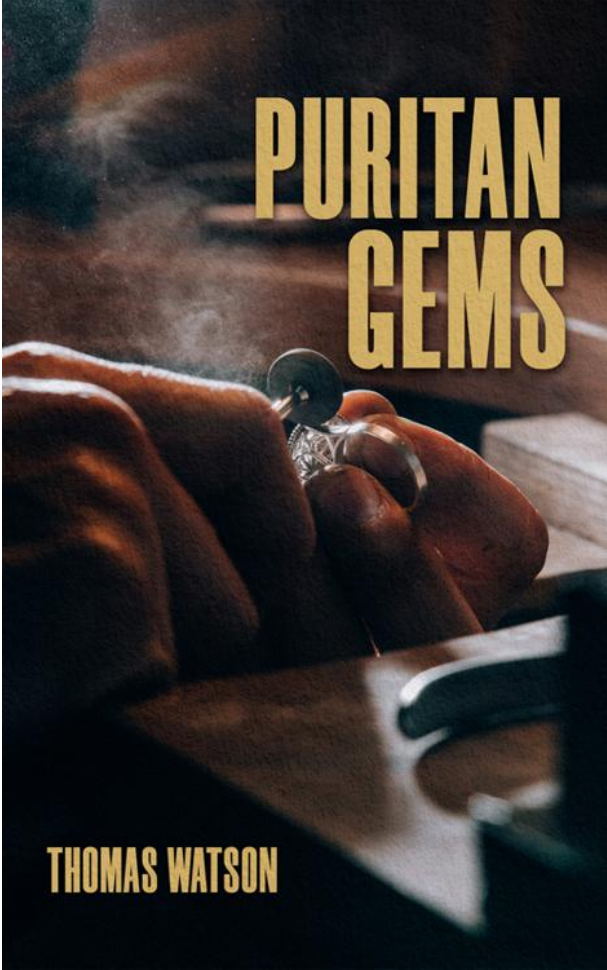




PURITAN GEMS

THOMAS WATSON



**PURITAN
GEMS**

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Puritan Gems
or, Wise and Holy Sayings of the Rev.
Thomas Watson, A.M.

by Thomas Watson

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It has been thought this *miniature Cabinet of jewels* would be an appropriate companion for the journey — the voyage — in the walk — in leisure moments, or on the couch of weakness, when some sentence might be found adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the reader, and be conducive to instruction and edification.

"The words of the wise are like goads, their *collected sayings* like firmly embedded nails — given by one Shepherd." Ecclesiastes 12:11

AFFLICTION

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 allow you to be tempted above that you 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 has never promised a charter of exemption from trouble — but he has promised to "be with us in trouble." Better be in a prison with God's presence and God's promises — than be on a throne without them.

A true Christian finds comfort in God's afflicting rod, "as sorrowful — yet always rejoicing." A Christian is like a bird that can sing in the dark days of winter, as well as in the lightsome months of summer.

God made for some of the martyrs, a prison as sweet as a garden of flowers — what then will Heaven be! If *afflicting* mercy is so great — what will be *crowning* mercy!

Christians mistake in supposing that, when God afflicts, he ceases to love. Affliction is his pruning-knife. He would rather have the branches of his vine bleed, than be unfruitful. He prunes us, that we may bring forth "the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

No vessel can be made of gold without fire. Just so, it is impossible that we can be made "vessels of honor," unless we are melted and refined in the furnace of affliction.

God's rod is a pencil to draw Christ's image more distinctly upon us. It is good there should be a symmetry between the Head and the members. To be part of Christ's mystical body, we must be like him, "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Hence it is good to be like Christ, though it be by sufferings.

The *loadstone of mercy* does not draw us so near to God as do the *CORDS OF AFFLICTION*.

Affliction is a bitter root — but it bears sweet fruit, "It yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

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

There is more evil in a drop of sin, than in a sea of affliction!

The more the diamond is cut — the more it sparkles. The heavier the cross is — the heavier is the saint's crown.

The vessels of mercy are seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in.

In all our crosses, God has a kindness for his people. As there was no night so dark but Israel had a pillar of fire to give light — so there is no condition so cloudy but there is the light of consolation. David sang "of goodness and mercy."

Affliction is a badge of adoption; it is God's seal by which he marks his own people. A holy man, suffering severely from some wounds, pointing to them, said, "These are the *jewels* with which God decks his children."

As the painter mixes with his dark shadows bright colors, so does God mingle the dark and bright colors — his crosses and his blessings — and so causes "all things to work together for good to those who love him."

God usually lets it be darkest before the morning star of light and cheerfulness appears.

God has a hand in affliction — but no hand in sin. *Afflictions are sharp arrows — but shot from the bow of a loving Father.*

God had one Son without sin — but no son without stripes. God puts his children to school at the cross, and there they learn best. God's children sing most sweetly when God hedges up their way with thorns, Hosea 2:15.

There are encouragements to suffer afflictions — but none to commit sin.

Fiery trials make golden Christians, Proverbs 17:3.

Although affliction has a sting to wound — it has wings to fly, Isaiah 35:10.

When the wind of affliction blows upon the believer, God is in the wind. When the fire of affliction kindles upon him, God is in the fire to sanctify, to support, to refine.

A true Christian carries Christ in his heart, and the cross on his shoulders.

The Apostle Paul had his *prison* songs. When the saints taste most of the wrath of man, they feel most of the love of God.

We think God cannot favor us except he has us in his lap. Yet he loves his people when he is giving them the bitter 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*.

Christ and his cross are never parted, for it is too much for the Christian to have two heavens — one here, and one hereafter.

In every cloud a child of God may see a *rainbow of mercy* shining; thus God chequers his providences, and mingles goodness with severity.

The goldsmith loves his gold when it is in the furnace, and so does God love his children when he places them in the crucible of affliction. It is only to separate the dross, not to consume the gold. "Whom he loves, he loves to the end."

The deluge brought the dove to the ark — the floods of sorrow make us hasten to Christ.

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

The nature of affliction is quite changed, when experienced by a godly man. It is to him, by Divine chemistry, turned into a blessing; it becomes a love-token, a badge of adoption, a preparatory to Heaven.

The cross, although it be of God's laying, is of our making. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him."

ASSURANCE

Assurance is a consequent of sanctification; sanctification is the seed — assurance is the flower. But, as a letter may be written, and yet not sealed — so grace may be written in the heart, yet the Spirit may not have applied the seal of assurance.

True assurance is built on a Scriptural basis, Isaiah 32:17. The seed of righteousness is sown in the soul, and this seed brings forth the harvest of assurance. But *presumption* is like a will without seal or witnesses; presumption lacks both the witness of the Word and the seal of the Spirit.

As the sun, reflecting its beams on a burning-glass, causes the glass to burn whatever is near it — so assurance, which is God shining on the soul, makes it burn in love to God.

Assurance drops sweetness into every earthly comfort; for while sin embitters, and is like drinking a cup filled with wormwood — assurance sweetens every morsel, and a dinner of herbs with the assurance of God's love is princely fare.

Assurance works out contentment, it rocks the heart quiet. It is the saint's *portion*, and Heaven is his *haven*.

When grace is engraved on the heart, wait awhile, and there will be the sunshine of assurance. Whom God kisses — he crowns! Assurance is the first fruits of Paradise — but it is often kept to sweeten the bitter cup of death.

Faith may be strongest, when assurance is weakest. The woman of Canaan had no assurance — but she had glorious faith.

Assurance should be an antidote to trouble. What though there is but little oil in the cruse — you are rich in assurance. How sweetly does the *bird* sing that knows not where to pick up the next crumb! And shall they be discontented who have God's Word to assure them of daily bread, and his love to assure them of Heaven?

Keep faith upon the wing; it is the grace in active exercise, which ascends to assurance.

Keep assurance by humility; pride estranges God from the soul. *The jewel of assurance, is best kept in the cabinet of an humble heart.*

Assurance and fear are different but not contrary; a child may have assurance of his father's love — yet be afraid of offending him. Who more fearful of sin, than the apostle Paul — yet who had stronger assurance? "Who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." Faith *procures* assurance, fear *preserves* it.

The godly fear — and sin not.

The wicked sin — and fear not!

Assurance establishes the Christian in troublous times; he is the likeliest to bear witness to the truth — who has the Spirit of God

bearing witness to his heart. Let there be much diligence, much prayer, much holy confidence — and these, like oil, will make the lamp of assurance shine steadily and brightly.

ANGELS

Much of God's curious workmanship shines in the angels. They are both beautiful and glorious, and as the strings in a lute make the harmony sweeter, and the several stars make the firmament brighter — so the society with angels will make the delight of Heaven the greater, and we shall not only see the angels with the eyes of our understanding — but converse with them forever.

The highest angels take care of the lowest saints. "Are they not all ministering spirits?"

CARE

We are bid to "commit our way unto the Lord." It is our work to *cast* care — and it is God's work to *take* care. Immoderate care is a spiritual canker which wastes and dispirits. We may sooner, by our worry, add a furlong to our grief, than a cubit to our comfort.

Worry, when it is either distrustful or distracting, is very dishonorable to God. It denies his providence, as if he sat in Heaven — and did not mind what became of things below.

CHEERFULNESS

Cheerfulness is like music to the soul: it excites to duty, it oils the wheels of affection; makes duties light, and religion rides swiftly on the wings of delight.

CHRIST

In Christ, there is not only a sufficiency, but a redundancy, it overflows the banks.

Christ is never sweet — until sin is felt to be bitter; nor is he rest — until man feels sin to be a burden.

Temptation to Christ, was like throwing a bur on a mirror, which will not stick. His life was purer than the sunbeams.

If we are *in* Christ while we live, we shall go *to* Christ when we die. Union is the ground of privilege; hence we must be *in* Christ, before we can be *with* Christ.

The fullness which is in Christ, is as light in the sun; it dwells there — it is never-failing. The riches of Deity are in him, and the communication of this blessed fullness, is that which satisfies the soul.

Jesus Christ is *an incomprehensible blessing*. 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.

Christ died for our benefit. He suffered — that we might reign. He hung on the cross — that we might sit on the throne. His crucifixion — is our coronation.

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

"When the arrow of a saint's prayer is put into the bow of Christ's intercession — it pierces the very heavens. It was love in God the Father to send Christ; and love in Christ, that he came to be incarnate. Christ's assuming our human nature, as it was a *master-piece of wisdom*, so it was a *monument of free grace*.

Christ is such a golden mine of wisdom, grace, and glory — which neither saints nor angels can ever fathom. There is both *fullness* and *sweetness*. Nor does a Christian only want necessities — in Christ he has unsearchable riches.

The full Godhead would be terrible to behold — we could not see it and live; but Jesus, clothing himself with humanity, makes the Divine nature beautiful and lovely to behold.

Christ sweetens all our comforts, and sanctifies all our crosses.

A beggar may behold the glory of a king, and not be happy; but Christ's glory shall be ours, "We shall be like Him."

Christ, who was veiled in the types, is clearly revealed in the looking-glass of the Scriptures.

Bread is satisfying; so Jesus Christ, the Bread of life, satisfies the soul. He satisfies the *mind* with confidence, the *heart* with affection, the *conscience* with peace.

Christ's Godhead gave both majesty and efficacy to his sufferings. Christ was the sacrifice, the priest, and the altar.

He was the *sacrifice*, as man.

He was the *priest*, being God-man.

He was the *altar*, being God.

We must look on *sin* with a penitent eye — and on *Christ* with a believing eye. We must *weep* for sin that slew Christ — but *hope* in the "Lamb slain" which takes away sin.

Christ mingles his sweet odors with the prayers of the saints; although they ascend from the believer weak and worthless — they proceed from Christ mighty and powerful.

CHRISTIANS

I have read of a holy man, who being tempted by some former companions to sin, he made this answer: I am so busy in reading a little book, which contains such deep mysteries, that I have resolved to read it all the days of my life. It has but three pages. In the first leaf, which is **red** — I am taught to meditate on the precious blood of Christ, which was shed for my sins. In the second leaf, which is *white* — I meditate on the pure and glorious joys of Heaven. In the third leaf, which is **black** — I contemplate the hideous and dreadful torments of Hell, prepared for the wicked for all eternity."

The saints are like letters engraved on Christ's heart, which cannot be erased out.

A child of God fears, because the "gate is *narrow*;" but hopes, because the gate is *open*.

Christians should be both diamonds and loadstones.

Diamonds, for the luster of their graces.

Loadstones, by attracting others to Christ.

A true Christian is a dwarf in humility — but a giant in strength to fulfill duty, to bear trial, and to endure temptation.

A Christian is as much afraid of a *painted holiness* — as he is of going to a *painted Heaven*.

The song of the Psalmist, when he longed for deliverance from the sorrows of life, was, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! I would flee away." The bird longs to be out of the cage, although it is adorned with pearl and ornamented with gold.

The world, to a godly man, is but a beautiful prison. Nor can he love his fetters, which detain him there, although they are made of gold. He sends his heart to Heaven, before his body is set free, "Setting your affections on things above."

The trees of righteousness, when they grow together, nourish each other in godliness; the communion of saints promotes fruitfulness. By Christian fellowship, knowledge is increased, faith is strengthened, and evidences are cleared. But when the trees which are planted in the garden of the Lord stand at a distance from each other, there is neither communion nor fruitfulness.

The godly in this life are like scattered pearls — they lie distant from each other, and are dispersed into several regions. But there is a day coming, when God will gather his saints "unto him" as one places his pearls on a string. "In the day that he makes up his jewels!"

A believer triumphs more in the imputed righteousness of Christ, than if he had Adam's righteousness in innocency, nay, than if he had the angels' righteousness, for now he has the righteousness of God! "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

CHURCH

God's Church is the apple of his eye. The eyelid of his providence daily covers and defends it.

Christ preserves his church as a *spark* in the ocean, as a *sheep* among wolves.

If the enemies destroy the church, it must be at a time when there is neither day nor night, for Christ keeps it day and night. Isaiah 37:3

If Christ is in the ship of his church, although the waves may threaten to overwhelm, there cannot be shipwreck. "I the Lord do keep it!"

CONSCIENCE

Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, his viceroy. The wicked do all they can to dethrone conscience and put it aside. Conscience is *God's echo*, and the sinner strives to silence its voice. Conscience is like a looking-glass: if it is soiled with thick dust, you cannot discover anything in it clearly; wipe away that dust, and how clearly seen is the least imperfection in the countenance! The time is coming, when God will wipe away the dust from a man's conscience, and he will see every one of his sins clearly represented!

Conscience is like a bee: use it well — and it will give honey; use it sinfully — and it will put forth a sting!

A troubled conscience is the first-fruit of Hell.

Conscience is God's preacher — a preacher who never flatters. Those who will not hear the *voice* of conscience, will be made to feel the *worm* of conscience.

CONTENTMENT

A contented heart is a temple where the praises of God sound forth — not a sepulcher wherein they are buried. The Spirit of grace works in such a heart like new wine, which, under the pressure of sorrow, will have a vent open for thankfulness.

The discontented spirit is ever murmuring; the contented mind is ever praising.

He who is contented with his condition, be it ever so humble, never diminishes his spiritual treasures — he carries a pardon sealed in his

heart.

A contented Christian does not choose his own cross — but is willing to take that which God chooses, and is content with the kind and the duration of the cross. He will wait for God's providence to remove it — but never force the door to escape from it.

A proud man is never contented; he thinks so highly of himself, that small blessings are disdained by him, and under small crosses he is impatient. The humble spirit is the contented spirit; if his cross is light, he reckons it in the inventory of his mercies; if it is heavy, he takes it on his knees, knowing "All things work together for his good." Where *humility* is the foundation — contentment will be the superstructure.

Contentment is a slip taken from the tree of life, and planted by the Spirit of God in the soul.

It pleased God to bring the Apostle Paul into most painful and trying conditions: hear him, "We are troubled on every side!" there was the sadness of his condition; "but not distressed," there was his contentment. "We are perplexed," there was his sadness; "but not in despair," there was his contentment. He could say, "In prisons more frequent, in deaths often." Yet he could add, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content."

Paul, in regard to his *faith*, was like a cedar — he could not be moved; but in his circumstances, he was like a reed, bending contentedly to every wind of Providence. When a gale of prosperity blew upon him, he could bend to that. When the tempest of trial raged, he could bend to that. "I know both how to be full, and how to be abased." A Christian, having cast anchor in Heaven, his heart never sinks; a *gracious* spirit is a *contented* spirit.

A contented Christian carries Heaven with him; for what is Heaven — but that sweet repose, and full confidence, that the soul shall have in God? In contentment there is the first-fruits of Heaven.

A contented Christian is like Noah in the ark: although tossed upon the waters, he reposed confidently in his God. The soul that is safe in the ark of contentment — sits quiet and sails above all the waves of trouble, and can even sing amid the deluge. The wheels of a chariot are an emblem of contentment: the wheels move, the axle stirs not. When change and motion are around us, a contented spirit remains firm in its center.

Wicked men are often disquieted in the *enjoyment* of all things. The Christian is often contented with the *lack* of all things.

Impatience is the daughter of *infidelity*. Contentment is an honeycomb which drops sweetness into every condition. Discontent is a leaven which sours every comfort. It embitters every mercy — it doubles every cross.

This holy contentment keeps the heart from fainting in the autumn — when the fruit and leaves are gone, there is still sap in the root. So when there comes an autumn in the history of the Christian, and the leaves of his earthly prosperity fall off — there is the sap of contentment in his heart. The contented heart is never out of heart.

Spiritual things satisfy: the more of Heaven there is in the soul, the less will earth content. The joys of God's Spirit are heart-filling and heart-cheering.

Never look for perfection of contentment — until there be perfection of grace.

ELECTION

We make our *election* sure, by making our *calling* sure: "God has chosen you to salvation through sanctification." By the streams, we come at last to the fountain. If we find the stream of sanctification running in our souls — we may by this come to the spring-head of election. I do not look up into the secret of God's purpose; yet I may know I am elected by the shining of sanctifying grace in my soul. Whoever he is that can find the Word of God transcribed and copied out into his heart, may undeniably conclude he is elected of God.

ETERNITY

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

O eternity! If all the body of the earth and sea were turned to sand, and all the air, up to the starry Heaven, were grains of sand, and a little bird should once in every thousand years take away but the tenth part of a grain of that vast heap, the period consumed in taking it all away would not comprise eternity.

What angel can span eternity?

Eternity makes Heaven to be Heaven. Eternity is the diamond in the ring of glory! The sunlight of glory shall rise on the soul, and never

set. There is peace without trouble, ease without pain, glory without end.

The wicked have a never-dying worm — but the godly a never-fading crown. Then how willing should we be to work for God and live to God!

Eternity is a circle that has neither beginning nor end. It is the highest link of the saint's happiness — a lamp ever burning, never wasting.

EXHORTATION

Use your talents for Christ's glory; spend and be spent for him. Let your *heart* study for Christ, your *hands* work for Christ, and your *tongue* speak for him. If Christ is our advocate in Heaven, we must be advocates for him on earth. Every one in his sphere must act vigorously for Christ.

Many would have Christ as their Savior — but not as their Prince. But all who will not have Jesus as their King — will not have his blood to save them. In all which Christ commands, be as the needle which points wherever the loadstone draws.

"Let a man examine himself." Hidden sins, if not searched out, defile the soul and mar our duties.

EXPERIENCE

There may be the *seed of grace* — where there is not the flower of joy. The earth may not yield a harvest of corn — yet may contain a mine of gold. A Christian may be, like vessels at sea, richly laden with jewels and spices — yet sail in the dark, and be tossed with storms.

When pearls became plentiful at home, they were little valued, and even slighted. The *aboundings of God's mercies* often cause them to be little prized; but he lessens them and withdraws them — to teach us their value. How valuable are the sunbeams of summer, after a long winter of gloom!

The favor of God is the *best jewel*; it can adorn a prison and unsting death.

"Light is sown for the righteous." The saints' comforts may be like seed long hidden under ground; but it is germinating, increasing, and will before long bring forth an abundant crop.

Holy thoughts are the *dove* we send out of the Ark of our souls — and they bring back the olive-branch of peace. Would believers have their spirits cheerful — let their thoughts be celestial. The higher the lark flies — the sweeter it sings. Just so, the higher a soul ascends in the contemplation of God — the sweeter joy it has.

He who enjoys much of God in this life, carries Heaven about him.

God brings us into the depths of *desertion*, that we may not be brought into the depths of *destruction*. God thus fits his people for that time when there shall be neither clouds nor sun setting, and when the Church shall never say more, "My beloved has withdrawn himself."

We shall never enjoy God fully, until we enjoy him eternally.

The Christian finds that to *serve* God, is to *enjoy* God. His precepts are not burdens — but privileges — not fetters — but ornaments; and thus "His yoke is easy and his burden is light."

When a man sees how he lives on the alms of free grace, he is made humble. *Humility is the sweet spice that is produced from poverty of spirit.*

The weak Christian has omnipotency to underprop him. "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

When a man has been sinning, his joy is gone, and the sting remains. But when he repents, the labor is gone — but the sweetness remains.

FAITH

Faith is a precious grace, because it lays hold on Christ, the one blessed object, and fetches in his fullness. The worth lies not in faith — but in Christ, on which it centers and terminates.

Faith is the vital artery of the soul. When we begin to believe, we begin to love. Faith grafts the soul into Christ, as the scion into the stock, and fetches all its nutriment from the blessed Vine.

Faith is a *heart-purifying* grace; it is a virgin grace, of a pure and heavenly nature. Faith in the soul, is as lightning in the air-it purifies; as fire under the metals — it refines. Faith does not only

justify — but it sanctifies. Faith and the *love of sin* can no more stand together than light and darkness.

Faith is a *heart-strengthening* grace. A believer is as Joseph, who, though the archers shot at him, "his bow abode in strength." Faith lays in suffering-strength, furnishes the soul with suffering-promises, gathers together suffering-graces, and propounds suffering-rewards.

Faith often lies hidden in the heart, and we see it not for lack of search; as fire lies hid in the embers, but, blow aside the ashes, and it is discernible.

That is precious faith which, like the star, shines brightest in the darkest night. 'Tis good that our graces should be brought to a trial; thus we have the comfort, and the Gospel the honor.

Faith shows the believer better things than the world can show: it gives a sight of Christ and glory; it gives a prospect of Heaven. As the mariner, in a dark night, climbs to the top of the mast, and cries out, "I see a star!" so faith climbs up above sense and reason into Heaven, and sees Christ, that bright Morning Star.

As the bee gathers the sweetest honey from the most bitter herbs, so faith gathers the sweetest consolations from the garden of Gethsemane and the hill of Calvary; for they show God reconciled, and sin pardoned.

Faith knows there are no impossibilities with God, and will trust his heart, when it cannot trace his hand.

Faith fetches all from Christ — and gives all the glory to Christ; hence, God has singled out this grace to be the condition of the covenant, "He who believes shall be saved."

Faith consecrates and purifies; it makes the heart a temple, over the portal of which is the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." The *jewel of faith* is always placed in the *cabinet of a pure conscience*.

Faith is seated in the understanding, as well as in the will; it has an *eye* to see Christ, as well as a *wing* to fly to Christ.

Faith begins in weakness — it smokes with desires — but does not flame with comfort; it is at first small as a grain of seed — but when real, it grows to a tree — lofty as the palm — wide-spreading as the cedar.

Faith makes Christ's sacrifice, ours. It is not gold in the mine that enriches — but gold in the *hand*. Faith is the hand that receives Christ's golden merits. Without faith, Christ himself will not avail us.

Love takes possession of Heaven — but faith gives a title to it. *Love is the crowning grace in Heaven — but faith is the conquering grace on earth.*

A weak faith may lay hold on a strong Christ. The promise does not say, he who has a great faith which can move mountains — stop the mouth of lions, shall be saved; "but whoever believes" (be his faith ever so small) "shall be saved."

A reed is but a reed, especially when bruised. Yet the promise is made to it, "A bruised reed will he not break." A weak faith may be fruitful; weak Christians may have strong affections, and the weakest believer is a member of Christ, as well as the strongest. Christ will cast off *fruitless* members — but not *weak* members.

Faith is not a plant of nature's garden — it is a "fruit of the Spirit."

Faith is the Queen of the Graces.

It is the condition of the gospel, "Your faith has saved you," — not your tears. "The soul shall live by faith." Unbelievers, though they breathe — yet lack life.

Faith is a *mother-grace*; it excites and invigorates all the graces: not a grace stirs, until faith sets it to work. Faith induces *repentance*. Faith sets *hope* to work; first we believe the promise, then we hope for it. Faith sets *love* to work, "Faith which works by love." Who can believe in the infinite merits of Christ — and his heart not ascend in the fiery chariot of love? Faith is a sheet-anchor we cast into the sea of God's mercy, and by it we are kept from sinking in despair!

Faith in the Mediator, brings more glory to God than martyrdom.

Faith and Hope are two sisters: they bear a resemblance to each other — yet differ thus: Faith looks at the *certainty* of the promise, Hope at the *excellency* of the promise.

Faith puts upon the soul the embroidered robe of Christ's righteousness, in which it shines brighter than the angels.

Faith is the *key* that unlocks the cabinet of God's promises, and empties out their treasures into the soul.

Faith overcomes all the *allurements* of the world, all the *riches* of the world, and all the *delights* of the world; and it does this by showing the soul "the land that is afar off;" it carries the believer to the Mount of Transfiguration, and confidently assures of "a better country" — "a land that flows with milk and honey."

Faith is a living principle, and the life of a saint is nothing else but a life of faith. His *prayer* is the breathing of faith, his *obedience* is the

result of faith, his *life* is a life of faith; he dies in faith , "I know whom I have believed."

The torchlight of faith shall be kept burning, notwithstanding the *winds of temptation* shall continue blowing.

THE FEAR OF GOD

The fear of God is a leading grace — it is the first seed God sows in the heart. When a Christian can say little of faith, and perhaps nothing of assurance — yet he dares not deny — but he fears God. God is so great — that he is afraid of displeasing him; and so good — that he is afraid of losing him.

The fear of the Christian is not servile — but filial. There is a great difference between *fearing* God, and being *afraid* of God. The godly fear God, as a dutiful and loving son fears his *father* — but the wicked are afraid of him, as a criminal is of his *judge*.

Fear and love are best in conjunction. Love is the sails to speed the soul's motion; and fear is the ballast to keep it steady in religion.

The fear of God is mingled with faith, "By faith Noah moved with fear." Faith keeps the heart cheerful — fear keeps the heart serene. Faith keeps the heart from despair — fear keeps it from presumption.

The fear of God is mingled with prudence. He who fears God has the *serpent's eye* in the *dove's head* — he foresees and avoids the rocks which others are lost upon. Although Divine fear does not

make a Christian cowardly, it makes him *cautious*. "A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself."

The fear of God is a Christian's safety; nothing can in reality hurt him. Plunder him of his money — he carries about him a treasure of which he cannot be despoiled. "The fear of the Lord is his treasure." Cast him into bonds — yet he is free. Kill his body — he shall rise again. He who has on the breastplate of God's fear, may be shot at — but cannot be shot through.

The fear of God is mingled with *hope*. "The eyes of the Lord are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope in his mercy." Fear is to hope, as oil is to the lamp — it keeps it burning. *The more we fear God's justice — the more we may hope in his mercy.*

Faith stands sentinel in the soul, and is ever on the watch-tower; fear causes circumspection. He who walks in fear, treads warily. Faith induces prayer, and prayer engages the help of Heaven.

The fear of God is a great purifier, "The fear of the Lord is pure." In its own nature it is pure; in its operation it is effective. The heart is the "temple of God;" and holy fear sweeps and purifies this temple, that it be not denied.

The fear of God promotes spiritual joy; it is the morning star which ushers in the sunlight of comfort. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, God mingles joy with fear, that fear may not be slavish.

The fear of God is an *antidote against apostasy*, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." I will so love them, that I will not depart from them — and they shall so fear me, that they will not depart from me.

The fear of God induces *obedience*. Luther said, "I would rather obey God, than work miracles." 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."

The fear of God makes a little to be sweet, "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord." It is because that little is sweetened with God's love, that little is a pledge of more. That little oil in the cruse, is but pledge of that joy and bliss which the soul shall have in Heaven. The crumbs which fell to the lot of Lazarus, were sweeter than the banquet was to the rich man. The handful of meal, with God's blessing, is better than all *unsanctified riches*.

Sincere love and holy fear go hand in hand; fear springs from love lest God's favor should be lost by sin.

GRACE, AND THE GRACES OF THE SPIRIT

Grace is the work of the Spirit; comfort is the seal of the Spirit. The *work* of the Spirit, goes before the *seal*.

The *graces* of the Spirit are compared to *water*, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit on your seed, and my blessing on your offspring."

The *comforts* of the Spirit are compared to *oil*, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, to give the oil of joy for mourning."

First God pours in the water of the Spirit, and then comes the oil of gladness; hereby we shall know whether our comforts are true and genuine. Some talk of the comforting Spirit, who never had the *sanctifying* Spirit; they boast of *assurance* — but never had *grace*. God's Spirit will never set seal to a blank. The heart must first be an epistle written with the finger of the Holy Spirit — and then it is sealed with the Spirit of promise.

Saving grace is the infusion of new and holy principles into the heart, whereby it is changed from what it was, and is made after God's heart. Grace infuses . . .

light into the understanding,
tenderness into the conscience,
consent into the will,
harmony into the affections!

Yes, grace is like leaven, pervading the whole man, until all is leavened.

Grace satisfies; other riches cannot, "He who loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver — this is also vanity." Riches can no more fill the heart, than a triangle can fill a circle; but grace fills up every crevice.

Grace is a string of pearls, with which the Church (Christ's Bride) is adorned.

The heart inlaid and enameled with grace, is like the "king's daughter, all glorious within." A gracious soul is the image of God, curiously drawn with the pencil of the Holy Spirit. A heart beautified with grace is God's lesser Heaven. "I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit."

Grace is the flower of the soul, which Christ delights to savor. Grace is to the soul, what . . .
the eye is to the body,
the sun to the world,
the diamond to the ring.

A soul decked with grace is as the dove, covered with silver wings and golden feathers.

Grace makes the heart a spiritual temple, which has this inscription on it, "*Holiness unto the Lord!*"

Grace gives us conformity to Christ — and communion with Christ, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." A man full of grace, has Christ in his heart and the world under his feet. Grace *humbles* — yet *elevates*.

Grace is aromatic; it embalms the names of the pious. A Christian, when he dies, carries a good conscience with him, and leaves a good name behind him.

All the graces display themselves in their beauty. Hope is the "helmet," meekness is the "the ornament," love is the "bond of perfectness."

The believers' graces are . . .
weapons to defend them,
wings to elevate them,
jewels to enrich them,
spices to perfume them,
stars to adorn them,
cordials to revive them, and
evidences for Heaven when death is near.

Grace is Christ's portrait drawn on the soul.

A soul beautified with grace is like the firmament, bespangled with brilliant stars.

Grace is the rich embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Spirit; it is the sacred unction; it is a distinguishing blessing. Christ gave Judas his purse, not his Spirit — grace being a seal of love and an earnest of glory.

Grace does not lie in the heart like a stone in the earth — but as seed which will spring up, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full-grown corn in the ear."

The more we grow in grace, the more we shall flourish in glory. Though every vessel of glory shall be full — yet some vessels hold more than others. He whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities. If any shall follow the Lamb in whiter and larger robes of glory than others, they shall be such as have shone most in grace here.

When grace flourishes — sin cannot thrive.

Grace is the beauty of holiness, Psalm 110:3.

Grace changes the language of the Christian, and makes it spiritual. The body is the temple of God; the tongue is the organ of this temple. "The tongue of the just is as choice silver." He drops silver sentences, enriching others with knowledge. "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things." "Their mouth is a well-spring of wisdom." Is a man known to what country he belongs, by his language, so he who belongs to the Jerusalem above speaks the language of Canaan.

God's children have various degrees of grace. Some are little children, who only feed upon the milk of the gospel. Others are young men grown to maturity. Others are fathers who are ready to take their degree in glory. Each have the vitality of godliness.

The Scriptures speak both of the cedar and of the bruised reed: each is a plant of God's creation — each of his care; so the weakest plant in God's garden of the Church is equally regarded by him with the strongest. God can read the work of his Spirit on the soul which has received the dimmest impression.

Reason makes us men; grace makes us saints.

The river of grace can never be dried up, for the Spirit of God is the spring which feeds it.

God makes grace flourish most in the fall of the leaf. Psalm 92:14.

GOD

Those excellencies which lie scattered in the *creature* — are all united and centered in God, as the beams are in the sun, and the drops are in the ocean.

When God says to the soul, "I am yours," it is enough — he cannot say more! He will be his people's God as long as he is God.

The creature is but a broken reed; God is the Rock of Ages.

Glory is essential to the Godhead, as light is to the sun. Glory is the sparkling of the Deity.

The glory of God must be a silver thread, to run through all our actions.

God cannot be God without his glory; this glory can receive no addition, for it is infinite.

There is in God all that may draw forth both wonder and delight. There is in him, a constellation of all beauties. He is the original and spring-head of being, who sheds a glory on the creature. We admire God in his *attributes*, which are the glittering beams by which the divine nature shines forth. We admire him in the *promises*, which are the charter of free grace, and the spiritual cabinet where the pearl of great price is hid. We admire God in the noble instances of his power and wisdom, such as none but a God could effect.

Oh! how does man shrink into nothing — when Infinite Majesty shines forth in his glory!

God being an infinite fullness — there is no fear of lack for any of the heirs of Heaven.

Here we see some beams of God's glory. We see him in the looking-glass of creation, and his image shines in the saints. But who can search out his *essential* glory? Let us adore Him — where we cannot fathom Him!

In Heaven we shall see God clearly, but not fully. He will communicate himself to us according to our measure — but not according to the infinity of his nature.

God's power is of equal extent with his will. God can, with a word, unpin the wheels of creation. God commands, and all creatures in earth and Heaven obey him. To contest with him, is as if the thorns should set themselves in battle-array against the fire, or as if an infant should challenge an archangel. God's power is never spent or wasted. "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint or grow weary!" Isaiah 40:28

God's power makes him mighty; his holiness makes him glorious. *Holiness is the most sparkling jewel of Jehovah's diadem.* God is holy, efficiently; holiness began with him who is "the Ancient of days." He made the angels holy, he infused holiness into the human nature of Christ, and all the holiness of his saints is but a crystal stream, from Him, the fountain.

We borrow all our holiness from God. As the lights of the sanctuary were lighted from the middle lamp, so all the holiness of believers is lighted from Heaven: "I am the Lord who sanctifies you."

Conceive of God in Christ, we cannot see him any other way, as we cannot see the sun in the circle — but in the beams. The Godhead dwells in Christ's human nature: "for in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Through the bright mirror of his own essence, God has a full and perfect knowledge of all things. The world is to God, as a bee-hive constructed of glass, where you see the working of all within.

All things are unveiled to the eye of Jehovah: "You, O God, see me."

There is a holiness of similitude, and that we must aspire after, and thus have some analogy with God. We should be as like him in

holiness, as the creature can resemble God.

God is called "the strength of Israel;" it is in his strength, that we stand, and not in our own. The child is safest in its father's arms; a little pinnacle tied fast to a rock is safe; so are believers when fastened to the Rock of ages. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

There is majesty in God's name *Jehovah*, it imports his absolute, eternal, and independent being. There is majesty in God's *looks*; Job had but a glimpse of God, and he was overwhelmed with amazement (Job 42:5). There is majesty in God's *words*, as when he spoke from Sinai. There is majesty in God's *attributes*, which are the indications of the Divine essence. There is majesty in God's *works* — every creature sets forth his power and speaks his praise.

God's power makes him mighty, his mercy makes him lovely — but his holiness makes him glorious. "Glorious in holiness."

If God IS our portion, all our estate consists in jewels, which can never fade, never waste, and never be lost. "God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever!"

God is to be loved more than his mercies. Many love their deliverance, more than their deliverer.

HEAVEN

Meditation on Heaven, is a pillar of support under all our sufferings.

One hour in Heaven will make us forget all our sorrows. As the sun dries up the water, so one beam of God's glorious face will dry up all our tears.

Heaven will make amends for all!

The saints shall receive as much glory as human nature, when glorified, can receive. But, although Christ conveys his image to his people, he does not convey his essence. The sun shining upon a glass leaves the impress of its beauty there — but the glass is not the sunbeam; so Christ conveys only his likeness, not his essence.

There will be no sorrow in Heaven; one smile from Christ will eradicate all tears. Sorrow is a cloud gathered in the heart upon the apprehension of some evil, and weeping is the cloud of grief dropping into rain; but in Heaven the Sun of righteousness shall shine so bright, that there shall be neither cloud nor rain.

"There remains a *rest* for the people of God;" not but that there will be activity in Heaven, for spirits cannot be idle — but it shall be activity without lassitude or weariness. It shall be labor full of ease, activity full of rest.

Heaven is the highest link of the saint's happiness. The lamp of glory will be ever burning, never wasting. As there is no intermission in the joys of Heaven, so there shall be no expiration. When God has once planted his saints in paradise, he will never transplant them, "they shall be forever with the Lord."

What if all the dust of the earth were turned to silver; what if every stone were a wedge of gold; what if every flower were a ruby, every blade of grass a pearl, every grain of sand a diamond — yet what is all this, compared to Heaven? It is as impossible for any man to

comprehend glory, as to "measure the heavens with a span," or drain the mighty ocean.

As the sunshine of blessedness is without clouds, so it never sets.

The sea is not so full of water as the soul of a glorified saint is full of joy. There can be no sorrow in Heaven, as there can be no joy in Hell.

The glory of Heaven will be *seasonable*. The seasonableness of a mercy adds to its beauty and sweetness: it is like "apples of gold in pictures of silver." Heaven is granted to the saints, when the conflicts with sin and sorrow are ended.

Although Heaven be given us freely — yet we must strive for it; our work is great, our Master is urgent, our time is short; we must be earnest as well as diligent. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."

Is there a kingdom of glory coming? Then see how happy are God's saints at their death! They go to a kingdom! They see God's face, which shines ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian glory! They have in the kingdom of Heaven, the quintessence of all delights! They have the water of life, as clear as crystal! They feed not on the dew of Hermon — but on the manna of angels. In that kingdom the saints are crowned with perfection! The desires of the glorified souls are infinitely satisfied! There is nothing absent they could wish might be enjoyed! There is nothing present that they could wish might be removed. No saint wishes to return from that land of Beulah! They would not leave the fatness and sweetness of the olive tree, to embrace the bramble. What are golden treasures, compared to the gold that never perishes in the kingdom of Heaven? There is glory in its highest elevation. In Heaven, there is

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knowledge without ignorance,
holiness without sin,
beauty without blemish,
strength without weakness,
light without darkness,
riches without poverty,
ease without pain,
liberty without restraint,
rest without labor,
joy without sorrow,
love without hatred,
plenty without excess,
honor without disgrace,
health without sickness,
peace without end,
contentment without cessation!

Oh, the happiness of those who die to the Lord!

If God says to us, "You are mine" — then he will take us up to himself at death. Death dissolves the union between the body and the soul — but perfects the union between God and the soul. This is the emphasis of Heaven's glory, to be with God. "Lead me, Lord, to that glory," said a holy man, "a glimpse whereof I have seen as in a glass, darkly."

HELL

Hell is the epitome of misery.

In the torments of Hell there is no year of jubilee. Men shall seek death, and shall not find it.

HOLINESS

Holiness consists in conformity to God. Holiness is the sparkling of the Divine nature. What makes the seraphim angels of light — but their holiness? Holy men shall be "equal with the angels."

As the diamond is to the ring — so is holiness to the soul. Those who oppose it, cannot but admire it.

Holiness leads to Heaven — it is the King's highway to Heaven. "A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness." Holiness is glory militant — and happiness holiness triumphant.

Be among the spices, and you will smell of them. Association induces assimilation. Communion of saints, promotes the holiness of saints.

Holiness is the beauty of the soul; it makes us like God and angels. As the sun is to the world — so is holiness to the soul.

The foundation of piety is on the heart; yet its beautiful frontispiece appears in the conversation. An upright Christian is like Solomon's temple — gold within and without. Piety is like leaven, which amalgamates and mingles itself with the whole man.

Walk closely with God every day. Live as under the continual inspection of God's omniscient eye — live holily. Peace and purity

must walk together. The way to preserve our peace is to preserve our integrity. Turn your closets into temples.

Search the Scriptures: the two Testaments are the two lips by which God speaks to his people, "Great peace have those who love Your law."

Holiness is God's stamp and impress; he will not own any who are without it. Holiness fits for communion with God. The holy mind enjoys the presence of God, and when God sees his likeness there, he gives his love.

To be learned and ungodly, is like Satan transformed into an angel of light.

To be beautiful and ungodly, is like a splendid picture hung up in an infected room.

Only godliness can ennoble, beautify, and adorn the man, and command the admiration of angels and of God.

Holiness is our spiritual beauty. Godliness is to the soul, as the light is to the world, to illustrate and to adorn it. Man is eminent before God, not for his greatness — but for his holiness. Hence a godly man walks with God, "Our fellowship is with the Father" — this is dignified elevation. A dwarf cannot walk among the stars, nor can a dwarfish soul have communion with Heaven.

What is the beauty of the angels, but their purity? Their distinguished title is, "The Holy Angels;" and a soul furnished with godliness is damasked with beauty, and is enameled with purity. This is "the clothing of wrought gold" with which the King's daughter (the

Church) is attired, and which makes her resemble "the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."

Purity of heart gives forth, although faintly, some idea and representation of God. There is no likeness to God will prove so blissful, as our being like him in purity. God loves the pure in heart. Love is founded on likeness.

Holiness is glory in the seed — and *glory* is holiness in the flower.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The garden has not more need of rain to cause its fruit to flow out, than we of the Spirit. To make our graces flourish, God's Spirit must both infuse grace and excite it. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

The Holy Spirit makes the heart a *temple* for pureness, and a *paradise* for pleasantness.

HOPE

Hope is a grace planted in the heart by the Spirit of God, whereby a Christian is quickened to the expectation of those things which are held forth in the promises, "But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently." Romans 8:25

There is a close affinity between faith and hope — but yet they differ. Hope looks at the *excellency* of the promise; faith looks to the *certainty* of the promise. Hope reads over the terms of the promise; faith looks at the seal of the promise. Faith believes; hope waits. Faith shows the Christian the land of promise; hope sails there with patience. Faith strengthens hope, and hope comforts faith. Faith is the cable, and hope the anchor. Both these help to keep the soul steady, that it does not dash upon rocks or sink in the quicksands.

True hope is quickening: it is called "a living hope." Hope becomes a spur to duty, and a whetstone to industry. Divine hope is as winds to the sails, as wheels to the chariot. It makes the Christian active in religion, "He runs the ways of God's commandments." Hope wrestles with difficulties — it despises dangers — it marches in the very face of death!

HUMILITY

Grace shines brightest through the veil of humility. A fit emblem of humility is the violet — it hangs its head low — but is known by its sweet scent.

When the silkworm weaves her intricate work, she hides herself under the silk, and is not seen. Just so, when we have done our best, we must be hidden ones, and transfer all the glory to God.

LIFE

Life is the porch of eternity. Here the believer dresses himself, that he may be fitted to enter in with the Bridegroom. It is to a child of God, a season of grace, the seed-time of eternity. The life of a *believer* is as a lamp — he gains good, and does good. The life of a *sinner* runs out as sand, utterly worthless. The life of the one is as a figure sculptured in marble; that of the other, as letters written in dust.

Life is the day for labor. Death is the sleeping-time for the body. Life is the working-time. A Christian has no time to lie fallow, "Work while it is called today." There is ever some work to do — either some sin to mortify, or some grace to exercise. "The night comes, when no man can work."

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper is the soul's festival day; it flies to the ordinance on the wings of delight, like a dove to the windows.

This ordinance, when partaken of in faith, has glorious effects on the hearts of God's children. It . . .

quickens their affections,
strengthens their faith,
mortifies their sin,
revives their hopes,
increases their joy, and
gives a rich foretaste of Heaven!

The Lord's Supper is the most spiritual ordinance ever instituted — here we have to do more immediately with Christ. In prayer we draw near through Christ — but in this ordinance we become one with him. In the Word preached we *hear* of Christ; in the Supper we *feed* on him.

This ordinance will be no further of use than it is blessed to us; then let believers pray that the partaking of it may not only be a sign to represent — but a seal to confirm, and an instrument to convey, all the blessings of Christ to the souls of his people.

The end of the Sacrament is to keep up the memory of our Lord's death, "This do, in remembrance of me." Christ's death lays a foundation for all the magnificent blessings which we receive from Christ. The covenant of grace was *agreed* on in Heaven — but *sealed* on the cross. Christ has sealed all the articles of peace in his blood. Remission of sins flows from Christ's death.

Christ's intercession is made available to us by virtue of his death; our entrance to glory has been purchased by virtue of his death. Well, therefore, is it that Christians remember Him who is their *all in all*.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is like a tree hung full of fruit; but none of that fruit will fall unless *shaken by the hand of faith*.

In the blessed ordinance of the Lord's Supper, we are to look above the elements; a blessing goes along with God's institution, to make this ordinance effectual for the sealing up of Christ and all his benefits to us.

We partake aright when we come in faith — faith has a twofold act: by the first we go over to Christ; by the second we bring Christ over to us, faith being the *eagle eye* which discerns the Lord's body. Faith

makes Christ present to the soul — other graces make us like Christ. Faith makes us members of Christ.

God's Word is for the ingrafting, the Lord's Supper for the confirming, of faith. The Word brings us to Christ, the Sacrament of the Supper builds us up in him.

LOVE

All other graces are eclipsed by Love. Love is the soul of religion, and is that grace which truly constitutes a Christian. Love is the Queen of the graces — it shines and sparkles in God's eye as the precious stones did on the breastplate of Aaron.

The antecedent of love is knowledge; the Spirit shines on the understanding, and reveals the wisdom, holiness, and mercy of God — and these become the loadstone to draw out the affections to God. Such as *know* not God, cannot *love* him. If the sun is set in the understanding, there will be night in the affections.

Love makes all our services acceptable; it is not duty — but love to duty, which God delights in; therefore serving and loving God are put together.

Love is the only grace that shall live with us in Heaven; there we shall need no repentance, because we shall never sin; no faith, because we shall see God face to face — but love will abide forever. "Love never fails," but shall outlive all the graces, and run parallel with eternity.

O preserve your love to God, keep it flaming on the altar of your heart! Love is like oil to the wheels — it quickens us in God's service. Does love grow cool? Make use of ordinances as sacred fuel to keep the holy fire burning.

Love facilitates duty; it is like wings to the bird, like sails to the ship; it carries the soul on swiftly and cheerfully in our way to glory. Love is vigorous, as well as active; it despises dangers, it tramples on difficulties; like a mighty torrent, it carries all before it.

Faith itself has no beauty, unless it works by love. The tears of repentance are not pure, unless they flow from the spring of love. Love is the jewel which Christ's bride wears — it is the diamond in the ring of all the graces of the Spirit. Not if you work miracles — but if you love one another, is to be the badge of discipleship. Love is the *golden clasp* which fastens hearts; the indissoluble cement that binds Christians to each other.

Love is a grace that dwells not always at home — but goes abroad to seek the sorrowful, and aid the miserable.

Love reveals the soundness of faith — as the even beating of the pulse shows the healthy state of the body.

Christian love renders the gospel lovely in the eyes of the world. It was an honor to the religion of Christ in ancient times when the heathen could say, "See how these Christians love one another!" Blessed sight to behold Christians linked together with the silver links of charity! The Church is Christ's temple, the saints are living stones: how beautiful is this temple when the stones of it are cemented together with love!

MERCY

God's mercies are past measuring, as they are past numbering. David failed in the endeavor: "Your mercy is great above the heavens!" A whole constellation of mercies has shined in our hemisphere.

The rainbow was an emblem of God's mercy. The Scripture oftener represents God in his white robes of mercy, than in his crimson robes of justice; oftener with his golden scepter, than his iron rod.

Mercy is God's right hand, that he is most used to. Wrath is called God's "strange work" — he is unused to it.

Mercy sweetens all God's other attributes. God's *holiness* without mercy, and his *justice* without mercy — would be terrible.

God's *holiness* makes him illustrious; his mercy *makes* him propitious.

The sweet dew drops on the thistle, as well as on the rose. The garden and the field where God's mercy distills is very large, "He delights in mercy."

The *vial of wrath* does but drop — but the *fountain of mercy* runs. The sun is not so full of light — as God is full of mercy. God has mercies under heaven — these we taste of; and mercies in heaven — these we hope for. "Your mercies are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

God counts it his glory to be scattering pardons. He is desirous that sinners should touch the *golden scepter of his mercy*, and live.

He who sins because of God's mercy — shall have judgment without mercy. Nothing sweeter than mercy, when it is improved — nothing fiercer, when it is abused. Mercy is not for those who sin and fear not — but for those who fear and sin not. God's mercy is a holy mercy — where it pardons, it purifies.

Mercy turns justice into a rainbow — a bow that is without an arrow.

O pray for mercy! God has treasures of mercy — prayer is the key that opens these treasures. Let your prayer be, Give me not only acorns — but pearls; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me — but mercy to *save* me; give me the *cream* of your mercies!

Although God's children are often under the clouds of affliction — yet they are never beyond the sunshine of mercy.

"His mercies are new every morning;" mercy flows in as constantly as the tide. We never eat — but mercy carves the meat. We never drink — but out of the golden cup of mercy. Do we travel? — mercy places a guard of angels round us. Mercy draws the *curtain of protection* when we sleep.

For one affliction — we have ten thousand mercies!

A Christian should keep two books always by him: One in which to write his sins, that he may be made humble. The other in which to write his mercies, that he may be kept thankful.

MEDITATION

Meditation is like the watering of seed — it makes the plants of grace to flourish, and the fruits of grace to ripen.

Meditation is the wing of the soul.

Meditation upon truth, has more sweetness in it than the mere remembrance of it. The memory is the chest where truth is laid up — meditation is the palate to feed on it. The memory is like the ark, where the manna was laid up. Meditation is like gathering the manna, and feeding upon it daily. A sermon remembered — but not ruminated, will be of no profit to us.

Without meditation, the Word preached may increase *notion* — but not *affection*. There is as much difference between the knowledge of a truth and the meditation of a truth — as there is between the light of a torch, and the light of the sun!

He who loses his heart in the morning, in the world, will hardly find it again all the day after.

Meditation makes the heart serious — it is as ballast to the ship. Meditation solidifies a Christian. Solid gold is best. The more serious a Christian grows, the more spiritual he is; and the more spiritual he becomes, the more will he resemble the Father of spirits.

It is better to meditate on one sermon, than to hear five. If an angel were to come down from Heaven and preach to men; yes, if Jesus himself were the preacher — none would profit without meditation.

The *bee* sucks the flower, and then works it in the hive, and it becomes honey. We must not only suck the flower of the Word — but work it in the hive of the heart.

Meditation fits for prayer, and makes the pulse of the soul beat strongly after God. The lamp of prayer will soon go out, unless meditation nourishes and supports it. When the soul is on the mount of meditation, then is the heart in tune for prayer.

Meditation is the saints' telescope, by which they see "things invisible." It is the golden ladder by which they ascend in holy imagination to Heaven. It is the dove sent out, and which brings back the olive-branch of peace.

MINISTERS

A minister of Christ is both a granary, to hold the corn — and a steward, to give it out. He, then, is an unfaithful servant who deals out the bread of life scantily.

Holy men who have been truly called to the ministry of Christ's gospel, are given for the edifying of the Church; then let them not be despised, no, not the very least of them. The least star gives light — and the least drop moistens. The weakest minister may help to comfort the strongest saint. The Church of God is a spiritual building; ministers are builders, "according to the grace of God, which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder." Some ministers bring stones, some timber; but those who place but a nail in the work, advance the building.

An ambassador may deliver his credentials with a trembling lip and a stammering tongue — but he is honorable for his work's sake, because he represents the King's person.

Ministers are but *stars* to light others to Christ. The Spirit is the *magnet* to draw them to him. If we would have the door of blessing opened to us through the ministry, we must unlock it with the *key of prayer*.

John the Baptist teaches us what kind of ministry is likely to do most good, namely, that which works upon the consciences of men. He came hewing and cutting down men's sins — and afterwards preached Christ to them. He first poured in the vinegar of the *law* — and then the wine of the *gospel*. John did not so much preach to please — as he did to profit. *That preaching is most to be preferred, which makes the truest discovery of men's sins, and opens to them most faithfully their own hearts.* Happy that people who love a soul-searching ministry! "They were pricked in their hearts, and said: What shall we do?"

God's ministers must have their hearts fired — not with passion — but with *love*. As they are Christ's ambassadors, they must come to sinners with an olive-branch of peace. The thunderbolt may crush — but the *sun melts*. It is better to love as a pastor, than speak as an angel.

Ministers by sending out a sweet perfume in their doctrine and life, make the church a garden of spices.

PARDON

Scarlet in the Greek is called *twice dipped*, and the art of man cannot wash out the dye. Although our sins be as *scarlet*, God's mercy,

through the blood of Jesus, can wash them all away! The sea can as well cover great rocks as little sands: then let not deep-stained sinners despair, "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant." We must not measure God by ourselves. God's mercy exceeds our sins — as much as Heaven does earth. If the greatest sinners could not be pardoned, it would be a great dishonor done to Christ's blood.

Such as go on in sin, and are so willful as not to seek after forgiveness, although there be a whole ocean of mercy in the Lord — not one drop will fall to their share, "He will by no means clear the guilty."

The mercy-seat covered the whole ark; this was a type of forgiveness, to show that God covers all our transgression, "Who forgives all your iniquities."

Let no man say his sins are forgiven, who does not find an inherent work of holiness in his heart.

Pardon of sin never comes alone; whom God pardons, he sanctifies, adopts, and crowns!

There is much ascribed to Christ's intercession — but his intercession had not prevailed with God for the forgiveness of one sin, had he not shed his blood. When Christ is described to John as an intercessor for his Church, he is represented in the likeness of a slain Lamb, "In the midst of the elders stood a *Lamb*, as it had been *slain*" — to show the necessity of Christ's *death* before he could be an *Intercessor*.

When a man seriously weighs within himself . . .
the glory and purity of that *Majesty* which sin has offended,
the preciousness of that *soul* which sin has polluted,
the loss of that *happiness* which sin has endangered,

the greatness of that *torment* which sin has deserved
— all this laid together must surely make sin burdensome, and
induce sinners most earnestly to seek for pardoning mercy.

Pardon is a voluminous mercy; it draws the *silver link of grace* and
the *golden chain of glory* after it.

Sins unpardoned, are like the angel with the flaming sword, who
stopped the passage to Paradise. Sins unpardoned, stop the way to
Heaven. The sinner will see God, not as a friend — but an enemy!
Luther said there were three things which he dared not think of
without Christ — his sins, of death, of judgment. Death, to a
Christless soul, is the *King of Terrors*.

The vast ocean has bounds set to it — but God's pardoning mercy is
boundless; nothing hinders pardon, but the sinner's not asking it.

Let the despairing sinner remember there is not so much misery in
man — as there is mercy in God. Man's sins are but a drop in the vast
sea of waters — compared with the mercy, the compassion, and the
grace of our God.

It is the proclaiming a jubilee in the soul, when we are able to read
our pardon; and to the witness of conscience God adds the witness of
the Spirit — by these two witnesses our joy is confirmed.

"Mary stood at his feet behind him, weeping." Mary's tears were
more precious to Christ than her ointment. God seals his pardon on
melting hearts.

A pardoned sinner is a monument of mercy, and he wishes he had a
coal from God's altar to inflame his love, that he might fly swifter in
obedience.

Forgiveness perfumes and drops sweetness into every earthly enjoyment.

A pardoned soul is adorned and embellished with holiness. Where Christ comes with blood to justify — he comes with water to purify.

There is a great difference between sins pardonable and sins pardoned; your sins may be pardonable — but not pardoned. God's mercy is not for the *presuming* — but for the *penitent* sinner.

It is easy to turn white into scarlet — but not so easy to turn scarlet into white; yet God has promised the repentant sinner to make the scarlet into milk-like whiteness, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

When the Lord pardons a sinner, he does not pay a debt — but *bestows a gift*.

Believe God has pardoned you, and you will readily pardon others. Faith can throw dust upon injuries, and bury them in the grave of forgetfulness.

PRAYER

Prayer keeps the heart open to God — but shut to sin.

Prayer is the *key* which unlocks God's treasures of mercy.

When prayer leads the van, deliverance brings up the rear.

Though our sins go up to Heaven as the smoke of a furnace — yet Christ's prayers go up as incense.

Prayer ushers in mercy, and prayer sanctifies mercy.

Those who would hold fellowship with God, must be much in prayer, and mighty in prayer. The incense heated with fire was a type of prayer, to teach us that Christians should have their hearts inflamed by prayer: cold hearts yield no fragrance.

Prayer is the arrow, and faith is the bow, by which our requests go up to Heaven. A faithless prayer is a fruitless prayer: "The father of the child cried out and said, with tears, Lord, I believe." When his tear dropped to the earth, his faith reached Heaven.

It is a saying of one of the ancients, "The saints carry the keys of Heaven at their belt." Prayer opens the door, and takes the blessings from God's hand!

God loves a modest boldness in prayer; such shall not be unanswered.

Prayer is a glorious ordinance; it is the soul trading with Heaven. God comes down to us by his Spirit, and we go up to him by prayer.

Prayer without fervency is no prayer. Lifeless prayer is no more prayer than the picture of a man is a man.

The tree of the promise will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer.

That prayer is most likely to pierce Heaven, which first pierces one's own heart.

When men cast off prayer, it is a sign they have cast off God; it is the brand of an apostate: "you restrain prayer before God."

Believers have the Spirit of God breathing in them, and God cannot but hear the cries of his own Spirit: "The Lord hearkened and heard."

Mental prayer is heard, "Hannah spoke in her heart." When the heart is so full of grief that it can only groan in prayer — yet God writes that down: "My groaning is not hidden from you."

Prayer is the bulwark of the land. God's vials of indignation are not poured out, while the sluices of prayer are open.

A godly man will as soon live without food, as without prayer.

"Every creature of God is sanctified by prayer." The bird never takes a drop from the stream, without lifting up its eye toward Heaven.

The Christian holds fellowship with Heaven; he is conversant with closet holiness; while the hypocrite is a saint in the church — but an atheist in the closet.

Prayer delights God's ear; it melts his heart; it opens his hand. Plead with him earnestly, and either he will remove the affliction, or remove your impatience.

Men can never pray fervently who do not pray feelingly, like Samson, when he said, "I shall die for thirst!" Daniel, in the den, prayed fervently and feelingly, and God shut the lions' mouths, and opened the lions' den: "The fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

Prayer is the key of Heaven, and faith is the hand that turns it!

"We cry, Abba, Father!"

"We cry" — there is the fervency.

"Abba, Father!" — there is the faith.

Fervency in prayer is as *fire* to the incense — it makes it ascend to Heaven as a sweet perfume. To induce believers to pray in faith, let them remember the *bountifulness* of God. He often exceeds the prayers of his people. Hannah asked a son — God gave her not only a son — but a prophet. Solomon asked wisdom — God gave him not only wisdom — but riches and honor beside. Jacob asked that God would give him food and clothing — but the Lord increased his riches to two bands. The woman of Canaan asked but the life of her child — but Christ not only gave her that — but the life of her soul also.

PRAISE

Eternity will be little enough of space to praise God. God loves to bestow his mercies where he may have the loudest praises. You who have angels' reward, should do angels' work — begin that work of praise on earth, which you hope to be always doing in Heaven.

The deepest springs yield the sweetest water. Just so, hearts most deeply sensible of God's love yield the sweetest praises.

PROMISES

The promises are springs of joy. There is far more in the promises to comfort, than in the world to perplex.

The promises are a cabinet of jewels, and they are as various as they are rich, suited to all the conditions of the Christian. They are the daily bread of God's children.

There is Christ and Heaven in every promise! Every believer may say of every promise, "*This is mine!*"

Scripture promises are the trees of life growing in the garden of God's Word, which the Christian may freely pluck and eat.

God may *change* a promise — but not *break* a promise. "The Lord shall give that which is good." He may change a temporal blessing for a spiritual blessing. He may not increase "the basket and the store," but he may increase the faith and the patience. He may cease to give his people pieces of silver — but he may give them treasures of gold.

No honey is so sweet, as that which drops from a promise. The promises are . . .

the support of faith,
the springs of joy, and
the saint's royal charter.

PROVIDENCE

God's providence is the hand that turns all the wheels in the universe — it is the pilot who steers the ship of the creation.

Providences are sometimes dark — often difficult to decipher. God often writes in shorthand — his providences are often secret — but always wise.

The beauties of Providence are not seen clearly at first. The painter at the first makes but a rough draught of his picture — first a hand, then an eye. Only when he has filled up every part and laid on his colors, it is beautiful to behold. Just so, we who live in this age of the Church see but a rough draught of God's providence — but when we reach Heaven, and see all the lineaments of God's providence drawn out and completed, all will be perfection and wisdom and mercy — kindness and love will seal the whole!

God's providence is greatly to be observed; but we are not to make it the *rule of our actions*. "Whoever is wise will observe these things." It is good to observe providence — but we must not make it *our rule to walk by*. Providence should be to the Christian as his *diary* — but not his *Bible*.

REDEMPTION

The doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ is the marrow and essence of the Gospel. Great was the work of creation — but greater far the work of redemption!

How vast are the *blessings* of redemption!

Believer, is there any consolation in Christ? It is yours!

Are there any privileges in the Gospel? They are your yours!

Is there any glory in Heaven? it will be yours!

Then long for the time when you shall be freed not only from the power — but from the presence of sin; shall be clothed in the glorious robes of immortality, and enjoy the blessings of full and glorious redemption.

The creation was the work of God's fingers — Redemption was the work of his arm! In the creation, God gave us ourselves — in redemption he gave us himself!

RICHERS

King Solomon had more than any man:

For his parentage, he sprung from the royal line.

For the situation of his palace, it was in Jerusalem, the paragon of the earth, "The city of God, the praise of the whole earth."

For wealth, his crown was hung full of jewels. He had vast treasures of gold and pearls: "The king made silver to be as common as stones in Jerusalem."

For wisdom, he was the oracle of his time. The Queen of Sheba was astonished at his knowledge!

Never had the world cast its smile on one so favored as Solomon — yet, when he had given an impartial verdict on the whole, he said of it, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!"

All the golden delights with which he was surrounded were a painted happiness, a gilded misery!

SALVATION

Salvation must not only be sought out by *knowledge* — but wrought out by *practice*: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." There can be no crown without *running* — no reward without *diligence*.

SCRIPTURE

The lines of Scripture are more valuable than mines of gold! God's Word is the star which directs us to Heaven; it is the field where "the pearl of great price" is hidden.

The Scriptures are the richest jewels that Christ has left.

Satan and his agents have been endeavoring in all ages to blow out the light of God's Word — but have never succeeded — a clear evidence that it was lighted from Heaven.

The mystery of Scripture is so profound, that no man or angel could have known it — had it not been Divinely revealed that the Prince of Life should be born and die — that the Lord of Glory should be put to shame; that sin should be punished to the full — yet pardoned to the full.

Then the Word is so full of goodness, justice, and sanctity, that it could be breathed from none but God.

It bears his very image.

It has no errata in it.

It is a beam of the Sun of Righteousness.

It is a crystal stream, flowing from the Fountain of Life.

It commends to us whatever is "just, lovely, and of good report."

This "sword of the Spirit" cuts down vice!

Out of this tower of Scripture, is thrown down a millstone upon the head of sin!

The Scripture is the Royal Law, which commands not only the actions — but the *affections*.

Where is such holiness to be found — as is dug from this Sacred Mine? Who could be its author — but God himself?

God's Word is the judge of controversies — and the rock of infallibility! All truth must be brought to the touchstone of Scripture, as all measures are brought to the standard.

Let no man talk of a *new revelation* from the Spirit. The Spirit of God acts by the Word, and he who pretends to a new light which is above the Word, or contrary to it — deceives himself and dishonors the Spirit; his light being borrowed from him who "made himself an angel of light."

This blessed Book will fill the head with knowledge — and the heart with grace.

God wrote the two tables with his own fingers; and if God took pains to write, well may we take pains to read.

There is majesty sparkling in every line of Scripture — it sounds forth sweet melody. How sweetly does this harp of Scripture sound! What heavenly music does it make in the ears of a distressed sinner — especially when the Spirit of God touches the strings!

The Scripture is a rock of diamonds — a chain of pearls adorning the Christian, and glorifying God.

The Scriptures are profitable for all things.

Is the believer cast down? Here are "comforts to delight the soul!"

Is he assaulted by Satan? Here is "the sword of the Spirit" to resist him.

The Scripture is a *chart*, by which the believer sails to eternity!

The Scripture is the Christian's *Sundial* — by which he sets his life!

The Scripture is the Christian's *Balance* in which he weighs his actions!

The Scripture is the Christian's *Map* by which he daily walks!

"Therefore I love your commandments above gold."

SIN

The natural heart is . . .
the nursery of sin,
the magazine where all the weapons of unrighteousness lie,
full of antipathy against God,
a lesser Hell.

Morality is but nature refined — old Adam put in a better dress.
The *garnishing* of man with moral excellencies, is but adorning a
dead man with a garland of flowers!

Civility is not grace, although it is a good wall against which to plant
the vine of grace.

Sin is not only a defection — but a pollution.

Sin is to the soul, as rust is to gold.

Sin is as a stain is to beauty.

Sin makes the soul red with guilt — and black with filth!

Sin has blotted God's image and stained the orient brightness of the
soul.

There is more evil in a drop of sin — than in a sea of affliction.

The love of sin makes sin taste sweet, and this sweetness beguiles the
heart, and ruins the soul.

It is worse to love sin than to commit it. The love of sin . . .
hardens the heart,

keeps the devil in possession, and freezes the soul in impenitency.

Despair, on account of sin, locks up the soul in impenitency. Despair is irrational: the Lord "shows mercy to thousands." The wings of God's mercy, like the wings of the cherubim, are stretched out to every humble penitent. Although you have been a great sinner, yet, if you are a weeping sinner — there is a golden scepter of mercy held forth.

The sinner may live in a calm — but he will die in a storm of wrath! He who lives graceless, dies peaceless.

View sin in the looking-glass of Christ's sufferings. The least sin cost his blood. Jesus Christ veiled his glory and poured out his soul unto death, on account of sin. Read the greatness of your sin in the greatness of the Savior's sufferings, and in the depth of his wounds!

God's long *forbearance* in not punishing of sin, is no *forgiveness!* The longer God delays the blow — the heavier it falls when he strikes!

When a man sins presumptuously, he stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie uneasy when he dies.

Sin casts the soul overboard, and the loss of the soul is an unparalleled loss — it can never be made up again.

THE SOUL

The soul is immaterial; it is a heavenly spark, lighted by the breath of God. The *body* is but the cabinet — the *soul* is the jewel. The essence of the soul is eternal — it is a blossom of eternity.

The soul in value outbalances the world. It is a bright mirror, in which are reflected something of the *image* of God, and much of the *wisdom* of God. How highly did Christ value it when he gave himself to buy it! The soul is a jewel so valuable, that its loss would be irreparable!

The soul is the richest piece of embroidery ever made by the hands of God:

the understanding bespangled with light,
the will invested with liberty,
the affections, like a harp, tuned by the Holy Spirit.

The soul is a sparkling diamond, set in a ring of clay!

TEMPTATION

That grace is tried gold, which can stand in the fiery trial and withstand fiery darts.

A tree that is shaken by the wind becomes more settled and rooted. Just so, temptations conduce, when sanctified, to settle and ground the believer the more in grace.

There is a great difference between *falling* into a temptation — and *running* into a temptation. He who falls into a river demands

pity; he who rushes into it deserves reproof. The man who willfully rushes into sin is like Saul, who fell on his own sword.

TRUTH

God is as true in his *threatenings* — as he is in his *promises*. Let us fear the *threatening* — that we may not *feel* it.

God can as well cease to exist — as cease to be true. Here is a safe anchorage, "He will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips."

The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's *power* — and shall not our faith hang upon the word of God's truth? There is nothing else we can believe in but God's unchanging truth. This is a golden pillar, on which faith can rest. God will not deny himself: "If we believe not — yet He abides faithful."

THE WORLD

The world is below the soul; it is but the soul's footstool; therefore cannot crown it with happiness.

The world is the cabinet in which God locks up his jewels for a while. The creation is but a theater, on which the great work of redemption was acted.

EXPOSITION OF TEXTS

David says, "My times are in your hand." If our times were in our own hand — we would have deliverance too soon. If they were in our enemies' hands — we would have deliverance too late. Hence God's times are the best.

"Everything is beautiful in its season." When the mercy is ripe — we shall have it. God sees when the deliverance will be in season. When the believer is low enough, and the enemy is high enough, then appears the "Morning Star."

"Seek the things that are above." Fly aloft in your affections; thirst after the graces and comforts of the Spirit. The eagle that flies above in the air, fears not the stinging of the serpent which creeps on the earth, and stings only such creatures which are within its reach.

"The Lord hears the poor, and despises not his prisoners." There is nothing lost by waiting. We send out the golden fleet of prayer to Heaven — the longer the voyage, the greater the cargo brought back in return.

"Work out your own salvation." God decrees salvation in a way of working. One of the Fathers, when disputing with another on fate and destiny, thus argues: "One gave counsel to his friend, who was sick, not to send for a physician, because, said he, it is appointed by *destiny* whether you shall recover or not. If it is your destiny to recover, you need not the physician. If it be not your destiny, he will do you no good."

This is an argument fetched out of the devil's tactics; because God decrees the *end* in the *use of means*. God decreed that Hezekiah would recover out of his sickness; but then he was to lay a fig to his boil. Although it is "the blessing of the Lord which makes rich," yet it is also true that the hand of the diligent makes rich. God's decreeing, is carried on by our working.

Hosea 8:11: "How shall I give you up, Ephraim?" It is a metaphor taken from a father going to disinherit his son, and while he is setting his hand to the deed, his heart begins to melt and to yearn over him, and then he reflects: Although he is a prodigal child — yet he is my child; I will not cast him off. So says God, "How shall I give you up? Though Ephraim has been a rebellious son — yet he is a son. I will not disinherit him." God's thoughts may be full of love — when there is a veil upon his face. The Lord may change his *dispensation* toward his children — but not his *disposition*. He may have the look of an enemy — but the heart of a Father!

Rev. 3:12: "Him that overcomes, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out — and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God." Here are many excellent things couched in this promise. The hypocrite is a reed shaken with the wind; but the conquering saint shall be a glorious pillar — a pillar for strength and a pillar for sanctity. "He shall go no more out." I understand this of a qualified state; namely, that the believer, after he has overcome, shall go out no more to the wars; shall have no more conflict with sin or temptation; no more combats with Satan or with the world; he shall have also the name of God written on him — shall bear his Father's name, and be acknowledged by Him as his son — he shall be enrolled as a citizen of the New Jerusalem, and become the friend and associate of angels.

Rev. 2:28: "I will give him the Morning Star." This "Morning Star" means Christ; as if he had said, I will give the persevering saint some of my beauty. I will put some of my rays upon him; he shall have the next degree of glory to me — as the Morning Star is next to the Sun.

Matthew 12:20: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, until he send forth judgment unto victory." This passage refers, prophetically, to Christ, who will not crush grace in its infancy. It refers also to the sinner, weeping — but not in despair; tossed on the wings of fear — yet not without the unction of hope.

This text is a spiritual honeycomb, dropping consolation into all bruised hearts. Christ will not quench the beginning of grace. Although the pearl of faith is small, it shines gloriously in God's eye. A goldsmith values the filings of gold; that little spark in that smoking flax is a ray and beam of God's own glory. The greatest grace was once but as a grain of mustard seed. The oak was once an acorn. Abraham's faith was once in its infancy — but it bore the impress of God's work, and it increased and grew until he was the father of the faithful, "The friend of God."

Grace is a flower of eternity. Christian! can you say sin is your burden, and Christ is your delight? Then this is the bruised reed and the smoking flax; and Christ will send forth judgment unto victory; he will make grace victorious over all opposition. Christ is the "Finisher of faith."

MONERGISM BOOKS

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