÷**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!