's lease expired, what have men of world's glory but dreams and thoughts?

There will be shortly a proclamation by One standing in the clouds, "that time shall be no more," and that courts with kings of clay shall be no more; and prisons, confinements, forfeitures, wrath of Kings, hazard of lands, houses, and name, for Christ, shall be no more. This world's span-length of time is drawn now to less than half an inch, and to the point of the evening of the day of this old grey-haired world. And, therefore, be fixed and fast for Christ and His truth for a time; and fear not him whose life goes out at his nostrils, who shall die as a man. … Kings earthly are but well-favoured little clay-gods, time's idols; but a sight of our invisible King shall decry and darken all the glory of this world. … All the world shall fall before Him, and (as God lives!) every arm lifted up to take the crown off His royal head, or that refuseth to hold it on His head, shall be broken from the shoulder blade. Oh, what would men count of clay estates, of time-eaten life, of worm-eaten and moth-eaten worldly glory, in comparison of that fairest … the Son of the Father's delights!

Look beyond time: things here are but moonshine. They have but children's wit who are delighted with shadows, and deluded with feathers flying in the air.

Verily I have seen the best of this world, a moth-eaten threadbare coat: I propose to lay it aside, being now old and full of holes. O for my house above, not made with hands!

Oh, thrice blinded souls, whose hearts are charmed and bewitched with dreams, shadows, feckless\* things, night-vanities, and night-fancies of a miserable life of sin! Shame on us who sit still, fettered with the love and liking of a piece of dead clay! Oh, poor fools, who are beguiled with painted things, and this world's fair weather, and smooth promises, and rotten, worm-eaten hopes! May not the devil laugh to see us give out our souls, and get in but corrupt and counterfeit pleasures of sin? O for a sight of eternity's glory, and a little tasting of the Lamb's marriage supper! Half a draught, or a drop of the wine of consolation, that is up at our banqueting-house, out of Christ's own hand, would make our stomachs loathe the brown bread and sour drink of a miserable life. Oh, how far are we bereaved of wit, to chafe, and hunt, and run, till our souls be out of breath, after a condemned happiness of our own making! … O that we were out of ourselves, and dead to this world, and this world dead and crucified to us! And, when we should be close out of love and conceit of any masked and farded† lover whatsoever, then Christ would win and conquer to Himself a lodging in the inmost yolk of our heart. Then Christ should be our night-song and morning-song; and the noise of our Well-beloved's feet, when He comes, and His first knock … at the door, should be as news of two heavens to us.

\*Weak, worthless. †Painted.

If contentment were here, heaven were not heaven. Whoever seek the world to be their bed, shall at best find it short and ill made, and a stone under their side to hold them waking, rather than a soft pillow to sleep upon. Ye ought to bless your Lord that it is not worse. We live in a sea where many have suffered shipwreck, and have need that Christ sit at the helm of the ship.

I recommend to you holiness and sanctification, and that you keep yourself clean from this present evil world. … Oh, how hard a thing is it, to get the soul to give up with all things on this side of death and doomsday! We say that we are removing and going from this world; but our heart stirreth not one foot off its seat. Alas! I see few heavenly-minded souls, that have nothing upon the earth but their body of clay going up and down this earth, because their soul and the powers of it are up in heaven, and there their hearts live, desire, enjoy, rejoice. Oh! men's souls have no wings; and, therefore, night and day they keep their nest, and are not acquainted with Christ. … Take you to your one thing, to Christ, that ye may be acquainted with the taste of His sweetness and excellency; and charge your love not to doat upon this world, for it will not do your business in that day, when nothing will come in good stead to you but God's favour.

Let all the world be nothing, and let God be all things.

5 THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL

"Flee also youthful lusts." — [2 Timothy 2:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy 2.22&t=DBY).

*Lusts.* Pride of youth, vanity, lusts, idolizing of the world, and charming pleasures, take long to root them out. … When the day of visitation comes, and your old idols come weeping about you, ye will have much ado not to break your heart.

It is impossible that a man can take his lusts to heaven with him; such wares as these will not be welcome there. Oh, how loath are we to forego our packalds and burdens, that hinder us to run our race with patience! It is no small work to displease and anger nature, that we may please God. Oh, if it be hard to win one foot, or half an inch, out of our own will, out of our own wit, out of our own ease and worldly lusts (and so to deny ourself, and to say, "It is not I but Christ, not I but grace, not I but God's glory, not I but God's love constraining me, not I but the Lord's word, not I but Christ's commanding power as King in me!"), oh, what pains, and what a death is it to nature, to turn me, myself, my lust, my ease, my credit, over into, "My Lord, my Saviour, my King, and my God, my Lord's will, my Lord's grace!" But, alas! that idol, that whorish creature, *myself, is*the master-idol we all bow to. … What hurried Eve headlong upon the forbidden fruit, but that wretched thing *herself?*What drew that brother-murderer to kill Abel? That wild *himself.*What drove the old world on to corrupt their ways? Who, but *themselves,*and their own pleasure? What was the cause of Solomon's falling into idolatry and multiplying of strange wives? What, but *himself,*whom he would rather pleasure than God? What was the hook that took David and snared him first in adultery, but his *self-lust?* and then in murder, but his *self-credit*and *self-honour?* What led Peter on to deny his Lord? Was it not a piece of *himself,*and *self-love*to a whole skin? What made Judas sell his Master for thirty pieces of money, but a piece of *self-love,*idolizing of avaricious *self?* What made Demas go off the way of the gospel, to embrace this present world? Even *self-love*and love of gain for himself. Every man blameth the devil for his sins; but the great devil, the house-devil of every man, the house-devil that eateth and lieth in every man's bosom, is that idol that killeth all, *himself.*Oh, blessed are they who can deny themselves, and put Christ in the room of themselves! Oh, would to the Lord that I had not a *myself,*but Christ; nor a *my lust,*but Christ; nor a *my ease,*but Christ; nor a *my honour,*but Christ! O sweet word! "I live no more, but Christ lives in me!" Oh, if every one would put away himself, his own self, his own ease, his own pleasure, his own credit, and his own twenty things, his own hundred things, which he setteth up, as idols, above Christ!

It is impossible that your idol-sins and ye can go to heaven together; and that they who will not part with these can, indeed, love Christ at the bottom, but only in word and show, which will not do the business.

*Contention.* I think not much of a cross when all the children of the house weep with me and for me; and to suffer when we enjoy the communion of saints is not much; but it is hard when saints rejoice in the suffering of saints, and redeemed ones hurt (yea, even go nigh to hate) redeemed ones. I confess I imagined there had no more been such an affliction on earth, or in the world, as that one elect angel should fight against another. … The saints are not Christ: there is no misjudging in Him; there is much in us; and a doubt it is, if we shall have fully one heart till we shall enjoy one heaven. Our star-light hideth us from ourselves and hideth us from one another, and Christ from us all. But He will not be hidden from us. … The King's spikenard, Christ's perfume, His apples of love, His ointments, even down in this lower house of clay, are a choice heaven. Oh! what then is the King in His own land, where there is such a throne, so many King's palaces, ten thousand thousands of crowns of glory that want heads yet to fill them? Oh, so much leisure as shall be there to sing! Oh, such a tree as groweth there in the midst of that Paradise, where the inhabitants sing eternally under its branches!

*Slandering.*The times would make any that love the Lord sick and faint, to consider how iniquity abounds, and how dull we are in observing sins in ourselves, and how quick-sighted to find them out in others. … And yet very often, when we complain of times, we are secretly slandering the Lord's work and wise government of the world, and raising a hard report of Him. "He is good, and does good," and all His ways are equal. … Oh, we are little with God! and do all without God! We sleep and wake without Him; we eat, we speak, we journey, we go about worldly business and our calling without God! and, considering what deadness is upon the hearts of many, it were good that some did not pray without God, and preach and praise, and read and confer of God without God! It is universally complained of, that there is a strange deadness upon the land, and on the hearts of His people.

*The devil.*Since we must have a devil to trouble us, I love a raging devil best. Our Lord knows what sort of devil we have need of: it is best that Satan be in his own skin, and look like himself.

My Lord Jesus had a good eye that the tempter should not play foul play, and blow out Christ's candle. … When He burnt the house, He saved His own goods. And I believe the devil and the persecuting world shall reap no fruit of me, but burnt ashes: for He will see to His own gold, and save that from being consumed with the fire. … Oh, what owe I to the file, to the hammer, to the furnace of my Lord Jesus! who has now let me see how good the wheat of Christ is, that goes through His mill, and His oven, to be made bread for His own table. Grace tried is better than grace, and it is more than grace; it is glory in its infancy.

Many make a start toward heaven who fall on their back, and win not up to the top of the mount. It plucketh heart and legs from them, and they sit down and give it over, because the devil setteth a sweet-smelled flower to their nose (this fair busked\* world), wherewith they are bewitched, and so forget or refuse to go forward.

\*Adorned.

6 "THE DAY OF AFFLICTION"

I have borne scorn and hatred,
I have borne wrong and shame,
Earth's proud ones have reproach'd me,
For Christ's thrice blessed name:—
Where God His seal set fairest
They've stamp'd their foulest brand;
But judgment shines like noonday
In Immanuel's land.

"In all their affliction He was afflicted." — [Isaiah 63:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah 63.9&t=DBY).

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." — [Revelation 3:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation 3.19&t=DBY).

*Affliction.*Know you not that Christ wooeth His wife in the furnace? "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." He casteth His love on you when you are in the furnace of affliction. You might indeed be casten down if He brought you in and left you there; but when He leadeth you through the waters, think ye not that He has a sweet soft hand? You know His love grip already; you shall be delivered, wait on. Jesus will make a road, and come and fetch home the captive. … Your winter night is near spent; it is near-hand the dawning. … This wilderness shall bud and grow up like a rose.

It is good that your crosses will but convoy you to heaven's gates: in, they cannot go; the gates shall be closed upon them, when ye shall be admitted to the throne. Time stands not still, eternity is hard at our door. Oh, what is laid up for you! therefore, harden your face against the wind.

The thorn is one of the most cursed, and angry, and crabbed weeds that the earth yields, and yet out of it springs the rose, one of the sweetest-smelled flowers, and most delightful to the eye, that the earth has. Your Lord shall make joy and gladness out of your afflictions; for all His roses have a fragrant smell. Wait for the time when His own holy hand shall hold them to your nose; and if ye would have present comfort under the cross, be much in prayer, for at that time your faith kisseth Christ and He kisseth the soul.

Every man thinketh he is rich enough in grace, till he take out his purse, and tell his money, and then he findeth his pack but poor and light in the day of a heavy trial. I found that I had not to bear my expenses, and I should have fainted, if want and penury had not chased me to the storehouse of all.

Venture through the thick of all things after Christ, and lose not your Master, Christ, in the throng of this great market. Let Christ know how heavy, and how many a stone-weight you and your cares, burdens, crosses, and sins are. Let Him bear all. … And then, let the wind blow out of what airt it will, your soul shall not be blown into the sea.

Lay all your loads and your weights by faith upon Christ; take ease to yourself, and let Him bear all. … I rejoice that He has come, and has chosen you in the furnace; it was even there where ye and He set tryst. That is an old gate of Christ's: He keepeth the good old fashion with you, that was in Hosea's days: "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak to her heart."\* There was no talking to her heart, while He and she were in the fair and flourishing city, and at ease; but out in the cold, hungry, waste wilderness, He allured her, He whispered news into her ear there, and said, "Thou art Mine."

\*[Hosea 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea 2.14&t=DBY), marginal reading.

Wants are my best riches, because I have these supplied by Christ.

We fools would have a cross of our own choosing, and would have our gall and worm wood sugared, our fire cold, and our death and grave warmed with heat of life; but He who has brought many children to glory, and lost none, is our best Tutor. I wish that, when I am sick, He may be keeper and comforter. … But I know it is my softness and weakness, who would ever be ashore when a fit of sea-sickness comes on; though I know I shall come soon enough to that desirable country, and shall not be displaced: none shall take my lodging.

Your afflictions are not eternal; time will end them, and so shall ye at length see the Lord's salvation. His love sleepeth not, but is still working for you. His salvation will not tarry nor linger; and suffering for Him is the noblest cross that is out of heaven. … It is a love-look to heaven and the other side of the water that God seeks; and this is the fruit, the flower and bloom growing out of your cross, that ye be a dead man to time, to clay, to gold, to country, to friends, wife, children, and all pieces of created things; for in them there is not a seat nor bottom for soul's love. Oh, what room is for your love (if it were as broad as the sea) up in heaven, and in God! And what would not Christ give for your love? God gave so much for your soul; and blessed are ye if ye have a love for Him, and can call in your soul's love from all idols, and can make a God of God, a God of Christ, and draw a line betwixt your heart and Him. … Let the Lord absolutely have the ordering of your evils and troubles; and put them off you by recommending your cross and your furnace to Him who has skill to melt His own metal, and knows well what to do with His furnace. Let your heart be willing that God's fire have your tin, and brass, and dross. … When ye are over the water, this case shall be a yesterday past a hundred years ere ye were born; and the cup of glory shall wash the memory of all this away, and make it as nothing. … The Lord is rising up to do you good in the latter end; put on the faith of His salvation, and see Him posting and hasting towards you.

If your Lord call you to suffering, be not dismayed; there shall be a new allowance of the King for you when you come to it. One of the softest pillows Christ has is laid under His witnesses' head, though often they must set down their bare feet among thorns.

*Suffering and reproach.*Christ is pleased to feast a poor prisoner, and to refresh me with joy unspeakable and glorious! so as the Holy Spirit is witness that my sufferings are for Christ's truth. … Now, I testify under my hand, out of some small experience, that Christ's cause, even with the cross, is better than the king's crown; and that His reproaches are sweet, His cross perfumed, the walls of my prison fair and large, my losses gain.

I beseech you therefore, in the bowels of Jesus, set before your eyes the patience of your forerunner Jesus, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously. And since your Lord and Redeemer with patience received many a black stroke on His glorious back, and many a buffet of the unbelieving world, and says of Himself, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not My face from shame and spitting"; follow Him, and think it not hard that you receive a blow with your Lord. Take part with Jesus of His sufferings and glory in the marks of Christ. … Be you upon Christ's side, and care not what flesh can do. Hold yourself fast by your Saviour, howbeit you be buffeted, and those that follow Him. Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." If you can possess your soul in patience, their day is coming. … The way to overcome is by patience, forgiving and praying for your enemies, in doing whereof you heap coals upon their heads, and your Lord shall open a door to you in your troubles. Wait upon Him as the night watch waiteth for the morning. He will not tarry. Go up to your watch-tower, and come not down; but by prayer, and faith, and hope, wait on. When the sea is full, it will ebb again; and so soon as the wicked are come to the top of their pride, and are waxed high and mighty, then is their change approaching. They that believe make not haste.

The worst things of Christ, His reproaches, His cross, are better than Egypt's treasures. He has opened His door, and taken into His house-of-wine a poor sinner, and has left me so sick of love for my Lord Jesus, that if heaven were at my disposing, I would give it for Christ, and would not be content to go to heaven, except I were persuaded that Christ were there.

I find that my extremity has sharpened the edge of His love and kindness, so that He seemeth to devise new ways of expressing the sweetness of His love to my soul. Suffering for Christ is the very element wherein Christ's love lives, and exerciseth itself, … And if Christ weeping in sackcloth be so sweet, I cannot find any imaginable thoughts to think what He will be, when we clay-bodies (having put off mortality) shall come up to the marriage-hall and great palace, and behold the King clothed in His royal robes, sitting on His throne. I would desire no more for my heaven beneath the moon, while I am sighing in this house of clay, but daily renewed feasts of love with Christ.

Thanks be to God that you have so learned Christ as to be made a man for Christ of no reputation, for Him. Your despised Master, who made Himself while He was amongst us of no reputation, is now exalted in glory. There is none now to gibe Him by bowing the knee, none now to spit in His face, none now to bring Him under mocking of the purple robe, none to put on His head a crown of thorns. And as you now partake of His sufferings, so shall you hereafter of His glory. You shall sit honourably on thrones; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you shall receive the crown. I am convinced that it is for conscience toward God that you suffer. The bottom of your testimony and suffering is not so narrow as some think, who study more to decline the cross than to be tender for every truth.

*Sickness.*Sure I am, it is better to be sick, providing Christ come to the bedside and draw by the curtains, and say, "Courage, I am thy salvation," than to enjoy health, being lusty and strong, and never to be visited of God.

It is a blessed fever that fetcheth Christ to the bedside.

I hear that Christ has been that kind as to visit you with sickness, and to bring you to the door of the grave; but ye found the door shut (blessed be His glorious name!) while ye be riper for eternity. He will have more service of you. … We have all idol-love, and are inclined to love other things beside our Lord; and, therefore, our Lord hunteth for our love more ways than one or two.

I have heard of your infirmity of body, and sickness. I know the issue shall be mercy to you, and that God's purpose, which lieth hidden underground to you, is to commend the sweetness of His love and care to you from your youth. And if all the sad losses, trials, sicknesses, infirmities, griefs, heaviness, and inconstancy of the creature, be expounded (as sure I am they are) the rods of the jealousy of an Husband in heaven, contending with all your lovers on earth, though there were millions of them, for your love, to fetch more of your love home to heaven, to make it single, unmixed, and chaste, to the Fairest in heaven and earth, to Jesus the Prince of ages, ye will forgive (to borrow that word) every rod of God, and "let not the sun go down on your wrath" against any messenger of your afflicting and correcting Father. … See that the mark at which Christ has aimed these twenty-four years and above, is, to have the company and fellowship of such a sinful creature in heaven with Him for all eternity; and, because He will not (such is the power of His love) enjoy His Father's glory, and that crown due to Him by eternal generation, without you, by name,\* therefore believe no evil of Christ: listen to no hard reports that His rods make of Him to you. He has loved you and washed you from your sins; and what would ye have more? Is that too little except He adjourn all crosses, till ye be where ye shall be out of all capacity, to sigh or be crossed? I hope that ye can desire no more, no greater, nor more excellent suit, than Christ and the fellowship of the Lamb for evermore. And if that desire be answered in heaven (as I am sure it is, and ye cannot deny but it is made sure to you), the want of these poor accidents, of a living husband, of many children, of an healthful body, of a life of ease in the world, without one knot in the rush, are nobly made up, and may be comfortably borne.

\*Alluding to [John 10:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 10.3&t=DBY), [16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 10.16&t=DBY); [John 17:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 17.24&t=DBY).

*Weakness.*Oh, how sweet it is for a sinner to put his weakness into Christ's strengthening hand, and to father a sick soul upon such a Physician, and to lay weakness before Him, to weep upon Him, and to plead and pray! Weakness can speak and cry, when we have not a tongue. "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy own blood, I said to thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live." … As for weakness, we have it that we may employ Christ's strength because of our weakness.

I should succumb and come short of heaven, if I had no more than my own strength to support me; and if Christ should say to me, "Either do or die," it were easy to determine what should become of me. … Christ is kindest in His love, when we are at our weakest; and if Christ had not been to the fore, in our sad days, the waters had gone over our soul. His mercy has a set period, and appointed place, how far and no farther the sea of affliction shall flow, and where the waves thereof shall be stayed. He prescribeth how much pain and sorrow, both for weight and measure we must have. Ye have, then, good cause to recall your love from all lovers, and give it to Christ. He who is afflicted in all your afflictions, looketh not on you in your sad hours with an insensible heart or dry eyes.

*Chastening.*Ye are His Wheat, growing in our Lord's field; and if wheat, ye must go under our Lord's threshing-instrument, in His barn-floor, and through His sieve,\* and through His mill to be bruised … that ye may be found good bread in your Lord's house. … I am persuaded your glass is spending itself by little and little; and if ye knew who is before you, ye would rejoice in your tribulations. Think ye it a small honour to stand before the throne of God and the Lamb? and to be clothed in white, and to be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb? and to be led to the fountain of living waters, and to come to the Well-head, even God Himself, and get your fill of the clear, cold, sweet, refreshing water of life, the King's own well? … Up your heart! shout for joy! Your King is coming to fetch you to His Father's house.

\*Alluding to [Amos 9:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Amos 9.9&t=DBY): [Luke 20:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 20.31&t=DBY).

Oh thrice fools are we, who, like new-born princes weeping in the cradle, know not that there is a kingdom before them! Then let our Lord's sweet hand square us and hammer us, and strike off the knots of pride, self-love, and world-worship, and infidelity, that He may make us stones and pillars in His Father's house.

It is the Lord's kindness that He will take the scum off us in the fire. Who knows how needful winnowing is to us, and what dross we must want ere we enter into the kingdom of God? So narrow is the entry to heaven, that our knots, our bunches and lumps of pride, and self-love, and idol-love, and world-love, must be hammered off us, that we may thring\* in, stooping low, and creeping through that narrow and thorny entry.

\*Press.

On this side of the New Jerusalem, we shall still have need of forgiving and healing grace. I find crosses of Christ's carved work that He marketh out for us, and that with crosses He figureth and portrayeth us to His own image, cutting away pieces of our ill and corruption. Lord cut, Lord carve, Lord wound, Lord do anything that may perfect Thy image in us, and make us meet for glory.

7 "THE FIERY TRIAL"

Deep waters cross'd life's pathway,
The hedge of thorns was sharp;
Now these lie all behind me —
Oh! for a well-tuned harp!
Oh! to join Halleluiah
With yon triumphant band,
Who sing, where glory dwells,
In Immanuel's land.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee … when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned." — [Isaiah 43:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah 43.2&t=DBY).

Who knows the truth of grace without a trial? Oh, how little getteth Christ of us, but that which He winneth (to speak so) with much toil and pains! And how soon would faith freeze without a cross!

Learn to make your evils your great good and to spin comforts, peace, joy, communion with Christ, out of your troubles, which are Christ's wooers, sent to speak for you to Himself.

I find it hard work to believe when the course of providence goes crosswise to our faith, and when misted souls in a dark night cannot know east by west, and our sea-compass seemeth to fail us. Every man is a believer in daylight: a fair day seemeth to be made all of faith and hope. What a trial of gold is it to smoke it a little above the fire! but to keep gold perfectly yellow-coloured amidst the flames, and to be turned from vessel to vessel, and yet to cause our furnace to sound and speak, and cry the praises of the Lord, is another matter.

I bless the Lord, that all our troubles come through Christ's fingers, and that He casteth sugar among them, and casteth in some ounceweights of heaven, and of the Spirit of glory that resteth on suffering believers, into our cup, in which there is no taste of hell.

Losses and disgraces are the wheels of Christ's triumphant chariot. In the sufferings of His own saints, as He intendeth their good, so He intendeth His own glory. … We creep in under our Lord's wings in the great shower, and the water cannot come through those wings. … We may sing … even in our winter storm, in the expectation of a summer sun, at the turn of the year. No created powers in hell, or out of hell, can mar the music of our Lord Jesus, nor spoil our song of joy. Let us then be glad, and rejoice in the salvation of our Lord; for faith had never yet cause to have wet cheeks, and hanging-down brows, or to droop or die.

Losses, disappointments, ill-tongues, loss of friends, houses, or country, are God's workmen, set on work to work good to you, out of everything that befalleth to you. Let not the Lord's dealing seem harsh, rough, or unfatherly, because it is unpleasant. When the Lord's blessed will bloweth across your desires, it is best, in humility, to strike sail to Him, and to be willing to be led any way our Lord pleaseth. … Ye know not what the Lord is working out of this, but ye shall know it hereafter.

I am taught in this ill weather to go on the leeside of Christ, and to put Him in between me and the storm; and (I thank God) I walk on the sunny side of the brae.

We take ill with it, and can hardly endure to set our paper-face to one of Christ's storms, and to go to heaven with wet feet, and pain, and sorrow. We love to carry a heaven to heaven with us, and would have two summers in one year, and no less than two heavens. But this will not do for us: one (and such a one) may suffice us well enough. The man, Christ, got but one only, and shall we have two?

I am like an old crazed ship that has endured many storms, and that would fain be in the lee of the shore, and feareth new storms; I would be that nigh heaven, that the shadow of it might break the force of the storm, and the crazed ship might win to land. My Lord's sun casteth a heat of love and beam of light on my soul.

I see grace groweth best in the winter … I shall think it mercy to my soul, if my faith shall out-watch all this winter-night, and not nod nor slumber till my Lord's summer-day dawn upon me. … God be thanked that Christ in His children can endure a stress and a storm, howbeit soft nature would fall down in pieces.

Christ's enemies are but breaking their own heads in pieces, upon the rock laid in Zion; and the stone is not removed out of its place. Faith has cause to take courage from our very afflictions; the devil is but a whetstone to sharpen the faith and patience of the saints. I know that he but heweth and polisheth stones, all this time for the new Jerusalem.

They are not worthy of Jesus who will not take a blow for their Master's sake.

If ye were not strangers here, the dogs of the world would not bark at you. You may see all windings and turnings that are in your way to heaven out of God's Word; for He will not lead you to the kingdom at the nearest, but you must go through "honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing." The world is one of the enemies we have to fight with, but a vanquished and overcome enemy, and like a beaten and forlorn soldier; for our Jesus has taken the armour from it. Let me, then, speak to you in His words: "Be of good courage," says the Captain of our salvation, "for I have overcome the world." You shall neither be free of the scourge of the tongue, nor of disgraces (even if it were buffetings and spittings upon the face, as was our Saviour's case), if you follow Jesus Christ. I beseech you in the bowels of our Lord Jesus, keep a good conscience, as I trust you do. You live not upon men's opinion; gold may be gold, and have the King's stamp upon it, when it is trampled upon by men. Happy are you, if, when the world trampleth upon you in your credit and good name, yet you are the Lord's gold, stamped with the King of heaven's image, and sealed by the Spirit to the day of your redemption. Pray for the spirit of love; for "love beareth all things, it believes all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things."

Be not afraid of men. Your Master can mow down His enemies, and make withered hay of fair flowers. Your time will not be long; after your afternoon will come your evening, and after evening night. Serve Christ. … Let His cause be your cause; give not an hair-breadth of truth away; for it is not yours, but God's. Then, since ye are going, take Christ's testificate with you out of this life — "Well done, good and faithful servant!" His "well done" is worth a shipful of "good-days" and earthly honours.

I never knew, by my nine years' preaching, so much of Christ's love, as He has taught me by six months' imprisonment.

Oh, what art is it to learn to endure hardness, and to learn to go barefooted either through the devil's fiery coals, or his frozen waters!

Think it not strange that men devise against you; whether it be to exile, the earth is the Lord's; or perpetual imprisonment, the Lord is your light and liberty; or a violent and public death, for the kingdom of heaven consisteth in a fair company of glorified martyrs and witnesses; of whom Jesus Christ is the chief witness, who for that cause was born and came into the world. Happy are ye if ye give testimony to the world of your preferring Jesus Christ to all powers.

Fear not men, for the Lord is your light and salvation. It is true, it is somewhat sad and comfortless that ye are your lone; but so it was with our precious Master: nor are ye your lone, for the Father is with you.

Think it not strange, beloved in our Lord Jesus, that Satan can command keys of prisons, and bolts, and chains. This is a piece of the devil's princedom that he has over the world. Interpret and understand our Lord well in this. Be not jealous of His love, though He make devils and men His under-servants to scour the rust off your faith, and purge you from your dross. And let me charge you, O prisoners of hope, to open your window, and to look out by faith, and behold heaven's post (that speedy and swift salvation of God), that is coming to you. It is a broad river that faith will not look over: it is a mighty and a broad sea, that they of a lively hope cannot behold the furthest bank and other shore thereof. Look over the water; your anchor is fixed within the veil; the one end of the cable is about the prisoner of Christ, and the other end is entered within the veil whither the Forerunner is entered for you. It can go straight through the flames of the fire of the wrath of men, devils, losses, tortures, death, and not a thread of it be singed or burnt: men and devils have no teeth to bite it in two. Hold fast till He come. … Enjoy your Beloved, and dwell upon His love, till eternity come in time's room, and possess you of your eternal happiness. Keep your love to Christ, lay up your faith in heaven's keeping, and follow the Chief of the house of the martyrs that witnessed a fair confession before Pontius Pilate. Your cause and His is all one. … Laugh ye at the giddy-headed clay pots, and stout, brain-sick worms, that dare say in good earnest, "This man shall not reign over us!" as though they were casting the dice for Christ's crown, which of them should have it. I know that ye believe the coming of Christ's kingdom; and that there is a hole out of your prison, through which ye see daylight.

My shallow and ebb thoughts are not the compass which Christ saileth by. I leave His ways to Himself, for they are far, far above me: only I would contend with Christ for His love, and be bold to make a plea with Jesus, my Lord, for a heart-fill of His love; for there is no more left to me. What stands beyond the far end of my sufferings, and what shall be the event, He knows, and I hope, to my joy, will make me know, when God will unfold His decrees concerning me. For there are windings, and to's and fro's, in His ways, which blind bodies like us cannot see.

Your time is measured, and your days and hours of suffering from eternity were, by infinite wisdom, considered.

I seek no more, next to heaven, than that He may be glorified in a prisoner of Christ; and that in my behalf many would praise His high and glorious name who heareth the sighing of the prisoner.

8 THE SHADOW OF DEATH

I shall sleep sound in Jesus,
Fill'd with His likeness rise
To live and to adore Him,
To see Him with these eyes.
'Tween me and resurrection
But Paradise doth stand;
Then — then for glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land!

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." — [Psalm 23:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 23.4&t=DBY).

"There shall be no more death." — [Revelation 21:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation 21.4&t=DBY).

Though I was lately knocking at death's gate, yet I could not get in, but was sent back for a time. It is well if I could yet do any service for Him.

If death which is before you … were any other thing than a friendly dissolution, and a change, not a destruction of life, it would seem a hard voyage to go through such a sad and dark trance, so thorny a valley, as is the wages of sin. But I am confident the way you know, though your foot never trod in that black shadow. The loss of life is gain to you. If Christ Jesus be the period, the end, and lodging-home, at the end of your journey, there is no fear; ye go to a Friend. And since you have had communion with Him in this life … ye may look death in the face with joy.

If, in that last journey, ye tread on a serpent in the way, and thereby wound your heel, as Jesus Christ did before you, the print of the wound shall not be known at the resurrection of the just. Death is but an awesome step, over time and sin, to sweet Jesus Christ who knew and felt the worst of death, for death's teeth hurt Him. We know death has no teeth now, no jaws, for they are broken. It is a free prison; citizens pay nothing for the grave. The jailor who had the power of death is destroyed: praise and glory be to the First-begotten of the dead.

I fear the clay house is a-taking down and undermining: but it is nigh the dawning. Look to the east, the dawning of the glory is near. Your Guide is good company, and knows all the miles, and the ups and downs in the way. The nearer the morning, the darker. Some travellers see the city twenty miles off, and at a distance; and yet within the eighth part of a mile they cannot see it.

The way ye know; the passage is free and not stopped; the print of the footsteps of the Forerunner is clear and manifest; many have gone before you. Ye will not sleep long in the dust before the Daybreak.

Remember, how swiftly God's post time flieth away; and that your forenoon is already spent, your afternoon will come, and then your evening, and at last night, when ye cannot see to work. Let your heart be set upon finishing of your journey, and summing and laying your accounts with your Lord. Oh how blessed shall ye be to have a joyful welcome of your Lord at night!

I doubt not but in death ye shall see all things more distinctly, and that then the world shall bear no more bulk than it is worth, and that then it shall couch and be contracted into nothing; and ye shall see Christ longer, higher, broader, and deeper than ever He was. O blessed conquest, to lose all things, and to gain Christ!

Oh, how sweet and comfortable will the feast of a good conscience be to you, when your eyestrings shall break, your face wax pale, and the breath turn cold, and your poor soul come sighing to the windows of the house of clay of your dying body, and shall long to be out, and to have the jailor to open the door, that the prisoner may be set at liberty! … set your heart on the inheritance. Go up beforehand and see your lodging. Look through all your Father's rooms in heaven: in your Father's house are many dwelling-places. Men take a sight of lands ere they buy them. I know that Christ has made the bargain already; but be kind to the house ye are going to, and see it often. Set your heart on things that are above, where Christ is at the right hand of God.

Your life has been near the grave, and you were at the door, and you found the door shut and fast: your dear Christ thinking it not time to open these gates to you till you have fought some longer in His camp. And therefore He willeth you to put on your armour again, and to take no truce with the devil or this present world. You are little obliged to any of the two: but I rejoice in this, that when any of the two comes to suit your soul in marriage, you have an answer in readiness to tell them: "You are too long acoming; I have many a year since promised my soul to another, even to my Lord Jesus, to whom I must be true."

9 THE HOUSE OF MOURNING

Soon shall the cup of glory
Wash down earth's bitterest woes,
Soon shall the desert-briar
Break into Eden's rose.
The curse shall change to blessing—
The name on earth that's bann'd,
Be graven on the white stone
In Immanuel's land.

"The ransomed of the Lord … shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." — [Isaiah 35:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah 35.10&t=DBY).

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying." — [Revelation 21:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation 21.4&t=DBY).

*The loss of a child.*Faith will teach you to kiss a striking Lord; and so acknowledge the sovereignty of God (in the death of a child) to be above the power of us mortal men, who may pluck up a flower in the bud and not be blamed for it. If our dear Lord pluck up one of His roses, and pull down sour and green fruit before harvest, who can challenge Him? For He sendeth us to His world, as men to a market, wherein some stay many hours, and eat and drink, and buy and sell, and pass through the fair, till they be weary; and such are those who live long, and get a heavy fill of this life. And others again come slipping in to the morning market, and do neither sit nor stand, nor buy nor sell, but look about them a little, and pass presently home again; and these are infants and young ones, who end their short market in the morning, and get but a short view of the fair. Our Lord, who has numbered man's months, and set him bounds that he cannot pass, has written the length of our market, and it is easier to complain of the decree than to change it.

Believe that he is not gone away, but sent before; and that the change of the country should make you think, that he is not lost to you who is found to Christ, and that he is now before you; and that the dead in Christ shall rise again. A going-down star is not annihilated, but shall appear again. If he has casten his bloom and flower, the bloom is fallen in heaven, into Christ's lap. And as he was lent a while to time, so he is given now to eternity, which will take yourself. The difference of your shipping and his to heaven and Christ's shore, the land of life, is only in some few years, which weareth every day shorter; and some short and soon-reckoned summers will give you a meeting with him. … If death were a sleep that had no wakening, we might sorrow. … He breweth your cup: therefore, drink it patiently and with the better will. Stay and wait on, till Christ loose the knot that fasteneth His cross on your back; for He is coming to deliver. And I pray you, learn to be worthy of His pains who correcteth. And let Him wring and be ye washen; for He has a Father's heart, and a Father's hand, who is training you up, and making you meet for the high hall. This school of suffering is a preparation for the King's higher house; and let all your visitations speak all the letters of your Lord's summons. They cry — "O vain world!" "O bitter sin!" "O short and uncertain time!" "O fair eternity that is above sickness of death!" "O kingly and princely Bridegroom, hasten glory's marriage, shorten time's short-spun and soon-broken thread, and conquer sin!" … And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" and answer ye with them, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus! come quickly!"

*The loss of a daughter.*Think her not absent who is in such a friend's house. Is she lost to you who is found to Christ? If she were with a dear friend, although you should never see her again, your care for her would be but small. Oh, now, is she not with a dear Friend? and gone higher, upon a certain hope that ye shall, in the Resurrection, see her again. … You would be sorry either to be, or to be esteemed, an atheist; and yet, not I, but the Apostle, thinketh those to be hopeless atheists who mourn excessively for the dead. … Follow her, but envy her not; for indeed it is self-love in us that makes us mourn for them that die in the Lord. Take heed, then, that in showing your affection in mourning for your daughter, ye be not, out of self-affection mourning for yourself. … Your daughter is plucked out of the fire, and she resteth from her labours; and your Lord, in that, is trying you, and casteth you in the fire; Go through all fire to your rest. … While ye prodigally spend time in mourning for her, ye are speedingly posting after her. Run with patience your race. Let God have His own; and ask of Him, instead of your daughter which He has taken from you, the daughter of faith, which is patience; and in patience possess your soul. Lift up your head: ye do not know how near your redemption doth draw.

As I have heard of the death of your daughter with heaviness of mind on your behalf, so am I much comforted that she has evidenced to yourself and other witnesses the hope of the resurrection of the dead. … Though we cannot outrun nor overtake them that are gone before, yet we shall quickly follow them; and the difference is, that she has the advantage of some months or years of the crown before you and her mother. As we do not take it ill if our children outrun us in the life of grace, why then are we sad if they outstrip us in the attainment of the life of glory? It would seem that there is more reason to grieve that children live behind us, than that they are glorified and die before us. All the difference is in some poor hungry accidents of time, less or more, sooner or later. … Ye would have lent her to glorify the Lord upon earth, and He has borrowed her (with promise to restore her again) to be an organ of the immediate glorifying of Himself in heaven. Sinless glorifying of God is better than sinful glorifying of Him.

*The loss of a son.* Dearest brother, go on and faint not. Something of yours is in heaven, beside … your exalted Saviour; and ye go on after your own. Time's thread is shorter by one inch than it was. I make bold, in Christ, to speak my poor thoughts to you concerning your son lately fallen asleep in the Lord. … I know that grace rooteth not out the affections of a mother, but putteth them upon His wheel who makes all things new, that they may be refined: therefore, sorrow for a dead child is allowed to you, though by measure and ounceweights. … He commandeth you to weep: and that princely One, who took up to heaven with Him a man's heart to be a compassionate High Priest, became your fellow and companion on earth by weeping for the dead. … The cup ye drink was at the lip of Jesus, and He drank of it; … and I conceive ye love it not the worse that it is thus sugared. Therefore, drink, and believe the resurrection of your son's body. … The good Husbandman may pluck His roses, and gather His lilies at midsummer, and, for aught I dare say, in the beginning of the first summer month; and He may transplant young trees out of the lower ground to the higher, where they may have more of the sun, and a more free air, at any season of the year. What is that to you or me? The goods are His own. The Creator of time and winds did a merciful injury (if I dare borrow the word) to nature, in landing the passenger so early. They love the sea too well who complain of a fair wind, and a desirable tide, and a speedy coming ashore in that land where all the inhabitants have everlasting joy upon their heads.

Violent death is a sharer with Christ in His death, which was violent. It makes not much what way we go to heaven: the happy home is all, where the roughness of the way shall be forgotten. He is gone home to a Friend's house, and made welcome, and the race is ended: time is recompensed with eternity, and copper with gold.

*The loss of a mother.*It has seemed good, as I hear, to Him that has appointed the bounds for the number of our months, to gather in a sheaf of ripe corn, in the death of your Christian mother, into His garner. It is the more evident that winter is near, when apples, without the violence of wind, fall of their own accord off the tree. She is now above the winter, with a little change of place, not of a Saviour; only she enjoyeth Him now without messages, and in His own immediate presence, from whom she heard by letters and messengers before. I grant that death is to her a very new thing; but heaven was prepared of old. And Christ (as enjoyed in His highest throne, and as loaded with glory, and incomparably exalted above men and angels … ) is to her a new thing, but so new as the first summer-rose, or the first fruits of that heavenly field; or as a new paradise to a traveller, broken and worn out of breath with the sad occurrences of a long and dirty way. … It cost her no more to go thither, than to suffer death to do her this piece of service: for by Him who was dead, and is alive, she was delivered from the second death. What, then, is the first death to the second? Not a scratch of the skin of a finger to the endless second death. And now she sitteth for eternity in a very considerable land, which has more than four summers in the year. Oh, what spring-time is there! … What a singing life is there! There is not a dumb bird in all that large field; but all sing and breathe out heaven, joy, glory, dominion to the high Prince of that new-found land. And, verily, the Land is the sweeter that Jesus Christ paid so dear a rent for it. And He is the glory of the land: all which, I hope, doth not so much mitigate and allay your grief for her part (though truly this should seem sufficient), as the unerring expectation of the dawning of that day upon yourself, and the hope that you have of the fruition of that same King and kingdom to your own soul.

*The loss of a wife.*If the place she has left were any other than a prison of sin, and the home she is gone to any other than where her Head and Saviour is King of the land, your grief had been more rational. But I trust your faith of the resurrection of the dead in Christ to glory and immortality, will lead you to suspend your longing for her, till the morning and dawning of that day when the archangel shall descend with a shout, to gather all the prisoners out of the grave, up to Himself. To believe this is best for you; and to be silent, because He has done it, is your wisdom.

*The loss of a husband.*It has pleased the Lord to remove your husband soon to his rest; but shall we be sorry that our loss is his gain, seeing his Lord would want his company no longer? Think not much of short summons; for, seeing he walked with his Lord in his life, and desired that Christ should be magnified in him at his death, ye ought to be silent and satisfied. … Know that the wounds of your Lord Jesus are the wounds of a lover, and that He will have compassion upon a sad-hearted servant; and that Christ has said, He will have the husband's room in your heart. He loved you in your first husband's time, and He is but wooing you still. Give Him heart and chair, house and all. He will not be made companion with any other. Love is full of jealousies: He will have all your love; and who should get it but He? I know that ye allow it upon Him. There are comforts both sweet and satisfying laid up for you: wait on.

10 THE WORD OF COMFORT

With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lustred with His love.
I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that plann'd,
When throned where glory dwells
In Immanuel's land.

"A word in season to him that is weary." — [Isaiah 50:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah 50.4&t=DBY).

Courage! up your heart! When ye do tire, He will bear both you and your burden. Yet a little while and ye shall see the salvation of God.

Ye cannot, ye must not, have a more pleasant or more easy condition here, than He had, who through afflictions was made perfect. We may indeed think, Cannot God bring us to heaven with ease and prosperity? Who doubteth but He can? But His infinite wisdom thinketh and decreeth the contrary; and we cannot see a reason for it, yet He has a most just reason. We never with our eyes saw our own soul; yet we have a soul. We see many rivers, but we know not their first spring and original fountain; yet they have a beginning. … When ye are come to the other side of the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the waters and to your wearisome journey, and shall see, in that clear glass of endless glory, nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom, ye shall then be forced to say, "If God had done otherwise with me than He has done, I had never come to the enjoying of this crown of glory." … Whether God come to His children with a rod or a crown, if He come Himself with it, it is well. Welcome, welcome, Jesus, what way soever Thou come, if we can get a sight of Thee.

Till He take His children out of the furnace that knows how long they should be tried, there is no deliverance; but after God's highest and fullest tide, that the sea of trouble is gone over the souls of His children, then comes the gracious long-hoped-for ebbing and drying up of the waters. … Do not faint; the wicked may hold the bitter cup to your head, but God mixeth it, and there is no poison in it. They strike, but God moves the rod; Shimei curses, but it is because the Lord bids him.

Ere it be long, our Master will be at us, and bring this whole world out, before the sun and daylight, in their blacks and whites. Happy are they who are found watching. Our sand glass is not so long as we need to weary; time will eat away and root out our woes and sorrow. Our heaven is in the bud, and growing up to an harvest. Why, then, should we not follow on, seeing that our span-length of time will come to an inch? Therefore I commend Christ to you, as the staff of your old age. Let Him now have the rest of your days. And think not much of a storm upon the ship that Christ saileth in: there shall no passenger fall over board, but the crazed ship and the sea-sick passenger shall come to land safe.

I long to know how matters stand betwixt Christ and your soul. I know that ye find Him still the longer the better: time cannot change Him in His love. Ye may yourself ebb and flow, rise and fall, wax and wane; but your Lord is this day as He was yesterday. And it is your comfort that your salvation is not rolled upon wheels of your own making, neither have ye to do with a Christ of your own shaping. God has singled out a Mediator strong and mighty: if ye and your burdens were as heavy as ten hills or hells, He is able to bear you, and save you to the uttermost. Your often seeking to Him cannot make you a burden to Him. I know that Christ compassionateth you, and makes a moan for you, in all your dumps, and under your downcastings; but it is good for you that He hideth Himself sometimes. It is not niceness, dryness, nor coldness of love, that causeth Christ to withdraw, that ye cannot see Him; but He knows that ye could not bear with upsails, a fair gale, a full moon, and a high spring-tide of His felt love, and always a fair summer-day and a summer-sun of a felt and possessed and embracing Lord Jesus. … He could not let out His rivers of love upon His own, but these rivers would be in hazard of loosening a young plant at the root. … Ye should, therefore, frist\* Christ's kindness, as to its sensible and full manifestations, till ye and He be above sun and moon. That is the country where ye will be enlarged for that love which ye dow† not now contain. … Lighten your heart by laying your all upon Him.

\*To put off for a time. † Can.

Faint not, because this world and ye are at yea and nay, and because this is not a home that laugheth upon you. The wise Lord, who knows you, will have it so, because He casteth a net for your love, to catch it and gather it in to Himself. Therefore, bear patiently the loss of children, and burdens, and other discontentments, either within or without the house: your Lord in them is seeking you, and seek ye Him. Let none be your love and choice, and the flower of your delights, but your Lord Jesus. Set not your heart upon the world, since God has not made it your portion; for it will not fall to you to get two portions, and to rejoice twice, and to be happy twice, and to have an upper heaven, and an under heaven too.

Weary not, but come in and see if there be not more in Christ than the tongue of men and angels can express. If ye seek a gate to heaven, the way is in Him, or He is it. What ye want is treasured up in Jesus; and He says, all His are yours.

Your life is hid with Christ in God, and therefore ye cannot be robbed of it. Our Lord handleth us, as fathers do their young children; they lay up jewels in a place, above the reach of the short arms of bairns, else bairns would put up their hands and take them down, and lose them soon. So has our Lord done with our spiritual life. Jesus Christ is the high coffer in the which our Lord has hid our life; we children are not able to reach up our arm so high as to take down that life and lose it; it is in our Christ's hand. … So long as this life is not hurt, all other troubles are but touches in the heel.

Let us not weary: the miles to that land are fewer and shorter than when we first believed. Strangers are not wise to quarrel with their host, and complain of their lodging. It is a foul way but a fair home. … The hope of it in the end is a heartsome convoy in the way.

There is a rest for the people of God. Christ possesseth it now one thousand six hundred years before many of His members but it weareth not out.

The saints know not the length and largeness of the sweet earnest, and of the sweet green sheaves before the harvest, that might be had on this side of the water, if we would take more pains. … We all go to heaven with less earnest, and lighter purses of the hoped-for sum, than otherwise we might do, if we took more pains to win further in upon Christ, in this pilgrimage of our absence from Him.

Oh that every hair of my head, and every member and every bone in my body, were a man to witness a fair confession for Him! I would think all too little for Him. When I look over beyond the line, and beyond death, to the laughing side of the world, I triumph, and ride upon the high places of Jacob; howbeit otherwise I am faint, dead-hearted, cowardly man, oft borne down, and hungry in waiting for the marriage supper of the Lamb. Nevertheless, I think it the Lord's wise love that feeds us with hunger, and makes us fat with wants and desertions.

We are fallen in winnowing and trying times. I am glad that your breath serveth you to run to the end, in the same condition and way wherein ye have walked these twenty years past. It is either the way of peace, or we are yet in our sins, and have missed the way. The Lord, it is true, has stained the pride of all our glory; and now, last of all, the sun has gone down upon many of the prophets. But stumble not; men are but men, and God appeareth more and more to be God, and Christ is still Christ. … A stronger than I am had almost stumbled me and cast me down. But oh what mercy is it to discern between what is Christ's and what is man's, and what way the hue, colour, and lustre of gifts of grace dazzle and deceive our weak eyes! Oh to be dead to all things that are below Christ, were it even a created heaven and created grace! Holiness is not Christ; nor are the blossoms and flowers of the Tree of Life the tree itself. Men and creatures may wind themselves between us and Christ; and, therefore, the Lord has done much to take out of the way all betwixt Him and us. … The fairest things, and most eminent in Britain, are stained, and have lost their lustre; only, only Christ keepeth His greenness and beauty, and remaineth what He was. Oh, if He were more and more excellent to our apprehensions than ever He was (whose excellency is above all apprehensions), and still more and more sweet to our taste! I care for nothing, if so be that I were nearer to Him. And yet He fleeth not from me: I flee from Him, but He pursueth.

The scarcity of faith in the earth says, "We are hard upon the last nick of time": blessed are those who keep their garments clean against the Bridegroom's coming.

Make you ready to meet the Lord; and rest and sleep in the love of that Fairest among the sons of men. Desire Christ's beauty. Give out all your love to Him, and let none fall by. Learn in prayer to speak to Him.

The Lord has told you what ye should be doing till He come. "Wait and hasten," says Peter, "for the coming of our Lord." All is night that is here, in respect of ignorance and daily ensuing troubles, one always making way to another, as the ninth wave of the sea to the tenth; therefore sigh and long for the dawning of that morning, and the breaking of that day of the coming of the Son of Man, when the shadows shall flee away. Persuade yourself the King is coming; read His letter sent before Him, "Behold, I come quickly." Wait with the wearied night-watch for the breaking of the eastern sky, and think that ye have not a morrow. As the wise father said, who, being invited against tomorrow to dine with his friend, answered, "These many days I have had no morrow at all."

11 THE PILGRIM

I have wrestled on towards Heaven,
'Gainst storm, and wind, and tide:—
Now, like a weary traveller,
That leaneth on his guide,
Amid the shades of evening,
While sinks life's ling'ring sand,
I hail the glory dawning
From Immanuel's land.

"I am a stranger in the earth." — [Psalm 119:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 119.19&t=DBY).

I persuade myself that this world is to you an unco\* inn; and that ye are like a traveller, who has his bundle upon his back, and his staff in his hand, and his feet upon the door-threshold. Go forward, in the strength of your Lord (let the world bide at home and keep the house), with your face toward Him, who longeth more for a sight of you than ye can do for Him. Ere it be long He will see us. I hope to see you laugh as cheerfully after noon, as ye have mourned, before noon. The hand of the Lord, the hand of the Lord be with you in your journey. What have ye to do here? This is not your mountain of rest. Arise, then, and set your foot up the mountain; go up out of the wilderness, leaning upon the shoulder of your Beloved. If ye knew the welcome that abides you when ye come home, ye would hasten your pace; for ye shall see your Lord put up His own holy hand to your face, and wipe all tears from your eyes; and I trow, then ye shall have some joy at heart.

\* Strange.

Be not cast down in heart to hear that the world barketh at Christ's strangers; they do it because their Lord has chosen them out of this world. And this is one of our Lord's reproaches, to be hated and ill-entreated by men. The stranger, in an uncouth country, must take with a smoky inn and coarse cheer, a hard bed, and a barking ill-tongued host. It is not long to the day, and he will to his journey upon the morrow, and leave them all. Indeed, our fair morning is at hand, the day-star is near the rising, and we are not many miles from home. What matters ill entertainment in the smoky inns of this miserable life? We are not to stay here, and we will be dearly welcome to Him whom we go to. … When I shall see you clothed in white raiment, washed in the blood of the Lamb. … and a crown upon your head, and following our Lamb and lovely Lord whithersoever He goes, — you will think nothing of all these days; and you shall then rejoice, and no man will take your joy from you. It is certain there is not much sand to run in your Lord's sand-glass, and that day is at hand; and till then your Lord in this life is giving you some little feasts. It is true you see Him not now as you shall see Him then. Your well-beloved stands now behind the wall looking out at the window, and you see but a little of His face. Then, you shall see all His face and all the Saviour, the loveliest person among the children of men. … You will have cause to hold up your heart in remembrance and hope of that fair, long summer-day. … Remember you are in the body, and it is the lodging-house: and you may not, without offending the Lord, suffer the old walls of that house to fall down through want of necessary food. Your body is the dwelling-house of the Spirit; and therefore, for the love you carry to the sweet Guest, give a due regard to His house of clay. When He looseth the wall, why not? Welcome, Lord Jesus! But it is a fearful sin in us, by hurting the body by fasting, to loose one stone or the least piece of timber in it, for the house is not your own.

Make others to see Christ in you, moving, doing, speaking, and thinking. Your actions will smell of Him if He be in you. There is an instinct in the new-born babes of Christ, like the instinct of nature that leads birds to build their nests, and bring forth their young, and love such and such places, as woods, forests, and wildernesses, better than other places. The instinct of nature makes a man love his mother-country above all countries; the instinct of renewed nature, and supernatural grace, will lead to such and such works, as to love your country above, to sigh to be clothed with your house not made with hands, and to call your borrowed prison here below a borrowed prison, and to look upon it servant-like and pilgrim-like.

The sea-sick passenger shall come to land; Christ will be the first to meet you on the shore. … Keep the King's highway. Go on (in the strength of the Lord), in haste, as if ye had not leisure to speak to the innkeepers by the way. He is over beyond time, on the other side of the water, who thinketh long for you.

I am, in this house of pilgrimage, every way in good case: Christ is most kind and loving to my soul. It pleaseth Him to feast, with His unseen consolations, a stranger and an exiled prisoner; and I would not exchange my Lord Jesus with all the comfort out of heaven.

Sit far back from the walls of this pest-house, even the pollutions of this defiling world. Keep your taste, your love, and hope in heaven; it is not good that your love and your Lord should be in two sundry countries. Up, after your lover, that ye and He may be together. A King from heaven has sent for you: by faith He showeth you the New Jerusalem, and takes you alongst in the Spirit, through all the ease-rooms and dwelling-houses in heaven, and says, "All these are thine; this palace is for thee and Christ." … Take with you in your journey what you may carry with you, your conscience, faith, hope, patience, meekness, goodness, brotherly kindness; for such wares as these are of great price in the high and new country whither ye go. As for other things, which are but the world's vanity and trash, since they are but the house-sweepings, ye will do best not to carry them with you. Ye found them here; leave them here, and let them keep the house … Fasten your grips fast upon Christ … I rejoice that He is in heaven before me. God send a joyful meeting; and, in the meantime, the traveller's charges for the way, I mean a burden of Christ's love, to sweeten the journey, and to encourage a breathless runner; for when I lose breath, climbing up the mountain, He makes new breath.

It is not a smooth and easy way, neither will your weather be fair and pleasant; but whosoever has seen the invisible God, and the fair City, makes no reckoning of losses and crosses.

A borrowed lodging and some years' house-room, and bread and water, and fire, and bed and candle, are all a part of the pension of my King and Lord; to whom I owe thanks, and not to a creature. I thank God that God is God, and Christ is Christ, and the earth the earth, and the devil the devil, and the world the world, and that sin is sin, and that everything is what it is; because He has taught me in my wilderness not to shuffle my Lord Jesus, nor to intermix Him with creature-vanities, nor to spin or twine Christ or His sweet love in one web, or in one thread, with the world and the things thereof. Oh, if I could hold and keep Christ all alone, and mix Him with nothing! … But we are still ill scholars, and will go in at heaven's gates wanting the half of our lesson; and shall still be bairns, so long as we are under time's hands, and till eternity cause a sun to arise in our souls that shall give us wit.

It were now a desirable life to send away our love to heaven. And well it becometh us to wait for our appointed change, yet so as we should be meditating thus: "Is there a new world above the sun and moon? And is there such a blessed company harping and singing hallelujahs to the Lamb up above? Why, then, are we taken with a vain life of sighing and sinning? Oh, where is our wisdom, that we sit still, laughing, eating, sleeping prisoners, and do not pack up all our best things for the journey, desiring always to be clothed with our house from above, not made with hands! "Ah! we savour not the things that are above, nor do we smell of glory ere we come thither; but we transact and agree with time, for a new lease of clay mansions. Behold, He comes!

It is a good country we are going to, and there is ill lodging in this smoky house of the world, in which we are yet living. … My counsel is, that ye come out and leave the multitude, and let Christ have your company. Let them take clay and this present world who love it. Christ is a more worthy and noble portion: blessed are those who get Him.

12 THE ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY

The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of Heaven breaks,
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair sweet morn awakes:
Dark, dark has been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory — glory dwells
In Immanuel's land.

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." — [Romans 8:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans 8.18&t=DBY).

Oh happy soul for evermore, who can rightly compare this life with that long-lasting life to come, and can balance the weighty glory of the one with the light golden vanity of the other!

When we shall come home, and when our heads shall find the weight of the eternal crown of glory, and when we shall look back to pains and sufferings, then shall we see life and sorrow to be less than one step or stride from a prison to glory; and that our little inch of time-suffering is not worthy of our first night's welcome-home to heaven.

If ye would lay the price ye give out (which is but some few years' pain and trouble) beside the commodities ye are to receive, ye would see they are not worthy to be laid in the balance together: but it is nature that makes you look what ye give out, and weakness of faith that hindereth you to see what ye shall take in. … Think ye much to follow the heir of the crown, who had experience of sorrows, and was acquainted with grief? It were pride to aim to be above the King's Son: it is more than we deserve, that we are equals in glory, in a manner.

There has not been so much taken from your time of ease and created joys, as eternity shall add to your heaven. Ye know that when one day in heaven has paid you (yea, and overpaid your blood, bonds, sorrow, and sufferings), that it would trouble angels' understanding to lay the count of that surplus of glory which eternity can and will give you. Oh but your sandglass of sufferings and losses comes to little, when it shall be counted and compared with the glory that abides you on the other side of the water! … If your mind could fancy as many created heavens as time has had minutes, trees have had leaves, and clouds have had raindrops, since the first stone of the creation was laid, they should not make half a scale in which to bear and weigh boundless excellency. And, therefore, the King whose marks ye are bearing, and whose dying ye carry about with you in your body, is, out of all cry and consideration, beyond and above all our thoughts.

Since ye have not now many years to your endless eternity, and know not how soon the sky above your head will rive, and the Son of Man will be seen in the clouds of heaven, what better and wiser course can ye take, than to think that your one foot is here, and your other foot in the life to come, and to leave off loving, desiring, or grieving for the wants that shall be made up when your Lord and ye shall meet. … Ye shall then rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and your joy shall none take from you. It is enough, that the Lord has promised you great things, only let the time of bestowing them be in His own carving. It is not for us to set an hourglass to the Creator of time.

When your Head shall appear, your Bridegroom and Lord, your day shall then dawn, and it shall never have an afternoon, nor an evening shadow.

Ye cannot be too often awakened to go forward towards your city, since your way is long, and (for anything ye know) your day is short. And your Lord requireth of you, as ye advance in years and steal forward insensibly towards eternity, that your faith may grow and ripen for the Lord's harvest. For the great Husbandman giveth a season to His fruits that they may come to maturity, and having gotten their fill of the tree they may be then shaken and gathered in for use; whereas the wicked rot upon the tree, and their branch shall not be green. "He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive." It is God's mercy to you, that He giveth you your fill, even to loathing, of this bitter world, that ye may willingly leave it. And at last, having trampled under feet all the rotten pleasures that are under sun and moon, and having rejoiced as though ye rejoiced not, and having bought as though ye possessed not, ye may arrive at our Lord's harbour, and be made welcome, as one of those who have ever had one foot loose from the earth, longing for that place where your soul shall feast and banquet for ever and ever. … and where ye shall see the fair face of the man Christ, even the beautiful face that was once for your cause more marred than any of the visages of the sons of men, and was all covered with spitting and blood. Be content to wade through the waters betwixt you and glory with Him, holding His hand fast, for He knows all the fords. Howbeit ye may be ducked, but ye cannot drown, being in His company. … Be not afraid, therefore, when ye come even to the black and swelling river of death, to put in your foot and wade after Him. The current, how strong soever, cannot carry you down the water to hell: the Son of God, His death and resurrection, are stepping-stones and a stay to you; set down your feet by faith upon these stones, and go through as on dry land. If ye knew what He is preparing for you, ye would be too glad. He will not (it may be), give you a full draught till you come up to the well-head and drink, yea, drink abundantly, of the pure river of the water of life, that proceedeth out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Tire not, weary not; when ye are got up thither, and have cast your eyes to view the golden city, and the fair and never-withering Tree of Life, that beareth twelve manner of fruits every month, ye shall then say, "Four-and-twenty hours' abode in this place is worth threescore and ten years' sorrow upon earth."

Oh, if He would fold the heavens together like an old cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way, and make ready in haste the Lamb's wife for her Husband! Since He looked upon me my heart is not my own; He has run away to heaven with it. … Look up to Him and love Him. Oh, love and live!

There shall be no complaints on either side, in heaven. There shall be none there, but He and we, the Bridegroom and the bride; devils, temptations, trials, desertions, losses, sad hearts, pain, and death, shall be all put out of play; and the devil must give up his office of tempting. Oh, blessed is the soul whose hope has a face looking straight out to that day. It is not our part to make a treasure here; anything, under the covering of heaven, which we can build upon, is but ill ground and a sandy foundation. Every good thing, except God, wanteth a bottom, and cannot stand its lone; how then can it bear the weight of us?

I know that all created power would sink under me, if I should lean down upon it; and, therefore, it is better to rest on God, than to sink or fall; and we weak souls must have a bottom and a being-place, for we cannot stand our lone.

Christ and His cross are not separable in this life; howbeit Christ and His cross part at heaven's door, for there is no house-room for crosses in heaven. One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, one loss, one thought of trouble, cannot find lodging there: they are but the marks of our Lord Jesus down in this wide inn, and stormy country, on this side of death. Sorrow and the saints are not married together; or, suppose it were so, heaven would make a divorce. I find that His sweet presence eateth out the bitterness of sorrow and suffering. I think it a sweet thing that Christ says of my cross, "Half mine"; and that He divideth these sufferings with me, and takes the larger share to Himself; nay, that I and my whole cross are wholly Christ's.

All the saints have their own measure of winter, before their eternal summer. Oh for the long day, and the high sun, and the fair garden, and the King's Great City up above these visible heavens! What God layeth on let us suffer; for some have one cross, some seven, some ten, some half a cross. Yet all the saints have whole and full joy.

I would praise Him for this, that the whole army of the redeemed ones sit rent-free in heaven.

Oh, how sweet to be wholly Christ's, and wholly in Christ! to be out of the creatures owning, and made complete in Christ! to dwell in Immanuel's high and blessed land, and live in that sweetest air where no wind bloweth but the breathings of the Holy Ghost, no seas nor floods flow but the pure water of life, that proceedeth from under the throne and from the Lamb! no planting but the Tree of Life that yieldeth twelve manner of fruits every month! What do we here but sin and suffer? Oh, when shall the night be gone, the shadows flee away, and the morning of that long, long day, without cloud or night dawn? The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Oh, when shall the Lamb's wife be ready, and the Bridegroom say, "Come!"

Get up in the strength of the Lord; get over the water to possess that good land. It is better than a land of olives and wine-trees; for the Tree of Life, that beareth twelve manner of fruits every month, is there before you; and a pure river of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, is there. Your time is short; therefore lose no time. Gracious and faithful is He who has called you to His kingdom and glory. The city is yours by free conquest, and by promise; and, therefore, let no unco lord-idol put you from your own.

I cannot tell you what is to come. Yet I may speak as our Lord doth of it. The foundation of the city is pure gold, clear as crystal; the twelve ports are set with precious stones; if orchard and rivers commend a soil upon earth, there is a paradise there, wherein groweth the tree of life that beareth twelve manner of fruits every month, which is seven score and four harvests in the year; and there is there a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; and the city has no need of the light of the sun or moon, or of a candle, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is the light thereof. Believe and hope for this, till ye see and enjoy.

13 THE EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST

Oh! Christ He is the Fountain,
The deep sweet well of love!
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above:
There, to an ocean fulness,
His mercy doth expand,
And glory — glory dwells
In Immanuel's land.

"Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." — [Psalm 73:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 73.25&t=DBY).

"What is thy Beloved more than another? … My Beloved is … the chiefest among ten thousand. … He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my friend." — [Canticles 5:9-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Canticles 5.9-16&t=DBY).

*Christ and His fulness.*Who knows how far it is to the bottom of our Christ's fulness, and to the ground of our heaven? Who ever weighed Christ in a pair of balances? Who has seen the foldings and plies, and the heights and depths of that glory which is in Him, and kept for us?

He is every way higher, and deeper, and broader than the shallow and ebb handbreadth of my short and dim light can take up; and, therefore, I would that my heart could be silent, and sit down in the learnedly ignorant wondering at the Lord, whom men and angels cannot comprehend. I know that the noonday light of the highest angels, who see Him face to face, sees not the borders of His infiniteness. They apprehend God near hand; but they cannot comprehend Him. … Oh, let this bit of love of ours, this inch and half-span length of heavenly longing, meet with Thy infinite Love! Oh, if the little I have were swallowed up with the infiniteness of that excellency which is in Christ! … Our wants should soon be swallowed up with His fulness.

*Christ and His excellencies.* "Come and see" makes Christ to be known in His excellency and glory. … It is little to see Christ in a book, as men do the world in a card. They talk of Christ by the book and the tongue, and no more; but to come nigh Christ, and hause\* Him, and embrace Him, is another thing.

\*Greet or salute.

Look into those depths (without a bottom) of loveliness, sweetness, beauty, excellency, glory, goodness, grace, and mercy, that are in Christ; and ye shall then cry down the whole world, and all the glory of it, even when it is come to the summer-bloom; and ye shall cry, "Up with Christ, up with Christ's Father, up with eternity of glory!"

*Christ and His love.*His love has neither brim nor bottom; His love is like Himself, it passeth all natural understanding. I go to fathom it with my arms; but it is as if a child would take the globe of sea and land in his two short arms.

They are happy evermore who are over head and ears in the love of Christ, and know no sickness but love-sickness for Christ, and feel no pain but the pain of an absent and hidden Well-beloved. We run our souls out of breath and tire them, in coursing and galloping after our night-dreams (such are the rovings of our miscarrying hearts), to get some created good thing in this life, and on this side of death. We would fain stay and spin out a heaven to ourselves, on this side of the water; but sorrow, want, changes, crosses, and sin are both woof and warp in that ill-spun web. Oh, how sweet and dear are those thoughts that are still upon the things that are above! and how happy are they who are longing to have little sand in their glass, and to have time's thread cut, and can cry to Christ, "Lord Jesus, have over; come and fetch the dreary passenger! "I wish that our thoughts were more frequently than they are upon our country. Oh, but heaven casteth a sweet smell afar off to those who have spiritual smelling! God has made many fair flowers; but the fairest of them all is heaven, and the Flower of all flowers is Christ. … Alas, that there is such a scarcity of love, and of lovers, to Christ amongst us all! Fy, fy, upon us, who love fair things, as fair gold, fair houses, fair lands, fair pleasures, fair honours, and fair persons, and do not pine and melt away with love to Christ! … If those frothy, fluctuating, and restless hearts of ours would come all about Christ, and look into His love, to bottomless love, to the depth of mercy, to the unsearchable riches of His grace, to inquire after and search into the beauty of God in Christ, they would be swallowed up in the depth and height, length and breadth of His goodness. … God send me no more, for my part of paradise, but Christ: and surely I were rich enough, and as well heavened as the best of them, if Christ were my heaven.

Hiding of His face is wise love. His love is not fond, doating, and reasonless. … Nay, His bairns must often have the frosty cold side of the hill, and set down both their bare feet among the thorns, His love has eyes, and, in the meantime, is looking on. Our pride must have winter weather to rot it. … The sea-sick passenger shall come to land; Christ will be the first to meet you on the shore. … Keep the King's highway. Go on (in the strength of the Lord), in haste, as if ye had not leisure to speak to the innkeepers by the way. He is over beyond time, on the other side of the water, who thinketh long for you.

Put Christ's love to the trial, and put upon it our burdens, and then it will appear love indeed. We employ not His love, and therefore we know it not.

Would to God that all cold-blooded, fainthearted soldiers of Christ would look again to Jesus, and to His love; and when they look, I would have them to look again and again, and fill themselves with beholding of Christ's beauty; and I dare say then that Christ would come into great court and request with many. … But when I have spoken of Him, till my head rive, I have said just nothing. … Set ten thousand thousand new-made worlds of angels and elect men, and double them in number, ten thousand, thousand, thousand times; let their heart and tongues be ten thousand thousand times more agile and large, than the heart and tongues of the seraphim that stand with six wings before Him, when they have said all for the glorifying and praising of the Lord Jesus, they have but spoken little or nothing; His love will abide all possible creatures' praise. … I am confounded with His incomparable love, and that He doth so great things for my soul, and has got never yet anything of me worth the speaking of.

Running-over love (that vast, huge, boundless love of Christ) is the only thing I most fain would be in hands with. He knows that I have little but the love of that love; and that I shall be happy, suppose I never get another heaven but only an eternal, lasting feast of that love. But suppose my wishes were poor, He is not poor: Christ, all the seasons of the year, is dropping sweetness. If I had vessels, I might fill them; but my old, riven, and running-out dish, even when I am at the Well, can bring little away. Nothing but glory will make tight and fast our leaking and rifty vessels.

I want nothing but ways of expressing Christ's love. A full vessel would have a vent. … Oh! it is a pity that there were not many imprisoned for Christ, were it for no other purpose than to write books and love-songs of the love of Christ. This love would keep all created tongues of men and angels in exercise, and busy night and day to speak of it. Alas! I can speak nothing of it, but wonder at three things in His love: *First,*freedom. O that lumps of sin should get such love for nothing! *Secondly,* the sweetness of His love. I give over either to speak or write of it; but those that feel it, may better bear witness what it is. But it is so sweet, that, next to Christ Himself, nothing can match it. … And, *thirdly,*what power and strength are in His love! … it can climb a steep hill; and swim through water and not drown; and sing in the fire and find no pain; and triumph in losses, prisons, sorrows, exile, disgrace, and laugh and rejoice in death. … Oh, when will we get our day, and heart's fill of that love! … O time, time! how dost thou torment the souls of those that would be swallowed up of Christ's love, because thou movest so slowly! … I know it is far after noon, and nigh the marriage-supper of the Lamb; the table is covered already. O Well-beloved, run, run fast! O fair day, when wilt thou dawn! O shadows, flee away!

Oh, that our souls would so fall at odds with the love of this world, as to think of it as a traveller doth of a drink of water, which is not any part of his treasure, but goes away with the using! for ten miles' journey makes that drink to him as nothing. Oh, that we had as soon done with this world, and could as quickly dispatch the love of it! But as a child cannot hold two apples in his little hand, but the one putteth the other out of its room, so neither can we be masters and lords of two loves. Blessed were we, if we could make ourselves master of that invaluable treasure, the love of Christ; or rather suffer ourselves to be mastered and subdued to Christ's love, so as Christ were our "all things," and all other things our nothings, and the refuse of our delights.

His love came upon a withered creature, whether I would or not; and yet by coming it procured from me a welcome. A heart of iron, and iron doors, will not hold Christ out. I give Him leave to break iron locks and come in, and that is all.

Keep yourself in the love of Christ, and stand far back from the pollutions of the world.

My prayer to our Lord is, that ye may be sick of love for Him, who died of love for you, — I mean your Saviour Jesus. And O sweet were that sickness to be soul-sick for Him!

*Christ, the Same.*Jesus, who upon earth ate and drank with publicans and sinners, and spake with harlots, and put up His holy hand and touched the leper's filthy skin, and came evermore nigh sinners, even now in glory, is yet the same Lord. His honour and His great court in heaven has not made Him forget His poor friends on earth. In Him honours change not manners, and He doth yet desire your company.

*Christ — Himself.*Our love to Him should begin on earth, as it shall be in heaven; for the bride takes not, by a thousand degrees, so much delight in her wedding garment as she doth in her bridegroom; so we, in the life to come, howbeit clothed with glory as with a robe, shall not be so much affected with the glory that goes about us, as with the bridegroom's joyful face and presence.

Love would have the company of the party loved; and my greatest pain is the want of Him, not of His joys and comforts, but of a near union and communion.

*Christ beyond compare.*Keep your first love with Jesus, fairer than all the children of men. … There is none like Him; I would not exchange one smile of His lovely face with kingdoms. Let others take their silly, feckless heaven in this life. Envy them not; but let your soul, cast at all things and disdain them, except one only: either Christ or nothing.

I know not a thing worth the buying but heaven; and my own mind is, if comparison were made betwixt Christ and heaven, I would sell heaven with my blessing, and buy Christ.

The saints, at their best, are but strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable sweetness of Christ.

Oh, what price can be given for Him. Angels cannot weigh Him. Oh, His weight, His worth, His sweetness, His over-passing beauty! If men and angels would come and look to that great and princely One, their ebbness could never take up His depth, their narrowness could never comprehend His breadth, height, and length. If ten thousand worlds of angels were created, they might all tire themselves in wondering at His beauty, and begin again to wonder.

O consider His loveliness and beauty, and that there is nothing which can commend and make fair heaven, or earth, or the creature, that is not in Him in infinite perfection; for fair sun and fair moon are black, and think shame to shine upon His fairness.\* … Be homely, and hunger for a feast and fill of His love; for that is the borders and march of heaven. Nothing has a nearer resemblance to the colour, and hue, and lustre of heaven than Christ loved, and to breathe out love-words and love-sighs for Him. Remember what He is. When twenty thousand millions of heaven's lovers have worn their hearts threadbare of love, all is nothing, yea — less than nothing, to His matchless worth and excellency. Oh, so broad and so deep as the sea of His desirable loveliness is! Glorified spirits, triumphing angels, the crowned and exalted lovers of heaven, stand without His loveliness, and cannot put a circle on it. … I but spill and lose words in speaking highly of Him who will bide and be above the music and songs of heaven, and never be enough praised by us all.

\*Alluding to [Isaiah 24:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah 24.23&t=DBY).

The discourses of angels, or love-books written by the congregation of seraphim (all their wits being conjoined and melted into one), would for ever be in the nether side of truth, and of plentifully declaring the thing as it is. The infiniteness, the boundlessness of that incomparable excellency that is in Jesus, is a great word.

If I had as many angels' tongues as there have fallen drops of rain since the creation, or as there are leaves of trees in all the forests of the earth, or stars in the heaven, to praise, yet my Lord Jesus would ever be behind with me.

Put the beauty of ten thousand thousand worlds of paradises, like the garden of Eden, in one; put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colours, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness, in one: oh, what a fair and excellent thing would that be! And yet it would be less to that fair and dearest Well-beloved Christ, than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths. Oh, but Christ is heaven's wonder, and earth's wonder! What marvel that His bride says, "He is altogether lovely!"

The Bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of Grace —
Not at the crown He gifteth,
But on His piercèd hand:
The *Lamb*is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land.

Extracts from the writings of Thomas Watson.

Gleanings from the Past Vol. 3
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**Preface**

The servant of the Lord, from whose writings these extracts have been culled, prefaced one of his works by saying, "There are two things which I have always looked upon as difficult: the one is to make the wicked sad; the other is to make the godly joyful." Alas! This sad world still holds many a careless sinner, and not a few sorrowful saints, though two hundred and fifty years have passed since these words were uttered. May God so speed this little book, that, in His good hand, it may be the means of arousing some sleeping conscience, and dropping a word of cheer into some sorrowful heart.  H. S. 1915.

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Comparatively little is known of the personal history of Thomas Watson. We know nothing of his parentage, and are quite ignorant of the time and place of his birth, or where his early years were spent.

His name appears in Kennet's "Register and Chronicle," as one of a number of other famous Puritan ministers educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and, tradition reports, that, while at Cambridge, he was a most laborious student.

It would appear that after leaving the University, he lived for some time with the family of Mary, the widow of Sir Horace Vere, baron of Tilbury.

In 1646 Watson married Abigail daughter of John Beadle, the rector of Barnston, Essex. In the same year he was appointed rector of the parish of St. Stephen's, Walbrook. He became highly esteemed in the City of London as a man of considerable learning, a popular preacher, and a man of personal piety and prayer. Calamy, in his "Abridgements," relates that on a certain day when Watson was in the pulpit, "among other hearers, there came in that Reverend and learned Prelate, Bishop Richardson, who was so well pleased with his sermon, but especially with his prayer after it, that he followed him home, to give him thanks; and earnestly desired a copy of his prayer. 'Alas!' said Mr. Watson, 'that is what I cannot give; for I do not use to pen my prayers; it was no studied thing, but uttered as God enabled me from the abundance of my heart and affections, *pro re nata*.' Upon which the good Bishop went away wondering that any man could pray in that manner, *ex tempore*." From this little incident we may judge that Thomas Watson realised the truth of Rutherford's touching words, "There be so many other things that are a-pouring out of the soul in prayer; as groaning, sighing, looking up to heaven, breathing, weeping; that it cannot be imagined, how far short printed and read prayers come of vehement praying: for you cannot put sighs, groans, tears, breathing, and such heart-messengers down in a printed book; nor can paper and ink lay your heart, in all its sweet affections, out before God."

During the Civil War, Watson inclined strongly to Presbyterian views. He joined some sixty Presbyterian ministers in an appeal to Cromwell, declaring their abhorrence of all violence against the person of the King, and urging him, and his army, to have no concern in it.

In 1651 he allowed himself to become involved, with others, in political correspondence with Charles II, then in Holland, and spent some months in the Tower for his pains.

On regaining his liberty he continued his charge at St. Stephen's until the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. By this intolerant Act upwards of two thousand clergy were driven from their parishes; among them the wisest and most godly in the land. For conscience' sake the greater part of these ejected ministers had, henceforth, to face poverty and reproach, suffering and trial.

Thomas Watson was one of the London ejected ministers. His touching farewell address is still extant. The closing paragraph is worth quoting:

"The hour is come wherein the sun is setting on not a few of the prophets: our work seems to be at an end; our pulpits and places must know us no more. You are not ignorant what things there are imposed on us as the condition of our continuing our ministration. I must profess before God, angels, and men, that my non-submission is not from any disloyalty to authority or any factious disposition, but because I dare not do anything concerning which my heart tells me the Lord says, 'Do it not.' I feel I must part with my conscience or with my ministry. I choose, therefore, that my ministry be sealed up by my sufferings, rather than be lengthened out by a lie; but I shall, through the grace of God, endeavour patiently and peaceably to suffer as a Christian. And now welcome the cross of Christ; welcome reproach; welcome poverty, scorn, and contempt, or whatever may befall me. This morning I had a flock and you had a pastor, but now behold a pastor without a flock, and a flock without a shepherd! This morning, I had a house, now I have none. This morning, I had a living, now I have none: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.' And thus, brethren, I bid you all farewell. 'Finally, brethren, farewell.'"

After his ejectment he continued to exercise his ministry in a private way. Following upon the Fire of London in 1666, he fitted up a large room for preaching, and later, at the time of the Declaration of Indulgence in 1672, he obtained a license for the use of the great hall of Crosby House, then belonging to Sir John Langham, a patron of evangelical nonconformity.

After preaching there for several years, his health gave way and he left the City for the quiet of Barnston in Essex. His end came suddenly in 1686, while engaged in prayer in his private room. He was buried on 28th July, 1686, in the grave of his father-in-law, John Beadle.

H. S.

1 WARNINGS

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." — [Isaiah 5:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah 5.6&t=DBY).

SIN is the source of our sorrows, and the grave of our comforts. Sin is the sinner's bond ([Acts 8:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 8.23&t=DBY)), and the saint's burden ([Ps. 38:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 38.3&t=DBY))

Little sins (suppose them so) yet multiplied become great. What is less than a grain of sand? yet when multiplied, what is heavier than the sand of the sea? A little sum multiplied is great; a little sin, unrepented of, will damn; as one leak in the ship, if it be not looked to, will sink it. You would think it is no great matter to forget God, yet it has a heavy doom ([Ps. 50:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 50.22&t=DBY)).

It is sad to have old age and old sins. It is hard to pull up an old tree that is rooted, it is easier to cut it down for the fire.

*Procrastination*. When the lamp is almost out, the strength exhausted, and old age comes on, then mourning for sin will be in season. Men do not argue thus in other cases; they do not say, it is too soon to be rich; they will not put off the getting of riches to old age; no, here they take the first opportunity. When God calls for mourning and thou art deaf, when thou callest for mercy God may be dumb ([Prov. 1:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 1.24&t=DBY), [28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov 1.28&t=DBY)). God may take the latter time to judge thee in because thou didst not take the former time to repent in. Though true mourning for sin be never too late, yet late mourning is seldom true. That repentance is seldom true-hearted which is grey-headed. The mariner in a storm throws his goods overboard, not but that he loves them, but he is afraid they will sink the ship; when men fall to weeping, work late, and would cast their sins overboard, it is for the most part only for fear lest they should sink the ship and drown in hell.

Old age is no good age to repent in. A tender plant is easily removed, but it is hard to pluck up an old tree that is rooted. It were a very unwise course for a mariner, while the ship is sound, the tackling strong, the wind favourable, the sea calm, to lie idle at anchor; and when the ship begins to leak, and the tempest to rise, now to launch forth and hoist up sails for a voyage; so is he who neglects the time of health and strength, and when old age comes, and his tackling is even broken, now begins his voyage towards heaven. How unworthy is this, for men to give the devil their strength and marrow, and then come and lay their old bones upon God's altar? A sinner in the time of his old age, sleeps between death and the devil. It is just, that he who forgets God in the time of health, God should forget him in the time of sickness.

*False peace.* "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are In peace" ([Luke 11:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 11.21&t=DBY)). This is the devil's peace; he rocks men in the cradle of security; he cries Peace, peace, when men are on the precipice of hell. The seeming peace a sinner has, is not from the knowledge of his happiness, but from the ignorance of his danger. … True peace is after trouble. God convinces and humbles the soul; then He speaks peace. Many say they have peace, but is this peace before a storm, or after it? True peace is after trouble. First there was the earthquake, and then the fire, and then the still small voice ([1 Kings 19:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Kings 19.12&t=DBY)). God pours the golden oil of peace into broken hearts.

*False repentance.*Many think they repent when it is not the offence, but the penalty troubles them; not the treason but the blood-axe. Some think they repent when they shed a few tears, as Saul did for his unkindness to David, "And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. And he said to David … thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil" ([1 Sam. 24:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Sam. 24.16-17&t=DBY)). But for all this he follows David again. So men can lift up their voice and weep for sins, yet follow their sins again. Others forsake their sin, but still retain their love for it in their hearts, like the snake that casts the coat but keeps the sting.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" ([Matt. 5:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 5.4&t=DBY)). We must go through the valley of tears to Paradise. Mourning were a sad subject to treat on, were it not that it has blessedness going before, and comfort coming after.

There is a mourning that is far from making one blessed. Many can weep over a dead child that cannot mourn over a crucified Saviour. Worldly sorrows hasten our funerals. The sorrow of the world works death ([2 Cor. 7:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 7.10&t=DBY)).

There is a despairing kind of mourning; such was Judas' mourning: he saw his sin, he was sorry, he justified Christ, he made restitution. Judas, who is in hell, did more than many nowadays; well, wherein was Judas' sorrow blameworthy? It was a mourning joined with despair he thought his wound broader than the plaster; his was not "repentance to life" ([Acts 11:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 11.18&t=DBY)), but rather to death.

There is a hypocritical mourning: the heart is very deceitful, it can betray as well as by a tear as by a kiss: Saul looks like a mourner, and as he was sometimes among the prophets ([1 Sam. 10:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Sam. 10.12&t=DBY)), so he seemed to be among the penitents, "And Saul said to Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord" ([1 Sam. 15:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Sam. 15.24&t=DBY)). Saul did play the hypocrite in his mourning; for he did not take shame to himself, but he did rather take honour to himself. "Honour me before the elders of the people." How easy it is for a man to put a cheat upon his soul, and by hypocrisy to weep himself into hell.

There is a forced mourning when tears are pumped out by God's judgments. Such was Cain's mourning: "My punishment is greater than I can bear" ([Gen. 4:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 4.13&t=DBY)). His punishment troubled him more than his sin; to mourn only for the fear of hell, is like a thief who weeps for the penalty, rather than the offence. A sinner mourns because judgment follows at the heel of sin; but David cries out, "My sin is ever before me" ([Ps. 51:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 51.3&t=DBY)). The prodigal says, "I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." He doth not say, "I am almost starved among the husks," "but I have offended my Father."

It is an excellent saying of St. Austin, "He doth truly bewail the sins he has committed, who never commits the sins he has bewailed."

A child of God will confess sin in particular; an unsound Christian will confess sin by wholesale, he will acknowledge that he is a sinner in general; whereas David doth, as it were, point with his finger to the sore ([Ps. 51:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 51.4&t=DBY)): "I have done this evil"; he doth not say, I have done evil, but this evil.

To die is to be but once done, and after death there is nothing to be done. If thou diest in thine impenitency there is no repenting in the grave. If thou leavest thy work at death half done, there is no finishing it in the grave ([Eccles. 9:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eccles. 9.10&t=DBY)): "There is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

God has given thee two eyes, if thou losest one, thou hast another; but thou hast but one soul, and if thou art robbed of that, thou art undone for ever.

The grave buries all a sinner's joy. They have a short feast, but a long reckoning. The time being short, the sinning time cannot be long.

Sinners, the time is shortly coming when the drawbridge of mercy will be quite pulled up. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" ([Ecc. 8:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecc. 8.11&t=DBY)). God forbears punishing, therefore men forbear repenting. God is not only gracious, but He waits to be gracious ([Isa. 30:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 30.18&t=DBY)). But though men will not set bounds to their sin, yet God sets bounds to His patience. God says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The angel cried, "the hour of His judgment is come" ([Rev. 14:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 14.7&t=DBY)).

If Felix trembled when Paul preached of judgment ([Acts 24:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 24.25&t=DBY)), how will sinners tremble when they shall see Christ come to judgment!

If God lets men prosper awhile in their sin, His vial of wrath is all this while filling; His sword is all this time whetting: and though God may forbear men a while, yet long forbearance is no forgiveness. The longer God is in taking His blow, the heavier it will be at last. As long as there is eternity, God has time enough to reckon with His enemies.

*Knowledge without affection.*Men have notions of Christ, but are not warmed with love to Christ. Their knowledge is like the moon, it has light in it, but no heat. The knowledge that hypocrites have of Christ, has no saving influence upon them, it doth not make them more holy: it is one thing to have a notion of Christ, another thing to fetch virtue from Christ. The knowledge of hypocrites is a dead, barren knowledge: it is informing, but not transforming; it doth not make them a jot the better. … "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it has perverted thee" ([Isa. 47:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 47.10&t=DBY)); the knowledge of most makes them more cunning in sin; these have little cause to glory in their knowledge. Absalom might boast of the hair of his head, but that hanged him; so these may boast of the knowledge of their head, but it will destroy them. Many of the old world knew there was an ark, but were drowned, because they did not get into the ark; knowledge which is not applying, will but light a man to hell.

*The show of holiness.*All our pompous show of holiness without sincerity, is but folly set forth in its embroidery; it is but going to hell in a more devout way than others. … The upright man has no subterfuges, his tongue and his heart go together, he is downright upright. … Men are ambitious of credit, and would gain repute in the world, therefore they will dress themselves in the garb and mode of religion, that others may write them down for saints. But alas, what is one the better to have others to commend him, and his conscience condemn him? What good will it do a man when he is in hell, that others think he is gone to heaven? Counterfeit piety is double iniquity. The hypocrite deceives others while he lives, but deceives himself when he dies. The hypocrite is abhorred of all. Wicked men hate him because he makes a show, and God hates him because he doth but make a show: the wicked hate him because he has so much a show of godliness, and God hates him because he has no more ([Acts 26:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 26.28&t=DBY)).

*Empty profession.*What is a man the better to have Christ's name upon him, if he still retain Satan's image? What is he advantaged to have the oracles of God, and want the Spirit of God? Think not that an empty profession will save; millions will be sent to hell in Christ's livery ([Matt. 7:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 7.22&t=DBY); [Matt. 8:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 8.12&t=DBY)).

*The cloak of religion.*Sometimes covetousness pretends conscience; Judas fisheth for money under a pretence of religion: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" ([John 12:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 12.5&t=DBY)). How charitable Judas was! but his charity began at home, for he carried the bag. Many make religion a cloak for their ambition. "Come … see my zeal," says Jehu, "for the Lord" ([2 Kings 10:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Kings 10.16&t=DBY)). No, Jehu, thy zeal was for the kingdom. It was not zeal, but state-policy. Jehu made religion hold the stirrup till he got possession of the crown.

Counterfeit piety is double iniquity. A little rusty gold is far better than a great deal of bright brass. A little true grace, though rusted over with many infirmities, is better than all the glistering shows of hypocrites. … The hypocrite is fair to look on, he has a devout eye but a hollow heart; but he who is sincere, his inside is his best side.

Hypocrites will obey God in some things which are consistent either with their credit or profit, but in other things they desire to be excused: like Esau who obeyed his father in bringing him venison, because probably he liked the sport of hunting, but refused to obey him in a business of greater importance, namely, in the choice of his wife.

Hypocrites will not sail in a storm; true grace holds out in the winter season. That is a precious faith, which, like the star, shines brightest in the darkest night.

*No escape in judgment.*If once the sentence of judgment is passed, what wilt thou do? Whither wilt thou go? Wilt thou seek help from God? He is "a consuming fire." Wilt thou seek help from the world? It will be all on fire about thee. From the saints? These thou didst deride upon earth! From thy conscience? There is the worm that gnaws. From Mercy? The lease is run out.

Whatever God can require for satisfaction, or we can need for salvation, is to be found in Christ. His name is the sweetest music to a Christian's ear, and His blood the most precious balm to a Christian's heart.

It is not money in a rich man's hand, though offered to us, that will enrich us, unless we receive it. So Christ's virtues or benefits will do us no good unless we receive them by the hand of faith.

Faith lives in a broken heart. "He cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe" ([Mark 9:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 9.24&t=DBY)). True faith is always in a heart bruised for sin.

Justifying faith lies in recumbency; we rest on Christ alone for salvation. As a man that is ready to drown catches hold on the bough of a tree, so a poor trembling sinner, seeing himself ready to perish, catches hold by faith on Christ, the tree of life, and is saved.

Of all sins, beware of the rock of unbelief. "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief" ([Heb. 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 3.12&t=DBY)). Men think, as long as they are not drunkards or swearers, it is no great matter to be unbelievers. This is the gospel sin. It disparages Christ's infinite merit as if it would not save; it makes the wound of sin to be broader than the plaster of Christ's blood. This is high contempt offered to Christ, and is a deeper spear than that which the Jews thrust into His side.

God has depth of mercy, it reaches as low as sinners; and height of mercy, it reaches above the clouds. … Take heed of abusing the mercy of God. Suck not poison out of the sweet flower of God's mercy. Think not that because God is merciful, you may go on in sin; this is to make mercy your enemy. To sin because mercy abounds is the devil's logic. He that sins because of mercy, is like one that wounds his head because he has a plaster. He that sins because of God's mercy, shall have judgment without mercy. Mercy abused turns to fury. If "he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and His jealousy, shall smoke against that man" ([Deut. 29:19-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deut. 29.19-20&t=DBY)).

God has treasures of mercy; prayer is the key that opens these treasures; and in prayer be sure to carry Christ in your arms, for all the mercy comes through Christ. "Samuel took a sucking lamb" ([1 Sam. 7:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Sam. 7.9&t=DBY)).

2 HEALING

"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." — [Psalm 147:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 147.3&t=DBY).

CHRIST is the most skilful physician, there is no disease too hard for Him. "Who healeth all thy diseases" ([Ps. 103:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 103.3&t=DBY)).

Christ shows more love to His patients than any physician besides: which appears in that long journey He took from heaven to earth, and in that He comes to His patients without sending for, "I am sought of them that asked not for Me; I am found of them that sought Me not" ([Isa. 65:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 65.1&t=DBY)). Then this physician lets Himself bleed to cure His patient, "He was wounded for our transgressions … and with His stripes we are healed" ([Isa. 53:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 53.5&t=DBY)). Through His wounds we may see His bowels. Christ Himself drank that bitter cup which we should have drunk, and by His taking the potion we are healed and saved.

Christ is the most cheap physician, He takes no fee. "A woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent *all her living* upon physicians … came behind Him and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched" ([Luke 8:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 8.43&t=DBY)). He desires us to bring nothing to Him but broken hearts; and when He has cured us He desires us to bestow nothing upon Him but our love.

Christ heals with more ease than any other. Christ makes the devil go out with a word ([Mark 9:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 9.25&t=DBY)). Nay, He can cure with a look: Christ's look melted Peter into repentance; it was an healing look. If Christ doth but cast a look upon the soul He can recover it. Therefore David prays to have a look from God, "Look Thou upon me, and be merciful to me" ([Ps. 119:132](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 119.132&t=DBY)).

Christ is the most tender-hearted physician. He has ended His passion but not His compassion. He is not more full of skill than sympathy, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" ([Ps. 147:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 147.3&t=DBY)). Every groan of the patient goes to the heart of this physician.

Christ never fails of success. Christ never undertakes to heal any but He makes a certain cure, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost" ([John 17:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 17.12&t=DBY)). Other physicians can only cure them that are sick, but Christ cures them that are dead, "And you has He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins" ([Eph. 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 2.1&t=DBY)). Christ is a physician for the dead; of every one whom Christ cures, it may be said, "He was dead, and is alive again" ([Luke 15:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 15.32&t=DBY)).

Christ is the most bountiful physician. Other patients do enrich their physicians, but here the physician doth enrich the patient. Christ prefers all His patients: He doth not only cure them but crown them ([Rev. 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 2.10&t=DBY)). Christ doth not only raise from the bed, but to the throne; He gives the sick man not only health but heaven.

If Christ be a physician, then let us make use of this physician for our diseased souls. "When the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them to Him, and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them" ([Luke 4:40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 4.40&t=DBY)). You that have neglected a physician all this while, now when the sun of the gospel, and the sun of your life, is even now setting, bring your sick souls to Christ to be cured. Christ complains that though men are sick to death, yet they will not come or send to the physician, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" ([John 5:40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 5.40&t=DBY)). But, object poor souls, "I am discouraged to go to Christ to ease me because of my unworthiness." Who did Christ shed His blood for but such as are unworthy? "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" ([1 Tim. 1:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 1.15&t=DBY)). Christ came into the world as into an hospital among a company of lame, bed-rid souls. Who was ever yet saved because he was worthy? What man could ever plead this title, 'Lord Jesus, heal me, because I am worthy'? What worthiness was in Paul before his conversion? What worthiness in Mary Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were cast? But free-grace did pity and heal them; God does not find us worthy, but makes us worthy. If we never come to Christ to be healed till we are worthy, we must never come; and this talking of worthiness savours of pride, we would have something of our own; had we such preparations and self-excellencies then we think Christ would accept us, and we might come and be healed; this is to fee our physician; oh, let not the sense of unworthiness discourage; go to Christ to be healed. "Arise, He calleth thee" ([Mark 10:49](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 10.49&t=DBY)). Consider what a little time we have to stay here, and let that hasten the cure. Solomon says there is "a time to be born, and a time to die" ([Ecc. 3:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecc. 3.2&t=DBY)), but mentions no time of living, as if that were so short it were not worth the naming. Oh, hasten the soul's cure, death is upon its swift march, and if that surprise you suddenly, there is no cure to be wrought in the grave. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" ([Ecc. 9:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecc. 9.10&t=DBY)). Now is the time of healing, now is the day of grace, now Christ pours out His balsam, "Now is the accepted time" ([2 Cor. 6:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 6.2&t=DBY)). If we neglect the day of grace, the next will be a day of wrath ([Rom. 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 2.5&t=DBY)).

If men will not receive the tenders of grace, Christ grieves ([Mark 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 3.5&t=DBY)). He is like a judge that passeth the sentence with tears in his eyes, "He beheld the city, and wept over it" ([Luke 19:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 19.41&t=DBY)). Ah, sinners, I come to save you, but you put away salvation from you: I come with healing under My wings, but you bolt out your physician: I would have you but open your hearts to receive Me, and I will open heaven to receive you, but you will rather stay with your sins and die, than come to Me and live, "Israel would none of Me" ([Ps. 81:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 81.11&t=DBY)). Well, sinners, I will weep at your funerals. … The men of the world see not the beauty of Christ. He doth not want worth but they want eyes. O unhappy man (says Austin) who knowest all things else but Christ! thy knowledge will but serve to light thee to hell.

But are you healed? Then break forth into thankfulness. "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth" ([Ps. 149:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 149.6&t=DBY)). God expects thankfulness. "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger" ([Luke 17:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 17.17-18&t=DBY).)

3 GIVING

"He that giveth to the poor shall not lack." [Proverbs 28:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs 28.27&t=DBY).

"Give, and it shall be given to you." [Luke 6:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 6.38&t=DBY).

FAITH alone justifies, but justifying faith is not alone. Good works though they are not the *causes*of salvation, yet they are the *evidences.*Faith must not be built upon works, but works must be built upon faith. Faith doth *justify*works; works do *testify*faith. "I will show thee my faith by my works" ([James 2:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 2.18&t=DBY)).

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say to them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" ([James 2:15-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 2.15-16&t=DBY)). There are some who perhaps will give the poor good words, and that is all. Good words are but a cold kind of charity. Let your words be as smooth as oil, they will not heal the wounded, let them drop as the honeycomb, they will not feed the hungry. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" ([1 Cor. 13:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 13.1&t=DBY)). 'Tis better to be charitable as a saint then eloquent as an angel.

"He shall have judgment without mercy, that has showed no mercy" ([James 2:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 2.13&t=DBY)). Dives denied Lazarus a crumb of bread, and Dives was denied a drop of water.

"I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink ([Matt. 25:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 25.42&t=DBY)). Christ doth not say ye took away My meat, but ye gave Me none.

Remember that excellent saying of St. Austin, "Give those things to the poor which you cannot keep, that you may receive those things which you cannot lose."

The way to lay up, is to lay out. Other parts of your estate you leave behind, but that which is given to Christ's poor is hoarded up in heaven. That is a blessed kind of giving, which, though it makes the purse the lighter, makes the crown the heavier. You shall have good security; "he that has pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he has given will He pay him again" ([Prov. 19:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 19.17&t=DBY)). You shall be paid with overplus. For a *wedge of gold*which you have parted with, you shall have a *weight of glory.*For a cup of cold water you shall have rivers of pleasure which run at God's right hand for evermore. The interest comes to infinitely more than the principal.

Your charity must be free. "Thou shalt surely give … and thy heart shall not be grieved" ([Deut. 15:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deut. 15.10&t=DBY)). That is, thou shalt not be troubled at parting with thy money; he that gives *grievingly,*gives *grudgingly.*Charity must flow like spring water. The heart must be the spring, the hand the pipe, the poor the cistern. God loves a cheerful giver.

We must give that which is our own ([Isa. 58:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 58.7&t=DBY)). "To deal thy bread to the hungry," it must be bread of thy own, "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering."

Do all *in* Christ. Out of Christ all our alms-deeds are but the fruit of the wild olive. They are not good works but dead works.

Do all *for*Christ. As Mary did out of love bring her ointments and sweet spices to anoint Christ's dead body: so out of love to Christ bring your ointments and anoint His living body, His saints and members.

Works of mercy are to be done in humility. Pride will be creeping into our best things; beware of this dead fly in the box of ointment. As the silkworm when she weaves her curious works, hides herself within the silk, so we should hide ourselves from pride and vanity.

The saints are brought in at last as disowning their works of charity. "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred and fed Thee? or thirsty and gave Thee drink?" ([Matt. 25:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 25.37&t=DBY)). A good Christian doth not only empty his hand of alms, but empties his heart of pride; while he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, he lays himself in the dust.

Distribute your silver and gold to the poor before "the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken" ([Ecc. 12:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecc. 12.6&t=DBY)). Make your hands your executors, not as some do who reserve all they give till the term of life is ready to expire. And truly what is then bestowed, is not given away, but taken away by death. 'Tis not charity but necessity. Be not like the medlar which is never good till it be rotten.

4 LONGING

"He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." — [Psalm 107:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 107.9&t=DBY).

"BLESSED are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" ([Matt. 5:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 5.6&t=DBY)). Though thou hast not so much righteousness as thou wouldst, yet thou art blessed, because thou hungerest after it; desire is the best discovery of a Christian, actions may be counterfeit; a man may do a good action for a bad end. So did Jehu. Actions may be compulsory: a man may be forced to do that which is good, but not to will that which is good. These hungerings after righteousness proceed from love; a man doth not desire that which he doth not love; if thou didst not love Christ, thou couldst not hunger after Him.

The hypocrite doth not so much desire the way of righteousness as the crown of righteousness: his desire is not to be made like Christ, but to reign with Christ. This was Balaam's desire, "Let me die the death of the righteous" ([Num. 23:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Num. 23.10&t=DBY)). This is the hypocrite's hunger; a child of God desires Christ for Himself. To a believer, not only heaven is precious, but Christ is precious ([1 Peter 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 2.7&t=DBY)). Hypocrites' desires are but desires, they are lazy and sluggish. "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour" ([Prov. 21:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 21.25&t=DBY)). But true desire is quickened into endeavour, "With my soul have I *desired*Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I *seek*Thee early" ([Isa. 26:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 26.9&t=DBY)).

If we do not thirst here we shall thirst when it is too late; if we do not thirst as David did, "My soul thirsteth for God" ([Ps. 42:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 42.2&t=DBY)), we shall thirst as Dives did for a drop of water.

"They shall be filled." God never bids us seek Him in vain. "He has filled the hungry with good things" ([Luke 1:53](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 1.53&t=DBY)). "He satisfieth the longing soul" ([Ps. 107:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 107.9&t=DBY)). God will not let us lose our longing.

A man may hunger after the world and not be filled; the world is fading, not filling. A man may be filled and not satisfied. A sinner may take his fill of sin, but it is far from satisfaction, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways" ([Prov. 14:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 14.14&t=DBY)). This is such a filling as the damned in hell have, they shall be full of the fury of the Lord; but he that hungers after righteousness shall be satisfyingly filled. "My people shall be satisfied with My goodness" ([Jer. 31:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jer. 31.14&t=DBY)).

God can fill the hungry soul. "With Thee is the fountain of life" ([Ps. 36:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 36.9&t=DBY)). The cistern may be empty and cannot fill us. But the fountain is filling. The fulness of God is an infinite fulness, it knows neither bounds nor bottom. It is a constant fulness, "Thou art the same" ([Ps. 102:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 102.27&t=DBY)). God can never be exhausted, His fulness is overflowing and ever-flowing.

God fills the hungry soul out of His tender compassion. When the multitude had nothing to eat, Christ was moved with compassion. Let the hungry soul think this, though I am full of wants, yet my God is full of bowels.

God will fill the hungry that He may fulfil His word. "Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye *shall be filled*" ([Luke 6:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 6.21&t=DBY)). Hath the Lord spoken and shall it not come to pass? As "His compassions fail not" ([Lam. 3:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Lam. 3.22&t=DBY)), so He will not suffer his "faithfulness to fail" ([Ps. 89:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 89.33&t=DBY)). If the hungry soul should not be filled, the promise should not be fulfilled.

God will fill the hungry because He Himself has stirred up the hunger. As in case of prayer, when God prepares the heart to pray, He prepares His ear to hear ([Ps. 10:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 10.17&t=DBY)). So in the case of spiritual hunger, when God prepares the heart to hunger, He will prepare His hand to fill.

God keeps open house for hungry sinners ([Isa. 55:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 55.1-2&t=DBY)).

There is no such thing as blind fate, but there is a Providence that guides and governs the world. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" ([Prov. 16:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 16.33&t=DBY)). … Providence is God's ordering all issues and events of things, after the counsel of His will, to His own glory. … The wheels in a clock seem to move contrary one to the other, but they help forward the motion of the clock, and make the alarum strike; so the providences of God seem to be cross wheels; but for all that they shall carry on the good of the elect. … God is not like an artificer that builds a house, and then leaves it, but like a pilot He steers the ship of the whole creation.

"The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine" ([Ps. 33:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 33.18-19&t=DBY)). God by His providential care shields off dangers from His people, and sets a lifeguard of angels about them ([Ps. 34:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 34.7&t=DBY)). God's providence keeps the very bones of the saints ([Ps. 34:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 34.20&t=DBY)). It bottles their tears ([Ps. 56:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 56.8&t=DBY)). It strengthens the saints in their weakness ([Heb. 11:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 11.34&t=DBY)). It supplies all their wants out of its alms-basket ([Ps. 23:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 23.5&t=DBY)). "Verily thou shalt be fed" ([Ps. 37:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 37.3&t=DBY)). If God will give His people a kingdom when they die, He will not deny them daily bread while they live.

God, who bounds everything else, is Himself without bounds. He sets bounds to the sea; *Huc usque;* "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further"; He sets bounds to the angels; they, like the cherubims, move and stand at His appointment ([Ezek. 10:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezek. 10.16&t=DBY)), but He is infinite without bounds. He who can span the heavens, and weigh the earth in scales, must needs be infinite ([Isa. 40:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 40.22&t=DBY)). "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" ([Jer. 23:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jer. 23.24&t=DBY)). The humble heart is His throne, in regard to His gracious presence ([Isa. 57:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 57.15&t=DBY)); and heaven is His throne, in regard to His glorious presence ([Isa. 66:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 66.1&t=DBY)); and yet neither of these thrones will hold Him, for the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him.

5 CONTENTMENT

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." — [Philippians 4:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians 4.11&t=DBY).

"I HAVE learned." The Apostle doth not say, "I have heard, that in every estate I should be content," but, "I have learned." It is not enough for Christians to hear their duty, but they must learn their duty. It is one thing to hear, and another thing to learn; as it is one thing to eat, and another thing to digest food. Christians bear much, but, it is to be feared, learn little.

If your estate be small, yet God can bless a little. It is not how much money we have, but how much blessing. He that often curses the bags of gold, can bless the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse. What if thou hast not the full flesh-pots? yet thou hast a promise, I will "bless her provision" ([Ps. 132:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 132.15&t=DBY)), and then a little goes a great way. Be content, that thou hast the dew of a blessing distilled: a dinner of green herbs, where love is, is sweet; I may add, where the love of God is. Another may have more estate than you, but more care; more riches, less rest; more revenues, but withal more occasions of expense: he has a greater inheritance, yet perhaps God doth not give him "power to eat thereof" ([Ecc. 6:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecc. 6.2&t=DBY)); he holds more, but enjoys less; in a word, thou hast less gold then he, perhaps less guilt.

Discontent keeps a man from enjoying what he doth possess. A drop or two of vinegar will sour a whole glass of wine. Comfort depends upon contentment. It is not trouble that troubles, but discontent; it is not the water without the ship, but the water that gets within the leak which sinks it; it is not outward afflictions that can make the life of a Christian sad; a contented mind would sail above these waters; but when there is a leak of discontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is disquieted and sinks.

The discontented person thinks everything he doth for God too much, and everything God doth for him too little.

There are no sins God's people are more subject to than unbelief and impatience; they are ready, either to faint through unbelief, or to fret through impatience. When men fly out against God by discontent and impatience, it is a sign they do not believe "that all things work together for good, to them that love God." Discontent is an ungrateful sin, because we have more mercies than afflictions; and it is an irrational sin, because afflictions work for good. Discontent is a sin which puts us upon sin. "Fret not thyself to do evil" ([Ps. 37:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 37.8&t=DBY)). He that frets will be ready to do evil: fretting Jonah was sinning ([Jonah 4:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah 4.9&t=DBY)). The devil blows the coals of passion and discontent, and then warms himself at the fire.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." Shall we be discontented at that which works for our good? If one friend should throw a bag of money at another, and in throwing it, should graze his head, he would not be troubled much, seeing by this means he had got a bag of money. So the Lord may bruise us by afflictions, but it is to enrich us; these afflictions work for us a weight of glory; and shall we be discontented?

Immoderate care takes the heart off from better things; and usually while we are thinking how we shall do to live, we forget how to die. We may sooner by our care add a furlong to our grief, than a foot to our comfort.

Remember thou art to be here but a day; thou hast but a short way to go, and what need a long provision for a short way? If a traveller has but enough to bring him to his journey's end, he desires no more.

How hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven! ([Luke 18:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 18.24&t=DBY)). His golden weights keep him from ascending up the hill of God. Be content then with a little; if you have but enough to pay for your passage to heaven, it sufficeth.

Humility is like the lead to the net, which keeps the soul down when it is rising through passion; and contentment is like the cork, which keeps the heart up when it is sinking through discouragement.

Is not many a man contented to suffer reproach for maintaining his lust? and shall not we for maintaining the truth? Some glory in that which is their shame ([Phil. 3:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Phil. 3.19&t=DBY)); and shall we be ashamed of that which is our glory?

What need he complain of the world's emptiness that has God's fulness? "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance," says David ([Ps. 16:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 16.5&t=DBY)); then let the lines fall where they will, in a sick bed, or prison, I will say, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

"The God which fed me all my life long to this day" ([Gen. 48:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 48.15&t=DBY)). Hath not God provided liberally for you. Thou never feedest, but mercy carves for thee; thou never goest to bed, but mercy draws the curtains, and sets a guard of angels about thee.

"The Lord is good to all" ([Ps. 145:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 145.9&t=DBY)). Sweet dewdrops are on the thistle, as well as on the rose. God's mercy is free. To set up merit is to destroy mercy. Nothing can deserve mercy, nor force it. We may force God to punish us, but not to love us. "I will love them freely" ([Hosea 14:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea 14.4&t=DBY)). Every link in the chain of salvation is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free. "He has chosen us in Him … according to the good pleasure of His will" ([Eph. 1:4-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 1.4-5&t=DBY)). Justification is free, "Being justified freely by His grace" ([Rom. 3:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 3.24&t=DBY)). Salvation is free, "According to His mercy He saved us" ([Titus 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Titus 3.5&t=DBY)). Say not then, I am unworthy; for mercy is free. If God should show mercy to such only as are worthy, He would show none at all. … God's mercy is an overflowing mercy; it is infinite: "Plenteous in mercy" ([Ps. 86:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 86.5&t=DBY)). "Rich in mercy" ([Eph. 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 2.4&t=DBY)). "Multitude of Thy tender mercies" ([Ps. 51:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 51.1&t=DBY)). The vial of wrath drops, but the fountain of mercy runs. … God has morning mercies, His mercies "are new every morning" ([Lam. 3:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Lam. 3.23&t=DBY)). He has night mercies, "In the night His song shall be with me" ([Ps. 42:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 42.8&t=DBY)). God's mercy is eternal, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting" ([Ps. 103:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 103.17&t=DBY)). As His mercy is overflowing so it is everflowing.

Doth God give us a Christ, and will He deny us a crust? If God doth not give us what we crave, He will give us what we need.

Prosperity often deafens the ear against God. "I spake to thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear" ([Jer. 22:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jer. 22.21&t=DBY)). Soft pleasures harden the heart. Prosperity has its honey, and also its sting. Anxious care is the evil spirit that haunts the rich man; when his chests are full of money, his heart is full of care. Sunshine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorches. The spreading of a full table may be the spreading of a snare. Many have been sunk to hell with golden weights. "They that will be rich fall into many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition" ([1 Tim. 6:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 6.9&t=DBY)). The world's golden sands are quicksands. What if we have less food we have less snare; if less dignity, less danger. As we lack the rich provisions of the world, so we lack the temptations. To give us Christ is more than if God had given us all the world. He can make more worlds, but He has no more Christs to bestow. If you have but daily bread enough to suffice nature, be content. Consider it is not having abundance that always makes life comfortable. A staff may help the traveller, but a bundle of staves will be a burden to him. The world is but a great inn. If God give you sufficient to pay for your charges in your inn, you may be content, you shall have enough when you come to your own country.

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" ([Ps. 56:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 56.3&t=DBY)). Faith cures the trembling in heart; it gets above fear as oil swims above the water. To trust in God makes Him to be a God to us. God will turn all evils to our good ([Rom. 8:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 8.28&t=DBY)). Joseph's imprisonment was a means for his advancement. Out of the bitterest drug He will distil His glory and our salvation. In short, He will be our guide to death, our comfort in death, and our reward after death. "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord" ([Ps. 144:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 144.15&t=DBY)).

6 POVERTY

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." — [Matthew 5:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew 5.3&t=DBY).

SOME think if they can fill their bags with gold, then they are rich; but they who are poor in spirit are the rich men; this poverty entitles them to a kingdom. How poor are they that think themselves rich! How rich are they that see themselves poor. There are some paradoxes in religion that the world cannot understand; for a man to become a fool that he may be wise ([1 Cor. 3:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 3.18&t=DBY)), to save his life by losing it ([Matt. 16:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 16.25&t=DBY)), and being poor to be rich, reason laughs at; but "blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom"; under these rags is hid cloth of gold.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." This poverty is your riches; you may have the world's riches, and yet be poor; you cannot have this poverty, but you must be rich; poverty of spirit entitles you to Christ's riches.

Blessedness doth not lie in the acquisition of worldly things. Christ doth not say, Blessed are the rich, or blessed are the noble; yet too many idolize these things: Man by the fall has not only lost his crown, but his head-piece. The tree of blessedness doth not grow in an earthly paradise. Hath not God cursed the ground for sin? Yet many are digging for felicity here, as if they would fetch a blessing out of a curse.

That which cannot quiet the heart in a storm, cannot entitle a man to blessedness; earthly things accumulated, cannot rock the troubled heart quiet, therefore cannot make one blessed. When Saul was sore distressed, could all the jewels of his crown comfort him? "They shall cast their silver in the streets … their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord" ([Ezek. 7:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezek. 7.19&t=DBY)).

That which is but for a season cannot make one blessed; all things under the sun are but for a season. "The world passeth away" ([1 John 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John 2.17&t=DBY)). Riches and honour are fugitive: while they are with us they are going away from us, like ice, which melts away while it is in your hand.

Things which do more vex than comfort, cannot make a man blessed; but such are all things under the sun. As riches are compared to "wind" to show their vanity ([Hosea 12:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea 12.1&t=DBY)), so to "thorns," to show their vexation ([Matt. 13:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 13.22&t=DBY)). Thorns are not more apt to tear our garments, than riches are to tear our hearts; they are thorns in the gathering, they prick with care; and as they pierce the hand with care of getting, so they wound the heart with fear of losing.

Those things which (if we have nothing else) will make us cursed, cannot make us blessed. "They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" ([1 Tim. 6:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 6.9&t=DBY)). How many have pulled down their souls to build up an estate! A ship may be so laden with gold that it sinks; many a man's gold has sunk him to hell. The rich sinner seals up money in his bag, and God seals up a curse with it. "Woe to him … that ladeth himself with thick clay" ([Hab. 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hab. 2.6&t=DBY)).

To such as are cut short in their allowance, whose cup doth not overflow, but their tears; be not too much troubled; remember these outward comforts cannot make you blessed; you might live rich and die cursed; you might treasure up an estate, and God might treasure up wrath; be not perplexed about these things; the want whereof cannot make you miserable, nor the enjoyment make you blessed.

Earthly riches, says Austin, are full of poverty. They cannot enrich the soul; oftentimes under silken apparel, there is a threadbare soul.

The common mercies wicked men have, are not loadstones to draw them nearer to God, but millstones to sink them deeper in hell ([1 Tim. 6:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 6.9&t=DBY)). Their delicious dainties are like Haman's banquet; after all their lordly fare, death will bring in the reckoning, and they must pay it in hell.

You never knew a man surfeit himself upon the world, and sick of love to Christ; while Israel fed with delight upon garlic and onions, they never hungered after manna. The love of earthly things will quench the desire of spiritual. "Love not the world" ([1 John 2:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John 2.15&t=DBY)); the sin is not in the having but the loving.

Godly and earthly is a contradiction. "For many walk, of whom I now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things" ([Phil. 3:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Phil. 3.18-19&t=DBY)). We read the earth swallowed up Korah alive ([Num. 16:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Num. 16.32&t=DBY)). This judgment is on many, the earth swallows up their time, and thoughts, and discourse, they are buried twice; their hearts are buried in the earth before their bodies.

God allows us the use of the world ([1 Tim. 6:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 6.7&t=DBY)), but take heed of the love of it; he that is in love with the world will be out of love with the cross. "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world" ([2 Tim. 4:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 4.10&t=DBY)). Before a man can die for Christ he must be dead to the world. It will be an easy thing to die, when we are dead before in our affections.

How soon we are broken upon the soft pillow of ease! Adam in paradise was overcome, when Job on the dunghill was a conqueror.

"I cannot be poor," says Bernard, "as long as God is rich, for His riches are mine." Whatever we lose for God, we shall find again in Him. "We have left all," say the disciples, "and have followed Thee" ([Mark 10:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 10.28&t=DBY)). Alas! what had they left? A few sorry boats and tackling! They parted with movable goods for the unchangeable God. All losses are made up in Him: we may be losers for God, we shall not be losers by Him.

"Thou hast put gladness in my heart" ([Ps. 4:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 4.7&t=DBY)). Worldly joys put gladness into the face. The rich Corinthians "glory in appearance and not in heart" ([2 Cor. 5:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 5.12&t=DBY)); but the Spirit of God puts gladness into the heart; divine joys are heart joys: "Their heart shall rejoice in the Lord" ([Zech. 10:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zech. 10.7&t=DBY)); "Your heart shall rejoice" ([John 16:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 16.22&t=DBY)).

Christ, who had all riches, scorned earthly riches; He was born poor, the manger was His cradle, the cobwebs His curtains: He lived poor, He had not where to lay His head: He died poor, He had no crown-lands, only His coat was left, and that the soldiers parted among them: and His funeral was suitable, for as He was born in another man's house, so He was buried in another man's tomb.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor" ([2 Cor. 8:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 8.9&t=DBY)). He could have brought down a house from heaven with Him, or have challenged the high places of the earth; but He was contented to live poor that we might die rich: the manger was His cradle. He, who is now preparing mansions for us in heaven, had none for Himself on earth; He had not where to lay His head.

He was poor, that He might make us rich. He was born of a virgin, that we might be born of God. He took our flesh, that might give us His Spirit. He lay in the manger that we might lie in paradise. He came down from heaven that He might bring us to heaven.

7 AFFLICTIONS

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted." [Psalm 119:71](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 119.71&t=DBY).

AFFLICTIONS quicken our pace in the way to heaven; it is with us, as with children sent on an errand, if they meet with apples or flowers by the way, they linger and make no great haste home, but if anything fright them, then they run with all the speed they can to their father's house: so, in prosperity, we are gathering the apples and flowers, and do not much mind heaven, but if troubles begin to arise, and the times grow frightful, then we make more haste to heaven, and with David, "run the way of God's commandments" ([Ps. 119:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 119.32&t=DBY)).

God's people have no writ of ease granted them, no charter of exemption from trouble in this life. While the wicked are kept in sugar, the godly are often kept in brine. God lets His people be in the house of bondage for probation or trial. "Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, … that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee" ([Deut. 8:15-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deut. 8.15-16&t=DBY)). Affliction is the touch-stone of sincerity. "Thou, O God, hast proved us; Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried; … Thou laidst affliction upon our loins" ([Ps. 66:10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 66.10-11&t=DBY)). Hypocrites may embrace the true religion in prosperity, but he is a good Christian who will keep close to God in a time of suffering. "All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten Thee" ([Ps. 44:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 44.17&t=DBY)).

The stones which are cut out for a building are first hewn and squared. The godly are called "living stones" ([1 Peter 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 2.5&t=DBY)). God first hews and polishes them by affliction, that they may be fit for the heavenly building. The house of bondage prepares for the house not made with hands.

Afflictions on the godly make them better, but afflictions on the wicked make them worse. The godly pray more ([Ps. 130:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 130.1&t=DBY)). The wicked blaspheme more. "Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God" ([Rev. 16:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 16.9&t=DBY)). Afflictions on the wicked make them more impenitent; every plague upon Egypt increased the plague of hardness in Pharaoh's heart. Affliction of the godly is like bruising spices, which are most sweet and fragrant: affliction on the wicked is like pounding weeds with a pestle, which makes them more unsavoury.

A sick bed often teaches more than a sermon; we can best see the ugly visage of sin in the glass of affliction.

What if we have more of the rough file, if we have less rust! Afflictions carry away nothing but the dross of sin.

When affliction or death comes to a wicked man, it takes away his soul; when it comes to a godly man it only takes away his sin. … "We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" ([1 Cor. 11:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 11.32&t=DBY)). He works out sin and works in grace.

"I will be with him in trouble" ([Ps. 91:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 91.15&t=DBY)). When we are most assaulted, we shall be most assisted. What if we have more trouble than others, if we have more of God with us than others? It cannot be ill with that man with whom God is. Better to be in prison and have God's presence, than be in a palace without it.

It is one heart-quieting consideration, in all the afflictions that befall us, that God has a special hand in them: "The Almighty has afflicted me" ([Ruth 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ruth 1.21&t=DBY)). Instruments can no more stir till God gives them a commission, than the axe can cut of itself without a hand. Job eyed God in his affliction: therefore, as Augustine observes, he doth not say, "The Lord gave, and the devil took away," but "The Lord has taken away." Whoever brings an affliction to us, it is God that sends it. Afflictions work for good. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" ([Ps. 119:71](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 119.71&t=DBY)). Joseph's brethren throw him into a pit; afterwards they sell him; then he is cast into prison; yet all this did work for his good: his abasement made way for his advancement; he was made the second man in the kingdom. "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it to good" ([Gen. 50:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 50.20&t=DBY)). Jacob wrestled with the angel, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint; this was sad; but God turned it to good, for there he saw God's face, and there the Lord blessed him. "Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face" ([Gen. 32:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 32.30&t=DBY)). Who would not be willing to have a bone out of joint, so that he might have a sight of God? King Manasseh was bound in chains, this was sad to see — a crown of gold changed into fetters; but it wrought for his good, for, "When he was in affliction he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly, and the Lord was intreated of him" ([2 Chr. 33:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Chr. 33.12-13&t=DBY)). He was more beholden to his iron chain, than to his golden crown; the one made him proud, the other made him humble. Paul was smitten with blindness; this was uncomfortable, but it turned to his good; God did by that blindness make way for the light of grace to shine into his soul.

God sweetens outward pain with inward peace. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy" ([John 16:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 16.20&t=DBY)). God's rod has honey at the end of it.

David says, "My times are in Thy hand" ([Ps. 31:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 31.15&t=DBY)). If our times were in our own hand, we would have deliverance too soon; if they were in our enemy's hand, we should have deliverance too late; but my times are in Thy hand; and God's time is ever best. Everything is beautiful in its season: when the mercy is ripe, we shall have it. It is true we are now between the hammer and the anvil; but do not cast away your anchor; God sees when the mercy will be in season. When His people are low enough, and the enemy high enough, then appears the Church's morning-star: Let God alone to His time. "My soul waiteth for the Lord" ([Ps. 130:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 130.6&t=DBY)). Good reason God should have the timing of our mercies, "I the Lord will hasten it in His time." Deliverance may tarry beyond our time; but it will not tarry beyond God's time. … After a wet night of affliction, comes a bright morning of the resurrection: if our lives are short, our trials cannot be long. … Time is short ([1 Cor. 7:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 7.29&t=DBY)). Though the cross be heavy, we have but a little way to carry it. The time being short the waiting time cannot be long.

When the hearts of His people are most humble, when their prayers are most fervent, when their faith is strongest, when their forces are weakest, when their enemies are highest; then is the usual time that Christ puts forth His kingly power for their deliverance ([Isa. 33:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 33.2&t=DBY), [8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa 33.8&t=DBY), [9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa 33.9&t=DBY), [10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa 33.10&t=DBY)).

Afflictions work for good, as they conform us to Christ. His life was a series of sufferings, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" ([Isa. 53:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 53.3&t=DBY)). He wept, and bled. Was His head crowned with thorns, and do we think to be crowned with roses? It is good to be like Christ, though it be by sufferings.

"Let none of you suffer … as an evil doer" ([1 Peter 4:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 4.15&t=DBY)). I am not of Cyprian's mind, that the thief on the cross suffered as a martyr; no, he suffered as an evil doer; Christ indeed took pity on him, and saved him; he died a saint, but not a martyr. When men suffer by the hand of a magistrate, these do not suffer persecution, but execution: they die not as martyrs, but as malefactors; they suffer evil for being evil.

God loves a thankful Christian. Job thanked God when He took all away: "The Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" ([Job 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 1.21&t=DBY)). Many will thank God when He gives, Job thanks Him when He takes away, because he knew God would work good out of it. We read of saints with harps in their hands ([Rev. 14:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 14.2&t=DBY)), an emblem of praise. We meet many Christians who have tears in their eyes, and complaints in their mouths; but there are few with their harps in their hands, who praise God in affliction. Every bird can sing in spring, but some birds will sing in the dead of winter. A good Christian will bless God, not only at the sun-rising, but at the sun-setting. Well may we, in the worst that befalls us, have a psalm of thankfulness, because all things work for good. If God makes all things turn to our good, how right is it that we should make all things tend to His glory! "Do all to the glory of God" ([1 Cor. 10:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 10.31&t=DBY)).

"His mercies are new every morning" ([Lam. 3:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Lam. 3.23&t=DBY)). Mercy comes in as constantly as the tide; nay, how many tides of mercy do we see in one day. We never feed, but mercy carves every bit to us; we never drink but in the golden cup of mercy; we never go abroad, but mercy sets a guard of angels about us; we never lie down in bed, but mercy draws the curtains of protection close about us. Shall we receive so many good things at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Our mercies far outweigh our afflictions; for one affliction we have a thousand mercies. The sea of God's mercy would swallow up a few drops of affliction.

Many, to rid themselves out of trouble, run themselves into sin. When God has bound them with the cords of affliction, they go to the devil to loosen their bands. Better it is to stay in affliction than to sin ourselves out of it.

Affliction quickens the spirit of prayer; Jonah was asleep in the ship, but at prayer in the whale's belly. Perhaps in a time of health and prosperity we pray in a cold and formal manner, we put no coals to the incense, we scarcely minded our own prayers, and how should God mind them? God sends some cross or other to make us take hold of Him. "They poured out a prayer, when Thy chastening hand was upon them" ([Isa. 26:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 26.16&t=DBY)); now their prayer pierced the heavens. In times of trouble we pray feelingly, and we never pray so fervently as when we pray feelingly.

When God puts His children to the school of the cross, He deals with them tenderly, because He does not leave them without a promise, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." He will not lay a giant's burden upon a child's back, nor will He stretch the strings of the instrument too much, lest they should break. If God sees it good to strike with one hand, He will support with the other; either He will make the faith stronger, or render the yoke lighter.

God loves His people when He is giving the bitter diet-drink of affliction. God's rod and God's love, they both stand together. It is no love in God to let men go on in sin, and never smite. God's greatest curse is when He afflicts not for sin. Let us feel God's hand so that we may have His heart.

Afflictions add to the saints' glory. The more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; the heavier the saints' cross is, the heavier shall be their crown.

If God be our God, He will give us peace in trouble. When there is a storm without, He will make peace within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble.

8 PERSECUTION

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." — [Matthew 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew 5.10&t=DBY).

AFFLICTION is the beaten road in which all the saints have gone. The living stones in the spiritual building have been all hewn and polished. Christ's lily has grown among the thorns. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution" ([2 Tim. 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 3.12&t=DBY)).

"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" ([Acts 14:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 14.22&t=DBY)). Though Christ died to take away the curse from us, yet not to take away the cross. The way to heaven, though it be full of roses in regard of the comforts of the Holy Ghost, yet it is full of thorns in regard to persecutions. It is a saying of Ambrose, there is no Abel but has his Cain. Put the cross in your creed.

A true saint carries Christ in his heart, and the cross on his shoulders. Christ's kingdom on earth is the kingdom of the cross. Christ and His cross are never parted. Persecution is the legacy bequeathed by Christ to His people. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" ([John 16:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 16.33&t=DBY)). We are all for reigning. "When wilt thou restore the Kingdom again to Israel?" But the Apostle tells us of suffering before reigning. "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him" ([2 Tim. 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 2.12&t=DBY)). Was His head crowned with thorns, and do we think to be crowned with roses?

Let us take heed of becoming persecutors: some think there is no persecution but fire and sword; yes, there is persecution of the tongue. … Reviling is called persecution, "men shall revile you and persecute you"; this is tongue persecution. "His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords" ([Ps. 55:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 55.21&t=DBY)). You may kill a man as well in his name as in his person; a good name is as precious ointment. Now to smite another in his name, is by our Saviour called persecution. Thus the primitive saints endured the persecution of the tongue. They "had trial of cruel mockings" ([Heb. 11:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 11.36&t=DBY)). Slandering is tongue persecution, "When men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely." Thus Paul was slandered in his doctrine; it was reported he should preach, men might do evil that good might come of it. Thus Christ, who did cast out devils, was charged to have a devil ([John 8:48](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 8.48&t=DBY)). "They laid to My charge things that I knew not" ([Ps. 35:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 35.11&t=DBY)).

*Why there must be persecution.*First, it is God's decree, "We are appointed thereunto" ([1 Thess. 3:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thess. 3.3&t=DBY)). Whoever brings the suffering, God sends it. God did bid Shimei curse; Shimei's tongue was the arrow, but it was God that did shoot it. Second, it is God's design for the trial of His saints. "Many shall be tried." It discovers true saints from hypocrites; unsound hearts pretend fair in prosperity, but in a time of persecution fall away ([Matt. 13:20-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 13.20-21&t=DBY)). Hypocrites will follow Christ to Mount Olivet, but not to Mount Calvary. Suffering times are sifting times. "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold" ([Job 23:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 23.10&t=DBY)). God lets His children be in the furnace that they may be "partakers of His holiness" ([Heb. 12:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 12.10&t=DBY)). "I am black but comely" ([Cant. 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Cant. 1.5&t=DBY)). The torrid zone of persecution made the spouse's skin black, but her soul fair.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted." What is that suffering which will make us blessed?

When we suffer in a good cause. Blessed are they which suffer "for righteousness' sake." It is the cause that makes a martyr. "For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain" ([Acts 28:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 28.20&t=DBY)).

When we suffer with a good conscience. A man may have a good cause, and a bad conscience. Saint Paul, as he had a just cause, so he had a pure conscience. "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" ([Acts 23:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 23.1&t=DBY)). A good conscience will make a man suffer with comfort.

When we have a good call. When "ye shall be brought before governors and kings" ([Matt. 10:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 10.18&t=DBY)). If God by His providence open a door, a man may fly in time of persecution ([Matt. 10:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 10.23&t=DBY)). But when he is brought before kings, and the case is such that either he must suffer, or the truth must suffer; here is a clear call to suffering.

When we have good ends in our suffering. "When ye shall be brought before governors and kings for *My sake*." The primitive Christians did burn more in love than in fire; when we look at God in our sufferings, and are willing to make His crown flourish, though it be in our ashes, this is that suffering which carries away the garland of glory.

When we suffer as Christians. "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed" ([1 Peter 4:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 4.16&t=DBY)).

When we suffer with patience. "Take, my brethren, the prophets … for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" ([James 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 5.10&t=DBY)).

When we suffer with cheerfulness. Thus Moses suffered cheerfully. Moses, when he was come to years, chose rather "to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" ([Heb. 11:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 11.25&t=DBY)). "He chose to suffer affliction," suffering was not so much his choice; the cross was not so much imposed as embraced. "They departed from the presence of the council, *rejoicing*that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." They rejoiced that they were so far graced, as to be disgraced for the name of Christ. Christ's marks in Saint Paul's body were prints of glory.

When we suffer and *pray*. "Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Stephen prayed for his persecutors, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Austin says, the Church of God was beholden to Stephen's prayer for all that benefit which was reaped by Paul's ministry.

*God with us in trouble*. "I will be with him in trouble" ([Ps. 91:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 91.15&t=DBY)). What if we have more afflictions than others, if we have more of God's company! "I will deliver him and honour him" ([Ps. 91:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 91.15&t=DBY)). He who can strengthen our faith, can break our fetters. "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy" ([John 16:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 16.20&t=DBY)). There is the water turned into wine. "Be of good cheer, Paul." In time of persecution God broacheth the wine of consolation; cordials are kept for fainting.

*Christ has been before in suffering.*Consider what Christ endured for us. Christ's whole life was a series of sufferings: Christian, what is thy suffering? Art thou poor? So was Christ: "The Son of Man has not where to lay His head" ([Matt. 8:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 8.20&t=DBY)). Art thou surrounded with enemies? So was Christ: "Against thy holy Servant Jesus … both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together" ([Acts 4:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 4.27&t=DBY)). Do our enemies lay claim to religion? So did His "And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood" ([Matt. 27:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 27.6&t=DBY)). Godly persecutors! Art thou reproached? So was Christ: "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon Me" ([Ps. 69:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 69.9&t=DBY)). Art thou slandered? So was Christ: "The Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils" ([Matt. 9:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 9.34&t=DBY)). Art thou ignominiously used? So was Christ: "Some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face and to buffet Him, and say to Him, Prophesy: and the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands" ([Mark 14:65](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 14.65&t=DBY)). Art thou betrayed by friends? So was Christ: "Jesus said to him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" ([Luke 22:48](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 22.48&t=DBY)). Is thy estate sequestered? And do the wicked cast lots for it? So Christ was dealt with: "They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots" ([Matt. 27:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 27.35&t=DBY)). Do we suffer unjustly? So did Christ: His very judge did acquit Him: "Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man" ([Luke 23:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 23.4&t=DBY)). Art thou barbarously dragged and haled away to suffering? So was Christ: "And when they had bound Him, they led Him away" ([Matt. 27:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 27.2&t=DBY)). Dost thou suffer death? So did Christ: "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him" ([Luke 23:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 23.33&t=DBY)).

Did the Lord Jesus endure all this for us, and shall not we suffer persecution for His name? Our cup is nothing to the cup which Christ drank; His cup was mixed with the wrath of God; and if He did bear God's wrath for us, well may we bear man's wrath for Him.

*Sufferings are light*. "Our light affliction" ([2 Cor. 4:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 4.17&t=DBY)). It is heavy to flesh and blood, but it is light to faith. It is light in comparison of sin; he that feels sin heavy, feels suffering light. Affliction is light in comparison of hell; what is persecution to damnation? What is the fire of martyrdom to the fire of the damned? "Who knows the power of Thine anger?" ([Ps. 90:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 90.11&t=DBY)). Affliction is light in comparison with glory; the weight of glory makes persecution light.

*Sufferings are short.*"After that ye have suffered a while" ([1 Peter 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 5.10&t=DBY)), or as it is in the Greek, "a little." Our sufferings may be lasting, not everlasting. Persecution is*aspera*but *brevis; though*it has a sting to torment, yet it has a wing to fly. "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away" ([Isa. 35:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 35.10&t=DBY)). It is but a while when the saints shall have a writ of ease granted them, they shall weep no more, suffer no more.

*Support in suffering.*While we suffer for Christ we suffer with Christ: "If so be that we suffer with Him" ([Rom. 8:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 8.17&t=DBY)). Oh, says the Christian, I shall never be able to hold out: but remember thou sufferest with Christ, He helps thee to suffer: "My grace is sufficient for thee" ([2 Cor. 12:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 12.9&t=DBY)). "Underneath are the everlasting arms" ([Deut. 33:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deut. 33.27&t=DBY)). If Christ put the yoke of persecution over us, He will put His arms under us. The Lord Jesus will not only crown us when we conquer, but He will enable us to conquer.

*Persecution and the love of God.*They are blessed whom God loves, but persecution cannot hinder the love of God. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution?" ([Rom. 8:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 8.35&t=DBY)). The goldsmith loves his gold as well when it is in the fire, as when it is in his bag; God loves His children as well in adversity as in prosperity. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" ([Rev. 3:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 3.19&t=DBY)). God sweetens their sufferings: "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" ([2 Cor. 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 1.5&t=DBY)). As the mother having given her child a bitter pill, gives it afterwards a lump of sugar.

*The reward of suffering*. "Great is your reward in heaven" ([Matt. 5:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 5.12&t=DBY)). A Christian may lose his life, but not his reward; he may lose his head, but not his crown. Not that we can merit this reward by our sufferings. "*I will give*thee a crown of life." The reward is the legacy which free-grace bequeaths. Alas! what proportion is there between a drop of blood, and a weight of glory? But though we have no reward by merit, we shall have it by grace; so it is in the text, "Great is your reward in heaven." Look upon the crown and faint if you can; the reward is as far above your thoughts, as it is beyond your deserts; a man that is to wade through a deep water, fixeth his eyes upon the firm land that is before him. While Christians are wading through the deep waters of persecution, they should fix the eyes of their faith on the land of promise; "Great is your reward in heaven." They that bear the cross patiently shall wear the crown triumphantly.

God brings us low before He raiseth us, as water is at the lowest ebb before there is a spring tide. When God would bring Israel to Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, He first led them through a sea and a wilderness. When He intended to advance Joseph to the second man in the kingdom, he cast him first into prison, and the iron entered into his soul. He usually lets it be darkest before the morning-star of deliverance appears.

Many desire to be glorified with Christ, but they are not content to suffer for Him. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him" ([2 Tim. 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 2.12&t=DBY)). The wicked first reign and then suffer; the godly first suffer, and then reign.

Afflictions are safe guides to glory. The storm drives the ship into the harbour. Blessed storm that drives the soul into the heavenly harbour. Is it not better to go through affliction to glory, than through pleasure to misery?

9 TEMPTATION

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him." — [James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 1.12&t=DBY).

*SATAN'S method in tempting.*He observes the temper and constitution. Satan will not tempt contrary to the natural disposition and temperament: he makes the wind and tide go together; that way the natural tide of the heart runs, that way the wind of temptation blows. Though the devil cannot know men's thoughts, yet he knows their temper, and accordingly he lays his baits.

Satan observes the fittest time to tempt in; as a cunning angler casts in his angle when the fish will bite best. Satan's time of tempting is usually after an ordinance. When we have been at solemn duties, we are apt to think all is done, and we grow remiss, and leave off that zeal and strictness as before; just as a soldier, who after a battle leaves off his armour, not once dreaming of an enemy. Satan watches his time, and, when we least suspect, then he throws in a temptation.

Satan makes use of near relations; the devil tempts by a proxy: thus he handed over a temptation to Job by his wife, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity?" ([Job 2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 2.9&t=DBY)). A wife in the bosom may be the devil's instrument to tempt to sin.

Satan tempts to evil by them that are good; thus he gives poison in a golden cup. He tempted Christ by Peter. Peter dissuades Him from suffering. Master, pity Thyself. Who would have thought to have found the tempter in the mouth of an apostle?

Satan tempts to sin, under a pretence of religion. He is most to be feared when he transforms himself into an angel of light. He came to Christ with Scripture in his mouth: "It is written." The devil baits his hook with religion.

Peter was tempted to self-confidence, he presumed upon his own strength; and when he would needs stand alone, Christ let him fall: but this wrought for his good, it cost him many a tear. "He went out and wept bitterly" ([Matt. 26:75](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 26.75&t=DBY)). And now he grows more modest, he durst not say he loved Christ more than the other apostles. "Lovest thou Me more than these? "He durst not say so, his fall broke the neck of his pride.

Satan tempts to sin gradually: as the husbandman digs about the root of a tree, by degrees loosens it, and at last it falls. Satan steals by degrees into the heart; he is at first more plausible; he did not say to Eve at first, 'Eat the apple'; no, but he goes more subtilely to work; he puts forth a question, "Hath God said?" ([Gen. 3:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 3.1&t=DBY)); surely, Eve, thou art mistaken; the bountiful God never intended to debar thee one of the best trees of the garden. "Hath God said?" surely, either God did not say it; or, if He did, He never really intended it. Thus by degrees he wrought her to distrust, and then she took of the fruit and ate. O, take heed of Satan's first motions to sin, that seem more plausible. Oppose the beginnings of evil. He is first a fox and then a lion.

It is hard to climb up the hill of God with too many golden weights. Those that want the honours of the world, want the temptations of it. The world is a flattering enemy. The world doth never kiss us, but with an intent to betray us. "Love not the world" ([1 John 2:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John 2.15&t=DBY)). The sin is not in the using of the world but in the loving. Living fish swim against the stream; so we must swim against the world, else we shall be carried down the stream, and fall into the Dead Sea.

"What I say to you I say to all, Watch" ([Mark 13:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 13.37&t=DBY)). We must ever keep sentinel. Sleep not upon your guard: our sleeping time is the devil's tempting time. When you have prayed against sin, watch against temptation.

Satan, in tempting, baits his hook with religion. He can hang out Christ's colours and tempt to sin under pretences of piety. Sometimes he is the white devil, and transforms himself into an angel of light. He wraps his poisonous pills in sugar.

Satan doth not tempt God's children because they have sin in them, but because they have grace in them. Had they no grace he would not disturb them, for where he keeps possession all is in peace ([Luke 11:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 11.21&t=DBY)). A thief will not assault an empty house, but where he thinks there is treasure. Though to be tempted is a trouble, yet to think why you are tempted is a comfort.

If you would not be overcome by temptation, flee the "occasions of sin." Occasions of sin have great force to awaken lust within. He that would keep himself free from infection will not come near an infected house. The Nazarite who was forbid wine, might not eat grapes, which might occasion intemperance. Come not near the borders of temptation. Many pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and yet run themselves into temptation.

If you would not be overcome by temptation, be much in prayer. Prayer is the best antidote against temptation. Christ prescribes this remedy, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" ([Mark 14:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 14.38&t=DBY)). When Paul had a "messenger of Satan to buffet him," he betook himself to prayer. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." ([2 Cor. 12:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 12.8&t=DBY)). When Satan assaults furiously let us pray fervently.

If you would not be overcome by temptation, be humble in your own eyes. They are nearest falling who presume on their own strength. The doves, says Pliny, take pride in their flying high, till at last they fly so high, that they become a prey to the hawk; so when men fly high in pride and self-confidence, they become a prey to the tempter.

If you would not be foiled by temptation, do not enter into a dispute with Satan. When Eve began to argue the case with the serpent, the serpent was too hard for her; the devil by his logic disputed her out of Paradise. If you enter into a parley with him, you give him half the victory.

If Adam, in a few hours, sinned himself out of Paradise, how quickly would we sin ourselves into hell, if we were not kept by a greater power than our own! But God puts underneath His everlasting arms. … Christian, thou canst not believe that evil which is in thy heart, and which will break forth suddenly, if God should leave thee. "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" ([2 Kings 8:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Kings 8.13&t=DBY), [15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Kings 8.15&t=DBY)). Hazael could not believe he had such a root of bitterness in his heart, that he should rip up the women with child. Is thy servant a dog? Yes, and worse than a dog, when that corruption within is stirred up. If one had come to Peter and said, "Peter, within a few hours thou wilt deny Christ," he would have said, "Is thy servant a dog?" But alas! Peter did not know his own heart, nor how far that corruption within would prevail upon him. The sea may be calm and look clear; but when the wind blows, how it rages and foams! so though now thy heart seems good, yet, when temptation blows, how may sin discover itself, making thee foam with lust and passion. Who would have thought to have found adultery in David, and drunkenness in Noah, and cursing in Job? If God leave a man to himself, how suddenly and scandalously may sin break forth in the holiest men on the earth! "I say to all, Watch" ([Mark 13:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 13.37&t=DBY)). A wandering heart needs a watchful eye.

10 CONTENTION

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! … for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." — [Psalm 133:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 133.1&t=DBY), [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 133.3&t=DBY).

GOD the Son is called the Prince of Peace ([Isa. 9:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 9.6&t=DBY)). He came into the world with a song of peace: "On earth peace"; He went out of the world with a legacy of peace, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you" ([John 14:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 14.27&t=DBY)). Christ's earnest prayer was for peace; He prayed that His people might be one. Christ not only prayed for peace, but bled for peace: "Having made peace through the blood of His cross" ([Col. 1:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Col. 1.20&t=DBY)). He died not only to make peace between God and man, but between man and man. Christ suffered on the cross, that He might cement Christians together with His blood; as He prayed for peace, so He paid for peace.

If there be but one God, as God is one, so let them that serve Him be one. That is what Christ prayed for. "That they all may be one" ([John 17:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 17.21&t=DBY)). How sad is it to see religion wearing a coat of divers colours; to see Christians of so many opinions, and going so many different ways! It is Satan that has sown these tares of division. He first divided men from God, and then one man from another.

In the primitive times, there was so much love among the godly, as set the heathens a-wondering; and now there is so little, as may set Christians a-blushing.

The saints are Christ's lambs; for a dog to worry a lamb is usual, but for one lamb to worry another is unnatural.

Want of love among Christians doth much silence the Spirit of prayer; hot passions make cold prayers; where animosities and contentions prevail, instead of praying one for another, Christians will be ready to pray one against another.

Why doth the Lord bring His people together in affliction, but to bring them together in affection. Metals will unite in a furnace; if ever Christians unite, it should be in the furnace of affliction. God's rod has this loud voice in it, "Love one another"; how unworthy is it when Christians are suffering together, to be then striving together!

"Speak not evil one of another" ([James 4:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 4.11&t=DBY)). Unmerciful men know how to boil a quart to a pint; they have the devilish art so to extenuate and lessen the merit of others, that it is even boiled away to nothing. Some, though they have not the power of creation, yet they have the power of annihilation. They can sooner annihilate the good which is in others, than imitate it.

Put on "the breastplate of love" ([1 Thess. 5:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thess. 5.8&t=DBY)). This breastplate is insuperable, it may be shot at but it cannot be shot through. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

Love will be the perfume and music of heaven. As perfect love casts out fear, so it casts out envy and discord. Those Christians who could not live quietly together on earth (which was the blemish of their profession) in heaven shall be all love; the fire of strife shall cease; there shall be no vilifying, or censuring one another, or raking into one another's sores, but all shall be tied together with the heart-strings of love. Satan cannot put in his cloven foot there to make divisions. There shall be perfect harmony and concord, and not one jarring string in the saint's music.

11 PREACHING

"My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."[1 Corinthians 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians 2.4&t=DBY).

TRUTH when it is in the plainest dress is most comely. The star shines brightest in its native lustre. Who goes to embroider a pearl? or paint over gold? It is a sign of a wanton Christian to look most at the fringing and garnishing of a truth. Many like the dressing but loathe the food. When men preach rather words than matter, they catch people's ears, not their souls; they do but court, not convert.

To let others go on in sin securely is not charity but cruelty. If a man's house were on fire, and another should see it, and not tell him of it for fear of waking him, were not this cruelty?

Some ministers love to soar aloft, like the eagle, and fly above the people's capacities, endeavouring rather to be admired than understood. Ministers should be stars to give light, not clouds to obscure the truth. It is cruelty to souls when we go about to make easy things hard; this many are guilty of in our age, who go into the pulpit only to tie knots.

If a man were invited to a feast, and there being music at the feast, he should so listen to the music, that he did not mind his meat, you would say, Sure he is not hungry; so when men are for jingling words, and like rather gallantry of speech than spirituality of matter, it is a sign they have surfeited stomachs, and itching ears.

Oftentimes God crowns his labours, and sends most fish into his net, who though he may be less skilful is more faithful; and though he has less of the brain, yet has more of the heart.

It is better to have God approve, than the world applaud: there is a time shortly coming when a smile from God's face will be infinitely better than all the applauses of men: how sweet will that word be, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" ([Matt. 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 25.21&t=DBY)).

What pains some men take to go to hell, "They weary themselves to commit iniquity" ([Jer. 9:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jer. 9.5&t=DBY)). The devil blows the horn, and men ride post to hell, as if they feared hell would be full ere they should get thither. Do men take all these pains for hell, and shall we not take pains for the kingdom of heaven? The more pains we take for heaven, the more welcome will death be to us. He who has spent his time in serving God, can look death in the face with comfort; he was wholly taken up about heaven, and now he shall be taken up to heaven; he traded before in heaven, and now he shall go to live there.

Christ teaches the heart. Others may teach the ear, Christ the heart. "Whose heart the Lord opened" ([Acts 16:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 16.14&t=DBY)). All that the dispensers of the word can do is but to work knowledge, Christ works grace: they can but give the light of the truth; Christ gives the love of the truth; they can only teach what to believe, Christ teaches how to believe. Christ gives us a taste of the word. Ministers may set the food of the word before you, and carve it out to you; but it is only Christ can cause you to taste it. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," ([1 Peter 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 2.3&t=DBY)). "Taste and see that the Lord is good" ([Ps. 34:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 34.8&t=DBY)). It is one thing to hear a truth preached, another thing to taste it. David had got a taste of the word. "Thou hast taught me: how sweet are Thy words to my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth" ([Ps. 119:102-103](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 119.102-103&t=DBY)).

Some speak much of the light of reason improved: alas! the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom the deep things of God; the light of reason will no more help a man to believe, than the light of a candle will help him to understand.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. … neither can he know them" ([1 Cor. 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 2.14&t=DBY)). He may have more insight into the things of the world than a believer, but he does not see the deep things of God. A swine may see an acorn under a tree, but he cannot see a star.

If you will have the teachings of Christ, walk according to the knowledge you have already. Use your little knowledge well, and Christ will teach you more. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" ([John 7:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 7.17&t=DBY)).

Lay aside those dispositions which may render the preached word ineffectual: As *curiosity.*Some go to hear the word preached, not so much to get grace, as to enrich themselves with notions: having "Itching ears" ([2 Tim. 4:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 4.3&t=DBY)). "Thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument" ([Ezek. 33:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezek. 33.32&t=DBY)). Many go to the word to feast their ears only; they like the melody of the voice, and the novelty of the opinions ([Acts 17:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 17.21&t=DBY)). This is to love the garnishing of the dish more than the food; it is to desire to be pleased rather than edified. Lay aside *prejudice.*The Sadducees were prejudiced against the doctrine of the resurrection. Sometimes prejudice is against the truths preached, and sometimes against the person preaching. "There is yet one man, Micaiah. … by whom we may enquire of the Lord, but I hate him" ([1 Kings 22:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Kings 22.8&t=DBY)). This hinders the power of the word. If a patient has an ill opinion of his physician, he will not take any of his medicines, however good they may be. … Lay aside *covetousness.*Covetousness is not only getting worldly gain unjustly, but loving it inordinately. This is a great hindrance to the preached word. The seed which fell among thorns was choked. The covetous man is thinking on the world when he is hearing; his heart is in his shop. "They sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words. … but their heart goes after their covetousness" ([Ezek. 33:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezek. 33.31&t=DBY)). Lay aside *partiality.*Partiality in hearing is, when we like to hear some truths preached, but not all. We love to hear of heaven, but not of self-denial; of reigning with Christ, but not of suffering with Him. "Speak to us smooth things" ([Isa. 30:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 30.10&t=DBY)), such as may not grate upon the conscience. Many like the comforts of the word, but not its reproofs. Lay aside *censoriousness.*Some, instead of judging themselves for sin, sit as judges upon the preacher; his sermon had either too much gall in it, or it was too long. They would sooner censure a sermon than practise it. Lay aside *disobedience.*"All day long I have stretched forth My hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people" ([Rom. 10:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 10.21&t=DBY)). If, when God speaks to us in His word, we are deaf, when we speak to Him in prayer, He will be dumb.

12 PRAYING

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." — [Ephesians 6:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians 6.18&t=DBY).

A GODLY man is a praying man. "Every one that is godly shall pray to Thee." As soon as grace is poured in, prayer is poured out. Prayer is the soul's traffic with heaven; God comes down to us by His Spirit, and we go up to Him by prayer.

A spiritual prayer is a believing prayer: Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" ([Matt. 21:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 21.22&t=DBY)). The reason why so many prayers suffer shipwreck, is because they split against the rock of unbelief; praying without faith is shooting without bullets.

A spiritual prayer is an holy prayer: "Wherefore lift up holy hands ([1 Tim. 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 2.8&t=DBY)). Prayer must be offered on the altar of a pure heart; sin lived in makes the heart hard, and God's ear deaf; sin stops the mouth of prayer, it doth as the thief to the traveller, puts a gag in his mouth, that he cannot speak; "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" ([Ps. 66:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 66.18&t=DBY)). It is foolish to pray against sin, and then to sin against prayer.

A spiritual prayer is an humble prayer: "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble" ([Ps. 10:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 10.17&t=DBY)). Prayer is the asking of an alms, which requires humility. It is comely to see a poor nothing lie at the feet of its Maker; "Behold, I have taken upon me to speak to the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" ([Gen. 18:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 18.27&t=DBY)). The lower the heart descends, the higher the prayer ascends. God accepts broken expressions, when they come from broken hearts.

A spiritual prayer is when we have spiritual ends in prayer. There is a vast difference between a spiritual prayer, and a carnal desire: the ends of a hypocrite are carnal; he looks a-squint in prayer; it is not the sense of his spiritual wants that moves him, but rather lust; "Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" ([James 4:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 4.3&t=DBY)). The sinner prays more for food than grace; this God doth not interpret praying, but howling. "They howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine" ([Hosea 7:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea 7.14&t=DBY)). Prayers which want a good aim want a good answer. A godly man drives the trade of prayer that he may increase the stock of grace.

Prayer delights God's ear, it melts His heart, it opens His hand: God cannot deny a praying soul.

How hard is it sometimes to get leave of hearts to seek God! Jesus Christ went more willingly to the cross than we do to the throne of grace.

Christ was in an agony at prayer ([Luke 22:44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 22.44&t=DBY)). Many when they pray are rather in a lethargy, than in an agony. When they are about the world, they are all fire; when they are at prayer, they are all ice.

The joint stock of the prayers of saints works for good to the godly. "Prayer was made without ceasing of the church to God for him. … And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him … and raised him up, … and his chains fell off" ([Acts 12:5-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 12.5-7&t=DBY)). The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was prayer fetched the angel.

"Effectual fervent prayer prevails much" ([James 5:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 5.16&t=DBY)). Cold prayers, like cold suitors, never speed. Prayer without fervency, is like a sacrifice without a fire. Prayer is called a "pouring out of the soul," to signify vehemence ([1 Sam. 1:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Sam. 1.15&t=DBY)). Formality starves prayer.

If you would keep your mind fixed in prayer, keep your eye fixed. "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens" ([Ps. 123:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 123.1&t=DBY)). Much vanity comes in at the eye. When the eye wanders in prayer, the heart wanders. Love is a great fixer of the thoughts. He who is in love cannot keep his thoughts off the object. He who loves the world has his thoughts upon the world. Did we love God more, our minds would be more intent upon him in prayer. He who gives himself liberty to have vain thoughts out of prayer, will scarcely have other thoughts in prayer.

He that leaves off prayer leaves off to fear God. "Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God" ([Job 15:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 15.4&t=DBY)). A man that has left off prayer is fit for any wickedness. When Saul had given over inquiring after God he went to the witch of Endor.

Faith is the breath of prayer; prayer is dead unless faith breathe in it. "Let him ask in faith" ([James 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 1.6&t=DBY)). "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" ([Matt. 21:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 21.22&t=DBY)). Without faith it is speaking, not praying. Faith must take prayer by the hand, or there is no coming nigh to God. A faithless prayer is fruitless. "They could not enter in because of unbelief," is as true of prayer; it cannot enter into heaven because of unbelief.

13 MEDITATION

"His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." [Psalm 1:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 1.2&t=DBY).

MEDITATION is the soul's retiring of itself, that by a serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to heavenly affections.

*Meditation opposed by the devil.*The devil is an enemy to meditation; he cares not how much people read and hear, nor how little they meditate; he knows that meditation is a means to compose the heart, and to bring it into a gracious frame; now the devil is against that; Satan is content that you should be hearing and praying Christians, so that ye be not meditating Christians; he can stand your small shot, provided that you do not put in this bullet.

*Meditation hindered by the world.*A Christian when he goes to meditate, must lock up himself from the world. The world spoils meditation; Christ went "apart" into the mount to pray, so go apart when you are to meditate "Isaac went out to meditate in the field ([Gen. 24:63](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 24.63&t=DBY)). He sequestered and retired himself that he might take a walk with God by meditation. The world's music will either play us asleep, or distract us in our meditations. When a mote is gotten into the eye, it hinders the sight; when worldly thoughts, as motes are gotten into the mind, which is the eye of the soul, it cannot look up so stedfastly to heaven by contemplation. When Abraham went to sacrifice he left his servant and the ass at the bottom of the hill ([Gen. 22:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 22.5&t=DBY)), so, when a Christian is going up the hill of meditation, he should leave all secular cares at the bottom of the hill, that he may be alone, and take a turn in heaven. This is the first thing, lock and bolt the door against the world.

*Meditation hindered by roving thoughts.*There must be in meditation a fixing the heart upon the object; carnal Christians are like quicksilver which cannot be made to fix; their thoughts are roving up and down and will not fix; like the bird that hops from one bough to another, and stays nowhere. David was a man fit to meditate: "O God, my heart is fixed" ([Ps. 108:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 108.1&t=DBY)). In meditation there must be a staying of the thoughts upon the object: "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" ([Luke 2:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 2.19&t=DBY)).

*Meditation and memory.*The meditation of a thing has more sweetness in it than the bare remembrance. The memory is the chest or cupboard to lock up a truth, meditation is the palate to feed on it. When David began to meditate on God, it was sweet to him as marrow ([Ps. 63:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 63.5-6&t=DBY)). There is as much difference between a truth remembered, and a truth meditated on, as between a cordial in a glass, and a cordial drunk down.

*Meditation and study.*Meditation and study differ. Study is a work of the brain, meditation of the heart; study sets the invention on work, meditation sets the affection on work. Study is the finding out of a truth, meditation is the spiritual improvement of a truth; the one searcheth for the vein of gold, the other digs out the gold. Study is like a winter sun that has little warmth and influence: meditation leaves one in a holy frame: it melts the heart when it is frozen, and makes it drop into tears of love.

*The necessity of meditation.*Without meditation the truth of God will not stay with us; the heart is hard, and the memory slippery, and without meditation all is lost; meditation imprints and fastens a truth in the mind. Without meditation the truths which we know will never affect our hearts, "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart" ([Deut. 6:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deut. 6.6&t=DBY)). How can the word be in the heart, unless it be wrought in by meditation? As an hammer drives a nail to the head, so meditation drives a truth to the heart. Without meditation the word preached may increase notion, not affection. Meditation fetcheth life in a truth. There are many truths lie, as it were, in the heart dead, which when we meditate upon, they begin to have light and heat in them.

*The time for meditation.*The best time to converse with God is, before worldly occasions stand knocking at the door to be let in: the morning is, as it were, the cream of the day, let the cream be taken off, and let God have it. Wind up thy heart towards heaven in the beginning of the day, and it will go the better all the day after. He that loseth his heart in the morning in the world, will hardly find it again all the day. O! Christians, let God have your morning meditations. He takes it in disdain to have the world served before Him. Suppose a king and a yeoman were to dine in the same room, and to sit at two tables; if the yeoman should have his meat brought up, and be served first, the king might take it in high disdain, and look upon it as a contempt done to his person. When the world shall be served first, all our morning thoughts attending it, and the Lord shall be put off with the dregs of the day, is not this a contempt done to the God of glory? God deserves the first of our thoughts; some of His first thoughts were upon us; we had a being in His thoughts before we had a being; He thought upon us "before the foundations of the world." Before we fell He was thinking how to raise us. We had the morning of His thoughts. We have taken up His thoughts from eternity: if we have had some of God's first thoughts, well may He have our first thoughts. "In the morning the dew fell" ([Ex. 16:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ex. 16.13&t=DBY)). The dew of a blessing falls early; now we are likeliest to have God's company. If you would meet with a friend, you go betimes in the morning before he be gone out. I would not by this, wholly exclude evening meditation. Isaac went out to meditate in the eventide ([Gen. 24:63](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 24.63&t=DBY)). When business is over, and everything calm, it is good to take a turn with God in the evening. God had his evening sacrifice, as well as His morning ([Ex. 29:39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ex. 29.39&t=DBY)), as the cream at the top is sweet, so the sugar at the bottom.

*The length of time to meditate.*Meditate till thou findest thy heart grow warm. If when a man is cold, you ask how long he should stand by the fire? Sure, till he be thoroughly warm, and made fit for his work. So, Christian, thy heart is cold; never a day, no, not the hottest day in summer, but it freezeth there; now stand at the fire of meditation till thou findest thy affections warmed, and thou art made fit for spiritual service. David mused till his heart waxed hot within him: "While I was musing the fire burned" ([Ps. 39:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 39.3&t=DBY)).

*The gain of meditation.*Meditation is an excellent means to profit by the word: reading may bring a truth into the head, meditation brings it into the heart; better meditate on one sermon than hear five. There is a disease in children called the rickets, when they have great heads, but their lower parts are small and thrive not. I wish many professors have not the spiritual rickets, they have great heads, much knowledge, but yet they thrive not in godliness, their heart is faint, their feet feeble, they walk not vigorously in the ways of God; and the cause of this disease is, the want of meditation. Illumination without meditation makes us no better than devils. Satan is an angel of light, yet black enough.

Meditation doth make the heart serious. Some Christians have light hearts: "Her prophets are light" ([Zeph. 3:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zeph. 3.4&t=DBY)). A light Christian will be blown into any opinion or vice; you may blow a feather any way: there are many feathery Christians; the devil no sooner comes with a temptation but they are ready to take fire; now meditation makes the heart serious. Meditation consolidates a Christian; solid gold is best; the solid Christian is the only metal that will pass current with God.

Meditation is the bellows of the affections. We light affection at this fire of meditation, "while I was musing the fire burned" ([Ps. 39:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 39.3&t=DBY)). Illumination makes us shining lamps, meditation makes us burning lamps.

Meditation fits for prayer. Meditation first furnisheth with matter to pray, and then furnisheth with a heart to pray. "I muse on the work of Thy hands, I stretch forth my hands to Thee" ([Ps. 143:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 143.5-6&t=DBY)). The musing of his head made way for the stretching forth of his hands in prayer. Prayer is the child of meditation: meditation leads the van, and prayer brings up the rear.

Meditation is a strong antidote against sin; sin puts a worm into conscience, a sting into death, a fire into hell; did men meditate of this, that after all their dainty dishes, death will bring in the reckoning in hell, they would say as David in another sense, ""Let me not eat of their dainties" ([Ps. 141:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 141.4&t=DBY)). The devil's apple has a bitter core.

Meditation is an excellent means to lessen our esteem of the world. Great things seem little to him that stands high, if he could live among the stars, the earth would seem as nothing. He who is catching at a crown, will not fish for gudgeons, as Cleopatra once said to Mark Antony.

*Directions for meditation.*Read before you meditate. "Give attendance to reading" ([1 Tim. 4:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 4.13&t=DBY)). Then it follows, "meditate on these things" (v. 15). Reading doth furnish with matter; it is the oil that feeds the lamp of meditation. Be sure your meditations are founded upon Scripture. Reading without meditation is unfruitful; meditation without reading is dangerous.

Meditate not on too many things at once. One truth driven home by meditation will most kindly affect the heart. Drive but one wedge of meditation at a time, but be sure you drive it home to the heart. Those who aim at a whole flock of birds hit none.

Pray over your meditations. Prayer fastens meditation upon the soul; prayer is a-tying a knot at the end of meditation that it doth not slip.

Let meditation be reduced to practice. Live over your meditation. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe *to do*according to all the law" ([Joshua 1:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua 1.8&t=DBY)). Meditation and practice, like two sisters, must go hand in hand. The end of meditation is action. They who meditate in God's law, and observe not to do, are no better than the devil; he knows much, but still he is a devil.

14 DEPARTING

"The time of my departure is at hand." — [2 Timothy 4:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy 4.6&t=DBY).

"To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." — [Philippians 1:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians 1.23&t=DBY).

"BUT this I say, brethren, the time is short" ([1 Cor. 7:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 7.29&t=DBY)). If we reckon that for time which is well spent, then time is brought into a narrow compass indeed: a great part of our time lies fallow: take from our life all the time of eating, drinking, sleeping, besides idle impertinencies, and then how short is our time! How little is the time wherein we can truly say, *Hoc vixi*, This time I have lived! O how little is the time *lived,*but time lost. The time is short, why should we love that over-much which we cannot keep over-long?

The world rings changes, it is never constant but in its disappointments. The world is but a great inn, where we are to stay a night or two, and be gone; what madness is it so to set our heart upon our inn, as to forget our home?

The world is a great inn; we are guests in this inn. Travellers when they are met in their inn, do not spend all their time in speaking about their inn; they are to lodge there but a few hours, and they are gone; but they are speaking of their home, and the country whither they are travelling. So when we meet together, we should not be talking only about the world; we are to leave this presently; but we should talk of our heavenly country ([Heb. 11:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 11.16&t=DBY)).

We are travellers who take up our lodgings here for a night; and Paul longed to be out of his inn. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" ([Phil. 1:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Phil. 1.23&t=DBY)). The apostle doth not say, "I must depart"; but, "I desire to depart." All men must depart. There is a dying principle in all. Nebuchadnezzar's image, though it had a head of gold, yet had feet of clay ([Dan. 2:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Dan. 2.43&t=DBY)). The strongest man stands upon feet of clay, and must moulder away in time; death will come at last.

The apostle doth not say, Having a desire to die, but "to depart." What a wicked man fears, a godly man hopes for. "I desire," says Paul, "to depart"; a sinner cries, "I am loath to depart." David calls death a going out of the world ([Ps. 39:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 39.13&t=DBY)). A wicked man doth not go out, but is dragged out. If a wicked man were put to his choice, he would never come where God is; but would choose the serpent's curse, to eat dust ([Gen. 3:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 3.14&t=DBY)), but not to return to dust. A soul enlivened with grace, looks upon the world as a wilderness, wherein are fiery serpents, and he desires to get out of this wilderness. Simeon, having taken Christ in his arms, cries out, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace" ([Luke 2:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 2.29&t=DBY)). He that has taken Christ into the arms of his faith, will sing Simeon's song, "Lord, let Thy servant depart." The bird desires to go out of the cage, though it be made of gold.

Death will dry up a believer's tears: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" ([Rev. 7:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 7.17&t=DBY)). Weeping is nothing but a cloud of sorrow gathered in the heart, dropping into water. Ever since we looked upon the tree of knowledge, our eyes have watered. Death shall stop the bottle of tears, and open the gate of paradise. A believer's dying day is his ascension day to glory.

The apostle had three great desires, and they were all centred in Christ. One was to be found in Christ ([Phil. 3:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Phil. 3.9&t=DBY)); the other was to magnify Christ ([Phil. 1:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Phil. 1.20&t=DBY)); the third was to be with Christ ([Phil. 1:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Phil. 1.23&t=DBY)). Paul doth not say, I desire to depart, and be in heaven, but to be with Christ. It is Christ's presence makes heaven. It is not the cherubim or seraphim which make paradise; but "the Lamb is the light thereof" ([Rev. 21:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 21.23&t=DBY)).

There had been little comfort in departing, if the apostle had not put in this word, "to be with Christ." Death will make a glorious change to a believer; it is but crossing the Dead Sea, and he shall be with Christ. Death to a child of God is like the whirlwind to the prophet Elijah; it blew off his mantle, but carried the prophet up to heaven: so death is a boisterous wind which blows off the mantle of the flesh (for the body is but the mantle the soul is wrapped in), but it carries the soul up to Christ; the day of a believer's dissolution is the day of his coronation. Though death be a bitter cup, there is sugar at the bottom. Though the flesh calls death the last enemy ([1 Cor. 15:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 15.26&t=DBY)), yet faith calls it the best friend; it brings a man to Christ, which is far better.

To be with Christ implies we shall see Him as He is; here we see Him but through a glass darkly. To be with Christ implies we shall not only see Him but enjoy Him: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" ([Matt. 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 25.21&t=DBY)); not only see it, but enter into it. To be with Christ implies duration; "So shall we ever be with the Lord" ([1 Thess. 4:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thess. 4.17&t=DBY)). The fashion of this world passeth away ([1 Cor. 7:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 7.31&t=DBY)). Earthly comforts, though they may be sweet, they are swift; but this privilege of being with Christ, runs parallel with eternity So shall we ever be with the Lord."

To a believer it is a happy departing; to a wicked man it is a sad departing, there is nothing but departing; he departs out of this life, and he departs from Christ: "Depart from Me, ye cursed" ([Matt. 25:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 25.41&t=DBY)).

If we are in Christ while we live, we shall go to Christ while we die. We must be in Christ before we can be with Christ.

This is that which makes heaven to be heaven, "We shall be ever with the Lord."

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" ([Matt. 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 25.21&t=DBY)). Oh amazing! The saints enter into God's own joy: they have not only the joy which God bestows, but the joy which God enjoys.

He is a constant Friend. "His compassions fail not" ([Lam. 3:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Lam. 3.22&t=DBY)). God is a friend for ever. "Having loved His own, He loved them to the end" ([John 13:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 13.1&t=DBY)). He loves to the end, and there is no end of that love. How invincible is the love of Christ! "It is strong as death" ([Cant. 8:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Cant. 8.6&t=DBY)). Death might take away His life, not this love. And that which makes this love of Christ the more stupendous, there was nothing in us to excite or draw forth His love: He did not love us because we were worthy, but by loving us He made us worthy.

Christ's love did not cease at the hour of death. We write on our letters, "Your friend till death"; but Christ wrote in another style, "Your friend after death." Christ died once, but lives ever. He is now testifying His affection for us, He is interceding for us. When He has done dying, yet He has not done loving.

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" ([Matt. 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 25.21&t=DBY)). Here joy enters into the saints; in heaven they enter into joy. There can be no more sorrow in heaven than there is joy in hell.

Why should we shed tears immoderately for them who have tears wiped from their eyes? Why should we be swallowed up of grief for them who are swallowed up of joy? They are gone to their kingdom; they are not lost but gone a little before; not perished, but translated.

Death may take away a few worldly comforts, but it gives that which is better; it takes away a short lease and gives land of inheritance. If the saints possess a kingdom when they die, they have no cause to fear death. A prince would not be afraid to cross the sea, though tempestuous, if he were sure to be crowned as soon as he came to shore.

15 CROWNING

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." — [2 Timothy 4:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy 4.7-8&t=DBY).

WE must run the race before we wear the crown. If you set the crown on Christ's head while you live, He will set the crown on your head when you die.

Behold, what manner of love is this, that Christ should be *arraigned*and we *adorned,*that the curse should be laid on His head and the crown set on ours.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." A Christian's best things are to come. We are here as Princes in disguise, the world knows us not; but there is a crown laid up. While we are *laying out*for God, He is *laying up*for us.

If you would wear the crown of righteousness, then walk in the way of righteousness. "In the way of righteousness is life" ([Prov. 12:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 12.28&t=DBY)). But, alas, this is a very untrodden way.

Some *know*the way of righteousness but do not walk in it.

Others *commend*the way of righteousness, but do not walk in it.

Others instead of walking in the way, they are good only at *crossing*the way; they oppose the way of righteousness; such are persecutors.

Others walk a few steps in the way and then go back again. These are apostates, as if they were going to heaven backwards.

Others walk half in the way and half out: these are loose professors who under a notion of Christian liberty do walk carelessly, crying up justification that they may weaken the power of sanctification. Surely were there none other Bible to read in, but the lives of some professors, we should read but little Scripture there.

Others instead of walking in the way do traduce and slander the way of righteousness. The way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ([2 Peter 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter 2.2&t=DBY)).

Others *creep*in the way, they do not walk; they go on but very slow. Those who look on can hardly tell whether they make any progress or no.

O! all you that would wear the crown of righteousness, walk in the way of righteousness; walk so that if we could suppose the Bible to be lost, it might be found again in your lives.

If you would wear the crown of righteousness, put on the armour of righteousness ([2 Cor. 6:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 6.7&t=DBY)). If you will have this crown you must fight for it ([2 Tim. 4:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 4.7-8&t=DBY)).

"The time is short," says the apostle. We are ready to strike sail, we are almost ashore, and then we shall be crowned. The crown is hard by, you sail apace … Though we bear the *cross*, we shall wear the *crown*.

A Christian's work is soon over, but not his reward. How great is that reward which thoughts cannot measure, nor time finish.

In the future life the saints shall be out of the noise of the drum and cannon, and not one stroke shall be struck more; then shall they not appear in their *armour*, but their *white robes*.

The cross is heavy, but the sharper the cross, the brighter the crown.

"Love never faileth" ([1 Cor. 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 13.8&t=DBY)). Faith is the staff we walk with in this life. "We walk by faith" ([2 Cor. 5:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 5.7&t=DBY)). But we shall set this staff at heaven's door, and only love shall enter.

Heaven itself is not a saint's reward. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?" ([Ps. 73:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 73.25&t=DBY)).

"Hold up my goings in Thy paths that my footsteps slip not" ([Ps. 17:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 17.5&t=DBY)). "Lord, hold me up that I may hold out. Thou hast set the crown at the end of the race, let me run the race, that I may wear the crown"; it was Beza's prayer, and let it be ours, "Lord, perfect what Thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven."

Love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" ([Rom. 13:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 13.11&t=DBY)). You are within a few days' march of heaven. Salvation is near to you. Christians, it is but a while and you will have done weeping and praying, and be triumphing; you shall put off your mourning, and put on white robes; you shall put off your armour, and put on a victorious crown.

Heaven's glory only is commensurate to the vast desires of an immortal soul. The soul is never satisfied till it has God for its portion, and heaven for its haven. The glory of heaven is pure and unmixed. There gold has no alloy. There the rose of Sharon grows without thorns. There is ease without pain, honour without disgrace, life without death. Physicians there are out of date: no distemper there, no passing bell, or bill of mortality. "Neither can they die any more" ([Luke 20:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 20.36&t=DBY)).

The glory is distributed to every saint. In an earthly kingdom the crown goes but to one, a crown will fit but one head; but above the crown goes to all ([Rev. 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 1.6&t=DBY)). All the elect are kings. The land is settled chiefly upon the heir, but in heaven all the saints are heirs. "Heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ" ([Rom. 8:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 8.17&t=DBY)). God has land enough to give to all His heirs.

16 FRAGMENTS

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." — [Proverbs 25:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs 25.11&t=DBY).

ONLY the believer is the rich man; here is his estate summed up, "All things are his."

The creation is but a theatre to act the great work of redemption upon.

Christ was not only "a Lamb without spot" but "a Lamb slain." Every pardon a sinner has, is written in Christ's blood.

If we will needs be high-minded, let it be in setting our mind upon heavenly things.

If thou wouldest get Christ into thy heart, let heaven be in thine eye: "Set your affections upon things above" ([Col. 3:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Col. 3.2&t=DBY)). There needs no exhortation to set our hearts on things below.

Though grace cannot be lost, yet it may be hid. David so clouded his graces by sin, that others could hardly see the cloth of gold under the filthy garments.

Why is prayer so sweet, but because the soul has private conference with Christ? Why is the word precious but because it is a means to convey Christ? An ordinance without Christ, is but feeding upon the dish instead of the meat.

Here Christ puts His graces upon His spouse, in heaven He will put His glory upon her.

Such was Adam's ambition to know more, that by tasting the tree of knowledge, he lost the tree of life.

Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, where one makes three, and three make but one: this is bad arithmetic, but good divinity.

Divisions are Satan's powder-plot to blow up religion.

The godly man has all his best things to come; the wicked man has all his worst things to come: as their way is different so their end.

Do not so look upon your troubles as to forget your mercies.

He that is proud of his knowledge, the devil cares not how much he knows.

How many have pulled down their souls to build up their houses.

God can strike a straight stroke by a crooked stick.

Let who will rule, God over-rules.

God can with a word unpin the wheels, and break the axle-tree of the creation. He can stop the lion's mouth, cause the sun to stand still, and make the fire not burn.

How slow is God to anger. He was longer in destroying Jericho, than in making the world.

Christ will not throw away His pearls for every speck of dirt.

Christ shed tears for them that shed His blood.

Our nature is defiled; how then can the actions be pure? If the water be foul in the well, it cannot be clean in the bucket. "We are all as an unclean thing" ([Isa. 64:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 64.6&t=DBY)).

That which begins in hypocrisy ends in apostacy.

Eternity to the godly is a day which has no sun-setting; and to the wicked, a night which has no sun-rising.

Now is the time of God's long-suffering, after death will be the time of the sinner's long suffering.

Take heed lest by growing rich, you grow worth nothing at last.

Many live to see their names buried before them.

"When I awake I am still with Thee" ([Ps. 139:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 139.18&t=DBY)). If you would still be with God, watch over your hearts every day; lock up your hearts with God every morning, and give Him the key.

Toleration is the grave of reformation. By toleration we adopt other men's sins, and make them our own.

God loves a broken heart, not a divided heart.

If a wicked man seems to have peace at death, it is not from the knowledge of his happiness, but from the ignorance of his danger.

It will be so much the worse to go to hell with hopes of heaven.

An idle person is a fit subject for the devil to work upon.

God must light up the lamp of grace in the heart; weeds grow of themselves, flowers are planted.

Godliness is glory in the seed, and glory is godliness in the flower.

Look upon an humble Saviour, and let the plumes of pride fall.

A godly man is an heavenly man; heaven is in him, before he is in heaven.

Other friends thou canst not keep, God is a friend thou canst not lose; He will be thy guide in life, thy hope in death, thy reward after death.

Many parents are careful to lay up portions for their children, but they do not lay up prayers for them.

We are apt to forget three things — our faults, our friends, our instructions.

True faith will trust God where it cannot trace Him.

Such sheep as have most wool are soonest fleeced.

It is good to find out our sins, lest they find us out.

Our life is a wayfaring life and a warfaring life.

Affliction is a bitter root, but it bears sweet fruit.

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee" ([Ps. 76:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 76.10&t=DBY)). He can reap His glory out of men's fury.

True love is not only at the tongue's end, but at the finger's end; it is the labour of love.

Does Christ appear for us in heaven, and are we afraid to appear for Him on earth?

It is Satan that makes us have good thoughts of ourselves, and hard thoughts of God.

As we must answer to God for idle words, so for sinful silence.

As the glass shows what the face is, whether it be fair or foul, so the words show what the heart is.

Did our thoughts dwell above we should live sweeter lives. The higher the lark flies the sweeter the songs.

Heaven is a place where sorrow cannot live and joy cannot die.

'Tis vain to speak of hopes of salvation and yet have the marks of damnation.

The world is a flattering enemy, it kills with embracing … whom the world kisseth it betrayeth.

The way to overcome is upon our knees.

The world is enough to busy us, not to fill us. "In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits" ([Job 20:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 20.22&t=DBY)).

Immorality begins at infidelity ([Heb. 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 3.12&t=DBY)).

Do you love to see Christ's picture in a saint, though hung in never so poor a frame?

Be more afraid of sin than of suffering.

Is heaven in thine eye, and Christ in thy heart, and the world under thy feet?

How many have perished by being their own saviours.

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

None so empty of grace as he that thinks he is full.

Such as would be over-rich, will overreach.

It is a poor thing to have an applauding world and an accusing conscience.

Saints have their infirmities; but the wicked do not hate them for these, but for their holiness.

Whatever you deny for Christ, you shall find again in Christ.

The sins you commit in haste you will repent at leisure.

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

"Gideon took thorns of the wilderness, and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth" ([Judges 8:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Judges 8.16&t=DBY)). God by the thorns and briers of affliction teaches us.

God gives gracious supports in affliction. If He strikes with one hand, He supports with the other. "Underneath are the everlasting arms" ([Deut. 33:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deut. 33.27&t=DBY)).

Prosperity exposes to much evil: it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning.

God lets us fall into sufferings to prevent falling into snares.

Why should we think to tread only upon roses and violets, when prophets and apostles have marched through briers to heaven?

If a man begins his voyage to heaven in the storm of death, it is a thousand to one if he does not suffer eternal shipwreck.

Pride stops the current of gratitude. A proud man will never be thankful; he looks upon all he has either to be of his own procuring or deserving.

Many pray Agur's first prayer, "Give me not poverty," but few pray his last prayer, "Give me not riches" ([Prov. 30:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 30.8&t=DBY)).

They that sleep in seedtime, will beg in harvest.

The prayer which wants a good aim wants a good issue.

God's rod is a pencil to draw Christ's image more distinctly upon us.

Affliction is God's flail to thresh off the husks, not to consume the precious grain.

Fiery trials make golden Christians ([Prov. 17:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 17.3&t=DBY)).

God only threshes the precious wheat, but He burns the useless chaff. He chastens the righteous, but He condemns the wicked.

The jewel of assurance is best kept in the cabinet of an humble heart.

Christ is never sweet until sin is felt to he bitter.

At Christ's death "the rocks rent." Not to be affected with Christ's dying love, is to have hearts harder than rocks.

Conscience is like a bee; use it well, and it will give honey; use it ill, and it will put forth a sting.

A troubled conscience is the first-fruit of hell.

Eternity is a sea without bottom or banks, for what line or plummet can fathom its depths?

A heathen, exercising much cruelty to a Christian, asked him, in scorn, what great miracle his Master, Jesus Christ, ever did. The Christian replied, "This miracle, that although you use me thus, I can forgive you.

Grace is Christ's portrait drawn on the soul.

He that sins because of God's mercy, shall have judgment without mercy.

Where grace grows sin cannot thrive.

God makes grace flourish most in the fall of the leaf. "They shall still bring forth in old age" ([Ps. 92:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 92.14&t=DBY)).

The sinner may live in a calm, but he will die in a storm. He that lives graceless, dies peaceless.

He who has no faith in his heart will have no fear of God before his eyes.

He who believes not in the blood of the Lamb, must feel the wrath of the Lamb.

Sin unrepented of ends in a tragedy. It has the devil for its father, shame for its companion, and death for its wages.

When people do not mind what God speaks to them in His word, God as little minds what they say to Him in prayer.

The godly have some good in them, therefore the devil afflicts them; and some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them.

A sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house. "I will return to my house" ([Matt. 12:44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 12.44&t=DBY)).

A sinner grinds in the devil's mill. "The lusts of your father ye will do" ([John 8:44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 8.44&t=DBY)).

William Gurnall. Extracts from the writings of,

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PREFACE

THE extracts that form this little volume are gleaned from a well-known Puritan work, written by William Gurnall and published in 1665, entitled, "The Christian in Complete Armour."

Amongst all the Puritan writings that have come down to us, none, perhaps, are more practical and conscience-reaching than this notable work. The perusal of the following pages will prove it still to be a ministry, rich with glowing thoughts to warm the heart;— a quiver well stocked with arrows to reach the conscience. H. S. 1914.

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

OF the personal history of William Gurnall hardly anything is known. Such bald facts as we possess are mainly gathered from a somewhat rare book, printed in 1830, and compiled by a painstaking antiquarian, named M'Keon. It is entitled, "An Inquiry into the Birthplace, Parentage, Life, and Writings of the Rev. William Gurnall, formerly Rector of Lavenham, in Suffolk, and author of 'The Christian in Complete Armour.'"

From this dry-as-dust little volume we learn that Gurnall was born at the seaport of Lynn, in the county of Norfolk, in the year 1616. He received his early education at the Free Grammar School of that town, passing, in 1632, to Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He graduated B.A. in 1635, and M.A. in 1639. No record remains to tell us how he spent the next five years of his life, with the exception of a passing remark, in one of Gurnall's letters, which would suggest that he was preaching at Sudbury for some portion of the time.

In December, 1644, he was appointed Minister of the Parish of Lavenham in Suffolk. Here he spent the remainder of his life exercising his ministry for a period of thirty-five years. The year following this appointment, Gurnall was married to Sarah Mott, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Mott. By this lady he had ten children, eight of whom survived him.

Gurnall died October the 12th, 1679, in his sixty-third year, and was buried at Lavenham. The exact spot of his burial is unknown, no stone or monument recording the resting-place of his body.

Such is the bare outline of his history; but, one other fact, that has given rise to much difference of judgment, remains to be noticed. In 1662, on the passing of the Act of Uniformity, when some two thousand ministers were ejected from the Church of England, Gurnall conformed to the Act, signed the required declaration, and retained his position as Rector of Lavenham.

That a preacher of such decided Puritan views should retain his connection with the Church of England at a time when, on every hand, godly and devoted men were seceding for conscience sake, seems inexplicable. There still exists a printed attack on Gurnall published in 1665, which, scurrilous as it is, yet clearly indicates that his action received strong condemnation at the time, and exposed him to severe reproach. This attack takes the form of two letters written to Gurnall by an anonymous author who calls himself a "Christian Friend." The title of this remarkable production is "Covenant Renouncers, Desperate Apostates," and the public are informed that it is "Printed in Anti-turn-coat Street, and sold at the Sign of Truth's Delight, right opposite to Backsliding Alley." The contents of the pamphlet are quite in keeping with the title-page, and hence it will be readily understood there is nothing very 'Christian,' or 'friendly,' in the letters of this "Christian Friend."

We may hold different opinions as to Gurnall's action, we may form conjectures as to the motives that prompted him in his decision, but no scrap of evidence remains to enlighten us as to the private views or personal motives that actuated him in conforming to the Act. To his own Master he must stand or fall.

From his funeral sermon, preached by William Burkitt, we may gather that Gurnall suffered from a weakly body which often kept him confined to his house. Burkitt describes him as a man of great humility, a man who loved the Lord, loved souls, and loved the saints, and one, too, who deplored the bitter religious controversies that raged among the Christian professors of his day. The words of Burkitt are worth quoting: "How often did he publicly deplore and bewail, that the greatest measure of love that is found at this day amongst the professors of the cross, was not true Christian love, but only love of a party." Burkitt winds up his discourse by describing him as a CHRISTIAN IN COMPLETE ARMOUR.  H. S.

1 SIN AND GUILT

"The way of transgressors is hard."

[Proverbs 13:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs 13.15&t=DBY).

*THE terror of sin.*A soul in a state of sin may possess much, but enjoys nothing. One thought of its state of enmity to God, would drop bitterness into every cup; all he has smells of hell-fire; and a man at a rich feast would enjoy it but little if he smelt fire, ready to burn his house and himself.

*The love of sin.*Sin is as truly the offspring of the soul, as children are of our bodies, and it finds as much favour in our eyes, yea, more; for the sinner can slay a son to save a sin alive ([Micah 6:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Micah 6.7&t=DBY)).

*The pleasures of sin.*The pleasures of sin must needs be short, because life cannot be long, and they both end together. Indeed, many times the pleasure of sin dies before the man dies: sinners live to bury their joy in this world. The worm breeds in their conscience before it breeds in their flesh by death. But be sure the pleasure of sin never survives this world. The word is gone out of God's mouth, every sinner "shall lie down in sorrow" and wake in sorrow. … The carnal heart is all for the present; his snout is in the trough, and while his draught lasts, he thinks it will never end. Who would envy the condemned man his feast which he has in his way to the gallows?

Where guilt is contracted in the getting of an enjoyment, there can be little sweetness tasted when it comes to be used. There is a great difference between the joy of the husbandman, at the getting in of his corn at the harvest, and the thief's joy, who has stolen some sheaves out of another's field, and is making merry with his booty.

No sin goes single. It is impossible to embrace or allow one sin, and be free of others. Allow one sin, and God will give you over to others. When Judas began to play the thief, I question whether he meant to turn traitor; no, his treason was a punishment for his thievery.

*Secret sins.*God is privy to thy most secret sin, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance" ([Ps. 90:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 90.8&t=DBY)). As He sees when thou shuttest thy closet to pray, and will reward thy sincerity: so when thou dost it to sin in secret, He will reward thy hypocrisy. The word tells thee of an informer which thou hast in thy own bosom, — conscience, which goes along with thee, and is witness to all thy fine-laid plots, and what it sees it writes down, for it is a court of record. Thou canst not sin so fast but it can write after thee; and the pen with which conscience writes down our sins has a sharp point, it cuts deep into the very heart and soul of the sinner … Consult the word, and thou wilt find that God usually has put them to shame in this world, who have promised themselves most secrecy in their sinning. So Gehazi played his part cunningly enough, which made him so bold to come before his master, and impudently lie to his head, not dreaming the least that he was aware of his sin; yet this man is found out, and for the garments he got of Naaman by a lie, he had another given of the Lord, which he was to wear as a livery for his sin, for he was clothed with a leprosy: a garment more lasting than the two changes of suits he had from the Syrian; for this lasted him all his life; neither was it then worn out, but to be put on by his children after him ([2 Kings 5:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Kings 5.27&t=DBY)). Yea, be he a saint, yet if he goes about to save himself from the shame of a sin, by any secret plot of wickedness, he takes the direct way to bring that upon him which he contrives to keep off. Uriah's blood was shed only as a sinful expedient to save David's credit. Ah, poor man! all comes out to his greater shame. David shall know that God will be as tender of His own honour, as he is of his credit; "For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun" ([2 Sam. 12:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Sam. 12.12&t=DBY)).

*Bosom sins.*Satan labours to provoke the Christian to heart sins, to stir up and foment these inward motions of sins in the Christian's bosom; he knows his credit now is not so great with the soul as when it was his slave; he must not think to command another's servant as his own; no, all he can do, is to watch the fittest season, when the Christian least suspects, and then to present some sinful motion handsomely dressed up to the eye of the soul, that the Christian may, before he is aware, take this brat up, and handle it in his thoughts, till at last he makes it his own by embracing it; and may be, this boy, sent in at the window, may open the door to let in a greater thief.

There may be more wickedness in a sin of the heart than of the hand. The more of the heart and spirit is let out, the more malignity is let in to any sinful act. To backslide in heart, is more than to backslide; it is the comfort of a poor soul when tempted and troubled for his relapses, that though his foot slides back, yet his heart turns not back, but faceth heaven and Christ at the same time; so to err in the heart, is worse than to have an error in the head; therefore God aggravates Israel's sin with this, "They do always err in their heart" ([Heb. 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 3.10&t=DBY)). Their hearts run them upon the error; they liked idolatry, and so were soon made to believe what pleased them best. Peter lays the accent of Magus's sin on the wicked thought, which his words betrayed to be in his heart: "Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven" ([Acts 8:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 8.22&t=DBY)).

Say not thou lovest Christ, so long as thou canst lay those sins in thy bosom, which plucked His heart out of His bosom. It were strange if a child should keep, and delight to use, no other knife but that wherewith his father was stabbed.

*Deliberate sins.*Take heed of deliberate sin; like a stone thrown into a clear stream, it will so disturb thy soul, and muddy it, that thou, who even now could see thy interest in Christ, wilt now be at a loss, and know not what to think of thyself. Like a fire on the top of the house, it will be no easy matter to quench it. If thou hast been so unhappy as to fall into such a slough, take heed of lying in it by impenitence: the sheep may fall into a ditch, but it is the swine that wallows in it.

*Presumptuous sins.*Presumptuous sins are the thieves that break through and steal the saint's comfort away. When the Christian comes to look into his soul after such a bold act, and thinks to entertain himself, as formerly, with the comforts of his pardoned state, interest in Christ, and hopes of heaven through Him, alas! he finds a sad change; no promise that will give out its consolations to him. The cellar door is locked, Christ withdrawn, and the keys carried away with Him. Hast thou fallen into the hands of any such presumptuous sins; that have stolen thy peace from thee? Send speedily thy hue and cry after them. I mean, make thy sad moan to God, renew thy repentance out of hand, and raise heaven upon them by a spirit of prayer. This is no time to delay; the further thou lettest these sins go without repentance, the harder thou wilt find it to recover thy lost peace and joy out of their hands.

As presumptuous sins are the thieves, that with a high hand rob the Christian of his comfort; so sloth and negligence are as the rust, that in time will fret into his comfort, and eat out the heart and strength of it.

A thorn in the foot will make any way uneasy to the traveller, and guilt in the conscience any condition uncomfortable to the Christian, but most of all a suffering one. Oh it is sad, to go with sore and smarting consciences into a suffering condition.

*Forsaking sin.*"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" ([Isa. 55:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 55.7&t=DBY)). Some men's sins forsake them; "the unclean spirit goes out," and is not driven out; occasions to sin cease, or bodily ability to execute the commands of sin is wanting. To forsake sin, is to leave it without any thought reserved of returning to it again. It were strange to find a drunkard so constant in the exercise of that sin but some time you may find him sober; and yet a drunkard he is, as well as if he was then drunk. Every one has not forsaken his trade, that we see now and then in their holiday suit; then the man forsakes his sin, when he throws it from him, and bolts the door upon it, with a purpose never to open more to it: "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" ([Hosea 14:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hosea 14.8&t=DBY)). … Forsake all or none; save one lust, and you lose your soul. What wilt thou get, poor sinner, if thou goest to hell, though thou goest thither by thy ignorance, unbelief, or spiritual pride, yet escape the plague of open profaneness? This is as ridiculous as it was with him, who being to be hanged, desired that he might by no means go through such a street to the gallows, for fear of the plague that was there.

Soul, take thy lust, thy only lust, which is the child of thy dearest love, thy Isaac, the sin which has caused most joy and laughter, from which thou hast promised thyself the greatest return of pleasure or profit, and offer it up; run the sacrificing knife of mortification into the very heart of it, and all this now, before thou hast one embrace more from it.

2 PROFESSION AND HYPOCRISY

"The hypocrite's hope shall perish." — [Job 8:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 8.13&t=DBY).

SUCH a generation there ever was and shall be, that mingle themselves with the saints of God; who pretend heaven, with heavenly speeches, while their hearts are lined with hypocrisy, whereby they deceive others, and most of all themselves; such may be the world's saints, but devil's in Christ's account. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And truly, of all devils, none so bad as the professing devil, the preaching, praying devil.

Satan can live very peaceably, as a quiet neighbour, by the door of such as will content themselves with an empty name of profession; this alters not his property. Judas's profession, he knew, did not put him a step out of his way to hell; the devil can show a man a way to damnation through duties and ordinances of God's worship. That covetous, traitorous heart which Judas carried with him to hear Christ's sermon, and preach his own, held him fast enough to the devil; and therefore he gives him line enough, liberty enough to keep his credit a while with his fellow apostles; he cares not though others think him a disciple of Christ, so he knows him to be his own slave.

The hypocrite at first blush may be taken for a saint, by such as see only his outside, as he passeth by in his holiday dress, and therefore is fitly by one called the stranger's saint, but a devil to those who know him better.

The hypocrite can show a clear tongue, and yet have a foul heart; he that made that proverb, *Loquere ut te videam*, "Speak that I may see you," did not think of the hypocrite, who will speak that you shall not see him.

He that has a false end in his profession will soon come to the end of his profession, when he is pinched on that toe where his corn is; I mean, called to deny that his naughty heart aimed at.

Many there are that have nothing to prove themselves Christians but a naked profession, of whom we may say as they do of the cinnamon tree, that the bark is more worth than all they have besides.

Many take up their saintship upon trust, and trade in religion with the credit they have gained from others' opinion of them. They believe themselves to be Christians, because others hope them to be such; and so their great business is, by a zeal in those exercises of religion that lie outermost, to keep up the credit they have abroad, but do not look to get a stock of solid grace within; and this proves their undoing at last. They say trees shoot as much in the root underground as in the branches above, and so doth true grace. Remember what was the perishing of the seed in stony ground! it lacked root; and why so but because it was stony? Be willing the plough should go deep enough to humble thee *for*sin, and rend thy heart *from*sin.

A hypocrite never got pardon in the disguise of a saint. He will call thee by thy own name, though thou comest to Him in the semblance of a penitent: "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam," said the prophet. Hypocrisy is too thin a veil to blind the eyes of the Almighty. Thou mayest put thy own eyes out, so as not to see Him, but thou canst never blind His eyes so that He should not see thee.

Speak, O ye hypocrites! can you show one tear that ever you shed in earnest for a wrong done to God? It is a good gloss Augustine has upon Esau's tears ([Heb. 12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 12&t=DBY)): "He wept that he lost the blessing, not that he sold it."

*Time-serving.*The hypocrite sets his watch, not by the sun, the Word I mean, but by the town clock; what most do, that he will do; *vox populi* is his *vox Dei.*

*Self-righteousness.*Take heed uprightness proves not a snare to thee. The young man in the gospel might have been better, had he not been so good. His honesty and moral uprightness was his undoing, or rather his conceit of them. Better he had been a publican, driven to Christ in the sense of his sin, than a Pharisee, kept from Him with an opinion of his integrity. May be thou art honest and upright in thy course. Bless God for it, but take heed of blessing thyself in it: there is the danger; this is one way of being "righteous over much." There is undoing in this over-doing, as well as in any under-doing.

What men do *by* themselves, they do *for*themselves; they devour the praise of what they do. The Christian only that doth all *by* Christ, doth all *for*Christ. Many souls do not only perish, praying, repenting, and believing after a sort, but they perish by their praying and repenting, while they carnally trust in these.

Few so bad indeed but seem to like religion in the *notion;*but *living*and *walking*holiness bites; the pharisees can lavish out their money on the prophets' tombs; but Christ is scorned and hated. What is the mystery of this? The reason was, these prophets are off the stage and Christ is on.

*False zeal.*Zeal without uprightness is of no service, nay, no one will go to hell with more shame than the false-hearted zealot, who mounts up towards heaven in his fiery chariot. Be not loth to be searched; there will need then no further search to prove thee unsound; if God's officers be denied entrance, all is not right within. If thy heart is sincere, it will delight in privacy. A false heart calls others to witness his zeal for God. It is the trick of the hypocrite to strain himself to the utmost in duty, when he has spectators, and to be careless alone.

A false heart may seem very hot in praying against one sin, but can skip over another; a hypocrite will be favourable to one lust, and violent against another; whereas a sincere Christian abhors all sin: "Order my steps in thy word: and let not *any*iniquity have dominion over me" ([Ps. 119:133](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 119.133&t=DBY)).

The hypocrite seems hot *in prayer,*but you will find him cold enough *at work;* he prays very fiercely against his sins, as if he desired them to be all slain upon the place; but doth he set himself upon the work of mortification? Doth he withdraw the fuel that feeds them?

Hypocrisy in religion springs from the bitter fruit of some carnal affection unmortified. So long as thy prey lie below, thy eye will be on the earth, when thou seemest, like an eagle, to mount in thy prayers to heaven. God is in the hypocrite's mouth, but the world is in his heart, which he expects to gain through his good reputation. … No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost ([1 Cor. 12:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 12.3&t=DBY)). A man may say the words, without any special work of the Spirit, and so may a parrot: but to say Christ is Lord believingly, with thoughts and affections comporting with the greatness and sweetness thereof, requires the Spirit of God to be in his heart.

*Knowledge without grace.*An orthodox judgment with an unholy heart and ungodly life is as uncomely as a man's head would be on a beast's shoulders. That man has little cause to boast that what he *holds*is truth, if what he *doth*be wicked.

Knowledge may make thee a scholar, but not a saint; orthodox, but not gracious. He that increaseth in knowledge, and doth not get grace with his knowledge, increaseth sorrow to himself, yea, eternal sorrow. It would be an ease to gospel sinners in hell, if they could erase the remembrance of the gospel out of their memories.

He that can venture on the appearance of evil under pretence of liberty, may, for ought I know, commit that which is more grossly evil, under some appearance of good; it is not hard, if a man will be at the cost, to put a good colour on rotten stuff and practice also. … It is possible a man may have a rotten body under a gaudy suit; and under fine language, a poor ragged conscience. Who had not rather be sincere with mean gifts, than rotten-hearted with great parts?

*Hypocrisy exposed.*The Christian, like a star in the heavens, wades through the cloud, that for a time hides his comfort; but the hypocrite, like a meteor in the air, blazeth a little, and then drops into some ditch or other, where it is quenched. "The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out" ([Prov. 13:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 13.9&t=DBY).).

Sincerity enables the Christian to do two things in affliction which the hypocrite cannot — to speak good *of*God, and to expect good *from* God.

"Will he always call upon God?" ([Job 27:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 27.10&t=DBY)). The hypocrite is often exposed here. An unsound heart will be meddling with prayer now and then, but grows weary of the work at last, especially if he be made to wait long for an answer. Saul prays to God, and because he hears not from Him, goes at last to seek the devil.

One spot occasions the whole garment to be washed. David overcome with one sin, renews his repentance for all ([Ps. 51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 51&t=DBY)). A good husband, when he sees it raining at one place, sends for the workmen to look over all the house. This indeed, differenceth a sincere heart from an hypocrite, whose repentance is partial, soft in one plot and hard in another. Judas cries out of his treason, but not a word of his thievery and hypocrisy. The hole was no wider in his conscience than where the bullet went in; whereas true sorrow for one, breaks the heart into shivers for others also.

If profession would serve the turn, and flocking after sermons with some seeming joy at the word were enough to save, heaven would soon be full: but as you love your souls, do not try yourselves by this coarse sieve; that is, seek by an easy profession, and cheap religion, such as is hearing the word, performance of duties and the like; of this kind there are many that will come and walk about heaven's door, willing enough to enter, if they may do it without ruffling their pride in a crowd, or hazarding their present carnal interest by any contest and scuffle. Take Christians under the notion of "seekers," and, by Christ's own words, there are many; but consider them under the notion of "strivers," such as stand ready shod with a holy resolution, to strive even to blood, if such trials meet them in the way to heaven, rather than not enter, and then the number of Christian soldiers will shrink, like Gideon's goodly host, to a little troop.

In this old age of England's withered profession, how great a rarity is a sincere convert! When we see a tree that used to stand thick with fruit, now bring forth but little, maybe an apple on this bough, and another on that, we look upon it as a dying tree. Those golden days of the gospel are over, when converts came flying as a cloud, as the doves to the window in flocks. Now gospel news grows stale, few are taken with it. Our old store of saints, the treasure of their times, wears away apace; what will become of us, if no new ones come in their room? Alas! when our burials are more than our births, we must needs be on the losing hand. There is a sad list of holy names taken away from us; but where are they which are born to God? If the good go, and those which are left continue bad, yea, become worse and worse, we have reason to fear that God is clearing the ground, and making way for a judgment.

None sink so far into hell as those that come nearest heaven, because they fall from the greatest height. None will have such a sad parting from Christ as those who went half way with Him, and then left Him.

3 PRIDE AND WORLDLINESS

"A man's pride shall bring him low." [Proverbs 29:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs 29.23&t=DBY).

*RELIGIOUS Pride.*Some are blind as Laodicea, and know it not ([Rev. 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 3.17&t=DBY)). As ignorance blinds the mind, so pride is a blind before their ignorance, that they know it not. These have such a high opinion of themselves that they take it ill that any should suspect them as such; these of all men are most out of the way to knowledge; they are too good to learn of man, as they think, and too bad to be taught of God. The gate into Christ's school is low, and these cannot stoop: the Master Himself is so humble and lowly that He will not teach a proud scholar.

Ah, poor creatures, what a sad change have they made, to leave the word, which can no more deceive them than God Himself to trust the guidance of themselves to themselves. "He that is his own teacher," says Bernard, "is sure to have a fool for a master."

Never art thou less holy than when puffed up with the conceit of it. "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright" ([Hab. 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hab. 2.4&t=DBY)). See an *ecce,*like a sign, is set up at the proud man's door, that all passengers may know that a wicked man dwells there.

When men stand high their heads do not grow dizzy till they look down; when men look down upon those that are worse than themselves, or less holy than themselves, then their heads turn round; looking up would cure this disease. The most holy men, when once they have fixed their eyes awhile upon God's holiness, and then looked upon themselves, have been quite out of love with themselves. After the vision the prophet had of God sitting upon the throne, and the seraphim about Him, covering their faces, and crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts," how was this gracious man smitten with the sense of his own vileness! they did no more cry up God as holy than he did cry out upon himself as unclean ([Isa. 6:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 6.5&t=DBY)). So Job, "Now mine eye sees Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself" ([Job 42:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 42.5-6&t=DBY)).

Compare not thyself with those that have less than thyself, but look on those that have far exceeded thee: to look on our inferiors occasions pride. "I am not as this publican," says the Pharisee; but looking on others more eminent than ourselves will both preserve humility, and be a spur to diligence.

A man may be very zealous in prayer and painstaking in preaching, and all the while pride is the master whom he serves, though in God's livery. It is hard starving this sin; there is nothing almost but it can live on; nothing so base that a proud heart will not be lifted up with, and nothing so sacred but it will profane. … So far as pride prevails the man prays and preaches rather to be thought good by others, rather to enthrone himself than Christ, in the opinion and hearts of his hearers.

Remember, Christian, when thou hast thy best suit on, who made it, who paid for it: thy grace, thy comfort, is neither the work of thy own hands, nor the price of thy own desert; be not for shame proud of another's cost.

*Pride of gifts.*If once (like Hezekiah) we call in spectators to see our treasure and applaud us for our gifts and comfort, then it is high time for God to send some messengers to carry these away from us, which carry our hearts from Him. … Pride of gifts hinders the receiving of good from others. Pride fills the soul, and a full soul will take nothing from God, much less from man.

Joseph's coat made him finer than his brethren, but caused all his trouble; thus great gifts lift a saint up a little higher in the eyes of men, but it occasions many temptations which thou meetest not with that are kept low; what with envy from their brethren, malice from Satan, and pride in their own hearts, I dare say none find so hard a work to bear up against those waves and winds.

While thou art priding in thy gifts, thou art dwindling and withering in thy grace. Such are like corn that runs up much into straw, whose ear commonly is light and thin. Grace is too much neglected where gifts are too highly prized; we are commanded to be clothed with humility. … Pride kills the spirit of praise: when thou should bless God, thou art applauding thyself. It destroys Christian love, and stabs our fellowship with the saints to the heart: a proud man has not room enough to walk in company, because the gifts of others he thinks stand in his way. Pride so distempers the palate that it can relish nothing that is drawn from another's vessel. … Pride loves to climb up, not as Zaccheus, to see Christ, but to be seen himself.

"God resisteth the proud" ([James 4:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 4.6&t=DBY)). The humble man may have Satan at his right hand to oppose him; but be sure the proud man shall find God Himself there to resist him. We must either lay self aside or God will lay us aside. … A proud scholar and a humble master will never agree: Christ is humble and lowly, and so resists the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

*Love of the world.*Tell some of adding faith to faith, one degree of grace to another, and you shall find they have more mind to join house to house, and lay field to field; their souls are athirst, but not for Christ or heaven: it is earth, earth, they never think they have enough of, till death comes and stops their mouth with a shovelful digged out of their own grave!

The canker and rust of our gold and silver, which is got with harder labour than is required here, will rise up in judgment against many, and say, "You could drudge and trudge for us that are now turned to rust and dust, but could walk over the field of the word, where an incorruptible treasure lay, and would lose it rather than your sloth!"

Thy time is short and thy way long. Is it wisdom to lay out so much on thy tenement which thou art leaving, and forget what thou must carry with thee? Before the fruit of these be ripe which thou art now planting, thyself may be rotting in the grave: "Time is short," says the apostle ([1 Cor. 7:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 7.29&t=DBY)).

Men are very kind to themselves: first they wish it may be long before death comes; and then because they would have it so, they are bold to promise themselves it shall be so. Who makes the lease? the tenant or the landlord? … Thou art young, thou canst not therefore say, thou shalt not die as yet: alas! measure the coffins in the churchyard, and thou wilt find some of thy length: young and old are within the reach of death's scythe; old men, indeed, go to death, their age calls for it; but young men cannot hinder death's coming to them.

It is an ill time to caulk the ship when at sea, tumbling up and down in a storm: this should have been looked to when on her seat in the harbour. And as bad it is to begin to trim a soul for heaven, when tossing on a sick-bed. Things that are done in a hurry are seldom done well. These poor creatures, I am afraid, go in an ill dress to another world who begin to provide for it when on a dying bed. … There is but one heaven: miss that, and where can you take up your lodging but in hell? One Christ that can lead you thither: reject Him, "and there remains no more sacrifice for sin."

O, how many part with Christ at the crossway! like Orpah, that go a furlong or two with Christ, until He goes to take them off from their worldly hopes, and bids them prepare for hardship, and then they fairly kiss and leave Him; loath indeed to lose heaven, but more loath to buy it at such a rate.

Of all men out of hell, none more to be pitied than he that hangs over the mouth of it, and yet is fearless of his danger.

It requires courage to despise the shame which the Christian must expect to meet for his singularity, to avoid which many durst not confess Christ openly ([John 7:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 7.13&t=DBY)). Many lose heaven because they are ashamed to go in a fool's coat thither. When the Christian must turn or burn, leave praying or become a prey, how many self-preserving distinctions would a cowardly heart invent? The Christian that has so great opposition had need to be well locked into the saddle of his profession, or he will soon be dismounted.

4 GLAD TIDINGS AND JOY

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." — [Luke 2:10-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 2.10-11&t=DBY).

*INCARNATION.*There is in Christ a foundation laid for greater familiarity with God than Adam was at first capable of. He, indeed, was the son of God, yet he was kept at a further distance, and treated with more state and majesty from God, than now the reconciled soul is; for though he was the son of God by creation, yet the Son of God was not then the Son of man by incarnation; and at this door comes in the believer's sweetest familiarity with God. God doth descend His throne, exchange His majestic robes of glory for man's frail flesh; He leaves His palace to live for a time in His creature's humble cottage, and there not only familiarly converses with him, but, which is stranger, ministers to him; yea, which is more than all these, He surrenders Himself up to endure all manner of indignities, from His sorry creature's hand. And when this coarse entertainment is done, back He posts to heaven, not to complain to His Father, how He has been abused here below, and raise heaven's power against those who had so ill-treated Him, but to make ready heaven's palace for the reception of those who had thus abused Him, and now will accept of His grace. And lest these, yet left on earth, should fear His resumed royalty and majesty, in heaven's glory, would make some alteration with their affairs in His heart; to give them therefore a constant demonstration that He would be the same in the height of His honour that He was in the depth of His abasement, He goes back in the same clothes, to wear them on the throne, in all His glory, only some princely cost bestowed, to put them into the fashion of that heavenly kingdom, and make them suit with His glorified state; giving them a pattern by this, what their own vile bodies, now so dishonourable, shall be made another day.

*Redemption.*Conscience requires as much to satisfy it as it doth to satisfy the justice of God Himself. But in the gospel, joyful news is brought to the sinner's ears of a fountain of blood there opened, which for its preciousness is as far above the price that divine justice demands for man's sin, as the blood of bulls and beasts was beneath it; and that is, the blood of Jesus Christ, who freely poured it upon the cross, and by it "obtained eternal redemption for us" ([Heb. 9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 9&t=DBY)). This is the door by which all true peace and joy comes into the conscience.

*The simplicity of the gospel.*If bread were as hard to come by as sweetmeats, or water as scarce as wine, the greatest part of men must needs famish; so if truths necessary to salvation were as hard to be understood, and cleared from Scriptures, as some others, many poor weak-hearted Christians would certainly perish without a miracle to help them. But the saying truths of the gospel lie plain, and run clear to all but those who muddy the streams with their own corrupt minds.

*The abiding truth of the gospel.*Consider God's especial care to preserve His truth; whatever is lost, God looks to His truth. In all the great revolutions, changes, and overturning of kingdoms, and churches also, God has still preserved His truth. In a word, in that great and dismal conflagration of heaven and earth, when the elements shall melt for heat, and the world come to its fatal period, then truth shall not suffer the least loss, but "the word of the Lord endureth for ever" ([1 Peter 1:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 1.25&t=DBY)).

*The peace of the gospel.* "Let him take hold of My strength, that He may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me" ([Isa. 27:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 27.5&t=DBY)). And where lies God's saving strength, but in Christ? He has laid strength upon this mighty One, able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him. Take hold of Christ, and thou hast hold of God's arm; He cannot strike the soul that holds thereby.

Where there is peace, such peace as peace with God and conscience, there can want no pleasure. David goes merry to bed, when he had nothing to supper but the gladness that God by this puts into his heart, and promiseth himself a better night's rest than any of them all, that are feasted with the world's cheer: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep" ([Ps. 4:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 4.7-8&t=DBY)). This same peace with God, enjoyed in the conscience, redounds to the comfort of the body. Now David can sleep sweetly, when he lies on a hard bed; what here he says he would do, in [Psalm 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm 3.5&t=DBY), he says he has done, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." The title of the psalm tells us when David had this sweet night's rest; not when he lay on his bed of down in his stately palace at Jerusalem, but when he fled for his life from his unnatural son Absalom, and possibly was forced to lie in the open field, under the canopy of heaven. … The great care which Christ took for His disciples, when He left the world, was not to leave them a quiet world to live in, but to arm them against a troublesome world: He bequeaths to them His peace.

*The rejection of the gospel. "*Not one of those invited shall taste of my supper." God can least bear any contempt cast upon His grace. They would not come when the supper was on the table; and therefore the cloth was drawn, and they go supperless to bed, and die in their sins. Christ thou wilt not, Christ therefore thou shalt not, have. None sink so deep in hell as those that fall into it with stumbling at Christ.

*The joy of the gospel.*Thy embracing Christ preached to thee in the gospel, will be as welcome news *to heaven,*I can tell thee, as the tidings of Christ and salvation through Him can be *to thee.*There is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner. Those angels that sang Christ into the world, will not want a song when He is received into thy heart, for He came into the world for this end.

Rejoice at the news: glad tidings, and sad hearts, do not go well together. When we see one heavy and sorrowful, we ask him what ill news he has heard. Christian, what ill news has Christ brought from heaven with Him that makes thee walk with thy folded arms and pensive countenance? "Saints shall shout aloud for joy" ([Ps. 132:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 132.16&t=DBY)). To see a wicked man merry and jocund, or a Christian sad and dumpish, is alike uncomely. … Truly the saint's heaviness reflects unkindly upon God Himself: we do not commend His cheer, if it doth not cheer us. O Christians, let the world see you are not losers in your joy, since you have been acquainted with the gospel; give them not cause to think by your uncomfortable walking, that when they turn Christians, they must bid all joy farewell, and resolve to spend their days in a house of mourning. … Do not for shame, Christian, run on the world's score by taking up any of its carnal joy; thou needest not go out of God's house to be merry. A Christian should deny himself of the world's joy and delights, lest they say, "These Christians draw their joy out of our cistern."

The saint's joy and peace is not such a light, frothy joy as the world's. The parlour wherein the Spirit of Christ entertains the Christian is an inner room, not next the street, for every one that goes by to smell the feast. "A stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy" ([Prov. 14:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 14.10&t=DBY)). Christ and the soul may be at supper within, and thou not so much as see one dish go in, or hear the music that sounds so sweetly in the Christian's ears. Perhaps thou thinkest he wants peace, because he doth not hang out a sign in his countenance of the joy and peace he has within. Alas, poor wretch! may not the saint have a peaceful conscience, with a solemn, yea, sad countenance, as well as thou and thy companions have a sorrowful heart, when there is nothing but fair weather in your faces? "In laughter the heart is sorrowful" ([Prov. 14:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 14.13&t=DBY)).

*The mystery of the gospel.*As the gospel is a mystery of faith, it enables the godly to believe strange mysteries; to believe that which they understand not, and hope for that which they do not see. It teacheth them to believe that Christ was born in time, and that He was from everlasting; that He was comprehended in the Virgin's womb, and yet the heaven of heavens not able to contain Him: to be the Son of Mary, and yet her Maker; to be born without sin, and yet justly to have died for sin. They believe that God was just in punishing Christ, though innocent; and in justifying penitent believers, who are sinners; they believe themselves to be great sinners, and yet that God sees them in Christ without spot or wrinkle. Again, as the gospel is a mystery of godliness, it enables the godly to do as strange things as they believe; to live by Another's spirit, to act from Another's strength, to live to Another's will, and aim at Another's glory; they live by the Spirit of Christ, act with His strength, are determined by His will, and aim at His glory: it makes them so gentle, that a child may lead them to anything that is good; yet so stout, that fire shall not frighten them into sin: they can love their enemies, and yet, for Christ's sake, can hate father and mother: it makes them diligent in their worldly calling, yet enables them to condemn the riches they have obtained by God's blessing on their labour; they are taught by it that all things are theirs, yet they dare not take a pin from the wicked by force or fraud: it makes them so humble as to prefer every one above themselves; yet so to value their own condition, that the poorest among them would not change his estate with the greatest monarch of the world: it makes them thank God for health, and for sickness also; to rejoice when exalted, and not to repine when made low; they can pray for life, and at the same time desire to die! … The gospel opens a mine of unsearchable riches, but in a mystery; it shows men a way how to be rich in faith, rich in God, rich for another world, while poor in this. … Again the professors of the gospel are hated, because they partake of its mysterious nature. They are high-born, but in a mystery; you cannot see their birth by their outward breeding; arms they bear, and revenues they have to live on, but not such as the world judges the greatness of persons and families by: no, their outside is mean, while their inside is glorious; and the world values them by what they know and see of their external part, and not by their inward graces; they pass as princes in the disguise of some poor man's clothes through the world, and their entertainment is accordingly. Had Christ put on His robes of glory and majesty when He came into the world, surely He had not gone out of it with so shameful and cruel a death. The world would have trembled at His footstool, which some of them did, when but a beam of His deity looked forth upon them. Did saints walk on earth in those robes which they shall wear in heaven, then they would be feared and admired by those who now scorn and despise them. But as God's design in Christ's first coming would not have been fulfilled, had He so appeared; neither would His design in His saints, did the world know them as one day they shall; therefore He is pleased to let them lie hid under the mean coverings of poverty and infirmities, that so He may exercise their suffering graces, and also accomplish His wrath upon the wicked for theirs against them.

Is the gospel a mystery? then, Christian, long for heaven, and only there shall this mystery be fully known. Here we learn our knowledge of it by little and little, like one that reads a book as it comes from the press, sheet by sheet; there we shall see it altogether: here we learn with much pain and difficulty, there without travail and trouble: glorified saints, though they cease not from work, yet rest from labour: here passion blinds our minds, that we mistake error for truth, and truth for error; but these clouds shall be scattered and gone: here the weakness of natural parts keeps many in the dark, and renders them incapable of apprehending some truths, which others are led into; but there the strong shall not prevent the weak, the scholar shall know as much as his master. … When that blessed hour comes, then lift up your heads with joy, for it will lead you into that blissful place where you will see Christ, not a great way off, not with the eye of faith, but with a glorified eye behold His very Person, never more to lose the sight of Him. Thou shalt no more hear what a glorious place heaven is, as thou were wont to have it set forth by the poor rhetoric of mortal man, preaching to thee of that with which he himself was little acquainted; but shalt walk thyself in the streets of that glorious city, and bless thyself, to think what poor, low thoughts thou hadst thereof, when on earth thou didst meditate on this subject: one moment's sight of that glory will inform thee more than all the books written of it were ever able to do.

5 FAITH AND HOLINESS

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him." [Hebrews 11:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews 11.6&t=DBY).

"Follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." [Hebrews 12:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews 12.14&t=DBY).

*FAITH in Christ.*Faith is that act of the soul whereby it rests on Christ crucified for pardon and life, and that upon the warrant of the word. The person of Christ is the object of faith as justifying: secondly, Christ as crucified. First, the person of Christ, not any axiom or proposition in the word; — this is the object of assurance, not of faith. Assurance says, I believe my sins are pardoned through Christ: faith's language is, I believe on Christ for the pardon of them. … Not every one that assents to the truth of what Scripture says of Christ doth believe on Christ. This believing on Christ implies trusting recumbency on Christ. It is not the sight of a man's arm stretched out to a man in the water will save him from drowning, but the taking hold of it. "Let him *take hold*of my strength" ([Isa. 27:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 27.5&t=DBY)).

"I know whom I have believed" ([2 Tim. 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 1.12&t=DBY)). None will readily trust a stranger that he is wholly unacquainted with. Abraham went indeed *he knew not whither,*but he did not go with *he knew not whom.*

*Faith and repentance.*Repentance, this is a sweet grace, but set on work by faith. Nineveh's repentance is attributed to their faith ([Jonah 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jonah 3.5&t=DBY)): "The people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth." All is silence and quiet in an unbelieving soul: no news of repentance, no noise of any complaint made against sin, till faith begins to stir.

*Faith and love.*Love is another heavenly grace; but faith gathers the fuel that makes this fire. Speak, Christian, whose soul now flames with love to God, was it always thus? No, there was a time when thy hearth was cold, not a spark of this fire to be found on the altar of thy heart. How is it, then, Christian, that now thy soul loves God, whom before thou didst scorn and hate? Surely thou hast heard some good news from heaven, that has changed thy thoughts of God, and turned the stream of thy love into this happy channel. And who can be the messenger besides faith, that brings any good news from heaven to thy soul? It is faith that proclaims the word, opens Christ's excellencies, pours out His name, for which the virgins love Him. When faith has drawn a character of Christ out of the word, and presented Him in His love and loveliness to the soul, the Christian has a copious theme to enlarge upon in his thoughts, whereby to endear Christ more and more to him. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious" ([1 Peter 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 2.7&t=DBY)); and the more faith, the more precious.

*Faith and a good conscience.*"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" ([1 Tim. 1:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 1.19&t=DBY)). Wouldst thou preserve thy faith, look to thy conscience. A good conscience is the bottom faith sails in; if the conscience be wrecked, how can it be thought that faith should be safe? If faith be the jewel, a good conscience is the cabinet in which it is kept; and if the cabinet be broken, the jewel must needs be in danger of losing.

The Christian's care should be to keep, as his conscience pure, so his name pure, which is done by avoiding all appearance of evil. Bernard's three questions are worth the asking ourselves in any enterprise: *An liceat? an deceat? an expediat?* "Is it lawful?" May I do it and not sin? "Is it becoming me, a Christian?" May I do it and not wrong my profession? Lastly, "Is it expedient?" May I do it and not offend my weak brother?

*Faith and prayer.*True faith is prayerful; prayer is the child of faith. As the creature cannot pray *without*faith, so *with*faith he cannot but pray. The new creature (like our infants in their natural birth) comes crying into the world: and therefore Christ tells it for great news to Ananias of Saul, a new-born believer, "Behold, he prayeth!"

Faith enables the soul to persevere in prayer. "Will [the hypocrite] always call upon God?" ([Job 27:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 27.10&t=DBY)). No, he prays himself weary of praying; something or other will in time make him quarrel with that which he never inwardly liked; whereas the sincere believer has that in him which makes it impossible he should quite give over praying, except he should also cease believing: prayer is the very breath of faith; stop a man's breath, and where is he then?

Faith may live in a storm, but it will not suffer a storm to live in it. As faith rises, so the blustering wind of the discontented troublesome thoughts go down. Faith relieves the soul in prayer of that which oppresses it; whereas the unbelieving soul still carries about it the cause of its troubles, because it had not strength to cast forth its sorrows and roll its cares upon God.

*Weak faith.*Weak faith will as surely land the Christian in heaven as strong faith; but the weak, doubting Christian is not like to have so pleasant a voyage thither as another with strong faith. Though all in the ship come safe to shore, yet he that is all the way seasick has not so comfortable a voyage as he that is strong and healthful.

As melancholy men delight in melancholy walks, so doubting souls most frequent such places of Scripture in their musing thoughts as increase their doubts.

"Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith!" ([Matt. 8:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 8.26&t=DBY)). You see the leak at which the water came in to sink their spirits: they had "little faith." It is not what God is in Himself, but what our apprehensions at present are of God, that pacifies and comforts a soul in great straits. If a man fear the house will fall on his head in a storm though it be as immovable as a rock, yet that will not ease his mind till he thinks it so.

*Bold faith.* "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" ([Heb. 13:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 13.5&t=DBY)) — there is the promise; and the inference, which he teacheth us to draw by faith from this, follows (ver. 6), "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper." We may boldly assert it in the face of men and devils, because He that is almighty has said it.

Faith is a right pilgrim-grace; it travels with us to heaven, and when it sees us safe got within our Father's doors it takes leave of us.

*Holiness and happiness.*"He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy" ([Eph. 1:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 1.4&t=DBY)). Mark, not because He foresaw that they would be of themselves holy, but that they should be holy; this was that God resolved He would make them to be. Consider it is not necessary that thou shouldst be rich; but it is necessary thou shouldst be holy, if thou meanest to be happy. You may travel to heaven with never a penny in your purse, but not without holiness in your heart and life also.

*Holiness and contentment.*"Godliness with content is great gain." The holy person is the only contented man in the world. Paul tells us "he had learnt in whatsoever state he was to be content."

*Holiness in the home.*It is in vain to talk of holiness if we can bring no letters testimonial from our holy walking with our relations. O, it is sad when they that have reason to know us best, by their daily converse with us, do speak least for our godliness! Few so impudent as to come naked into the streets: if men have anything to cover their naughtiness they will put it on when they come abroad. But what art thou within doors? Pray not only against the power of sin, but for the power of holiness. His zeal is false that seems hot against sin, but is cold to holiness.

6 WILES AND TEMPTATIONS

"There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."[1 Corinthians 10:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians 10.13&t=DBY).

*THE Devil's dupes.*Many have yielded to go a mile with Satan, that never intended to go two. Thus Satan leads poor creatures down into the depths of sin by winding stairs, that let them not see the bottom whither they are going: first, he presents an object that occasions some thoughts, these set the affections on fire, and these fume up into the brain and cloud the understanding, which, being thus disabled, now Satan dares a little more declare himself, and boldly solicit the creature to that it would otherwise have defied. Give not place to Satan! no, not an inch in his first motions; he that is a beggar, and a modest one without doors, will command the house if let in.

The devil teaches sinners to cover foul practices with fair names — superstition must be styled devotion; covetousness, thrift; pride in apparel, handsomeness; looseness, liberty; and madness, mirth.

*The Devil's wiles.*Satan makes choice of such as have a great name for holiness: none like a live bird to draw other birds into the net. Abraham tempts his wife to lie: "Say thou art my sister." The old prophet leads the man of God out of his way ([1 Kings 13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Kings 13&t=DBY)).

Under the skirt of Christian liberty Satan conveys in libertinism; by crying up the Spirit he decries and vilifies the Scripture; by magnifying faith, he labours to undermine repentance and blow up good works.

If Satan get into thy spirit and defile it, O, how hard wilt thou find it to stay there? Thou hast already sipped of his broth, and now are more likely to sit down and make thy full meal of that, which by tasting has vitiated thy palate already.

When you hear one commend another for a wise or good man, and at last come in with a "but" that dasheth all, you will easily think he is no friend to the man, but some sly enemy, that by seeming to commend, desires to disgrace the more. Thus, when you find God represented to you as merciful and gracious, but not to such a great sinner as you; to have power and strength, but not able to save thee; you may say, Avaunt, Satan, thy speech bewrayeth thee.

When the flesh or Satan beg time of thee, it is to steal time *from*thee. They put thee off prayer at one time, to shut thee out at last from prayer at any time.

What day in all the year is inconvenient to Satan? What place or company art thou in, that he cannot make a snare for thy soul?

Satan knows what orders thou keepest in thy house and closet; and though he has not a key to thy heart, yet he can stand in the next room to it, and lightly hear what is whispered there. If once he doth but smell which way thy heart inclines, he knows how to take the hint; if but one door is unbolted, here is advantage enough.

*The occasion of temptation.*The least passage of thy life may prove an occasion of sin to thee: at what a little wicket many times a great sin enters! David's eye did but casually light on Bathsheba, and the good man's foot was presently in the devil's trap: hast thou not then need to pray that God would set a guard about thy senses wherever thou goest, and to cry with him, "Keep back mine eyes from beholding vanity"?

It should be our care, if we would not yield to the sin, not to walk by, or sit at the door of the occasion: parley not with that in thy thoughts, which thou meanest not to let into thy heart. If we mean not to be burnt, let us not walk upon the coals of temptation. Thou temptest God to suffer thy locks to be cut, when thou art so bold as to lay thy head in the lap of a temptation.

Set a strong guard about thy outward senses: these are Satan's landing-places, especially the eye and the ear. Take heed what thou importest at these; vain discourse seldom passeth without leaving some tincture upon the heart. And for thy eye, let it not wander; wanton objects cause wanton thoughts. Job knew his eye and his thoughts were like to go together, and therefore to secure one he covenants with the other ([Job 31:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 31.1&t=DBY)).

The haft of Satan's hatchet, with which he lies chopping at the root of the Christian's comfort, is commonly made of the Christian's wood. First, he tempts to sin, and then for it. Satan is but a creature, and cannot work without tools; he can indeed make much of little, but not anything of nothing, as we see in his assaulting of Christ, where he troubled himself to little purpose, because he came and found nothing in Him ([John 14:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 14.30&t=DBY)). Though the devil throws the stone, it is the mud in us that disturbs our comfort.

Be sure thou art watchful more than ordinary over thyself, in those things where thou findest thyself weakest and hast been oftenest foiled. The weakest part of a city needs the strongest guard.

The devil would tempt Christ when he "shewed Him all the kingdoms of the world," and promised them all to Him, if He would "fall down and worship Him." Everyone that by unrighteousness doth seek the world's pelf goes to the devil for it, and doth worship him in effect. How much better it is to have poverty from God than riches from the devil! A temptation comes strong, when the way to relief seems to lie through the sin that Satan is wooing to: when one is poor, and Satan comes, "What, wilt starve rather than step over the hedge, and steal for thy supply?" This is enough to put flesh and blood to the stand.

*Deliverance from temptation.*What says thy soul, when God hedgeth up thy way, and keeps thee from that sin which Satan has been soliciting for? If on Christ's side, thou wilt rejoice when thou art delivered out of a temptation, though it be by falling into an affliction.

Christian, it is ill done of thee to make a breach in thy holy course, by tampering with any sin; but thou wilt commit a greater if thou turnest thy back on God also when thou shouldst humble thyself for thy former sin. Thou hast fallen into sin in the day, wilt thou not, therefore, pray at night? Take heed thou run not farther into temptation. Now is the time for the devil to set upon thee, when the weapon of prayer is out of thy hand. The best thou canst look for is a storm from God to bring thee back again, and the sooner it comes the more merciful He is to thee.

"Watch and pray," says our Saviour, "that ye enter not into temptation" ([Matt. 26:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 26.41&t=DBY)). They, not keeping this pass, gave the enemy, Satan, a fair occasion to come in upon them; and as they were led into temptation by neglect of prayer, so they were rescued and led out of it again by Christ's prayer, which He mercifully laid in beforehand for them: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

Let this encourage thee, O Christian, in thy conflict with Satan; the skirmish may be sharp, but it cannot be long. The cloud, while it drops, is rolling over thy head, and then comes fair weather, and eternal sunshine of glory.

Thou canst not be long off thy watch, but the devil will hear on it. The devil knew the apostle's sleeping time, and then he desires leave to winnow them ([Luke 22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 22&t=DBY)). The thief riseth when honest men go to bed. The devil begins to tempt when saints cease to watch. … The saint's sleeping time is Satan's tempting time; every fly dares venture to creep on a sleeping lion. No temptation so weak but is strong enough to foil a Christian that is napping in security. Samson asleep, and Delilah cut his locks. Saul asleep, and the spear is taken away from his very side, and he never the wiser. Noah asleep, and his graceless son has a fit time to discover his father's nakedness. Eutychus asleep, nods, and falls from the third loft, and is taken up for dead. The Christian asleep may soon lose his spiritual strength, be robbed of his spear, and his nakedness discovered by graceless men, to the shame of his profession. Yea, he may fall from a high loft of profession, so low, into scandalous practices, that others may question whether there be any life of grace in him.

The Christian's safety lies in resisting. All the armour provided is to defend the Christian fighting, none to secure him flying; stand, and the day is ours; fly, or yield, and all is lost.

7 SUFFERING AND SHAME

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." [Romans 8:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans 8.18&t=DBY).

*SUFFERING for Christ.*"Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" ([Phil. 1:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Phil. 1.29&t=DBY)). All the parts and common gifts that a man has will never enable him to drink deep of this cup for Christ; such is the pride of man's heart, he had rather suffer any way than this; rather from himself, and for himself, than from Christ, or for Christ. You would wonder to see sometimes how much a child will endure at his play, and never cry for it: this fall, and that knock, and no great matter is made of it by him, because got in a way that is pleasing to him; but let his father whip him, though it put him not to half the smart, yet he roars and takes on, that there is no quieting of him.

Most men are more tender of their skin than of their conscience, and had rather the gospel had provided armour to defend their bodies from death and danger, than their souls from sin and Satan. All the pieces are to defend the Christian from sin: none to secure him from suffering. Here is the true reason why so few come at the beat of Christ's drum to His standard, and so many of those few that have enlisted themselves by an external profession under Him, within a while drop away, and leave His colours; it is suffering work they are sick of.

Sufferings for the gospel are no matter of shame. Paul doth not blush to tell, it is for the gospel he is in bonds. The shame belonged to them that put on the chain, not to him that wore it. "If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf" ([1 Peter 4:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 4.16&t=DBY)). The apostles rejoiced that "they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" ([Acts 5:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 5.41&t=DBY)). Shall the wicked glory in their shame, and thou be ashamed of thy glory?

Heaven is but little worth if thou hast not a heart to despise a little shame, and bear a few taunts from profane Ishmaels for thy hopes of it. Let them spit on thy face, Christ will wipe it off; let them laugh, so thou winnest.

Fear not what you can suffer, only be careful for what you suffer. Christ's cross is made of sweet wood; there are comforts peculiar to those who suffer for righteousness. The true cause of Paul's sufferings was his zeal for God and His truth; "For which I am in bonds." That is, for the gospel which I profess and preach: as that martyr, who being asked how he came to prison, showed his Bible, and said, "This brought me hither." Persecutors may pretend what they please, but it is the saint's religion and piety that their spite is at.

*Blessing through suffering.*Persecution doth but mow the church, which afterward comes up the thicker for it; it is unholiness that ruins it. Persecutors do but plough God's field for Him, while He is sowing it with the blood that they let out. Few are made better by prosperity, whom afflictions make worse. He that will sin, though he goes in pain, will much more if that be gone.

*Prepared for suffering.*The proverb is, He that would learn to pray let him go to sea; but I think it were better thus, He that would go to sea (this I mean of suffering) let him learn to pray before he comes there.

Christian, suffering may overtake thee suddenly; therefore be ready shod. Sometimes orders come to soldiers for a sudden march; they must be gone as soon as the drum beats. And so mayest thou be called out, before thou art aware, to suffer for God or from God. Abraham had little time given him to deal with his heart, and persuade it into a compliance with God, for offering his son Isaac; a great trial and short warning: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac" ([Gen. 22:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 22.2&t=DBY)). Not a year, a month, a week hence, but now! This was in the night, and Abraham is gone early in the morning. How couldst thou, in thy perfect strength and health, endure to hear the message of death, if God should, before any lingering sickness has brought thee into some acquaintance with death, say no more, but, Up and die, as once to Moses? Art thou shod for such a journey? Couldst thou say, "Good is the word of the Lord"?

"The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle" ([Ps. 78:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 78.9&t=DBY)). Why? What is the matter? So well armed, and yet so cowardly? This seems strange: read the preceding verse, and you will cease wondering; they are called there, "a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God."

Be sure thou givest up thy lust to the sword of the Spirit, before thy life is in danger from the sword of the persecutor. Canst thou be willing to lay down thy life for Christ, and yet keep an enemy in thy bosom out of the hand of justice, that seeks to take away the life of Christ? Persecutors tempt as well as torture. It is possible for one to die in the cause of Christ, and not be His martyr. Thy heart must be holy which thou sufferest with, as well as the cause thou sufferest for. He alone is Christ's martyr, that suffers for Christ. "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; … who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not" ([1 Peter 2:20-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 2.20-23&t=DBY)). This is hard work indeed, in the very fire to keep the spirits cool, and clear of wrath and revenge. But it makes him that by grace can do it, a glorious conqueror. Flesh and blood would bid a man call fire from heaven, rather than mercy to fall upon them that so cruelly handle him. He that can forgive his enemy is too hard for him, and has the better of him; because his enemy's blows do not bruise his flesh, but the wounds that love gives, pierce the conscience.

Many that never could be beaten from the truth by dint of argument, have been forced from it by fire of persecution. It is not an orthodox judgment will enable a man to suffer for the truth at the stake.

*Fellowship in sufferings.*This would speak grace high in its exercise when a person is himself swimming in the abundance of all enjoyments, and can then lay aside his own joy to weep and mourn for and with any afflicted saints. It is not usual for any but those of great grace to feel the cords of the church's afflictions through a bed of down; it must be a David that can prefer Jerusalem above his chief joy. On the other hand, when in the depths of our own personal troubles, we can yet reserve a large space in our prayers for other saints, bespeaks a great measure of grace. When in our distresses we can entertain the tidings of any other saint's mercies with joy and thankfulness; this requires great grace. The prosperity of others too often breeds envy in them that want it; if, therefore, thou canst praise God for mercies granted to others while the tears stand in thy eyes for thine own miseries, it is what flesh and blood never learnt thee.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" ([Matt. 10:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matt. 10.28&t=DBY)). Children are afraid of bugbears, that cannot hurt them; but they can play with fire that will burn them; and no less childish is it to be frightened into a sin at the frown of a man, who has no power to hurt us more than our own fear gives him; and to play with hell-fire into which God is able to cast us for ever. What was John Huss the worse for his fool's cap that his enemies put on his head, so long as under it he had a helmet of hope, which they could not take off? Or how much the nearer hell was the same blessed martyr for their committing his soul to the devil? No nearer than some of their own are to heaven, for being sainted in the Pope's Calendar.

*Sustained in suffering.*None find such quick despatch at the throne of grace as suffering saints. "In the day when I cried," says David, "thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul" ([Ps. 138:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 138.3&t=DBY)). Peter knocked at the gate, who were assembled to seek God for him, almost as soon as their prayer knocked at heaven's gate in his behalf. There is ever a door more than the Christian sees in his prison, by which Christ can with a turn of His hand open a way for His saint's escape. Man may, the devil to be sure will, leave all in the lurch that do his work. But if God sets thee on He will bring thee off; never fear a "look thee to that" from His lips, when thy faithfulness to Him has brought thee into the briers: only be not troubled if thou art cast overboard, like Jonah, before thou seest the provision which God makes for thy safety: it is ever at hand, but sometimes out of sight, like Jonah's whale, sent of God to ferry him ashore under water, and the prophet in his belly, before he knew where he was. That which thou thinkest come to devour thee, may be the messenger that God sends to bring thee safe to land.

The Egyptians thought they had Israel in a trap, when they saw them by the seaside. When they are out of danger, behold they are in a wilderness, where nothing is to be had for back or belly, and yet here they shall live forty years, without trade or tillage, without begging or robbing of any of the neighbour nations; they shall not be beholden to them for a penny in their way. What cannot almighty power do to provide for His people.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in Him" ([Lam. 3:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Lam. 3.24&t=DBY)). Hast thou not chosen Him for thy portion? Dost thou not look for a heaven to enjoy Him in for ever? And can any dungeon of outward affliction be so dark, that this hope will not enlighten? He that has laid up a portion in heaven for thee, will lay out surely all the expenses thou needest in thy way thither. Remember how often God has confuted thy fears, and proved thy unbelief a false prophet. Hath He not knocked at thy door with inward comfort and outward deliverance, when thou hadst put out the candle of hope, given over looking for Him, and been ready to lay thyself down on the bed of despair? Wert thou never at so sad a pass, the storm of thy fears so great that the anchor of hope even came home, and left thee to feed with misgiving and despairing thoughts, as if now thy everlasting night were come, and no morning supply expected by thee? Yet even then thy God proved them all liars, by an unlooked-for surprise of mercy, with which He stole sweetly in upon thee.

*Suffering and glory.*There are few who are greedy hunters after the world's enjoyments, that do drive their worldly trade without running in debt to their consciences. And I am sure he buys gold too dear, that pays the peace of his conscience for the purchase. But heaven is had cheap, though it be with the loss of all our carnal interests, even life itself.

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" ([Luke 24:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke 24.26&t=DBY)). And truly the saints' way to salvation lies in the same road ([Rom. 8:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rom. 8.17&t=DBY)): "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together," only with this advantage, that His going before has beaten it plain, so that now it may be forded, which but for Him had been utterly impassable to us.

O comfort one another, Christians, with this! though your life be evil with troubles, yet it is short; a few steps, and you are out of the rain. There is a great difference between a saint, in regard of the evils he meets with, and the wicked; as two travellers riding contrary ways, both taken in the rain and wet, but one rides from the rain, and so is soon out of the shower; but the other rides into the rainy corner, the further he goes the worse he is. The saint meets with trouble as well as the wicked, but he is soon out of the shower; but as for the wicked, the further he goes the worse: what he meets with here is but a few drops, the great storm is the last.

When the Christian's affairs are most disconsolate, he may soon meet with a happy change. The joy of that blessed day comes "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye … we shall be changed" ([1 Cor. 15:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 15.52&t=DBY)). In one moment sick and sad, in the next well and glad, never to know more what groans and tears mean. Now clad with the rags of mortal flesh, made miserable with a thousand troubles that attend it, in the twinkling of an eye arrayed with the robes of immortality, enriched with a thousand times more glory than the sun itself wears in that garment of light which now dazzleth our eyes. Who can wonder to see a saint cheerful in his afflictions, that knows what good news he expects to hear from heaven, and how soon he knows not? The saints' hope is laid up in heaven, and yet it heals all the wounds which they receive on earth. If Christ sends his disciples to sea, He means to be with them when they most need His company. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee" ([Isa. 43:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 43.2&t=DBY)).

8 STRIFE AND CONTENTION

"Spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention." [Habakkuk 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Habakkuk 1.3&t=DBY).

CONTENTION is uncomfortable, with whomsoever we fall out: neighbours or friends, wife or husband, children or servants; but worst of all with God.

Consider the unhappy contentions and divisions that are found among the people of God. Contentions ever portend ill. Christ sets up the light of His gospel to walk and work by, not to fight and wrangle; and therefore, it were no wonder at all if He should put it out, and so end the dispute. If these storms which have been of late years upon us, and are not yet off, had but made Christians, as that did the disciples ([Mark 6:48](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark 6.48&t=DBY)), ply their oars, and lovingly row all one way, it had been happy; we might then have expected Christ to come walking toward us in mercy, and help us safe to land; but when we throw away the oar, and fall to strife in the ship, while the wind continues loud about us, truly we are more likely to drive Christ from us, than to invite Him to us; we are in a more probable way of sinking than saving of the ship and ourselves in it.

There is nothing (next to Christ and heaven) that the devil grudges believers more than their peace and mutual love. If he cannot rend them from Christ, stop them from getting heaven, yet he takes some pleasure to see them go thither in a storm, like a shattered fleet severed from one another, that they may have no assistance from, nor comfort of each other's company all the way. One ship is easier taken than a squadron.

If the gospel will not allow us to pay our enemies in their own coin, and give them wrath for wrath, much less will it suffer brethren to spit fire at one another's face.

When children fight and wrangle, now is the time they may expect their father to come and part them with his rod. "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" ([Mal. 4:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mal. 4.6&t=DBY)). Strife and contention set a people next door to a curse. God brings a heavy judgment upon a people when Himself leaves them. "Be of one mind," says the apostle, "live in peace; and the God of love and peace shalt be with you" ([2 Cor. 13:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Cor. 13.11&t=DBY)), implying that if they did not live in peace they must not look to have His company long with them.

In our divided times, wherein there is so much difference of judgment, had there been less wrangling among ourselves and more wrestling with God, we had been in a fairer way to find the door of truth, which so many are yet groping for. The way of controversy is dusty, and contentious disputes raiseth this dust, and blows it most into their eyes that gallop fastest in it, so that they miss the truth, which humble souls find upon their knees at the throne of grace. … Sinning times have ever been the saint's praying times: this sent Ezra with a heavy heart to confess the sin of his people ([Ezra 9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ezra 9&t=DBY).). And Jeremiah tells the wicked of his degenerate age that his "soul should weep in secret places for their pride" ([Jer. 13:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jer. 13.17&t=DBY)).

"The love of many shall wax cold," and no wonder when self-love waxeth so hot. It was foretold also by the apostle ([2 Tim. 3:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 3.1-2&t=DBY)), "In the last days … men shall be lovers of their own selves"; and what a black regiment follows this captain, sin! If once a man makes self the whole of his aim, farewell loving of, or praying for others: charity cannot dwell in so narrow a house as the self-lover's heart; yea, it is opposed to it: "Love seeketh not her own" ([1 Cor. 13:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 13.5&t=DBY)).

They were none of the best Christians of whom Paul gives this character, "They sought their own." As the heart advances in grace, so it grows more public-spirited: the higher a man ascends a hill, the larger will be his prospect: his eye is not confined within the compass of his own wall. The carnal spirit thinks of none but himself; whereas grace elevates the soul, and the more grace a man has, the more it will enable him to look from himself into the condition of his brethren.

I have known one that when he had some envious unkind thoughts stirring in him, against any one (and who so holy as may not find such vermin sometimes creeping about him), he would go to the throne of grace where he would most earnestly pray for the increase of those good things in them which he before had seemed to grudge.

When love has once laid the dust which passion and prejudice have blown in our eyes, we shall then stand at greater advantage for finding out truth. Pity thy weak brother, and take him by the hand for his help, but despise him not; God can make him to stand and suffer thee to fall: Christ doth not quench the smoking flax — why should we?

The persecutor's sword is not at the church's throat among us; but are not Christians falling out among themselves? The question has often been asked, why the word preached has been no more effectual to convert the wicked, or to edify the saints? One of the chief causes is the divisions amongst those that have made the greatest profession of the truth. The body of Christ is edified by love ([Eph. 4:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 4.16&t=DBY)). The apostles themselves, when wrangling got little good by Christ's sermon, or the supper itself, administered by Christ to them. One would have thought that was such a meal, in the strength whereof (as so many Elijahs) they might have gone a long journey; but, alas! we see how weak they arise from it; one denies his Master, and the rest in alarm forsake Him. Christ prays for His people's unity, "That the world may believe that thou hast sent me" ([John 17:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John 17.21&t=DBY)). This should stir up all that wish well to the gospel, to pray for the reunion of divided hearts; hot disputes will not do it; prayer will, or nothing can. The God of peace can only set us at peace: if ever we are wise to agree, we must obtain our wisdom from above; this alone is pure and peaceable.

The unreasonableness of the strife betwixt Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's is aggravated by the near neighbourhood of the heathens to them, "And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and Perizzite dwelled then in the land" ([Gen. 13:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Gen. 13.7&t=DBY)). … O Christians, shall Herod and Pilate put you to shame? They clapped up a peace to strengthen their hands against Christ; and will not you unite against your common enemy? … Contentions put a stop to the growth of grace. The body may as well thrive in a fever, as the soul prosper when on a flame with strife and contention. Observe that place ([Eph. 4:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 4.15&t=DBY)): "But speaking the truth in love," or being sincere in love, "may grow up into Him in all things." The apostle is upon a cure, showing how souls may come to thrive and flourish; and the receipt he gives is a composition of these two rare drugs, sincerity and love; preserve these and all will go well. There may be preaching, but no edifying, without love. You cut off your trade with heaven, at the throne of grace; you will be little *in prayer*to God, if much *in squabbling*with your brethren. It is impossible to go from wrangling to praying, with a free spirit. And if you should be so bold as to knock at God's door, you are sure to have cold welcome, "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." As we cut off our trade with heaven, so with one another; when two countries fall out they must needs both pinch by the war. No Christian could well live without borrowing from his brethren. There is that "which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part" ([Eph. 4:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 4.16&t=DBY)). Contentions and divisions spoil all intercourse among believers. Communication flows from communion, and communion is founded upon union. The church grows under persecution; that sheds the seed all over the field, and brings the gospel where else it had not been heard of; but divisions and contentions, like a furious storm, washes the seed out of the land, with its heart, fatness, and all. Contentions not only hazard the decay of grace, but growth of sin. "If ye have bitter envying, and strife in your hearts, glory not; … for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." Contention is the devil's forge, in which if he can but give a Christian a heat or two, he will soften him for his hammer of temptation. Moses himself, when his spirit was a little hot, "spake unadvisedly with his lips."

We are prone to mistake our heat for zeal, whereas commonly in strife between saints it is a fire-ship sent in by Satan to break their unity and order; wherein while they stand they are an armada invincible: and Satan knows he has no other way but this to shatter them: when the Christians' language, which should be one, begins to be confounded, they are then near scattering.

Was there ever less love, charity, self-denial, heavenly mindedness, or the power of holiness, than in this sad age of ours? Alas! these are in great danger of perishing in the fire of contention and division, which a perverse zeal in less things has kindled among us.

Lay this deep in thy heart, that God, which gives an eye to see truth, must give a hand to hold it fast when we have it. What we have from God we cannot keep without God; keep therefore thy acquaintance with God, or else truth will not keep her acquaintance long with thee. God is light: thou art going into the dark, as soon as thou turnest thy back upon Him. We stand it better advantage to find truth, and keep it also, when devoutly praying for it, than fiercely wrangling and contending about it: disputes toil the soul and raise the dust of passion; prayer sweetly composeth the mind, and lays the passions which disputes draw forth; and I am sure a man may see further in a still, clear day, than in a windy and cloudy. When a person talks much and rests little, we have great cause to fear his brain will not long hold out; and truly, when a person shall be much in talking and disputing about truth, without a humble spirit in prayer to be led into it, God may justly punish that man's pride with a spiritual frenzy in his mind, that he shall not know error from truth.

A truth under dispute is stopped in the head: it cannot commence in the heart, or become practicable in the life.

Many a sharp conflict there has been between saint and saint, scuffling in the dark through misunderstanding of the truth and each other.

There is a day coming, and it cannot be far from us, in which we shall meet lovingly in heaven, and sit at one feast: full fruition of God shall be the feast, and peace and love the sweet music that shall sound to it; and what folly it is for us to *fight* here who shall *feast* there!

9 SERVANTS AND SERVICE

"He that has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? says the Lord." — [Jeremiah 23:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah 23.28&t=DBY).

*PREACH the truth.*Take heed of giving thy own dreams and fancies in God's name. All is chaff except the pure word of God. Oh stamp not God's image on thine own coin! We live in high-flown times: many people are not content with truths that lie plainly in the Scriptures; and some, to please their wanton palates, have sublimated their notions so high, that they have flown out of the sight of the Scripture, and unawares run themselves, with others, into dangerous errors. Make not experiments upon the souls of people, by delivering what is doubtful. Better feed people with sound doctrine though it be a plain meal, than that thou shouldst, with an outlandish dish, light on a wild gourd, that brings death into their pot.

*Preach with the fear of God.*A little bread, with God's blessing, may make a meal for a multitude; and great provision may soon shrink to nothing, if God help not in the breaking of it. It is not thy sermon in thy head, or notes in thy book, that will enable thee to preach, except God open thy mouth; acknowledge, therefore, God in all thy ways, and lean not to thy own understanding: the swelling of the heart, as well as of the wall, goes before a fall. How much may it provoke God, when thou goest to the pulpit, and passest by his door in the way, without calling for His assistance? … Not only the preparation of the heart, but the answer of the tongue, both are from the Lord ([Prov. 16:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 16.1&t=DBY)). God keeps the key of the mouth as well of the heart; not a word can be uttered, until God opens the door of the lips to give it a free egress. He opened the mouth of the ass, and stopped the mouth of that wicked prophet, its master ([Num. 22:28-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Num. 22.28-31&t=DBY)): hear him confess as much to Balak: "Lo, I am come to thee: have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (verse 38).

*Preach without fear of man.*There is nothing more unworthy than to see a people bold to sin, and the preacher afraid to reprove them. It is said of Tacitus, that he took the same liberty to write the emperors' lives, that they took in leading them.

Man-pleasing is both endless and needless. If thou wouldst thou couldst not please all; and if thou couldst, there is no need, if thou pleasest Him that can turn all their hearts and bind their hands. They speed best that dare be faithful. Jonah was afraid of his work: O, he durst not go to such a great city with such a sad message: to tell them that they should be destroyed, was to set them at work to destroy him that brought the news; but how near was he to losing his life by running away to save it? Jeremiah seemed the only man likely to lose his life by his bold preaching; yet he had fairer quarter at last than the smooth preachers of his time. If thou art free and bold, thou mayest, indeed, be *mocked*by some, but thou wilt be *reverenced*by more: yea, even they that wag their heads at thee, carry that in their conscience which will make them fear thee: they are the flattering preachers who become base among the people ([Mal. 2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mal. 2.9&t=DBY)). It is not wisdom to provoke the judge, by flattering the prisoner.

Where one says, How shall I do this and sin against God? many in their hearts say, How shall I do this and anger man? Herod feared John, and did many things; had he feared God he would have laboured to have done everything.

Fall to the work God sets thee about, and thou engagest His strength for thee. "The way of the Lord is strength." Run from thy work and thou engagest God's strength against thee; He will send some storm or other after thee to bring home His runaway servant. How oft has the coward been killed in a ditch, or under some hedge, when the valiant soldier that stood his ground and kept his place, got off with safety and honours?

*Preach with a good conscience.*Keep a clear conscience: he cannot be a bold reprover, that is not a conscientious liver; such a one must speak softly, for fear of waking his own guilty conscience. Unholiness in the preacher's life, either will stop his mouth from *reproving,*or the people's ears from *receiving.*Oh how harsh a sound does such a cracked bell make in the ears of his auditors!

*Preach definitely.*He is the better workman, who drives one nail home with reiterated blows, than he which covets to enter many, but fastens none. Such preachers are not likely to reach the conscience, who hop from one truth to another, but dwell on none. Were I to buy a garment in a shop, I should like him better that lays one good piece or two before me that are for my turn, which I may fully examine, than him who takes down all his shop, and heaps piece upon piece, merely to show his store, till at last for variety I can look attentively on none, they lie so one upon another.

*Preach faithfully.*The preacher must read and study people as diligently as any book in his study; and as he finds them, dispense like a faithful steward to them. People complain, we are so oft reproving the same error or sin; and the fault is their own, because they will not leave it. Who will blame the dog for continuing to bark, when the thief is all the while in the yard? Alas, alas, it is not once or twice rousing against sin will do it!

"It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" ([1 Cor. 4:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Cor. 4.2&t=DBY)). The preacher's faithfulness stands in relation to him that intrusts him. It is very unlikely that a steward, in giving out provision, should please all the servants in the house; such officers have least thanks when they do their work best. He that thinks to please men, goes about an endless and needless work. A wise physician seeks to *cure,*not to *please*his patient. He that chides when he is sick, for the bitterness of the potions, will give thee thanks for it when he is recovered.

*Preach simply.*The word of God is too sacred a thing, and preaching too solemn a work, to be toyed and played with, as is the usage of some, who make a sermon but matter of wit and fine oratory. Their sermon is like a child's doll, from which if you take its dress, the rest is worth nothing. It is well indeed when the people can keep pace with the preacher. To preach truths and notions above the hearers' capacity, is like a nurse that should go to feed a child with a spoon too big to go into its mouth.

*Preach wisely.*"Because the preacher was wise, he … sought to find out acceptable words" ([Eccles. 12:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eccles. 12.9-10&t=DBY)). Not rude, loose, and indigested stuff, in a slovenly manner brought forth, lest the sluttery of the cook should turn the stomachs of the guests.

*Preach gently.* "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" ([2 Tim. 2:24-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 2.24-25&t=DBY)). Oh how careful is God that nothing should be in the preacher to prejudice the sinner's judgment, or harden his heart against the offer of His grace! If the servant be proud and hasty, how shall they know that the Master is meek and patient? He that will take the bird must not scare it. A forward, peevish messenger is no friend to him that sends him. Sinners are not pelted into Christ with stones of hard provoking language, but wooed into Christ by heart-melting exhortations.

The oil makes the nail drive without splitting the board. The word never enters the heart more kindly, than when it falls most gently: "Ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness" ([Ps. 45:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 45.4&t=DBY)). Be as rough to thy people's sins as thou canst, so thou be gentle to their souls. Dost thou take the rod of reproof into thine hand? Let them see that love, not wrath, gives the blow. The word preached comes, indeed, best from a warm heart.

"The words of wise men are heard in quiet" ([Ecc. 9:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecc. 9.17&t=DBY)). Let the reproof be as sharp as thou wilt; but the spirit must be meek. *Passion*raiseth the blood of him that is reproved; but *compassion*turns his bowels. We must not denounce wrath in wrath.

*Preach diligently.*All the water is lost that runs beside the mill, and all thy thoughts are waste which help thee not to do God's work withal in thy general or particular calling. The bee will not sit on a flower where no honey can he sucked, neither should the Christian. Why sittest thou here idle? thou shouldst say to thy soul, when thou hast so much to do for God and thy soul, and so little time to despatch it in?

10 READING AND MEDITATION

"Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. … Meditate upon these things." [1 Timothy 4:13-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy 4.13-15&t=DBY).

MEDITATION is to the sermon what the harrow is to the seed, it covers those truths which else might have been picked or washed away.

An affectionate hearer will not be a forgetful hearer. Love helps the memory: Can a woman forget her child, or a maid her ornaments, or a bride her attire? No, they love them too well; were the truths of God thus precious to thee, thou wouldst with David think of them day and night. Even when the Christian, through weakness of memory, cannot remember the very words he hears, to repeat them; yea, then he keeps the power and savour of them in his spirit, as when sugar is dissolved in wine you cannot see it, but you may taste it; when meat is eaten and digested, it is not to be found as it was received, but the man is cheered and strengthened by it, more able to walk and work than before, by which you may know it is not lost: so you may taste the truths the Christian heard, in his spirit, see them in his life.

Till the heart be touched the mind will not be fixed. Therefore you may observe, it is said, God opened the heart of Lydia "that she attended" ([Acts 16:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 16.14&t=DBY)). The mind goes of the will's errand; we spend our thoughts on what our hearts propose. If the heart has no sense of its ignorance, or no desires after God, no wonder such a one listens not what the preacher says, his heart sends his mind another way. "They sit before thee as my people," says God, "but their heart goes after their covetousness."

When the soul stands upon this Pisgah of meditation, looking by an eye of faith, upon all the great and precious things laid up by a faithful God for him, it is easy to despise the world's love and wrath; but, alas! it is hard for us to go up thither who are so shortbreathed, and soon tired with a few steps up this mount of God. Would we but frequently retire from the world, and bestow some of that time in secret waiting upon God, which we lavish out upon inferior pleasures, and entertainments of the creature, we should invite God's Holy Spirit to us. Let a wicked man set up a lust for his thoughts to dally with, and the devil will soon be at his elbow to assist him. And shall we not believe the Holy Spirit as ready to lend His helping hand to a holy meditation? Doubtless He is. Spread thou thy sails and the Spirit will fill them with His heavenly breath. Be thou but careful to provide fuel, gather matter for meditation, set thy thoughts at work upon it, and the Spirit of God will kindle thy affections. "While I was musing," says David, "the fire burned" ([Ps. 39:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 39.3&t=DBY)).

Meditation fills the heart with heavenly matter, but prayer gives the discharge and pours it forth upon God. … Meditation is prayer's handmaid, to wait on it before and after the performance. It is as the plough before the sower, to prepare the heart for the duty of prayer, and as the harrow to cover the seed when it is sown.

Deadness in the heart of a saint will damp his zeal, if not cleared by daily watchfulness. Look, therefore, narrowly whence thy cooling comes; perhaps thy heart is too much let out upon the world in the day, and at night thy spirits are spent, when thou shouldst be in prayer. If thou wilt be hotter in duty, thou must be colder towards the world. Now, there is no better way for this, than to set thy soul under the frequent meditation of Christ's love to thee, thy relation to Him, with the great and glorious things thou expectest from Him; but if you let your heart continue soaking in the thoughts of an inordinate love to the world, you will find when you come to pray, that your hearts will be as a wet log at the back of a fire, long in kindling, and soon out again. Perhaps the deadness of thy heart in prayer ariseth from not having a deep sense of thy wants, and the mercies thou art in need of. Couldst thou but pray feelingly, thou wouldst pray fervently. The hungry man needs no help to teach him how to beg.

Prize the word, feed on the word, whether it be in public, or in a conference with some Christian friend, or in secret reading and meditation by thy solitary self. Let none of these be disused, or carnally used by thee. When thy stomach fails *to* the word, thy faith must needs begin to fail *on* the word.

But you will say, If we had so much time to spare as others, we would not be so unacquainted with the Scriptures. Could God find heart and time to pen and send this love-letter to thee, and thou find none to read and peruse it! The sick man no time to look on his physician's prescription! The condemned malefactor to look on his prince's letter of grace, wherein a pardon is signed! Must the world have all thy time and swallow thee up alive! Art thou such a slave to thy pelf, as to tie thy soul to thy purse strings; and take no more time for the saying of it, than this cruel master will afford thee! Who gave thee leave thus to overlade thyself with the incumbrance of the world? Is not God the Lord of thy time? Why did you not read My word, and meditate thereon? will Christ say at that day. Darest thou, then, be so impudent as to say, Lord, I was overcharged with the cares, and drunk with the love of the world, and, therefore, I could not! Well, if this be the thief that robs thee of thy time, get out of his hands, lest it also rob thee of thy soul. What calling more encumbering than a soldier's, and of all the soldiers, the general's? Such an one was Joshua, yet he had a strict command given him to study the Scriptures: ([Joshua 1:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua 1.8&t=DBY)) "This book shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." Must Joshua, in the midst of drums and trumpets, and distractions of war, find time to meditate on the law of God, and shall a few trivial occasions in thy private calling discharge thee from the same duty?

Take heed thou comest not to the Scriptures with an unholy heart. If ever you know the mind of God in His word, the Spirit must impart it to you. And will He that is so holy take thee by thy foul hand, to lead thee into truth? No, thy doom is set, "None of the wicked shall understand" ([Dan. 12:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Dan. 12.10&t=DBY)). If we have the truth for our guest, and be acquainted with the mind and will of God, we must have a holy heart for its lodging!

Go to God by prayer for a key to unlock the mysteries of His word. It is not the plodding but the praying soul, that will get this treasure of scripture knowledge. God often brings a truth to the Christian's hand as a return of prayer, which he had long hunted for in vain with much labour and study: "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets" ([Dan. 2:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Dan. 2.28&t=DBY)); and where doth He reveal the secrets of His word but at the throne of grace? "From the first day," says the angel, "that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words"; that is for thy prayer ([Dan. 10:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Dan. 10.12&t=DBY)). And what was this heavenly messenger's errand to Daniel but to open more fully the Scripture to him? as appears by verse 14 compared with verse 21. This holy man had got some knowledge by his study in the word, and this sets him apraying, and prayer fetched an angel from heaven to give him more light.

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" ([Ps. 119:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 119.11&t=DBY)). It was not the Bible in his hand to read it, not the word on his tongue to speak of it; but the hiding it in his heart, that he found effectual against sin.

"Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings" ([1 Thess. 5:19-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thess. 5.19-20&t=DBY)). They are coupled together; he that despiseth one loseth both. If the scholar be too proud to learn of the usher, he is unworthy to be taught by the master.

"They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned to fables" ([2 Tim. 4:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 4.3-4&t=DBY)). Satan commonly stops the ear from hearing sound doctrine, before he opens it to embrace corrupt.

11 PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." [Philippians 4:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians 4.6&t=DBY).

*PRAYER the sign of life.*What is prayer, but the breathing forth of that grace which is breathed into the soul by the Holy Spirit? When God breathed into man the breath of life, he became a living soul; so when God breathes into the creature the breath of spiritual life, he becomes a praying soul: "Behold, he prays," says God of Paul to Ananias ([Acts 9:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts 9.11&t=DBY)). Praying is the same to the new creature, as crying to the natural. The child is not learned by art to cry, but by nature — it comes into the world crying. Praying is not a lesson got by forms and rules of art, but flowing from principles of new life.

*Prayer and reality.*Prayer is an act in which we have immediately to do with the great God, to whom we approach in prayer. It is too sacred a duty to be performed between sleeping and waking, with a heavy eye or a drowsy heart; this God complained of: "There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee" ([Isa. 64:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isa. 64.7&t=DBY)). He counts it no prayer where the heart is not stirred up and awake. Our behaviour in prayer has an universal influence upon all the passages of our whole life; as a man is in prayer, so he is likely to be in all the rest; if he is careless in praying, then he is negligent in hearing and loose in his walking. Prayer is the channel, in which the stream of divine grace, blessing, and comfort, runs from God into the heart; dam up the channel and the stream is stopped.

*Prayer and integrity.*"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" ([Ps. 66:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 66.18&t=DBY)). Now, when God refuseth to hear, we may be sure the Spirit refuseth to assist; for God never rejects a prayer which His Spirit indites. Hast thou defiled thyself with any known sin? Think not to have Him help thee in *prayer,*till He has helped thee to *repent;*He will carry thee to the *laver*before He goes with thee to the *altar.*

Take heed thou prayest not with a reservation: be sure thou renouncest what thou wouldst have God remit. … He that desires not to be purged from the filth of sin, prays in vain to be eased of the guilt. If we love the work of sin, we must take the wages. A false heart could be willing to have his sin covered, but the sincere desires his heart may be cleansed. David begged a clean heart as well as a quiet conscience: "Blot out all mine iniquities; create in me a clean heart, O God" ([Ps. 51:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 51.9-10&t=DBY)). In nothing do our hearts more cheat us than in our prayers, and in no requests more than those which are levelled against our lusts. That is oftentimes *least intended,*which is *most pretended. …*The saint's prayer may miscarry from some secret grudge that is lodged in his heart against his brother.

*Prayer and diligence.*God has appointed prayer as a help to our diligence, not as a cloak for our sloth. Idle beggars are welcome neither to God's door nor man's. What! wilt thou lift up thy hands to God in prayer, and then put them in thy pocket? Is it a lust thou art praying against? And dost thou sit down idle to see whether it will now die alone? Will that prayer slay one lust, that lets another (thy sloth I mean) live under its nose? Dost thou think to walk loosely all day, yielding thyself, and betraying the glory of God into the hands of thy lust, and then mend all with a prayer at night?

O Christian, should it not make thee blush much more, to see the whole town up, and as busy as bees in a garden, one flying this way, and another that way, and all to bring a little more of this world's perishing pelf into their hive, out of which, death ere long will drive them, and force them to leave what with so much pains they have gathered for others; while thou sleepest away thy precious time, though thou art sure to carry thy gettings into the other world with thee, and there enjoy the fruit of thy short labour here, with everlasting glory!

*Prayer and watching.*He that prays and watcheth not, is like him that sows a field with precious seed, but leaves the gate open for hogs to come and rout it up. … "Watch and pray," says Christ to His disciples; He knew they could not do that work sleeping. But it is not enough to keep the eye awake, if thou sufferest it to wander: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way" ([Ps. 119:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 119.37&t=DBY)). To pray, and not watch what becomes of our prayer is a great folly, and no little sin. What is this but to take the name of God in vain? Yet thus do many knock at God's door, and then run away to the world and think no more of their prayers.

*Prayer and perseverance.*By "praying always" we are exhorted to the daily, constant exercise of prayer; by "praying with perseverance," we are pressed to bear up against discouragements, as to any particular request we may make at the throne of grace, and not to give over, though we have not a speedy answer to it; so that the former is opposed to a neglect of the duty in its stated seasons, and the latter to a fainting in our spirits, as to any particular suit we put up.

*Prayer and supplication.*"Praying … with all perseverance and *supplication*for all saints." In praying for saints you must pray for all: I do not mean for quick and dead; prayer is a means to wait upon them in their way; at death, when they are at their journey's end, prayers are useless, and the wicked in that estate are beneath, the saints above, our prayers; we cannot help the wicked, the tree is fallen, and so it must lie. We read of a change the body shall have after death. Vile bodies may, but filthy souls cannot after death be made glorious: if they leave the body filthy, so shall they meet it at the resurrection. As the wicked are beyond our help, so the saints are above all need of our help. … We are to love all saints, therefore to pray for all. The new creature never wants its new nature; if God loves all His children, then wilt thou all thy brethren, or not one of them. When Paul commends Christians for this grace of love, he doth it thus: ([Eph. 1:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 1.15&t=DBY)) "After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints." Now, if we love all, we cannot but pray for all.

Though we are to pray for all saints, yet some call for a more special remembrance at our hands: for instance, those that are near to us by bond of nature as well as of grace. "A brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more to thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord" (Philemon 16). You are to pray particularly for those that are in distress: whoever you forget, remember these: this is a fit season for love. A friend for adversity is as proper as fire for a winter's day: Job's friends chose the right time to visit him, but took not the right course of improving their visit: had they spent the time in praying for him which they did in hot disputes with him, they had profited him, and pleased God more.

*Prayer and thanksgiving.*Prayer is a means to dispose the heart to praise. When David begins a psalm with prayer, he commonly ends it with praise. That Spirit which leads a soul out of itself to God for supply, will direct it to the same God with His praise. We do not borrow money of one man and return it to another. If God has been thy strength, surely thou wilt make Him thy song. The thief comes not to thank a man for what he steals out of his yard. Mercies ill got are commonly as ill spent, because they are not sanctified, and so become fuel to feed lusts.

As a necessary ingredient in all our prayers: Let your requests be made known with *thanksgiving*([Phil. 4:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Phil. 4.6&t=DBY)). This spice must be in all our offerings. He that prays for a mercy he wants, and is not thankful for mercies received, may seem mindful of himself, but is forgetful of God, and so takes the right course to shut his prayers out of doors. God will not put His mercies into a rent purse; and such is an unthankful heart.

Daniel, when in the very shadow of death, the plot being laid to take away his life, prayed three times a day, and gave thanks before his God ([Dan. 6:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Dan. 6.10&t=DBY)). To have heard him pray in that great strait would not have afforded so much matter for wonder; but to have his heart in tune for giving thanks in such a sad hour was admirable.

*Prayer and trial.*When prayer cannot prevail to keep a temporal mercy alive, yet it will have a powerful influence to keep thy heart alive when that dies. O, it is sad, when a man's estate and comfort are buried in the same grave together. None will bear the loss of an enjoyment so patiently, as he that was exercised in prayer while he had it. The more David prayed for his child while alive, the fewer tears he shed for it when dead.

*Prayer and prosperity.*Prayer is not a winter garment: it is then to be worn indeed, but not to be left off in the summer of prosperity. If you would find some at prayer, you must stay till it thunders and lightens; and not go to them except it be in a storm. Pray in prosperity, that thou mayest speed when thou prayest in adversity; own God now, that He may acknowledge thee then. Shall that friend be welcome to us, who never gives us a visit but when he comes to borrow? Pray in prosperity, that thou mayest not be ensnared by it. Prosperity is no friend to the memory, therefore we are cautioned so much to beware when we are full, lest we forget God. You shall find, in Scripture, that the saints have had their saddest falls on the most even ground. Noah, who had seen the whole world drowned in water, no sooner was safe on shore, but himself is drowned in wine. David's heart was fixed when in the wilderness, but his wanton eye rolled and wandered when he walked upon the terrace of his palace.

*Morning and evening prayer.*Prayer must be the key of the morning, and lock of the night. We show not ourselves Christians, if we do not open our eyes with prayer when we rise, and shut them again with the same key we lie down at night. Pray as often as you please besides.

If you will have fire for your evening sacrifice, labour to keep what is already on thy altar from going out. What you fill the vessel with you must expect to draw thence: if water be put in, we cannot, without a miracle, think to draw wine. What! art thou all day filling thy heart with earth (God being not in all thy thoughts), and dost thou look to draw heaven thence at night? He that is heavenly in his earthly employments, will be the less worldly in his heavenly. It was a sweet speech of a dying saint, that he was going to change his place but not his company.

*Broken prayer.*Sometimes thou hearest one pray with a moving expression, whilst thou canst hardly get out a few broken words in duty, and thou art ready to accuse thyself and to admire him; as if the gilt of the key made it open the door better. "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed" ([James 5:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James 5.17&t=DBY)). A weak hand with a sincere heart is able to turn the key in prayer.

*Ejaculatory prayer.*Ejaculatory prayer to God, is the short dagger thou art to use for thy defence against temptation, when thou hast no time to draw the long sword of solemn prayer. Thus thou mayest pray in any place, company, or employment.

*Public prayer.*When thou prayest before others, observe on what thou bestowest thy chief care and zeal, whether on the externals or internals of prayer; that which is exposed to the eye and ear of men, or that for the eye and ear of God; the devout posture of thy body, or the inward devotion of thy soul; the pomp of thy words, or the power of thy faith; the agitation of thy bodily spirits in the vehemency of thy voice, or the fervency of thy spirit in heartbreaking affections. These inward workings are the very soul of prayer. The sincere soul dares not be rude in his outward posture; he is careful of his words, that they may be grave and pertinent, neither would he pray them asleep who join with him, by a cold manner of delivering his prayer; but still it is the inward disposition of his heart he principally looks to, knowing well, that it is possible to warm in prayer, thereby benefiting others, and at the same time have his own heart cold and idle; therefore he doth not count he prays well, except he finds his own affections drawn out. The hypocrite, if he comes off the duty with the applause of others in the external performance, is well pleased.

*Formal prayer.*Take heed of formal praying, this is as baneful to grace as not praying. A plaster, though proper, and of sovereign virtue, yet if it be laid on cold, may do more hurt than good.

Dost thou think that God will welcome that prayer to heaven which has not thy heart to bear it company? And how can thy heart go with it, when thou hast sent it another way? Will God hear thee when thou mockest Him? And if this be not to mock Him, what is? Like children that give a knock at a door, and then run away to their play again; thus thou raisest thy voice to God, and then are gone in thy roving thought to hold converse with the world, or worse. Is not this trifling with God? Satan disturbs thee *in*praying, that he may make thee weary *of* praying. Indeed he is not likely to miss his mark, if thou lettest these vermin go on to breed in thy heart; for these will rob thee of the sweetness of prayer; and when the *marrow*is once out, thou wilt easily be persuaded to throw the *bone*away. He is in danger to forsake his meat, who has lost his relish for it. Prayer is a tedious work for him who has no pleasure in it: and weariness in it stands next door to weariness of it.

The best way to keep vessels from leaking is to let them stand full. A vain heart *out* of prayer, will be little better *in* prayer. Walk in the company of sinful thoughts all the day, and thou wilt hardly shut the door upon them, when thou goest into thy closet. Thou hast taught them to be bold; they will now plead acquaintance with thee, and crowd in after thee, like little children, who if you play with them, will cry after you when you would be rid of their company.

Beware that thy constant daily prayer doth not degenerate into a lifeless formality. What we do commonly we are prone to do slightly. He is a rare Christian that keeps his course in prayer, and yet grows not to pray of mere course. He that watcheth his heart all day, is most likely to find it in tune for prayer at night; whereas loose walking breeds lazy praying.

Never was any formal prayer of the Holy Spirit's making; when He comes it is a time of life.

*Lengthy prayer.*Pray often rather than very long. It is difficult to remain long in prayer, and not slacken in our affections. Especially observe this in social prayers; for when we pray in company, we must consider them that travel with us: as Jacob said: "I will lead on softly, as the children are able to endure."

*Hindrances to prayer.*There is an antipathy between sinning and praying. The child that has misspent the day in play abroad, steals to bed at night, for fear of a chiding from his father. Sin and prayer are such contraries, that it is impossible at one stride to step from one to another.

Another method Satan has to make the Christian put off prayer is some worldly business that is to be dispatched. Take heed of overcharging thyself with worldly business, which is done when thou graspest more thereof than will consist with thy Christian calling. God allows thee to give to the world that which is the world's, but He will not suffer thee to pay the world that which is due to Him. We could not easily want time to pray, if our hearts would but persuade our heads to devise and study how our other affairs might be disposed of without prejudice to our devotions. That cloth which a bungler thinks too little for a garment, a good workman can make one of it, and leave some for another use also. O, there is a great deal of art in cutting out time with little loss. Some look upon every minute of time spent in the closet, as lost in the shop. Does the husbandman mow the less for whetting his scythe? Doth a good grace before meat spoil the dinner? No: nor doth prayer hinder the Christian either in his employments or enjoyments, but expedites the one, and sanctifies the other. "Acknowledge God in all thy ways, and lean not to thy own understanding."

Godliness has the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" ([1 Tim. 4:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Tim. 4.8&t=DBY)). This earth below, to a saint, is a land of promise, though not the land that is chiefly promised. God has not promised him heaven, and left him to the wide world to shift for his outward subsistence; He has not bid them live by faith, for their souls, and live by their wits, for their bodies. No; He that has promised to give him "grace and glory," has also said, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" ([Ps. 84:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 84.11&t=DBY)). Their bill of fare here is provided as well as their inheritance hereafter.

*Neglect of prayer.*When Saul had given over inquiring after God, we hear him knocking at the devil's door, and asking counsel of a witch. Take heed of living near the tempter! If Satan might have his wish, surely it would be this, that the creature might live prayerless.

Satan cannot but deny but great wonders have been wrought by prayer. As the spirit of prayer goes up, so his kingdom goes down. Satan's stratagems against prayer are three. First, If he can, he will keep thee from prayer. If that be not feasible, secondly, he will strive to interrupt thee in prayer. And, thirdly, if that plot takes not, he will labour to hinder the success of thy prayer.

"Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God" ([Job 15:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Job 15.4&t=DBY)). Eliphaz's doctrine was true, though his application was false. Sins of commission are the usual punishments that God inflicts on persons for sins of omission: he that leaves a duty, may fear to be left to commit a crime: he that turns his ear from the truth, takes the ready course to be given over to believe fables ([2 Tim. 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Tim. 4.4&t=DBY)): he that casteth off prayer, it is a wonder if you find him not, ere long, cast into some foul sin.

*Answers to prayer.*He has engaged to answer the prayers of His people, and fulfil the desires of them that fear Him ([Ps. 145:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 145.19&t=DBY)); but it proves a long voyage sometimes before the praying saint has the return of his adventure. There comes often a long and sharp winter between the sowing time of prayer and the reaping. He hears us, indeed, as soon as we pray, but we often do not hear of Him so soon. Prayers are not long on their journey to heaven, but long coming thence in a full answer. Never was faithful prayer lost at sea. No merchant trades with such certainty as the praying saint. Some prayers, indeed, have a longer voyage than others, but then they come with the richer lading at last.

Sometimes we have speedy return of prayers — "In the day that I cried, thou answeredst me." While the church were at God's door praying for Peter's deliverance, Peter is knocking at theirs, to tell them their prayer is heard.

12 PATIENCE AND HOPE

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." [Romans 15:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans 15.4&t=DBY).

HOPE has an eye that can see heaven in a cloudy day, and an anchor that can find firm land under a weight of waters to hold by; it can expect good out of evil.

True hope is a jewel that no one wears but Christ's bride; a grace with which no one is graced but the believer's soul. Christless and hopeless are joined together ([Eph. 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Eph. 2.12&t=DBY)).

We are directed to "take the helmet of salvation"; and this not for some particular occasion, and then hang it up till another extraordinary strait calls us to take it down, and use it again; but we must take it so as never to lay it aside, till God shall take off this helmet, to put on a crown of glory in the room of it. "Be sober, and hope to the end," is the apostle Peter's counsel ([1 Peter 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 1.13&t=DBY)).

The hope of heaven leaves a blot upon the world in the Christian's thoughts. He that looks on heaven, must needs look off earth. The soul's eye can as little as the body's be above and below at the same time. Here is not my hope, says the soul, and therefore not my haunt: my hope is in heaven, from whence I look for my Saviour, and my salvation to come with Him.

Hast thou heaven *in hope?* It is more than if thou hadst the whole world *in hand.*The greatest monarch the earth has will be glad, in a dying hour, to change his crown for thy helmet; his crown will not procure him this helmet, but thy helmet will bring thee to a crown; a crown not of gold, but of glory, which, once on, shall never be taken off.

Why are men dull and heavy in the service of God? Truly because their hopes are so. Hopeless and lifeless go together. No wonder the work goes hardly off hand, when men have no hope to be well paid for their labour. He that thinks he works for a song, will not sing at his work — I mean forward it. The best customer is sure to be served best and first; and him we count the best customer whom we hope will be the best paymaster. If God be thought so, we will leave all to do His business. Nothing better to clear the soul of sloth and listlessness of spirit in the service of God than hope well improved and strengthened. It is the very physic which the apostles prescribe for this disease: "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end: that ye be not slothful" ([Heb. 6:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Heb. 6.11-12&t=DBY)).

"What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God?" ([2 Peter 3:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter 3.11-12&t=DBY)). Live up to thy hopes, Christian; let there be a decorum kept between thy principles and thy practices — thy hope of heaven, and walk on earth. The eye should direct the foot. Thou lookest for salvation; walk the same way thy eye looks. There is a decorum, which if a Christian doth not observe in his walking, he betrays his high calling and hopes to scorn. To look high and live low, how ridiculous it appears!

Let thy hope of heaven moderate thy affections to earth. "Be sober, and hope," says the apostle ([1 Peter 1:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter 1.13&t=DBY)). You that look for so much in another world, may be very well content with a little in this. Nothing more unbecomes a heavenly hope than an earthly heart.

I doubt not but every gracious person finds the nearer to heaven he gets in *his hopes,*the farther he goes from earth in *his desires.*When he stands upon these battlements of heaven, he can look down upon this dung-hill world as a little dust-heap, next to nothing.

Let thy hope of heaven conquer thy fear of death. Why shouldst thou be afraid to die, who hopest to live by dying? Is the apprentice afraid of the day when his time will be out? — he that runs a race, of coming too soon to his goal? — the pilot troubled when he sees his harbour? Death is all this to thee! Thy indenture expires, and thy Jubilee is come; thy race is run, and the crown won, and is sure to drop on thy head when thy soul goes out of thy body. Thy voyage, how troublesome soever it was in its sailing, is now happily finished, and death doth but land thy soul on the shore of eternity at thy heavenly Father's door, never to be put to sea more.

The Turks say, they do not think we Christians believe heaven to be such a glorious place as we profess and talk of; for, if we did, we would not be so afraid to go thither. Christian, understand aright what message death brings to thee, and the fear of it will be over; it snatcheth thee, indeed, from this world's enjoyments, but it leads thee to the felicities of another, incomparably better. And who, at a feast, will chide the servant that takes away the first course to make room for the second to be set on, that consists of far greater delicacies!

A sad heart does not become a living hope. Christ takes no more delight to dwell in a sad heart, than we in a dark house; therefore, let in the light which sheds its beams upon thee from the promise, or else thy sweet Saviour will be gone. We do not entertain our friends in a dark room, or sit by those who visit us mopish, lest they should think we are weary of their company. Christ brings such good news with Him, as may bespeak better welcome with thee than a disconsolate spirit.

Wouldst thou not have thy hope strong? Then keep thy conscience pure. Thou canst not defile one, without weakening the other. Living godly in this present world, and looking for the blessed hope laid up for us in the other, are both conjoined ([Titus 2:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Titus 2.13&t=DBY)). A soul wholly void of godliness, must needs be as destitute of all true hope; and the godly person that is loose and careless in his holy walking will soon find his hope languishing. All sin disposeth the soul that tampers with it, to trembling fears, and shakings of heart. God forbid, Christian, that death should find thee wanton and negligent in thy walking, that he should surprise thee lying in the puddle of some sin! Can a bird fly, when one of its wings is broken? Faith and a good conscience are hope's two wings; if, therefore, thou hast wounded thy conscience by any sin, renew thy repentance, that so thou mayest exercise faith for the pardon of it, and redeem thy hope, when the mortgage that is now upon it shall be taken off. If a Jew had pawned his bedclothes, God provided mercifully, that it should be restored before night; "For," says he, "that is his covering; wherein shall he sleep?" ([Ex. 22:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ex. 22.27&t=DBY)). Truly, hope is the saint's covering, wherein he wraps himself, when he lays his body down to sleep in the grave: "My flesh," says David, "shall rest in hope" ([Ps. 16:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ps. 16.9&t=DBY)). A sad going to the bed of grave he has, who has no hope of a resurrection to life.

Hope is the handkerchief that God puts into His people's hands, to wipe the tears from their eyes, which their present troubles, and long stay of expected mercies, draw from them ([Jer. 31:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jer. 31.16-17&t=DBY)): "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, says the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end."

"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" ([2 Thess. 3:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thess. 3.5&t=DBY)). It is a way you will never find, a work you will never be able to do of yourselves thus to wait patiently till Christ come, "the Lord," therefore, "direct your hearts" into it. Love Him, and you will wait for Him. So Jude 21: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life."

13 A BASKET OF FRAGMENTS

"The words of the wise are as goads." [Ecclesiastes 12:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ecclesiastes 12.11&t=DBY).

THE believer is to persevere in his Christian course to the end of his life; his work and his life must go off the stage together.

The fearful are in the forlorn of those who march to hell ([Rev. 21:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Rev. 21.8&t=DBY)).

O how uncomely a sight is it, a bold sinner, and a fearful saint!

Christ never lost a battle even when He lost His life.

He that has God's heart cannot want His arm.

This goodly fabric of heaven and earth has not been built, but as a stage whereon God would in time act what He decreed in heaven of old.

One Almighty is more than many mighties. All these mighty sins and devils make not any almighty sin, or an almighty devil.

A proud heart and a lofty mountain are never fruitful.

"Pray." But how? "Without ceasing."

"Rejoice." But when? "Evermore."

"Give thanks." For what? "In everything."

God will not have His kingdom, either in the heart or in the world, maintained by carnal policy.

When afflicted, love can allow thee to groan, but not to grumble.

Mercy should make us ashamed, wrath afraid to sin.

Whoever thou art, thou art base-born till born again.

Christ and Satan divide the whole world; Christ will bear no equal, and Satan no superior, and therefore hold in with both thou canst not.

Sin only sets Satan in the throne.

Sinners dying in their sins, cannot hope to have a better resurrection than they have a death.

Since man was turned out of paradise, he can do nothing without labour, except sin.

We must either lay self aside, or God will lay us aside.

Bernard used to say, when he heard any scandalous sin of a professor, *Hodie illi, cras mihi.* He fell today, I may stumble tomorrow.

A soul in meditation is on his way to prayer.

It is impossible for a naughty heart to think well of an afflicting God.

The great talkers of religion are oft the least doers.

Does thy heavenly Father keep so starved a house that the devil's scraps will go down with thee?

No truth but has some error next door.

No action so little, but we may in it do God or the devil some service, and therefore none too little for our care to be bestowed on.

It is not enough to have truth on our side, if we have not truth in our hearts.

Hypocrisy is a lie with a fair cover over it.

None sooner topple over into error, than such who have a dishonest heart with a nimble head. The richest soil, without culture, is most tainted with weeds.

Thou must live by thy faith, not another's. Labour to see truth with thy own eyes.

He that maintains any error from the Bible, bears false witness against God.

He that abandons the truth of God, renounceth the God of truth.

Error is short lived; "a lying tongue is but for a moment"; but truth's age runs parallel with God's eternity.

It is no matter what is the sign, though an angel, that hangs without, if the devil and sin dwell within.

Heaven is worth the having, though thou goest poor and ragged, yea, naked, thither.

The gospel, what is it, but God's heart in print.

The Christian's love to Christ takes fire at Christ's love to him. No such picklock to open the heart as love.

You never knew a man full of self-confidence and self-abasement together. The conscience cannot abound with a sense of sin, and the heart with self-conceit at the same time.

A temptation comes very forcibly when it runs with the tide of our own wills.

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him" ([Prov. 26:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 26.12&t=DBY)); of all fools the conceited fool is the worst. Pride makes a man incapable of receiving counsel.

Exercise thy faith, if thou meanest to preserve thy faith. We live by faith, and faith lives by exercise,

The devil is wily, thou hadst need be wary.

None long for heaven more than those that enjoy most of heaven.

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" ([Prov. 27:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Prov. 27.6&t=DBY)). God's wounds cure; sin's kisses kill.

Never think to find honey in the pot, when God writes poison on the cover.

Sin disturbs the inward peace of the soul and the outward peace of the world.

Thou knowest, sinner, already, the best of thy sinful pleasure, but not the worst of thy punishment.

If thou wilt play the mountebank, choose not the pulpit for thy stage.

The less conscience barks at present, the more it will bite when it shall be unmuzzled.

Either use the world as if thou usedst it not, or you will pray as if you prayed not.

The faster a man rides if he be in a wrong road, the farther he goes out of his way.

He that is impatient, and cannot wait on God for a mercy, will not easily submit to Him in a denial.

Man's words will not break thy bones.

Cease to pray and thou wilt begin to sin. Prayer is not only a means to prevail for mercy, but also to prevent sin.

Where God is on one side, you may be sure to find the devil on the other.

He that shows any kindness to a saint, is sure to have God for his paymaster.

The work of salvation cannot be done by the candle-light of a natural understanding, but by the sunlight of a gospel revelation.

God had Nero a closer prisoner than he had Paul.

Error is but a day younger than truth.

Christ passeth oft by palaces to visit the poor cottages. Pilate missed Christ on the bench, while the poor thief finds Him, and heaven with Him, on the cross.

Ignorance is the mother of persecution.

That book must be worth reading, that has God for the author.

We must come to good works by faith, and not to faith by good works.

It was a charge long ago laid upon Christianity, that it was better known in leaves of books than in the lives of Christians.

It is better to die honourably than live shamefully.

It is easier to bow at the name, than to stoop to the cross of Jesus Christ.

The head may be ripe, and the heart rotten.

Prayer is a great heart-easer.

The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins.