÷**The Christian Soldier, or   
Heaven Taken by Storm**

by Thomas Watson, 1669

A practical handbook on Christian living,   
showing the holy violence a Christian is   
to put forth in the pursuit after glory.

"The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and  
the violent take it by force." Mat 11:12

**CHOICE EXCERPTS**

**How do I mortify the flesh?**  
  
**The flesh** is a bosom traitor; it is like the Trojan horse  
within the walls, which does all the mischief. The flesh   
is a sly enemy—it kills by embracing. The embraces of   
the flesh are like the ivy embracing the oak; which sucks   
out the strength of it for its own leaves and berries. So the   
flesh by its soft embraces, sucks out of the heart all good.   
  
The pampering of the flesh, is the quenching of God's Spirit.   
The flesh chokes and stifles holy motions—the flesh sides with   
Satan. There is a party within us, which will not pray, which will   
not believe. The flesh inclines us more to believe a temptation   
than a promise. The flesh is so near to us, its counsels are more   
attractive. There is no chain of adamant which binds so tightly  
—as **the chain of lust**.  
  
In the best of saints, do what they can, sin will fasten its   
roots in them, and spring out sometimes with inordinate   
desires. There is always something which needs mortifying.   
"**Put to death**, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly   
nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and   
greed, which is idolatry." Col 3:5.  
  
**How do I mortify the flesh?**  
  
**1. Withdraw the fuel that may make lust burn.** Avoid   
all temptations. Take heed of that which nourishes sin.   
Those who pray that they may not be led into temptation  
—must not lead *themselves* into temptation.   
 **2. Fight against fleshly lusts with spiritual weapons**—faith and prayer. The best way to combat with sin is—upon   
our knees. Beg strength from Christ. Samson's strength lay in   
his *hair*; our strength lies in our *head—*Christ. This is a mystery   
to the major part of the world—who *gratify* the flesh rather   
than *mortify* it.

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**He wounded the old serpent three times!**  
  
What an infinite mercy it is, that God has blessed us   
with the **Scriptures!** The barbarous Indians have their   
golden mines—but not the Scriptures, which are 'more   
to be desired than much fine gold.'   
  
Our Savior bids us 'search the Scriptures'. We must not   
read these holy lines carelessly, as if they did not concern   
us, or run over them hastily—but peruse them with reverence   
and seriousness. The noble Bereans 'searched the Scriptures   
daily.' The Scripture is **the treasury of divine knowledge**;   
it is the rule and touchstone of truth; out of this well—we   
draw the water of life.   
  
Read the Word as **a book made by God Himself**. Other   
books may be written by holy men—but this book is inspired   
by the Holy Spirit. It is the library of the Holy Spirit!  
  
Read the Word as **the perfect rule of faith**; it contains all   
things essential to salvation. The Word teaches us how to please   
God; and how to order our lives in the world. It instructs us in   
all things that belong either to *prudence* or *piety*, and is 'able   
to make us wise unto salvation.'  
  
When you read the Word, look on it as a **soul-enriching   
treasury**. Search it as for 'hidden treasure!' In this Word   
are scattered many divine sayings—gather them up as so   
many jewels! This blessed book will enrich you—it fills your   
head with divine *knowledge,* and your heart with divine  *grace!* In this field, the Pearl of price is hidden! What are   
all the world's riches compared to these? Islands of spices,   
coasts of pearl, rocks of diamonds? These are but the riches  
which *reprobates* may have—but the Word gives us those   
riches which *angels* have!  
  
Look upon the Word as **a spiritual armory**, out of which   
you fetch all your weapons to fight against sin and Satan.   
  
Here are weapons to fight against SIN. The Word of God is   
*a holy sword*, which cuts asunder the lusts of the heart!   
When pride begins to lift up itself, the sword of the Spirit   
destroys this sin! When passion vents itself, the Word of   
God, like Hercules' club, beats down this angry fury! When   
lust boils, the Word of God cools that intemperate passion!   
  
Here are weapons to fight against SATAN. When the devil  
tempted Christ, **He wounded the old serpent three times**   
with the sword of the Spirit—"It is written!" Satan soon foils   
the Christian when he is unarmed, and without Scripture   
weapons.  
  
Look upon the Word as **a spiritual looking-glass** to dress   
yourselves by! It is a mirror for the blind—'The commands of   
the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes!' In other mirrors   
you may see your *faces*; in this mirror you may see your *hearts!*   
This mirror of the Word clearly represents Christ. He is . . .  
most precious;  
altogether lovely;  
a wonder of beauty;  
a paradise of delight!  
  
Look upon the Word as **a shop of spiritual antidotes and  
remedies**. If you find yourself dead in duty—here is a medicine.   
If you find your heart hard—the Word will soften and mollify it.   
If you are poisoned with sin—here is an herb to expel it.  
  
Look upon the Word as **a sovereign elixir to comfort you   
in distress**. It comforts you against all your sins, temptations,   
and afflictions. What are the *promises*—but divine cordials to   
revive fainting souls.

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**It makes men so filthy!**  
  
It is a part of our Christian profession—to fight   
under Christ's banner—against the world.   
  
The world is a flattering enemy. It shows its **golden   
apple**. It is given to some—as a snare. Take heed of   
being drowned in the world's luscious delights!  
  
It must be a strong brain that can bear heady wine.   
He had need have a great deal of wisdom and grace,  
who knows how to maintain a great estate. Riches   
often send up intoxicating fumes, which make men's   
heads giddy with pride. It is hard to climb up the *hill  
of God*—with too many *golden weights!*  
  
The world shows its *two breasts* of **pleasure** and **profit**  
—and many fall asleep with the breast in their mouth!  
  
The world never kisses us—except with an intention   
to betray us.   
  
The world is a silken halter.   
  
The world is no friend to grace; it chokes our love   
for heavenly things—the *earth* puts out the *fire*.   
  
Naturally we love the world. Too many are *wedded   
to their money—*they live together as man and wife.   
  
O let us take heed of being *entangled in this pleasing   
snare!* Many who have escaped *the rock of scandalous  
sins—*yet have *sunk in the world's golden quicksands!*   
  
The sin is not in **using** the world—but in **loving** it.   
"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If   
anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is   
not in him." 1Jn 2:15   
  
Believers are called out of the world. "They are not   
of the world, even as I am not of it." Joh 17:16.   
They are **in** the world—but not **of** it. A true saint is   
crucified in his affections, to the world, Gal 6:14.   
He is dead to the honors and pleasures of it. What   
delight does a dead man take in pictures or music?   
  
Jesus Christ gave Himself "to redeem us from this   
present evil world." Gal 1:4  
  
Living fish swim against the stream. We must swim   
against the world, else we shall be carried *down* the   
stream, and fall into the *dead sea* of hell!  
  
The world is DECEITFUL. Our Savior calls it, "The   
*deceitfulness* of riches." Mat 13:22. The world   
promises happiness—but gives weariness. It promises   
us Rachel—but gives us bleary-eyed Leah! The world   
promises to *satisfy* our desires—but only *increases*   
them. The world gives poisoned pills—but wraps   
them in sugar!  
  
The world is POLLUTING. "Religion that God our Father   
accepts as pure and faultless is this: . . . to keep oneself   
from being *polluted by the world*." It is called *filthy lucre*  
—because **it makes men so filthy!**  
  
Men will damn themselves to get the world. Ahab would   
have Naboth's vineyard, though he swam to it in blood.  
  
The world is PERISHING. "The world and its desires pass   
away." The world is like a *flower—*which withers while we   
are smelling it!

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**One of you is a devil!**  
  
"**Examine yourselves** to see whether you are in the faith;  
test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in  
you—unless, of course, you fail the test?" 2Co 13:5  
  
Self-examination is a *necessary*—but *difficult* work.  
  
Self-examination is the setting up a court in conscience and  
keeping a register there, that by strict scrutiny a man may  
know how things stand between God and his own soul. By   
a serious scrutiny of our hearts, we come to know to what   
prince we belong—whether to the Prince of *Peace*, or the   
prince of *darkness*.  
  
Self-searching is a **heart-anatomy**. As a surgeon, when he   
makes a dissection in the body, discovers the inward parts,   
the heart, liver, and arteries—just so, a Christian anatomizes   
himself.   
  
*Sentimentality* and *public opinion* are false rules to go by.   
We must judge the state of souls by the light of Scripture.  
  
Many have *foolish, presumptuous hopes.* They fancy their   
state to be good; and while they weigh themselves in the   
*balance of presumption*, they pass the test.   
  
Many take their salvation on *trust*. The foolish virgins thought   
they had oil in their lamps, the same as the wise. How confident   
are some of salvation—yet never examine their title to Heaven.  
  
Many rest in *the good opinions of others.* How vain is this!   
Alas, one may be *gold* and *pearl* in the eye of others—yet God   
may judge him to be reprobate silver! Others may think him a   
saint—and *God may write him down in His black book!* Judas   
was looked upon by the rest of the Apostles as a true believer  
—yet he was a traitor! "Then Jesus replied—Have I not chosen   
you, the Twelve? Yet **one of you is a devil!**" Joh 6:70  
  
Others can but see the outward behavior—but they cannot   
tell what evil is in the heart. Fair streams may run on the   
top of a river—but **vermin may lay at the bottom!**

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**We must either leap over them, or tread upon them!**  
  
"A man's enemies will be the members of his own household.   
Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not  
worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more  
than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take  
his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me." Mat 10:36-38   
  
Take heed of **the snare in your family!** It is one of the   
Devil's great subtleties—to hinder us from piety by our   
nearest relations—and to shoot us with our own rib!   
  
He tempted Adam by his wife. Who would have suspected   
the Devil there? He tempted Job by his wife, "Are you still   
holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" Job 2:9   
Thus would the Devil have cooled Job's love for God; but   
the shield of his faith quenched this fiery dart!  
  
Take heed of such tempters! **It is better to go to Heaven   
with their hatred—than to Hell with their love!** If our  
dearest friends and family lie in our way to Heaven—**we   
must either leap over them, or tread upon them!**

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**The rat gets into his belly and eats his entrails**  
  
Take heed of a slothful, lazy disposition. A slothful  
person would gladly have Heaven—but is loathe to   
take it by storm. Sloth is the soul's sleep. Many,  
instead of *working* out salvation, *sleep* away salvation!  
Such as will not labor, must be put at last to beg. They   
must beg, as Dives in hell—for one drop of water.   
  
**God never made Heaven as a hive for drones!**   
Sloth is a disease apt to grow upon men—shake it off!   
  
A sluggish ship is a prey to the pirate.   
A sluggish soul is a prey to Satan!   
  
When the crocodile sleeps with his mouth open—**the   
rat gets into his belly and eats his entrails**. Just   
so, while men are asleep in sloth—the Devil enters   
and devours them!  
  
**Our sleeping time is Satan's tempting time!**

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**Stunted in grace**  
  
It is a pitiful thing, to be contented with **feeble grace**.   
Weak grace may live in the heart—but is sickly, and   
does not flourish into lively acts. **Weak grace** will not   
withstand strong temptations, or carry us through great   
sufferings. **Little grace** will not do God much service.   
A tree which has but little sap—will not have much fruit.   
It may be said that some Christians are **stunted in grace**.   
Oh, labor to grow to further degrees of sanctity. The more   
grace—the more strength! "But **grow in the grace** and   
knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him   
be glory both now and forever! Amen." 2Pe 3:18

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**If you live after the flesh**  
  
"**If you live after the flesh**—you shall die! But if  
you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the  
body—you shall live!" Rom 8:13  
  
**Take heed of the flesh!** As good consult with the Devil,  
as with the flesh. The flesh is a bosom traitor. An enemy   
within the walls, is the worst enemy! The flesh cries out,   
"There is a lion in the way!" The flesh says as Judas, "Why   
all this waste?" "Why all this praying and wrestling? Why   
do you waste your strength? Why all this waste?"   
  
The flesh cries out for **ease**—it is loathe to put its neck   
under Christ's yoke. The flesh is for **pleasure**—it would   
rather be playing games—than running the heavenly race.   
  
Here is a description of fleshly pleasures, "You lie on beds   
inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on   
choice lambs and fattened calves. You strum away on your   
harps like David and improvise on musical instruments.   
You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions."   
Amo 6:4-6. These are the delights of the flesh.   
  
There was one who tried to please all of his five senses   
at once. He had a room richly decorated with beautiful   
pictures; he had the most delectable music; he had all   
the choice aromatics and perfumes; he had all the   
sumptuous candies of the confectioner; he was lodged   
in bed with a beautiful paramour. Thus he indulged the   
flesh, and swore that he would spend all his estate to   
live one week like this—though he were sure to be   
damned in hell the next day.   
  
"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and   
fine linen and lived in luxury every day. . . In hell, where   
he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far   
away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him,   
'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to   
dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue,   
because I am in agony in this fire!'" Luk 16:19, Luk 16:23-24  
  
  
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**They save one sin—and lose one soul!**  
  
Take heed of indulging any lust. Indulging in sin will   
spoil all effort for Heaven. **Sin enfeebles**; it is like the   
cutting of Samson's hair—then the strength departs.   
Sin is the soul's sickness. Sickness takes a man off his   
legs and so dispirits him, that he is unfit for any holy   
exercise. A sick man cannot run a race.   
  
Therefore lay the axe to the root! Let sin be hewn down!  
Do not only abstain from sin in the **act**—but let the **love**   
of sin be mortified, and let **every** sin be put to the sword!   
Many will leave all their sins but one. **They save one sin  
—and lose one soul!** One sin is a fetter! A man may lose   
the race as well by having one fetter on his leg, just as if   
he had many. I have read of a great monarch, who, fleeing   
from his enemy, threw away the crown of gold on his head  
—that he might run the faster. So, that sin which you wore   
as a crown of gold—throw it away that you may run the   
faster to the heavenly kingdom!  
  
  
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**All on fire for the world!**  
  
Take heed of too much pursuit after the world. The   
world cools holy affections. The *earth* puts out the *fire*.   
  
The world hindered the young man from following Christ,   
"he went away sorrowful!" Whereupon, says our Savior,   
"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"   
Luk 18:24. Demas' piety was buried in the earth,   
"Demas has forsaken me—having loved this present   
world." 2Ti 4:10  
  
The world so blinds men's **eyes**—that they do not see the   
narrow way to heaven! It so fetters their **feet**—that they   
do not run in the way of God's commandments.   
  
Mithridates, king of Pontus, being beaten by the Romans,   
and fearing he would not escape them—he caused a great   
deal of silver and gold to be scattered in the way, which   
while the Roman soldiers were busy gathering, he got   
away from them. Satan uses a similar strategy; knowing   
what tempting things riches are—he throws them as baits,   
in men's way, that while they are eagerly gathering these,   
he may hinder them in their pursuit of eternal happiness!  
  
It would hinder a man to climb up a steep rock, with   
heavy weights tied to his legs. Men's *golden weights*   
hinder them in climbing up this steep rock which leads   
to salvation!  
  
A man cannot seek both Heaven and earth at the same time.   
He cannot love both Christ and the world, 1Jn 2:15. He   
who is **all on fire for the world**—will be all **ice** for Heaven!   
Take heed of engaging your affections too far in these earthly   
things. Use the world as your **servant**—but do not follow it as   
your **master**.

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Though the sinner shall drink a **sea of wrath**—  
yet **he shall not drink one drop of injustice!**   
  
  
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**The glory of heaven!**  
  
If the mountains were gold; if every sand of the sea   
were a diamond; if the whole globe were a shining   
gem; it would all still be infinitely beneath **the glory   
of heaven!**   
  
1. In heaven, there shall be **freedom from sin**. Here   
on earth, sin keeps house with us; it is as natural to us   
to sin as to breathe. The soul that is most refined, and   
cleansed by grace, is not without some dregs of corruption.   
But a sinful thought shall not creep in to heaven. There   
is *beauty* which is not stained with lust, and *honor* which   
is not swelled with pride. "Nothing impure will ever enter   
it!" Rev 21:27   
  
2. In heaven, there shall be **freedom from the assaults   
of the red dragon**. It is sad to have Satan daily soliciting   
us by his temptations, and laboring to trick us into sin. But   
the old serpent is cast out of the heavenly Paradise!  
  
3. In heaven, there shall be **freedom from all afflictions**.   
Our lives now are interlined with troubles. "My life is consumed   
by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because   
of my affliction, and my bones grow weak." Psa 31:10. There   
are many things to occasion disquiet; sometimes *poverty* afflicts;   
sometimes *sickness* tortures; sometimes *unkindness* of friends   
breaks the heart. Our lives, like the seas, are full of tempests.   
But in the kingdom of Heaven, there is nothing to give grief.   
There, all is serene and calm; nothing within to trouble, or   
without to molest.  
  
4. The delights of the heavenly kingdom are **unmixed**. The   
comforts here below, are checkered. Honor may be stained   
with disgrace; joy interwoven with sorrow. Our skies are mixed   
with clouds. But the delicacies of heaven are pure as well as   
pleasant. There is honey, which has not one drop of gall. The   
crystal spring of joy has no settlings of sorrow at the bottom.   
The rose in that paradise, is without prickles; the sun in that   
horizon, is without eclipse.  
  
Heaven will make amends for all our labor and pains!

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**Then the Devil shoots him with his fiery darts!**  
  
"While everyone was **sleeping**, his enemy came and  
sowed weeds among the wheat." Mat 13:25  
  
While men are idle in the vineyard, they are a prey to every   
temptation. Satan sows most of his seeds of temptation in   
hearts which lie fallow. When he sees people unemployed,   
he will find work for them to do—he will stir them up to one   
sin or other. When Satan finds men in a drowsy condition,   
**their sleeping time is his tempting time!**   
  
By watching and praying, we prevent the Devil's design—we  
are so busy with salvation that we have no leisure to listen to   
temptation.  
  
When the bird is flying—it is safe; but when it sits still on the   
bough—**it is in danger of being shot!** When a Christian sits   
still and is inactive—**then the Devil shoots him with his   
fiery darts!**  
  
"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation!"  
Mat 26:41

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**A divine magnet!**  
  
"The Spirit helps us in our weakness." Rom 8:26  
  
The Spirit helps us in all the duties of piety. The promises   
encourage us—and the Spirit enables us. In all earthly races   
a man runs in his own strength; but in the race to Heaven   
we have the Spirit of God helping us! He not only gives us   
the crown, when we have finished running—but **He gives   
us legs to run!** He gives us quickening and assisting grace!   
  
The Spirit of God helping us, makes our work easy. If another   
helps us to carry a burden—it is less difficult. If the magnet   
draws the iron—it is not hard for the iron to move. If the   
Spirit of God, as **a divine magnet**—draws and moves the   
heart in obedience, then the work goes on with more ease.  
  
"He gives strength to the *weary* and increases the power of  
the *weak*. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men  
stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew  
their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will  
run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."   
Isa 40:29-31

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This E-sword module was formatted by wlue777 and original document is found at www.gracegems.org

÷**The Christian Soldier (choice excerpts) cont'd**

**A pleasant, easy way to Heaven**  
  
Someone asked Him, "Lord, are only a few people  
going to be saved?" He said to them, "**Make every  
effort** to enter through the narrow door, because  
many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be  
able to!" Luk 13:23-24  
  
Though Heaven is given us freely—yet we must take   
pains for it. Canaan was given Israel freely—but they   
had to fight with the Canaanites. It is not a *lazy wish*,   
or a *sleepy prayer*—which will bring us to Heaven.  
  
We have **a long race** from earth to Heaven—but a little   
time to run; it will soon be sunset. In a race there's not   
only a laying aside of all weights which hinder—but a   
putting forth of all the strength of the body; a straining   
every joint that men may press on with all swiftness to   
lay hold on the prize.  
  
Many have made themselves **unfit** to run this blessed   
race; they are drunk with the pleasures of the world.   
A drunken man is unfit to run a race.  
  
Others **neglect** to run this race all their life; and when   
sickness and death approach—now they will begin! A   
sick man is very unfit to *walk*, much less to *run* a race!   
I acknowledge that true repentance is never too late;   
but when a man can hardly move his hand, or lift up   
his eyes—that is a very unfit time to begin the race   
from earth to Heaven.  
  
The Lord has in his eternal decree joined the *end* and   
the *means* together—striving and entering; the race and  
the crown. And a man can no more think to come to   
Heaven without striving, than he can think to come to   
the end of his journey, who never sets a step in the way!  
Who expects a harvest without plowing and sowing?   
How can we expect the harvest of glory without labor?   
  
Though our salvation with respect to Christ is a *purchase*  
—yet with respect to us, it is a *conquest*.  
  
**We have a precious soul to save!** What pains do we take   
for the feeding and enriching of the body, the brutish part?   
O then what pains should we use for the saving of the soul?   
The body is but a ring of clay; the soul is the diamond. If   
Christ thought the soul was worth the shedding of His blood,   
well may we think it worth spending our sweat.  
  
**We have a heavenly kingdom to gain!** What pains are   
used for earthly crowns and empires; men will wade to the   
crown through blood! Heaven is a kingdom which should   
make us strive for it—even to blood. The hopes of a kingdom   
(says Basil) should carry a Christian cheerfully through all   
labors and sufferings.  
  
Some imagine that there is **a pleasant, easy way   
to Heaven**—an idle wish, a deathbed tear. But it is   
not so easy a thing as men imagine. There are . . .  
so many precepts to obey;  
so many promises to believe;  
so many rocks to avoid,   
so many sins to mortify;  
so many temptations to resist;  
so many graces to quicken—   
that it is a difficult matter to be saved.   
  
Alas, there is a great work to be done; the bias of the   
heart must be changed. Man by nature does not only   
lack grace—but hates it! He has an envenomed spirit  
against God, and is angry with converting grace!   
Is it easy for the *proud* heart to be made humble?   
Is it easy for the *earthly* heart to be made heavenly?   
Can this be done without effort? It is all *up hill* to   
Heaven, and it will make us sweat before we get to   
the top of the hill.  
  
Is salvation-work so easy? Can a man be saved by a   
faint wish? Can he leap out of the Devil's arms—into   
Abraham's bosom? Oh no! there must be striving.  
  
A Christian must charge through the whole army of his   
lusts, every one of which is stronger than Goliath! He has   
no time to drowse; he must be either praying or watching.  
  
Some think free grace will save them; but it must be in   
the use of means. "Watch and pray." Others say, the   
promises will bring them to Heaven; but the promises   
of the Word are not to be separated from the precepts.   
The *promise* tells us of a crown—but the *precept* says,   
"Run in such a way as to get the prize!" 1Co 9:24.   
The promises are made to encourage faith, not to nourish   
sloth. But others say, Christ has died for sinners; and so   
they leave Him to do all for them and they will do nothing.   
Our salvation cost Christ blood; it will cost us sweat. The   
boat may as well get to shore without rowing, as we can   
get to Heaven without effort.

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**Not whom he may *bite*—but *devour!***  
  
We read in Scripture of Satan's *snares* and *darts*;   
**he hurts more by his *snares* than by his *darts!***  
  
Satan opposes us both by *open violence*, and *secret   
treachery*.  **1. Satan opposes by *open violence***—so he is called   
*the Red Dragon*. He labors to storm the castle of the   
heart; he stirs up passion, lust, and revenge. These are   
called "fiery darts," Eph 6:16, because they often set   
the soul on fire. Satan in regard to his *fierceness*, is   
called a **lion**, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy   
the devil prowls around like a *roaring lion* looking for   
someone to **devour**!" 1Pe 5:8. **Not whom he   
may *bite*—but *devour!*** Yes, there is "a lion in the   
way," but we must resolve upon fighting.  
  
**2. Satan opposes by *secret treachery***—so he is   
called *the Old Serpent*. What he cannot do by *force*,  
he will endeavor to do by *fraud*. Satan has *several   
subtle devices in tempting:*  
  
**Satan suits his temptations to the temper of the   
individual.**Satan studies our dispositions, and lays   
suitable baits. He knew Achan's s covetous heart,   
and tempted him with a wedge of gold. He tempts   
the youthful man with lust.  
 **Satan tempts to sin gradually.**He steals into   
the heart by degrees. He is at first, more modest.   
He did not say to Eve at first, "Eat the apple!" No!   
but he goes more subtly to work. He puts forth a   
question, *"Has God said?* Surely Eve, you are mistaken;   
the bountiful God never intended to debar one of the   
best trees of the garden. *Has 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 God, and   
then she took of the fruit and ate. Oh, take heed of   
Satan's first motions to sin, which seem more modest.  **He is first a *fox*, and then a *lion.***  
  
**Satan tempts to evil in lawful things.**It was lawful   
for Noah to eat the fruit of the grape; but he took too   
much, and so sinned. *Excess* turns that which is good—  
into evil. Eating and drinking may turn to intemperance.   
Industry in one's calling, when excessive, becomes   
covetousness. Satan draws men to an immoderate love   
of the creature, and then makes them sin in that which   
they love—as Agrippina poisoned her husband Claudius,   
in that food which he loved most.  
  
**Satan puts men upon doing good out of evil ends.**   
If he cannot hurt them by *scandalous* actions—he will by   
*virtuous* actions. Thus he tempts some to espouse religion   
out of ulterior motives. He tempts others to give to charity,   
for applause, that others may see their good works.  
  
"Take up the shield of **faith**, with which you can extinguish   
all the flaming arrows of the evil one!" Eph 6:16. We   
must resist the devil by faith. Faith is a wise, intelligent   
grace. **Faith can see a hook under the bait!** Faith keeps   
the castle of the heart, so that it does not yield. Faith beats   
back the temptation. Faith holds the promise in one hand,   
and Christ in the other. The promise encourages faith, and   
Christ strengthens it; so faith beats the enemy out of the field!  
 **We overcome Satan upon our knees!** A Christian by prayer   
fetches in auxiliary forces from Heaven. In all temptations, go   
to God by **prayer**. "Lord, teach me to use every piece of the   
spiritual armor—how to hold the *shield*, how to wear the *helmet*,   
how to use the *sword* of the Spirit. Lord, strengthen me in the   
battle; let me rather die a conqueror—than be taken prisoner,   
and led captive by Satan!"   
  
Remember that Christ has given Satan his death-wound   
upon the cross. He has bruised the head of the old Serpent!   
He is a **chained** enemy, and a **conquered** enemy; therefore   
do not fear him. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you!"   
Jas 4:7. "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under   
your feet!" Rom 16:20

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**Suck out the sweetness of a truth**  
  
**Meditation** is a holy exercise of the mind; whereby we   
bring the truths of God to remembrance, and seriously   
*ponder* upon them and *apply* them to ourselves. It is a   
work which cannot be done in a crowd. A Christian must   
retire from the world, to have serious thinking upon God.   
It is not a few transient thoughts that are quickly gone;  
but a fixing and staying of the mind upon heavenly   
objects.   
  
As the bee sucks the honey from the flower, so by   
meditation we **suck out the sweetness of a truth**.   
It is not the receiving of food into the mouth, but the   
digesting of it which makes it nutritious. So it is not   
the receiving of the most excellent truths in the ear,   
which nourishes our souls—but the digesting of them   
by meditation.   
  
Satan does what he can to hinder this duty. He is an   
enemy of meditation. The devil does not care not how   
much we read—so long as we do not meditate on what   
we read. Reading begets *knowledge*—but meditation   
begets *devotion*.   
  
"Oh, how I *love* Your law! I *meditate* on it all  
day long." Psa 119:97  
  
Holy meditation **quickens the affections**. The reason   
why our affections are so cold to heavenly things is   
because we do not warm them at the fire of holy   
meditation. As the musing on *worldly* objects makes   
the fire of lust burn; the musing on *injuries* makes   
the fire of revenge burn; just so, meditating on the   
transcendent beauties of *Christ*, would make our   
love to Christ flame forth.  
  
Meditation has a **transforming** power in it. The reading   
of the Word may affect us—but the meditating upon it   
transforms us. Meditation stamps the impression of divine   
truths upon our hearts. By meditating on God's holiness,   
we grow holy. While by meditation we look upon God's   
purity, we are changed into His likeness.  
  
Meditation produces **reformation**. "I have *considered*   
my ways and have *turned* my steps to Your statutes."   
Psa 119:59. If men would spend but one quarter of   
an hour every day in contemplating heavenly objects,   
it would leave a mighty impression upon them!

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**The looking-glass of self-love**  
  
"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond  
cure. Who can understand it?" Jer 17:9.   
  
The heart is the greatest impostor.   
  
Little does a man know what secret atheism,   
pride, and lust is in his heart.  
  
As ignorance blinds, so self-love flatters.   
  
Every man is ready to think the best of himself.   
  
What Solomon says of love to our neighbor is most   
true of self-love; "it hides a multitude of sins." When   
a man looks upon himself in **the looking-glass of   
self-love**—his *virtues* appear greater than they are,   
and his *sins* less. Self-love makes one rather excuse   
what is amiss, than correct it.  
  
"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me  
and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is  
any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way  
everlasting." Psa 139:23-24

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**He came hewing and cutting down men's sins!**  
  
"Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is near!" Mat 3:2   
  
Hence learn, what kind of ministry is likely to do most good,   
namely, that which works upon the consciences of men. John   
the Baptist lifted up his voice like a trumpet, he preached the   
doctrine of repentance with power! **He came hewing and   
cutting down men's sins**, and afterwards preached Christ   
to them. First, he poured in the *vinegar of the law*, then the  *wine of the gospel.* This was that preaching which made men   
studiously seek after heaven. John did not so much preach to   
*please*—as to *profit*; he chose rather to reveal men's sins—than   
to show his own eloquence. The best mirror is not that which   
is most ornate, but that which shows the truest face. That   
preaching is to be preferred which makes the truest discovery   
of men's sins, and shows them their hearts!  
  
It is the greatest mercy, to have *a soul-searching ministry.*   
If one had a desperate wound, he would desire to have it   
probed to the bottom. Who would not be content to have   
their souls searched, so they may have them saved?  
  
John the Baptist was a burning and shining light; he did   
burn in his doctrine and shine in his life; and therefore   
men pressed into heaven. Joh 5:35

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**Error damns as well as vice**  
  
**Error** is the adultery of the mind; it stains the soul.   
**Error damns as well as vice.** A man may as well   
die by poison—as by pistol.  
  
**Truth** distinguishes a Christian from the world, as   
chastity distinguishes a virtuous woman from a harlot.   
We have not a richer jewel to trust God with than our  
souls; nor He a richer jewel to trust us with than His   
truths.

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**God's severity against sin**  
  
Meditate on **God's severity against sin**.   
  
Every arrow in God's quiver is shot against sin.   
  
Sin burned Sodom, and drowned the old world.   
  
Sin kindles hell.   
  
The meditation of this would frighten us out of   
our sins. There cannot be so much *sweetness* in   
sin—as there is *sting*. How dreadful is God's anger!   
"Who knows the power of His wrath?" All fire,   
compared with the fire of God's wrath—is but   
painted and imaginary fire.

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**Our words show what our heart is**  
  
"The good man brings good things out of the good  
stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil  
things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out  
of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks."   
Luk 6:45   
  
Our discourse demonstrates what our heart is. As the  
looking-glass shows what the face is—whether it be fair   
or foul; just so, **our words show what our heart is**.   
Vain discourse reveals a light, feathery heart. Gracious   
discourse reveals a gracious heart. The water of the   
conduit shows what the spring is.   
  
Holy discourse is very edifying. It enlightens the mind   
when it is ignorant—and settles it when it is wavering.   
A godly life adorns religion; godly discourse propagates it.  
  
Gracious discourse makes us resemble Christ. His words   
were perfumed with holiness: "grace was poured into   
His lips." Levi made Him a feast—and Christ feasted him   
with holy discourse. The more holy our discourse is, the   
more we are like Christ.  
  
God takes special notice of every good word we speak   
when we meet. "Then those who feared the Lord talked   
with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A   
scroll of remembrance was written in His presence   
concerning those who feared the Lord and honored   
His name." Mal 3:16.   
  
When men entertain bad discourse, Satan draws near,   
and makes one of the company; but when they have holy   
and gracious discourse, Jesus Christ draws near, and   
wherever He comes, He brings a blessing along with Him.   
  
"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned  
with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."   
Col 4:6

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**Go in a feather-bed to Hell**  
  
Slothful professors are settled on their lees. They make   
a lazy profession of piety—but use no diligence. They   
are like the lilies, which neither toil, nor do they spin.   
They have some faint wishes, "Oh that I had Heaven!"   
But a man may desire venison, and lack it—if he does   
not **hunt** for it. "The sluggard craves and gets nothing,   
but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied." Pro 13:4   
  
Men would be content to have the kingdom of Heaven;   
but they are loath to fight for it. They choose rather to  **go in a feather-bed to Hell**, than to be carried to   
Heaven in a "fiery chariot" of zeal and diligence. How   
many sleep away, and play away, their **time**—as if   
they were made merely to rest, or amuse themselves!  
  
Such as have accustomed themselves to an idle, lazy   
disposition, will find it hard to shake off, "I have taken   
off my robe—must I put it on again?" Son 5:3.   
The spouse had laid herself upon the bed of sloth, and   
though Christ knocked at the door, she was reluctant to   
rise and let Him in.

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**Enslaved**  
  
"**Enslaved** by all kinds of passions and pleasures."   
Tit 3:3  
  
Lust is an inordinate desire or impulse, provoking the   
soul to the gratifying of its carnal desires. Aristotle calls   
them 'brutish lusts' because when lusts are violent, they  
will not let reason or conscience be heard; but a man is   
carried brutishly to the satisfying of the flesh.  
  
Men are enslaved by their **drunken** lusts. Though death   
is in the cup, they will drink it up. One having almost lost   
his eye-sight, the physician told him there was no cure for   
him, unless he would leave off his excessive drinking.   
"Then," replied he, "farewell sweet light!"  
  
Men are enslaved by their **impure** lusts. Men are said to   
"burn in lusts," Rom 1:27. The apostle intimates that   
lust is a kind of fever. Feverish heats are not more deadly  
to the body, than lust is to the soul. O what folly is it—for   
a drop of pleasure to drink a sea of wrath!  
  
Men are enslaved by their **covetous** lusts. Covetousness   
is the soul's idolatry. Their God is made of gold, and to it   
they bow down. Those who bowed down on their knees to   
drink of the waters, were accounted unfit soldiers for Gideon.   
So are those unfit for Christ, who stoop immoderately to the   
care of earthly things. Those who are enslaved by the world,   
what have they but the wind? "What does he gain, since he   
toils for the wind?" Ecc 5:16. The world cannot enrich the   
soul, it cannot remove pain. If pangs of conscience come,   
the world can no more give comfort, than a crown of gold   
can cure a head-ache.

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**The dregs of old age!**  
  
Someone asked Him, "Lord, are only a few people  
going to be saved?" He said to them, "**Make every   
effort to enter** through the narrow door, because   
many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be   
able to." Luk 13:23-24  
  
Many put off seeking for heaven, until old age. When   
they are fit for no other work, then they will begin this   
taking heaven by storm.   
  
No man says, "I will learn my trade when I am old."  
  
It is imprudence for one to begin to work for Heaven,   
when he is past his time for labor. There is a night of   
sickness and death coming, and our Savior says, "The  
night comes, when no man can work." Surely a man   
can put forth but little effort for Heaven when old age,   
and old sins are upon him. Besides, how unworthy and   
insincere it is—to give the **Devil** the *flower of youth;*   
and **God the dregs of old age!**There is little hope of   
their salvation—who are never seek for Heaven, until   
they are on the borders of eternity.

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**Many seek heaven hypocritically**  
  
**Many seek heaven hypocritically**. They would have   
Heaven and their lusts too. But let not such seekers   
ever think to find happiness; let them not think they  
can lie in Delilah's lap—and go to Abraham's bosom   
when they die.

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**What makes men so loathe to die?**   
  
Because their conscience accuses them that   
they are not fit for heaven—so now death looks   
ghastly! They are afraid death will carry them   
as prisoners to hell!   
  
At the hour of death, sinners will awaken out   
of their lethargy—and fall into a frenzy of horror  
and despair!  
  
But the Christian who has been active in piety, and   
has spent his time in the service of God, can look   
death in the face with comfort. Death shall do him no   
hurt; it shall not be a destruction, but a deliverance!   
It shall purge out sin and perfect glory!

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**He who digs in a gold mine sweats**  
  
"Christ's love compels us!" 2Co 5:14  
  
Love to Christ made Paul labor more than all the other   
apostles. A man will only strive for that which he loves.   
Why are men so eager in their pursuit after gold—but   
because they love it? Love causes delight, and delight   
causes diligence. Love is like oil to the wheels. Get love   
for Christ and piety—and you will never be weary; you   
will count those the best hours which are spent with God.   
When a man has warmed himself by this fire, he is fittest   
for holy work.  
  
**He who digs in a gold mine sweats**—yet love for   
the gold makes his labor delightful.

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**It cost more to redeem us, than to make us**  
  
Great was the work of creation; but greater the work of   
redemption. **It cost more to redeem us, than to make   
us**. In the one, there was only the speaking a *Word*, Psa 148:5  
in the other, the shedding of *blood*, Heb 9:22. The   
creation was the work of God's *fingers*, Psa 8:3; the   
redemption was the work of his *arm*, Luk 1:5. In creation   
God gave us ourselves; in redemption He gives us Himself!