

**SMOOTH
STONES TAKEN
FROM ANCIENT
BROOKS**

**BY
THOMAS BROOKS**

Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks

Thomas Brooks, 1608-1680

Grace is a ring of gold — and Christ is the sparkling diamond in that ring!

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Satan promises the best — but pays with the worst.

He promises honor — and pays with disgrace.

He promises pleasure — and pays with pain.

He promises profit — and pays with loss.

He promises life — and pays with death.

But God pays as he promises — all his payments are made in pure gold.

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Sin is bad in the eye,
worse in the tongue,
worse still in the heart,
but worst of all in the life!

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The first step to mercy — is to see our own misery.

The first step toward Heaven — is to see ourselves near Hell.

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The world and you must part — or Christ and you will never meet.

"You can not serve God and mammon."

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Augustine prayed, "*Deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man, myself!*"

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Grace is a sweet flower of paradise, a spark of glory!

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A humble soul is like the violet, which by its fragrance draws the eye and the heart of others to it.

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"Whatever is not of faith, is sin." Until men have faith in Christ, their best services are but *glorious sins!*

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As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants — so must the flood of repenting tears drown our sweetest and most profitable sins!

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Sometimes grace in a rugged, harsh nature is like . . .  
a gold ring on a leprous hand,  
or a diamond set in iron,  
or a jewel in a swine's snout!

Souls at their first conversion are but *roughcast* — but God, by visiting them and manifesting himself to them in his ways, more and more fits them as vessels of mercy for glory.

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*Did God leave us to act according to our sinful natures — we would all be incarnate devils, and this world would be an absolute Hell!*

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Those sins shall never be a Christian's *bane* — that are now his greatest *burden*.

It is not falling into the water — but lying in the water, that drowns.

It is not falling into sin — but lying in sin, that destroys the soul.

If sin and your heart are two — then Christ and your heart are one.

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God scatters *giftless gifts* — the honors, riches, and favors, of this world — up and down among the worst of men. But as for his gold — his Spirit, his grace, his Son, his favor — these are jewels that he only casts into the bosoms of saints, and that because he dearly loves them.

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The best and sweetest flowers of Paradise, God gives to his people when they are upon their knees. Prayer is the *gate* of Heaven — a *key* to let us in to Paradise.

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Christian, though the *cup* is bitter — yet it is put into your hand by your loving heavenly Father! Though the *cross* is heavy — yet he who has laid it on your shoulders will bear the heaviest end of it himself; and why then should you murmur?

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Were *riches* ever true to those who trusted them? As the bird hops from twig to twig, so do riches hop from man to man. "Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle!"  
Proverbs 23:5

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Where the disease is strong, the medicine must be strong, or else the cure will never be wrought. God is a *wise physician*, and he would never give strong medicine, if a weaker one could effect the cure.

The more *rusty* the iron is, the oftener we put it into the fire to purify it. The more *crooked* it is, the more blows and the harder blows, we give to straighten it. Therefore, Christian, if you have *long been a-gathering rust*, you have no cause to complain if God deal thus with you!

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Many a man has slain his mercies — by setting too great a value upon them. *Over-loved mercies* — are seldom *long-lived* mercies. The way to lose your mercies — is to indulge them; the way to destroy them — is to fix your minds and hearts upon them.

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There are those who love their mercies into their graves, that hug their mercies to death, that kiss them until they kill them! Many a man has slain his mercies by setting too great a value upon them. *Over-loved mercies are seldom long-lived.*

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Though true repentance is never too late — yet late repentance is seldom true. Do not put off God until old age; for old, lame and sick sacrifices rarely reach as high as Heaven. Give God the *cream* and *flower* of youth, strength, time and talents!

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Faith is the *key* that unlocks Paradise and lets a flood of joy into the soul.

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God will make the most insensible sinner sensible, either of his *hand* here — or of his *wrath* in Hell.

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*The more vile Christ made himself for us — the more dear he ought to be unto us!*

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You may write bitterness and death upon that mercy which has taken away your heart from God.

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Cold prayers shall never have any warm answers. God will suit his returns to our requests. Cold prayers are as arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings — they *pierce* not, they *cut* not, they *fly* not up to Heaven. Cold prayers always freeze before they reach Heaven.

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As green wood and old logs meet in one fire — so *young* sinners and *old* sinners meet in one Hell and burn together.

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Little sins multiplied, become great. There is nothing less than a grain of sand — yet there is nothing heavier than the sand of the sea when multiplied.

*Little sins* are very dangerous!

A little *leaven*, leavens the whole lump.  
A little *knife*, may kill.  
A little *leak* in a ship, may sink it.  
A little *flaw* in a good cause, mars it.

Just so, a little sin may at once bar the door of Heaven, and open the gates of Hell!

Though the scorpion is little — yet will it sting a lion to death!

Just so will the least sin, if not pardoned by the death of Christ!

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Where God refuses to *correct* — there God resolves to *destroy*. There is no man so near the edge, so near the flames, so near Hell — as he whom God will not so much as spend a rod upon! "For the LORD disciplines those He *loves*, and He punishes each one he accepts as His child!" Hebrews 12:6

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A saint's conflict is against sin *universally* — the least as well as the greatest.

He looks upon one sin, and sees that it threw down *Noah* — the most *righteous* man in the world.

He looks upon another sin, and sees that it cast down *Abraham* — the greatest *believer* in the world.

He sees that another sin threw down *David* — the best *king* in the world.

He looks upon another sin, and sees that it cast down *Paul* — the greatest *apostle* in the world.

He sees that one sin threw down *Samson* — the *strongest* man in the world.

He sees that another sin cast down *Solomon* — the *wisest* man in the world.

He looks upon another sin, and sees that it threw down *Moses* — the meekest man in the world.

He sees that another sin cast down *Job* — the most *patient* man in the world.

And this raises a holy indignation against all sin, so that nothing can satisfy and content him but a destruction of *all* those lusts and vices which vex and rack his righteous soul!

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"Those who use the things of the world, should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away!" 1 Corinthians 7:31

Sorrow attends worldly joy,
danger attends worldly safety,
loss attends worldly labors,
tears attend worldly purposes.

As to these things . . .
men's hopes are vain,
their sorrow is certain,
and their joy is feigned.

The apostle calls this world a sea of glass — a *sea* for the trouble of it, and *glass* for the brittleness and bitterness of it.

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Afflictions are called by some "the mother of virtue."

Manasseh's *chain* was more profitable to him than his *crown*.

Luther could not understand some Scriptures, until he was in affliction.

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Some say that roses grow the sweeter when they are planted by garlic.

Truly, Christians who have gloriously improved their graces, are like those roses; they grow sweeter and sweeter, holier and holier, by wicked men.

The best *diamonds* shine most in the *dark* — and so do the best Christians shine most in the worst times!

"Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe!" Philippians 2:14-15

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Everything that a man leans upon but God, will be a *dart* that will certainly pierce his heart through and through! He who leans only upon Christ, lives the highest, choicest, safest, and sweetest life!

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight!" Proverbs 3:5-6

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"You shall break them with a rod of iron! You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel!" Psalm 2:9

There is no way to avoid perishing by Christ's iron rod — but by kissing His golden scepter!

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Jesus Christ has the greatest worth and wealth in him. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is in one piece of gold — so all the heavenly excellencies that are scattered abroad in angels and men are united in Christ! Yes, *all the whole volume of perfection*, which is spread through Heaven and earth, is epitomized in Christ!

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"Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs!" 1 Timothy 6:10

Earthly riches are called *thorns*, and well they may be. For, as thorns, they pierce both head and heart. They pierce the *head* with cares in *getting* them — and the *heart* with grief in *parting* with them.

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God looks more upon the bright side of the cloud, than the dark side. "Remember the *patience* of Job" (James 5:11). It is not "Remember the murmuring of Job, the cursing of Job, the complainings of Job, the impatience of Job," but "Remember the *patience* of Job." God looks upon the pearl — and not upon the spot that is in it!

Just so, in Hebrews 11:30, 31, there is mention made of *Rahab's* faith, love, and peaceable behavior towards the spies; but no mention made of her *lie*. The Lord overlooks her *weaknesses* — and keeps His eye upon her *virtues*.

Where God sees but a little grace, He does, as it were, hide His eyes from those circumstances that might seem to deface the glory of it.

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He who drew Alexander while he had a *scar* upon his face — drew him with his finger upon the scar. Just so, when the Lord comes to look upon a poor soul, he lays his finger upon the scar, upon the infirmity — that he may see nothing but grace, which is the beauty and the glory of the soul.

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Samson's strength lay in his hair. Just so, much of a Christian's spiritual strength lies in *secret prayer*. Nothing disarms Satan and weakens sin, like secret prayer!

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Secret prayer is Jacob's ladder, where God descends into the soul, and the soul sweetly ascends to God.

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Secret meals are very fattening — and secret prayers are very soul-enriching!

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Pride is Satan's disease! It is so base a disease, that God would rather see His dearest children *buffeted* by Satan, than that in pride they should be *like* Satan (2 Corinthians 12:7). Pride is . . .

a gilded misery,
a secret poison,
a hidden plague,
the engineer of deceit,
the mother of hypocrisy,
the parent of misery,
the moth of holiness,
the blinder of hearts,
the turner of medicines into maladies.

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Weak saints are as much *united* to Christ, as much *justified* by Christ, as much *reconciled* by Christ, and as much *pardoned* by Christ — as the strongest saints. He who looked upon the brazen serpent, though with weak sight, was healed as thoroughly as he who looked upon it with a stronger sight.

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Has God given you a *crown* — and will you not trust Him for a crumb?

Has He given you a house which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God?
Has He given you a *kingdom* that can never be shaken? And will you not trust Him
for a cottage in this world?

Has he given you Himself, His Son, His Spirit, His grace — and will you not trust
Him to give you bread, and clothes, and other necessary mercies which He knows
you need?

Has He given you the greater — and will He not give you the lesser? Surely not!
"He who spared not His own Son — but delivered Him up for us all — how shall
He not with Him, also freely give us all things!" Romans 8:32

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Oh, how sweet is . . .  
a *harbor* after a long storm, and  
a *sunshiny* day after a dark and tempestuous night,  
and a *warm* spring after a sharp winter!

Just so, the miseries and difficulties that a man meets with in this world — will  
exceedingly sweeten the glory of the eternal world!

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Man's *holiness* is now his greatest *happiness*.

In Heaven, man's greatest happiness will be his perfect holiness!

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He does well, who *discourses* of Christ. But he does infinitely better, who by  
experimental knowledge, *feeds* and *lives* on Christ.

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Christ will be *all in all* — or he will be nothing at all.

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God loves to lade the wings of prayer with the choicest and chief blessings. Many  
Christians have found, by experience, praying times to be . . .  
a shelter to their souls,  
a sacrifice to God,  
a sweet savor to Christ,  
a scourge to Satan, and  
an inlet to assurance.

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There is no possibility of taking a mercy out of God's hand — until the mercy is ripe
for us, and we are ripe for the mercy!

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A gracious soul grieves more that God by his sin is grieved and dishonored — than  
he himself is afflicted and chastened for it.

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The being in a state of grace will yield a man a Heaven hereafter — but the seeing of himself in this state will yield him both a Heaven here and a Heaven hereafter; it will render him doubly blessed — blessed in Heaven, and blessed in his own conscience.

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*Clothes* and *company* oftentimes tell tales in a mute but significant language.

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Other sins will not be long-lived — when justice is done upon *the bosom sin*. Thrust but a dart through the heart of *Absalom* — and a complete conquest will follow.

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*Grace* and *glory* differ very little.

The one is the seed, the other is the flower.

Grace is glory *militant* — glory is grace *triumphant*.

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Saving faith makes a man see . . .
the prickles that are in every rose,
the thorns that are in every crown,
the poison that is in the golden cup,
the spot that is in the shining pearl.

And thus a Christian counts and calls all these things, as indeed they are, "*vanity of vanities!*"

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There is no water so sweet as the *saint's tears*. Tears have a voice, and their oratory is of great prevalency with the Almighty God. "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my *tears* in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book." Psalm 56:8

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Temptations make a Christian more serviceable and useful to others. None so fit and able . . .

to relieve tempted souls,
to sympathize with tempted souls,
to support tempted souls,
to counsel tempted souls,
to pity tempted souls,
to bear with tempted souls, and
to comfort tempted souls —
as those who have been in *the school of temptation*.

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A sincere heart weeps and laments bitterly over those secret and inward corruptions — which others will scarcely acknowledge to be sins.

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Christians, your hearts are Christ's royal throne, and in this throne Christ will be chief. *If you shall attempt to enthrone the creature*, be it ever so near and dear unto you — Christ will dethrone it, he will destroy it. He will quickly lay them in a bed of dust — who shall aspire to his royal throne.

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*Everything on this side Hell is a great mercy!*

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The least sin is rather to be avoided and prevented, than the greatest sufferings. If this *cockatrice* is not crushed in the egg — it will soon become a serpent! The very *thought* of sin, if but thought on, will break forth into *action* — action into *custom* — custom into *habit* — and then both body and soul are lost irrecoverably to all eternity.

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God will not be put off with the shell — when we give the devil the kernel.

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Woe, woe to the soul that fights against God with his own mercies — who will be sinful, because God is merciful. *Abused mercy* will at last turn into a lion, a fierce lion — and then woe to the despisers and abusers of it!

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When God gives a mercy, he does not relinquish his own right in that mercy.

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Christ is the pot of manna, the cruise of oil, a bottomless ocean of all comfort, contentment and satisfaction. He who has him — lacks nothing. He who lacks him — enjoys nothing long!

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Long afflictions will much set off the glory of Heaven.

The longer the storm — the sweeter the calm;  
the longer the winter nights — the sweeter the summer days.

The new wine of Christ's kingdom, is most sweet to those who have long been drinking gall and vinegar.

The higher the mountain — the gladder we shall be when we get to the top of it.

The longer our journey is — the sweeter will be our end; and  
the longer our passage is — the more desirable will the haven be.

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Augustine, upon that answer of God to Moses, "You cannot see my face and live" makes this quick and sweet reply, "*Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see your face!*"

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God loves to smile most upon his people, when the world frowns most. When the world puts its iron chains upon their legs — then God puts his golden chains about their necks! When the world puts a bitter cup into their hands — then God drops some of his honey, some of his goodness and sweetness, into it. When the world is ready to stone them — then God gives them the white stone! And when the world is tearing their good names — then he gives them a new name, that none knows but he who has it, a name that is better than that of sons and daughters.

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"I thank you, God, that I am *not* a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector!" Luke 18:11-12

Men who content themselves with *negative righteousness*, shall find at last Heaven's gates bolted upon them with a double bolt. All that negative righteousness and holiness can do — is to help a man to one of the best chambers and easiest beds in Hell!

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Knowledge and love, like the water and the ice — beget each other. Man loves Christ by knowing him — and knows Christ by loving him.

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The bee stores her *hive* out of all sorts of flowers for the common benefit. Just so, a heavenly Christian sucks sweetness out of every mercy and every duty, out of every providence and every ordinance, out of every promise and every privilege — that he may give out the more sweetness to others.

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Where Christ loves, he always begets a love something like his own. That love which is flat, lukewarm, or cold, will leave a man to freeze on this side Heaven — yes, it will fit him for the hottest place in Hell.

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Ah! souls — if your knowledge does not put the *world* under your feet — it will never put a *crown of glory* upon your heads!

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No man honors God, and no man justifies God at so high a rate — as he who lays his hand upon his mouth, when the *rod* of God is upon his back! "I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for *you* are the one who has done this!" Psalm 39:9

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The *world*, by the glistening of her pomp and preferment, has slain millions! It is like the *serpent Scytale*, who, when she cannot overtake the fleeing passengers, does, with her beautiful colors, astonish and amaze them so that they have no power to leave until she has stung them to death. Just so, *adversity has slain her thousands — but prosperity her tens of thousands!*

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Among the philosophers there were *two hundred and eighty opinions concerning happiness*, some affirming happiness to lie in one thing, some in another. But by the

Spirit and the Word we are taught that happiness lies in our oneness with God, in our nearness and dearness to God, and in our conformity to God.

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Ah, souls, while you are in the very service of the Lord, you will find by experience that the God of Heaven will prosper you, and support you, and encourage and strengthen you, and carry you through the hardest service with the greatest sweetness and cheerfulness that can be. He will suit your strength to your work; and in the hardest service, you will have the choicest assistance.

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In the Old Testament, the Jews being babes and infants in grace and holiness, had a world of *temporal* promises — and very few *spiritual* ones. But now in the days of the Gospel, the Lord is pleased to double and treble his Spirit upon his people — and we meet with very few *temporal* promises in the Gospel — it is full of *spiritual blessings*.

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Idleness is the very source of sin. Standing pools gather mud, and nourish and breed venomous creatures. Just so, with the hearts of idle and slothful Christians!

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Believer, your afflictions are not to be compared to those that attended our Lord Jesus, whose whole life, from the cradle to the cross, was nothing but a *life of suffering*. Osorius, writing of the sufferings of Christ, says, that the crown of thorns bored his head with seventy-two wounds. Many *seventy-two afflictions* did Christ meet with while he was in this world; he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. A man might as well compare the number of his bosom friends with the stars in Heaven — as compare his afflictions with the sufferings of Christ!

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The most dangerous vermin — are too often to be found under the fairest and sweetest flowers.

The fairest glove — is often drawn upon the foulest hand.

The richest robes — are often put upon the most diseased bodies.

Just so, the fairest and sweetest names — are upon the greatest and most horrible vices and errors in the world.

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It is not in the power of any mortal to *repent* at pleasure. Some ignorant deluded souls vainly conceive that these five words, "*Lord, have mercy upon me,*" are efficacious to send them to Heaven. But as many are undone by buying a counterfeit jewel — so many are in Hell by mistake of their repentance. Many rest in their repentance, though it be but the shadow and not the substance; which caused one to say, "*Repentance damns more than sin!*"

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The soul is never able to stand under the guilt and weight of the least sin, when God sets it home upon the soul. The *least sin* will press and sink the stoutest sinner as

low as Hell, when God shall open the sinner's eyes and make him see the horrid filthiness and abominable vileness that are in sin.

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All *worldly* glory is like the flowers of the field — but the glory that Christ gives is lasting and durable like himself. When a man has been in Heaven as many millions of years as there are stars in Heaven — his glory shall be as fresh and as green as it was at his first entrance there!

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Souls rich in grace, *practice* that themselves, which they *prescribe* to others.

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Should God chain up Satan, and give him no liberty to tempt or entice men to vanity or folly — yet they would not, they could not but sin against him by reason of that *cursed nature* that is in them, which will still be provoking them to those sins which stir up the anger of God against them.

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There are three things that *earthly riches* can never do:  
they can never satisfy divine justice,  
they can never pacify divine wrath,  
they can never quiet a guilty conscience.

And until these things are done — man is undone!

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Sin and punishment are linked together with chains of adamant!

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Reader, remember this: if your knowledge does not now *affect* your heart — it will at last, with a witness, *afflict* your heart. If it does not now endear Christ to you — it will at last provoke Christ the more against you. If it does not make all the things of Christ to be very precious in your eyes — it will at last make you the more vile in Christ's eyes!

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A humble soul knows, that to bless God in *prosperity* — is the way to increase it; and to bless God in *adversity* — is the way to remove it.

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Satan often paints sin with virtue's colors. He knows that if he should present it in its own hideous nature and dress — the soul would rather fly from it, than yield to it. Therefore he presents it unto us, not in its own proper colors — but painted and gilded over with the name and show of virtue, that we may the more easily be overcome by it, and take the more pleasure in committing it.

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Let no knowledge satisfy you — but that which . . .
lifts you above the world

weans you from the world
makes the world a footstool.

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To venture upon the occasion of sin, and then to pray, "*Lead us not into temptation,*" is the same as to thrust your finger into the fire, and then pray that it may not be burnt!

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All our *murmurings*, which are so many arrows shot at God himself, will return upon our own heads! They reach not him — but they will hit us. They hurt not him — but they will wound us. It is better to be *mute* than to *murmur*. It is dangerous to provoke a consuming fire! "I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for *You* are the one who has done this!" Psalm 39:9

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Unholy ministers pull down, instead of building up. O the souls that their lives destroy! By their loose lives, they lead their flocks to Hell, where themselves must lie lowermost!

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There is the seed of all sins, of the vilest and worst of sins — in the best of men!

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Be sure, Christian, that you always reflect upon your graces, and whatever good is in you, with caution. Your graces are gifts of grace, favors given you from above, gifts dropped out of Heaven into your heart, flowers plucked from the garden of Paradise. Keep humble, therefore. What do you have, that you have not first received from God?

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Of all mercies, *pardoning mercy* is the most sweetening mercy. It is a mercy that makes all other mercies look like mercies, and taste like mercies, and work like mercies. He who has it — cannot be miserable; he who lacks it — cannot be happy.

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Every man *obeys* Christ as he *prizes* Christ, and not otherwise. The higher price any soul sets upon Christ — the more noble will that soul be in its obedience to Christ.

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True repentance is a gift from God. If the Lord does not give it — man will eternally perish for the lack of it!

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Grievous is the torment of the damned for the *bitterness* of their punishment — but most grievous for the *eternity* of the punishment. For to be tormented without end — this is that which goes beyond the bounds of all description! O that you would repent and return, that your souls might live forever!

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Adversity abases the loveliness of the world — which might entice us. It abates the lustfulness of the flesh within — which might incite us to folly and vanity!

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"Throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!" Matthew 13:50

Afflicted saint, when you are fretful and desponding — think what a lost soul, who had been in Hell but an hour, would give for a drop of that grace which you have in your heart! Think seriously of this, and be thankful!

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ!" 1 Thessalonians 5:9

"Heaven will make amends for all!"

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It is a just and righteous thing with God, that he should fall into the pit — who will adventure to dance upon the brink thereof; and that he should be a slave to sin — who will not flee from the *occasions* of sin. As long as there is fuel in our hearts for a temptation, we must be on our watch. He who has gunpowder about him, had need keep far enough off from sparks!

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Oh, how vile are those preachers who think to correct the divine wisdom of the Word — with their own vanity, novelty and sophistry!

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There is often a great deal of knowledge — where there is but little wisdom to improve that knowledge. It is not the most *knowing* Christian — but the most *wise* Christian who sees, avoids and escapes Satan's snares!

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Christ has lost none of his affection to poor sinners, by going to Heaven.

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A doctrine not applied, is as a sword without an edge. It is like a *whole loaf* set before children — which will do them no good. A garment fitted for *all bodies* — is fit for nobody. Doctrine is but the drawing of the bow — *application* is the hitting of the mark!

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If poverty has killed her thousands — then riches have killed their ten thousands!

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Our sins are debts that none can pay but Christ. It is not our tears — but his blood; it is not our sighs — but his sufferings, which can satisfy for our sins. Christ must pay all — or we are prisoners forever.

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"Buy the truth, and do not sell it." Remember you can never *overbuy* it — whatever you give for it. You can never sufficiently *sell* it — if you should have all the world in exchange for it.

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Christians, the highway to comfort — is to mind comfort less and duty more.

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Christian, if you would escape Satan's devices — then make present resistance to Satan's first motions. It is safe to *resist* — it is dangerous to *dispute*. Eve disputes — and falls in Paradise. Job resists — and conquers upon the dunghill.

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Ministers should preach *feelingly*, *experimentally* as well as *exemplary*. They must speak from their heart — to the hearts of others. They must feel the worth, the weight, the sweet of those things upon their own souls, that they give out to others.

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The Lord many times breaks our bones — but it is in order to the saving of our lives and souls forever. He gives us a potion that makes us heart-sick — but it is in order to the making of us perfectly well, and to the purging of us from those ill humors that have made our heads ache, and God's heart ache, and our souls sick and heavy to death. Therefore, Christian, under all your afflictions be silent and thankful.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Surely they do not truly love Christ — who love anything more than Christ!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Lord Jesus has as great and as large an interest in the *weakest* saints, as he has in the *strongest*. He has the interest of a *Friend*, and the interest of a *Father*, and the interest of a *Husband*. Therefore, though saints are weak, yes, though they are very weak — he overlooks their weakness, and keeps a fixed eye upon their graces!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Afflictions are but as a dark entry into our Father's house; they are but as a dirty lane to a royal palace!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

If there were the least real *pleasure* in sin — there could be no Hell where men shall be *tormented* with their sin.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns — ten thousand are destroyed by its smiles!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I think that often men charge that upon the devil, that which ought to be charged upon their own hearts!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Cowardice in a *minister* is cruelty! If he fears the faces of men — he is a murderer of the souls of men!

~~~~~

Sinner, if you are but heartily willing to be divorced from that *wicked trinity* — the world, the flesh and the devil — there is no doubt that God will be your portion!

~~~~~

The greatness of a man's sins, does but set off the riches of free grace. Sins are debts, and God can as easily blot out a debt of many thousands, as he can a lesser one. Where sin has abounded, there grace shall much more abound!

~~~~~

Men of the greatest excellencies, are the main objects upon which the *eye of envy* is placed.

~~~~~

Every believer has a whole God, wholly — he has *all of God* for his portion. God is not a believer's portion in a limited sense, nor in a comparative sense — but in an *absolute* sense. God himself is theirs, he is wholly theirs, he is only theirs, he is always theirs!

~~~~~

As the lowest shrubs are freed from many violent gusts and blasts of wind which shake and rend the tallest cedars — so the humble soul is free from a world of temptations which proud and lofty souls are torn in pieces with!

~~~~~

Self-seekers are self-losers, and self-destroyers! Absalom and Judas seek themselves — and hang themselves. Saul seeks himself — and kills himself. Haman sought himself — and lost himself. That which self-seekers think would be a *staff* to support them, becomes, by the hand of justice, an *iron rod* to break them!

~~~~~

There is nothing in the world that renders a man more unlike a saint and more like Satan, than to argue from mercy to sinful liberty; from divine goodness to licentiousness. This is the *devil's logic*, and in whoever you find it, you may say of him, "*This soul is lost!*"

~~~~~

Christians, let your souls dwell upon the vanity of all things here below, until your hearts are so thoroughly convinced and persuaded of the vanity of them — as to trample upon them, and make them a footstool for Christ to get up and ride in a holy triumph in your hearts!

~~~~~

*Every Christian's life should be a commentary upon Christ's life!*

~~~~~

Our safety and security lie not in *our* weak holding upon Christ — but in *Christ's* holding us fast in his everlasting arms. This is our glory and our safety — that Christ's left hand is always under us, and his right hand always embraces us!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It is a very great stumbling block to many poor sinners, to see men who make a high and boasting *profession* of Christ, and yet never exercise and show forth the *virtues* of Christ. They profess they know him — and yet, by the non-exercise of his virtues, they deny him.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." It is not enough that the tree does not bear bad fruit — but it must bring forth *good* fruit, or else be destroyed. So it is not enough that we are not thus and thus wicked — but we must be gracious and godly — or else divine justice will put the *ax of divine vengeance* to the root of our souls, and cut us off forever!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A little will satisfy *nature*,
less will satisfy *grace* — but
nothing will satisfy a proud man's lusts!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

There is no power below that which raised Christ from the dead and made the world — which can break or turn the heart of a sinner.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Repentance is a flower which does not grow in nature's garden.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Woe, woe to that soul that God will not spend a rod upon. This is the saddest stroke of all — when God refuses to strike at all. "For the LORD disciplines those He loves, and He punishes each one He accepts as His child!" Hebrews 12:6

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

When *mercy* is despised — then *justice* takes the throne. "Since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you — when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you!" Proverbs 1:25-27

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Of all mercies, *pardoning mercy* is the most necessary mercy. You may go to Heaven without honor, and without riches, and without the smiles of creatures — but you can never go to Heaven without pardoning mercy!

A man may be great — and graceless,
he may be rich — and miserable,
he may be honorable — and damnable.

But he cannot be a pardoned soul, without being a very blessed soul. Pardoning mercy entitles him to all blessedness — it puts the royal crown upon his head!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A humble soul knows that *little sins* (if I may so call any) cost Christ his blood — and that they make way for greater sins. A humble soul knows that little sins, multiplied, become great — as a little sum, multiplied, is great. A humble soul knows that little sins . . .
cloud the face of God,
wound conscience,
grieve the Spirit,
rejoice Satan and
make work for repentance.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

When all else is gone — yet a Christian has his God to live upon as his portion — and that is enough to make up for the lack of all other things. As he has nothing, who has not God for his portion — so he lacks nothing, who has God for his portion.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

No man knows how the *heart* of God stands, by his *hand*. God's *hand* of mercy may be toward a man — when his *heart* is against him, as in the instance of Saul and others. And the hand of God may be set against a man — when the heart of God is dearly set upon him, as you may see in Job and Ephraim. Usually the *worst* of men have most of these outward things — and the *best* of men have least of earth, though most of Heaven.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

No man knows either God's love or hatred — by outward mercy or misery. For all things come alike to all, to the righteous and to the unrighteous, to the good and to the bad, to the pure and to the impure. The *sun of prosperity* shines as well upon the brambles of the wilderness — as upon the fruit trees of the orchard. The *snow and hail of adversity* come upon the best garden — as well as upon the wildest waste. Health, wealth, honors, crosses, sicknesses and losses — are cast upon godly and evil men indiscriminately.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Let us do our duties — and let the Lord do as pleases him.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Such men as are contented with so much grace as will bring them to glory, and keep Hell and their souls asunder — will never be rich in grace, or high in comfort and assurance. Such souls usually go to Heaven in a storm. Oh, how weather-beaten are they before they can reach the heavenly harbor!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Happiness lies not in those things that a man may enjoy — and yet be miserable forever. True happiness is too big and too glorious a thing to be found in anything below that God, who is a Christian's chief good.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Satan is as old as the world, and is grown very cunning by experience. *When he was but a young serpent*, he easily deceived and outwitted our first parents — but now

he is that *old serpent*. Yet, notwithstanding all his plots, devices and stratagems — God's chosen ones shall overcome him by the blood of the Lamb!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

There is a wonder: God is on high, and yet the higher a man lifts up himself — the farther he is from God; and the lower a man humbles himself, the nearer he is to God. "For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a *high* and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and *lowly* in spirit!" Isaiah 57:15

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

As earthly portions carry away worldly hearts from God — so when God once comes to be a man's portion, he carries his heart away from the world, the flesh and the devil.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Why should any *living* man complain?" Lamentations 3:39

What, out of the *grave* — and complain?

What, out of *Hell* — and complain?

This is a man's sin — and God's wonder!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

This is your glory, Christians — to see the free grace of Christ, and his infinite, spotless, matchless, and glorious righteousness, to be your only comfort and refuge. Truly, were there no more to bear up a poor weak saint from fainting under all his sins and sorrows, and sufferings — yet this alone would do it.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Though the scorpion is little — yet will it sting a lion to death.

Just so will the *least sin* damn us — if not pardoned by the death of Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A gracious soul may look through the *darkest cloud*, and see his God smiling on him. We must look through the anger of his correction — to the sweetness of his countenance!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The law cannot condemn a believer — Christ has fulfilled it for him. Divine justice cannot condemn him — that Christ has satisfied. His sins cannot condemn him — they are pardoned through the blood of Christ. And his own conscience, upon righteous grounds, cannot condemn him, because Christ, who is greater than his conscience, has acquitted him.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Let those be your choicest companions — who have made Christ their chief companion.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Sin may *rebel* — but it shall never *reign* in any saint.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

As the roots of the tree *descend* — so the branches *ascend*. The lower any man is in this sense — the higher shall that man be raised. The lowest valleys have the blessing of fruitfulness — while the high mountains are barren.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Where grace is improved to a considerable height, it will work a soul to sit down satisfied with the naked enjoyment of God, without other things.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The more any man improves his graces — the clearer, the sweeter, fuller and richer is his enjoyment of God. There is no man in all the world who has such enjoyment of God — as that man has who most improves his graces. It is not he who *knows* most, nor he who *hears* most, nor yet he who *talks* most — but he who exercises grace most, who has most communion with God, who has the clearest visions of God, and who has the sweetest discoveries and manifestations of his Lord and Master.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Pheraulus, a poor man on whom Cyrus bestowed so much that he knew not what to do with his riches — being wearied out with care in keeping them, desired rather to live quietly, though poor, as he had done before — than to possess all those riches with discontent. Therefore, he gave away all his wealth, desiring only to enjoy so much as might supply his *necessities*. Let worldly professors think seriously of this story and blush!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He will not long be a babe in grace — who lives out that little grace he has.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Private prayer is a golden key to unlock the mysteries of the Scriptures unto us. The knowledge of many choice and blessed truths — are but the returns of private prayer. The word dwells most richly in their hearts — who are most in pouring out of their hearts before God in their closets.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Secret sins commonly lie nearest the heart, the fountain from whence they take a quick and continual supply.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

As the tender dew which falls in the silent night, and makes the herbs and flowers to flourish and grow more abundantly, than great showers of rain that fall in the day — so secret prayer will more abundantly cause the *sweet herbs of grace and holiness* to grow and flourish in the soul, than all those more open, public and visible duties of religion, which are too often mingled and mixed with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

All divine strength and power against sin, flows from the soul's union and communion with Christ. It is only faith in Christ, which makes a man triumph over sin, Satan, Hell and the world.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Of all graces, faith is the *root grace*; and if this withers — you will find your graces languish. Your hope, fear, patience, humility, joy, can never outlive your faith — they live together and they die together.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Oh, the power of private prayer! It has a kind of omnipotence in it! It takes God captive, it holds him as a prisoner, it binds the hands of the Almighty; yes, it will wring a mercy, a blessing out of the hand of Heaven itself.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The *lives* of ministers oftentimes convince more strongly than their *words*. Their *tongues* may persuade — but their *lives* command.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A *humble* soul can rejoice in the grace and gracious actions of others, as well as in its own. But *proud* souls will be still casting contempt and disgrace upon those excellencies in others, which they lack in themselves.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Chrysostom calls *humility* the root, mother, nurse and foundation of all virtue. Basil calls it the storehouse and treasury of all good. What is the scandal and reproach of religion at this day? Nothing more than the *pride of professors*.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Christ choosing solitude for private prayer, does not only hint to us the danger of distraction and deviation of thoughts in prayer — but how necessary it is for us to choose the most convenient places we can for private prayer. Our own fickleness and Satan's restlessness, call upon us to get into such places where we may freely pour out our soul into the bosom of God (Mark 1:35).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God is never better pleased than when his people importune him in his own words — and urge Him with arguments taken from his own promises.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Certainly, the very *soul of prayer* lies in the pouring out of a man's soul before the Lord, though it be but in sighs, groans, and tears. One sigh and groan from a broken heart — is better pleasing to God than all human eloquence!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

There is oftentimes greatest danger to our bodies in the *least* diseases that hang upon us, because we are apt to make light of them, and to neglect the timely use of means for removing them — until they are grown so strong that they prove mortal to us. Just so, there is most danger often in the *least sins*. If the serpent gets in his *head* — he will draw in his whole body after!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The more our virtues and graces are exercised — the more they are strengthened and increased. All acts strengthen habits.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Temptation is *God's school*, wherein he gives his people the clearest and sweetest discoveries of his love; a school wherein God teaches his people to be more frequently and fervent in duty; a school wherein God teaches his people to be more tender, meek, and compassionate to other poor, tempted souls than ever; a school wherein God teaches his people to see a greater evil in sin than ever, and a greater emptiness in the creature than ever, and a greater need of Christ and free grace than ever; a school wherein God will teach his people that all temptations are but his *goldsmiths*, by which he will try and refine, and make his people more bright and glorious!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The pious examples of others should be the looking-glasses by which we should dress ourselves. He is the best and wisest Christian, who writes in the fairest Scripture copy, who imitates those Christians that are most eminent in grace, and who have been most exercised in closet prayer, and in the most secret duties of religion.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

That man is doubtless upon the brink of ruin, whose worldly business eats up all his thoughts of God, of Christ, of Heaven, of eternity, and of his soul; who can find time for anything — but none to meet with God in his closet!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Love covers all sin. Love's mouth is very large. Love has two hands, and makes use of both to hide the defects of weak saints. O you strong ones, Christ casts the mantle of his righteousness over your weakness — and will you not cast the mantle of love over your brother's infirmities?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The sleeping of God's vengeance, causes the overflowing of sin — and the overflowing of sin, causes the awakening of divine vengeance. Abused divine mercy — will certainly turn into divine *fury*.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God's hearing of our prayers does not depend upon sanctification — but upon Christ's intercession; not upon what we are in ourselves — but what we are in the Lord Jesus. Both our *persons* and our *prayers* are acceptable in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God makes *afflictions* to be but inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of His blessed self.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Christ is the sun, and all the watches of our lives should be set by the dial of his motion.

~~~~~

God esteems men's deeds by their hearts — and not their hearts by their deeds.

~~~~~

An idle life and a holy heart is a contradiction.

~~~~~

Some have stronger *corruptions* to subdue than others, and more violent *temptations* to withstand than others, and greater *difficulties* to wrestle with than others, and higher and harder *duties* of religion to manage than others — and accordingly they are more strengthened in the inner man than others.

~~~~~

Many wicked men take more pains to damn their souls and go to Hell — than you do to save your soul and go to Heaven!

~~~~~

It is but a very short time . . .  
between *grace* — and *glory*,  
between our *title* to the crown — and our *wearing* the crown,  
between our *right* to the heavenly inheritance — and our *possession* of it.

The short storm — will end in an everlasting calm.

"Sorrow may endure for a night — but joy comes in the morning."

~~~~~

Example is the most powerful rhetoric. The highest and noblest example should be very quickening and provoking; and Christians have set before them the greatest, the noblest pattern of humility that was ever heard or read of (John 13:4)

~~~~~

Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which, though they say nothing — yet obtain pardon. And though they do not plead a man's cause — yet they obtain mercy at the hands of God. As we see in that great instance of Peter, who, though he said nothing that we read of — yet weeping bitterly, he obtained mercy.

~~~~~

Conscience is *God's spy in the bosom*. As a scribe, a registrar, conscience sits in the closet of our hearts, with pen in hand, and makes a memorandum, of all our secret ways and secret crimes, which are above the cognizance of men.

~~~~~

There are many who go a round of duties, as mill horses go their round in a mill, and *rest* upon them when they have done, using the *means* as *mediators* — and so fall short of Christ and Heaven at once. *Open profaneness is the broad road that leads to Hell — but religious duties rested in, is a sure though cleaner path to Hell.*

~~~~~


Whatever faith touches, it turns into gold, that is, into our good. If faith looks upon *God*, it says, "This God is *my* God forever and ever, he shall be my guide even unto death!" When it looks upon the *crown of righteousness*, it says, "This crown is laid up for *me!*" Faith is . . .

a sword to defend us,
a guide to direct us,
a staff to support us,
a friend to comfort us, and
a golden key to open Heaven unto us!

Faith, of all graces, is the most useful grace to the soul of man. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

No man knows what mercies a day may bring forth, what miseries, what good, or what evil, what afflictions, what temptations, what liberty, what bonds, what good success, or what afflictions — a day may bring forth. Therefore, a man need *every day* be in his closet with God, that he may be prepared and fitted to entertain and improve all the occurrences, successes and emergencies that may attend him in the course of his life.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Christ is the crown of crowns, the glory of glories and the Heaven of heavens!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The spirit is willing — but the flesh is weak. *Every new man is two men* — he has contrary principles in him, the flesh and the spirit. The spirit, the noble part, is willing; but the flesh, the ignoble part, is weak and wayward.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Joy and *comfort* are those dainties, those sweets of Heaven, which God does not every day feast his people with. Every day is not a wedding day, nor is every day a harvest day, nor every day a summer's day.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

All *tears* will not be wiped from our eyes — until all *sin* is taken out of our hearts! "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Revelation 21:4

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"All of you, *clothe yourselves* with humility" 1 Peter 5:5

Clothe yourselves . . .
with the silk of piety,
with the satin of sanctity, and
with the purple of modesty —
and God himself will be a suitor to you. Do not let the clothes upon your backs —
speak out the vanity of your hearts!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Christian, whenever you come off from holy services, sit down and look over the *spots*, *blots* and *blemishes* which cleave to the choicest of them. You cannot be

proud of them then.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"I have known a good old man," says Bernard, "who, when he heard of anyone that had committed some notorious offense, was accustomed to say within himself: *He fell today — I may fall tomorrow!*"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

As chickens find warmth by close sitting under the hen's wings — so the graces of the saints are enlivened, nourished and strengthened by the *sweet secret influences* which their souls fall under when they are in closer communion with their God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Divine love is like a *rod of myrtle*, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveler who carries it in his hand so lively and cheerful that he never faints or grows weary. Ah, friends, did you but love the Lord Jesus with strong love — you would never faint or grow weary of closet duties.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Humility makes a man like an angel — but pride makes an angel, a devil! Pride is worse than the devil, for the devil cannot hurt you — until pride has possessed you. Proud souls are *Satan's apes*, none imitate him to the life like these; for as face answers to face in a looking-glass, so does a proud soul answer to Satan!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

If you cannot pray as you would, nor as you should — pray as well as you *can*.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It was a choice saying of Augustine, "Every saint is God's temple; and he who carries his temple about him, may go to prayer when he pleases."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Spiritual sluggards are subject to the saddest strokes. Oh, the deadly sins, the deadly temptations, the deadly judgments — that spiritual sluggards will unavoidably fall under! None such an enemy to himself, none such a friend to Satan — as the spiritual sluggard!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Laban's house was full of idols — great houses often are so. Jacob's tent was little — but the true worship of God was in it. 'Tis infinitely better to live in Jacob's tent — than in Laban's house!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Until we have sinned — Satan is a *parasite*; and *when* we have sinned — he is a *tyrant!*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A Christian should trade with God upon the credit of Christ. "O Lord," he should say, "I need power against such and such sins — give it me upon the credit of Christ's blood. I need strength for such and such services — give it me upon the

credit of Christ's word. I need such and such mercies for my cheering, refreshing, quickening, and strengthening — give them into my bosom upon the credit of Christ's intercession."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A humble soul can never be good enough. It never can pray enough, or hear enough, or mourn enough, or believe enough, or love enough, or fear enough, or rejoice enough, or repent enough, or loathe sin enough, or be *humble* enough.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Weak Christians are usually carried out much after the poor base things of this world. Their hearts should be only in Heaven — and yet they strive for earth as if there were no Heaven, or as if earth were better; all which clearly evidences that their graces are very weak — and their corruptions very strong.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Believer, the more worldly business lies upon your hand — the more need you have to keep close to your closet. Much business lays a man open to many sins, many snares, and many temptations.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Believer, you cannot have too frequent communion with God, or too frequent fellowship with Jesus. You cannot have your heart too frequently filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, and with that peace which passes understanding. You cannot have Heaven too often brought down into your hearts, or your hearts too often carried up to Heaven — and therefore you cannot be too frequent in closet prayer.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Pride, passion, and other vices, in these days go *armed*. Touch them ever so gently, yet, like the nettle — they will sting you. And if you deal with them roundly, roughly, and cuttingly — they will turn and taunt you, as the Hebrew did to Moses, "*Who made you a judge over us?*"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

There is wisdom required to suit things to the capacities and conditions of poor souls — to make dark things plain, and hard things easy. Ministers must not be like him in the story, who gave straw to the dogs, and a bone to the donkey — but they must suit all their discourses to the conditions and capacities of their hearers — or else all will be lost, time lost, pains lost, God lost, Heaven lost, and souls lost forever.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

This age is full of monsters who *envy* every light that outshines their own, and who throw dirt upon the graces and excellencies of others — so that themselves only may be honored.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Prayer is nothing but the breathing that out before the Lord, which was first breathed into its by the Spirit of the Lord.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Comforter always *abides* with the saints, though he does not always *comfort* them.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Weak Christians are apt to sit down troubled and disheartened by the sin within. But they should remember, to strengthen them against all discouragements, that their persons stand before God clothed with the righteousness of their Savior — and so God owns them, and looks upon them with great delight.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Cold prayers ask for a denial — but fervent supplications offer a sacred violence to the kingdom of Heaven. Lazy prayers never procure noble answers. *Lazy beggars may starve for all their begging.*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The more infirmities and weaknesses hang upon us — the more cause have we to keep close and constant to our closet duties. If grace is weak — the omission of private prayer will make it weaker. If corruptions are strong — the neglect of private prayer will make them stronger. *The more the remedy is neglected — the more the disease is strengthened!*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Pride is like certain flies, which alight especially upon the fairest wheat and the loveliest roses.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He who has *no heart* to pray for a mercy he needs — has no ground to believe that God will ever give him that mercy. There is no receiving without asking, no finding without seeking, no opening without knocking.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

You had better be a poor man and a rich Christian — than a rich man and a poor Christian. You had better *do* anything, *bear* anything, and *be* anything — rather than be a *dwarf in grace.*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Sinful *omissions* — lead to sinful *commissions!*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

'Twas an excellent saying of Ambrose, "If you cannot hide yourself from the sun, which is God's minister of light — how impossible will it be to hide yourself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun! Though a sinner may baffle his *conscience* — yet he cannot baffle the eye of God's omniscience!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A Christian's whole life should be a visible representation of Christ. The heathens had this notion among them — that the way to honor their gods, was to be like them. Sure I am, that the best way of honoring Christ is to be like him (1 John 2:6): "He who says he abides in him — ought himself also to walk even as he walked." Oh, that this blessed Scripture might always lie warm upon our hearts.

~~~~~

That Christian who, in private prayer, lies most at the feet of Jesus, shall certainly understand most of the mind of Christ in the gospel, and he shall have most of Heaven and the things of his own peace brought down into his heart.

~~~~~

No man can make sure or happy work in prayer, but he who makes *heart-work* of it. When the soul is separated from the body, the man is dead. Just so, when the heart is separated from the lip in prayer, the prayer is dead.

~~~~~

The heart is the spring and fountain of all natural and spiritual actions; it is the *great wheel* which sets other wheels going; therefore keep it with all custody and caution — or else bid farewell to all true joy, peace and comfort. "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life!" Proverbs 4:23

~~~~~

If the prayers of God's children are so faint that they cannot reach up as high as Heaven — then God will bow the heavens and come down to their prayers.

~~~~~

Every mercy that is gathered by the hand of private prayer, is as sweet as the rose of Sharon. But those blessings which are received without either supplication or thanksgiving, lack the precious perfume of a Savior's love, and leave no fragrance in the ungrateful heart.

~~~~~

There is not a sin that a saint commits, but Satan would trumpet it out to the world, if God would give him permission!

~~~~~

Oh, weak and timid Christian, you should be greatly thankful for the *little grace* you have. Does *free grace* knock at your door — when it passes by the doors of thousands? Does it cast a pearl of great price into your bosom — when others are lying in their blood forever? And will you not be thankful? *Remember, the least measure of grace, is worth more than a thousand worlds — yes, worth more than Heaven itself!*

~~~~~

Much faith will yield unto us *here* our Heaven — but *any* faith, if true, will yield us Heaven *hereafter*.

~~~~~

Of all gifts, Christ is *the sweetest gift*. As the tree in Exodus 15:25 "sweetened the bitter waters," so this gift, the Lord Jesus, of whom that tree was a type, sweetens all other gifts that are bestowed upon men. Jesus turns every bitter into sweet, and makes every sweet more sweet.

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Absolute perfection is peculiar to the triumphant state of God's elect in Heaven; that is the only privileged place where no unclean thing can enter; the only place where sin and Satan and Hell never obtained a footing. Such a dream of an absolute perfection in *this* life — confound and jumble Heaven and earth together. Those who would obtain absolute perfection — must step into Heaven before they have it.

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A man's most glorious actions will at last be found to be but *glorious sins* — if he has made himself, and not the glory of God, the end of those actions.

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Grace is compared to the sweetest things — to sweet spices, and to wine and milk. Grace is a beam of that Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is a sweet flower of Paradise, a spark of glory. It is nourished and maintained by that sweet Word, which is sweeter than honey or the honeycomb — and by sweet union and communion with the Father and the Son. It is exercised about the sweetest objects — God, Christ, the promises, and future glory. Grace sweetens all our services and duties!

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*Secret sins* are in some respects more dangerous than *open sins*.

The more inward and secret the disease is — the more the man is in danger of losing his life. There are no fevers so dangerous — as those which prey upon the inward parts.

Just so, there are no sins so pernicious to the souls of men — as those that are most inward and secret. Secret sins often reign in the souls of men most powerfully — when they are least apparent!

"You have set our iniquities before you, our *secret sins* in the light of Your presence!" Psalm 90:8

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Tears are not always mutes. "Cry aloud, (says one) not with your tongue — but with your eyes; not with your words — but with your tears. For such is the prayer which makes the most forcible entry into the ears of the great God of Heaven!" Penitent tears are *undeniable ambassadors*, they never return from the throne of grace without a gracious answer.

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When the *world* frowns most — then generally *God* smiles most. When the world puts its iron chains upon the saints' legs — then God puts his golden chains about their necks! When the world puts a bitter cup into one hand — then the Lord puts a cup of consolation into the other! When the world cries out "*Crucify them, crucify them*" — then commonly they hear that voice from Heaven, "*These are my beloved ones, in whom I am well pleased!*"

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Lack of private devotional duties is the great reason why the hearts of many are so dead and dull, so formal and carnal, so barren and unfruitful under public ordinances. Oh, that Christians would seriously lay this to heart! Certainly that man's heart is best in public duties — who is most frequent in private exercises.

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Oh, the horrid drudgery which is in the ways of sin, Satan, and the world. The worst day in Christ's service — is better than the best day, if I may so speak, in sin or Satan's service. *Satan will pay the sinner at last — with the loss of God, Christ, Heaven, and his soul forever!*

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It was the saying of an old saint, that he was more afraid of his duties than of his sins. For his duties made him proud — while his sins made him always humble!

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Heart and tongue must go together. Word and work, lip and life, prayer and practice must echo to one another — or else both your prayers and your soul will be lost together.

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The *curse of unsatisfiability* lies upon the creature. *Honors* cannot satisfy the ambitious man, nor *riches* the covetous man, nor *pleasures* the voluptuous man. Man cannot take off the weariness of one pleasure, by another.

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The two poles could sooner meet — than the love of *Christ*, and the love of the *world*. "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him!" 1 John 2:15

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Christians, if ever you would bear the fruits of righteousness, then take heed of sin, abhor it more than Hell, and fly from it as from your deadliest enemy!

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It is a great folly, it is double iniquity, for a Christian to be troubled for the lack of those things which God ordinarily bestows upon the *worst* of men. Oh, the mercies that a Christian has in hand, in hope, and in the promises — are so many, so precious, and so glorious — that they should bear up his head and heart from fainting and sinking under all outward wants.

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It is the greatest measure of *grace* which ushers in the greatest measure of *joy* and *comfort* into a believing heart.

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"Lust having conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death!" James 1:15

Sin has its *conception* — and that is delight.

And then its *birth* — and that is action.

And then its *growth* — and that is custom.

And then its *end* — and that is damnation!

"For the wages of sin is death!" Romans 6:23

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It were ten thousand times better that we had never been born into the world — than that we should go unsaved out of the world!

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It was a saying of one, "that he who comes not willingly to Christ, shall one day go unwillingly to Hell."

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God hears no more than the *heart* speaks. And if the heart is *dumb* — God will certainly be *deaf*.

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God, who has done singular things for our good — may indeed justly expect that we should do singular things for his glory.

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A sanctified heart is better than a *silver tongue!*

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*A little* of this world will serve a man who is *strong* in grace.

*Much* of this world will not serve a man who is *weak* in grace.

But *nothing* will serve a man who is *void* of grace!

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Ah, poor souls, Christ is willing to bestow the *best gifts* — upon the *worst sinners*.
"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!" Luke 5:32

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Ah, how many *threadbare souls* are to be found under silken cloaks and gowns!  
How often are worldly riches like executioners — they hide men's faces with a covering, that they may not see their own end, and then they hang them. Yes, and if they do not *hang* you, they will shortly *leave* you, for they "make themselves wings and flee away."

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When we consider that *sin has slain our Lord Jesus Christ* — O how should the thought provoke our hearts to be revenged on sin, for having murdered the Lord of glory, and done more mischief than all the devils in Hell could have done!

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As we are never out of the *reach of God's hand* — so we are never out of the *view of God's eye*. When we are in the darkest place — God has windows in our bosoms, and observes all the secret actings of our inner man. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, says the Lord?" (Proverbs 15:3)



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A man never begins to fall in love with *Christ* — until he begins to fall out with his *sins*. Until sin and the soul are two — Christ and the soul cannot be one.

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The conversion of the thief upon the cross is an *example* without a *promise*. It is an example of *late repentance* — but where is there a *promise* to late repentance? O sinner, remember it is not examples — but promises, that are foundations for faith to rest on. For, consider, as *one* of the dying malefactors was saved to teach sinners not to despair — so the *other* was damned to teach them not to presume! Oh, think seriously of this, and the Lord make you wise for eternity.

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A Christian is as well able to count the stars of Heaven, and to number up the sands of the sea — as he is able to reckon the many devices, snares and traps which Satan uses!

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Is not the *soul* more than clothing, more than friends, more than life, yes, more than all? Then why do you not labor to enrich your soul? 'Twere better to have a rich soul under a threadbare coat — than a threadbare soul under a golden garment. If he is a monster among men, who makes liberal provisions for his servant or his slave — and starves his wife; then what a monster is he who makes much provision for his baser part — but none for his nobler nature! Ah, friends, a slothful heart in the things of God, is a very heavy judgment.

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God lades the wings of private prayer with the sweetest, choicest, and chief blessings. Ah! how often has God . . .  
kissed the poor Christian at the *beginning* of private prayer;  
spoken peace to him in the *midst* of his prayer;  
and filled him with light, joy, and assurance upon its *close*!

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Secret duties shall have open rewards. "Your father who sees in secret shall reward you openly." Ah, Christians, did you really believe and seriously dwell on this — you would walk more thankfully, more cheerfully, suffer more patiently, fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil more courageously, lay out yourselves for God, his interest and glory, more freely, live upon what Providence has given you for your portion more quietly and contentedly — and certainly you would be in private prayer more frequently and abundantly.

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*All the tears in the world cannot wipe off one sin!*

All remission of sin, is only by the blood of Jesus Christ!

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Consider the *worth and excellency of souls*. A soul is a spiritual, immortal substance; it is capable of the knowledge of God, of union with God, of communion with God, and of a blessed and happy fruition of God.

Christ left his Father's bosom for the good of souls; he assumed man's nature for the salvation of men's souls; Christ prayed for souls, he wept for souls, he bled for souls, he hung on the cross for souls, he trod the wine-press of the Father's wrath for souls, he died for souls, he rose again from death for souls, he ascended for souls, he intercedes for souls — and all the glorious preparations he has been making in Heaven these sixteen hundred years are for souls!

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The best works of hypocrites, and all men outside of Christ — are but *fair and shining sins, beautiful abominations!*

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Chilo, one of the seven sages, being asked what was the hardest thing in the world to be done, answered, "*To use and employ time well.*"

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Ah, young men and women, remember that *death* is oftentimes sudden in his approaches — and you had need therefore to be *prepared* to meet him. Nothing is more *sure* than death. Nothing is more *uncertain* than life. Caesar Borgia said when he was sick unto death, "When I lived, I provided for everything but death; now I must die, and am unprepared!"

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There is no way to be saved by Christ — but by believing.  
He who believes shall be saved — let his sins be ever so great!  
He who believes not shall be damned — let his sins be ever so little!