

# JEWELS from JAMES

(Choice devotional selections from  
the works of John Angell James)

Volume 1

Volume 2

Volume 3

Volume 4

Volume 5

Volume 6

Volume 7

Volume 8

"I write plain truths, in plain language, for plain people."

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### **He who trifles with it is a fool!**

If the man who **trembles** at death is a coward; **he who trifles with it is a fool!** There is a thousand times more rationality in the trembler—than in the trifler!

There is a phenomenon in the rational world well worthy of consideration, inquiry, and solution—the strange and fatal insensibility of men to the grand fact that they are mortal! Since it is infallibly certain that they must and will die—and since death is so solemn an event—how does it happen that so few ever seriously think of it, or really prepare for it?

One would think that so grand and solemn a fact

as death, especially viewed in connection with the events which are to immediately follow it—heaven, hell and eternity—along with the **uncertainty** how soon it may be realized—might operate with an unlimited and altogether overpowering influence upon men's minds and hearts!

But men wish to forget death!

They try to forget it—and alas, too often succeed in accomplishing **this fatal oblivion!** Yet we can scarcely wonder at this, when we consider what is their spiritual condition—and what death is!

It is the **commonness** of death, which deprives it of its extreme dreadfulness. If death happened in our world only once in a century, it would be felt like the shock of an earthquake; and would hush the inhabitants of earth into a breathless silence, while the echoes of the knell of the departed soul were reverberating around the globe!

Death is . . .  
the moment of destiny;  
the seal of eternity;  
the cessation of probation;  
the commencement of retribution and judgment!

The antecedents of death are dreadful—so are the accompaniments—so are the consequences!

To every **sense**—death is revolting!

To every **social affection**—death is crucifying!

To **reason**—death is perplexing!

To everything but saving faith—death is overwhelming!

**Traveling to glory, honor, immortality and eternal life!**

**Earth** is to its inhabitants, neither a paradise nor

a desert. If it has not all the beautiful scenes and productions of a paradise—so neither has it all the dreariness and desolation of a desert. This world is called "a valley of tears," but it is not less true that it is sometimes a valley without the tears. It often wears a smiling aspect, and reflects the light of God's graciousness and bounty.

We know very well that **man's chief portion** lies in the blessings of salvation, and the hope of eternal glory. These are so vast as almost to reduce all else to nothing. Full pardon of sin, and the hope of an eternity of pure and perfect felicity, are such amazing expectations, as might seem to render us absolutely indifferent alike to . . .

poverty and riches;  
pain and ease;  
obscurity and renown.

How little would it signify to him who was going to take possession of a kingdom and a throne, whether he traveled through a desert or a garden; or whether he dined meagerly or sumptuously; or whether he had all best accommodations and conveniences along the way. His thoughts would be so engrossed with the permanent scenes of greatness, grandeur, power, and wealth before him—as to be almost insensible to the privations or comforts along the way. So it is, with a Christian **traveling to glory, honor, immortality and eternal life!**

It is incumbent upon Christians to let their spirit and conduct be consistent with the hope of eternal glory, in that eminent spirituality and heavenliness of mind, which are manifested in a supreme, constant, and practical regard to divine and eternal things.

### **A Christian's habits**

Christian parents should resist the entrance of **worldly conformity** into their families.

Expensive entertainments,

mirthful parties,  
vain and frivolous amusements,  
showy modes of dress,  
should be most cautiously avoided!

True religion will not dwell amid such scenes;  
her refined and spiritual taste is soon offended,  
and she retires.

**A Christian's habits** should be simple and spiritual.

If it is his aim to approach as nearly as possible to the manners of the world without actually being numbered with its votaries, his children will be restrained with difficulty, on the godly side of the line of demarcation, and be perpetually longing and trying to push onward towards worldliness.

The miserable efforts, made by some professing Christians, to be thought people of taste and fashion, show how badly they bear the Christian yoke, and how nearly they are resolved to cast it away as an encumbrance. We would despise these things wherever we see them, if they did not demand claims upon our pity, still stronger than those upon our scorn.

When a worldly temper has crept into the circle of a Christian family, piety retires before it, and the spirit of error soon enters to take possession of the desolate home.

### **Christ's seemingly inexplicable conduct**

Behold the Canaanite woman appealing to Incarnate Mercy for her demon-possessed daughter, beseeching for a cure from Him who alone could effect it, and whom she believed could, if He would. What a plea! "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession!" One would think that such an appeal of course will be instantly heard and granted. "But Jesus gave her **no reply**—not even a word!" What! the 'ear of pity' deaf to such a petition! "What!" one

would have imagined she would say, "is this the mercy, the fame of which has reached even my afflicted home? Will He not hear me, look on me, answer me? Must I return, and tell all who come to inquire about my plight—that He would not bestow a word or even a look, upon me?"

To increase her distress and discouragement, the disciples urged Jesus to send her away. "Tell her to leave," they said. "She is bothering us with all her begging." Is this all the mercy that could be found in the hearts of all the twelve apostles? Poor woman, we pity you. There is very little hope for you!

Jesus at length breaks silence, and says, "I was sent only to help the people of Israel—God's lost sheep—not the Gentiles." His **harsh words** are more distressing than His **silence!**

Still her faith holds on, and her prayer continues, for "she came and worshiped Him and pleaded again—Lord, help me!" To this He makes a reply that seems to add **insult** to neglect. "It isn't right to take food from the children—and throw it to the dogs!"

Mysterious answer! O Savior, how apparently unlike Yourself!

What must have been the poor widow's reflections—"My heart is now almost broken—am I not a Gentile woman? and must I be called a dog? Is it thus He will deny His own character, and break the bruised reed? Must I go home and look upon my poor child with the sting of this insult and its venom rankling in my tortured bosom?"

Surely she will now give up her suit—stop her plea—and renounce her faith. Yes, she would have done so—had her faith been less strong. "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even dogs are permitted to eat crumbs that fall beneath their master's table!" Marvelous reply, one of the finest responses which language ever formed, and the most ingenious reasonings ever drawn.

Jesus could hold out no longer. He could protract the trial no farther. Like Joseph under the influence of his feelings, when his heart was moved by the discourse of his brothers; Jesus drops the innocent disguise which His bursting compassion could not sustain another moment, and with delighted surprise He exclaims, "Woman, your faith is great! Your request is granted!"

What was the meaning of all this? What was the secret of **Christ's seemingly inexplicable conduct?** What? He saw He had a subject

which would enable Him to exhibit to the world an extraordinary instance of **faith in prayer**, and He determined to draw it forth in all its power and beauty. His heart was moved towards her from the beginning. He knew what He would do—and though He beat her off with one hand, He held her fast by the other.

Here then we have an instance of prayer continued under delays, apparent neglect, and repulse—and continued through the power of faith. The woman still believed that there was mercy in that heart, to which she for a long time appealed in vain, and that she should ultimately succeed—and she did. "And her daughter was instantly healed!"

### **Turn away from the lovely enchantress!**

"Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world." 1 John 2:15-16

Such is the world that assails the Christian, and which he must overcome—or perish eternally! He is aware of his danger from the strength, subtlety, and ever-present activity of this enemy of his soul.

The whole current of Scripture commands runs against the love of the world. In every possible form, it is forbidden.

### **Worldliness is the most thronged road to everlasting ruin!**

Worldliness does not merely consist in an intense love of money, and an excessive eagerness to be rich—but in a supreme regard to that which is visible and temporal, whether these relate to the quiet scenes of domestic comfort, or to those elegancies, splendors, and accumulations of wealth, which lead a man to seek his highest bliss in these!

**The world is a foe which attacks us in various places!** In the **shop**—by all the temptations incident to trade and wealth. In the halls of **politics** and public business—by all the enticements to pride and ambition. In the places of **amusement**—by all the soft blandishments of pleasure. In the haunts of **vice**—by all the gratifications of appetite. In the scenes of **nature**—by all the delights of taste and imagination. In the walks of **science** and **literature**—by all the delights of intellectual gratification. In the **social circle**—by all the enjoyments of friendship. In the **domestic retreat**—by all the sweets of marital bliss. **Oh, how many are the scenes where the world meets man and subdues him!**

Sometimes the world approaches the believer with a smiling face, making promises and offering caresses, like the serpent to our first mother in the garden; or like Satan to our Lord when he said, "All these things will I give you—if you will fall down and worship me!" How difficult is it on such occasions to **turn away from the lovely enchantress**, to keep the eye steadily fixed on heavenly glories—and instead of greedily quaffing the cup of poisoned sweets, to dash it on the ground!

**If immorality slays its thousands—the world slays its ten thousands!** 'Supreme love of the world' will as certainly lead its possessor to the bottomless pit, as the love of open vice!

Worldliness, I repeat, and repeat with emphasis, is . . .  
the smoothest,  
the most polished,  
the most fashionable,  
the most respectable  
path to the bottomless pit!

**Victory over the world** is subordination . . .  
of the creature to the Creator;  
of earth to heaven;  
of temporal blessings to spiritual ones;  
of time to eternity.

Victory over the world is the formation of an unearthly, spiritual, divine, and heavenly mind-set and character!

"It was the sight of Your dear cross,

First weaned my soul from earthly things;  
And taught me to esteem as dross,  
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings!"

How all the splendor of earthly things pales before  
that infinitely more resplendent object—**Jesus!**

### **All this loveliness of character**

"Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14

An unholy person cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

There is a vast difference between sanctification—and the **common morality** of life. There are many people who are . . .  
very amiable in their dispositions,  
very just in their transactions,  
very excellent in all their relationships,  
very lovely in their general character;  
but who at the same time, whatever esteem and  
affection they may have—are not in a state of  
sanctification. They . . .  
have never been convinced of sin,  
have never exercised faith in Christ,  
have never been born of the Spirit,  
have never been brought to love God.

**All this loveliness of character** is but the beautiful  
wildflower in the wilderness of unrenewed humanity.

There can be no true holiness apart from the principle  
of supreme love to God. Until this is implanted in the  
soul, we are under the dominion of supreme selfishness  
—and all these excellences may be traced up to self!  
God's law is not obeyed; God's glory is not sought,  
because God Himself is not loved.

It is a melancholy spectacle, to see so much 'general  
excellence of character' as we sometimes witness, all  
fruitless to its possessor, as regards the eternal world,  
for lack of that Divine principle which transmutes all



this **apparently beautiful morality**, into true godliness.

Without holiness, whatever amiable and lovely qualities of a general kind we may possess, we are still . . .

the children of wrath,  
the enemies of God,  
the subjects of unrenewed corruption,  
the heirs of perdition; and  
going on to everlasting destruction!

"Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14

### **He is both depraved and condemned!**

God created man in His own image—which consisted of true holiness. No spot of **guilt** was upon his conscience—nor spot of **depravity** upon his heart.

The light of truth irradiated his **understanding**.

The glow of perfect love warmed his **heart**.

The choices of his **will** were all on the side of purity.

His **conscience** was the seat of perfect peace.

The beauties of holiness adorned his **character**.

His **whole soul** was in harmony with the untainted scenes of Paradise—in which bowers he walked in undisturbed friendship with God.

No sorrow wrung his heart.

No care wrinkled his brow.

No anxiety broke his rest.

He was happy—because he was holy.

**When he sinned**, his whole moral condition was

altered! He fell under the **condemnation** of the law he had violated, and became the subject of inward **corruption**. An entire change passed over his nature. He not only became **guilty**—but **depraved!**

His **understanding** became darkened!

His **affections** became selfish and earthly!

His **will** became prone to choose what is wrong!

His **conscience** became benumbed!

If he would ever be recovered from this state of misery, he must be both **pardoned** and **sanctified**.

The covenant of God's love and mercy in Christ Jesus—the glorious scheme of redeeming grace—meets the whole case of fallen man, by providing not only justification—but sanctification as well.

Wonderful gospel provision!

**Pardon** for the **guilty!**

**Sanctification** for the **unholy!**

The condition of the sinner may be likened to that of a condemned criminal shut up in prison, and infected with a deadly plague! What he needs, is both the cure of his plague—and the reversal of his sentence. Neither alone, will meet his case. If he is only pardoned—he will die of the plague. If he is only cured of the plague—he will suffer the just sentence of the law.

So it is with fallen man—**he is both depraved and condemned!** If he is only pardoned—his depravity will be his misery. If he could by any means be reformed—he is still under sentence of death.

The glory and completeness of the gospel scheme is, that it provides a cure for the diseases of the soul—in sanctification; as well as a pardon from

the condemnation of the law—in justification!

### **A system of religious pauperism?**

"Even while we were with you, we gave you this rule: **'Whoever does not work should not eat!'** Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and wasting time meddling in other people's business. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we appeal to such people—no, we command them: Settle down and get to work! Earn your own living!" 2 Thesal. 3:10-12

The poor should be conspicuous for their **industry**, and should not eat the bread of idleness. The poor have no right, therefore, to expect, that in consequence of their association with a Christian church, they are in any measure released from the obligation of the most unwearied industry. **They are not to be supported in idleness**, nor ought they to look for any financial allowance, while they are able to provide for themselves and their family.

The religion of Jesus Christ was never intended to establish **a system of religious pauperism**. It is to be feared, that many have entered into Christian fellowship on purpose to obtain its funds! This is a dreadful case, wherever it occurs, and should make all the poor members of our churches tremble at the most distant approximation to such a crime!

The only times in which Christians should feel that they have claims upon the funds of the church, are when sickness or old age has incapacitated them for labor; or when the produce of their industry is too scanty to procure the necessities of life.

### **The guardian angels of our churches!**

"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, **I am nothing.**" 1 Cor. 13:2

We must come back to the first principles of practical piety, and cultivate the passive virtues of the Christian character. We must remember that Christianity is being like Christ, and that unless we partake of that love which is patient and kind, which does not envy, nor boast, nor is proud, nor rude, nor self-seeking, nor easily angered, which keeps no record of wrongs—**we are nothing!**

Strange indeed it is, that men, who by their own confession are lost, vile, ruined, helpless sinners, should lack HUMILITY; and that they who believe themselves to be saved from hell by unmerited mercy, should be destitute of LOVE!

We must crucify that selfishness, which fixes upon its own gratification, and cherish that expansive benevolence which looks upon the good of others. We must contend to be lowest—not to be highest! We must seek to please, and not merely to be pleased.

Let us remember that HUMILITY and LOVE are . . .  
the necessary fruits of our doctrines,  
the highest beauty of our character, and  
**the guardian angels of our churches!**

### **The panacea for the world's evils**

The secret of the world's moral renovation, and **the panacea for the world's evils**, lies compressed in that one expression of the apostle Paul, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!"

**This city has so aroused My anger and wrath!**

"From the day it was built until now, **this city has so aroused My anger and wrath** that I must remove it from My sight!" Jeremiah 32:31

Let us devoutly acknowledge both the source and the justice of **our calamities**. The origin of the evils that afflict us, is *often* to be found in the sins which disgrace us.

Sin is the only thing in all the universe which God hates, and this He abhors wherever He discovers it.

With our limited understanding, and feeble powers of moral perception, it is impossible for us to form an adequate idea of the evil of sin, or the light in which it is contemplated by a God whose **understanding** is infinite, and whose **purity** is immaculate. That law which men are daily trampling upon, equally without consideration, without reason, and without penitence, is most sacred in His eyes, as the emanation and the transcript of His own holiness. He is also omnipresent and omniscient. There is not a nook or corner of the land from which He is excluded. Of every scene of iniquity He is the constant, though invisible witness. The whole mass of national guilt, with every the minutest particular of it, is ever before His eye!

His **justice**, which consists in giving to all their due, must incline Him to punish iniquity—and His **power** enables Him to do it!

He is the moral governor of the nations, and concerned to render His providence subservient to the display of His attributes. And if a people so highly favored as we are, notwithstanding our manifold sins, escape without chastisement—will not some be ready to question the equity, if not the very exercise of His administration?

His threatenings against the wicked are to be found in almost every page of holy Scripture. Nor are **the threatenings of the Bible** to be viewed in the light of mere unreal terrors, as clouds and storms which the poet's pencil has introduced into the picture; the

creatures of his own imagination, and only intended to excite the imagination of others.

No! They are solemn realities, intended to operate by their denunciation as a check upon sin; or if not so regarded, to be endured in their execution as a punishment upon our sins! Scripture gives us many examples in which this has happened. It has preserved an account of the downfall of nearly all the chief empires, kingdoms, and cities of antiquity; and that, not as a mere chronicle of the event, but as a great moral lesson to the world. Scripture carefully informs us, that **sin was the cause of their ruin!**

**Volcanoes** terrify with their eruptions, and submerge towns or cities beneath their streams of lava!

**Earthquake's** convulsive throes bury a population beneath the ruins of their own abodes!

**Hurricanes** carry desolation through a country!

**Famine** whitens the valleys with the bones of the thousands who have perished beneath its reign!

**Pestilence** stalks through a land, hurrying multitudes to the tomb, and filling all that remain with unutterable terrors!

**Wars** have been agents in the unparalleled scenes of bloodshed and misery!

Scripture proclaims that these are to be regarded as **a fearful exposition of the evil nature of sin**, written by the finger of God upon the tablet of the earth's history!

Visit, in imagination, my countrymen, the spots where many of these cities once stood, and you shall see nothing but desolation stalking like a specter across the plain, lifting its eye to heaven, and exclaiming, amidst the silence that reigns around, "The kingdom and the nation that will not serve You, shall utterly perish!" As you stand

amidst the moldering fragments of departed grandeur, does not every breeze, as it sighs through the ruins, seem to say, as a voice from the sepulcher, "See, therefore, and know that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against the Lord!"

Let us devoutly acknowledge both the source and the justice of our calamities. The origin of the evils that afflict us, is often to be found in the sins which disgrace us.

"From the day it was built until now, **this city has so aroused My anger and wrath** that I must remove it from My sight!" Jeremiah 32:31

"The Lord your God pronounced this disaster against this place. The Lord has brought it about, and has done as He said. Because you sinned against the Lord and did not obey his voice, this thing has come upon you."  
(Jeremiah 40:2-3)

## **I kill**

("The Death of Eminent Ministers, a Public Loss"  
A funeral sermon by J. A. James, Nov. 6, 1825)

'Chance' has nothing to do with death! Not the outcast infant of a day old, exposed by its unnatural mother to perish by the tiger or the vulture; nor even the sparrow that dies of hunger in its nest—passes out of life without the knowledge of God.

"Don't be afraid!" said Christ, "I am the first and the last, the living one. I was dead, but now I am alive forever! I have the keys of the unseen world and of death!" What consolation is there in this sublime declaration! The key of death is never for a moment entrusted out of His hands—and never can be wrested from them! **Every time a human being dies**, it is by an act of His power, in turning the key which unlocks the gates of death! Our life is under the constant and strict observation of His omniscient eye! He determines the moment when to take the key from His

belt, and throw the portals of immortality back on their mighty hinges!

O, what comfort does this impart to us, in reference to our own lives—to know that exposed as we are to all the accidents and diseases of this 'world of changes', and enveloped as we are in darkness as to the consequences of the next step, and the events of the next hour—that we cannot die by a random stroke, or by a blind chance! **The key of death must be turned by Him who is infinitely wise, and powerful, and good!**

"See, I am the only God! There are no others. **I kill**, and I make alive! I wound, and I heal, and no one can rescue you from My power!" Deuteronomy 32:39

**That one majestic, inconceivable, and expressive word**

"And this is the promise that He Himself made to us: **eternal life.**" (1 John 2:25)

In the infinite comprehensiveness of this one promise are included all that the omniscient mind of the **Father** in the exercise of His love has contrived in eternity; all that the incarnate **Son** has obtained by His sacrifice upon the cross; and all that the Divine **Spirit** has revealed upon the page of Scripture; and all which is contained in **that one majestic, inconceivable, and expressive word**—HEAVEN!

I do not need flamboyant descriptions and eloquent representations of the celestial state, to raise my desires and hopes. It is enough to know that it is GLORY, first prepared, then promised, and ultimately bestowed by Jehovah—as the concentration of His infinite beneficence and the full manifestation of His boundless benevolence!

Heaven is . . .

the absence of all evil, natural and moral;  
the possession of all possible good;  
a glorified body united with a perfect soul,



and all this in the immediate presence of God!

There we shall **see** God!

We shall not only see Him—but **love** Him!

We shall not only love Him—but **serve** Him!

We shall not only serve Him—but **enjoy** Him!

We shall not only enjoy Him—but hold such **communion** with Him as will assimilate us to the all-perfect source of our felicity!

The objects of our contemplation,  
our situation,  
our companions,  
our personal constitution,  
our constant exercises of holy intellect, heart, and  
volition—will be so many distinct sources of bliss!

Perfect **knowledge**,  
perfect **holiness**, and  
perfect **love** must of necessity  
open the fountain of perfect **joy**!

No secondary concern will call off our unwearied  
attention from the service of God; no **sin** or **pain**  
will interrupt us in it; nor will **death** ever dismiss  
us from it. The business and the blessedness of  
that happy state are the same—our supreme  
delight will be our constant employment.  
Every **sense** will be an inlet,  
every **faculty** a capacity, and  
every **energy** a pulsation—of the purest bliss!

Heaven will be "life" . . .  
life in **perfection**,  
the life of the **soul**,  
the life of **God**,  
the life of **eternity**!

But to **describe** it, how vain and arrogant the  
attempt, when even to **conceive** of it is impossible!

"In Your presence is fullness of joy! At Your right hand there are pleasures for evermore!" Neither language nor thought can go beyond this! Mind cannot conceive more. God Himself can tell us no more, than that heaven consists in His presence, and the enjoyment of His favor—forever and ever!

"No **eye** has seen, no **ear** has heard, and no **mind** has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love Him!" (1 Corinthians 2:9)

### **The base cares and the petty enjoyments of the present world**

Sin is raging all around us!

Satan is busy in the work of destruction!

Men are dying!

Souls are every moment departing into eternity!

Hell is enlarging her mouth, and multitudes are continually descending to torments which knows no mitigation and no end!

How astounding is it sometimes to ourselves, that, **the base cares and the petty enjoyments of the present world** should have so much power over us, as to retard us in our heavenward course, and make us negligent and indolent, heedless and forgetful.

**Time** is short!

**Life** is uncertain!

**Death** is at hand!

**Immortality** is about to swallow up our existence in eternal life—or eternal death!

**Heaven** expanding above us!

**Hell** is yawning beneath us!

**Eternity** is opening before us!

### **It is by faith**

**It is by faith**, as an operative principle of universal obedience to the gospel of Christ, that the believer "purifies his heart" and adorns his character with "the beauties of holiness," through the power of the Divine Spirit.

**It is by faith** that he overcomes the world . . .  
the dread of its frown,  
the desire of its smile,  
its evil maxims,  
its corrupt principles.

**It is by faith** that he . . .  
quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one,  
is delivered from the wiles of the devil,  
and bruises the serpent's head.

**It is by faith**, as a pilgrim and stranger upon earth, he nourishes the desire for, and indulges the expectation of, that country which God has promised to those who love Him.

**It is by faith** that he rises superior to the love of life, vanquishes the fear of death, and while this monster puts his most horrid form of mischief on—he smiles at his terrors, and, swelling into rapture, exclaims, "O death, where is your sting!"

### **Essential to eminent usefulness**

A revived church is the best hope of a lost world.

A revived ministry the best hope of a dormant church.

Under 'a great show of outward profession', there is a lamentable deficiency of vital godliness in our churches. Much of the prevailing benevolence and activity of the church, are a mere substitute for spiritual religion—rather than the expression of vital godliness.

In our churches, it is easy to perceive . . .  
how much more welcome is the 'humorous'—than the serious;  
how much more anxious the audience is to be 'entertained'  
—than to be edified;  
how much greater homage is paid to the 'talent' of the preacher  
—than to his piety!

In fact, our public meetings sometimes assume rather the character of 'religious amusements'—than pious worship!

It ought never to be forgotten that a church meeting, if rightly understood, is a company of people brought together to carry out the design for which the Son of God expired upon the cross! Surely the frame of our minds, and the tone of the sermons, and the spirit and tendency of the whole worship service, ought to be in strict harmony with such a purpose. Yet many of our church meetings have rather lowered, than elevated the tone of our piety, and thus enfeebled our real strength for carrying on this great work.

Eminent piety is **essential to eminent usefulness!**

It is eminent piety alone, which will enable us to take a clear and impressive view of the object to be sought, and supply the energies necessary for obtaining it.

It is eminent piety alone, which will purify our motives, and produce that spirit of profound humility, self-denial, dependence, and entire consecration—which are necessary to qualify us for the work.

It is eminent piety alone, which will keep up the spirit of faith and prayer, to which the divine promises are made. We must become .

. .  
more devout,  
more prayerful,  
more holy,  
more heavenly,  
more spiritual.

### **He secretly wishes there was no Supreme Being**

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God!"  
(Psalm 14:1)

His sinful disposition is at deadly enmity with the perfection of the Divine character. The holiness of God is the object of his abhorrence—as long as this exists he cannot be at perfect peace. The rays of Divine purity, as often as they fall upon his disordered mind, must disturb and exasperate it. **He secretly wishes there was no Supreme Being**—or that He was not holy. If his powers were equal to his desires, he would . . .  
wrest the sword of justice from the hand of Deity,  
strip the character of Jehovah of the beauties of holiness,  
dash in pieces the tables of His law,  
overturn the throne of judgment,  
and establish the reign of anarchy,  
in order that he might sin in peace, and escape the punishment of his wickedness!

The very existence of a holy God is, and ever must be, an annoyance to him, in whose mind there are combined . . .  
the love of sin,  
a dread of its consequences, and  
a wish to be unmolested in his course of iniquity.

### **Flesh-pleasing pulpit opiates!**

They are a rebellious people, deceptive children, children who do not obey the Lord's instruction. They say to the seers, "Do not see," and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy the truth to us. **Tell us flattering things!** Prophesy illusions! Get out of the way! Leave the pathway. Rid us of the Holy One of Israel." Is. 30:9-11

It is a striking fact, that He who was love incarnate; who was mercy's messenger to our lost world; who was named Jesus, because He was to be the Savior of His people; who was the manifestation of God's love to man—delivered, during the

course of His personal ministry, more fearful descriptions of Divine justice and the punishment of the wicked, than are to be found in any other part of the Word of God! What can exceed the solemn scene of the parable of the rich man in torments? Hell and destruction are there set openly before us.

No man can fulfill his ministry, therefore, without frequently alluding to **the justice of God in the punishment of sin**. He must seek to alarm the fears of the unconverted by a representation of the consequences that will follow a state of final impenitence.

Such a subject frequently calls up all the enmity of the carnal mind. To be told, not only that they are sinners—which all will admit in general terms—but that their sins are such as to deserve the wrath of God, such as to expose them to the torments of hell, and such as will infallibly bring them to the bottomless pit—unless they truly repent; to be told again and again that they are hastening to perdition; to have the rod of Divine vengeance shaken over their heads; to have all the dreadful curses of the violated law analyzed, ascertained and announced; to have this done in their hearing, and done frequently; to be made to sit and hear their future eternal doom, and thus to be tormented before their time—is what they cannot, and will not endure! Unable to bear any longer his pointed addresses to the conscience, they will leave his ministry—for the **flesh-pleasing pulpit opiates** of some flatterer of men's souls, who is too cowardly to trouble the minds, or alarm the consciences of those who love smooth, flattering and delusive preaching.

To be publicly denounced as deserving Divine wrath; to be told that they are sinners to such a degree as to merit the eternal punishment of a holy God; to be reminded that, instead of their fancied good heart, pure nature, and blameless life—they are, in the sight of God, depraved in every faculty and polluted in every part; to be represented as unfit for communion with God here, and for His presence hereafter—all this is so opposed to all their notions, so mortifying to their vain pride, so degrading to their dignity, that they cannot but dislike it. To such a debasement they would not willingly descend; and hence their demand for the teaching of deceit, and the smooth speech of falsehood. What they want is to be flattered into a good opinion of themselves. They hate the doctrine which disturbs their self-delight, and revile the man who attempts to tell them the solemn reality

of how vile they are!

### **Do you remember little Elizabeth?**

"He who wins souls is wise." Proverbs 11:30

My 'imagination' has sometimes presented me with this picture of a faithful teacher's entrance to the state of her everlasting rest. The agony of death finished, the triumph of faith completed—and the conquering spirit hastening to her crown! Upon the confines of the heavenly world, a divinely lovely form awaits her arrival. Enrapt in astonishment at the dazzling glory of this celestial inhabitant, she inquires, "Is this Gabriel, chief of all the heavenly multitudes—and am I honored with his aid to guide me to the throne of God?"

With a smile of ineffable delight, such as gives fresh beauty to an angel's countenance, the mystic form replies, "**Do you remember little Elizabeth**, who was in yonder world—a pupil in your Sunday school class? Do you recollect the child who wept as you talked to her of sin—and directed her to the cross of the dying Redeemer? God smiled with approbation upon your effort, and by His own Spirit sealed the impression upon her heart in characters never to be effaced. Providence removed her from beneath your care, before the fruit of your labor was visible. The gospel seed, however, had taken root, and it was the privilege of another to water—what *you* had sown. Nourished by the influence of heaven, the 'plant of piety' flourished in her heart, and shed its fragrance upon her character. Piety, after guarding her from the snares of youth, cheered her amidst the accumulated trials of an afflicted life, supported her amidst the agonies of death, and elevated her to the mansions of immortality! And now behold before you—the **glorified spirit of that poor child**, who, under God, owes the eternal life on which she has entered—to your faithful labors in the Sunday School; and who is now sent by our Redeemer to introduce you to the world of glory, as your first and least reward for guiding **the once thoughtless, ignorant, wicked Elizabeth** to the world of grace! Hail, happy spirit! Hail, favored of the Lord! Hail, deliverer of my soul! Hail, to the world of eternal glory!"

I can trace the scene no further! I cannot paint the raptures produced in the honored teacher's bosom by this unexpected encounter. I cannot depict the mutual gratitude and love of two such spirits meeting on the confines of heaven—much less can I follow them to their everlasting mansion, and disclose the bliss which they shall enjoy before the throne of God! All this, and a thousand times more, is attendant upon the salvation of one single soul! Teachers, what a motive to diligence!

Amidst surrounding millions, the faithful teacher shall stand to receive the public plaudits of his Judge and Savior—"In as much as you have done it unto the least of these My brethren—you have done it unto Me! Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord!"

### **This most hateful disposition!**

Temptations vary with our circumstances, but there is no scene from which they are entirely excluded. There is no situation, however obscured by solitude, or elevated by piety—from which all temptations can be effectually shut out. The fact is, that as **our chief danger** arises from our own evil heart. Until we can be separated from our vile selves, we shall look in vain for a spot sequestered from the attack of temptation.

One temptation to which Sunday School teachers are exposed, is a spirit of PRIDE.  
To be a teacher of others;  
to be invested with authority;  
to be regarded as an oracle;  
to be listened to with deference;  
is a situation which has its temptations, and which some weak minds have found quite too powerful for the growth of humility.

You mistake, if you suppose that merely being a teacher of children, is too small to induce pride. Pride is a vice that does not dwell exclusively in king's houses, wear



only elegant clothing, and feed sumptuously every day upon lofty titles, fame or affluence. Pride . . . is generated in the depravity of our nature, accommodates itself to our circumstances, and adapts itself to our taste!

Pride is found as often in the poor cottage, as in the elegant mansion. Consciousness of superiority—whatever be the object of comparison—is the basis of **this most hateful disposition** of pride; and this may be supplied even from the office of a Sunday School teacher!

Be watchful therefore, over your own heart—for **the loss of humility is a destruction in the Christian character**, which cannot be repaired by the most splendid talents, or the most active zeal.

### **Every child is totally depraved**

It is important for you, in all your exertions, to bear in mind the total and universal depravity of the human race. By **total depravity**, I do not mean that people are as bad as they can be; for in general they lie under strong restraints—and most do not sin with reckless abandonment. I do not mean that they are all equally wicked; for some are less sinful than others. I do not mean that they are destitute of everything useful, and lovely in society; for their social affections are often strong and praiseworthy. I do not mean that their actions are always wrong; the contrary is manifestly true.

What I mean by total depravity, is an entire destitution in the human heart by nature—of all spiritual affection, and holy propensities. In this view, **every child is totally depraved.**

To change this state of the mind, and produce a holy bias; to create a new disposition; to turn all the affections into a new channel, and cause them to flow towards God and heaven, is the work of the omnipotent and eternal Spirit!

### **Gently rubbed off by the hand of love**

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven!" Matt. 5:10-12

Consider it your honor to be persecuted for righteousness sake.

The richest laurel that can adorn your brow is the scorn of fools!

The praise of the wicked is censure—and their satire is praise.

Every feeble mind can scoff, but only the wise man can bear it well.

The scorner is below a man; but the man who bears scorn patiently is like an angel.

Instead of indulging in revenge, exercise forgiveness!

You have reason rather to be grateful to the scoffer, than to be angry with him. His foul breath, though it seems to tarnish your reputation for awhile, yet being **gently rubbed off by the hand of love**, shall only prepare it for a brighter luster.

And it shall be proved hereafter that the scorner was the occasion of adding one more gem to the crown of glory which shall adorn your brow with unfading honor!

Pity him, for he is indeed more an object of your pity than of your contempt. Thus prove to the scoffer that the religion which he ridicules, subdues the turbulent and angry passions, teaches its possessor to forgive iniquities against himself, and implants the godlike disposition of returning good for evil.

### **The sum total of worldly enjoyment in those two ciphers!**

"I have seen everything that is done under the sun. Look at

it! **All is vanity and vexation of spirit!**" Ecclesiastes 1:14

The design of Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes seems to be this—after detailing the good things of life to the widest extent, setting them in the strongest light, and granting to them every possible advantage which their most passionate admirers contend for—to demonstrate, that as they are attended with so many inseparable evils, are so short-lived in their continuance, so unprofitable in the hour of death, and so utterly useless in the eternal world beyond the grave—that they are insufficient for the needs of the soul, and inadequate to the eternal happiness of man.

No one was more capable of forming a correct opinion on this subject than Solomon; since no man ever commanded more resources of earthly delight than he did, or ever more eagerly availed himself of the opportunities which he possessed. And yet he grew disgusted and dissatisfied with sensual pleasures, and at length gives us **the sum total of worldly enjoyment in those two ciphers—vanity and vexation of spirit!**

His testimony, therefore, is to be considered as that of a man who had **drunk the cup of earthly pleasures to its dregs**—and who found those dregs to be wormwood, gall, and poison!

### **The worst enemy of mankind!**

"Being **examples to the flock.**" 1 Peter 5:3

"He will remind you of **my way of life** in Christ Jesus, **which agrees with what I teach** everywhere in every church." 1 Corinthians 4:17

They expect to see our descriptions of piety copied into our own conduct; and happy the man who having set forth true godliness in his discourses, in all its beautiful proportions and all its glowing colors, shall constrain the audience to exclaim, "The painter has delineated his own likeness!" Happy the man who, when the people shall ask, "What is true religion?" shall

be not only able to reply in reference to his pulpit, "Come and hear," but in reference to his life, "Come and see!"

He alone is an honor to his pastoral office, who lives the gospel which he preaches, and adorns by his conduct the doctrines which he believes. **But the unholy minister is a disgrace to Christianity, and the worst enemy of mankind!** He is the most powerful abettor of infidelity, and does more to wither the eternal interests of mankind than the most malignant and pestiferous treatises that ever issued from the press. If he perished alone in his sins, our feelings might be those of unmingled pity. But when we view him ruining the souls of others by his example, we unite abhorrence with our compassion, just as we would at the conduct of the shepherd who first drove his flock over a precipice, and then dashed himself upon the rocks below!

### **An insatiable thirst after larger attainments**

The man who thinks he has enough godliness—gives a decisive proof that he has none at all. There is in true piety, **an insatiable thirst after larger attainments** . . .  
in knowledge,  
in faith,  
in hope,  
in love,  
in purity.

Therefore let every real Christian adopt the language of Paul, and act up to the assertion, "Not that I have already reached the goal or am already fully mature, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do—forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14

### **He cannot forget**

"Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." John 3:36

The Christian realizes that the whole human race is in a state of sin and ruin; suffering all the consequences of sin in this world—and exposed to the bitter pains of eternal death in the world to come. He is convinced that without a fitness for the pure and spiritual joys of heaven, not one individual of all the millions who are continually passing into eternity, can ascend to the realms of glory and felicity. They appear, in his eyes, to be actually perishing, and hence he is filled with the tenderest concern, and affected with the deepest sorrow. In his estimation . . .

the most agonizing diseases,  
the most pinching poverty,  
the greatest deprivation,  
and the heaviest cares,  
are as nothing, compared with those miseries  
which sin has brought upon the deathless soul.

**He cannot forget**, that the soul, if not saved, will become immortal in its suffering and wretchedness.

"Whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." John 3:36

### **Delusive signs!**

There are **delusive signs** of spiritual health and vigor.

Increased ability and disposition to 'talk of religion' in the way of explaining and defending its doctrines, may be mistaken for an increased influence of it in the heart. Yet this may be nothing but the working of pride, or an effusion of vanity.

To have a knowledge of the truths of Scripture, without

an experience of their influence upon the heart, is only walking to the bottomless pit with the torch of truth in our right hand!

Zeal for some peculiar notions or forms, may be thought to be pure concern for God's glory. Yet all the while it may only be the most rancorous party spirit.

Liberality in giving may be merely self-righteousness or ostentation.

Undeviating formality may be erroneously thought to be ardent devotion.

Enthusiastic attachment to some novel opinion, may be erroneously supposed to be spirituality of mind.

These are but a few specimens of the errors into which people fall, in judging spiritual health and vigor. And they tend to show the vast importance of our having a scriptural knowledge of the correct tests of personal godliness.

### **As he snuffs the gale of popular applause!**

"In all things approving ourselves as the **ministers of God.**" 2 Corinthians 6:4.

This verse implies that ministers are to labor for God—surely not for the preacher's fame. SELF is an idol which has been worshiped by far greater multitudes than any other deity of either ancient or modern heathenism. A minister is the last man in the world who should be seen at the altar of this vile abomination—SELF. And yet without great care he is likely to be the first one there, to linger there the longest, to bow the lowest, and to express his devotion by the costliest sacrifices!

Many become ministers merely to acquire popular applause. 'Fame' is their motive and their aim. To

commend themselves, is the secret but powerful spring of all they do. SELF is with them in the study directing their reading, selecting their texts, arranging their thoughts, forming their illustrations—and all with a view to 'shine in public'. Thus prepared, they ascend the pulpit with the same object which conducts **the actor** to the stage—to secure the applause of approving spectators. Every tone is modulated, every emphasis laid, every attitude regulated—to please the audience, rather than to profit their souls; to commend themselves, and not Jesus Christ. The service ended, this bosom idol returns with them to their own abode, and renders them restless and uneasy to know how they have succeeded. If they are admired, they receive their reward; if not, the first prize is lost!

It is nothing in abatement of the sin, that all this while evangelical sentiments are uttered. Orthodoxy is the most direct road to popularity. Christ may be the text—when SELF is the sermon! And dreadful as it seems, it is to be feared that many have elevated the cross only to suspend upon the 'sacred tree' their own honors! and have employed all the glories of redemption—merely to emblazon their own name!

The ministry is not intended to be a platform, where the petty manufacturer of 'tinsel eloquence' and 'rhetorical flowers' shall display to a gaping crowd his gaudy wares!

When carried to this height, this is the direst, deepest tragedy that was ever performed by man, since it ends in the actual and eternal death of **the performer**, who forgets, **as he snuffs the gale of popular applause**, that it bears the vapors of damnation!

"The Spirit took me to the north gate of the temple's inner courtyard, where there was **an idol that disgusted the Lord and made Him furious!**"  
(Ezekiel 8:3)

**This heavenly magnet!**

"But God proves His own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!" Romans 5:8

It magnifies the love of God, to consider the guilt, sinfulness and unworthiness of its objects.

As **an exhibition of unparalleled love**, the cross melts and captivates the heart! Think of **the attraction of the cross**—when the love which it exhibits, is seen and felt by a mind under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

What was it, my readers, which melted your hard and frozen hearts into penitence, and gratitude and love? What was it that drew you away from your sins? What was it that brought you as willing captives to the feet of Jesus? It was the love of God beseeching you upon the summit of Calvary, and with open arms bidding you welcome to the heart of Deity!

Everything else united to repel you. The terrors of justice petrified you with horror, and despair was binding you more closely than ever to your sins—until divine mercy appeared and told you there was hope for the guilty—in **this heavenly magnet**—the cross of Christ!

### **Gathering around the very cradle of his infant!**

The godly parent reflects on the destiny of that being which with rapture, he calls **his child**. He penetrates the disguise which the 'helplessness and unconsciousness of infancy' seem to have thrown around that child, and discovers the grandeur and the dignity of an immortal being! He sees in his countenance, that **face** which is to shine like the sun in the skies with the glory of God—OR to be clouded with the infamy and horror of the divine curse! He hears a **voice** which is to be forever hymning the praises of its Creator—OR to be forever venting blasphemies against its Judge!

In short, he contemplates a being born for eternity; one who will be forever towering from height to height of glory in heaven—OR sinking from gulf to gulf of despair in hell!



He reflects that his child is born with the latent seeds of sinful corruption in his nature, which await only the advancing 'spring of life' to vegetate, to strike root, to spring up under the fatal warmth of temptation, and bear the bitter fruits of rebellion against God.

He sees, in imagination, the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**, **gathering around the very cradle of his infant**, fixing their murderous eyes upon his immortal soul and going out to prepare for his ruin!

He realizes that his child possesses an immortal soul, which is in danger of being forever undone! To desire anything for him less than the salvation of his child's immortal soul, is **cruelty of the blackest kind!**

### **The hand of faith**

When **the hand of faith** opens to lay hold of Christ, it drops the sin it had grasped before. You must part with your sin—or Christ.

### **The devil's sin**

**Pride** is the parent sin. Pride is the original sin, both in heaven and on earth. Pride is **the devil's sin**, and that by which our first parents fell. We have all more of this hateful disposition than we either know or suspect.

### **An ice house, instead of a hot house!**

It appears quite clear then, that great numbers of Christian professors are but very imperfectly acquainted with the requirements of "pure and undefiled religion," and need to be led to re-study it in the pages of Holy Scripture. We have lost sight of the 'divine Original', and have confined our attention to the 'imperfect transcripts'

which we find on every hand in our churches. We have by tacit consent reduced the standard, and fixed our eye and our aim upon an inferior object. We are a law to each other, instead of making the Word of God the law to us all.

We tolerate a worldly-minded, diluted, and weakened piety in others—because we expect a similar toleration for ourselves. We make excuses for them—because we expect the like excuses for our own conduct in return. We have abused, shamefully abused, the fact that 'there is no perfection upon earth,' and converted it into a license for any measure and any number of imperfections!

Our highest notion of religion requires only abstinence from open immorality and the more polluting worldly amusements; an attendance upon an evangelical ministry; and an approval of orthodox doctrine. **This, this, is the religion of multitudes!** There may be . . .

- no habitual spirituality;
- no heavenly-mindedness;
- no life of faith;
- no communion with God;
- no struggling against sin, Satan, and the world;
- no concern to grow in grace;
- no supreme regard to eternity;
- no studied and advancing fitness for the eternal world;
- no tenderness of conscience;
- no laborious discipline of our disposition;
- no cultivation of love;
- no making piety our chief business and highest pleasure;
- no separation in spirit from the world.

In short, no impress upon the whole mind, and heart, and conscience and life—of the character of the Christian, as delineated upon the page of Scripture.

We all need to be taken out of 'the religious world', as it is called, and collected again around the Bible to study what it is to **be** a Christian! Let us endeavor to forget what the bulk of professors **are**, and begin afresh to learn what they **ought** to be.

It is to be feared that **we are corrupting each other**, leading each other to be satisfied with a 'conventional

piety'. Many have been actually the worse for attending church. They were more intensely concerned and earnest before they came into church fellowship. Their piety seemed to come into **an ice house, instead of a hot house!** They grew better outside the church—than in the church. At first they were surprised and shocked to see . . .  
the lukewarmness,  
the irregularities,  
the worldliness,  
the inconsistencies,  
of many older professors, and exclaimed, with grief and disappointment, "Is this the church of Christ!"  
But after a while, **the fatal influence** came over them, and their piety sank to the temperature around them!

### **Constant multiplication of corrupted copies**

Our idea of the nature of earnest individual piety must be taken, not from the conventional customs of the age—but from the Word of God. Once give up the Bible as the only true standard of personal piety, and there is no rule left but custom, which is ever varying with the opinions and corruptions of the times.

Yet how prevalent is the disposition to conform ourselves to the prevailing religion of the day and of the church to which we belong, and to satisfy ourselves with the average measure of piety around us! "I am as good as my fellow members!" is the shield with which many a professor wards off the allegation of his being below his duty.

This has been the fatal practical error of the church through every age of its existence, by which . . .  
its **beauty** has been disfigured,  
its **power** weakened,  
its **usefulness** impeded!

Professing Christians, instead of looking into the perfect standard of Scripture, and seeing themselves reflected from that faithful mirror, and adjusting their character and conduct by its infallible revelations—placed before themselves the standard of the Christian profession as it was found in the church of the day, and regulated

their behavior by what they saw in the prevailing character of their fellow Christians.

Thus a **constant multiplication of corrupted copies** has ever been going on! And religion, as seen in the conduct of its professors, compared with that which is described in the pages of its own inspired rule—have been quite different things!

Let us turn away from the religion we see in the church—to the religion we read in the Bible! Let us not go to the imperfect and blurred copy—but to the perfect and unspotted original! The Bible's representation of the nature of true piety is intended for us as our guide, and is obligatory upon us!

The inspired, unalterable, and infallible standard of Scripture is . . .  
too spiritual,  
too devout,  
too unearthly,  
too humbling,  
too self-denying,  
for many.

"Deny yourself, and take up your cross, and follow Me!"  
is still the stern, unbending demand of Christ.

### **Satan's workshop!**

([J. A. James](#), speaking of the power of the press in 1848)

"I don't want Satan to outwit us. After all, we are not ignorant about **Satan's scheming**." 2 Corinthians 2:11

The press has a great power for evil. Infidel and immoral writers are pouring forth a deluge of skepticism and vice, which are depositing a pernicious and pestiferous slime over the minds of the people.

Let it be imagined, if imagined it can be, what must be the state of multitudes in this country, when millions of pestiferous publications are annually going out among

the masses of our population. Let the minds of all  
Christian people dwell upon . . .  
the insult offered to God,  
the ruin brought upon souls,  
the injury done to morals, and  
the mischief perpetrated in the nation,  
by such a state of things!

These ungodly publications originate from **Satan's  
workshop**, and reflect the scenes of that dreadful  
laboratory of mental poison! These authors, printers,  
publishers, booksellers, vendors, by myriads, are all  
busy and indefatigable—**to do what?**

To destroy the Bible,  
to corrupt the mind,  
to pull down the cross,  
to dethrone God,  
to subvert true religion,  
to turn man into a speaking brute,  
to overturn all morality,  
to poison the springs of domestic happiness,  
to dissolve the ties of social order,  
to involve our country in ruin!

Satan, and all his emissaries upon earth,  
are in earnest in ruining men's souls!

We have an evil to contend with—  
so gigantic in its strength,  
so diffused in its influence all around us,  
so infectious and malignant in its effects!

The enemy is coming in like a flood!

Infidelity and immorality are invading us!

The alarm bell must be rung!

**Every one of those little creatures  
will be either in heaven—or in hell**

"Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

(Ephesians 6:4)

Fond **mother**, look at that babe hanging on your bosom, and those other children sporting around your knee. And you, the **father** of the family, watching them indulge in joyous emotions and playful expressions—pause, ponder, reflect—millions of ages from that moment of domestic ecstasy, **every one of those little creatures will be either in heaven—or in hell**; will be a seraph—or a fiend; will be enduring inconceivable torment—or enjoying ineffable felicity; will be an associate with the devil and his demons in everlasting fire—or a companion with the innumerable company of angels in everlasting glory!

Overwhelming thought!

How tremendous is the responsibility of a parent! The immortal destiny of your children should be your one great, commanding, controlling, absorbing object!

**But you are dead!**

"I know your works; **you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead!**" Revelation 3:1

One most impressive lessons which is taught here, is that churches may have a reputation for being in a flourishing condition—and yet be all the while in a state of progressive decay!

How many churches are flattering themselves that they are in a flourishing condition! The **place** of worship may be commodious, elegant, and free from debt. The **minister** may be popular, and approved by his flock. The **congregation** may be large, respectable, and influential. The **finances** may be good, and even prosperous. In short, there may be every mark of **external** prosperity—until the church flatters itself into the idea of its being in a high state of spiritual health.

But examine its **internal** state! Inquire into its condition as viewed by God! Inspect the private conduct of its members—and what a different aspect of things is seen then!

How prevalent is **the spirit of the world** in their social fellowship! Games and parties, scarcely differing from the fashionable circles of the worldly and the mirthful, are kept up at much expense, and with every accompaniment of frivolity and levity! Let a godly person of devotional taste, spiritual affections, and tenderness of conscience, enter into the parties of such a congregation—and what a destitution of vital piety, and what prevailing worldliness would he find!

Let us look beneath the illusive covering of external prosperity—and examine whether disease and decay are lurking underneath!

There is often a strange contrast between the 'heavenliness' which a church professes—and the 'worldliness' of her conduct.

"For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked." (Revelation 3:17)

### **Observe the holy virtues**

"In all things see that you are an example of good works—holy in your teaching, serious in behavior."  
(Titus 2:7)

Never was there . . .  
a more pure and sincere creature;  
a more dutiful daughter;  
a more harmless and inoffensive being,  
than she was! And yet how did she confess  
and bewail her sinfulness in the sight of God;  
how entirely did she renounce all dependence  
upon her own good doings, and how exclusively  
did she rely upon the righteousness of Christ!

**Observe the holy virtues** which clustered  
in her character . . .  
how profound was her humility

how gentle her demeanor,  
how striking her meekness,  
how uncomplaining her submission,  
how exemplary her patience,  
how exquisite her benevolence,  
how ardent her zeal,  
how tender her attachments,  
how intense her piety!

And, to crown all, how unmixed was all this with any spiritual pride, or any sense of superiority, or any sanctimonious airs. How much is there for all of us to learn and to copy! Be stimulated, encouraged and guided by the example of Elizabeth Bales!

"You should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."  
(1 Timothy 4:12)

### **The damnation of one soul**

"For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26)

One soul is of more value than the whole world!

The **salvation** of one soul is a greater blessing than the temporal deliverance of an empire!

**The damnation of one soul** is a greater calamity than the misery of a kingdom for a thousand ages!

"He will also drink the wine of God's wrath, which is mixed full strength in the cup of His anger. He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever."  
Revelation 14:10-11



## Piety and morality

True religion consists of two parts—**piety and morality**.

By **piety**, I mean a right state of heart towards God, that is, the existence of supreme love, arising out of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, manifested by delight in God's nature, reverence for His character, obedience to His commands, gratitude for His services, and all those acts of worship which He has enjoined in His word. True piety is the real, intelligent and cordial submission of the whole man, to the will of God as revealed in Scripture.

By **morality**, I mean all those moral duties which we owe to our fellow-creatures and to ourselves.

True religion is a right state of the soul, not only towards God, but also towards man. It must follow us everywhere, and influence us in all things, and at all times.

True religion gives an elevation and dignity to the whole character, and exalts even the commonest duties of life into acts of piety.

## Who can wonder?

"You should be an **example** to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12

Look into some families of professors; follow them through the history of only one week, and see . . .

- their worldly mindedness,
- their gaiety,
- their frivolity,
- their unsanctified tempers,
- their worldly reading,
- their amusements,
- their homage to talent,
- their low esteem of holiness,

their negligence of family prayer,  
their neglect of godly instruction to their children  
—and **who can wonder** that young people, brought  
up amidst such scenes, do not become pious—but go  
off to the world or to sin?

**Too often the children are like their parents,**  
and bring into the church no higher or better kind  
of religion than what they have learned at home!  
And thus a low tone of piety, a lukewarm Laodicean  
spirit, is extended and perpetuated.

There must be a revival of piety in the parents!  
It is vain to expect that a worldly-minded **father**,  
whose spirituality, if he ever had any, has been  
utterly evaporated by the exclusiveness of concern  
about business and politics; or a frivolous, pleasure  
loving **mother**, who thinks far more about adorning  
the bodies of her children, than about saving their  
souls—should be at all concerned about the pious  
education of their children.

Recollect what a solemn thing it is to be a parent!  
What a weighty responsibility attaches to those who  
have the immortal souls of their children committed  
to their care!

"You fathers, don't provoke your children to wrath,  
but nurture them in the discipline and instruction  
of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

**Take the following maxims for your guide:**

(John Angell James, "An Address to the Children" 1855)

1. True piety will be your best friend—for both worlds!
2. The eye of God is always upon you, and  
He is present when no one else is near!
3. Godliness is the best of all things, for it makes

bitter things sweet—and sweet things sweeter!

4. What a boy would be as a man, let him seek to be that while a boy. The boy is the father of the man!
5. Sin is deceitful as well as wicked, leading you to commit great sins by first tempting you to little ones; and leading you into habits of sin by asking for only one sin at a time. "Only this once!" is Satan's way of beguiling you into a course of sin. What ought not to be done at all—should not be done once!
6. Avoid the first wrong step!
7. There are three things, which if lost, can never be recovered—time, opportunity, and the soul!
8. A holy and useful life is more to be desired than a long or a prosperous one!
9. To live wholly for ourselves is a poor, base, contemptible life!
10. "When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is: fear God and keep His commands. For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

### **There is wondrous power in it!**

Saving faith has a great influence on all one's feelings, actions, and character. Though there is no merit in faith—**there is wondrous power in it!** Faith is the inlet both of happiness and holiness to the soul. To believe that the eternal God . . .  
is reconciled to us,  
pardons all our sins,  
receives us to His special favor,  
gives us a title to eternal life,  
must from necessity be a source of ineffable delight, and the cause of an entire change in

all our tastes, pursuits, and character!

True faith in Christ is . . .  
the foundation of the believer's happiness,  
the means of his holiness,  
the spring of all his actions,  
the true basis of his character.

### Beautiful bubbles!

Many are saying, "Who can show us anything good?"  
Look on us with favor, Lord. You have put more joy  
in my heart than they have when their grain and  
new wine abound. (Psalm 4:6-7)

There is certainly some pleasure in the gratification of the  
appetites—in the enjoyment of health, friends, property,  
and fame. **Even sinful objects have their pleasures.**  
There could be no power in temptation, if sin yielded no  
enjoyment. But viewing man as a rational, moral, and  
immortal creature; as a sinner subject to the stings of a  
reproachful conscience, and under the displeasure of the  
God he has offended; as liable to all the vicissitudes of a  
tearful existence, and ever exposed to the fear and stroke  
of death—he needs something more for his happiness,  
than can be found in the objects of this world. He has . . .  
**needs** which they cannot supply;  
**cravings** which they cannot satisfy;  
**woes** which they cannot alleviate;  
**anxieties** which they cannot dispel.

For each one that is even tolerably successful in gaining  
felicity from visible objects, there are many who utterly fail.  
Their schemes are frustrated; their hopes perish; **their air  
castles vanish as they journey on in life.** And each  
ends a course of worldly-mindedness, by adding another  
to the millions of examples which have proved this present  
world to be vanity.

In some cases, abundance and unobstructed enjoyment  
produce revulsion. Tired of old pleasures, they look about

for new ones, and plead the oft-repeated inquiry, "Who will show us anything good?" Novelty perhaps comes to the relief of their discontented, restless, and dissatisfied minds; but novelty itself soon grows old, and still something new is wanted. There remains an aching void within, a craving, hungry appetite for bliss—unsatisfied, unfed. They hunt for enjoyment . . .

in endless parties of pleasure,  
in every place of amusement,  
in every scene of diversion;  
in the dance, and in the game;  
in the theater, and in the concert;  
amidst the scenes of nature, and  
in the changes of foreign travel.

But happiness, like a shadow ever flitting before them, and **ever eluding their grasp**, tantalizes them with its form, without yielding them its substance; and excites their hopes—only to disappoint them!

What are all the pleasures of time and sense, all the objects of this visible world—but as the **dropping of pebbles into a deep chasm**, which, instead of filling it up, only tell them how deep it is—by awakening the dismal echoes of emptiness and desolation.

Look at the worldling. Does he succeed in his quest for happiness? Is he satisfied? Let him possess all he seeks, all he wishes, all that earth can furnish; let rank be added to wealth, and fame to both; let a constant round of fashionable amusements, festive scenes, and elegant parties, follow in endless succession, until his cup is full to overflowing. What does it all amount to? "All that my eyes desired, I did not deny them. I did not refuse myself any pleasure. When I considered all that I had accomplished and what I had labored to achieve, **I found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the wind!** There was nothing to be gained under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2)

Have not multitudes since Solomon's time, made the same melancholy confession? Is it not a general admission, that the pleasure of worldly objects arises more from hope and anticipation—rather than possession? They are like **beautiful bubbles**, which, as they float, reflect the colors of the rainbow—but dissolve and vanish when grasped! Tell me, votaries of

earthly good, have you realized what you expected? Are not the scenes of festivity and amusement resorted to, by many with aching hearts? Does not the smiling countenance often conceal a troubled spirit; and is not the laugh resorted to in order to suppress the sigh?

Even if it were granted, that the possession of wealth, the gratifications of taste, and the indulgence of appetite, could give happiness in seasons of health and prosperity—they must inevitably fail in the day of sickness and adversity. If they were satisfying for a season—**they are all fragile and uncertain!** All the enjoyments of this life are like gathered flowers, which are no sooner plucked, than they begin to lose their beauty and their fragrance while we look at them and smell them; and which, however mirthful and beautiful they appeared while they were growing—begin to wither as soon as they are in our hands!

### **JEWELS from JAMES**

(Choice devotional selections from the works of John Angell James)

#### **Like a ball and chain around his ankle!**

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and **the sin which so easily besets you.**" Hebrews 12:1

**Besetting sins** are powerful hindrances to Christian progress. In the case of most people, there is **some one sin** to which, either from their situation, taste, constitution, or other circumstances—they are more powerfully tempted than to others.

**Satan** knows very well what in every case this is, and skillfully adapts his temptations to it. **He is an expert angler**, and never chooses his bait, or throws his line, at random! Independently, however, of him, the very tendency of the heart is in that direction.

**That one sin**, whatever it is, while indulged, will hold you back! You cannot make progress in holiness, until

it is mortified. Even its partial indulgence, though it may be considerably weakened, will hinder you!

Study then your situation, circumstances, and constitution. You cannot be ignorant which temptation and sin, you are most liable to succumb to. You must know in what way you have most frequently wounded your conscience, and occasioned to yourself shame and sorrow.

Is it an unsanctified temper?

Is it an impure imagination?

Is it a proud heart?

Is it a vain mind?

Is it a taste for worldly company?

Is it a proneness to envy and jealousy?

Is it a love of money?

Is it a tendency to exaggeration in speech?

Is it a fondness for pleasure?

Is it a disposition to censoriousness and backbiting?

Study yourselves! Examine your own heart! You must find out this matter, and it requires no great pains in order to know it. It floats upon the surface of the heart, and does not lie hidden in its depths. There, there, is your danger! As long as **that one sin**, be it what it may, is indulged, you cannot advance in the Christian life!

Other sins are like unnecessary clothing to the racer.

Besetting sins are **like a ball and chain around his ankle!**

**Is this your religion?**

"If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing!**" 1 Corinthians 13:2

**LOVE** is a grace which many professing Christians think far too little about; but it is of infinite value in the eyes of God. Love is the most characteristic feature of Christ's image in a renewed man. Love is the most precious fruit of grace; and yet the fruit which too many of His professed followers seem to think themselves hardly under any obligation to cultivate.

**Christian love** is that benevolent disposition or kindness, which consists in good-will to all creatures, and which leads us, as we have opportunity, to promote their happiness.

The apostle has given us a description of the exercises of this noble and god-like principle.

"Love is patient" and forbearing under injuries and annoyances—and does not revile, revenge, or retaliate.

"Love is kind," not harsh or crude—but ever ready, willing, and pleased by looks, words, and actions, to promote the comfort of others.

"Love does not envy." It does not pine and grieve at the sight of another's superior possessions, fame, happiness, or piety—and dislike him on that account.

"Love does not boast. Love is not proud." It neither boasts its own gifts, achievements, and possessions, nor despises others, nor makes insulting comparisons—but is humble and gentle.

"Love does not behave unseemly." It modestly keeps its place, and does nothing to offend by what is unfitting its rank, station, or circumstances.

"Love seeks not her own." It does not selfishly want



to have its own way, or promote its own interest—to the neglect of others.

"Love is not easily provoked." It governs its temper, controls its passions, and is not soon or unreasonably irritable or petulant.

"Love thinks no evil." It is not censorious, nor forward to impute a bad motive to a doubtful action—but is disposed to put the best construction on the actions and words of others.

"Love rejoices not in iniquity—but rejoices in the truth." It does not delight in the sins—but in the excellences of an opponent.

"Love bears (or covers) all things." It does not divulge, proclaim, aggravate faults—but hides them as far as it can, and it is right to do so.

"Love believes all things," that are to the advantage of another.

"Love hopes all things," where there is not sufficient evidence to authorize belief.

"Love endures all things," bears hardships, sustains labor, makes sacrifices—in order to accomplish its purposes of good-will.

Such is love in exercise and act. This is benevolence—this is a regard to the happiness of others. Whoever acts thus, must promote happiness. He must bless all around him. All things smile in his presence.

Beautiful description! Heavenly temper! Godlike mind!

Now, dear friends, **look at love!** Gaze upon . . .  
its lovely form,  
its beautiful countenance,  
its graceful actings.

Observe its seraphic glow, its divine temper, until you are all enamored with its charms. But look at it not only

as something to be admired—but to be possessed and practiced. Unless this is your temperament, you are not Christians. I do not say you cannot be Christians unless you have love in perfection. But you must have the principle of love, and must be living in its exercise. You are Christians no further than you live under its influence.

No matter what knowledge you may have of the doctrines of the gospel; what seeming faith you may possess; what zeal you may manifest; what liberality you may exercise; what regularity, and punctuality in attendance upon the means of grace, you may maintain—if love is lacking, all this is of no avail.

### **Nothing can be a substitute for love.**

Christianity is love . . .  
not a slavish attendance on ceremonies;  
not receiving the sacraments;  
not zeal for orthodoxy;  
not a form of church government;  
not belonging to any particular church.

God's eternal thoughts and purposes in **election**, Christ's **redeeming** work upon the cross, the Spirit's omnipotent agency in **regeneration**, are not merely to bring us under a particular ecclesiastical regimen—but to deliver us from the dominion of selfishness, and place us under the reign of love—and thus make us like God!

If an individual is destitute of love, he has no saving religion. He may be zealous for the forms of Christianity, but he is destitute of its living spirit.

And now, my dear friends, let me entreat you to examine yourselves concerning this great essential of the Christian character. Are you experimentally acquainted with this disposition? **Is this your religion?** Is your temperament thus molded? Is that one word 'love' characteristic of your spirit? Has God's love to you, changed you into its own likeness? Do you know what it is to have pride, passion, envy, malice, selfishness—subdued,

repressed, resisted—by a meek, gentle, lowly, forgiving, forbearing, generous, self-denying temper? Are the harshness, hardness, asperity of the fallen nature, displaced by the softness, sweetness, and kindness of true love?

### **They shall not swoon, nor halt, nor turn back**

How full of encouragement is the language of the prophet Isaiah, "But those who hope in the Lord will find new strength. They will **fly** high on wings like eagles. They will **run** and not grow weary. They will **walk** and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31

This beautiful passage contains a promise of **continued supplies of grace and strength** to all who really desire to serve the Lord with integrity and simplicity. In the image of the **eagle**, the prophet alludes to the strength of wing and of vision possessed by this noble bird—whereby it ascends to a lofty height, untired and undazzled—soaring even above the fogs and mists of the lower regions of the air, mounting above the very clouds, undeterred by the lightning, and floating in the pure azure above!

Thus shall all who hope in the Lord rise higher and higher, upon the mighty wings of strong devotion, and with the unblinking eye of faith—into the regions of heavenly mindedness; and shall approach nearer and nearer to God—the sun of our spiritual day.

"They will **run**" in the heavenly race, for the crown of immortal glory, "and not grow weary." Their strength, instead of being exhausted, shall, contrary to what occurs in bodily effort—be increased by exertion. No length nor greatness of labor shall be too much for them. God shall pour into their souls, **fresh energy for every fresh effort.**

"They will **walk** and not be faint." Their pilgrimage may be arduous; the road may be long and rugged; often up steep ascents, and down into deep and rocky crags, where every step is a labor—but they shall not

lose heart or hope; **they shall not swoon, nor halt, nor turn back**—but go forwards, **sustained by a power greater than their own!**

### **Dethroned—but not destroyed!**

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Romans 7:18

A Christian is truly regenerated—but at the same time only partially sanctified.

### **Sin is dethroned—but not destroyed!**

His predominant taste and disposition are holy—but godly principles may not yet have struck their roots very deep into his soul.

His holy purposes are somewhat vacillating, and his inclinations to evil sometimes strong.

We have the burden of our fleshly corruptions to carry, which without great labor and effort, will sadly retard us in our Christian lives.

We are like a traveler who is on a smooth road, has fine weather, is intimately acquainted with the way, and has agreeable and helpful companions—but who at the same time is very lame, or has a load to carry. His lameness or his load will be a great delay to him. His attention must be directed to these things. He must cure the one or lighten the other, or he will make slow progress.

### **A poor, weak, and trembling creature**

"He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will carry

**the lambs** in His arms, holding them close to His heart." Isaiah 40:11

Dwell upon the love and tenderness of our Lord Jesus!

Notice who are **the objects of His care**—"the lambs," which means not only those of tender age—but also those who have been newly converted; those who are young in Christian experience; and also those whose temperament is naturally timid, whose strength is feeble, and whose danger is great.

Yes, you are **the objects of Christ's special attention, care, and solicitude!** You are those whom He takes up in the arms of His power—and lays on the bosom of His love! He knows . . .

your weakness,  
your timidity,  
your dangers!

He will exert for you . . .

His tenderest **sympathy**,  
His greatest **vigilance**,  
His mightiest **power**.

This expression however not only conveys the idea of great care of the weak—but the exercise of that care with a view to their preservation and growth. It means not only that He cordially receives them, will provide for their safety, be concerned for their comfort, and will accommodate His conduct to their needs—but He will also nourish them through their infant existence, and raise them up to maturity and strength.

Let every **lamb** of the flock of Christ, therefore, go to Him by faith and prayer, and say, "Blessed Jesus, I come to you as **a poor, weak, and trembling creature**, doubtful of my own continuance, and alarmed at my numerous difficulties and enemies. **I am but a lamb**, and often fear I shall never be anything better. But was it not in regard to such weakness that You have been pleased to utter these gracious and tender words? I flee to you as the helpless lamb to its shepherd—when hungry, to feed it—or when pursued by wild beasts, that

he may defend it. Lord, take me in the arms of Your power and lay me on the bosom of Your love—though I am so poor and helpless a creature. I will hope in your nurturing power and love, that I shall continue to grow, and that You will one day rejoice in me, as one of the flock which You have purchased with Your own blood!"

### **This pleasure-loving, pleasure-seeking, and pleasure-inventing age**

**A taste for worldly amusements** will inevitably prove, wherever it is indulged—a powerful obstacle to growth in grace.

Man is unquestionably made for enjoyment. He has a capacity for bliss—an instinctive appetite for gratification; and for this, God has made ample provision of a healthful and lawful kind. But "a taste for worldly pleasure" means that this God-given capacity is directed to wrong sources, or carried to an excess.

Now there are some amusements which in their very nature are so utterly incompatible with true godliness, that a **liking** for them, and a **hankering** after them, and especially an **indulgence** in them—cannot exist with real, earnest, and serious piety.

The dissolute parties of the glutton and the drunkard; the fervency for the gambling-table; the pleasures of the race-course; the performances of the theater—are all of this kind. **A taste for them is utterly uncongenial with a spirit of godliness!** So is a love for the gay and fashionable entertainments of the ball-room, and the wanton parties of the upper classes. These are all unfriendly to true religion, and are usually renounced by people intent upon the momentous concerns of eternity.

We would not doom to perdition, all who are at any time found in this round of worldly pleasure—but we unhesitatingly say, that a taste for them is entirely opposed to the whole spirit of Christianity! They are

all included in that "world" which is overcome by faith and the new birth.

True religion is, though a **happy**, a very **serious** thing—and can no more live and flourish in the uncongenial atmosphere of those parties, than could a young tender plant survive, if brought into a frigid zone!

But in **this pleasure-loving, pleasure-seeking, and pleasure-inventing age**, there is a great variety of amusements perpetually rising up, which it would be impossible to say are sinful, and therefore unlawful. Yet the 'supposition of their lawfulness' viewed in connection with their abundance, variety, and constant repetition, is the very thing that makes them dangerous to the spirit of true religion.

**A taste for even lawful worldly amusements**, which leads its possessor to be **fond** of them, **seeking** them, and **longing** for them—shows a mind that is in a very doubtful state as to vital piety.

A Christian is not to partake of the pleasures of the world, merely to prove that his religion does not debar him from enjoyment. But he is to let it be seen by his "peace which passes understanding," and his "joy unspeakable and full of glory," that his godliness gives far more enjoyment than it takes away—that, in fact, it gives him the truest happiness!

The way to win a worldly person to true religion is not to go and partake of his amusements; but to prove to him, that we are happier with our pleasures—than he is with his; that we bask in full sunshine—while he has only a smoking candle; that we have found the "river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb"—while he is drinking of the muddy streams which issue from the earth!

"Many are asking, 'Who can show us any good?'  
Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.  
**You have filled my heart with greater joy** than when their grain and new wine abound!" Ps. 4:6-7

After all, it is freely admitted—

1. That true religion is not hostile to anything which is not hostile to it.
2. That many things which are not strictly pious, though not opposed to piety—may be lawfully enjoyed by the Christian.
3. That what he has to do in this matter is not to practice total abstinence—but "moderation".
4. Yet the Christian should remember how elastic a term "moderation" is, and to be vigilant lest his moderation should continually increase its latitude, until it has swelled into the imperial tyranny of an appetite which acknowledges no authority—and submits to no restraint!

### **Growing worse?**

One of the last lessons we effectually learn, is that true godliness is a constant conflict in a believer's heart—between sin and holiness.

Some sincere believers mistake a clearer view, and deeper sense of their depravity, for an actual increase of sin. The Christian seems sometimes to himself, to be **growing worse**, when actually it is only that he sees more clearly what in fact he really is!

In the early stages of our Christian life, we have usually but a slender acquaintance with the evil of our sinfulness, and the depravity of our heart. The mind is so much taken up with pardon and eternal life, that it is but imperfectly acquainted with those depths of deceit and wickedness, which lie hidden in itself.

At first we seem to feel as if the **serpent** were killed. But we soon find that he was only asleep—for by the warmth of some fiery temptation, **he is revived and hisses at us again!**

Nothing astonishes an inexperienced believer more



than the discoveries he is continually making of the evils of his heart. Corruptions which he never dreamt to be in him, are brought out by some new circumstances.

It is like turning up the **soil**, which brings out worms and insects, which did not appear upon the surface.

Or to vary the illustration, his increasing knowledge of God's holy nature, of the perfect law, and the example of Christ—is like opening the shutters, and **letting light into a dark room**, the filth of which, the inhabitant did not see until the sunbeams disclosed it to him.

### **As your Biblical knowledge widens**

There are many who regard an increasing acquaintance with the text of the Bible, as an evidence of growth in grace.

Ask yourselves the solemn question. In proportion as you store your **minds** with biblical texts and biblical ideas—are you all the while seeking to have your **heart** filled with biblical feelings, and your **life** with biblical actions?

As you grow in acquaintance with the character of **God**—do you reverence Him more? As your ideas brighten on the person of **Christ**—do you love Him more? As you become more acquainted with the perfection and spirituality of God's **Word**—do you delight in it more? As you see more clearly the evil of **sin**—do you hate it with a more intense hatred?

**As your Biblical knowledge widens**, do you become . . .  
more profoundly humble,  
more tenderly conscientious,  
more gentle,  
more spiritual?

Unless this is the case, you are in a fatal mistake by supposing that you are making progress in the divine

life, merely because you are advancing in biblical knowledge.

### **We live by faith**

**"We live by faith**, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

Faith is the root of all true piety. Christians need faith for sanctification, consolation, and perseverance. Every act of the spiritual life is an act of faith. Every step in the spiritual walk is a step of faith. The Christian's course is not one of merely 'doing', but of believing.

His **prayers** are the breathings of faith;  
his **works** are the actings of faith;  
his **penitence** is the tear of faith;  
his **joy** is the smile of faith;  
his **hopes** are the anticipations of faith;  
his **fears** are the tremblings of faith;  
his **strength** is the confidence of faith;  
his **submission** is the acquiescence of faith.

Faith is the **eye** which looks at Christ.

Faith is the **foot** which moves to Christ.

Faith is the **hand** which receives Christ.

Faith is the **mouth** which feeds upon Christ.

It is not only by the activity of obedience, but by the 'silent and passive power of dependence', that the Christian is made strong and victorious.

**"We live by faith**, not by sight." Here is the reason why so many professors are so worldly and so weak; why they make such little progress, and such small attainments. They are so much under the dominion of sense, and are so almost wholly given up to **a life of sight**, that they have neither time nor inclination to look at the things which are unseen and eternal.

There is in them no habitual looking to Christ, no abiding in Him, no vivid consciousness that all their springs are in Him, and that it is from His fullness they are to receive necessary grace.

We must prefer **the invisible realities of eternity**, to the visible things of time; and amid all that is . . .

dazzling to sight,  
gratifying to appetite,  
and dear to passion,

**by faith, spend a life of . . .**

self-denial,  
mortification of sin, and  
separation from the world.

Be this then your sincere and earnest prayer, my dear friends, "**Lord, increase our faith!**" Be willing to have the world displaced from your soul, to make room for the objects of faith! Be ever ready to come from **the dazzling glare of earthly scenes**, to dwell in the calm and holy light of faith. Study the Scriptures, and meditate much upon their contents. Frequent and devout converse with the objects of faith, is the best way to have it increased.

Watch diligently against the influence of those **objects which have a fatal tendency** to eclipse faith's light, to obstruct its operation, and enfeeble its life—namely, sensual pleasure; eager pursuit of the world; and a too intimate converse with those who mind earthly things.

### **To live and walk by faith**

"The life I live in the body, **I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20

**To live and walk by faith**, is to come daily to Jesus in the exercise of fresh dependence, fresh expectations, and fresh devotedness.

**To live and walk by faith**, is to see more of His glory and grace continually, and to rejoice greater in His unsearchable riches, and inexhaustible fullness.

**To live and walk by faith**, is in all our conflicts, sins, fears, weaknesses, and woes—to resort afresh to Jesus, with a full persuasion that we are welcome, and thus ever to derive strength and courage from Him.

### **A little more comfort, luxury, or elegance**

"During supper, a woman came in with a beautiful jar of expensive perfume. She broke the seal and poured the perfume over His head." Mark 14:3

**"She did what she could!"** Mark 14:8

Have you, like your devoted sister of Bethany, done what you could? Take an inventory of the means which the Lord has put into your hands for honoring Him, and then look over the list of your contributions.

What proportion does your annual giving to the cause of Christ bear, compared to the cost of . . .  
your furniture,  
your wardrobe,  
your entertainments,  
your ornaments and decorations,  
your luxuries?

Jesus did not withhold from you His very precious blood! What are you willing to do for Him? What beautiful jar of expensive perfume **have** you broken, **will** you break for Him?

It is sorrowful to see professing Christians wholly taken up in getting wealth for themselves—either hoarding it up—or spending it in the luxuries that constitute "the pride of life."

Consider, I entreat you, the different **results** of the money you spend upon yourselves—and that which you spend upon Christ. The money you spend selfishly perishes in the using. The money you spend for the cause of Christ acquires an imperishable existence.

What you spend in the comforts and elegancies of life—and what you hoard unnecessarily—dies with you, when you die. But the wealth which, under the influence of pure motives, we devote to Christ, will never die. It is immortal and incorruptible.

Oh Christians! how is it that we can cheat ourselves of such heavenly felicity and eternal honor, merely to have **a little more comfort, luxury, or elegance** here? Why do we impoverish ourselves in the eternal world, to enrich ourselves in this present world?

Oh God! Bestow upon us Your grace, that when we meet You in judgment, we may hear this commendatory testimony from Your gracious lips, **"They did what they could!"**

### **Our recreations and entertainments**

"So whether you eat or drink or **whatever you do**, do it all for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31

Our piety should appear in **our recreations and entertainments**, separating us from the follies and amusements of the world; allowing neither what is polluting, nor what is frivolous.

True piety should not only keep us from the theater, the ball-room, and the public concert; but should prevent us from turning our own homes into the 'resorts of fashion', and the scenes of light and dissipating entertainments.

### **A sublime fiction**

"Their destiny is destruction . . . **their mind is on earthly things.**" Philip. 3:19

This is the description given by the apostle, of the

predominant taste and pursuits of the men of the world.

Sadly, this also describes a large proportion of those who have 'professed' to come out from the world, and to be a people separated unto God. How engrossed are they, not only in the business, but in the cares, the love, and the enjoyment of earthly vanities! Who would imagine, to see their **conduct**, to hear their **conversation**, to observe their **spirit**—so undevout, and so worldly—that these were the men, who have heaven in their eye and heart, as their eternal destiny? We would be inclined to think, that to them, **heaven is nothing more than . . .**

a mere name,  
**a sublime fiction**,  
a sacred vision,

which, with all its splendor, has scarcely power enough to engage their thoughts and fix their regards! **How little effect has heaven . . .**

to elevate them above a predominant earthly-mindedness,  
to comfort them in trouble,  
to minister to their happiness,  
to mortify their corruptions.

Can it be that **they** are seeking for, and going to glory, honor, and immortality—who think so little about it, and derive so small a portion of their enjoyment from the expectation of it?

"Their destiny is destruction . . . **their mind is on earthly things.**" Philip. 3:19

## **Holiness**

"You ought to live holy and godly lives." 2 Peter 3:11

**Holiness** is a very comprehensive word, and expresses a state of mind and conduct that includes many things.

Holiness is the work of the Spirit in our sanctification.

Holiness is the fruit of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Holiness is the operation of the new nature, which we receive in regeneration.

Holiness may be viewed in various aspects, according to the different objects to which it relates.

Toward **God**, holiness is . . .  
supreme love;  
delight in His moral character;  
submission to His will;  
obedience to His commands;  
zeal for His cause;  
seeking of His glory.

Toward **Christ**, holiness is . . .  
a conformity to His example,  
imbibing His spirit.

Toward **man**, holiness is . . .  
charity,  
integrity,  
truth,  
mercy.

Toward **sin**, holiness is a hatred of all iniquity, a tender conscience easily wounded by little sins, and scrupulously avoiding them; together with a laborious, painful, self-denying, mortification of all the known corruptions of our heart.

Toward **self**, holiness is . . .  
the control of our fleshly appetites;  
the eradication of our pride;  
the mortification of our selfishness.

Toward **divine things in general**, holiness is . . .  
spirituality of mind,  
the habitual current of godly thought,  
godly affections flowing through the soul.

And, toward the **objects of the unseen world**, holiness is heavenly-mindedness, a turning away

from things seen and temporal, to things unseen and eternal.

Oh, what a word is holiness! How much does it comprehend! How little is it understood, and how much less is it practiced!

### **Honor, wealth, and pleasure lose their charms**

"Before I was **afflicted** I went astray, but now I obey Your word. It was good for me to be **afflicted!**" Psalm 119:67,71

**Afflictions tend to wean us from the world—and to fix our affections on things above.**

We are all too worldly!

We gravitate too much to earth!

**Our feet stick in the mire**, and we do not soar aloft on the wings of faith and hope into the regions above, as we ought.

We are like moles—when we should be like eagles!

Hence the **need**, and the **benefit** too, of afflictions.

How differently things look, when seen from the chamber of **sickness**—or the **grave** of a loved one! **Honor, wealth, and pleasure lose their charms** then, and present no beauty, that we should desire them. We then seem to regard the world as an impostor which has deceived us, and turn from it with disgust!

**The loss of a loved one**, does more to prove the truth of Solomon's description of the 'vanity of everything beneath the sun', than all the sermons we have ever heard, and all the volumes we have ever read!

### **The divine Craftsman**



"God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness." Hebrews 12:10

God does not afflict His children willingly. He takes no delight in seeing our tears—or hearing our groans. But He does take delight in . . .  
doing us good,  
making us holy,  
conforming us to His own image, and  
fitting us to dwell in His own presence.

He treats us as the sculptor does the marble under his hand, which **from a rough unsightly mass**, he intends to carve into a splendid statue—a glorious work of art. Every application of the **chisel**, every blow of the **mallet**, is to strike off some bit of the stone, which must be removed to bring out the figure in perfection, which he designs to form.

In our case, how much is necessary to be struck off from our corrupt nature, before we can be brought into that form and beauty which it is the intention of **the divine Craftsman** that we should bear. How much . . .

pride,  
vanity,  
carnality,  
worldly-mindedness,  
self-sufficiency,  
independence,  
creature-love,  
earthly dependence;  
must be removed by each blow of the mallet, and each cut of the chisel, before the beauties of . . .  
holiness,  
humility,  
meekness,  
heavenly-mindedness;  
and all the graceful proportions and features of His own image, can be exhibited in us.

**The design of the divine Artist**

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

In this present world, you may never see how the death of your husband is for good. Many go all their lives without having the 'mystifying characters' of the sad event deciphered—and the secret workings of God's love laid open. They die in ignorance of His plans—though not of His purposes.

The 'finished side' of the embroidery may never be turned to you here; and looking only at the tangled threads and dark colors of the 'back part'—**all now appears to be in confusion!**

But when the 'front view' shall be seen; and **the design of the divine Artist**; and all the connections of the finely embroidered piece shall be pointed out; and the coloring shall be shown in the light of eternity—with what adoring wonder, delight, and gratitude will you exclaim, as the 'whole picture' bursts upon your sight, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His methods! How unfathomable are His ways! All things have worked together for my good!"

You shall trace together the providential events of your earthly history. You shall learn why you were united—and why separated. You shall see the wisdom and goodness of those events, which once appeared so dark, and drew so many tears from your eyes. You shall indulge in reminiscences, all of which will furnish . . .

new occasions of wonder;  
new motives to praise; and  
new sources of delight!

You shall point one another to the vista of everlasting ages opening before you, through which an endless succession of joys are advancing to meet you! And then, filled with a pure, unearthly love for each other, you shall fall down before the throne of the Lamb, and feel every other affection absorbed in supreme, adoring love to Him!

Such a scene is before you! And since it is—then bear your sorrows, afflicted widow—for in what felicities

are they to result—and how soon!

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

### **A lamb with a wolf's head!**

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philipians 2:5

Christians should excel in the manifestation of Christ's character. The mind which was in Jesus, should be in them. They should consider His character as a model of their own; and be **conspicuous** for their . . .  
poverty of spirit,  
meekness,  
gentleness,  
and love.

It is matter of surprise and regret, that many people seem to think that Christianity has nothing to do with character! And that provided they are free from gross sins, and have lively feelings in devotional exercises, they may be as **petulant, irritable, and implacable** as they please! This is a dreadful error, and has done great mischief to the cause of God!

**A sour, ill-natured Christian**, is like **a lamb with a wolf's head!** Or like a dove with a vulture's beak!

If there be any one word which above all others should describe a Christian's character, it is that which represents his divine Father; and as it is said, that 'God is love', so should it be also affirmed, that **a Christian is love**—love embodied, an incarnation of love! His words, his conduct, his very looks—should be so many expressions of love!

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and **live a life of love**, just as Christ loved us and

gave Himself up for us!" Ephesians 4:32-5:2

### **The beauties of social virtue**

A Christian should be very eminent for a right discharge of all their social duties. Christianity, so far from loosening the bands of society, adds to them incredible strength and firmness, by motives drawn from the eternal world. One part of the design of Christianity is to purify and strengthen the social principle, and carry it to its greatest elevation and perfection.

A good Christian—and yet a bad husband, father, brother, neighbor, or citizen—is an anomaly.

Professing Christians should excel all others in **the beauties of social virtue**. True religion should give . . . additional tenderness to the **marital** relationship; greater love to the Christian **parent**; loving obedience to the Christian **child**; fresh kindness to the Christian **employer**; diligence to the Christian **employee**.

The world should look to the church with this conviction, "Well, if social virtue were driven from every other portion of society, it would find a sanctuary, and be cherished with care, among Christians." Then will Christianity have attained its highest recognition upon earth, when it shall be admitted by universal consent, that to say a man is a Christian, is an indisputable testimony to his excellence in all the relationships he bears to society.

### **"Beware of the dog!"**

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Ephes. 4:2.

There are some people whose feelings are like dry straw—kindled into a blaze in a moment, by the least spark which has been purposely or accidentally thrown upon it.

A word, or a look—is in some cases quite enough to be considered a very serious injury! It is a common thing for such people to excuse themselves on the ground that 'their **feelings** are so delicate'—that they are offended by the least touch! This is a humiliating confession, for it is acknowledging that, instead of being like the oak of the forest, which laughs at the tempest, and is unmoved by the tread of the wild boar—they resemble the sensitive plant, a little squeamish shrub, which trembles before the breeze, and shrivels and contracts beneath the pressure of a tiny insect!

**Delicate feelings!!** In plain English, this means that they are petulant, irritable and peevish! I would like to have a sign hung around the neck of such people—and it would be this, "**Beware of the dog!**"

We should never allow ourselves to be offended, until, at least, we are sure that offense was intended; and this is really not so often as we are apt to conclude. Had we but patience to wait, or humility to inquire, we would find that many hurtful things were done by mistake, which we are prone to attribute to design. How often do we violate that love which thinks no evil, and which imperatively demands of us to attribute a good motive to another's conduct—until a bad motive is proved!

Let us then deliberately determine, that, by God's grace, **we will not be easily offended**. If such a resolution were generally made and kept, offenses would cease. Let us first ascertain whether offense was **intended**, before we allow the least emotion of anger to be indulged. And even then, when we have proved that the offense was committed on purpose, let us next ask ourselves whether it is **necessary** to notice it. What wise man will think it worth while, when an insect has stung him, to pursue it all day, in order to punish the aggressor?

**OUR church?!**

"I will build **My church**." Matthew 16:18

The power of a church is simply a right to put their own interpretation upon the laws of Christ, and to obey His laws, in the way which they think will be most agreeable to Him.

This is neither understood nor remembered with as much distinctness as it should be. Hence it is a very usual thing for churches to consider themselves as met to make laws, and set in order the affairs of the spiritual kingdom. A great deal is said about "**our** church," and "rules that **we** have established in **our** church." **OUR church?!** When did it become OURS? **The church is Christ's!** The rules WE have established?! The sole right of making laws, is with Him to whom the church belongs!

The church is a kingdom, of which Christ is sole monarch! The New Testament is His spiritual code, and all the power we have, is to execute the laws which He has already established!

In the whole business of church government, we are to acknowledge His authority, and consider ourselves as doing His will. Nothing is left . . .  
to our will,  
to our wisdom,  
to our caprice;  
but in all things we are to be guided by **the law of Jesus**, as laid down in His Word!

In the choice of officers, in the admission of members, in the exercise of discipline—we are not to act upon views and principles of our own. We are to be guided by those we find in the New Testament. We have no power to legislate; but merely to interpret the His law—and obey.

When we meet, Christ is in the midst of us, not only by His essential presence—but by His revealed will. Every authoritative voice is hushed—but that which speaks to us from the sacred Word of God.

When a **new member** is proposed, we are not to ask, "Is he such a one as we think will add respectability

to our church? is he of long standing in the ways of God? is he peculiar in his habits?" Our only question is, "Is he one who Christ has received as His child?"

When a **new measure** is submitted for our adoption, we are not first to inquire into its policy; but whether it is in exact accordance with the general principles and spirit of the New Testament.

**Every act of church government** must be an explicit acknowledgment of the authority of Jesus, as King of HIS church, and an act of obedience to HIS laws!

It is impossible for this sentiment to be stated too frequently or too forcibly. It lays the axe to the root of **all the errors on church government**, which have crept into the world.

### **There is the image of Christ!**

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5

Press right home to your conscience the question, "**What do I have of the mind of Christ?**" Does my heart answer, does my disposition correspond, to the holy, meek, humble, forgiving, benevolent, patient, self-denying mind of Christ? Do men who know the beauty and glory of the Original, as it is delineated on the page of the gospel, when they see me, say, "**There is the image of Christ!**"

Or do they look skeptically on, and after standing in silence for some time, profess they can see little or no resemblance? Oh, be satisfied with nothing short of a copy of Christ's heart into yours!

### **A love for pleasure, diversion and recreation**

One characteristic of our age is an ever-growing taste for **elegance, refinement, and luxurious gratification.**

But just in proportion as we multiply the 'attractions of earth'—is the danger of our making it our all—and leaving heaven out of sight. This is now affecting the church, and the godly and self-denying spirit of our practical Christianity is in danger of being weakened, and of degenerating into a soft and sickly wastefulness.

Elegance, extravagance, luxurious entertainments and expensive feasts, are beginning to corrupt the simplicity that is in Christ. And amid our . . .

sumptuous homes,  
gorgeous furniture,  
costly dress, and  
mirthful decorations,

professors of religion are setting their affections too much upon things upon earth, and turning away from the glory of the cross—to the vanities of the world!

Akin to this, is a continually augmenting desire after **amusement**, for which droves are constantly yearning. **A love for pleasure, diversion and recreation**, is an ever-increasing appetite—and there are those who are ever ingenious and ever busy to supply its demands. Men are continually inventing new kinds of diversions and endless devices, to blot from the mind all considerations of eternity.

The people, it is affirmed, must have recreation. Be it so—but let it be of a healthful kind—a taste for wholesome literature, quiet home enjoyments, and, above all, the sacred delights of true piety.

Who will call them off from these 'painted nothings', and make them feel how vain are all these things? Who will set up a barricade against the billows of this ocean of worldly-mindedness, and guard the piety of the church from being entirely swept away by a flood of worldliness and ungodliness?



**Humility** is the crowning grace, the finishing stroke of beauty, and the brightest ray of glory, in the Christian character.

### **A godly ministry**

We can do nothing without **a godly ministry**. Of all the curses which God ever pours from the vials of His wrath upon a nation which He intends to scourge, there is not one so fearful as giving them up to an unholy ministry.

I trust our churches will ever consider **piety** as the first and most essential qualification in their pastors, for which talents, genius, learning, and eloquence, would and could be no substitutes. It will be a dark and evil day when personal godliness shall be considered as secondary to any other quality in those who serve at the altar of God.

No ministry will be really effective, whatever may be its eloquence, which is not a ministry of . . .  
strong faith,  
true spirituality, and  
deep earnestness.

### **Dead things never grow!**

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears **no fruit**, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." John 15:1-2

Why is it that so many professing Christians make no spiritual progress, and indeed make no efforts to grow in grace? Why? Because they care nothing about it! To take up a 'mere profession' is all they desire; but to proceed from one degree of piety to

another; to grow in grace—is no part of their desire.

What! No solicitude to have more . . .  
experimental knowledge of truth,  
faith in Christ,  
likeness to God,  
fitness for heaven!

No desire to advance in such things! Is it possible to be a Christian and yet destitute of this desire to grow in grace? No, it is not! I tell you, it is not!

**If you have no concern to grow in grace**  
—there is no grace in you!

You are a piece of **dead wood**  
—and not a living branch!

You are a **spiritual corpse**  
—and not a living man!

In this state there can be no growth  
—for **dead things never grow!**

### **This heavenly light of truth**

"All Scripture is inspired by God, and is **useful** for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."  
2 Timothy 3:16-17

The doctrines of Scripture are facts, which involve corresponding emotions and principles of action, and must, from their very nature, if believed, be **operative upon the heart and the life.**

If the doctrines of Scripture . . .  
exert no godly influence,  
carry with them no practical weight,  
exert no moral power,  
they are not truly believed.

The doctrines of Scripture are at once . . .  
the source of consolation, and  
the means of sanctification.

The doctrines of Scripture . . .  
come into the **mind** as knowledge,  
produce peace and love in the **heart**,  
and spread the beauties of holiness  
over the **character** and **conduct**.

The doctrines of Scripture are light; and like the  
rays of the sun, they **sustain life** at the root of  
the vine, and **produce fruit** on its branches.

**This heavenly light of truth** gives . . .  
spiritual vitality to the soul,  
and holy conduct to the life.

"For our gospel came to you not simply with  
words, but also with power, with the Holy  
Spirit and with deep conviction." 1 Thes. 1:5

**"Sanctify them by the truth;** Your Word is truth."  
John 17:17

### **I follow like a little blind child**

"And **we know** that God causes everything to work  
together for the good of those who love God and  
are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Strong faith has a firm persuasion of **God's over-ruling  
Providence**—so comprehensive as to include the destinies  
of empires and worlds; and so minute as to extend to  
individuals. Strong faith believes that God's Providence is . . .  
ever active,  
ever directing,  
ever controlling, and  
ever subordinating  
all things to His own purposes and plans.

Strong faith is a conviction of this great truth—so deep, so satisfying, and so tranquilizing—as not at all to be shaken by the chaotic aspect of human affairs, or the prevalence of gigantic evils.

A weak faith must give way before . . .  
the deep mysteries,  
the confounding events,  
the defeats of what is good, and  
the triumphs of what is evil,  
which are perpetually going on in our world's history.

**The stream of Providence** is . . .

so **twisting**,  
so **dark**,  
apparently so **murky**, and  
occasionally so **devastating**;  
that it requires strong faith believe that it is the  
work of God and not of chance; and that if it is the  
work of God—it must be just, and wise, and good.

In the darkest dispensations of Providence affecting ourselves, strong faith realizes that it is all from God; and must therefore be wise, and just, and good. To be able really say, "It is well. I am sure it is right. I cannot tell **how** it is right. I do not understand **why** this deep afflictive Providence came. I can find no key to unlock the mystery. But I am as confident that it is right, as if God's whole purpose were transparent to my reason, and I could see the event in all its connections, bearings, and results. **I cannot see how or why**—but I believe that my deep affliction is for God's glory and my ultimate benefit. I know that God causes everything to work together for good."

Faith assures us that the darker, the more confounding, the more disappointing events—are all right and just, and good.

Strong faith walks on amid shadows and darkness, grasping the arm of God, believing that He is leading us, and will lead us right. Strong faith gives up all into His hands, saying, "I cannot even see a glimmering of light! I cannot see where to place my next step! But I can most implicitly trust in the wisdom, power, and truth of God! **I follow like a little blind child**, grasping the hand of his father!"

Times of great troubles and difficulties, are seasons and opportunities for the exercise of faith. **God is always the Christian's best refuge—and often his only one!** He is sometimes reduced to extremity, and is compelled to say, "He alone is my rock and my salvation! My help comes only from the Lord! No one else will help me—no one else can!"

Sense and reason both fail. No door of escape presents itself—nor any way of relief. There is nothing left for him to do, but to take up the promise and carry it in the hand of faith, knock by prayer at the door of mercy, and as he stands there to say, "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone! My hope comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation! He is my fortress, I will not be shaken. Yes, Lord, You have bid me come, when I could go nowhere else. And here according to your command and promise I will remain—waiting, trembling, yet believing and hoping. I am sure You will come and help me. My heavenly Father knows the necessities of His poor helpless child, and He will come in His own time, and in His own way, and I will wait for him. My bread will be given me, and my water will be sure."

### **A cold chill fell upon their hearts!**

It has frequently occurred, that young converts in the ardor of their first love, and while much unacquainted as yet, with what is called the 'religious world', have looked upon the church as a 'sacred enclosure', within which dwelt a kind of heavenly inhabitants, who could think or speak of little else than the glory which awaited them. In the church, these novices expected to find . . .  
the sweetest and holiest fellowship,  
an almost unearthly spirituality, and  
an uninterrupted strain of pious conversation.

But alas! What a woeful disappointment did the reality produce! In the 'sacred enclosure' they found worldly minded professors—almost as intent upon seen and temporal things, as those they had left out in the world!

In the 'vestibule of heaven', they beheld professors . . .  
covered with the 'earthly dust',  
disordered with worldly concerns,  
and given up to worldly amusements!

In the church members, they saw little but worldly  
conduct, and heard little else but worldly conversation!

**A cold chill fell upon their hearts**, which checked  
the ardor of their pious affections; and even they,  
lately so fervent, soon sunk and settled down into  
the lukewarmness of those among whom they had  
come to dwell.

### **Vacationing at resorts?**

The line of distinction between the world and the  
church is fast disappearing.

What shall be said of the conduct of some professing  
Christians **vacationing at resorts**? It has become  
almost one of the necessities of life to Englishmen,  
to pay an annual visit to the coast, or to one of our  
inland places of resort. To say that this is wrong to  
those who can afford to pay for it, is certainly not  
my intention. But some professing Christians have  
ruined themselves, and plunged their families into  
poverty and distress, by habits of expense and  
idleness, acquired by this annual excursion to the  
sea. The taste of the age is for luxurious gratification,  
and it is certainly one of these luxuries to while away  
a week or two amidst the beauties of the coast, or  
the mirthful throng of a fashionable lounging place.

I will suppose, however, that the professor can afford  
the gratification; still, are not his spendings for this  
enjoyment, out of all due proportion with his donations  
to the cause of Christ? When did he ever give, in one  
amount, to any Christian cause, what he gives, in one  
amount, for his treat to his family to a resort? No, put  
together all that he gives to the cause of the Lord for  
a whole year, and does it equal what he spends upon

one vacation, lavishing hundreds—or thousands, in riding into the country, or sailing on the sea, and luxuriating in other ways on the shore.

When a world is perishing, and immortal souls are sinking daily in crowds to perdition, a Christian should look, with grudging eye, on almost every dollar he spends in luxury!

Are there no 'perils for piety' in a vacation resort? Temptations abound everywhere, entering like a poisoned atmosphere into every place—but surely no one will deny, that they are found in greater number and force in those places, which fashion has set apart for relaxation and amusement.

The mixed society to be found in such haunts of pleasure; the amusements which are resorted to; and the general air of wastefulness which pervades the whole scene—are all uncongenial with the spirit of piety, which flourishes best in silence and solitude.

Those who frequent vacation resorts, seem as though the object of their existence is to spend it in pleasure. Is this proper behavior for the self-denying, humble followers of a crucified Savior?

It is indeed to be feared that some professing Christians, when they set out on their summer's vacation, leave their religion at home, in order that nothing may interrupt their pursuit and enjoyment of pleasure. Many have gone to places of fashionable resort to have their piety lastingly injured; and some to lose it altogether. They started a retrograde course in piety from that day when they went joyfully and thoughtlessly to the coast in search of recreation. Surely, surely, then, it cannot be thought unseasonable or unnecessary to raise a warning voice, and to make it loud and strong when it is becoming increasingly prevalent among professing Christians to seek in this species of gratification, a temporary release from the "dull cares of home, and the plodding pursuits of business."

### **A chameleon kind of religion**

"So that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world." (Philippians 2:15)

Saving religion is not merely an occasional act—but a permanent habit, resulting from an internal principle.

Saving religion is a principle so fixed as to constitute a new moral nature; and so steadily operative, as to form an unchanging character.

A real Christian is a Christian **always, everywhere, and in all companies**. He carries his piety with him wherever he goes, as an integral part of himself. It is not like his clothes which may be continually altered, or varied to suit his situation, occupation, and company. He needs his piety everywhere, he loves it everywhere, and is commanded to let it be seen everywhere.

But among most professors of Christianity, there is too much of **a chameleon kind of religion**, which takes its hue from surrounding objects. This is seen most conspicuously in the conduct of those who have a flexible, yielding, easy-going kind of piety—which accommodates itself to changing circumstances, by little sacrifices of principle and consistency.

### **A golden image in the house!**

It is quite evident that covetousness is indeed the sin of the church. In this wealthy age and country, there is imminent peril of professing Christians forgetting their high calling, and living only to get riches. We see them toiling and panting in pursuit of the golden object of ambition.

It is not the possession of wealth that we should dread; but the inordinate desire, the dishonest means, the undue



love, and the covetous hoarding of it! Wealth justly obtained, and piously spent, is a blessing—not a curse.

I am quite aware, that it is difficult to have money and not love it. It is hard indeed to have **a golden image in the house**, and not worship it!

Wealth often produces the pride of life—so opposite to the humility and poverty of spirit, which is essential to the nature of true religion.

Wealth often generates a worldly-mindedness, which makes its possessor contented with seen and temporal things, and disposes him to mind only earthly things.

Wealth often leads to a prevalent feeling of independence, so unlike that habitual trust and reliance on God, which the Scriptures require.

Wealth often originates, and keeps up, both the care and perplexity of **getting**, and the anxiety of **disposing**; and thus exhausts the vigor as well as time, upon worldly objects—leaving the soul neglected, impoverished, and defrauded.

Wealth is the green and flowery mount from which many have slid down into the bottomless pit!

Yes, wealth has a tendency to do all this, in consequence of the depravity of our hearts, and thus to cast stumbling blocks in the path of salvation.

"But godliness with contentment is a great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But **those who want to be rich** fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains. Now you, man of God, run from these things; but pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness." (1 Timothy 6:6-11)

### **The silent influence in parental conduct**

Parents have a great power of **influence** over the minds and hearts of their children. Their children are almost continually with them—they are seen by them in nearly all they do, in their habitual conduct, and character at home. They are . . .

**heard** in what they say;

**seen** in what they do;

**studied** in all their behavior;

by little ears, and eyes, and minds,  
which are scarcely ever closed!

The child's heart is soft and pliable to a father's or a mother's influence. Their constant influence has been molding him from the dawn of reason. What, then, ought to be the parents' behavior at home? The whole cultivation, and direction, and management of a child's mind, from the very dawn of reason, should be carried on with special reference to the formation of Christian character. This should be the one thing, to which all other things should be subordination.

**The silent influence in parental conduct** is far greater, either for good or for evil, than most parents are aware of. They teach by what they **say**, they influence by what they **do**; and also by what they do not say, and do not perform.

The pious parents, who embody a meek, benevolent, ardent, and consistent godliness in their character, exert a tremendous influence over the minds of their children!

But oh! the dreadful contrast in the case of those parents who are characterized by . . .

ungodly dispositions,

worldly associations,

mirthful and extravagant living,

trifling conversation, and

lack of all seriousness and spirituality.

Oh! what can be expected from such parents—but children who regard their religion with disgust?

**Every man is best known at home.** Parents are ever doing something to prejudice their children in favor of true religion—or to prejudice them against it; doing something to draw them into the church—or to drive them into the world; lending a helping hand to lead them to heaven—or taking them by the hand and leading them to hell.

Parents! Must you employ your influence in ruining the souls of your children—and sending them to perdition? Oh! tremble at the interview you must have with them at the day of judgment, and the dialog you must hold with them forever in the bottomless pit!!

### **The evidence of genuine piety**

**The evidence of genuine piety** is to be found in . . .  
real humility,  
self-distrust,  
hungering and thirsting after righteousness,  
sorrow for sin, and  
a continual effort to regulate your thoughts,  
feelings, and conduct by the Word of God.

Genuine piety will not thrive and increase without effort—but is of so tender and delicate a nature as to require great, constant, and persevering concern, watchfulness, and care.

### **Encroaching, absorbing, and destructive!**

"Their minds are fixed on earthly things." Phil. 3:19

This is a concise, emphatic, and accurate description of a worldly man. His supreme, yes, exclusive desire, aim, and purpose, is to get as much, and enjoy as much,

of the world as he can. He thinks of nothing else, and wishes for nothing else. His hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, desires and dread—are all of the earth, earthly.

The worldly mind has an exclusive regard to, and wish for, earthly possessions and enjoyment. It makes the world the highest object of pursuit, and the chief source of enjoyment. This shows itself in various ways,  
a love of pleasure in one;  
avarice in another;  
ambition in a third;  
exclusive delight in home in another.

If a professing Christian partakes of this spirit, he is worldly-minded. If he appears like one whose supreme aim is to be rich and happy on earth; if he appears to be continually intent on increasing his wealth and multiplying his comforts; if he looks like a man who is entirely occupied in enjoying himself here on earth—he is a worldly-minded man.

You must resist the **encroaching, absorbing, and destructive** influence of the world in all its many fascinating forms!

Consider that you have . . .  
a soul to be saved,  
a hell to avoid,  
a heaven to obtain!

### **Eminent piety**

Eminence in piety signifies our having all the parts of the Christian character in considerable strength, and in attractive proportions.

**Eminent piety** is always accompanied by . . .  
a large measure of spiritual affections;  
a struggle for universal holiness;  
a desire and endeavor for purity of heart;  
a prevailing taste for divine and heavenly things;

a walking with God;  
a living by faith;  
a setting our affections on things above;  
a being dead to the world;  
a mortification of sin in the heart;  
a proneness to devout meditation;  
a delight to hold communion with God;  
a fondness for the Scriptures;  
a large portion of love to the brethren;  
an inflexible integrity;  
a liberality for the cause of Christ;  
an ardent love of biblical ordinances;  
an enjoyment of the peace that passes understanding;  
a frequent experience of spiritual joy;  
an exquisite tenderness of conscience;  
a mind which trembles at sin;  
a constant penitential frame for our many imperfections;  
a holy watchfulness against sins . . .  
of the life,  
of the tongue,  
of the imagination  
and of the heart!

Piety is not an abstract system of doctrine and ethics. It is a constant movement of the heart, to the splendor and attraction of the cross of Christ!

Love to Christ is the spring of all Christian piety!

This is eminent piety—to be always in sight of the cross, having fellowship with Christ; so that we shall truly comprehend the meaning and feel the force of the Apostle's words, "for me to live is Christ!"

### **A showy and expensive style of living**

"Tell those who are **rich in this world** not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which will soon be gone. . . . Tell them to use their money to do good. They should

be rich in good works and should give generously to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them." 1 Timothy 6:17-19

It is the incumbent duty of **rich Christians**, to consecrate a large portion of their affluence, to upholding the cause of truth. Let them, in order to abound more and more in such efforts, as well as to exhibit a bright example of pure and undefiled religion, avoid all unnecessary worldly conformity, and all expensive modes of living.

There is, in the present age, a disposition, even in professing Christians, to **a showy and expensive style of living**, which cannot be more effectually repressed, than by the **plain and simple habits** of those who are known to have an easy access to all the elegancies and splendors of life.

Rich Christians ought to be far more anxious to **give**—than to **hoard** their fortunes. When we enter their mansions and see magnificence in every room, luxury on every table; when we see their extravagant dress and decor, we cannot help saying, "How much ought a disciple of Jesus, who lives in this manner, to give away to the cause of Christ, before he is justified in such an expenditure!"

In short, the **VICES** to which rich Christians are more particularly exposed, and against which they should vigilantly guard, are . . .

- pride,
- haughtiness,
- love of money,
- idleness,
- self-indulgence,
- luxury,
- extravagance,
- worldly conformity.

The **VIRTUES** to which they are called to exercise are . . .

- gratitude to God;
- humility and meekness to men;
- frugality and temperance towards themselves;
- liberality, together with tender sympathy to their poorer brethren; and a generous regard to the support of the cause of pure religion and general benevolence.

### **Not markedly different**

When I look into the New Testament, and read **what a Christian should be**, and then look into the church of God, and see **what Christians are**—I am painfully affected by observing the dissimilarity!

That worldly spirit to which our age of growing selfishness and luxury gives rise, is exceedingly adverse to Christianity, whose elements are faith, hope, love.

The church of Christ at present, is sadly mixed up with both the **spirit** of the world, and many of its **customs**. The great bulk of professing Christians are **not markedly different** from the 'followers of pleasure' and the 'worshippers of Mammon'.

### **I am in agony in this fire!**

The rich man called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because **I am in agony in this fire!**' But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony!'

Luke 16:24-25

It is a grievous fact that many an ungodly sinner walks in a flowery path to perdition—and goes merrily to his eternal ruin. It is, on the contrary, as certain that many a godly Christian travels by a rough and toilsome road to heaven—and ascends to glory amid many tears. Our Divine Lord has set forth this in the most solemn of his parables—the rich man and Lazarus. If we looked only at the outward and earthly condition of these two men, we would say one is the type of all that is felicitous; while the other is the type of all that is miserable.

But who that looks upon their eternal abode, would not a thousand times rather be Lazarus with his poverty, sores, and beggary, feeding at the rich man's gate upon the crumbs which fell from his table—than the wealthy possessor of the mansion, with his purple and fine linen and daily luxurious living! Look **up** at the one who has dropped all his poverty, borne by angels to Abraham's bosom! And then look **down** upon the other, stripped of his splendid garments, deprived of his luxurious living, and from the midst of his torment begging for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue—and there see the end and outcome of 'sanctified poverty' and of 'unsanctified wealth'.

### **What a heaven!**

Heaven will consist of . . .  
the moral perfection of the soul,  
perfect knowledge,  
perfect holiness,  
perfect love,  
perfect likeness to Christ,  
perfection of the **body** in . . .  
incorruptibility,  
immortality,  
glory, and  
spirituality;  
the presence of God in the full manifestation of His glory,  
the beatific vision of Christ,  
the fellowship of angels and all the redeemed,  
the joint worship of the heavenly multitudes,  
the perfect **service of Christ**, without . . .  
interruption,  
imperfection, or  
cessation,  
**complete freedom from** . . .  
pain,  
toil,  
hunger,  
thirst,  
anxiety,  
fear,  
sorrow, and



death!

Such is the substance of heavenly felicity. Take any one of them by itself—and each is a heaven! Add them altogether—and **what a heaven!**

How pure! How elevated! How felicitous!

### **Afflictions**

Glance at the good which **afflictions** are calculated to effect, and do effect in all cases where they are sanctified. As the bee sucks honey from many a bitter herb—so faith extracts good from bitter sorrows!

How sorrows crucify him to the **world**—and the world to him; sometimes gently drawing him away from the world—at others forcing him out as by a violent wrench!

How trials mortify his **pride** and cure his **vanity!**

How afflictions restore him from his **backslidings** and bring him again to God from whom he has departed. How they revive his lukewarm religion and quicken him in prayer. How they make him feel that religion is after all his great concern.

Yes, there is more learned sometimes in one great affliction, than from a thousand sermons, or a library of books!

### **He has some secret source of happiness**

It is highly incumbent upon Christians, to take care against **a worldly spirit**. They are in extreme peril of losing the power of godliness from their hearts, and joining the number of those, of whom it is said, in the expressive language of Paul, that "**they mind earthly things!**"

Such earthlings look upon the possession of wealth as "the one thing needful." Wealth is their chief object of pursuit, the chief source of happiness. Nothing modifies or mitigates

their desire for riches. They are of the earth, earthly!

Now certainly a Christian is, or ought to be, of another spirit than this! He should be industrious, frugal, and persevering in his attention to the concerns of this world. But still there should be in his mind, an ultimate and supreme regard for the possession of everlasting life. He ought not to be slothful in business; but then he must be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He should be seen to unite the 'diligent worker' and 'sincere Christian'—and to be busy for both worlds.

The men of this world should be constrained to say of him, "This man is as attentive to business, and as diligent in it as we are; but we can perceive in all he does, an inflexible regard to morality, and an invariable reference to piety. We can discover no lack of diligence or prudence; but it is perfectly evident, that **his heart and highest hope are in heaven**. He is neither so elated in **prosperity**, nor so depressed in **adversity**, as we are. **He has some secret source of happiness**, of which we are not possessed! His eye is upon some driving force, which we do not recognize."

What a testimony!

Who can obtain a higher one?

Who should seek less?

### **The last pang, and groan, and tear!**

The Christian also looks to **the end of afflictions!** The end *may* sometimes come in this world. In reference to this, the utmost that the believer can be sure of is—that **they will end in God's time**. They may last for his whole life. The **sickness** which afflicts his body may be unto death! The **loss** which he has sustained in his property may be irreparable, and **poverty** may go down with him to the grave! The **trial** which beclouds and distresses his spirits may be his lot for life! But on the other hand, they may not! God may be bringing him "through fire and through water to bring him out into a wealthy place." But the Christian leaves this in the hand of God, and endeavors to

maintain a hope which shall save him from despondency—checked at the same time by a reverence that guards him from unwarranted presumption.

But if the end of the trial should not come in this world—it **will** come in the next world—when they will not only forever cease, but leave an eternal blessing behind! "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!" "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" Four things are set forth in these passages.

1. Our afflictions will have a termination! This is sweet. They are to end—they are not to last forever! **The last pang, and groan, and tear** are at hand—and how near the Christian never knows!
2. Our afflictions are not to end like those of the brute creation—in the grave merely—but in heaven! **The last pang, and groan, and tear** are to usher in that blessed state of which it is so beautifully said, "The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters—and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes!" Heaven shall terminate the afflictions of the righteous!
3. Heaven is so glorious, that the first view of its scenes, and the first moment of its enjoyment, shall make amends for the longest life of the most protracted and intense sufferings!
4. The sufferings of our earthly pilgrimage will enhance and increase the felicities of heaven! Their **submissive endurance**; the **graces** which they call into exercise; the **sanctification** which they promote; the **heavenly temper** which they cultivate, will be the means of ripening the spirit, and making it fit for its eternal inheritance!

Every **tear** that is shed;  
every **groan** that is heaved;  
every **loss** that is sustained;  
every moment of **suffering** that is endured;  
every **disappointment** that is experienced, which is borne with patience, with resignation, with unwearied holiness—

will not only be followed with millions of ages of ineffable felicity—but will prepare the soul for its enjoyment, and add something to its weight and its luster!

### **If there are but two real Christians in the world**

There appears to me to be, at the present moment, a most criminal neglect, on the part of Christian parents, of the pious education of their children.

That Christian who would carry on a system of pious education with success, should enforce it with all the commanding **influence of a holy example**. Let your children **see** all the "beauties of holiness" reflected from your character, and the grand outline of godly virtue filled up with all the delicate touches and varied coloring of the Christian graces.

Let your children have this conviction in their hearts, "**If there are but two real Christians in the world**, my father is one, and my mother is the other."

It is dreadful—but not uncommon for children to employ themselves in contrasting the appearance which their parents make . . .

at the Lord's table—and at their own table;  
in the house of God—and at home!

### **JEWELS from JAMES**

(Choice devotional selections from the works of John Angell James)

### **Fiendlike, beastlike, manlike, Godlike**

"Love your enemies,  
do good to those who hate you,  
bless those who curse you,  
pray for those who mistreat you."

(Luke 6:27-28)

To return evil for good, is **fiendlike**.

To return evil for evil, is **beastlike**.

To return good for good, is **manlike**.

But to return good for evil, is **Godlike**.

This is true practical Christianity.

"Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good." (Romans 12:21)

### **The religion of this poor Hottentot woman**

It is the practice of some of the Christian Hottentots, in order to enjoy the privilege of secret prayer with greater privacy and freedom than they could do in their own confined and incommensurable dwellings—to retire among the trees and bushes, that they may carry on their devotions without being intruded on by others, and also derive all that tranquilizing influence which would be produced by a spot, with which no other occupations, thoughts, and feelings are associated, than such as are holy. Each individual selects for his own use a particular bush, behind which, and concealed by it, he may commune with his heavenly Father in secret. By the others, this bush is considered as sacred to the one by whom it had been appropriated; and which, therefore, is never to be violated by the foot, or even by the gaze of another, during the season it is occupied by its proprietor. The constant tread of the worshipers, in their repeated visits to these hallowed spots, would, of necessity, wear a path in the grass which lay between their huts, and the sylvan scene of their communion with God.

On one occasion, a Christian Hottentot woman said to another member of their little community, "Sister, I am afraid you are somewhat declining in piety." The words were accompanied with a look of affection, and were uttered with a tone that savored nothing of accusation,

nor of reproachful severity—but was expressive of tender concern, and the meekness of wisdom. The individual thus addressed, asked her friend for the reason of her fears. "Because," replied this good and gentle spirit, "**the grass has grown over your path to your bush.**" Nature carrying on its usual progress, had disclosed the secret. The backslider could not deny the fact. There, in the growing grass, was the indisputable evidence that the feet which had once trodden it down had ceased to frequent the spot. She did not attempt to excuse it, but fell under the sweet influence of this sisterly reproof, and confessed, with ingenuous shame and sorrow, that her heart had turned away from the Lord. The admonition had its desired effect—the sinner was converted from the error of her ways, and her watchful and faithful reprover had the satisfaction and reward of seeing the wanderer restored—not only to **the path to the bush**, but to the renewed favor of that God with whom she there again communed in secret.

Note the value of private prayer, and the connection between its regular and spiritual performance, and a healthy state of the soul. When the bush was neglected, and the path to it forsaken—then did **the religion of this poor Hottentot woman** begin to spiritually decline. And how could it be otherwise? Who ever kept up a vigorous piety—when secret prayer was neglected?

It is in the closet of private devotion, that . . .  
our **cares** are lightened,  
our **sorrows** mitigated,  
our **corruptions** mortified,  
our **graces** strengthened, and  
we shake off the dust of the **earth!**

### **Men may see something of God in me!**

"For I have given you an **example** that you also should do just as I have done for you." (John 13:15)

It has long been my conviction, that there is a great deficiency in evangelical churches—of the practical

enforcement of Christian duties in detail; especially of what may be emphatically called the Christian virtues—the passive graces of the Christian character, the exercise of brotherly kindness and love.

It is not so acceptable to have all the special and difficult duties of the Christian's life, or man's conduct to his fellows, set clearly before the understanding and enforced upon the conscience. Men do not like to be followed through all the labyrinths of the heart's deceitfulness, beaten out of every refuge of lies, and made to feel the obligation to love where they are inclined to hate; and to forgive where they desire to revenge.

And we ministers pander too much to this taste. The pulpit has not done its duty. We have preached to the intellect, to the imagination, and to the taste—but not enough to the heart and to the conscience. In our endeavor to **please**, we have not been sufficiently intent upon the greater object—to **profit**. We have not preached justification too much—but sanctification too little. We have urged faith—but not love. We have descanted upon the evil of licentiousness, and falsehood, and dishonesty, and covetousness—but have said far, far too little about malice and bitterness. We have urged men to zeal and liberality—but not enough to humility, forbearance, and forgiveness. We have rightly led men to view the cross of Christ—but we have not sufficiently urged them to take up their own cross. We have properly entreated them to view Jesus as their Righteousness—but not sufficiently as their **Example**.

O, Christians . . .

study that wondrous character,  
contemplate that illustrious pattern,  
dwell upon that beautiful model,  
until the frosty incrustations of your cold, hard  
heart have all melted, like icicles before the sun!

How wonderful and how ennobling is the conception, and what an ambition should it raise in the mind of the Christian, to consider and say, "**Men may see something of God in me!**" Yes, we can teach them what God is, as to His moral character, and let them see in 'our merciful disposition' a ray of the infinite sun of His own glory. These sweet relentings of our nature, these soft and genial currents of our soul, these

effusions of love—these, we can remind them, are but the overflowings of His goodness, His own love, into our hearts, and the reflection of His infinite mercy to us.

"The one who says he abides in Him should walk just as He walked." (1 John 2:6)

"Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps." (1 Peter 2:21)

### **Casting all our sins into oblivion!**

"Who is a God like You, removing iniquity and passing over rebellion for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not hold on to His anger forever, because He delights in faithful love. He will again have compassion on us; He will vanquish our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." (Micah 7:18-19)

Wonderful language! This is one of the finest images to represent the completeness of God's pardoning mercy to be found in all the Bible. He casts our sins not into a brook nor a river where they might be found again; no, nor into the sea near the shore where the tide might wash them up again—but like a stone cast into the depths of the sea, where they can never be fished up again, but lie forever buried and forgotten at the bottom of the ocean! This is divine forgiveness—**casting all our sins into oblivion!**

### **Infected and enfeebled**

The church is **infected and enfeebled** with worldliness.

"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world." Galatians 1:4

"And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:17



### **Do you indeed ACT as you pray?**

I need not prove to you that prayer, as a duty, is essential to Christian conduct; and, as a privilege, is equally indispensable to Christian enjoyment. All Christians give themselves to this devout exercise. Their petitions are copious, comprehensive, and seemingly earnest.

What solemn professions they make to God!

What ardent desires they express!

What numerous blessings they seek!

What strong resolutions they form!

If we so **pray**—how ought we to **live**? What kind of people must we be—to live up to the standard of our prayers? And ought we not, in some measure at least, to reach this standard? Should there not be a harmony, a consistency, a proportion—between our practice and our prayers?

**Do you indeed ACT as you pray?** Do you understand the import, and feel the obligation of your own petitions? Do you rise from your knees where you have asked and knocked—to seek? Do you really want, wish for, and endeavor to obtain an answer to your prayers? Are you really intent upon doing, and being—what you ask for in prayer?

Our prayers are to act upon ourselves; they have, or ought to have, great power in the formation of character and the regulation of conduct.

It is plain, therefore, that much of prayer is mere words. We either do not **understand**, or do not **consider**, or do not **mean**—what we say.

Do we go from praying—to acting, and to live for salvation, for heaven, for eternity?

How common is it for professors to pray for victory over the world; to be delivered from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; to be enabled to set their affections on things above, and not on things of the earth; and to be dead to seen and temporal things. And yet all the while they are as obviously eager to amass wealth, to multiply the attractions of earth, and to enjoy as much luxurious gratification as possible!

'Spirituality of mind' is the subject of innumerable prayers from some who never take a step to promote it! But, on the contrary, who are doing all they can to make themselves carnally minded! How many repeat that petition, "Lead us not into temptation," who, instead of most carefully keeping at the utmost possible distance from all inducements to sin, place themselves in the very path of sin!

How often do we pray to have the mind of Christ, and to imitate the example of Jesus. But where is the assiduous endeavor, the laboring effort, to copy this high model, in . . .  
its self-denying condescension,  
its profound humility,  
its beautiful meekness,  
its indifference to worldly comforts,  
its forgiving mercy,  
its devotedness to God?

How often do we pray to be delivered from evil tempers and irascible feelings. And yet we indulge them on every slight provocation, and take no pains to subdue them!

It is unnecessary to multiply the illustrations of the inconsistency between our prayers and our practice.

### **So hideous and so dreadful is the offspring!**

How dreadful is the nature of **sin**! Sin is the parent of **death**. Death the first-born of sin. What must be the parent—when **so hideous and so dreadful is the offspring!** Who can

have watched the harbingers of death—the groans, the pains, the dying strife—without being struck with the fearful nature of man's revolt from God?

Death in itself, and by itself—is horrid and revolting! To see all this inflicted upon a Christian, a child of God, an heir of glory; to see no way even to the kingdom of God, to the realms of immortality—but this dark valley of corruption, earth, and worms—this gives us a most impressive idea of the dreadful nature of sin! How such scenes should enlarge our views of the malignity of sin, and embitter our hearts against it!

**O sin, sin—what have you done!**

**Like water to the flame of joy**

"I have spoken these things to you, so that My joy may be in you, and your joy may be full." John 15:11

One of the reasons why so little spiritual joy is experienced by the majority of Christian professors, is because of SIN. Sin weakens spiritual joy—and ought to do so! I do not now mean immorality—for that extinguishes joy! I mean . . .

the lesser workings of our corruption,  
the sins of the heart,  
the sins of the tongue,  
the sins of the character,  
sins known only to God and conscience,  
sins of omission,  
sins of defect.

I mean sins that do not unchristianize us, any more than they excommunicate us from the church. Such sins unopposed, unmortified—do, and must, prevent or diminish our joy. They may not put out the light of our piety altogether—but they surround it with an impure atmosphere, a thick fog—which prevents its light from shining upon the heart!

The religion of many is altogether too feeble. They are too worldly, too lukewarm, live too far from God—to

derive much joy and peace from their piety. Spiritual joy, is joy—in God, in Christ, in holiness, in heaven! And when, therefore, the professor lives so little in the closet, communes so little with his Bible, and lives so far from God—it can be no wonder that his religion does not make him happy!

My dear friends, let me now entreat you to avoid these hindrances, and to seek after more of that heavenly, holy, happy frame of mind. Pray for it, for it is a fruit of the Spirit. Be much in converse with your Bibles, for it comes in the way of understanding, believing, and experiencing the truth. Find time for private, silent meditation, for the truth will not be seen, so as to affect the heart, by a hasty glance at Scripture. Seek to have your faith strengthened, for your joy must ever be in proportion to your faith.

Watch against sin, for sin is **like water to the flame of joy**. Cultivate all the branches of holiness; for holiness is happiness. You must have eminent piety, if you would have spiritual joy. Spiritual joy is the oil to the wheels of obedience. It is this which braces up the soul for action, and carries it forward through difficult and self-denying duties.

How can we best vanquish the world, that ever present, and every where present foe, which comes in so many forms—and with such golden pleas? How, but by a heart already well pleased with its own happiness in Christ. Spiritual joy is the world's vanquisher! The heart by holy joy rises above the world—sees it below, covered with smoke and dust, and finds itself in a brighter, purer, happier region, with the cloudless sun above, and all around filled with glory. What has the world to offer comparable to that which a rejoicing faith has found in Christ? What has 'worldly ambition' to offer, which can vie with this? He may spurn the favor of the crowned prince, and put his crown aside as a bauble—who is rejoicing in hope of an incorruptible crown of life and glory!

"The joy of the Lord is your strength!" Nehemiah 8:10

### **Though we mourn—we must not murmur**

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. **The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away.** Praise the name of the Lord! (Job 1:21)

"See, I am the only God! There are no others. **I kill,** and I make alive! **I wound,** and I heal, and no one can rescue you from My power!" Deuteronomy 32:39

When a holy and beloved object of our affection is removed by death, we ought to sorrow. Humanity demands it; and Christianity, in the person of the weeping Jesus, allows it. The man without a tear, is a savage or a Stoic—but not a Christian. God intends when He *bestows* His gifts—that they should be received with smiles of gratitude; and when He *recalls* them—that they should be surrendered with "drops of sacred grief." Sorrow is an affection implanted by the Creator in the soul, for wise and beneficent purposes; and it ought not to be ruthlessly torn up by the roots—but directed in its exercise by reason and piety.

The work of **grace**, though it is above **nature**—is not against it. The man who tells me not to weep at the grave—insults me, mocks me, and wishes to degrade me! Tears are the silent, pure, sincere testimony of my heart to the excellence of the gift He gave in mercy; and in mercy, no doubt, as well as judgment, He has recalled.

But, then, **though we mourn—we must not murmur.** We may sorrow—but not with the violent and uncontrolled grief of the heathen, who have no hope.

Our sorrow must flow, deep as we like, but noiseless and still—in the channels of **submission**. It must be a sorrow so **quiet**, as to hear all the words of consolation which our heavenly Father utters amidst the gentle strokes of His rod. It must be a sorrow so **reverential**, as to adore Him for the exercise of His prerogative in taking away what and whom He pleases. It must be a sorrow so **composed**, as to prepare us for doing His will as well as bearing it.

It must be a sorrow so **meek** and **gentle**, as to justify Him in His dispensations. It must be a sorrow so **confiding**, as to be assured that there is as much love in taking the mercy away—as there was in bestowing it. It must be a sorrow so **grateful**, as to be thankful for the mercies left—as well as afflicted for the mercies lost. It must

be a sorrow so **trustful**, as to look forward to the future with hope.

It must be a sorrow so **patient**, as to bear all the aggravations that

accompany or follow the bereavement with unruffled acquiescence.

It must be a sorrow so **holy**, as to lift the prayer of faith for Divine grace, to sanctify the stroke. It must be a sorrow so **lasting**, as to preserve through all the coming years of life, the benefit of that event, which in one solemn moment changed the whole aspect of our earthly existence.

### **These are the idols of the heart!**

The first commandment of the decalogue says, "You shall have no other gods before Me." The meaning of this precept, which is the foundation of all religion, is not merely that we shall not acknowledge any other God besides Jehovah—but also that we shall **treat** Him as God! That is, we . . .

must **love** Him with all our hearts,  
**serve** Him with all our lives, and  
**depend** upon Him for our supreme felicity.

It is obvious that whatever we love most, and are most anxious to retain and please—whatever it is we depend most upon for happiness and help—whatever has most of our hearts—that is, in effect, is our God! It does not matter whether it is friends, possessions, desires—or our own selves!

### **These are the idols of the heart!**

SELF is the great idol which is the rival of God, and which divides with Him the worship of the human race. It is surprising and affecting to think how much SELF enters into almost all we do. Besides the grosser form of self-

righteousness, which leads many unconverted people actually to depend upon their own doings for acceptance with God; how much of . . .

self-seeking,  
self-valuing,  
self-admiration,  
self-dependence,

there is in many converted ones!

How covertly do some seek their own praise in what they professedly do for God, and their fellow-creatures! How eager are they for the admiration and applause of their fellow-creatures! How much of self, yet how little suspected by themselves—is seen by One who knows them better than they know themselves, at the bottom of their most splendid services, donations, and most costly sacrifices!

In how many ways does self steal away the heart from God! How subtle are its workings, how concealed its movements, yet how extensive is its influence. How SELF . . .

perverts our motives,  
lowers our aims,  
corrupts our affections, and  
taints our best actions!

How much incense is burned—and how many sacrifices are offered on the altar of this idol!

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols!" 1 John 5:21

### **The prevailing sin of Christians**

Increasing deadness to the world, and growing spirituality of mind, are sure results of 'sanctified affliction'.

**The love of the world is the great snare of the church in every age! Worldly-mindedness is now the prevailing sin of Christians.** We see them on all hands too eager to make themselves happy on earth, and seeking their enjoyments, if not in the sinful amusements of the world—yet in its 'innocent and home-bred comforts'. They look not at unseen and eternal things, but at seen and temporal things. Theirs is too much a

life of 'sense', refined it is true from its gross sinfulness—but still a life of sense, rather than a life of faith.

Hence there is "a needs be" for severe trials, if not to separate them and keep them separate from open and gross sins—yet to lift up their affections to things above, and to lead them to seek their happiness . . .

from God, the fountain of life;  
from Christ, the Redeemer of their souls; and  
from heaven, the object of their expectations.

When the world has been crucified to us, and we have been crucified to the world; when we have been taught its vanity and emptiness as a satisfying portion for the soul; when we have lost much of our anxiety to obtain its possessions, and of our dread of losing them; when we have turned from the folly of hewing out broken cisterns which can hold no water, and led more to the fountain of living waters; when we have lost our dependence on our comforts and possessions for happiness, and feel and rejoice in a glorious independence from 'created good' for bliss—when there is really and truly a conscious elevation of soul towards God and divine things—there is the evidence that we are sanctified by our trials.

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes. I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me." (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75)

### **The most subtle, stubborn, and tenacious foe**

"Don't you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own**, for you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body." 1 Corin. 6:19-20

Recollect that the renunciation of SELF, as well as of SIN, was one of the solemn transactions of that scene, and that time—when you bowed by faith at the foot of the cross, received mercy through Jesus Christ, and yielded yourselves to God. You then abjured, not only self-righteousness, but



**self-seeking, self-pleasing, and self-living.** Self, as a supreme object, was renounced.

Self, until then, had been your loftiest aim; self-love your highest affection—but then you transferred your aim and your affection to another object. The Christian has no right to ask what he will do with himself; or to what he will give himself; or how he will employ himself. He is no longer at liberty to inquire how he shall spend his energies, his time, his property, his labor, and his influence; for he is not his own—he is bought with a price.

He is not to live for **fame**—and please himself with the applause of his fellow creatures.

Nor is he to live for **riches**—and please himself with increasing wealth.

Nor is he to live for **health**—and please himself with the glowing energies of a sound body.

Nor is he to live for **taste**—and please himself with the pursuit of literature, science, or the arts.

Nor is he to live for **social enjoyment**—and please himself with an agreeable circle of friends.

Nor is he to live for **ease**—and please himself with unmolested quiet.

In short, he is not to consider himself as his own master—to please himself supremely in any way; nor his own property—to employ himself on his own account, and for his own benefit. He is not to imagine that personal gratification is to be his end and aim—for the accomplishment of which he may lay down his own schemes, select his own course, and pursue his own methods—as if he had an independent and sovereign right over himself. Self is . . .

"the old man" to be crucified with Christ;  
the body of sin to be destroyed;  
the corrupt nature to be put away;  
the law in our members to be resisted;  
the lusts of the mind to be subdued.

Self is the enemy of God—to be fought against; the rival interest with Christ in our soul—to be subdued; the means by which the devil would hold us in alienation from holiness—to be opposed.

Self is **the most subtle, the most stubborn, the most tenacious foe** with which grace has to contend, in the soul of the believer. SELF lives, and works, and fights—when many other corruptions are mortified. Self is the last stronghold—the very citadel of Satan in the heart—which is reduced to the obedience of faith.

Why do believers **murmur** at the painful dispensations of Providence, and find submission so hard an achievement? Because self is disturbed in its enjoyment!

Why are they so easily **offended**, and experience such difficulty in showing forgiveness? Because self-esteem has been wounded!

Why are they **covetous**? Because self is gratified by its increasing stores.

What is **vanity**—but the indulgence of self-love?

What is **ambition**—but the exultation of self?

What is **pride**—but the worship of self?

Why are they so reluctant to give their time and labor for the good of others, and the glory of God? Because they want it for ease, and the enjoyment of self!

Why are they peevish, quarrelsome, and discontented with the little annoyances of life, which are everywhere and continually occurring? Because they want to settle down in unmolested ease, and undisturbed quiet, to enjoy themselves!

But is this right? Is not this living as if we were our own? Is not this living for ourselves? Is not this forgetting that we are purchased property, belonging to another?

My dear friends, do consider this subject. Weigh well the import of the condition of Christian discipleship, as laid down by our Lord: "If any man will come after Me, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF." Self-denial, not self-pleasing, is your business! And the evidence of our being disciples is in exact proportion to our disposition thus to take up our cross.

If we are coveting ease, quiet, soft indulgence, luxurious gratification—and are dissatisfied, and discontented, and contentious, and peevish, because we cannot please ourselves, nor get others to please us, as the supreme end of life—how can we dream that we are the disciples of Him, of whom it is declared, "He pleased not Himself," especially since it is said, "Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus?"

For whom then are we to live, and whom are we to please, if not ourselves? Who is to come in the place of self? GOD! And for this obvious reason—we are God's! God's servants! God's property!

### **All others are walking to perdition!**

"Enoch walked with God." (Genesis 5:24)

Walking with God! Is this our religion? Does this aptly set forth our life? It makes no difference . . .  
to which church we belong,  
nor what creed we adopt,  
nor what ceremonies we profess,  
nor what zeal for religious things we have  
—if we are not walking with God!

Reconciliation with Him through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; a habitual acting as in His sight and with a view to His approbation, and a life of devotional communion with Him—is true religion—in whomever or wherever found.

Walking with God! Is this religion ours?

Do we intelligently, experimentally, know the meaning of that phrase—walking with God? Let us set it down before us, look at it, ponder it, and never cease to study it, until we know its meaning, and feel its force!

None are walking to heaven, but those who are walking with God! **All others are walking to perdition!** We hear a great deal about other things that are connected with religion—its doctrines, its forms, its creeds—but walking with God is true religion. If we know nothing of this, we know nothing of true piety!

It is walking with God—and not any external matter, that distinguishes the real from the nominal Christian!

And it is 'close walking with God' which distinguishes the earnest Christian from the comparatively lukewarm one. The earnest Christian walks closely with God, presses, so to speak, to his very side; while the other, like Peter, during his season of cowardice, follows afar off.

"Walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

### **Over-indulgence of fond and foolish parents!**

"I am going to carry out all my threats against **Eli and his family**. I have warned him continually that judgment is coming for his family, because his sons are blaspheming God and **he hasn't disciplined them.**" 1 Samuel 3:12-13

There is, in some households,  
no family government,  
no order,  
no subordination,  
no discipline.

The children are kept under no restraint, but are allowed to do what they like. Their faults are intentionally unnoticed and unpunished, and their corruptions allowed to grow wild and headstrong; until, in fact, the whole family becomes utterly lawless, rebellious against parental authority—and

grievous to all around them!

How many have had to curse the **over-indulgence of fond and foolish parents!** How many, as they have ruminated amid the desolations of poverty, or the walls of a prison, have exclaimed, "**O, my cruelly fond parents,** had you exercised that authority with which God entrusted you, over your children, and had you checked my childish corruptions, and punished my boyish disobedience; had you subjected me to the beneficial restraint of wholesome discipline, I would not have brought you with a broken heart to your grave, nor myself with a ruined life to the jail!"

**Overindulgence of children** is awfully common, and continually making shocking ravages in human character. It is a system of **great cruelty to the children**, to the parents themselves, and to society. This practice proceeds from various causes; in some instances, from a perverted and intentional sentimentalism; in others, from absolute indolence, and a regard to present ease, which leads the silly mother to adopt any means of coaxing, and yielding, and bribing—to keep the "young rebels" quiet for the time!

It is not uncommon for parents to treat the first acts of **infantile rebellion**, rather as accidents to be smiled at, than as sins to be disciplined. "O," says the mother, "it is only play, he will know better soon. He does not mean any harm. I cannot discipline him."

Lack of parental discipline, from whatever cause it proceeds, it is in the highest degree injurious to the character of the children!

### **For wives only!**

"**Wives**, submit to your husbands as to the Lord."  
Ephesians 5:22

In every society, there must be authority vested somewhere, and some ultimate authority, some last and highest tribunal established, from the decision of which there lies no appeal.

In the family constitution this authority rests in the husband—he is the head, the law-giver, the ruler. In all matters concerning the 'little world in the house', he is to direct, not indeed without taking counsel with his wife. But in all differences of view, he is to decide—unless he chooses to waive his right; and to his decision the wife should yield, and **yield with grace and cheerfulness**.

Usurpation of authority is always hateful, and it is one of the most offensive exhibitions of it, where the husband is degraded into a slave of the queen mother.

I admit it is difficult for a sensible woman to submit to imbecility, but she should have considered this before she united herself to it. Having committed one error, let her not fall into a second, but give the strongest proof of her good sense which circumstances will allow her to offer, by making that concession to the God-given authority of her husband. She may reason, she may persuade, she may solicit—but if ignorance cannot be convinced, nor obstinacy turned, nor kindness conciliated, she has no resource left but to submit.

"Wives, **submit** to your husbands as to the Lord."  
Ephesians 5:22

### **For husbands only!**

"And you **husbands** must **love** your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up His life for her to make her holy." Ephesians 5:25-26

### **Christ's love is SINCERE.**

He did not love in word only, but in deed, and in truth. In Him there was no deceitfulness; no epithets of endearment going forth out of untruthful lips; no actions varnished over with a mere covering of love. We must be like Him, and endeavor to maintain a principle of true love in the heart, as well as a manifestation of it in the conduct.

It is a miserable thing to have to act the part of love, without feeling it. Hypocrisy is base in everything; but next to religion, is most base in affection. Besides, how difficult is it to act the

part well, to keep on the mask, and to pretend the character so as to escape detection! Oh, the misery of that woman's heart, who at length finds out to her cost, that what she had been accustomed to receive and value as the attentions of a lover—are but the tricks of a cunning deceiver!

**The love of the Redeemer is ARDENT.**

Let us, if we would form a correct idea of what should be the state of our hearts towards the woman of our choice, think of that affection which glowed in the bosom of a Savior, when He lived and died for His people. We can possess, it is true, neither the same kind, nor the same degree of love—but surely when we are referred to such an instance, if not altogether as a model, yet as a motive, it does teach us, that no weak affection is due, or should be offered to the wife of our bosom. We are told by the Savior Himself, that if He laid down his life for us, it is our duty to lay down ours for the brethren; how much more for the "friend that sticks closer than a brother." And if it be our duty to lay down our life, how much more to employ it while it lasts, in all the offices of an affection—strong, steady, and inventive!

She who for our sake has forsaken the comfortable home, and the watchful care, and the warm embrace of her parents—has a right to expect in our love, that which shall make her "forget her father's house," and cause her to feel that with respect to happiness, she is no loser by the exchange. Happy the woman, and such should every husband strive to make his wife, who can look back without a sigh upon the moment, when she left forever, the guardians, the companions, and the scenes of her childhood.

**The love of Christ to His church is SUPREME.**

He gives to the world His benevolence—but to the church His love! "The Lord your God in the midst of you," said the prophet, "is mighty; He will save you, He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest in His love—He will rejoice over you with singing."

So must the husband love his wife, above all else—he must "rest in his love." He should love her not only above all outside his house—but above all within it. She must take precedence both in his heart and conduct, not only of all strangers, but of all relatives, and also of all his children. He ought to love his children for her sake, rather than her for their sake.

Is this always the case? On the contrary have we not often

seen men, who appear to be far more interested in their children than in their wives; and who have paid far less attention to the latter than to grown-up daughters? How especially unseemly is it, for a man to be seen fonder of the society of any other woman, than that of his wife, even where nothing more may be intended than the pleasure of her company. Nor ought he to forsake her, in his leisure hours, for any companions of his own sex, however pleasant might be their demeanor or their conversation.

**The love of Christ is UNIFORM.**

Like Himself, it is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Marital affection should have the same character; it should be at all times, and in all places alike; the same at home as abroad; in other peoples houses as in our own. Has not many a wife to sigh and exclaim—"Oh! that I were treated in my own house, with the same tenderness and attention as I receive in company!" With what almost loathing and disgust must such a woman turn from endearments, which under such circumstances she can consider as nothing but hypocrisy! Home is the chief place for fond and minute attention; and she who has not to complain of a lack of it there, will seldom feel the need or the inclination to complain of a lack of it abroad—except it be those silly women, who would degrade their husbands, by exacting not merely what is really kind, but what is actually ridiculous.

**The love Jesus is PRACTICAL and LABORIOUS.**

He provided everything for the welfare and comfort of the church, and at a cost and by exertions of which we can form no idea.

The business of providing for the family belongs chiefly to the husband. It is yours my brethren to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of carefulness, and to drink if necessary, the waters of affliction, that you may earn by the sweat of your brow, a comfortable support for the family circle. This is probably what the apostle meant, when he enjoined us to give honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel—the honor of providing for her, which she in consequence of the weakness of her frame, and the frequent infirmities which the maternal relation brings upon her, is not so well able to procure for herself.



In most barbarous countries, and in some half-civilized ones, the burden of manual labor falls upon the woman, while her tyrant husband lives in indolence, feeding upon the industry of the hapless being whom he calls a wife—but treats as a slave! And are there no such idle tyrants in our age and country, who so as they can live in indolence, and gratify their appetites, care not how they oppress their wives—wretches who do little or nothing for the support of the family? How utterly lost to every noble and generous sentiment must that man be, whose heart cannot be moved by the entreaties or tears of his own wife, and who can hear in vain her pleadings for his child at her bosom, and his child by her side, and who by such appeals cannot be induced to give up his daily visits to the tavern, or his habits of sauntering idleness, to attend to his neglected business, and hold off the approaching tide of poverty and ruin.

Such a creature is worse than a brute—he is a monster! And it seems a pity that there is no law and no prison-ship to take him away to a land where, if he will not work, so neither could he eat!

A practical affection to a wife extends to everything! It should manifest itself in the most delicate attention to her comfort, and her feelings; in consulting her tastes; in concealing her failings; in never doing anything to degrade her, but everything to exalt her before her children and others; in acknowledging her excellencies, and commending her efforts to please him; in meeting, and even in anticipating all her reasonable requests; in short, in doing all that ingenuity can invent for her substantial happiness and general comfort.

**Christ's love to His church is DURABLE and UNCHANGEABLE.**

"Having loved His own, He loved them to the end"—without abatement or alteration. So ought men to love their wives, not only at the beginning; but to the end of their union; when the charms of beauty have fled before the withering influence of disease; when the vigorous and sprightly frame has lost its elasticity, and the step has become slow and faltering—when the wrinkles of old age have followed the bloom of youth, and the whole person seems rather the monument, than the resemblance of what it once was. Has she not gained in mind,

what she has lost in exterior fascinations? Have not her mental graces flourished amid the ruins of personal charms? If the 'rose' and the 'lily' have faded on the cheek—have not the 'fruits of righteousness' grown in the soul? If those blossoms have departed, on which the eye of youthful passion gazed with so much ardor, has it not been to give way to the ripe fruit of Christian excellence? The woman is not what she once was—but the wife, the mother, the Christian—are better than they were!

For an example of marital love in all its power and excellence, point me not to the bride and bridegroom displaying during the first month of their union, all the watchfulness and tenderness of affection—but let me look upon the husband and wife of fifty, whose love has been tried by the lapse and the changes of a quarter of a century, and who through this period and by these vicissitudes, have grown in attachment and esteem; and whose affection, if not glowing with all the fervid heat of a midsummer's day, is still like the sunshine of an October noon—warm and beautiful, as reflected amid autumnal tints!

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies—he who loves his wife loves himself." A man's children are **parts** of himself; his wife **is** himself—"for the two shall be one flesh." This is his duty and the measure of it too; which is so plain, that, if he understands how he treats himself, there needs nothing be added concerning his demeanor towards her. For what tender care does he take of his body, and uses it with a delicate tenderness, and cares for it in all contingencies, and watches to keep it from all evils, and studies to make for it fair provisions. So let a man love his wife as his own body.

Husbands! It is in your power to do more for your wife's happiness, or misery, than any other being in the universe! **An unkind husband** is a tormentor of the first class. His victim can never elude his grasp, nor go beyond the reach of his cruelty, until she is kindly released by the 'king of terrors', who, in this instance, becomes to her an angel of light, and conducts her to the grave as to a shelter from her

oppressor!

For such a woman there is no rest on earth—the destroyer of her peace has her always in his power, for she is always in his presence,  
or in the fear of it. The circumstances of every place, and every day,  
furnish him with the occasions of cruel neglect or unkindness, and it  
might be fairly questioned, whether there is to be found on earth a case of greater misery, than a woman whose heart daily withers under the cold **looks**, the chilling **words**, and repulsive **actions** of a husband who loves her not. Such a man is a murderer, though in this world he escapes the murderer's doom; and by a refinement of cruelty, he employs years in conducting his victim to her end, by the slow process of a lingering death.

### **A ball, a concert, a festivity, a party!**

Some of you are bent upon **present worldly enjoyment**. The apostle has described your taste and your pursuits where he says, "**Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.**" Ponder that description. Does it not startle and horrify you? Lovers of parties, of the dance and the song, of the gay scene and frivolous chat—more than God!

Just look at this thought in all its naked deformity. **A ball, a concert, a festivity, a party**—loved more than God! Not to love God at all for higher objects than these—for science, literature, fame, rank, wealth—is a dreadful state of mind! **But to neglect and despise God for scenes of frivolity, mirth, and pleasure—is it not shocking?**

Did you ever yet seriously reflect thus—"What a dreadful heart I must have—which can love pleasure, but cannot love God!"

Consider what this **desire for pleasure** will do for you . . .  
in the hour of sickness,  
in the scenes of poverty,  
in the season of calamity,  
in the agonies of death,

in the bottomless pit?

### **Woman's mission**

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make **a helper suitable for him.**" Gen. 2:18

**Woman's mission** is to be the suitable help-mate of that man, to whom she has given herself as the companion of his pilgrimage upon earth.

She is, in wedded life, to be his constant companion, in whose companionship he is to find one, who meets him hand to hand, eye to eye, lip to lip, and heart to heart—to whom he can unburden the secrets of a heart pressed down with care, or wrung with anguish; whose **presence** shall be to him above all other friendship; whose **voice** shall be his sweetest music; whose **smiles** his brightest sunshine; from whom he shall go forth with regret; and to whose company he shall return with willing feet, when the toils of the day are over; who shall walk near his loving heart, and feel the throbbing of affection as her arm leans on his, and presses on his side.

In his hours of private companionship, he shall tell her all the secrets of his heart; find in her all the capabilities, and all the promptings, of the most tender and endeared fellowship; and in her gentle smiles, and unrestrained speech, enjoy all to be expected in one who was given by God to be his companion and friend.

That companionship which woman was designed to afford to man, must of course be included the sympathetic offices of the **comforter**. It is hers, in their hours of retirement, to console and cheer him; when he is injured or insulted, to heal the wounds of his troubled spirit; when burdened by care, to lighten his load by sharing it; when groaning with anguish, to calm by her peace-speaking words the tumult of his heart; and act, in all his sorrows, the part of a ministering angel.

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make **a helper suitable for him.**" Gen. 2:18

### **Dreadful and murderous cruelty!**

What genuine believer can for a moment question whether his **children's eternal salvation** ought to be the supreme solicitude of his heart?

If we look to the great bulk of mankind it is perfectly evident that true religion hardly enters into their view. They are very willing that their children should go to church; but as to any concern for the religious character, and the formation of pious habits—they are as destitute of everything of this kind, as if religion were a mere fable, or were nothing more than a mere form. Their chief object is either elegant and fashionable accomplishments, or learning and science—and provided their children excel in these, they never make any enquiry or feel any concern whether they fear God. They would be not only surprised, but would either laugh you to scorn, or scowl upon you with indignation, for proposing such fanatical questions in reference to their children! Yes, this is the way of the greater part of parents, even in this religious country. To train them up to shine and make a figure in society, is all they seek.

### **Amazing folly!**

### **Dreadful and murderous cruelty!**

### **Degrading and groveling ambition!**

To lose sight of the soul, and neglect salvation, and forget immortality! To train them in every kind of knowledge but the knowledge of religion! To instruct them in an acquaintance with every kind of subject, but to leave them in ignorance of God their Creator, their Preserver and Benefactor! To fit them to act their part well on earth, and to leave them unprepared for heaven! To qualify them to go with advantage through the scenes of time, and then to leave them unfit for the glorious and enduring scenes of eternity!

O strange fondness of irreligious parents!

O miserable destiny of their hapless offspring!

In direct opposition to this, the chief end of every Christian parent must be the spiritual interests, the religious character, the eternal salvation of his children. His highest ambition, his most earnest prayer, his most vigorous pursuit, his eye, his heart, and his hope should be engaged for their eternal welfare!

This should be the nature and exercise of his concern—"I am desirous, if it pleases God, that my children should be blessed with the enjoyment of reason, of health, of such a moderate portion of worldly wealth, and worldly respectability as is compatible with their station in life; and with a view to this I will give them all the advantages of a suitable education. But above and beyond this, I far more intensely desire, and far more earnestly pray, and far more anxiously seek, that they may have the fear of God in their hearts, may be made partakers of true religion, and be everlastingly saved. And provided God grants me the latter, by bestowing upon them His grace, I shall feel that my chief object is accomplished, and be quite reconciled to any circumstances which may otherwise befall them. For rather would I see them in the humble valley of poverty, if at the same time they were true Christians—than on the very pinnacle of worldly grandeur, but destitute of true piety."

Such should be the views and feelings and desires of all true Christian parents. Religion should be at the very center of all their schemes and pursuits for their offspring. This should be the guiding principle, the directing object, the great landmark by which all their course should be steered.

### **The rib**

"Then the Lord God made a woman from **the rib** He had taken from the man, and brought her to Adam."  
Genesis 2:22

Woman was the finishing grace of the creation.

Woman was the completeness of man's bliss in Paradise.

Woman is the mother of the human race.

Woman was the cause of sin and death to our world.

The world was redeemed by the seed of the woman.

Woman is our companion, counselor, and comforter in the pilgrimage of life—or our tempter, scourge, and destroyer.

Our sweetest cup of earthly happiness—or our bitterest draught of sorrow, is mixed and administered by her hand.

She not only renders smooth or rough our path to the grave—but helps or hinders our progress to immortality.

In heaven we shall bless God for her aid in assisting us to reach that blissful state—or amid the torments of unutterable woe in another region, we shall deplore the fatality of her influence!

**I look beyond the painted and gaudy scene of earth's fading vanities**, to the everlasting ages through which you must exist in torment or bliss; and, God helping me, it shall not be my fault if you do not live in comfort, die in peace, and inherit salvation!

### **The first book they read**

"Train up a child in the way he should go."

Proverbs 22:6

Education in modern parlance, means nothing more than instruction, or the communication of knowledge to the mind; and a good education means, the opportunity of acquiring all kinds of learning, science, and what are called achievements.

But properly speaking, education in the true and higher import of the term, means . . .  
the implanting of right dispositions,  
the cultivation of the heart,  
the guidance of the temper,  
the formation of the character.

The most important part of education is that which relates to the communication of **godly principles**, and the formation of **moral habits**.

You educate your children by . . .  
your example,  
your conversations,  
your likings and dislikings,  
your home life,  
your daily behavior,  
these, these will educate them!

You began educating your children the moment they were capable of forming an idea. This unconscious education is of more constant and powerful effect, and of far more consequence than that which is direct and apparent. This education goes on at every instant of time. It goes on like time—you can neither stop it nor turn its course.

Your children may read many books, but **the first book they read**, and that which they continue to read, and by far the most influential—is that of their parents' example and daily deportment.

### **Pointing or leading?**

Children have their eyes always upon their parents, and are quick to discern any violations of consistency. If they see us as worldly-minded, as grasping and anxious after riches, as solicitous to be surrounded by splendid furniture, luxurious gratifications, and fashionable habits, as the people of the world—if



they see us deceitful, implacable, or malicious—what can they conclude but that our religion is mere sham?

In such a case, of how little service is our attempt to impress upon their minds, those claims which we ourselves 'practically' deny? It were far better for some parents to say nothing to their children about religion, for until they alter their own conduct, their admonitions can produce no other effect than to excite disgust!

It is enough to make every parent tremble—to think what a parent should be! **Without a godly example**, everything else that we do is most lamentably deficient! As has been often said, it is only **pointing** them the way to heaven—but **leading** them in the way to hell!

### **They slay their own children!**

A mother should never forget that those little engaging creatures which play about the room so gaily and so innocently, with all the unconsciousness of childhood, are young immortals—beings destined to eternity—creatures placed on earth on probation for heaven—and that **much will depend upon her**, whether the everlasting ages shall be spent by them in torment—or in bliss!

This is an overwhelming thought!

All should realize the sublime idea that . . .  
their houses are the **schools for eternity**;  
their children the scholars;  
themselves the teachers; and  
evangelical religion the lesson.

Those parents who neglect the religious education of their children, whatever else they may impart, are **more guilty than Herod!**

He slew the children of others,  
**they slay their own children!**

He slew only the body,  
they slay the soul!

He slew them by hired assassins,  
they slay their children themselves!

We shudder at the cruelties of those who sacrificed their babes to Moloch. But how much more dreadful an immolation do they practice, who **offer up their sons and daughters to Satan**, by neglecting the education of their souls, and leaving them to grow up in ignorance of God and their eternal destiny!

Mothers! Your religion, if it is genuine, will teach you at once the greatness of the work, and your own insufficiency to perform it aright in your own strength. Your business is to train immortal beings for God, heaven, and eternity!

### **The domestic slave**

There are various kinds of slavery in the world, and many classes of victims of this cruel bondage. There is among others, **the domestic slave**, whose tyrant is her husband—and the scene of her bondage, her home!

His **stinginess** allows her scanty supplies for bare necessities. His **selfishness** is so engrossing and exacting, that his demands for his own personal ease and indulgence are incessant, and leave her no time for the consideration of her own comfort. His **disposition** is so bad, that all her diligence to please are unavailing to give him satisfaction, or to avert the sallies of his irritability, discontent, and complaints.

When such a man protests against Negro-slavery, let him begin the work of emancipation at home, by raising the oppressed woman he holds in bondage there, from the condition of a drudge—into the station of a wife!

But there are also many sad cases in which **the slavery is**

**self-imposed!** The bondage comes from the wife herself! The husband would gladly release her—but she will not let him!

Some are slaves to **neatness**—and make their fidgety anxiety about this matter a misery to themselves and all around them!

Others are slaves to **fashion**—and are always anxious and troubled about elegance and refinement!

Others are slaves to **domestic display, parties and amusements**—and are always full of anxiety about making a splendid appearance!

Others are slaves to **frugality**—and are ever vexing themselves to economize!

In these ways women will torment themselves and fill their minds with unnecessary cares and self-imposed troubles! To all such we say, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about so many things!"

**A hideous skeleton!**  
**A collection of bones!**  
**A heap of dust!**

"Don't be concerned about the **outward beauty** that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for **the beauty that comes from within**, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God." 1 Peter 3:3-4

How exquisitely is this put! How impressive the ideas which are conveyed! It is **the decoration of the soul** rather than of the body, about which Christian women should be chiefly solicitous and concerned.

The soul is indestructible and immortal—so should its ornaments be. What can jewels of silver or jewels of

gold do for the soul?

Can the diamond sparkle upon the **intellect**?

Or the ruby blaze upon the **heart**?

Or the pearl be set in the **conscience**?

Or the gorgeous robe clothe the **character**?

Or the flower wave over the **holy nature**?

No! The appropriate ornaments of the soul are truth, holiness, knowledge, faith, hope, love, joy, humility; and all the other gifts and graces of the Spirit—wisdom, prudence, fortitude and gentleness. These are the jewels with which the inner heart should be adorned. The outer body is corruptible. Dust it is, and unto dust it shall return.

That beautiful woman glittering in all the profusion of diamonds—the admiration and envy of the party or the ball room—must before long be a mass of putrefaction too ghastly to be looked upon—and then **a hideous skeleton, a collection of bones, a heap of dust!**

And where will be the immortal spirit? Will it wear the cast-off jewels of the body? O no! These remain, rescued from the grasp of the 'king of terrors', but only to ornament other bodies!

But turn now to that other female, the woman who, regardless of the decoration of the body, was all intent upon **the beauty of the soul**. Look at her, who was clothed with the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation, and decorated with the ornaments of a gentle and quiet spirit.

She too dies; but her indestructible and immortal soul over which death has no dominion, goes not unadorned into the presence of the Eternal; for the jewels with which it decorated itself on earth are as indestructible as its own nature, and go with it to shine in the presence of God!

**All taken up with fashion, amusement, and folly!**

**"Make the teaching about God our Savior attractive in every way."** Titus 2:10

It is a solemn thing to profess to be a disciple of Christ.

It supposes you to be a new creature, that old things have passed away, and that all things have become new with you.

It supposes that you have . . .  
new principles,  
new motives,  
new ends of life,  
new tastes and new pleasures.

Now, your **profession** is to be maintained with a due regard to this. Your **conduct** must correspond with it.

You must be dissimilar in these things, to those who make no such profession. They must **see** the difference as well as **hear** of it. You must compel them to say, "Well, we do not like her religion, but it is quite in harmony with her profession."

Study your profession, and thoroughly understand what it implies and enjoins. Consider well . . .  
what holiness of conduct;  
what spirituality of mind;  
what separation from the world in spirit and taste;  
what devotional feelings;  
what faith, hope, love and humility;  
what amiableness and kindness of disposition,  
are included in that declaration you have actually made—"I am a Christian!"

She who is bent upon eternity, cannot sink down into the levity of those who are **all taken up with fashion, amusement, and folly!**

The possessor of true religion is satisfied with her own sources of enjoyment, without running to the

amusements of the world for pleasure and excitement.

### **One of the loveliest scenes**

A married couple without mutual love, is **one of the most pitiable spectacles on earth!** They remain united only to be a torment to each other!

A loving, united, harmonious family, where the children all promote the comfort of their parents and of one another; where each is studious to please and to perform all fond kindnesses for the rest, and all seek the happiness of each other, is **one of the loveliest scenes to be found in our selfish and discordant world!**

### **So much time thrown away on these elegant trifles!**

**"Redeeming the time,** because the days are evil." Eph. 5:16

There are three things which, if lost, can never be recovered—**time**, the soul, and an opportunity.

In order to be useful, it is necessary to cultivate habits of order, punctuality, and **the right employment of time.**

There is no doing good without the proper use of time.

Two things cannot be done at once. Benevolent service requires time. And how much time is wasted, which the miseries and needs of society require! "Redeem the time!" is a warning that should ever be sounding in our ears!

We need time for the improvement of our **own souls**—and we need it for the good of **others**. We can do much with a proper use of time—and nothing without it. There is scarcely anything to which the injunction of our Lord more strictly applies than to time—"Gather up the **fragments** that nothing be lost." Order redeems time, so does punctuality—therefore

order and punctuality are ways of supplying the time necessary for the exercise of deeds of mercy.

Redeem time from useless reading, and other selfish entertainments—and also from that excessive addictedness to the worldly accomplishments of music, arts, and fancy craft-works, which are so characteristic of the present day. That some portion of time may be given to these things is admitted. I am not for parting with the exquisite polish which skill in these matters imparts to female elegance. I love to see the decorations of female mind and manners. Of this I may have to speak again in a future chapter, and therefore shall merely now enquire—when the cries of misery are entering into her ears, and the groans of creation are arising all around her; when countless millions abroad are living and dying without the light of the gospel and the hope of salvation; when at our own doors will be found so many passing in ignorance and wickedness to their eternal destinies—is it humane for a Christian woman to spend so much precious time each day over her knitting, crotchet, or embroidery work? As she sits plying those needles, and bringing out, it may be, the tasteful design, hour after hour—does she never hear the cry of human woe, "Come over and help us!" Does it never occur to her, how many souls have gone into eternity unprepared to meet their God, since she took her chair and commenced her daily entertainment?

Or, even leaving out of view the employment of her time for deeds of mercy to **others**; is it not an afflicting sight to behold **so much time thrown away on these elegant trifles**, which might be employed in cultivating one's own mind and heart, by reading useful Christian literature?

You cannot, systematically, do good either to yourself or others, without redeeming time for the purpose!

### **True religion**

**True religion** is . . .  
**personal,**  
**experimental,**

**practical.**

It is a thing of the **heart**—and not merely external religious forms.

**True religion** is a **living** principle in the soul . . .  
influencing the mind,  
alluring the affections,  
guiding the will,  
directing and enlightening the conscience.

**True religion** is a **supreme**—not a subordinate matter. It demands and obtains the throne of the soul. It guides the whole character—and requires the whole man and all his conduct to be in subordination.

**True religion** is not an occasional thing—but **habitual**. It takes up its abode in the heart—and not merely visits it at certain times and at particular seasons.

**True religion** is not a partial thing—but **universal**. It does not confine itself to certain times, places, and occasions—but forms an integral part of the character—and blends with everything we do.

**True religion** is **noble** and **lofty**—not an abject, servile, and groveling thing. It communes . . .  
with God,  
with truth,  
with holiness,  
with heaven,  
with eternity,  
with infinity!

**True religion** is a **happy**—and not a melancholy thing. It gives peace that passes understanding, and joy that is unspeakable, and full of glory!

**True religion** is a **durable**—and not a transient thing. It . . .  
passes with us through life,  
lies down with us on the pillow of death,  
rises with us at the last day, and  
dwells in our souls in heaven as the very element of eternal life!



Such is **true religion**—the most **sublime** thing in the world—sent down to be our comforter on earth—and our guide to everlasting life through all this gloomy valley!

**Literature, science, politics, commerce, and the arts,** are all important in their place and measure; and men give proof that they duly, or rather unduly estimate their importance—by the devoted manner in which they attend to them. To multitudes, these things are everything.

Yet man is an immortal creature, and there is an eternity before him—and what direct relation have these things to immortality? Or what influence do they exert on our everlasting destiny in the eternal world? More—do they make us either virtuous or happy in this world? Is there any necessary connection between any, or all of these things—with human felicity? They call out and employ the noble faculties of the mind; they raise man from savage to civilized society; they refine the taste; they embellish life; they decorate the stage on which the great drama of existence is carried on—and give interest to the performance!

But do any of these things reach the seat of man's chief pleasures or pains—the heart? Do they . . .  
cure its disorders,  
correct its tastes,  
mitigate its sorrows, or  
soften its weightiest cares?

Do any of these things comfort man amid . . .  
the wreck of his fortunes,  
the disappointment of his hopes,  
the loss of his friends,  
the malignity of his enemies,  
the pains of a sick chamber,  
the struggles of a dying bed,  
the prospect of a coming judgment?

No! True religion is that, and that alone, which can do this! And this it can do, and is continually doing!

## **The surest guide to success in this world**

What is your life, but a voyage to eternity!

A life altogether unprepared for, must be a life of perpetual mistakes, faults, and miseries.

The chief preparation for life is the formation of a moral and spiritual character. Genuine piety, the parent of sound morality, is **the surest guide to success in this world**. And as true religion is the best guide to happiness in this world, likewise it is the only way to happiness in the world to come.

True piety will preserve you from all the habits which tend to poverty and misery—and aid the formation of all habits which tend to usefulness and happiness.

## **"Who can show us any good?"**

Many are asking, "**Who can show us any good?**"  
Psalm 4:6

Man is made for happiness, and is capable of it. But **what** is happiness—and **how** is it to be obtained? To possess and enjoy it, man must be furnished with some good—suited to his nature, adapted to his condition, and adequate to his capacity and desires.

**The nature of the chief good** has been, in every age, the interesting subject of most earnest philosophic inquiry. But how various and opposed, have been the conclusions at which the inquirers have arrived on this important subject. Varro, a learned Latin writer, who lived before Christ, reckoned up more than two hundred different opinions on this subject—thus plainly evincing man's ignorance of his own nature, circumstances, and needs.

Not perceiving what it is that has made him miserable—man cannot know what will make him happy! Unacquainted with, or rather overlooking, the disease—he cannot know the remedy!

He feels an aching void within, **an unsatisfied craving after something**—but knows neither the nature, nor the source, of the food adapted to meet and satisfy his hungry appetite.

The vagrant spirit of man is seen wandering from God—the fountain of bliss—roaming through this "dry and thirsty land, where there is no water;" **anxiously looking for happiness**, but never finding it; coming often to springs that are dry, and to cisterns that are broken; until weary of the pursuit and disappointed in its hopes, it is ready to give up all in despair, and reconcile itself to misery, under the notion that happiness is but a fiction!

In this sad and hopeless mood, the victim of grief and despondency is met by the Bible, which takes him by the hand, and leads him to the fountain of living waters. Such is the design of Scripture—to show first of all what will **not** make man happy, and then what will.

Upon all the most coveted possessions of this world, it pronounces the solemn and impressive sentence, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" It interrogates singly every coveted object of human desire, and asks, "What are you?" only to receive the melancholy answer, "Vanity!"

Nothing 'on earth' can satisfy the soul of man, as its supreme good. **Science** has multiplied its discoveries, **art** its inventions, and **literature** its productions. **Civilization** has opened new sources of luxury, and **ingenuity** has added innumerable gratifications of appetite and of taste. Every domain of nature has been explored; every conceivable experiment been made, to find new means of enjoyment, and new **secrets of happiness**. But still the heart of man confirms, and the experience of the human race prolongs the echo—"Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!"

What is the nature and the source of happiness?

What is . . .

to terminate the weary pursuits,  
to revive the languid hopes,  
to gratify the anxious desires,  
of destitute and sorrowing people,  
hungering and thirsting after bliss?

What human reason is thus proved to be too ignorant  
and too weak to decide, the Bible undertakes to settle;  
and explicitly, imperatively, and infallibly, determines  
for all and forever. Only Biblical Christianity . . .

suits the nature,  
meets the needs,  
alleviates the sorrows,  
satisfies the desires,  
of the human soul—and is its portion forever.

Only Christianity . . .

finds man depraved—and makes him holy;  
finds him little—and makes him great;  
finds him earthly—and raises him to heaven!

"You are my portion, O my God. Your favor is  
life, and your love is better than life. You are  
the center, the rest, the home of my heart!"

"Everyone who drinks this water will **thirst again**;  
but whoever drinks the water I give him will never  
thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in  
him a spring of water welling up to eternal life!"

John 4:13-14

### **The idol of our day!**

One of the evils of our age, is **an excessive love  
of pleasure**, which leads to self-indulgence, and  
indisposes the mind for sober thought and true piety.

**Love of pleasure** is one of the growing tendencies of  
the day in which we live, and threatens infinite damage  
to the present and eternal welfare of mankind, by  
bringing on an age of frivolity, sensuality and 'practical  
atheism'.

Find your pleasure, young men . . .  
in the improvement of your mind,  
in attention to duties,  
in true piety, and  
in active benevolence.

Is there not scope enough for enjoyment here?

**Excessive worldliness** is another of the dangers of this age. In our wealthy and materialistic country, there is most imminent peril of sinking into the mere worldling, and living only to get wealth. Never was there so great a danger of having . . .

the **conscience** benumbed,  
**moral principles** prostrated,  
the **heart** rendered callous,  
the **intellect** emptied of its strength,  
as in the age in which we live!

Wealth is **the idol of our day!** Without watchfulness and prayer, you are in danger of . . .

bowing devoutly at its shrine,  
becoming its worshipers, and  
immolating your souls as a burnt-offering on its altars!

### **A bad word!**

"We may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall." Proverbs 16:33

"Luck!" There is no such thing in our world, none in nature, none in human affairs.

**Luck** means that an event has no cause at all. It is **a bad word**—a heathen term. Drop it from your vocabulary! Trust nothing to luck, and expect nothing from it. Avoid all practical dependence upon it or its kindred words . . .

**fate,**  
**chance,**  
**fortune.**

Never forget your dependence upon God. He can exalt you to prosperity—or sink you into the lowest depth of adversity. He can make everything to which you set your hand to prosper—or to fail. Devoutly acknowledge this. Abhor the atheism that shuts God out of His own world!

### **JEWELS from JAMES**

(Choice devotional selections from the works of John Angell James)

#### **The sin of killing time**

**"Only fools idle away their time."** Proverbs 12:11

Idleness is a **complicated** vice. Yes, I say VICE!

First it is a most **wasteful vice**. It wastes time, which is more precious than rubies; it wastes a man's mental faculties; it wastes property.

Idleness is a **disgraceful** vice. How reproachful is it in a being made to be active, to spend life in doing nothing, and to throw away his mental powers in sloth.

Idleness is a **criminal** vice. God has commanded us to be active, and will call us to account for **the sin of killing time**.

Idleness is a **dangerous** vice. Doing nothing is next to doing evil—and is sure to lead to it. From its very inaction it ultimately becomes the active cause of all evil. "The Devil tempts all men; but the idle man tempts the Devil."

Idleness is a **wretched** vice. An idle man is the most miserable of all God's creatures. Woe be to the man who is doomed to bear the pain and penalties of a slothful disposition.

"And we urge you, brothers, **warn those**

**who are idle."** 1 Thessalonians 5:14

### **Fortified by true piety**

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4

**Parents!** How momentous a duty is it to give sound Christian instruction to your children at the earliest period in which they can receive it; and endeavor, by the most judicious, affectionate, and persevering methods, to **form their character** by true religion!

Train them up in the fear of God—that they may leave home **fortified by true piety**, to encounter the temptations of the world, and to endure the trials of life.

Next to God Himself, a pious child is a parent's best companion amid the infirmities of old age, and in the chamber of sickness and death.

### **Self-seeking, men-pleasing ministers**

"Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? **Or am I trying to please men?** If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ." Galatians 1:10

A fearless disregard of . . .  
smiles or frowns,  
character or consequences,  
opposition or approbation,  
pay or popularity,  
will always distinguish the true servant of Christ  
from **self-seeking, men-pleasing ministers**.

"For we speak as messengers who have been approved

by God to be entrusted with the Gospel. **Our purpose is to please God, not men.** He is the one who examines the motives of our hearts." 1 Thes. 2:4

### **By its own powerful and holy instinct**

"I will give you a new heart with new and right desires, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart."

Ezekiel 36:26

The new nature, **by its own powerful and holy instinct,** will turn away your feet from every forbidden place, and every unhallowed scene. Panting after God, and thirsting for the living God, taking pleasure in His ways, you will shudder at the idea of being found in the haunts of vice, or in the society of the vicious. It will be unnecessary to forbid your going to the tavern, the theater, the house of ill fame, the gambling-table, or horse-race. Your own renewed and sanctified nature will be a law against these things.

### **The shrine of Mammon**

"You lack only one thing. Go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me." At this, the man's face fell, and he went sadly away because he had many possessions. Mark 10:21-22

You see what was the defect in this young man. He did not possess the faith which overcomes the world. He wished to unite two things utterly irreconcilable—the love of God and the love of the world. He wanted to serve two masters, God and Mammon. It was not open vice and profligacy that kept him from true religion here, and from heaven hereafter.

It was the more decent and reputable sin of supreme attachment to worldly things. He could give up many sins, but he could not give up his besetting sin—supreme



regard to wealth. He could do many things, but he could not give up all to follow Christ. He could give up open vice, but he could not deny himself and take up his cross. He had many good qualities, but he lacked one thing.

**If open vice has slain its thousands, worldliness has slain its tens of thousands!**

Of all the false gods, **the shrine of Mammon** is most resorted to—it is from that idolatrous temple, the broadest and most beaten path to the bottomless pit will be found. In the crowd which press along that path, are included, not only the knaves, the cheats, and men of dishonorable character; but men who follow things which are just, and honest, and true, and reputable; who yet rise to no higher than to be the **worshippers of this sordid deity**. Yes, even Mammon can boast of devotees who scorn all that is vile, dishonorable and unjust.

In the broad road which leads to destruction, there is a path for the lovers of the world—as well as for the lovers of vice!

### **Other Baals!**

"How long are you going to waver between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow Him! But **if Baal is God, then follow him!**" 1 Kings 18:21

There are **other Baals** in this age, in all the various forms under which they are objects of human idolatry.

It is true you are not called, invited or disposed, to bow the knee to idols of wood, stone, or metal.

These, however, are not the only way in which idolatry may be practiced. **Everyone has a god**, and if man does not love and worship Jehovah, he will make a deity of his own image. Survey, young men, **the idols which you are called upon to worship!**

Among them, sustaining a high place, is **the idol of**

**SENSUALITY.** This goddess is decked out with all that can pollute the imagination, inflame the passions, or excite the evil propensities of a youthful heart. Before this image, multitudes of devotees of both sexes bow the knee and offer the most costly sacrifices of property, health, principle, and reputation!

Near her is **the bewitching and smiling image of WORLDLY PLEASURE**, with the sound of music, the song, and the dance—alluring the giddy and thoughtless to its orgies; and throwing the spell of its fascinations over the imagination of multitudes who go merrily to their ruin!

**MAMMON, the despicable deity of wealth**, is there, glittering with gold, and offering riches to his eager followers as the reward of their diligent and faithful adherence. His liturgy is the cry of "Money! Money! Money!" His sacrifices are the time, the bodies, the comfort, and the souls of his worshipers!

Near this is **the shrine of HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.** This idol is only evil, when raised above the place of faith, piety, and virtue. When thus exalted above Scripture, it is a deceiving, corrupting idol—the false goddess of a Pantheon of Vices.

Nor must we leave out **the idols of FALSE RELIGION**, the chief of which is **Popery**—the anti-Christ of the Apocalypse, "the Man of Sin sitting in the temple of God, exalting itself above all that is called God." This idol, taking the name of Christ as its designation, assuming the cross as its symbol, and boasting of an apostle as its first pope; enriched by wealth; venerable for antiquity; dignified by learning; decorated by sculpture, architecture, and painting; and adding the abysmal policies, and most serpentine craft to all these other dangerous qualities, has fascinated countless millions! And, notwithstanding the monstrous absurdity of its doctrines, the blood-stained page of its history, and its hostility to the liberties of mankind—is now putting forth the most arrogant claims, and making the most audacious attempts for the conquest of our country!

These idolaters have chosen their god, and are the determined and devoted worshipers of their Baals!

They have hardened their hearts, and seared their consciences, except it be an occasional qualm in the season of death or sickness.

They congratulate themselves upon their having thrown off all the weaknesses and fears of Christianity, and upon their being now enabled to pursue their downward course unchecked by the restraint of conscience. Unhappy men, blind, and glorying in their blindness; benumbed in all their moral faculties, and exulting in their stupidity! With every tie cut, which held them to piety and truth, they account it a privilege that they are drifting unobstructed to destruction—determined to be lost, and rejoicing that nothing bars their path to the bottomless pit!

"These men have set up idols in their hearts!" Ezekiel 14:3

"Their hearts were devoted to their idols!" Ezekiel 20:16

### **Saving faith**

**Saving faith** expresses itself not only in worship, in religious zeal, in charity to the poor—but in a systematic and strong restraint upon the passions, imagination, temper, and appetites.

**Saving faith** will ensure you . . .  
the protection of omnipotence;  
the guidance of omniscience;  
the companionship of omnipresence;  
the supplies of all-sufficiency.

**Saving faith** will fill your intellect with the thoughts of God's own mind, and your soul with the joy of God's own heart—and thus furnish you at once with the supreme truth, and the chief good.

**Saving faith** will mingle its own heavenly

pleasures with the pure delights of earth.

**Saving faith** will preserve you equally from the snares of prosperity, and the withering blasts of adversity.

**Saving faith** will be . . .  
your nurse in sickness,  
your companion in solitude, and  
your preserver amid the corruptions of society.

**Saving faith** will be your shield against temptations to sin, and the insidious attacks of infidelity and false philosophy.

**Saving faith** will be . . .  
the guide of your youth,  
the protector of your matured life,  
and the prop of your old age.

**Saving faith** will prepare you for early death, or for living until old age. It will smooth the pillow of death, by giving you immortal hopes amid the dissolution of nature. It will rise with you from the grave in that day when death shall be swallowed up in victory, and will put you in possession of glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life!

**These are the fools of whom Solomon speaks!**

"Whoever walks with the wise will become wise; but **the companion of fools** shall be destroyed!" Pr. 13:20

Young men! There are evil companions to be avoided!

The workhouse,  
the lunatic asylum,  
the prison,  
the gallows,  
the bottomless pit,  
all, all, attest the truth of this, by the millions they  
have swallowed up in their jaws of destruction!

**Evil companionship** has ruined . . .  
more characters,  
more fortunes,  
more bodies,  
and more souls,  
than almost anything else that could be named.

Young men! Evil companionship is one of your first and most pressing dangers. Character assimilates to that which surrounds it. You must take your character, to a certain extent, from your companions.

Do not have bad companions! Men . . .  
who scoff at Christianity,  
who ridicule the godly,  
who make light of sin and laugh at conscience,  
who are lewd in their actions, or obscene in their talk,  
who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,  
who are extravagant in their habits,  
who are loose in their moral principles,  
**these are the fools of whom Solomon speaks,**  
—who will bring their own destruction upon you,  
if you do not avoid them!

With much the same emphasis do I warn you against **bad BOOKS**. There are books that inflame the imagination and corrupt the taste—that by their excitement unfit the mind for the sober realities of life—or by continuous light entertainment, indispose the mind for what is serious and holy. These are all to be avoided.

In some respects bad books are more mischievous than bad companions, since they are more accessible, and more constantly with us. They can be more secretly consulted, and **lodge their poison more abidingly** in . . .  
the imagination,  
the intellect, and  
the heart!

A bad book is a bad companion of the worst kind, and prepares for bad companions of all other kinds!

"Whoever walks with the wise will become wise; but

**the companion of fools** shall be destroyed!" Pr. 13:20

### **A most dangerous propensity!**

"Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." 2 Tim. 3:4

A pleasure-loving **youth** will become a pleasure-loving **man**.

A love of pleasure, a taste for amusement, is **a most dangerous propensity!**

### **Novels**

As to **novels**, I join with every other moral and religious writer in condemning, as the vilest trash, the greater part of these productions, which have carried a turbid stream of vice over the morals of mankind.

### **Novels . . .**

corrupt the **taste**,  
pollute the **heart**,  
debase the **mind**,  
demoralize the **conduct**.

**Novels** throw prostrate the **understanding**; sensualize the **affections**; enervate the **will**; and bring all the high faculties of the **soul** into subjection to a wild imagination.

**Novels** generate a morbid, sickly sentimentalism, instead of a just and lovely realism.

A wise man should despise **novels**, and a godly man should abhor them!

## **The theater!**

I do not hesitate for a moment to pronounce **the theater** to be one of the broadest avenues which lead to destruction!

**Fascinating**, no doubt it is—but on that account the more **delusive** and the more **dangerous!** Let a young man once acquire a taste for this species of entertainment, and yield himself up to its gratification, and he is in imminent danger of becoming a lost character—rushing upon his ruin!

All the evils that can . . .  
waste his property,  
corrupt his morals,  
blast his reputation,  
impair his health,  
embitter his life,  
and destroy his soul,  
lurk in the confines of **the theater!** Vice, in every form, lives, and moves, and has its being there!

Myriads have cursed the hour when they first exposed themselves to the contamination of **the theater**. >From that fatal evening, they date their destruction!

Take warning then, and have nothing to do with **the theater**. Avoid it as one of the avenues to the broad road that leads to destruction. The danger is greater than I describe. The doors of **the theater** are as the jaws of the devouring lion!

"Do not follow the crowd in doing evil." Exodus 23:2

## **Our life is a bubble!**

**"What is your life?** You are a **mist** that appears for a little while and then vanishes!" James 4:14

Our world is a valley of tears. **Our life is a bubble**, raised from those tears, inflated by sighs; which, after floating a little while, decked with a few gaudy colors

—is touched by the hand of death, and dissolves!

Poverty,  
disease,  
misfortune,  
unkindness,  
instability,  
death,  
all assail the travelers as they journey onward  
to eternity through this gloomy valley.

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on  
what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary,  
but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinth. 4:18

### **When the honey is all sucked!**

**Love of worldly pleasure** is a great impediment  
to true piety. It has been most wickedly said,  
"**Youth** is the time for pleasure,  
**manhood** is the time for business,  
**old age** is the time for religion."  
It is painful to observe, that if the two latter parts  
of human life are neglected, the first is not.

Young people too often answer the description given by  
the apostle, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

In youth, there are many temptations to this wicked  
propensity . . .  
the **senses** are vigorous,  
the **spirits** lively,  
the **imagination** ardent,  
the **passions** warm, and  
the **concerns** of life but few and feeble.

Hence many give themselves up to the impulses of their  
corrupt nature, and are held in alienation from a life of  
piety—**by a love of pleasure**. Some are carried away by  
a vain and frivolous love of dress and show; others by  
a delight in mirth and parties; others by games, balls,



and theatrical performances; others by the sports of the field; others by intemperance and debauchery.

It is admitted that all these gratifications are not equally degrading in themselves—nor equally destructive of reputation and health. But **if indulged in as the chief good**, they may all prevent the mind from attending to the concerns of true religion.

**A predominant love of worldly pleasure**, of any kind—is destructive in every point of view. It often **leads** on from gratifications which, in the opinion of the world, are decent and moral—to those which are wicked and immoral. It is incompatible with the duties and comforts of domestic life. It hinders the improvement of the understanding, and keeps the mind barren and empty. It prevents from becoming the benefactors of society. But its greatest mischief is, that it totally indisposes the mind for true religion, and thus extends its mischief to eternity! **In short, if a predominant love of worldly pleasure is cherished and persisted in, it ruins and damns the soul forever!**

My children, beware of this most dangerous propensity for worldly pleasure! Consider where it leads—resist it to the uttermost—and ask grace from God to acquire a better taste.

Yes, **if you live for worldly pleasure**, and neglect true religion, you are giving up an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory—for light and frivolous gratifications, which are but for a moment! You are, for the sake of a few years' empty mirth, entailing everlasting ages of unmitigated torments!

Besides, though worldly pleasure may temporarily gratify—it does not really satisfy! **When the honey is all sucked**—it leaves a sting behind!

And what are the pleasures of the world, compared with those of true piety?

But the shadow to the substance;  
the stagnant pool to the fresh and running fountain;  
the smoking candle to the midday sun!

**Shall worldly pleasure cheat you of eternal salvation?**

**He certainly acts as an atheist!**

Fathers! **Your children are immortal beings!** The stamp of eternity is upon them! Everlasting ages are before them! They are like the rest of the human race—**depraved, guilty, and condemned creatures**; and consequently in danger of eternal misery! Yet they are, through the mercy of God, creatures capable of attaining to glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life. Looking upon them in this light, what should be your chief concern for them—and what should be your conduct towards them?

**Fathers! Your children are hastening to either eternal happiness—or eternal torment!**

The man who does not make **the eternal welfare of his children**, the supreme end of all his conduct towards them, may profess to believe as a Christian—but **he certainly acts as an Atheist!**

Once more let it be stated, and stated with all possible emphasis—that the chief design of this work is to form the pious character of its readers, and to implant those virtues which shall live, and flourish, and dignify, and delight—infinite ages after every object that is dear . . .  
to avarice or pride,  
to learning or science,  
to taste or ambition,  
shall have perished in the conflagration of the universe!

It is in the highest degree inconsistent, absurd, cruel, and wicked—for a Christian parent not to be supremely desirous of the everlasting welfare of his children! Let a supreme concern for their immortal interests be at the bottom of all your **conduct**, and be interwoven with all your parental **habits!**

## Taste & distaste

True religion changes the moral nature, producing . . .  
a dislike and dread of sin, and  
a love of holiness and virtue.

Piety is a **spiritual taste**; and, like every other taste, it is accompanied with a **distaste** for the opposites of those things or qualities which are the subjects of its delight. Sin is that bitter thing which the soul of a true Christian hates. It is the object of his antipathy—and therefore of his dread. He turns from it with aversion and loathing, as that which is offensive and disgusting. It is not merely that he is commanded by authority to abstain from sin—but he is led away from it by **the expulsive power of a new attraction**. He may have sinful propensities of his carnal nature—but he resists the indulgence of them, for it is sin against God.

When you have once tasted the sweetness of true religion—how insipid, how nauseous, will be those draughts of 'wicked pleasure' with which the sinner intoxicates and poisons his soul!

When you have acquired a relish for the pure, calm, satisfying joys of faith and holiness—how entirely will you disrelish the polluting, boisterous, and unsatisfying pleasures of sin!

When you have once drunk of the waters of the river of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb—how loathsome will be the filthy turbid streams of licentious gratification!

## The pursuits of butterflies and grasshoppers, and canary birds!

**Pleasure** is the supreme good, and chief object of pursuit of many. To pleasure, they have devoted their lives. Some are living for sports, others for the gratification of the appetites, and others for the enjoyment of the round of fashionable

amusements. Pleasure, in one form or other, is the chief object of pursuit with myriads.

As to the **gratification of our animal appetites**, it should not be difficult to persuade us, that to sink to the level of the brute creation, and **hold communion with swine, and goats and rats**, cannot be the chief end of a rational being.

To many, **fashionable amusements** seem to be the purpose of life. Multitudes live for pleasures of this kind. Ball succeeds to concert; the private party to the public assembly; the card party to the dinner party. **In this busy round of fashionable follies, many pass their lives away!**

Can it be, that the chief object of existence is to **sing**, and **play**, and **dress** and **dance**? Do not these things, when we reflect upon them, look more like **the pursuits of butterflies and grasshoppers, and canary birds**—than of rational creatures? Is it not melancholy to see beings with never-dying souls, sinking to the amusements of children; and employing time as if it were given them for nothing but mirth; and using the world as if it were created by God only to be a sort of playground for its inhabitants?

Does this kind of life really satisfy those who pursue it?

Far, very far, from it! Can any person, in reality, be farther from happiness than those who live for pleasure?

"O Lord, save me from the men of this world—who have their portion in this life!" Psalm 17:14

### **A bubble that rises, and shines, and bursts!**

"Be very careful, then, how you live—**not as fools** but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

Paul implies that a man can give no greater proof of folly, nor more effectually act the part of a fool, than to waste his time. While on the other hand, a just appreciation and right improvement of time

are among the brightest displays of true wisdom.

We must value time correctly, and improve it diligently.

**Time is the most precious thing in the world.** God distributes time miserly—by the moment—and He never promises us another moment! We are to highly **value**, and diligently to **improve** the present moment, by the consideration that for anything we know, it may be our last.

Time, when once gone, never returns. **Where is yesterday?** A moment once lost, is lost forever!

We should never forget that our time is among the talents for which we must give account at the judgment of God. We must be tried not only for what we have done—but for what we neglected to do. Not only for the hours spent in sin—but for those wasted in idleness. Let us beware of wasting time.

It might stir us up to diligence in the improvement of our time, to think how much of it has been already misspent. What days, and weeks, and months, and years, have already been utterly wasted, or exhausted upon trifles totally unworthy of them. They are gone, and nothing remains of them but the guilt of having wasted them. We cannot call them back if we would. Let us learn to value more highly, and to use more kindly, those days which remain.

How **much** of our time is already gone—and how **little** may be yet to come? The sands of our hour-glass may be almost out! **Death may be at the door!**

When you begin a day, you don't know that you shall end it!  
When you lie down, you don't know that you shall rise up!  
When you leave your house, you don't know that you shall ever return!

For what is your life? It is even as a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes! Life is **a bubble that rises, and shines, and bursts!** We know not in any one period of our existence—but that it may be the last. Surely, surely,

we should then improve our time, when we may be holding, for anything we know, the last portion of it in our hands!

You are immortal creatures, and must live forever in torment or in bliss! And certainly you cannot be forming a right estimate of the value of time, nor be rightly employing it, if the soul be forgotten, salvation neglected, and eternity left out of consideration!

### **Our great concern!**

"There are three things that will endure—**faith, hope, and love**—and the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinth. 13:13

Real Christianity consists of these three apostolic graces.

All else is but her earthly attire, which may vary in fashion and color, without affecting her substance and life, or destroying her symmetry. Had this been understood, believed, remembered, and practiced from the beginning . . .  
what monstrous systems of error;  
what iron yokes of spiritual tyranny;  
what bloody persecutions;  
what ecclesiastic arrogance and presumption;  
what disfigurements of **the simple and spiritual religion of the meek and lowly Jesus**, by pagan rites and external ceremonies; what foul blots upon the fair form of Christianity—would the world have been spared!

Amid the controversies and decrees of church councils, how has the still small voice of the apostle been stifled, which says, "There are three things that will endure—**faith, hope, and love**—and the greatest of these is love."

How forward have men been to **admire** this sacred trio, but how slow to **imitate** them!

**Poets** have sung their charms!  
**Painters** have delineated their beauty!  
**Music** has chanted their praises!  
**Eloquence** has emblazoned their worth!

What remains but for preachers to make them the prevailing themes of their ministry—and for professing Christians to exhibit them in the practice of their lives!

When this shall everywhere be done, and they shall universally come in place of a heartless orthodoxy and an external ritualism—then the world will see Christianity as she is, and will covet to be like her. But, until then, multitudes will look upon Christianity with suspicion, and not a few turn from her with disgust!

**Our great concern** should be to promote a healthful, spiritual, robust, and godly piety in our churches; for which no external improvements in our architecture, our music, or our services, can be a substitute!

What we should seek to maintain in our churches, is the more powerful dominion of faith, hope, and love, compared with which, many of those matters which are now rife among us, are but of very small importance.

**Faith, hope, and love** are the great themes of the Christian ministry, are something more than matters of theory—something more than mere theses for the theologian to discuss before an audience. They are matters of eternal life or death—and should be preached as if the preachers believed them to be so.

### **The great idol!**

"People will be **lovers of themselves**." 2 Timothy 3:2

**Selfishness** is the cause of all sin—the opposite of all holiness and virtue.

**The essence of man's sin**, the sum of his moral depravity, is to love himself supremely; to seek himself finally and exclusively; to make self, in one shape or another, the center to which all his busy thoughts, anxious cares and diligent pursuits, constantly tend.

**Self-love** is the most active and reigning principle in fallen nature! **SELF** is **the great idol** which mankind are naturally disposed to worship; and **selfishness** the grand interest to which they are devotedly attached!

Selfishness is contrary to the habitual temper of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For even Christ did not please Himself."

The perfection of all virtue lies in unselfish love. The nearer we approach to this state of mind, the nearer we come to sinless moral excellence. "Love is not self-seeking."

"Do nothing out of **selfish ambition** or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." Phil. 2:3

### **The loathsome moral leprosy!**

"Love does not boast—it is not proud." 1 Corin. 13:4

**Pride** has a high and overweening conceit of its own possessions and acquirements, and ostentatiously boasts of what it is, has done, can do, or intends to do.

**Pride** signifies such an exalted idea of ourselves, as leads to self-esteem—and to contempt of others.

**Pride** is self-admiration—self-doating.

**Pride** is the sin which laid the moral universe in ruins.

**Pride** is the original sin, the inherent corruption of our nature. **Pride** spreads over humanity with contagious violence. **Pride** is **the loathsome moral leprosy**, raging alike through the palace and the cottage, and infecting equally the prince and the peasant.

Love is no less opposed to VANITY than it is to pride!

Pride differs from vanity thus—  
**pride** causes us to value ourselves;  
**vanity** makes us anxious for applause.



**Pride** renders a man odious;  
**vanity** makes him ridiculous.

Love does not boast of, or ostentatiously display,  
its possessions, abilities, or good deeds.

"Love does not boast—it is not proud." 1 Corin. 13:4

**Although they should spend every penny!**

**"If I give all I possess to the poor** and surrender  
my body to the flames, but have not love, **I gain**  
**nothing!"** 1 Corinthians 13:3

This representation of the indispensable necessity  
of Christian love, is most striking. It supposes it  
possible that a man may distribute all his substance  
in acts of apparent beneficence—and yet after all be  
without true religion!

**Actions** derive their moral character from the **motives**  
under the influence of which they are performed.

Therefore, many actions which are beneficial to **man**,  
may still be sinful in the sight of **God**, because they  
are not done from a right motives!

The most diffusive generosity—**if prompted by pride,**  
**vanity or self-righteousness**—is of no value in the  
eyes of the omniscient Jehovah! On the contrary, it  
is very sinful!

It is too evident to be questioned, that many of the  
**charities** of which we are the witnesses, are done from  
any motives but the right ones. We readily see that  
multitudes are lavish in their monetary contributions,  
who are at the same time totally destitute of love to  
God. They are, as it respects real religion, less than  
nothing, **although they should spend every penny**  
of their property in relieving the needs of the poor!

If our munificence, however great or self-denying, be

the operation of mere selfish regard to ourselves, to our own reputation, or to our own safety—and not of pure love—**it may do good to others**, but will do none to ourselves!

**"If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing!"** 1 Corinthians 13:3

### **Seraph or demon?**

Many conclude that they are true Christians, because of the **intensity of their religious feelings**. Possessed of much excitability and warmth of temperament, they are, of course, susceptible of deep and powerful impressions from true religion. They are not without **joy**—and they are not without their religious **sorrows**. Their **tears** are plentiful—and their **smiles** in proportion.

See them in the house of God, and none appear to feel more under the preaching of the Word than they do. The sermon exerts an influential power over their affections, and the preacher seems to have their hearts at command. They talk loudly of "happy frames and precious seasons".

But follow them from the house of God to their own **homes**—and, **O, how changed the scene!** The least offense, perhaps an unintentional one—raises a storm of angry passion, and the man who looked like a **seraph in the sanctuary**—seems more like a **demon at home!**

Follow them from the Sabbath into the **other days** of the week, and you will see the man who appeared **all for heaven** on the Sunday—**all for earth** on the Monday!

Follow them from the assembly of the saints to the places of **business**—and you will see **the man who looked so devout**; now . . .  
irritated and quarrelsome,  
selfish and unfair,  
crude and insulting,

envious and malicious!

Yes! And perhaps in the evening of the same day, you will see him at a prayer meeting, enjoying, as he supposes, the holy season!

Such is the delusion under which many are living! Their religion is, in great part, is a mere selfish religious voluptuousness!

### **The necessary fruits of our doctrines**

Let us remember that HUMILITY and LOVE are **the necessary fruits of our doctrines**, and the highest beauty of our character!

**True Christian love** must be . . .  
blended with all our **habits**,  
diffused through all our **conduct**,  
forming our **character**,  
breathing in our **desires**,  
speaking in our **words**,  
beaming in our **eyes**.

This is true religion—practical religion.

"If I have the gift of **prophecy** and can fathom all **mysteries** and all **knowledge**, and if I have a **faith** that can move mountains—but have not love, **I am nothing!**" 1 Corinthians 13:2

"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." 1 John 4:8

### **I can conceive of no higher heaven**

In the sublime visions of the Apocalypse, where heaven is opened to our view, it is Christ who is represented as the glory of that place . . .

lighting up all countenances with joy,  
filling all hearts with gladness, and  
making all tongues vocal with praise.

Jesus is the sun of that blessed world—the orb  
of that nightless, cloudless, and eternal day!

"I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better  
by far!" This was the heaven Paul longed for. That one  
idea of 'being with Christ' filled his soul. To be absent  
from the body, and present with the Lord—was the  
prevailing wish of his truly Christian heart.

Jesus is the object of the Christian's supreme  
regard. Are there not moments when he has . . .  
such views of Christ's glory,  
such conceptions of His amazing mercy,  
such a sense of His love,  
such feelings of gratitude and affection,  
that he is ready to say, "If I feel all this now,  
when I only believe, what must be the felicity . . .  
of beholding His full-orbed glory,  
of gazing upon His face,  
and hearing His loving voice!

**I can conceive of no higher heaven**, no more perfect  
paradise, than to be in the presence of Him who died  
for me upon the cross!"

There is something wonderfully impressive and delightful,  
in thus resolving the bliss of heaven into a one state of  
mind, consisting of an adoring and grateful love, for a  
being to whom we are indebted for redemption **from** an  
infinite and eternity of torment, and **to** an infinite  
and eternity of bliss; and who adds to all these claims  
upon our gratitude, additional claims upon our homage  
and admiration—for His own infinity and eternal glories!

### **Elegance, entertainment, and luxurious gratification**

"For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the  
lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions.

These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world." 1 John 2:16

**The 'spirit of the world' has come into the church!**

**Elegance, entertainment, and luxurious gratification** are occupying far more than they ought to do, the minds of professing Christians!

"Therefore, come out from them and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you." 2 Corinthians 6:17

**A decent, flowery, down-hill way to eternal destruction!**

Christ is . . .  
the supreme object of a true Christian's love,  
the chief source of his felicity,  
the highest end of his life.

The **first object** of a Christian's desire, pursuit and expectation—is the salvation of his soul.

Our **great business** on earth—is to fit for heaven.

Our **main concern** in time—is to prepare for eternity.

The **world** is, indeed, **a very dangerous foe** to the believer. To very, very many, it is the most **destructive** one. They are not so likely to be subdued by 'open vice' as by worldly-mindedness.

Worldliness is **the sin of the age**, and has deeply infected the church of Christ.

"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

This verse ought to ring through all Christendom,

and make the **ears** of millions tingle—and their **hearts** to palpitate with fear and alarm!

### **What is the world?**

Not merely open sin and vice, profligacy, idolatry, infidelity or heresy. Oh no! The world contains many things besides the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life—things . . .

more decent,  
more innocent,  
more rational,  
more commendable,  
than these vile objects!

Everything on earth, however fair, laudable and excellent in itself—everything besides God, is the world.

Your **business** is the world,  
your **family** is the world,  
your **comfortable home** is the world,  
the **wife** of your bosom is the world,  
the **children** whom God has given you are the world.

"What! then," you exclaim, "are we not to love these?"  
Yes, in proper degrees—but not more than God. You are not to seek your highest happiness from them. You are not to be more solicitous to secure them, than heaven. It is of a 'supreme love' which the apostle speaks.

"Anyone who loves his father or mother **more** than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter **more** than Me is not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:37

Christian professors, there is need to have these solemn, yet righteous demands, sent with a voice of thunder into your places of business and scenes of domestic comfort. You have need to be told that . . .

all this engrossing solicitude about business;  
all this eager haste to be rich;  
all this ambition for larger houses;  
all this taste for elegance, show and fashion;  
all this competition for name and fame,

which leads to a neglect of salvation, to departure from God, to indifference to heaven—is the love of the world, which is incompatible with the love of the Father!

And not less so . . .

that supreme concern about domestic enjoyment,  
that taste for fashionable amusements, or even  
that more refined and simple love of home-bred delights,  
which leaves out God, salvation, heaven and eternity!

Here, here, I repeat, is your **peril**.

Here the **enemy** with which you have to do battle!

It is not **vice**.

It is not **profligacy**.

**It is worldly-mindedness!**

Do we not see mere professors throwing  
themselves wholly—body, soul, and spirit . . .  
into their trade,  
into the cherished objects of their ambition,  
into their entire devotedness to a worldly life.

**In** these things, and **for** them, they live!

These things . . .

bind round and overgrow their heart,  
stifle all serious thoughts,  
smother all heavenly desires.

**The road that leads to destruction** is broad enough to comprise many parallel paths. And there is one path crowded with professors of religion, walking in company, with cheerful appearance, and elegant attire, and elastic step—but still **walking to perdition!** Oh, yes, there is a way 'through the church'—**a decent, flowery, down-hill way to eternal destruction**, and there are many who take that road!

**The sweetest ingredients in the cup of life**

The purest happiness of an earthly nature, is that which springs up in a comfortable home, where there is a loving union of hearts between man and wife.

The tender sympathies,  
the delicate affections,  
the minute attentions,  
the watchful solitudes,  
the ceaseless kindnesses **of marital love**,  
—are **the sweetest ingredients in the cup of life**,  
and contribute a thousand times more to earthly enjoyment, than all the possessions of wealth, and all the blandishments of rank, station, and fashion.

### **You are the one who has done this!**

"They all know that the the hand of the Lord has done this. In His hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind." Job 12:9-10

"Be still, and know that I am God." Such is the admonition which comes to you—and which comes from heaven. **It is God Himself who has bereaved you**—through whatever second causes He has inflicted the blow. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge—much less a rational and immortal creature. He has the keys of death, and never for a moment entrusts them out of His hand—the door of the sepulcher is never unlocked, but by Himself!

Though men may drop and die as unheeded by many, as the fall of the autumnal leaf in the pathless desert—**they die not by chance!** Every incident which has reduced you to your present sorrowful condition, is an individual decision of infinite wisdom. Whether therefore, **the death of your husband** was slow or sudden; at home or abroad; by accident or disease—it was appointed, and all its circumstances arranged, by God. Be still, therefore, and know that He is God, who does His will among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of earth, and allows no one to question His proceedings.

Bow down before Him with unqualified submission—and find



relief in acquiescence to His wise and sovereign will.

Submission forbids all passionate invective; all rebellious language; all bitter reflections on second causes; and all questionings about the wisdom, goodness, or equity of the God of Providence. You should not only suppress all murmuring and complaining **language**—but all **thoughts** and **feelings** of this kind. Submission is that state of the soul under afflictive dispensations of Providence, which produces an acquiescence in the will of God—as just, and wise, and good. It expresses itself in some such manner as the following. "I deeply feel the heavy loss I have sustained, and my nature mourns and weeps. But as I am persuaded it is the Lord's doing, who has a **right** to do as He pleases, and who is at the same time too **wise** to mistake, and too **benevolent** to put me to unnecessary pain—I endeavor to bow down to His holy will."

Did we really believe in the doctrine of Providence, and that He who superintends its administration, unites to an **arm of omnipotence**—a **mind of infinite knowledge**, and a **heart of boundless love**—submission would be easy!

Christian mourner, consider God as the author of all your trials—as well as of all your comforts! View Him as your Father! Be assured that He loves you too well to do you any harm! Be confident that He is making all things work together for your good!

"I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for **You are the one who has done this!**" Psalm 39:9

### **Continually churning up mire and dirt!**

"The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waves are **continually churning up mire and dirt.**" Isaiah 57:20

Until the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, is regenerated and brought to love God supremely, there can be no true happiness or peace. As long as the heart is under the dominion of selfishness, and

all those lusts and passions to which it gives rise,  
**it must be miserable!**

In the absence of Christian love, the human bosom must be the seat of uneasiness and distress.

Happiness does not arise from **possessions**, so much as from **dispositions**. Happiness is not what a man has, or where he dwells—but what he IS. The great source and springs of felicity, are rooted in our nature. There are certain dispositions, the absence of which would render heaven a place of torment to us; and others, which would raise for us an Eden in the midst of the dreariest wilderness on earth.

It is true that many, in the absence of Christian love, pretend to some kind of enjoyment, and have it too; for there are 'pleasures of sin', such as they are. But as to solid happiness—that which befits and satisfies a rational, moral, and immortal creature—it may with the greatest truth be affirmed, that the wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest—but is **continually churning up mire and dirt!**

As well may we expect quietude and comfort in a den of wild beasts, or in a field of battle—as in a heart where the vile passions of anger, wrath, malice, envy, pride, and revenge—have taken up their abode and predominate. How demon-like is the feeling when these turbulent evil passions gain the ascendancy! What agitation and what torment are the result!

"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like." Galat. 5:19-21

**The pastor**

"We were as **gentle** among you as a mother feeding and caring for her own children." 1 Thessalonians 2:7

Oh! what churches we would have, if Christian love had its full scope!

**The pastor** would labor with the most earnest, indefatigable, and unselfish zeal for the eternal welfare of the flock; and make it evident that compassion for souls, and not filthy lucre—was the impulse of all his conduct. Affection would beam in his eyes, and breathe in his spirit, while "the law of kindness" would dwell on his lips.

He would preside over the people in the meekness of wisdom; and, instead of proudly lording it over God's heritage, he would rule them in love.

Over all his talents, however brilliant, he would put the 'garment of humility'. And, with respect to all his success, however great, he would speak in the language of modesty. He would neither envy his more gifted or successful brethren, nor proudly vaunt over his inferiors.

To all under his pastoral care, even the most illiterate and poor, he would conduct himself with the humility and love of true benevolence. He would labor to correct their errors, whether doctrinal or practical; and have no greater joy than to see them walking in the truth!

"Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity."  
1 Timothy 4:12

### **The meek and gentle and passive virtues**

**The meek and gentle and passive virtues** of the gospel, are generally looked upon with disesteem, and treated with contempt by the world. Is . . .  
poverty of spirit,  
humility,  
self-abasement,

the forgiveness of insults,  
patience under provocation,  
—admired, applauded, imitated? Quite the contrary!

The men who would practice these Christian graces,  
must make up their minds to endure the world's scorn,  
and to be treated as **poor weak-spirited creatures**.  
And yet this is the spirit of true piety—for this is the  
disposition of Jesus!

When Jesus Christ came into the world, He found it full  
of the notion that human glory consisted in ambition,  
pride, and revenge. Hence He took particular pains to  
correct this notion, giving, in His sermon on the mount,  
a delineation the very opposite of this. Indeed, the  
design of that sermon was to rectify the mistakes then  
universally prevalent on the subject of true piety and  
of happiness; and to teach the world that His disciples  
were to be **pre-eminently distinguished by . . .**

humility,  
penitence,  
meekness,  
purity,  
peaceableness,  
forgiveness,  
thirsting after righteousness.

These are the qualities of a true Christian, and everyone  
who bears the character, must sedulously cultivate its  
appropriate dispositions, and be willing to bear the ridicule  
to which they will expose him. Bearing their scorn, he will  
wait with patience for that world where humility and  
meekness will be honored and rewarded—and love, their  
parent disposition, be crowned with glory!

## **The flaming scimitar of the Sultan**

### **MOHAMMEDANISM**

This system of imposture, abounding as it does with  
minute and ridiculous ceremonies, and a slavish regard  
to absurd ritual observances; enforces, by the authority

of its founder, the most ferocious and blood-thirsty hatred to all who do not receive it with implicit faith.

Wars against all other religions are not only enjoined in many passages of the Koran—but are declared to be in a high degree 'meritorious' in the sight of Allah.

How completely Islamism has filled its votaries with the most ferocious bigotry and the most merciless intolerance, is known by universal testimony. They everywhere pour insulting contempt upon all who are not Muslims, and feel a savage delight in adding cruelty to insult.

The spirit of the system is everywhere visible in the absolute despotism of the governments of those countries in which it prevails. Where Islam is found, the arts and the sciences do not flourish, and liberty withers in its shade. **The flaming scimitar of the Sultan** is its patron and defense. It was propagated by the sword, and it is **essentially and unalterably cruel**.

Such is Islamism—a curse to the world, and the reverse of all that is holy and beneficent.

### **A very common supposition**

It is **a very common supposition** that it is an **easy** thing to be a Christian. And if to be a Christian were nothing more than . . .  
going to a place of worship,  
indulging in pious emotions,  
subscribing to religious institutions, and  
professing certain religious opinions,  
—the supposition would be correct—for  
nothing is more easy than all this!

### **But if the spirit of true piety is . . .**

poverty of spirit,  
humility,  
self-abasement,  
forgiveness of insults,  
patience under provocation,  
penitence,

meekness,  
purity,  
peaceableness,  
thirsting after righteousness,  
—then must it be obvious to everyone who knows  
his own heart, that to be a true Christian is the  
most **difficult** thing in the world!

### **One gracious purpose of mercy!**

"And we know that **God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him**, and are called according to His purpose for them." Romans 8:28

**Providence** is God's government of the universe.

Providence is that mighty scheme . . .  
which commenced before time was born;  
which embraces the annals of other worlds besides ours;  
which includes the history of angels, men, and devils.

Providence comprises the whole range of events which have taken place from the formation of the first creature, to the last moment of time—with all the tendencies, reasons, connections, and results of things.

Providence encompasses the separate existence of each individual, with the continuation and influence of the whole, in one harmonious scheme.

We are puzzled at almost every step, at the deep, unfathomable mysteries of Providence!

How often is Jehovah, in His dealings with us, a God who hides Himself! How often does He wrap Himself in clouds, and pursue His path upon the waters, where we can neither see His goings, nor trace His footsteps! How many of His dispensations are inexplicable, and of His judgments how many are unfathomable by the short line of our reason!

But whatever we don't know now, we shall know hereafter. The crooked will be made straight, the clouds of darkness will be scattered, and all His conduct towards us placed in the broad day-light of eternity.

We shall see how all the varying, and numerous, and seemingly opposite events of our history, were combined into **one gracious purpose of mercy**, which was most perfectly wise in all its combinations.

Delightful, most delightful, will it be to retrace our winding and often gloomy course, and discern at each change and turning, the reason of the occurrence and the wisdom of God. Delightful will it be to discern the influence which all our temporal circumstances—all our disappointments, losses, and perplexities—had upon our permanent and celestial happiness. How much of divine wisdom, power, goodness, and faithfulness, will our short and simple history present, and what rapturous fervor will the discovery give to the song of praise which we shall utter before the throne of God and the Lamb!

### **The whole Bible, condensed into a single term!**

I heard the sound of a vast crowd in heaven shouting, "Hallelujah! **Salvation** is from our God!" Revelation 19:1

**Salvation!** What a word! And what a blessing!

**One word**—but containing millions of ideas!

It is **the whole Bible, condensed into a single term!**

God's eternal councils;  
Christ's redeeming work;  
the Spirit's sanctifying power;  
all the riches of divine grace;  
all the blessings of eternal glory,  
are in substance comprehended in those few syllables!

**That one word** is a boundless, fathomless ocean

of blessedness—it passes knowledge!

All that preachers have ever said;  
all that authors have ever written;  
all that Christians have ever felt, imagined, hoped for,  
leave its full meaning yet to be explained.

It can be comprehended only in heaven!

It can be developed only in eternity!

I heard the sound of a vast crowd in heaven shouting,  
"Hallelujah! **Salvation** is from our God!" Revelation 19:1

### **Satan's Vicar**

**The three great works of the devil** are . . .

Idolatry,  
Mohammedanism,  
and Popery.

The Mohammedan power, symbolized in the book of the Apocalypse by the "false Prophet," is, with the Papal Beast, to be cast into the lake which burns with brimstone and fire.

We are aware of the dreadful nature of **Popery**. We regard Popery as **the masterpiece of Satanic deceit and malice**—his richest trophy, and his proudest triumph. The Pope is more **Satan's Vicar**, than that of Christ, upon earth. And the Vatican his chosen seat of dominion among men.

**Idolatry** was a prominent Satanic invention. **Mohammedanism** was a mighty stretch of diabolical craft. But **Popery** transcends both! The other two were devices outside the pale of Christianity—Popery is within it. They opposed Christianity—Popery corrupts it. They try to destroy it—Popery goes far to make it destroy itself!



## The rotten plank!

Not everyone who **says** to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. **Many** will **say** to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!' Matthew 7:21-23.

These dreadful words should sound through the whole church with the solemnity and impressiveness of an alarm bell. What a salutary fear and trembling they should awaken! To what a close and anxious examination they should lead!

Mistaken professors are **going by myriads to the bottomless pit!** Myriads and myriads are walking to eternity over **the rotten plank** of a 'formal and insincere profession', which will break beneath their feet and let them fall into the burning gulf below!

I will never cease to sound the note of warning to these deluded professors. For not only is it a **dreadful** thing to go down to the pit with a lying profession, but a **possible** thing! Not only is it a possible case, but a **common** one! "MANY will say to Me on that day!"

## Distress in heaven?

Will it cause **distress in heaven**, to know that our unsaved beloved friends and relatives are forever lost?

The only way of solving this difficulty, is to realize that a perfect knowledge of God, and of the wisdom and justice of all His designs and operations, will constitute a chief part of the happiness of heaven. We shall be . . .

so convinced of the equity of His dealings towards the wicked,  
so divested of all the weakness of 'human sentimentalism',  
so absorbed in the love of what is right and just,  
that **the absence of our loved ones from the world of glory**, will cause no interruption of our heavenly bliss!

This, I acknowledge, is now hard to conceive. The day shall

reveal it. "**Now we know in part** and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears." 1 Cor. 13:9-10

After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for **true and just are His judgments!**" And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! **The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever!**" Revelation 19:1-3.

### **The design of Christ's work**

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

**The design of Christ's work** is not merely to deliver from hell, but also from sin. The salvation of Christ is designed to make you a new creature, and to restore the image of God to your soul.

All true Christians . . .  
love God,  
hate sin,  
feel Christ precious,  
give themselves to prayer,  
live holily.

### **Like a concealed worm at the root of a flower**

It may be that your hindrances to a more rapid growth in grace, arise from some specific cause, some sin indulged, some corruption cherished. Is there not some sacrifice which you are unwilling to make, or something which you are unwilling to surrender? You must give up the forbidden thing, or your growth in grace is impossible! That one sin will, **like a concealed worm at the root of a flower**—eat out the very life of your piety, and cause it to droop, wither, and decay.

### **A misspent life**

Time, with ceaseless flow rolls onward, and is ever bearing you on its resistless stream—to the boundless ocean of eternity. Yes, to eternity!

**A misspent life** can never be spent over again! A fault committed in reference to the 'chief end of existence' can never be rectified. It is a mistake on which death sets the seal of eternity—a mistake which will require everlasting ages to understand and deplore it!

The chief object of life must be something **important**. A rational creature could not be justified in setting up a mere trifle as the end and purpose of existence. It marks a base and abject state of mind, or at any rate, great childishness of taste—to allow one's thoughts, feelings and aspirations, to be attracted, as to their center—to a mere triviality.

God has given to man noble faculties—and to see them all devoted to some mere petty trifle, as their supreme aim—is **a sad and a humiliating spectacle**.

### **Who are they, and from where did they come?**

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. They cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation be to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Revelation 7

Who are they that send forth such strains? **Who are they, and from where did they come?** "These are those who came out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes, and made them white in the Lamb's blood. Therefore they

are before the throne of God, they serve Him day and night in His temple. He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His presence. They will never be hungry, neither thirsty any more; neither will the sun beat on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shepherds them, and leads them to springs of waters of life. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

They were once upon earth; once men of like passions with yourself. There is not a **burden** that oppresses your heart, but oppressed theirs. There is not a **fear** that agitates your mind, but agitated theirs. There is not a **temptation** that assails you, but assailed them. There is not an **obstacle** that terrifies you, but terrified them. They were once as **ignorant**, as **weak**, as **sinful**, as **timid**, as **discouraged**, as you are now. There is not a **sorrow**, a **perplexity**, or a **danger** with which you are painfully familiar—but they passed through before you.

But there they are in heaven, more than conquerors over all these things, through Him who loved them. He who saved them has engaged to save you; nor is His ear heavy, nor His arm shortened. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

### **What will He do with the lambs?**

"He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will gather the **lambs** in His arm, and carry them in His bosom."  
(Isaiah 40:11)

It is said of our Divine Redeemer, "He will feed His flock like a shepherd." And in His flock there are lambs which can neither travel fast nor far. And **what will He do with the lambs?** "He will gather the lambs in His arm, and carry them in His bosom." He will not carry them on His shoulder—the emblem of strength; but in His bosom—the image of

tender love.

Weak grace is real grace, and is in connection with the infinite source in Christ's fullness.

### **A new creation**

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is **a new creation**. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new!"  
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

There must be a Divine alteration of disposition. Our . . .  
views and tastes,  
pains and pleasures,  
hopes and fears,  
desires and pursuits,  
must be changed!

We must be brought to love **God** supremely, for His holiness and justice—as well as for His mercy and love; to delight in Him for his transcendent glory—as well as for His rich grace.

We must have a perception of the beauties of **holiness**,—and love Divine things for their own excellence.

We must mourn for **sin**, and hate it for its own evil nature—as well as its dreadful punishment.

We must feel delight in the **salvation of Christ**, not only because it delivers us from hell—but makes us like God, and all this in a way which honors and glorifies Jehovah.

We must be made partakers of true **humility** and universal **love**, and feel ourselves brought to be of one mind with God, in willing and delighting in the happiness of others.

We must be brought to feel an identity of heart with God's cause, and to regard it as our honor and happiness to do anything to promote the glory of Christ in the salvation of sinners.

We must feel a longing desire, a hungering and thirsting after **holiness**—as well as come to a determination to put away all sins, however gainful or pleasant.

We must have a **tender conscience**, that shrinks from and watches against little sins, secret faults, and sins of neglect and omission—as well as great and scandalous offences.

We must **love the people of God**, for God's sake, because they belong to Him and are like Him.

We must practice the self-denying duty of **mortification of sin**—as well as engage in the pleasing exercises of religion.

Nothing less than such a view of Christ in His glorious mediatorial character, and such a dependence by faith upon His blood and righteousness for salvation—as changes the whole heart, and temper, and conduct, and throws the world as it were into the background, and makes glory hereafter, and holiness now, the supreme concern—is saving religion.

### **The great storehouse of iniquity!**

"**From the heart** come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man." Matthew 15:19-20

The heart is the polluted fountain from whence all the muddy streams of evil conduct flow! **The heart is the great storehouse of iniquity!** Men sometimes make excuse for their evil deeds, by saying, that they have good hearts at the bottom. This, however, is an awful mistake, for every man's heart, not excepting the most wicked, is really worse than his conduct!

Men think little of sin—but does God?

What turned Adam and Eve out of paradise? Sin!

What drowned the old world in the flood? Sin!

What brought disease, accidents, toil, care, war, pestilence, and famine into the world? Sin!

What has converted the world into one great burying-place of its inhabitants? Sin!

What lights the flames of hell? Sin!

What crucified the Lord of life and glory? Sin!

**What then must sin be?** Who but God, and what but His infinite mind—can conceive of its evil nature?

### **Is he a brute? Is he a maniac?**

"What will it benefit a man, if he gains the whole world yet loses his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26)

Consider what the loss of the soul includes. It is the loss of everything dear to man as an immortal creature. It is the **loss of Heaven**, with all its honors, felicities, and glories. It is the loss of everything that can contribute to our eternal happiness.

The loss of the soul includes in it all that is contained in that dreadful word, **Hell**. Hell is the eternal endurance of the wrath of God. It is the coming down of the curse of the Almighty upon the soul; or rather, it is the falling of the soul into that curse, as into a lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

All the **tears** that ever have been or ever will be shed on the face of the earth; all the **groans** that ever have been or ever will be uttered; all the **anguish** that ever has been or ever will be endured by all the inhabitants of the world, through all the ages of time—do not make up an equal amount of **misery** to that which is included in the loss of one human soul!

Consider that the eternal loss of the soul is not a rare, but a very common occurrence. The loss of the soul is so tremendous a catastrophe, that if it happened only once in a year, or once in a century, so as to render it barely possible that it should happen to you—it would be reckless carelessness not to feel some solicitude about the matter! How much more, then, when, alas! it is **an every-day calamity!** So far from its being a rare thing for men to go to hell—it is a much rarer thing for them to go to heaven! Our Lord tells us, that the 'road to destruction' is thronged, while the 'way to life' is traveled by few. Hell opens its mouth wide and swallows up multitudes in perdition! How alarming is the idea, and how probable the fact—that **you** may be among this number! Some who read these pages will very likely spend their eternity in hell.

Concern, then, deep concern about the salvation of your soul, is the most reasonable thing in the world! Can that man have a soul, or know that he has one, who is careless about its eternal happiness? Is he a man—or **is he a brute?** Is he a rational being—or **is he a maniac?** Ever walking on the edge of the precipice that hangs over the bottomless pit—and not concerned about salvation! Oh, fatal, awful, destructive indifference!

Look into the **bottomless pit**—can you be too anxious to escape its torments? Look into **heaven**—can you be too anxious to obtain its glories? Look into **eternity**—can you be too anxious to secure immortal life?

### **What a bauble!**

"The unsearchable riches of Christ!" Ephes. 3:8

How poor and trifling are all those objects which so much engross the time and attention of the great bulk of mankind!

**What a bauble** is **wealth**, compared with the unsearchable riches of Christ!



How insignificant is the **honor** which comes from man, compared with the honor which comes from God!

And how contemptible the **pleasures of sin**, which are but for a season—those short-lived enjoyments for which men barter their souls and eternal salvation!

"The world and everything in it that people desire is passing away; but those who do the will of God live forever." (1 John 2:17)

### **Continually dropping into eternal burnings!**

**What deep pity** has been felt, and properly felt, for the population of those towns in which the ravages of the **pestilence**, or natural **disaster**, have been unusually extensive!

But oh, Christians! think of the more awful ravages of the **plague of sin**—which is sweeping crowds of immortal souls from your own neighborhood into everlasting misery! There are thousands of immortal creatures perishing in sin at your very doors! Souls are continually going down to the bottomless pit, from the houses on your right hand and your left! Men and women and their families are **continually dropping into eternal burnings**, almost before your eyes! And will you not go to their houses, and entreat them to think of their soul's eternal welfare?

"As He saw the crowds, His heart was filled with **pity** for them." (Matthew 9:36)

"And when He drew near and saw the city, He **wept** over it." (Luke 19:41)

"Brothers, **my heart's desire** and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved." (Romans 10:1)

"I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some." (1 Corinth. 9:22)

### **The rage of the present day**

If we would be revived in piety, we must resist by faith the encroaching influence of the WORLD, and the engrossing power of seen and temporal things. The address to the church of Laodicea would lead one to suppose that it was a place of trade—and that trade had produced riches—and riches had produced . . .

pride,  
worldly-mindedness,  
love of ease,  
indifference to divine things,  
and spiritual poverty.

Most people in our country appear inordinately intent upon gaining the world. To be rich, or at least to be comfortable, to be reputable, to be stylish, to be fashionable, to live in larger houses, and to have finer furniture and more earthly things than others—seems to be the supreme concern of most! They must, whether they can afford it or not, vie with their neighbors in all their habits. This seems to be **the rage of the present day**—and the church of God is, in a measure, carried away by the delusion.

Many seem almost without knowing it, to be possessed by a grasping at things beyond their reach, and an ambitious aspiring at some undefinable point of worldly elevation. All their time, all their attention, is absorbed—and all the vigor of their spirits is exhausted—in **this panting race after the world's possessions and comforts!**

It is evident that . . .

until this disposition be more subdued than it is,  
until our moderation be more known to all men,  
until we have lowered our estimate of the importance of wealth,  
until we have ceased thus to mind earthly things,  
until we have gained a greater victory over the world, or

are anxious to gain it—our piety cannot be revived. It is **like seed growing amidst thorns**—and though a fertile shower and a warmer sun should cause it to spring afresh during a more than ordinarily genial season—yet it is still among thorns, which will be sure to choke the grain!

I am afraid that we have not . . .  
that simplicity of taste,  
that contentment,  
that moral courage to be indifferent to the world's opinions,  
that sobriety of mind,  
that comparative unconcernedness about finery and splendor  
—which are necessary to prepare us for a high state of piety.

Let us, then, consider this matter. Let us attend to the apostolic admonition, "Be not conformed to this world—but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

The spirit of the world, and the spirit of piety, cannot dwell together in the same bosom. "You cannot serve God and Mammon." "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Are you seeking great things for yourself? Seek them not!" "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth," so much as treasures in heaven. Remember that "one thing is needful!" "Take heed, and beware of covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he has."

But if we will be rich, if we will be anxious about many things, if we will be full of worldly ambition, and earthly mindedness and covetousness—then we cannot experience much revival in piety—and **need not add hypocrisy to lukewarmness!** For very little better than a hypocrite, is the man who prays for the effusions of the Holy Spirit—and yet will not moderate his extreme concern after worldly wealth.

We must also put away our worldly-mindedness, our ambition, our excessive concern to be conformed, as far as possible, to the showy, expensive, and luxurious habits of the people of this world. We must restrain our taste for voluptuous ease, extravagance and self-indulgence. We must give up our concern to be accounted fashionable.

### **An inundation of worldliness**

"Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. Because everything that belongs to the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's lifestyle—is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's will remains forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

What an unearthly spirit, what an impress of eternity, what a temper of heaven should there be in us! Professing to believe all this, to hope for all this, to love all this, to yield up ourselves to all this—ought we not to be a people really, practically differing from the people of the world—seen, known and acknowledged to be different . . .

in our prevailing spirit,  
in our pleasures,  
in our tastes,  
in our feelings and conduct in regard to wealth,  
in the maxims which govern us?

Ought we not to appear to be the conquerors, and not the captives, of the world? But is it so? Is not the very opposite to all this, the present characteristic of many professors? Has not **an inundation of worldliness** flowed in upon the church?

In the habits of some professing Christians, there is a too prevailing taste for an expensive, showy style of living; an undue ambition to be in vogue; an excessive sensitiveness about fashion, refinement, needless show, extravagance, luxury and appearance. This is seen in their feverish concern to live in large houses, and possess elegant furniture.

Fashion is the goddess to whose shrine too many bow with ardent devotion. Just look at the conduct of many professors of religion. Are they not almost as completely swallowed up in the eagerness to be rich, as the openly ungodly?

Christians must be upon their guard, lest they become too eager for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the

pride in one's lifestyle.

### **A consistent Christian!**

#### **The following duties are common to all Christians:**

unreserved, cheerful, perpetual devotedness to Christ,  
entire and constant dependence on the Holy Spirit,  
a life of faith,  
spirituality of mind,  
separation from the world,  
heavenly mindedness,  
supreme regard to eternity,  
universal and high toned morality,  
eminent social excellence in all the relative duties of life,  
all the gentle and passive virtues.

O, what a character is that of **a consistent Christian!**

How holy,  
how heavenly,  
how humble,  
how gentle,  
how benevolent,  
how just,  
how devout,  
how useful,  
how happy!!

### **Be holy in every aspect of your life**

"As the One who called you is holy, you also are to **be holy in every aspect of your life**; for it is written—  
**Be holy**, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Let him turn away from all the 'conventional piety' of the day, and study with devout attention what the Scriptures teach of the true nature of genuine piety.

Let him, in a season of closet devotion, examine his own piety, and compare it with the Scriptural standard.

Let him, upon discovering his great and numerous shortcomings, humble and abase himself before God, in a spirit of true contrition.

Let him reject all excuses which his own deceitful heart, and lukewarm, worldly-minded Christians will be ever ready to suggest. He must be thoroughly convinced that nothing can, or will, be admitted by God as an apology for a low state of personal piety.

Let him intensely desire to be raised from his low state into a more exalted state of spirituality, devoted zeal and heavenly-mindedness. Let him set himself most vigorously to the work of mortifying sin, and crucifying the flesh.

Let him redouble his diligence in attending the means of grace, and especially let him give himself to reading the Scriptures, meditation and prayer.

Let him add a season of humiliation and supplication, to obtain a new and copious effusion of the Holy Spirit. Without the influence of the Spirit, we are only building a Babel to proclaim our folly, or a mausoleum to entomb our fleshly endeavors.

Let him cultivate a new and more delicate sensibility of conscience, in reference to all matters of offense, both towards God and man.

Let him give himself to Christian vigilance, watching always against sin.

Let him, in short, intelligently, resolutely, and unalterably, make up his mind to enter upon a new course of personal godliness; so new that his past attainments shall seem as if they were nothing. There is such a thing as starting afresh, as forgetting the things that are behind—and so must it be with him who would be really in earnest. He will wake up from his slumbering, dreamy profession, saying, "I have slept too long and too much! I must now

throw off the spirit of sloth, and give all diligence to make my calling and election sure."

### **Propensity for amusements and entertainments**

A great hindrance to earnest piety, is the taste for amusement, which characterizes the present day.

Every age has had its sources of pleasure, and its means and methods of diversion—to relieve the mind from the fatigue and oppression of the more serious occupations of life. The human mind cannot be kept always upon the stretch, nor can the heart sustain, without occasional relief, its burden of care. I would not rob the believer of his few brief holidays, nor condemn as irrational or unchristian, his occasional oblivion of worldly vexations amidst the beauties of nature, or the pleasures of the social circle.

**There is a time to laugh—as well as to weep.**

Still, it may be seriously questioned, whether among professing Christians, the **propensity for amusements and entertainments** has not been growing too fast, and ripened into something like a passion for worldly pleasures.

The very craving after diversion and amusement, which there is in some people, shows a morbid state of the soul. It might be supposed, judging from the representations of true religion which we find in the word of God, and from the general principles contained in it—that a Christian has rendered unnecessary, all such sources of enjoyment, which worldly people resort to.

To hear all this talk, then, about the necessity of entertainment; and the impossibility of relieving the exhaustion of labor, and the monotony of life, without parties, games, and diversions—sounds very like a growing weariness of the yoke of Christ!

This growing desire after amusement marks a low state of piety. The godly Christian is very well content to forego many things in which the people of the world see no harm.

**JEWELS from JAMES**

(Choice devotional selections from the works of John Angell James)

### **You will die this year!**

This is what the Lord says: "I am going to remove you from the face of the earth. **You will die this year!**" Jerem. 28:16

This may be the case with any one of the readers of the present address, and therefore every one of them should seriously reflect upon such a possibility.

This year you **may** die—for you **must** die some time—and that time may as likely come this year as any other.

This year you may die—because you have no revelation from God that you shall not.

This year you may die—because you are ever and everywhere exposed to the causes that take away life.

This year you may die—because **life is the most uncertain thing in the world**, and you have not the assurance of a single moment beyond the present.

This year you may die—for it is all but certain that many of the readers of this address will die this year—and why not you?

This year you may die, although there is now no indication of approaching death; for many during the past year have been cut off, and many during the present year will die, who may now seem very likely to live—and why not you?

How many, then, are the probabilities that before next new year's day, your place will be vacant in the family, at the scene of your daily occupation, and in the house of God! Ought not this to induce a habit of solemn, pensive, devout, practical, profitable, reflection. Bring home the thought. Take up the supposition, and say, "Yes, it is possible, by



no means improbable, that I may die—this year!"

Are you really prepared for your latter end, by being a partaker of genuine faith, the new birth, a holy life, and a heavenly mind? Or are you a mere nominal professor, having a name to live, while you are dead? Do you recognize in yourselves, and do others see in you, the marks of a state of grace? Put the question to your own hearts, ask yourselves, "What am I? Am I a spiritual, heavenly, humble servant of God? Am I really crucified with Christ, dead to the world, ripening for glory? Is there anything heavenly about me? Is my temper sanctified, my walk consistent?"

Is your soul in that state in which you would desire it to be found when death strikes? Are you, in your devotional habits, your temper, your general behavior, as you should be—with eternity so near? Would you desire to die—just as you are now?

How many false professors will be unmasked this year, and appear with astonishment and horror, as self-deceivers, formalists, and hypocrites! How many in reply to the plea, "Lord, Lord, I ate and drank in your presence"—will hear the dreadful response, "Depart from me, I never knew you!" and thus find there is a way to the bottomless pit—from the fellowship of the church! In whatever state you die this year—*that* you will be forever! The seal of eternal destiny will be put upon you! Your last words in time, and your first in eternity, might be, "I must be what I am—*forever!*"

The grand secret is about to be revealed, whether you are a child of God—or a child of the devil! That next moment after death—which imagination in vain attempts to paint, is to arrive—and, waking up in eternity, you will shout with rapture, "I am in heaven!"—or utter with a shriek of despair, and surprise, the dreadful question, "What! Am I in hell forever!"

## **Ever walking on the precipice of eternity!**

Reader! Did you ever, in serious moments, and in a serious manner, ask such questions as these:

What am I?

Where did I come from?

Who sent me here?

What is my business in this world?

What is to become of me when I die,  
and leave this present world?

Does not reason press such inquiries on your attention? You find yourself in existence, possessing a rational soul; you know you cannot remain here long, and must soon go and lie down in the grave with your forefathers. But does your history end there? Is there no world beyond the tomb? There is! You are not only mortal, but immortal.

**Immortality!** What a word! What a thing! Did you ever ponder the idea? A deathless creature—with an everlasting existence! Such is your soul. You are **ever walking on the precipice of eternity**—and any moment you may fall over it!

Eternal duration alone, apart from the consideration whether it is to be spent in torment or in bliss—is a solemn idea. You are to live somewhere—forever! Should this matter be allowed to lie forgotten among the thousand unconsidered subjects? Should it be treated with indifference, excite no reflection, produce no concern? Ought you not to be concerned? Going on step by step to eternity—should you not pause, ponder, and say, "Where am I going?"

For a person to realize that he is immortal, and yet to care nothing about where he is going to spend eternity, is the most monstrous inconsistency in the universe!

Can any man know . . .

how holy God is,  
how evil a thing sin is,  
how great a blessing salvation is,  
how glorious heaven is,  
how dreadful hell is,  
how solemn eternity is,  
and not not be concerned about his eternal soul?

Astounding spectacle! A rational creature, anxious about a thousand things, yet not concerned about the eternal soul! Agitated, perplexed, inquisitive about little matters of mere passing interest, which the next day will be forgotten; and yet neglecting that great subject, which swallows them all up, as the ocean does the drops of rain that fall upon it. Your health, your property, your prospects, your friends, anything, everything, but your soul, and your soul's salvation, seizes and carries you away!

Did you ever weigh the import of that most awful of all words—**hell**?

**Death** is a dreadful monosyllable! From the cold touch of that 'last enemy' all rational beings recoil with horror.

But death is only as the dark, heavy, iron-covered door of the prison, which opens to, while it conceals, the sights and sounds of the dungeon. Oh that first moment after death! what disclosures, what scenes, what feelings come with that moment! That moment **must** come—and it **may** come soon!

**Immorality**, whether public or private, if it spreads through society, and especially through the rising generation, will be a canker to all that is great, glorious, and free, in this noble nation; and England's flag, floating so loftily and proudly, will be dragged down into the mud, and **trampled underfoot by a swinish generation!**

Be thankful, be humble, be consistent, be watchful. There is no logic so convincing, no rhetoric so persuasive, as **the power of uniform and conspicuous excellence**. Add to the substance of your moral worth, the brightest polish of an amiable disposition, and all the kindnesses of life. Be courteous, generous, benevolent, cheerful, active and useful.

### **One life to spend**

**"This one thing I do.** Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13-14)

There are many secondary and subordinate ends of life, but there can be only one that is supreme. The salvation of the immortal soul, and a preparation for heaven, form the great end of man's life upon earth.

Man has but **one life to spend**, and he should be careful, anxiously careful, yes almost painfully careful, not to throw it away upon an undeserving object. Think of his coming to the close of his brief and troubled sojourn in this world with the melancholy confession, "Life with me has been a lost adventure!" We would help you to guard against this catastrophe, and assist you so to select your object, and lay your plan, that after a prosperous, happy, and useful life, even death itself—instead of being the wreck of your hopes, shall prove the consummation of your hopes, and be your eternal gain.

Our one thing, our chief end of life, is the same as Paul's, the pursuit of glory, honor, immortality; our hope is the possession of eternal life. There it is before you in all its simplicity, and, we may add, in all its sublimity.

### **True piety**

**True piety** will be the guide of our youth, the comfort of

our manhood, and the staff of our old age. If we succeed in life, it will preserve us from the snares of prosperity. And if we fail, it will be our solace in adversity. Should we be exposed to the temptations of bad company, piety will be our shield; or, if we should dwell much alone, it will be the comforter of our solitude. Piety will guide us in the choice of a companion for life, sweeten the cup of marital happiness, and survive the severance of every earthly tie. It will refresh us with its cooling shade amidst the heat and burden of life's busy day, be the evening star of our declining years, and our lamp in the dark valley of the shadow of death, and then rise with us as our eternal portion in the realms of immortality.

True piety will guard you from the snares to which youth are ever and everywhere exposed. It will . . .  
comfort you in sorrow,  
cheer you in solitude,  
guide you in perplexity.

### **The low state of piety among professors**

Ah, my friend, let me tell you in the beginning of your career, that you cannot expect too little from man—nor too much from God.

Many are discouraged by witnessing **the low state of piety among professors**. They hear little from the lips of many Christian professors, but, "What shall we eat and drink? How shall we be adorn ourselves? What is the news of the day?"

They see so much worldly-mindedness, so much imperfection of temper, so many things unworthy of the Christian character, that they can scarcely believe there is reality in religion, and are sometimes ready to give it all up as a mere name. Nay, from some of these very professors they receive plain hints that they are too concerned, too precise, too earnest and urgent.

## How far people may go

It is amazing, **how far people may go**, and **not** be really converted. They may have many and deep religious impressions, many and strong convictions; they may have much knowledge of their sinful state, and a heavy and burdensome sense of their guilt; they may look back upon their past lives and conduct with much remorse; they may be sorry for their sins; and may desire to be saved from the consequences of them, being much alarmed at the prospect of the torments of hell.

Was not **Judas** convinced of sin, and did not he weep bitterly and confess his sin, and was not he filled with remorse? Was not **Cain** convinced of sin? I have known many people, who at one time appeared to be more deeply impressed with a sense of sin, and to have stronger convictions and remorse, than many who were truly converted—and yet they went back again to the world and sin. Nor is a detestation of sin always a true sign of conversion. Unconverted people may even wish to be delivered from the fetters of those corrupt lusts, which have long held them fast; for there are few notorious sinners, who do not frequently hate their sins, and wish and purpose to reform. Yes, people may sometimes desire to be delivered from all sin; at least they may desire it in a certain way, because they think that it is necessary in order to be saved from hell.

And as conviction of sin may exist without conversion, so may religious joy. The stony ground hearers "heard the word, and with joy received it," and yet they had "no root in themselves, and endured only for a while." The Galatians had great blessedness at one time, which the apostle was afraid had come to nothing. Multitudes rejoiced in Christ when he made His entrance into Jerusalem, who afterwards became His enemies. Many take great pleasure in hearing sermons, and going to prayer-meetings, and singing hymns, and frequenting church meetings, who are not truly born of the Spirit. So also do many people leave off sinful actions, and give

up many wicked practices, and seem to be quite altered for a time, and yet, by their subsequent history, show that they are not converted.

There may be considerable zeal for the outward concerns of religion, as we see in Jehu, without any right state of mind towards God. Many have had great confidence of the reality of their conversion; they have had dreams and spiritual impressions, as they suppose—and yet too plainly proved, by their after-conduct, that they were under an awful delusion. But it would be almost endless to point out **the various ways in which men deceive themselves**, as to their state. Millions who have been somewhat, yes, much concerned about religion, have never been born again of the Spirit. Perhaps as many are lost by self-deception, as by any other means. Hell resounds with the groans and lamentations of souls which perished through the power of deceived hearts!

### **Then hell itself is full of penitents**

Repentance is more, much more than 'mere sorrow for sin'. True sorrow for sin is a part, and only a part, of repentance. If mere sorrow comprised the whole of repentance, then Cain, Ahab, and Judas all repented! **Then hell itself is full of penitents**, for there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth forever. Many, very many, grieve for their sins, who never repent of them. Men may grieve for the **consequences** of their sins, without mourning for the sins themselves.

Repentance signifies an entire change of a man's views, disposition, and conduct, with respect to sin.

The author of repentance is the Holy Spirit—it is the effect of Divine grace working in the heart of man.

No man knows what sin is, and how sinful he is, who does not clearly see that he has deserved to be cast into "the lake which burns with fire and brimstone."

### **All sins in one!**

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Alarming representation! Have you thus loved God, and your neighbor? Confounding and overwhelming question! What a state of sin have you been living in! Your whole life has been sin, for you have not loved God! And not to love God, is **all sins in one!** Who can think of greater sin than not loving God? To love the world, to love trifles, to love even sin—and not to love God!

### **But what is that misery?**

When man was created, he was created holy—and consequently happy. He was not only placed in a paradise which was without sin—but he was blessed with a paradise within him. His perfect holiness was as much the Eden of his soul, as the garden which he tilled was the Eden of his bodily senses—it was in the inward paradise of a holy mind that he walked in communion with God. The 'fall' cast him out of this 'heaven upon earth' . . .

his **understanding** became darkened,  
his **heart** became corrupted,  
his **will** became perverted,  
his **nature** became earthly, sensual, and devilish.

Not only was his conscience laden with guilt, but, as a necessary consequence, his imagination was full of terror and dread of that holy God, whose voice and presence formerly imparted nothing but transport to his soul. He became afraid of God, and unfit for him. His whole soul became the seat of fleshly appetites and sinful passions.



In his former innocence he had loved God supremely. He had been united to God by a feeling of dependence and devotedness. But now he was cut off from both these feelings, and **came under the domination of an absorbing and engrossing selfishness**. Such is the sinful nature he has transmitted to all his posterity. They are . . .

not only guilty—but depraved;  
not only under the wrath of God—but robbed of His image;  
not only condemned by God—but alienated from Him.

True it is, that hell will be some place set apart for the wicked, where the justice of God will consign them to the misery which their sins have deserved. **But what is that misery?** An eternal abandonment of them to themselves, with all their vices in full maturity! Hell is not only the wrath of God suffered, but that wrath coupled with an eternal endurance of all the tyranny of sin!

Hence, then, the design of the death of Christ is not only to deliver us from the penalty of sin, but also from the polluting consequences of sin.

### **One verse in Scripture**

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." (1 Peter 2:2)

And as those infants thrive best who are fed from the bosom of their mothers—so those Christians grow most in grace, who are most devoted to a spiritual perusal of the Scriptures.

Meditate on what you read. If we would gain knowledge from books, we must not only see the matters treated of, but steadily ponder them. Nothing but meditation can enable us to properly understand or feel. In reading the Scriptures and pious books, we are, or should be, reading for eternity.

Our profiting depends not on the quantity we read, but the quantity we understand. **One verse in Scripture**, if understood and meditated upon, will do us more good than a chapter, or, even a book, read through in haste, and without reflection.

### **Salvation!**

"Let us rejoice and be glad in His **salvation**." Isaiah 25:9

What a blessing is salvation! A blessing that includes . . .  
all the riches of grace;  
all the greater riches of glory;  
deliverance from sin, death, and hell;  
the possession of pardon, peace, holiness, and heaven!

Salvation is a blessing immense, infinite, everlasting; which occupied the mind of Deity from eternity, was procured by the Son of God upon the cross, and will fill eternity with its happiness.

Oh, how little, insignificant, and contemptible is the highest object of human ambition, to say nothing of the baser matters of men's desires, compared with salvation! Riches, rank, fame, and honors, are but as the small dust of the balance, when compared with the "salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

"My mouth will tell about Your righteousness and Your salvation all day long, though I cannot sum them up."  
Psalm 71:15

"He alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I will not be shaken." Psalm 62:6

### **Eternity, vast eternity, incomprehensible eternity**

Reader! You are an immortal creature, a being born for eternity, a creature that will never go out of existence.

Millions of ages, as numerous as . . .  
the sands upon the shore,  
the drops of the ocean,  
the leaves of all the forests on the globe,  
will not shorten the duration of your existence.

**Eternity, vast eternity, incomprehensible eternity,**  
is before you! Every day brings you nearer to everlasting  
torments—or felicity. You may die any moment—and you  
are as near to heaven or hell as you are to death.

Reader, whoever you are, you will remember the contents  
of this small treatise, either with pleasure and gratitude in  
heaven—or with remorse and despair in hell!

### **We need to re-study our Bibles**

**We need to re-study our Bibles**, and learn  
what real Christianity is—how holy, how heavenly,  
how spiritual, how loving, how morally and socially  
excellent a matter it is.

What separation from the world,  
what devoutness,  
what intense earnestness,  
what conscientiousness,  
what enlarged benevolence,  
what unselfishness,  
what zealous activity,  
what unearthliness,  
what seeds of celestial virtue—  
our profession of godliness implies.

Having examined this, and obtained an impressive  
idea of it, let us **survey our own state**, and ask if  
we do not need, and ought not to seek, more of the  
prevalence of such a piety as this, which, in fact, is  
primitive Christianity.

Is our spiritual condition what it **ought** to be, what

it **might** be, what it **must** be—to fulfill our high commission as the salt of the earth and the light of the world? A Christian, acting up in some tolerable measure to his profession, walking in the holiness of the Gospel—is the strongest and most emphatic testimony for God to our dark revolted world, next to that of Christ himself.

### **I would ask**

**I would ask**, what there is among you . . .  
of 'living by faith';  
of the spiritual and heavenly mind;  
of the victory over the world;  
of devotional habits;  
of Bible meditation;  
of the practice of self-denial;  
of Christian charity;  
of the meekness and gentleness of Christ;  
of the stamp of immortality;  
of the anticipation of eternity;  
of the patient waiting for the coming of our Savior,  
all of which are enjoined in the word of God, and  
implied in our profession of Christianity

Do we not see, almost everywhere, instead of these things, a superficial, secular, and temporizing kind of piety; a piety without any depth of feeling, any power of principle, or any distinctness of character; a cold, spiritless orthodoxy, united with a heartless morality; a mere exemption from gross vice and fashionable amusements; an observance of forms and decencies—but a lamentable destitution of love, of Christian temper, and tenderness of conscience?

Enter the social spheres of professing Christians, listen to their conversation, witness their entertainments, observe their spirit. How frivolous, how worldly, how different from what might be expected from redeemed sinners, from the heirs of immortality, from the expectants of everlasting glory!

Follow them home to their domestic circle, and behold their

pervading temper—how irascible, how worldly, how destitute of spirituality! Witness the cold and lifeless formality—the late, hurried, irregular, and undevout seasons of their family devotions, together with the shameful neglect of the pious instruction of their children! Witness the shortness and inconstancy of their times for private prayer, and think how little communion with God, how little study of the Scriptures, how little self-improvement, can be carried on during such fragments of time, snatched from the greedy and all-devouring passion of earthly-mindedness!

The spirit of prayer is expiring amidst the ashes of its own dead forms, and the Bible reduced, in many houses of professing Christians, to the degradation of a mere article of furniture, placed there for show—but not for use.

Who will deny that this is but too correct a representation of modern piety; or admitting it, deny the need in which our churches stand of a revival?

### **Ah! are we prepared to say this?**

"As the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in every aspect of your life; for it is written— Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)

If we would increase in holiness, we should pray, "O God, let my soul prosper and be in health, at all events! Improve my personal piety, my Christian temperament and spirit, though it be at the sacrifice of my temporal comfort. Supply my deficiencies, mortify my corruptions, increase my spirituality, and enkindle in my heart the flame of holy love, though it be necessary, in order to accomplish this purpose, to diminish my worldly ease and enjoyments."

### **Ah! are we prepared to say this?**

## **A languid and feeble plant**

I come now to the state of piety in your own hearts. Is it so lively, so vigorous, so elevated, as it should be? Consider what our profession amounts to, what our principles are, what our creed includes.

We believe that we are immortal creatures, going on to eternity, and that we shall exist through everlasting ages in inconceivable torment or felicity; that we are sinners by nature and practice against God—and as such, under the sentence of the divine law, which sentence is eternal death, an everlasting sense and endurance of the wrath of God; that we have been delivered from our state of condemnation through the sovereign, rich, and efficacious grace of God, granted to us through the mediation of Jesus Christ; that we are pardoned, and in a state of favor with Jehovah; that we are going on to glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, and shall dwell forever with Christ and his saints and angels, in glory everlasting; that we are redeemed by Jesus Christ and purified from iniquity to be a peculiar people, zealous for good works, and designed to show forth the praise of God by the beauties of holiness.

Are not these our principles and profession? Think, then, what kind of people ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness; how dead to the world, caring but little about its profits and losses, its pains and pleasures; how heavenly in our anticipations and aspirations; how spiritual in our thoughts and feelings; how devotional in our habits; how self-denying in all our gratifications; how fond of the Holy Scriptures, and devoted to the perusal of them; how given to meditation and contemplation, to private prayer and self-communion; how devoted to communion with God, and how impressed with a sense of the unutterable, inconceivable love of Christ; how replete with love to our brethren, and benevolence to the whole family of man!

Should it not be seen by others, as well as felt by ourselves, that we look not at the things which are seen and temporal—but at the things which are unseen and eternal? that our eye, our hope, our heart, are upon eternity?

But is this, indeed, our state, or the state of Christians in general? Do they indeed live the life of that faith, and painful mortification, and habitual restraint, and aspiring spirituality, and heavenly-

mindedness—which are so often inculcated in the Word of God, as the very essence of vital and experimental Christianity?

What do we know in this age, when profession is easy and piety generally safe from persecution. We abstain from immoralities, and public amusements, and from many private engagements which are the symbols of love to the world—and to these things we add an attendance upon an evangelical ministry, and the forms of domestic and private piety—and all this so far is well. But as to the real culture of the heart; the mortification of the corrupt and earthly affections of the soul; the deep sense of the love of Christ; the withdrawal of our affections from the world, to set them on things above; the high communing of our spirits with God; the blissful anticipation of an eternity to be spent with the Lord Jesus; the conflicts and the triumphs of the fight of faith—of these things, alas! we know little but the names, and are ready, in some cases, to wonder what they mean. Yet are they all continually alluded to in the Scriptures.

I am well convinced that the piety of the present day is **a languid and feeble plant**, it has run up to a great height, perhaps, under the influence of a long season of unclouded sunshine; but it lacks depth and tenacity of root, strength of stem, and abundance of fruit—and that, were the wintry season and frosty nights of persecution again to return, it would droop its head, and shed its leaves, and give full proof of its sickly and delicate constitution.

It is greatly to be feared, that in these times of peace and prosperity in the church, many have entered her gates, and joined her fellowship—who know nothing at all of spiritual religion, and whose example and spirit exert a deadening influence upon others.

### **A self-indulgent, ease-loving spirit**

I now mention, as a second fault—**a self-indulgent, ease-loving spirit**; an cowardly, weak disposition which shrinks from those duties, occupations, and engagements which require a sacrifice of bodily repose and comfort. The words of our Lord are still the standing-rule of discipleship, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." If there be meaning in words, these must imply that the true Christian spirit

is self-denial. This was not intended to apply exclusively to that time, or to any age of persecution, or to any peculiar external condition of the Church. It is the perpetual law of Christ's kingdom for all ages, all countries, all people. We can no more be Christians without a spirit of self-denial, than we can be without repentance and faith, or truthfulness, justice, or chastity. It is a state of mind and a course of conduct essential to personal godliness. We must all, in one sense or other, be cross-bearers.

But in what does self-denial consist? Not in the self-imposed austerities of Catholicism or hermitism; nor in the self-inflicted penances of superstition—nor in the privation of the sober and moderate enjoyment of the lawful gratifications of our compound nature. Grace is not at war, any more than Reason, with the instincts of humanity; the Creator has not implanted these in our nature to be violently torn up by the Redeemer and Sanctifier. All that piety does with them, is to keep them in due subjection to itself; not to eradicate them—but so far to crop their excessive growth as to prevent their overshadowing and chilling our virtues. To the wearer of sackcloth, the wallower in filth, the half-starved abstinent, the recluse of the cell, God says, "Who has required this at your hand?" This is not self-denial—but self-degradation, a disgusting caricature of the virtue recommended by our Lord. It is self-gratification under a hideous form; self-pleasing in a way of self-torture; the worship of self in a Moloch shape.

**Self-denial** means the subjection of all the promptings of self-love to the will of God. It is the surrender of ourselves to God, to do his will and please him in the way of his commandments, rather than ourselves. In other words, it is to prefer known and prescribed duty, to selfish gratification. This state of mind will develop itself in various ways. If anyone has injured us, Christian duty says, "Freely forgive him." Sinful self says, "Retaliate." The maxim of the devil says, "Revenge is sweet;" and sinful self affirms the same. Revenge is self-indulgence—forgiveness, with our corrupt hearts, is self-denial. So also, in a different case, if we have injured another, reason, piety, conscience, all say, "Confess your fault." The evil heart says, "No, I cannot thus humble myself." Self-denial requires confession—self-indulgence resists it.

So again, the whole business of internal sanctification, in our present imperfect state, is a course of self-denial. We are to "mortify our members," to "crucify the flesh," to "keep under our body." All this implies and requires self-denial—for it is a resistance



rather than a gratification of our sinful nature. Indeed, the whole course of the Christian life is one continued habit of self-denial, or the subjection of our sinful self to our renewed and holy self.

Self-denial requires often the sacrifice of personal and relative gratification for the benefit of others and the good of Christ's cause.

### **Mere catacombs filled with these lifeless forms**

"Having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. (2 Timothy 3:5)

Are not the doctrines of the gospel calculated by their nature, and intended by their design, to produce a spiritual frame of mind? Ah! but how much of dull, dormant, dead orthodoxy—is there in the bulk of modern professors! What a discordance between their beliefs and their practice!

Ah, what are some churches—but **mere catacombs filled with these lifeless forms** of Christian professors! I am speaking of the bulk of professors, and of them I do not hesitate for a moment to declare that there is an obvious and lamentable deficiency of spirituality of mind. Their affections are in a languid and lukewarm condition.

Sound doctrine, if it is destitute of spirituality and heavenly mindedness—is but the lifeless statue of godliness.

Oh, professing Christians, without holy and heavenly affections, what is your religion but a mere name? Attend then to the exhortations of the apostle, and "set your affections on things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God." Cultivate a spiritual frame; acquire habits of pious thinking and feeling. Like the secret source of a spring of water, deep in the earth, yet continually welling up to the surface, and gushing out in sparkling ebullitions—let religion be in your soul, an inward source and spring of living piety, which, by its own force, is perpetually sending forth spiritual thoughts and heavenly aspirations; so that a stream of devout thought and feeling, deep and full, is more or less continually

flowing through your life.

### **Better than a ton of gold!**

A grain of saving faith is **better than a ton of gold**, for it secures an inheritance in all the unsearchable riches of Christ, of grace, and of glory! It justifies, sanctifies, and eternally saves!

Learn to think less and less of the wealth of this world, and more and more of the unsearchable riches of Christ!

Lower the estimate which pride and vanity form of the importance of worldly distinctions.

How dim, how worthless, does everything earthly appear when seen in the sunlight of the cross!

It is by losing sight of Jesus, by living so far from Him, by forgetting Him—that we let the world get so much the upper hand of us.

We must meditate more upon the cross.  
We must dwell more upon Calvary.  
We must be more familiar with the crucified One.

"But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Galatians 6:14)

### **Prayer**

If there is one thing which is more suited to our condition, and more prompted by our necessities than any other—it is prayer.

If there is one duty which is more frequently enjoined by

the precepts, or more beautifully enforced by the examples of Scripture, than any other—it is prayer.

If there be one practice as to which the experience of all good men of every age, every country, and every church, has agreed—it is prayer.

If there be one thing which above all others decisively marks the spirit of sincere and individual piety—it is prayer.

So that it may be safely affirmed, where the spirit of prayer is low in the soul of an individual, in a country, an age, or a church—whatever it may have, of morality, of ceremony, of liberality—the spirit of piety is low also.

Every sincere act of adoration—increases our veneration for God's glorious character.

Every confession of sin—deepens our penitence.

Every petition for a favor—cherishes a sense of dependence.

Every intercession for others—expands our philanthropy.

Every acknowledgment of a mercy—inflames our gratitude.

Instead of the church **permeating** the world with its own spirit—it is receiving the spirit of the world into itself. Instead of directing, controlling, and sanctifying the spirit and ways of the age—it is itself directed, controlled, and contaminated by them.

### **A dark sign**

It will be **a dark sign** of the approach of an evil day, when our churches in choosing their pastors shall be

guided rather by a regard to talent than to piety; by a love of eloquence, rather than of the gospel.

**The great object of life** to many professing Christians, seems to be to become rich. Their chief end does not appear to be so much to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever—as to obtain and enjoy the present world. Wealth is the center of their wishes—the invariable tendency of their desires. Jehovah is the God of their creed, but Mammon is the God of their hearts! They are devout adorers of the God of wealth.

**The way to win the ungodly** to piety, is not by showing them that their pleasures are ours—but that our pleasures are infinitely superior to any which they know!

### **All their secularities and fashionable follies!**

Two consequences result from the reception of unsuitable people to church fellowship. They not only are confirmed in their false views of their own case; but by their low state of pious feeling, or total destitution of it, by their worldly-mindedness and laxity, they corrupt others, and exert a deadening influence upon the whole church! Their example is a source of corruption to very many, who are allured by it into **all their secularities and fashionable follies**. One family of such worldly and lukewarm professors is often . . .

a grief to the pastor,  
a lamentation to the spiritual part of the flock,  
a snare to many of the less pious, and  
a reproach to the church at large.

Too many of this description find their way, in these days of easy profession, into all our churches. We need a deeper sort of piety in our churches, a more realizing sense of . . .

the claims of Christ,  
the value of the soul,  
the misery of men without the Gospel, and  
the great ends and obligations of the Christian profession!

### **EXCESSIVE INDULGENCE**

Some very good people have erred here; they have taught, entreated, and prayed—and then wondered that their children did not become truly pious. But their excessive indulgence, their injudicious fondness, their utter neglect of all discipline, the relaxation of their authority, until the children have been taught to consider that they, and not their parents, were the most important people in the household.

But there is another thing to be observed, and that is the mischief of **EXCESSIVE INDULGENCE**. Read the history of **Eli**, as recorded by the pen of inspiration. The honors of the priesthood and of the magistracy lighted upon him. He was beloved and respected by the nation whose affairs he administered, and to all appearance seemed likely to finish a life of active duty, in the calm repose of an honored old age. But the evening of his life, at one time so calm and so bright, became suddenly overcast, and a storm arose which burst in fury upon his head, and dashed him to the ground by its dreadful thunder bolts. Whence did it arise? Let the words of the historian declare, "I have told him, said the Lord, that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile—and he restrained them not!" Poor old man, who can fail to sympathize with him under the terror of that dreadful sentence, which crushed his dearest hopes and beclouded all his prospects—but the sting, the venom of the sentence, was in the declaration that a criminal unfaithfulness on his part had brought upon his beloved sons both temporal and eternal ruin! All this destruction upon his sons, all this misery upon himself, was the consequence of weak and criminal parental indulgence!

Doubtless it began while they were yet children; their every wish and every whim were indulged, their foolish inclinations were gratified; he could never be persuaded that any germs of malignant

passions lurked under appearances so playful and so lovely; he smiled at transgressions on which he ought to have frowned; and instead of endeavoring kindly but firmly to eradicate the first indications of pride, anger, ambition, deceit, self-will, and stubbornness—he considered they were but the wild flowers of spring, which would die by themselves as the summer advanced. The **child** grew in this hotbed of indulgence—into the boy; the **boy** into the youth; the **youth** into the young **man**; until habit had confirmed the vices of the child, and acquired a strength which not only now bid defiance to parental restraint—but laughed it to scorn.

Contemplate the poor old man, sitting by the way-side upon his bench, in silent despair, his heart torn with self-reproach, listening with sad presages for tidings from the field of conflict. At length the messenger arrives, the doleful news is told. The ark of God is taken, and his sons Hophni and Phinehas are slain! His aged heart is broken, and he and his whole house are crushed at once under that one sin—the excessive weakness and wickedness of a false and foolish parental indulgence!

Parents, and especially mothers, look at this picture and tremble—contemplate this sad scene, and learn the necessity of judicious, affectionate, firm, and persevering discipline!

### **Foul blots!**

"Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."  
(Ephesians 6:4)

Parents! you are always educating your children for good—or for evil. Not only by what you say—but by what you **do!** Not only by what you intend—but by what you **are!** You yourself are one constant lesson which their eyes are observing, and which their hearts are receiving. Influence, power, impulse, are ever going out from you—take care then how you act! See the immense importance of **parental example**. What example is so powerful as that of a parent? It is one of the first things which a child observes; it is that which is most constantly before his eyes, and it is that which his very relationship inclines him most attentively to respect, and most assiduously to copy. Vain, worse than useless, is

biblical instruction which is not followed up by godly example. Good advice, when not illustrated by good conduct, inspires disgust. There are multitudes of parents to whom I would deliberately give the counsel never to say one syllable to their children on the subject of religion—unless they enforce what they say by a better example. Silence does infinitely less mischief than the most elaborate instruction—which is all counteracted by inconsistent conduct!

Would you see the result of parental misconduct—look into the family of **David**. Eminent as he was for the spirit of devotion, sweet as were the strains which flowed from his inspired heart, and attached as he was to the worship of the sanctuary—yet what **foul blots** rested upon his character, and what dreadful trials did he endure in his family! What profligate creatures were his sons! And who can tell how much the apostasy of Solomon was to be traced up to the recollection of parental example?

Parents, beware, I beseech you, how you, act! O let your children see piety in all its sincerity, power, beauty, and loveliness!

**Rouse, Christian professors**, from your slumbers and your dreams! Multitudes of you are perishing in your sins—you are going down to the pit with a lie in your right hand! Your profession alone will not save you, and that is all that some of you have to depend upon. There are millions of professors of religion in the bottomless pit, who while they lived brought no scandal upon religion by immorality. But the life of God was not in their souls, they had a name to live—but were dead! They looked around upon the low standards of the day in which they lived, instead of studying the Bible for their standard of piety; and went to the judgment of God, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not been called by Your name?" and then they met with the dreadful rebuff and rejection, "I never knew you, depart from Me!"

### **Closet prayer**

We live in a busy age, when Christians find little time for private prayer, reading the Scriptures, and meditation.

Perhaps there was never so little private prayer among professors as there is now. A few hasty expressions or a few broken thoughts, poured out without solemnity or without coherence, or else a short form learned by rote, and repeated at night or morning, or perhaps both, constitutes, it is to be feared, all the private prayer which some offer to God.

**Closet prayer** means a person's selecting some suitable time and place to be alone with God, to pour out into His ear with freedom and enlargement, all the cares, the sorrows, the desires, and the sins of a burdened heart and a troubled conscience. It signifies the act of a child going to commune with his Divine Parent, to give utterance to the expressions of his adoring gratitude, praise, and love. It is but too obvious that there is comparatively little of such closet exercises in this day of engrossing worldliness. What spirituality, what heavenly-mindedness, can you expect in the habitual neglect of the closet?

### **Fearfully secularized**

If asked to point out the specific and prevailing sin of the church in the present day, I cannot hesitate to reply—a prevailing worldliness of mind, heart, and conduct. The church is **fearfully secularized** in the spirit and temper of her members. The love of the world is become the master-passion, before which other and holier affections have grown dim and weak.

The determination, as well as the concern, to be rich, has



crept into the church! Those who profess to have overcome the world by faith, appear almost as eager as others, in all schemes for getting wealth, and by almost any means.

This worldly spirit is also seen in the **general habits and tastes of professing Christians.**

Their style of living,  
their entertainments,  
their associations,  
their amusements,  
their conversation—evinced . . .

a conformity to the world,  
a minding of earthly things,  
a disposition to adapt themselves to the world around,  
a desire to seek their happiness from objects of sense,  
rather than from those of faith—which proves the extent to which a secular worldly spirit is dominating the spirit of piety in the church.

### **I am the servant of Christ**

Are you taken up with getting and enjoying wealth, grandeur, and worldly ease?

How deeply are the great bulk of professing Christians sunk in the love and pursuit of the world—and how almost entirely occupied by its cares or its enjoyments! They are absorbed in seeking selfishness, avarice, worldliness, indolence and luxuriousness.

I am not to consider myself as sent into the world merely to get wealth, and enjoy myself. **I am the servant of Christ**, and must do my Master's work. I am bought with a price, and am not my own, and must yield myself up to my Divine owner.

### **Worth nothing in themselves**

True religion is not merely an outward observance of ceremonies, nor an attendance upon ordinances; these things are **worth nothing in themselves**—and are not acceptable to God. They are profitable only as they spring from the inward principle of a renewed, holy, and humble mind.

True religion begins in deep conviction of sin, a sense of our fallen and ruined state as exposed to the wrath of God; and then goes on in a simple faith in the Gospel, leading to an entire, thankful, and peace-giving dependence on the blood and righteousness of Christ for acceptance with God.

From this faith there arises love to God, to His people, to His ways, and to holiness. In proportion as faith is felt, it makes its possessor humble, meek, and benevolent; full of pity for man and zeal for the glory of God.

### **Oh, where is the compassion for souls?**

"For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36-37

Nothing can be more momentous than eternity!

Ponder the worth of a soul! Weigh the solemn significance of that word, damnation! Measure, if you can, the height of salvation!

What would you not do—to save your children from falling into the water or the fire? Oh, think of the bottomless pit—and the fire which is never quenched! Take a proper aim in all you do. Look as high as heaven, as deep as to the mouth of hell, and as far as eternity!

The world is perishing around us! Sinners are going

down to the pit before our eyes! Immortal souls by countless millions are crowding to the regions of eternal despair!

How little are we affected by the terrific scene! How little are we pierced by a sense of the ignorance, sin and misery which appeal to our very senses! **Oh, where is the compassion for souls?**

It is **a distressing spectacle** in such a world as ours, where evil of every kind so much abounds—to observe the disgusting and odious selfishness of many of the rich, who are wholly taken up with their own luxurious gratification, as if born only to pamper their appetites and indulge their tastes—without bestowing a thought or a care upon the misery which prevails around them.

True religion makes you **holy, kind, gentle, good-tempered and happy.**

The whole system of the gospel is **a system of love**, God is love. Redemption is a manifestation of His love. Christ is love incarnate. His religion is love. All who make a profession of such a religion should therefore be distinguished by its characteristic feature—and shine forth in the mild beauty of holy love.

**Keep your heart!**

**"Keep your heart** with all diligence, for out of it is the

wellspring of life." Proverbs 4:2

"I the Lord am the searcher of the heart, the tester of the thoughts, so that I may give to every man the reward of his ways, in keeping with the fruit of his doings." Jer. 17:10

It is the heart which is the constant object of divine notice and omniscient scrutiny. **Man** looks at the conduct—and conjectures the motive from the action. **God** looks at the heart—and determines the action by the motive. What our heart is—that are we in the judgment of the All-wise. The heart influences the conduct—"for out of it is the wellspring of life." As in the physical body, the heart is the fountain of that vital fluid which according as it is healthy or impure, carries vigor or feebleness, pain or ease, activity or torpor to the whole body—so is it also in the spiritual frame. Let us keep the heart—and the heart will keep the life.

Why are Christians not more attentive to this duty? In some cases, there is too little real concern about spiritual things, too much lukewarmness of soul, too much absorption of mind in secular concerns. Then, also, there is real difficulty in heart work—it requires painstaking, retirement, resistance of the encroachments of the world. Many are afraid to have dealings with the heart. A careful examination would discover much that is evil, and much that they would rather not know, and which they would not like to put away.

### **And where are they now?**

My dear children, I would think it probable that during my fifty year pastorate here, nearly 20,000 children have been in our Sunday schools. **And where are they now?** Many are in eternity! Some, we hope, in heaven—others, we fear, in hell!

During my pastorate I have witnessed multitudes of children that have grown up to be their parents' comfort and joy; and others breaking their parents' heart by their misconduct, and bringing down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. To which of these classes do you belong?

### **Imagine what would be the results**

**Imagine what would be the results**, if the Bible were circulated through the whole earth, its dictates everywhere obeyed, and its spirit generally imbibed. There would neither be tyranny in the prince, nor rebellion in the subject; there would be neither fraud nor violence, neither injustice nor oppression, neither war nor bloodshed.

In short, if the Bible were universally circulated, believed and obeyed—every evil that renders man a foe to others and himself would be removed—and the whole family upon earth harmonized into order and happiness.

### **Sickness and disease**

Christians, like others, are exposed to the attacks of **sickness and disease**. "Wearisome nights, and months of vanity, are appointed to them." But their religion follows them into the sick chamber, and is their nurse, their companion, and their comforter—giving patience in the day, and songs even in the night. How soothing are its consolations, how pleasant are its reflections, how bright are its anticipations! It speaks to the sufferers of the sources of their sorrows, and tells them that they all proceed from their Father in heaven! It reminds them of . . .

His unerring wisdom,  
His infinite love,  
His unfailing fidelity,  
His gracious presence in the scene of woe,  
His merciful design in every chastisement of His hand,  
the blissful outcome in which He will cause all to terminate.

They can bear confinement, for God is with them. Their

hours are not made heavy and irksome by the recollection of the mirthful scenes from which they are cut off, and the amusements to which they have no longer access. Their entertainment has come with them; they have brought the cup of their pleasure with them, and they can drink it amidst the languor of disease, as a refreshing cordial, or an exhilarating draught.

### **The essence of heaven**

This is heaven . . .  
perfect knowledge of God,  
perfect enjoyment of His favor,  
perfect love of His infinite excellences,  
perfect obedience to His commands,  
perfect conformity to His image,  
all this by a soul refined in its tastes,  
enlarged in its capacity, and immortal  
in its duration!

What other sources of enjoyment will be open to the blessed in heaven, it is not for us now to know, or even to conjecture; doubtless there are some which it is impossible for us to understand. But the fountain of delight will be God, and **the essence of heaven** is the enjoyment of His love. He is the first truth, and the chief good; beyond which nothing higher remains to be known, nothing richer to be enjoyed!

The Gospel is **the grand universal remedy**  
—the comforter of sinful and sorrowful man.

Can a man really believe . . .  
that God loves him,  
that the Eternal is favorably disposed towards him,  
that all his sins are pardoned,

that heaven secured to him,  
and not be glad, grateful, and happy?

**This is a fearful picture!**

Fearful is the death of the worldling! Oh, from what he departs—and to what he goes! What a parting! To leave all he loved and admired—and go to his eternal destiny! To have acquired nothing, and saved nothing—but what he can no longer keep! After crossing the dark waters of death, he will be set ashore in a vast and black eternity, naked and destitute, with nothing to relieve, support, or comfort him! And who shall describe the scene that follows? It is done by one whose solemn pencil was guided by an unerring hand.

"There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was left at his gate. He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torment in Hell, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!' " (Luke 16:19-24)

**This is a fearful picture!** Of what?

An infidel? No!

An immoral and profligate man? No!

A bloody tyrant? No!

A remorseless oppressor of the poor? No!

**This is a picture of a worldling!** Of a man whose sin was that he sought his happiness entirely from earthly sources. It was not our Lord's intention to describe a man of ill-gotten wealth, but one whose whole happiness was derived from his wealth—one who cared for nothing but what he saw, and tasted, and handled, and felt—who had what he sought, and then, having passed his time in a life of earthly gratification, went away to spend his eternity in a

state of banishment from that God whose favor was never, in his estimation, essential to his happiness.

Such a termination of his sensual course is just what the worldling might expect and ought to expect; for if he slighted God's favor, and did not even seek for it; if he made himself, or strove to make himself, happy without it; if he valued everything more than God, and set his wealth, or rank, or fame, or pleasure, above God's love; if he cared not for salvation, and thought heaven of such little consequence, as not to be worth his pursuit; has he any reason to complain of being denied that which he never asked for, and which he is not fit for? In banishing such a man from heaven, God does but give him his choice. God does but leave him to himself. There ends the earthly course, and begins the eternal one—of him who seeks for happiness in earthly vanities.

### **Beautiful bubbles!**

Many are saying, "Who can show us any good?"

Psalm 4:6

There is certainly some pleasure in the gratification of the appetites—in the enjoyment of health, friends, property, and fame. **Even sinful objects have their pleasures.** There could be no power in temptation, if sin yielded no enjoyment. But viewing man as a rational, moral, and immortal creature; as a sinner subject to the stings of a reproachful conscience, and under the displeasure of the God he has offended; as liable to all the vicissitudes of a tearful existence, and ever exposed to the fear and stroke of death—he needs something more for his happiness than can be found in the objects of this world. He has . . .  
needs which they cannot supply;  
cravings which they cannot satisfy;  
woes which they cannot alleviate;  
anxieties which they cannot dispel.

For each one that is even tolerably successful in gaining felicity from visible objects, there are many who utterly fail. Their schemes are frustrated; their hopes perish; **their air**



**castles vanish as they journey on in life;** and each ends a course of worldly-mindedness, by adding another to the millions of examples which had proved this present world to be vanity.

In some cases, abundance and unobstructed enjoyment produce boredom. Tired of old pleasures, they look about for new ones, and plead the oft-repeated inquiry, "Who will show us anything good?" Novelty perhaps comes to the relief of their discontented, restless, and dissatisfied minds; but novelty itself soon grows old, and still something new is wanted. There remains an aching void within, a craving, hungry appetite for bliss—unsatisfied, unfed. They hunt for enjoyment . . .

in endless parties of pleasure,  
in every place of amusement,  
in every scene of diversion;  
in the dance, and in the game;  
in the theater, and in the concert;  
amidst the scenes of nature, and  
in the changes of foreign travel;

but happiness, like a shadow ever flitting before them, and **ever eluding their grasp**, tantalizes them with its form, without yielding them its substance, and excites their hopes—only to disappoint them!

What are all the pleasures of time and sense, all the objects of this visible world—but as the **dropping of pebbles into a deep chasm**, which, instead of filling it up, only tell him how deep it is—by awakening the dismal echoes of emptiness and desolation.

Look at the worldling. Does he succeed in his quest for happiness? Is he satisfied? Let him possess all he seeks, all he wishes, all that earth can furnish; let rank be added to wealth, and fame to both; let a constant round of fashionable amusements, festive scenes, and elegant parties, follow in endless succession, until his cup is full to overflowing. What does it all amount to? "All that my eyes desired, I did not deny them. I did not refuse myself any pleasure. When I considered all that I had accomplished and what I had labored to achieve, **I found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the wind!** There was nothing to be gained under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2)

Have not multitudes since Solomon's time, made the same melancholy confession? Is it not a general admission, that the pleasure of worldly objects arises more from hope and anticipation, rather than possession? They are like **beautiful bubbles**, which, as they float, reflect the colors of the rainbow—but dissolve and vanish when grasped! Tell me, votaries of earthly good, have you realized what you expected? Are not the scenes of festivity and amusement resorted to, by many with aching hearts? Does not the smiling countenance often conceal a troubled spirit; and is not the laugh resorted to in order to suppress the sigh?

Even if it were granted, that the possession of wealth, the gratifications of taste, and the indulgence of appetite, could give happiness in seasons of health and prosperity—they must inevitably fail in the day of sickness and adversity. If they were satisfying for a season—**they are all fragile and uncertain!** All the enjoyments of this life are like gathered flowers, which are no sooner plucked than they begin to lose their beauty and their fragrance while we look at them and smell them; and which, however mirthful and beautiful they appeared while they were growing—begin to wither as soon as they are in our hands!

Many are saying, "Who can show us any good?" Psalm 4:6

### **Your idol?**

What is it, that you are looking to and depending upon for happiness? Is **HEALTH your idol**, and the source of your happiness? How soon may we be smitten with disease—and doomed to wearisome nights and months of vanity in the chamber of sickness. Will riches smooth the pillow of sickness? Will the counting money or the surveying estates, when it can be done only in imagination, enchant the sleepless hours, and cheer the long sad days of ceaseless pain? Will the recollection of the parties you have attended, the pleasures you have enjoyed but cannot any longer enjoy—enliven the gloom of the solitary chamber? Will the sound of carriages at midnight, taking the votaries of pleasure to or from the

scenes of fashionable resort, impart to your feverish frame any relief, or to your distressed mind any comfort? Oh, what, in that long, dark season of trial which may be coming upon you, will the pleasures and possessions of earth do for you?

What is it, that you are looking to and depending upon for happiness? Is **WEALTH your idol**, and the source of your happiness? How justly is it called in Scripture, "uncertain riches!" and "deceitful mammon!" "Riches," said the wise man, "make to themselves wings and fly away as an eagle towards heaven." And is it not most strange folly to stake your happiness on that which, like an uncaged bird, may at any moment be upon the wing, and soaring where we cannot follow? What changes have we witnessed in the circumstances of men; what rapid falls from wealth to poverty! How many do we know who, by those vicissitudes which are ever going on in this commercial country, and in this speculating age, have descended from the sunny heights of prosperity—to dwell the remainder of their days in the gloomy valley of poverty below! This may be your case. Your treasure, like the volatile quicksilver, may slip through your fingers when you think you hold it firmest. What will you do for comfort then? Your friends, like summer birds, will migrate when your winter has come upon you! You will no longer be able to have parties—and who invites the child of misfortune to theirs? Those who once shared your hospitalities, will forget you in the season of your humiliation, for your presence will no longer grace their circle. What, then, will you do, when the world frowns—and you have no one else to smile upon you?

What is it, that you are looking to and depending upon for happiness? Is **PLEASURE your idol**, and the source of your happiness? How soon may you be unfitted by sickness or change of circumstances for this, and have the sweet and intoxicating cup dashed from your lips! How soon may your place be vacant at the resort of the mirthful and the fashionable! And then with what melancholy feelings will you contrast the amusements of the ball-room, the concert, or the party—with the abode of poverty or disease!

What is it, that you are looking to and depending upon for happiness? Are **FRIENDS your idol**, and the source of your happiness? Alas! alas! how soon may 'the spoiler' enter your earthly paradise, and convert that joyous scene into a desert, by the death of the most endeared objects of your affection! What! depend for

your supreme felicity on the frail continuance of a beating pulse! Death enters, not only into the scenes of discord and strife, but also into those of the purest love and sweetest harmony—and, disregarding the entreaties of marital or parental love, bears off the object to which, more than all the universe besides, you looked for your bliss!

Where, then, will you find satisfaction? The finite has failed—and the infinite God has not been sought! The human and earthly has been taken away—and the divine and heavenly has not been acquired. That one death has covered earth with sackcloth, and has thrown a pall over all that it contains. Is happiness, then, to be found amidst such uncertainties?

### **"The meekness and gentleness of Christ"**

2 Corinthians 10:1

Our Christian profession involves in it far more than an orthodox creed, a regular attendance upon religious ordinances, and an abstinence from gross immorality. It involves the image of Jesus, yes His very mind and spirit. **The meekness and gentleness of Christ** are to be our badge of distinction, the token of our submission to His authority, and the evidence of our sincerity. We must mortify our pride, curb our rashness, allay the heat of anger, and extinguish resentment. We should be discreet, mild, and courteous, in all our language and conduct, weighing the import of words before we utter them, and calculating the consequences of actions before we perform them.

One of the most difficult duties which ever our proud hearts have to perform, is to say, "**I have done wrong, forgive me.**"

## **The true spirit of Christianity**

Quarrels among Christians! Is there not a contradiction here? Do Christians ever quarrel with one another? Does not Christianity, where it is really possessed and felt in its proper influence, imply all that is loving, and kind, and peaceable? Certainly! And if every professor of it really lived under its influence, there would be no such thing as brother trespassing against brother. Christianity is, in every aspect of it—a religion of love.

God is love.

Christ is love.

The law is love.

The gospel is love.

Heaven is love.

That one word "love," comprehends everything.

Perfect love not only casts out fear, but malice. In heaven there will be no quarreling, because every one of its inhabitants is perfect in love. The design of Christianity is not only to conduct us to heaven, but to fit us for it—and it does this by imparting to us the spirit of love. **The true spirit of Christianity** is that which the apostle has, with such exquisite beauty, described in the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians.

## **This heavenly exotic**

The church of God in general has yet failed to exhibit in any considerable and attractive prominence, that spirit of holy love, by which it was intended by its Divine Founder to be characterized. The 'wolf and the serpent' are too often to be seen, where only the 'lamb and the dove' should be found.

Christianity has not yet left the impression of its exceeding loveliness, as deeply stamped as it should be on the characters of its professors. Of all its graces,

none is so faintly and imperfectly traced as Christian love. It has been found more easy, at any rate more common, to subdue the lustful disposition, than the irascible disposition. And yet it is as much the intention of Christ, that His people should be distinguished by meekness and gentleness—as it is by purity, justice and truthfulness.

Love is pre-eminently the Christian grace. Equity, chastity, and veracity, have been found in the list of heathen virtues—but not charity. These other virtues have sometimes "shed their fragrance on the desert air" of paganism. But where has love been found—except in the garden of the Lord?

Alas, that even there this plant of Paradise, **this heavenly exotic**, should so often look shriveled and worm-eaten; and thus fail to procure for its Divine Curator all the praise it should, and in its more flourishing condition would do. My concern is that Christian love should be cultivated with more care, and be seen with admiration in healthful vigor and in beauty.

### **It is a pity**

We pray for the conversion of our children. What fervent petitions are breathed out for them! Well, and how are these prayers followed up? By the serious, regular, and devout maintenance of family prayer? By clear instruction, affectionate counsels, faithful warning, and above all, a consistent exhibition of the beauties of holiness in ourselves? Do our children see in us, and hear from us, all that can recommend true religion, and that is calculated to win them to piety? Or, on the contrary, do they not place our conduct and our prayers in contrast, and think, if they do not say, that **it is a pity** their father does not act more as he prays?

There is often a shocking inconsistency between our prayers, and our actions.

### **The religion of some people**

True religion is **life**—and it is a vigorous life—not sickly, declining life.

**The religion of some people** is just enough to make them miserable. It spoils them for the world, without fitting them for the church. Their religious profession is an encumbrance upon them, and is in the way of their worldly enjoyment. These are the men who are so taken up with the world, that they do not desire the joy of true religion, and are unwilling to cast out a single earthly care or enjoyment, though it were to make way for all the consolations of the Spirit!

### **Spiritual joy**

Oh! how numerous are the machinations of Satan to keep God's people from being happy—when he cannot keep them from being holy! How numerous and how subtle are the methods by which he causes the children of light to walk in darkness!

Many suppose that spiritual joy means something mystic, ecstatic, almost seraphic. They are not contented with the calm, sweet, serene enjoyment of peace.

**Spiritual joy** has nothing to do with frivolity, merriment and lightness.

Nothing spectral in appearance,  
nor sepulchral in tone,

nor ascetic in habit,  
nor cynical in spirit,  
should characterize a Christian.

He is a child of light, and should live, and act, and speak as such. He should be like one bending his way back to paradise, and bearing the trials of earth, with the recollection of his happy destiny, and the prospect of his future glory! He should have something of the bliss of heaven—and much of its seriousness too.

By spiritual joy, I mean the joy produced by true religion. It is that holy peace which is the result of divine truth . . .

understood,  
believed, and  
contemplated.

It is not mere exhilaration of the animal spirits, the joyousness produced by good health, worldly prosperity, friendship, or gratification of taste.

It is true, that his spiritual delight may blend itself, and does, with his more common pleasures—sweetening, sanctifying, and elevating them all—but still it is of a different kind. It is the joy of faith, of hope, of love. It is joy in God, in Christ, in holiness, in heaven.

Spiritual joy is ordinarily a calm, unruffled feeling; a composed and serene state of mind. It is a tranquil river which flows through the soul, noiseless in proportion as it is deep. Spiritual joy is a sweet rest, diffusing a feeling of joyous repose over the heart.

### **The springs of true happiness**

**The springs of true happiness** gush out from the foot of the cross! But how little do many who profess to have drunk the living water, appear as if they had been at the crystal stream, and were satisfied with it!

Mere 'religious professors' do not desire this spiritual joy. They certainly would have some kind of enjoyment; they



desire to be gratified. But it is only the joy . . .  
of friendship,  
of health,  
of success in business,  
of a comfortable home, and  
a quiet fire-side that they long for.  
They do not desire . . .  
the peace of believing,  
the pleasure of communing with God,  
the delight of holiness and hope,  
the felicity of a sense of pardoned sin,  
the gratification arising from the exercises of devotion.

### **JEWELS from JAMES**

(Choice devotional selections from  
the works of John Angell James)

### **We must learn it by painful experience!**

The death of Christian friends should impress us with, even as it shows us—the **vanity of the world**. All that poetry ever wrote, even the most mournful, beautiful, and pensive of its strains—all that philosophy ever argued—all that morality ever taught, conveys no such view, and is calculated to produce no such impressions, of the emptiness of the world—as the desolate chamber, the vacant place, the deserted chair, the picture—of some dear object of our heart's affection!

It is at the tomb of that loved, lost friend, the world stands stripped of its false disguise, and is presented to us as a shadow! Gloom now covers everything. Scenes that once pleased, please no more. Favorite walks are shunned, or re-trodden only to remind us of the dear companion that once shared their beauties with us. Seasons return, but not to bring with them the delights with which the presence of one beloved object associates them. We go about in the bitterness of our spirit, crying, "Vanity of vanity—all is vanity and vexation of spirit!" We are ready to sigh for death to relieve us from the tedium of existence, and the sense of emptiness!

Be it so! It is all true! The world **is** empty! And it was intended by God that it should be! The world contains no satisfying bliss! It is a cistern, a broken cistern, which can hold no water. God told us so, but we would not learn this by His word—so now **we must learn it by painful experience!** If we cannot be taught by 'faith', since we must learn—we are in mercy taught by 'feeling' it to be empty!

Oh let us go to the fountain that is full, flowing, open! Let us go to the fountain of living waters! If there is emptiness, nothingness, in the world—there is fullness in God! Is there enough in Him to satisfy millions of millions, and not enough to satisfy us? Let us crucify the world. There is more happiness in a crucified world, than in an idolized one!

If our hearts cannot die to the world anywhere else—let them be crucified at the tomb of those we love!

### **The plough and the harrow**

In some people we discover a striking and beautiful mellowness of character, **as the result of God's chastening hand**. The roughness, harshness, arrogance, and haughtiness of their conduct, which once rendered them annoying and offensive, are scraped off—and a sweet gentleness, humility, meekness, and softness of manner, and a tenderness of spirit have come in their place. There is now . . .  
a gentleness in their speech,  
a mildness in their look, and  
a kindliness and cautiousness in their manner,  
which tell us how the haughty spirit has been broken, and the proud loftiness of their mind has been brought down. An unusual loveliness has been spread over their character, a holy amiableness has been infused into their temper, and a stubborn self-will has yielded to a kind consideration of the wishes and feelings of others; which convince all around them, how much the Spirit of God has done in them, and for them, by the afflictions they have endured. How **the plough and the harrow**

have broken up the hard soil, and pulverized the rough clods of their stubborn nature, and prepared it for the growth of the precious seed of the kingdom.

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word. It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes. I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me." (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75)

### **These predominant sins**

Almost all of us have 'favorite pet sins'—which there is not ordinarily that concern and labor for putting them away, which there should be. They are indulged, instead of being resisted. Thus they gain strength by such indulgence, and most sadly disfigure our character and disturb our spiritual peace!

**Prosperity**, like sunshine upon weeds, often causes them to grow rapidly! And then God in great faithfulness, love and mercy sends **adversity**, like frost, to kill them. Upon a bed of sickness, and in other severe trials—they are often remembered, understood, and seen in all their sinfulness. They are then lamented, confessed, and mortified.

Nothing can be a darker sign than for a professor's conscience to be so dull and drowsy during a time of trial, as to leave him unadmonished respecting **these predominant sins**.

It is sometimes a blessed fruit of tribulation, that **these predominant sins** have been weakened, if not eradicated. It is worth any amount of suffering to secure this result. Happy the Christian who comes out of the furnace, with his dross removed by the fire! No matter what he has lost—he has gained freedom from these inward enemies of his peace and purity.

**We all know more than we do**; and we should be more solicitous to reduce to practice what we already know, than to acquire still more of 'mere theory'.

### **Pulpit buffoonery**

One characteristic of Whitefield's manner which deserves particular attention, was his **solemnity**. He never degraded the pulpit by low humor and low wit; abounding in anecdote—but he was uniformly solemn. His deep devotional spirit contributed largely to this, for his piety was the inward fire which supplied the ardor of his manner.

He was eminently a man of **prayer**; and had he been less prayerful, he would also have been less powerful. He came into the pulpit from the closet where he had been communing with God, and could no more be trifling, merry, or humorous at such a time, than could Moses when he came down from the fiery mount to the people! Happily the age and taste for **pulpit buffoonery** is gone, I hope never to return.

It was the stamp and impress of eternity upon his preaching that gave Whitfield such power. He spoke like a man who stood upon the borders of the unseen world, alternately enrapt in ecstasy as he gazed upon the felicities of heaven; and convulsed with terror as he heard the howlings of the damned, and saw the smoke of their torment ascending from the pit forever and ever. His maxim was to preach for eternity. He said if ministers preached for eternity they would act the part of true Christian orators.

We need pastors imbued with his spirit, his piety, his dependence upon the Spirit of God, his love for souls, his devotedness, and his earnestness!

And tell me, my brethren, what are all the prettinesses, the beauties, or even sublimities of human eloquence; what are all the similes, metaphors, and other garniture of rhetoric which many in this day are aiming at, to move, and bow, and conquer the human soul—compared with "the powers of the world to come?"

## **The great moral magnet**

"As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to Myself." (John 12:32)

So said the Savior of men. The cross is for all ages and all countries **the great moral magnet** to draw men . . .  
from barbarism to civilization,  
from sin to holiness,  
from misery to happiness,  
and from earth to heaven!

**"One thing I do!"** Philippians 3:13

Human life is so short, and the faculties of man are so limited, that he who would do some great thing, must do but one; and must do that one with such a concentration of his forces, as, to idle spectators who live only to amuse themselves, looks like enthusiasm, and almost draws upon him the charge of fanaticism.

**It is never to be forgotten**, amidst all the fluctuations of opinion, all the vicissitudes of earthly affairs, and even the advance of civilization, science, and social improvement—that human nature, in its spiritual condition and its relation to God, remains unchanged. The lapse of ages will never improve our natural corruption, nor will the progress of science and advance of civilization eradicate it. Man as he is born into the world in sin, and grows up in it, will still, as ever, need both the redemption and the regeneration of the gospel of Christ.

The great stream of the population is dashing in one mighty cataract over the precipice of impenitence and

unbelief—**into the dreadful gulf below!**

**Oh wonderful, ineffable, inconceivable exchange!**

The SUDDEN DEATH of a real Christian, is an unspeakable blessing. Such a one is spared . . . .  
the languors of sickness,  
the racking pain,  
the anguish sometimes almost intolerable,  
and all the other terrible harbingers of death protracted through wearisome nights and months of vanity! To be exempt from the heart-rending pangs of separation at the last faltering adieu; to be saved from those gloomy apprehensions which sometimes arise in the minds of the strongest and holiest of believers when contemplating the portals of the tomb; to be carried through the iron gates of death before we knew we were drawing near to them; to wake up in a moment, as from a dream, at the sound of the seraphim's song—and exchange in an instant of time the sights of earthly objects for the glorious realities of heaven—and the society of friends below for the innumerable company of angels; to find ourselves suddenly in the presence of God and the Lamb, and see the smile of welcome upon the countenance of the Savior—and with a burst of astonishment and gratitude to exclaim,  
"And is this heaven? and am **I** there?  
How short the road! How swift the flight!"

**Oh wonderful, ineffable, inconceivable exchange!**

"In vain our fancy strives to paint  
The moment after death,  
The glories that surround the saint,  
When he resigns his breath!

"Thus much, and this is all we know—  
They are completely blessed,  
Are done with sin, and care, and woe,  
And with their Savior rest!"

Sudden death to a real Christian—is one mighty bound from earth to heaven! Sudden death to an unconverted sinner—is one dreadful stumble into hell. Oh, unutterable horror—to be surprised, overwhelmed, confounded in a moment—by exchanging the pleasures, the friends, the possessions, the prospects of earth—for those doleful shades, where peace and hope can never dwell.

**You**, too, may die suddenly. Are you ready, quite prepared by repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a holy life—for death—for speedy death—for sudden death? Prepare to meet your God! Prepare for death, for judgment and eternity! Prepare! Prepare!

### **You will certainly die!**

"But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, **you will certainly die!**" (Genesis 2:17)

Every dying groan,  
every tolling death-bell,  
every funeral procession,  
every opened grave,  
proclaims the evil of sin, and is a warning against it!

"For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Death is the dreadful gate, the dark passage to eternity!

True believers pass through this solemn scene uttering the song of triumph, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Old age, apart from moral excellence, is an object of detestation and loathing. A wicked old man is **the most**

**shocking spectacle upon earth**—with the exception of a wicked old minister!

### **Dumb dogs!**

"Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow **worker**, fellow **soldier**"  
(Philippians 2:25)

Some people seek the pastoral ministry, as an office which provides a good income—while they disregard all its duties and its obligations. Such doubtless there are, men who seek the ministry for the indulgence of a literary taste, or for the gratification of a propensity to idleness. It is too true that all sections of the church are cursed with some ministers of this description, who are each looking for his gain. "His watchmen are blind, all of them, they know nothing; all of them are **dumb dogs**, they cannot bark; they dream, lie down, and love to sleep. These dogs have fierce appetites; they never have enough. And they are shepherds who have no discernment; all of them turn to their own way, every last one for his own gain." Is. 56:10-11

But look at the true, the good, the faithful minister, as described in Scripture. He is . . .

- a laborer,
- a watchman,
- a fisher,
- a soldier,
- a builder,
- a wrestler;

all terms that employ toil, vigilance, effort, perseverance, and enduring self-denial. There are some men, whose lives and exertions justify the employment of such figures of speech. They do labor . . .

- in the **closet** by wrestling supplication;
- in the **study** by intense application;
- in the **pulpit** by earnest preaching;
- in the **church** by pastoral oversight;
- in the **houses** by counsel, reproof, and warning;
- by their pens as well as their tongues;
- on week days and on Sundays;



at home and abroad.

The faithful minister must be classed among those who have no leisure. As he maintains a holy, blameless and consistent life, many are . . .

impressed by his example,  
enriched by his beneficence,  
blessed by his prayers, and  
instructed by his principles.

Truth and love are **the two most powerful things in the universe!** It is by the 'silken cord of love', united with the 'golden thread of truth', that the church must draw the world to Christ.

The Bible is **the central luminary** around which all true Christians revolve, in nearer or remoter orbits, reflecting the splendor of its beams, and governed by the power of its attraction.

**See how well the world goes on without them!**

(John Angell James, "The London Missionary Society" 1849)

Christ can do much by the weakest instrument; and He can do altogether without the strongest. He that could do without apostles and prophets, after he had removed them by death, can dispense with us! This should check the inflation of some proud men's minds, and repress that overweening conceit by which they destroy in part their own usefulness.

It would surprise and mortify many, could they come out of their graves ten years after they had entered them, and still retained the ideas they once entertained of their own importance—to **see how well the world goes on without them!**

If the death of ordinary individuals be but as the casting of a **pebble** from the seashore into the ocean, which is neither missed from the one nor sensibly gained by the other; the death of the more extraordinary ones is but as the sinking of a larger **rock** into the abyss beneath—it makes at the time a rumbling noise and a great splash; but the wave which it raises soon subsides into a ripple, the ripple itself as soon sinks to a placid level, the tide flows, ships pass, commerce goes on, and shore and ocean appear just as they did before the disruption!

Ah! my brethren, let us seek to have our record in heaven, where it will be engraved in characters which will stand forever on the Rock of Ages! For it will soon be effaced here on earth, where it is only as a footprint upon the sand, which the next wave will speedily and entirely obliterate forever!

### **A censurable, disgraceful, and destructive habit!**

"That you not become **slothful**, but imitators of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises."  
(Hebrews 6:12)

**Slothfulness**, in every aspect in which it can be viewed, and in every relation to human affairs, is **a censurable, disgraceful, and destructive habit!** With that incalculable source of energy which every rational and healthy mind carries about within itself, and with the many occasions and demands for its exercise, which in this busy world surround us—it is a sin and a shame for any man to "stand idle all the day long."

**Indolence**, in reference to the concerns of this world, is bad enough. But where shall we find language sufficiently strong to describe the present guilt and future misery of indolence and sloth in reference to the soul and the soul's concerns? Of all the instances of folly, sin, and misery, which the inhabitants of earth present, the most astounding must be the sight of an impenitent sinner, slumbering in careless security over the over the bottomless pit!

One would be led to imagine, did not experience testify to the contrary, that there is enough in that one word 'eternity' to rouse all men to the most intense concern, and to the most laborious diligence!

Could that happy spirit who has lately left our world be permitted to address you from her throne of glory, with what an emphasis would she say, "Beloved friends, with whom on earth I took sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in company, could you conceive of but a thousandth part of the glory which now surrounds me, you would account that world which so sinfully engrosses your attention scarcely worth a passing glance, or a momentary thought! Do not be slothful, when heaven or hell hangs upon your life! Do not be slothful, when eternity is before you! Do not be slothful, when infinite joy, or endless woe, attends on every breath!"

How perilous to yourselves,  
how corrupting to others,  
how discreditable to religion,  
how displeasing to Christ,  
is **slothfulness** in the Christian profession!

### **The highest class in the school of Christ**

"So that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and **patience** inherit the promises." Heb. 6:12

By **patience**, we mean a quiet waiting, amidst sufferings and sorrows—for the heavenly kingdom. Patience is an uncomplaining willingness to remain any length of time, and amidst any tribulation, for the glory to be revealed.

No circumstances of life, (and let the sufferer hear and drink in the soul-comforting thought,) no circumstances of life seem to ripen the Christian so fast or so perfectly for heaven—as the experience of sorrow and affliction. Oh! then let our comforts go, then let our eyes weep, then let our hearts bleed—if **our Father is thus ripening us** for everlasting fruition and

inconceivable bliss!

"But **patience** must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing." (James 1:4)

James intimates, that when we are enabled to exercise the grace of patience, we have reached **the highest class in the school of Christ**, have nothing more to learn upon earth, and are ready and fit to depart, and to be with Jesus—and have then obtained as much grace as can be possessed, short of glory itself!

Patience, then, sufferer, patience! The first moment, and the first glance of heaven will be an infinite recompense for all you suffer—for all you lose on earth! If every step on earth is a step of suffering—then let each be a step of patience!

Weep you may—murmur you must not.

Nature may pay the tribute of a groan—but grace must pay it with a smile.

The shower of your tears may fall—but in the rays of the Sun of Righteousness must reflect the beautiful rainbow of the promise.

Christian, you make your way to glory along the path of patient resignation, which, if it is like the Valley of Weeping, and has its briars and its thorns—has also its refreshing rain-pools of heavenly consolation!

### **The base cares and the petty enjoyments of the present world**

Sin is raging all around us!

Satan is busy in the work of destruction!

Men are dying!

Souls are every moment departing into eternity!

Hell is enlarging her mouth, and multitudes are continually descending to torments which knows no mitigation and no end!

**Heaven** expanding above us!

**Hell** yawning beneath us!

**Eternity** opening before us!

How astounding is it sometimes to ourselves, that, favored with a certain, though distant, view of the celestial city, living almost within the sight of its glories and the sound of its music, **the base cares and the petty enjoyments of the present world** should have so much power over us, as to retard us in our heavenward course, and make us negligent and indolent, heedless and forgetful.

**Time** is short, **life** uncertain, **death** at hand, and **immortality** is about to swallow up our existence in eternal life—or eternal death!

### **Love of deception**

They are a rebellious people, deceptive children, children who do not obey the Lord's instruction. They say to the seers, "Do not see," and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy the truth to us. Tell us flattering things! Prophecy illusions! Get out of the way! Leave the pathway. Rid us of the Holy One of Israel." (Isaiah 30:9-11)

A wish to be deceived is a state of mind by no means uncommon. This was the case with the Jews at the time when this prophecy was delivered. Their national crimes were bringing destruction nearer and nearer. Their political horizon was perpetually becoming darker, and signs of the accumulating vengeance of Heaven were multiplying around them. The prophets, bearing the burden of the Lord, represented him as a holy Being, whom their transgressions insulted, and whose justice must necessarily be roused to avenge wrong. One denunciation followed another, until the people, alike

unwilling to be reformed and to hear of the punishment which would come upon them for their impenitence, were anxious to change the tone of the prophets' faithful ministrations. They could not bear the pungent warnings of those holy men; they trembled under the solemn and impassioned appeals of Isaiah and his fellow-prophets, and endeavored, either by threats to silence, or by bribes to corrupt, the oracles of heaven.

The holiness of God was a subject peculiarly offensive to them—hence the exclamation, "Rid us of the Holy One of Israel!" They wanted to hear only of his mercy. They would have disrobed him of his garments of light, and silenced, if they could, the song of the seraphim, uttered in praise of his unsullied purity. The deity they wanted to hear of, was an indulgent being, who would overlook sin, and never punish the transgressor. They wished to hear no more of the rigid and strict requirements of the law—but to listen only to the soothing sounds of promise; they were anxious that the terrible thunders of justice should die away midst the soft whispers of mercy. They were determined to go on in sin, and therefore desired, whatever might be "right things," to hear only smooth things, and to be left to go on unmolested in their career of iniquity.

Happy would it be for multitudes, if this **love of deception** had been confined to the Jews—if this demand for "smooth things" had been made only by them. But, alas! they have many, very many followers under the present dispensation. The faithful ministers of Jesus Christ meet with the same reception from many of their hearers, as did the prophets of the older economy.

There are not lacking in our age many who are anxious to save their own souls and those that hear them; who, in their solicitude to be clear from the blood of all men, shun not to declare "the whole counsel of God." Their aim is not to please men—but to profit their hearers; not to satisfy their taste, or amuse their fancy, or lull them into a false peace, or wrap them up in unfounded security—but to save them from the wrath to come. Hence, they are anxious to convince them of sin, and by "the terrors of the Lord to persuade" them to urge the all-important enquiry, "What shall I do to be saved?" They know that without previous conviction, alarm, and penitence, there can be no true comfort and therefore their aim is, like that of the skillful surgeon, to probe the wound before they attempt to heal it. This many of their hearers cannot endure; they want smooth things, not right things; they cannot

bear to have their consciences roused, their fears alarmed, and their minds rendered uneasy. They wish the preacher to avoid all harsh themes, and confine himself to more agreeable and palatable topics. The people to whom I here allude, are those people in our congregations, who, though they attend an evangelical ministry, have never yet been converted by the grace of God—but are still living either in open sin, or predominant worldly-mindedness; who know that if religion is indeed what they hear it often described, they can make no pretensions to it; who have no intention of altering their course, and who wish, therefore, to be left to pursue it, without being disturbed by the voice of ministerial faithfulness.

**Churches** should be purified as much as possible from all secularity, and conducted as much as possible in simplicity and godly sincerity, without the admixture of that fleshly wisdom which guides the affairs of this world. They should be divested of earthly pomp, guided by men of piety, and most cautiously preserved from that self-importance and self-dependence, which all imposing organizations of numbers, wealth, and influence, are apt to produce.

### **True religion**

**True religion** is . . .

- a principle of the heart;
- an element of the character;
- the habit of thinking, feeling, and acting  
aright in all our social relations;
- the basis of every virtue;
- the main prop of every excellence;
- the fear of the Lord, by which men depart from evil;
- faith working by love;
- such a belief in the gospel of Christ, as leads  
to a conformity to His example.

**True religion**, though founded on a belief of doctrines, and nourished by the exercises of devotion—diffuses its influence over the entire character of man.

**True religion** is the belief, the love, the worship, the imitation of Jesus.

**True religion** is sound morality, animated and sanctified by the spirit of true devotion to Christ.

**True religion** prescribes, not only homage to God, but follows him into the domestic circle.

### **Imagining we are going on to heaven**

"The human heart is more deceitful than anything else and desperately wicked!" Jeremiah 17:9

**Oh, the idea of imagining we are going on to heaven—when step by step we are advancing to hell!**

Is this **possible**? It is! And the very possibility should awaken our alarm.

Is it **common**? It is! And this should carry our solicitude to the highest pitch.

What did Christ say on this matter? Read with awe and trembling. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Matthew 7:21-23.

Read, I say, this passage in which our Lord with His own hand, sounds the alarm through the whole church. Ought you not to examine? Is not there need of it? Is it



not all but madness to go on without it? Mistake! What in such a matter as salvation? Mistake! What in a matter in which an error will require an eternity to understand, and an eternity to deplore it!

Very many know the theory of divine truth, without feeling its influence on the heart, or exhibiting it in the conduct. They often see the right way; without walking in it. **Only those** who are renewed and sanctified by the truth, will be eternally saved.

### **A holy, moral, useful, happy man**

Explain to them the moral attributes of the great GOD. . .  
His holiness as opposed to all iniquity,  
His truth as manifested in the accomplishment of His word  
His mercy which inclines Him to pity the miserable.

Endeavor to make them understand the exceeding sinfulness of SIN, as breaking through all the obligations imposed upon the conscience by the majesty and goodness of God. Strive to lead them to a knowledge of the total corruption of their nature, as the source and spring of their actual transgressions. Unfold to them their situation, as under the wrath of God on account of their sins. Show them their inability, either to atone for their guilt or renovate their nature.

Lead them to CALVARY, and develop the design of the Savior's death as a sacrifice for sin, and teach them to rely upon His merits alone for salvation.

Direct them to the HOLY SPIRIT as the fountain of grace and strength for the renewal of their hearts.

Lay before them all the branches of Christian DUTY; those which relate to **God**, such as faith, repentance,

love, obedience, and prayer; and those which relate to **man**, as obedience to parents, honesty to their employers, kindness to all. Enforce upon them the obligations of public worship.

Particularly impress upon them, that genuine religion, while it is founded on a belief of God's word, does not consist merely of abstract feelings, or occasional duties, but in a principle of submission to the revealed will of Jehovah, implanted deep in the human heart, pervading the conduct, and spreading over the whole character, so as to form **a holy, moral, useful, happy man**.

### **The impious mask of a cowardly heart**

A man says there is no God, because he wishes there were none. He scorns spiritual religion, because spiritual religion condemns him. He is an infidel because he is a sinner. He is a scoffer because he is an infidel.

The true and ultimate source of scoffing at true religion is an unrenewed, unsanctified mind—a heart that hates God, and abhors his image.

The religion of the Bible is . . .  
too humbling for the pride of their intellect,  
too holy for the corruptions of their heart,  
too strict and too rigid for their indulgent lives,  
and they cannot endure it. And being unable to confound it by logic, or overwhelm it by eloquence, they treat it with derision.

In some cases the scoffing may be traced up to fear, united with dislike. The scorner secretly trembles at the idea of a God, and of a judgment to come. He fears that there may be a reality in religion, and if there is—what is to become of him! The poor creature, like a scared child whistling as he passes through a graveyard to keep up his courage, or laughing at the story of a ghost, to conceal the palpitations of his

heart, ridicules true religion to allay, if possible, the rising alarms of his conscience, and to avoid the terrors of his affrighted imagination.

The sneering countenance is often **the impious mask of a cowardly heart** and of a trembling conscience.

### **The abominable adage!**

"Exhort the younger men to be sober-minded."  
Titus 2:6

There are many things which tend to nourish the love of sensual pleasure in the **youthful** bosom. At their age care sits lightly on the heart, the passions are strong, the imagination is lively, the health is good, the social impulse is felt in all its energy, the attractions of friends are powerful; and this they imagine is the ideal time for them to take their fill of pleasure. They think that they shall settle down by and by, when the season of youth is past; and that sobriety, morality, and religion will all come in the proper order of nature.

Worldly pleasure, decked in the voluptuous attire and the gaudy ornaments of a harlot, appears to their heated imagination, with all the attractive charms of a most bewitching beauty. They yield themselves at once to her influence, and consider her as abundantly able to afford them all the happiness they desire. Their great concern is to gratify their senses. The soul and all its vast eternal concerns is neglected for the pleasures of fleshly appetites!

We frequently hear **the abominable adage**,  
"**Youth** is the time for pleasure,  
**manhood** is the time for business,  
and **old age** is the time for religion."

It is not possible for language to utter, or mind to

conceive, a more gross or shocking insult to God than this!—which is in effect saying, "when I can no longer enjoy my lusts, or pursue my gains—**then** I will carry to God a body and soul worn out in the service of sin, Satan, and the world!"

The monstrous wickedness and horrid impiety of this idea is enough, one would think, when put clearly to him, to shock and terrify the most confirmed and careless sinner in existence!

**Thoughtless and sensual young man**, who has no idea of happiness but as arising from fleshly indulgence, and who is drinking continually the intoxicating cup of worldly pleasure—pursue your course if you are determined on this mode of life; gratify your appetites; indulge all your passions; deny yourself nothing; eat, drink and be merry; disregard the admonitions of conscience, trample under foot the authority of Scripture—**but** do not think that you shall always prosper in the ways of sin, or carry forever that air of jollity and triumph.

The day of reckoning is at hand, when for all these things, you will be called into judgment! God now witnesses, and takes account of all your ways, and will one day call you to His judgment, and repay you according to your doings! "For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

### **God's flock**

"I exhort the elders among you: shepherd **God's flock**."  
(1 Peter 5:2)

The flock which is committed to their care is the **God's flock**—which is thus denominated to teach us that believers are the special property of Christ, which He owns, loves, and protects—in distinction from the wicked (who, are a kind of wild beasts

in whom He has neither peculiar property nor pleasure). They are thus denominated also, to teach us that Christians are not to live solitarily and unconnected, but are to unite themselves with each other in visible communion and brotherly love, and are to submit to the guidance and directions of their great Shepherd, and in all things to manifest the simplicity, harmlessness, and innocence of which the sheep is the natural emblem.

### **Handel's "Messiah"**

Concerning **Handel's "Messiah"** with what sentiments may it be supposed the Son of God beholds the scenes of His suffering life, atoning death, and final appearance in judgment—blended with all the hilarity of a musical festival, and sung by graceless men and women—for the entertainment of the multitude!

Let those whose spiritual vision is not quite obscured by their musical taste, compare the scenes of an oratorio when "the Messiah" is being performed—and those of the house of God when the Lord's supper is celebrated—and remembering that the subject is the same in both, let them ask if both can be right? Is the cross on which the Savior loved and died rightly appropriated—when it is used for the purposes of amusement, gaiety and fashionable vanity?

The subject of the "Messiah," as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, is given for the purpose of bringing men to repentance, faith and salvation; to be the great means, through faith, of overcoming the world with all its lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eye, and the pride of life; to give a death blow to the love of the world in the heart of man; and to subjugate the senses and the imagination to unseen and eternal things.

While in **Handel's "Messiah"**, the cross of Christ, instead of crucifying us to the world, and the world to us, is employed as an amusement to add new attractions to earth, and to yield new gratifications

to sense, and thus to make man more effectually the captive of that world—of which he should seek by faith to be the conqueror.

For what purpose is this 'sacred music' performed? It is for amusement! Purely for amusement! Is it, then, done, for the glory of God—to convert the most solemn and sacred topics of divine truth into a source of public entertainment? No! It is done to draw people together to hear the sufferings of the Messiah set forth for much the same purpose as they are called to be entertained by a dramatic representation of the sorrows of Hamlet or Romeo!

### **He will carry them in His bosom**

"He will tend his flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs in His arms; **He will carry them in His bosom**, and gently lead those that are with young." Isaiah 40:11

**He will carry them in His bosom**—where He could not only hear, but feel every bleat they uttered; and have all the tenderness of His own heart excited by the anxious and fluttering pulsations of theirs!

See Him in the midst of his disciples . . .  
how feeble were their perceptions,  
how weak their faith,  
how worldly their expectations,  
how slow their growth!

Yet how kindly did He bear with their dullness,  
and how gently did He chide their imperfections.

### **Wealth**

The responsibility attached to wealth seems to be poorly

understood.

It should ever be borne in mind that the exercise of mercy and charity is represented by our Lord in his description of the judgment day, as one of the principal topics of scrutiny in that season of final retribution. What a spectacle of horror and amazement will the rich man then present, who lavished in selfish extravagance that princely fortune which was entrusted to him for the benefit of society. Let such men read the parable of Dives and Lazarus—its salutary and impressive warnings were delivered expressly for them!

**Wealth**, considered as a means of sensual gratification, ranks but one step above the acorns of the swine; while as a means of relieving misery, wealth opens sources of felicity, as lofty and sublime as the joy of angels!

### **Exhibit in their conduct**

Those who profess to believe in the truth of Christianity, should be careful to **exhibit in their conduct** . . .  
the purity,  
the benevolence,  
the meekness, and  
humility of the gospel.

Let every Christian embody in his own character and conduct, the evidence of Christianity, and prove that it is from heaven, by showing that it makes him heavenly.

The ungodly should consider their dreadful situation, **hastening** . . .  
from **sinning** to dying,  
from **death** to judgment,  
from **judgment** to the bottomless pit, and

then from age to age of torment without end or mitigation! They are kindling for themselves a fire which shall burn to the lowest hell.

### **An unholy minister**

**An unholy minister** is the most dreadfully guilty, and the most fatally mischievous person in existence! He is a living curse, a walking pestilence, diffusing a savor of death around him wherever he goes; from whom, as to any voluntary association, every godly person should flee with greater horror than from a person infected with the plague. His name is Apollyon—his work destruction.

It is dreadful to reflect what multitudes are now in the bottomless pit, who were conducted there by the damnable heresies of such men's lives; from whose imprecations, envenomed by despair, the guilty authors of their ruin will find neither escape nor shelter through everlasting ages, but feel the guilt of blood forever upon their wretched souls!

### **A mere pedestal for the preacher's fame!**

"We preach Christ crucified!" 1 Corinthians 1:23

From the cross, as the tree of life, hang in maturity and abundance—all those fruits of grace which are necessary to the salvation of the soul.

Are we **guilty**—here is pardon.

Are we **rebels** against God—here is reconciliation.

Are we **condemned**—here is justification.

Are we **unholy**—here is sanctification.



Are we agitated with conscious **guilt**—  
here is peace for a wounded spirit.

My brethren in the ministry—the pulpit is intended to be **a pedestal for the cross**. But alas! even the cross itself, it is to be feared, is sometimes used as **a mere pedestal for the preacher's fame!** We may roll the thunders of eloquence, we may dart the coruscations of genius, we may scatter the flowers of poetry, we may diffuse the light of science, we may enforce the precepts of morality from the pulpit—but if we do not make Christ crucified the great subject our preaching, we have forgotten our purpose, and shall do no good.

Satan trembles at nothing but the cross. And if we would destroy his power, and extend that holy and benevolent kingdom of Jesus, it must be by means of the cross.

"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and power." (1 Corinthians 2:2-4)

### **Fresh communications**

The Holy Spirit is not only the efficient cause and author of our spiritual life; but He is also the sustainer of it.

We need **fresh communications** of His grace every step of our course, to keep before us . . .  
the glory of God as our center, rest, and end;  
the loveliness, beauty, and preciousness of Christ;  
the evil of sin;  
the transcendent excellence of holiness;

the sublimity and importance of heaven, and eternal life.

**The true believer . . .**

seeks God as his supreme end,  
enjoys God as his chief good,  
obeys God as his Sovereign Ruler.

It is **an act of amazing love** that God should not only give us his Son—but his Spirit also! That God should make a temple for the Holy Spirit in our hearts, is a display of infinitely greater condescension, than for the greatest monarch upon earth to take up his dwelling in a mud hut.

**One thing is certain**—you are a sinner, a poor, miserable, and perishing sinner! The door of mercy is open, and you are welcome to enter in! You can go to God in no other way, but as a sinner. God meets His repenting enemies, only at the cross! "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Luke 5:32

**No declension in piety**

We are not to conclude that our piety is declining, merely because our feelings are not so lively and flashy as they once were. If there is a growth . . . in humility and meekness,

in tenderness of conscience and self-denial,  
in a sense of the value of Christ,  
in dependence upon the Spirit,  
there is **no declension in piety**, although there  
may be less of vivid emotion than there once was.

Just as there is no decay of strength in the human  
body, where the sprightliness and efflorescence of  
youth are gone, if the grave robustness of manhood  
remains. Nor should the aged believer mistake the  
'decay of nature' for the 'decline of grace'. He hears,  
he prays, he reads, he remembers, and enjoys with  
less ability than he once did; but this is the effect  
of old age, and not of backsliding.

### **Declension in piety**

There are three stages of departure from God—

1. spiritual declension
2. actual backsliding
3. final apostasy

They are intimately connected, and lead on, unless stopped  
by divine grace, from one to the other. There have been  
many people in these states in every age of the church—  
there are some now. Professors are continually falling away  
from Christ, some only in heart, others openly in conduct;  
some partially and for a season, others totally and forever.  
The hopes of pastors and churches are continually receiving  
the bitterest disappointment from the relapses of those who  
"did run well." Like the blossoms in the spring, for a time they  
excited the most pleasing anticipations—but a blight came on  
—the blossom went up as dust, and the root appeared to be  
rottenness.

**Declension in piety**, means a diminution of its vigor at the heart;  
a loss of the power of godliness, or, to use a scriptural phrase,  
"a leaving of our first love." There is no immorality; no open sin;  
but an utter decay of pious affection. The whole amount of piety  
that is left—is cold, heartless, dead formality. The fundamental

doctrines and precious truths of the Gospel, though not renounced, are not relished and fed upon with that eager appetite, keen relish, and exquisite zest which they once were. The means of grace, though not neglected—are mere forms, imparting no quickening power, and yielding no spiritual enjoyment. Pious affections of peace, joy, love, delight in God, and hope of heaven—are almost extinguished. The vigor of watchfulness, spirituality of mind, and the severity of mortification of sin are relaxed—under the idea that so much strictness in religion is not necessary. The tenderness of the conscience is blunted—and little sins of temper, of the heart and the tongue, are committed with far less repugnance than formerly. Besetting sins, once nearly subdued—acquire fresh life and power. In short, piety has lost its hold upon the mind, the heart, and conscience, as an elevating, sanctifying, and satisfying reality. Delight in God, the love of Christ, the joyful hope of heaven, have well near ceased!

### **Those in affliction**

**Those in affliction** should restrain their grief, and not be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow. An excessive degree of distress, a refusal to be comforted, a disposition to nourish grief—is a temper dishonorable to a Christian, who, in the darkest and dreariest scenes of human life, ought never to appear like those who are without God and without hope.

PATIENCE must have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

RESIGNATION must not only suppress the murmur, but dictate words of confidence and peace. "Though He slays me, yet will I trust in him," must be your declaration, as well as your purpose.

FAITH—strong, steady faith—which cleaves closer to Christ, in proportion as other things fail, must be in exercise.

HOPE, as the anchor of your soul, must keep your little bark safe amidst the storm.

MEEKNESS must put forth all its power and beauty in preventing peevishness, and producing a sweetness of temper in the midst of perplexing and ruffling circumstances.

ASSURANCE that all things are working together for good, should bear the soul above the low and cloudy horizon of present trials, and enable it to spot eternal sunshine beyond the storm; and rendered the brighter by the gloom, from the midst of which it is contemplated.

While at the same time, a deep concern should be manifested for **a sanctified use of every affliction.**

Concern should be manifested . . .

to glorify God in the fires,  
to have every corruption mortified,  
to have every grace strengthened;  
to die to earth,  
to live for heaven.

### **A showy and extravagant style of living!**

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."  
(Colossians 3:1-2)

Avoid, I beseech you, **a showy and extravagant style of living!** Do not be ambitious of obtaining . . .

a large, luxurious house,  
elegant furniture,  
fine, expensive clothing,  
and a country residence.

What are these things to a man whose heart should be set on things that are above, not on things that

are on earth?

**The worm of pride** feeds upon the root of piety! Pride will prevent that deep humiliation before God, that self-abhorrence, that self-annihilation, that entire dependence, and sense of ill-desert which are essential to the spirit of true piety; and, at the same time, pride will call into active operation many tempers most inimical to godliness.

### **Prosperity**

"Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches." Psalms 73:12

Worldly-mindedness is a very common fruit of prosperity.

O how difficult is it to maintain this pure, spiritual, unearthly, heavenly taste—in the midst of prosperity! How difficult is it to help loving the world—when it puts on all its charms, smiles upon us, and caresses us!

Many prosperous Christians are miserably low in spiritual piety, have little enjoyment of God, and little communion with Christ.

**Prosperity**, by multiplying the sources of earthly gratification, tends to take us off from those which are spiritual and divine.

Prosperity tends . . .  
to carnalize our affections,  
to vitiate our holy taste, and  
to wither our devotion.

Nothing is more beautiful in our world than the manifest association of humble piety and temporal prosperity; it is

the temper of heaven united with the possession of earth. The man who makes this attainment, is great in the kingdom of God. His prosperity is maintained without injury to himself. Let the prosperous Christian aim at this beautiful combination.

"Keep vanity and lies far away from me. Don't give me either poverty or riches. Feed me only the food I need." Prov. 30:8

### **Inconsistent professors**

"We exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory." 1 Thes. 2:12

Multitudes have staked the truth of Christianity on the conduct of its professors.

**Inconsistent professors**, therefore, are the abettors of infidelity and irreligion. They are mere caricatures of piety, which they represent with hideous and distorted features, and commend to the ridicule and disgust of onlookers.

**Inconsistent professors** are traitors in the camp, and betray the cause which they profess to defend. They are destroyers of other men's souls! No sins have so much power to do mischief as theirs; and none have been so destructive. Hell swarms with souls whom **inconsistent professors** have hurried on to perdition!

The faith, and love, and holiness of believers, are one of God's ordinances for the conversion of sinners, and it is an ordinance that has been greatly blessed. The beauties of holiness displayed in all their symmetry and harmony, as they are embodied in the character of eminent Christians, have been employed by the Spirit of God to soften prejudice, and subdue enmity. Many who turned with disgust from religion as it was seen disfigured and deformed in some inconsistent

professors; have, by a more pure and lovely manifestation of holiness, been charmed into admiration, affection, and imitation.

### **Our influence!**

The influence of one lively, ardent, active Christian, is a blessing to the whole church of which he is a member. His prayers at the meetings, and his conversation in the companies of Christian friends, tend not only to stop the spreading lukewarmness of many others; but to kindle a similar spirit to his own, in the hearts of those with whom he associates. He keeps up the spiritual atmosphere of the church, and makes it amiable, spiritual and heavenly.

While on the other hand, the influence of one worldly minded, convivial professor, whose spiritual affections, if not wholly extinguished, are smouldering under a heap of earthly cares and tastes—depresses and chills the piety of all who come near him. He is . . .  
a hindrance to pious conversation,  
an interruption to the fellowship of the saints,  
an extinguisher upon the devotion of the church.

However profitable the fellowship may have been before he entered the room, he soon contrives, by anecdotes, politics, or business, to turn the current into some low and earthly channel.

It is of immense consequence that we should all consider the effect which our influence has upon others. **Our influence** is always acting upon others; and their influence is always acting upon us! This is a solemn consideration, which we should never forget for a single hour. This applies universally. We are all perpetually sending forth, and receiving influence.



### **An incarnation of love**

Jesus Christ was **an incarnation of love** in our world. He was love living, breathing, speaking, acting among men!

His **birth** was the nativity of love.

His **sermons** the words of love.

His **miracles** the wonders of love.

His **tears** the meltings of love.

His **crucifixion** the agonies of love.

His **resurrection** the triumph of love.

### **A stronger and a holier affection**

Christian! Would you be crucified to the world, and have the world crucified to you? Would you indeed, and in truth, have the spirit of the world cast out of you? Would you cease to be characterized as 'minding earthly things'?

Go daily by sacred meditation, to Mount Calvary, and while all the mysteries of redeeming love, as concentrated in the cross, there meet the eye of faith—and as the visions of celestial glory, seen most distinctly from that spot, attract and fix the transported gaze of hope—you will see the beauty of the earth fade away before you, amidst the splendor of a more excellent glory, and feel the love of the world die within you, under the power of **a stronger and a holier affection**.

### **The neglect of domestic piety**

There is probably scarcely any deficiency of the church in the present day, more apparent than **the neglect of domestic piety**.

**Family prayer** is not performed with that constancy, solemnity, and fervor, which is calculated to interest and to edify.

**Parental authority** is not maintained with that steadiness which is adopted to inspire respect, and that affection which is likely to secure obedience.

As to the judicious, diligent, and engaging Biblical instruction, which is necessary to inform the mind, to enlighten the conscience, and to form the character; it is in some families almost entirely neglected.

Far more solicitude is felt, and far more pains are taken by many, to educate their children for this world than for the future eternal world; and to fit them to act their part well for time, than to prepare them for the scenes of eternity.

In many Christian homes, family piety is but the form of godliness—without its power.

**The religion of today** has lost something of its steadiness, its seriousness, and its dignity; and has acquired too much of the flutter and the vanity of a thing of fashion and excitement. True religion ought to be sustained, in all its exercises and habits, with an appropriate seriousness, dignity, and conscientiousness.

### **A substitute for personal piety?**

Zeal in Christian service cannot be **a substitute for personal piety**. The attendance at the committee cannot be an excuse for neglecting the closet. The financial support of a church can be no apology for neglecting to mortify a corruption. Yet there is a tendency in this day to forget this. There is an imminent danger of losing sight of religion as a personal, private, and individual concern. We are too much drawn away from our closets and our own hearts, as we lose the habit of silent meditation.

We are so accustomed to excitement, that there is a dullness in solitude. Private prayer is neglected for that which is social; the Bible is neglected for the sermon; and the closet is neglected for the committee-room. The great system of revealed truth is not sufficiently brought before us in its grandeur, glory, and demands—as a matter for our individual contemplation, reception, and application.

**The evidence of genuine piety** is to be found in . . .

real humility,  
self-distrust,  
hungering and thirsting after righteousness,  
sorrow for sin, and  
a continual effort to regulate your thoughts,  
feelings, and conduct by the Word of God.

Genuine piety will not thrive and increase without effort—but is of so tender and delicate a nature as to require great, constant, and persevering concern, watchfulness, and care.

### **He will not forget the lambs**

(John Angell James, "The Christian Professor")

"He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom."  
(Isaiah 40:11)

Are you alarmed at the difficulties and dangers of the wilderness way? Consider that you enjoy the notice, the love, intercession, and the support of the Great and Good Shepherd, who gathers the lambs in His arms, and carries them in His bosom.

**He will not forget the lambs**—their feeble bleat attracts His notice, their helplessness draws His attention, and for them he puts forth all His pastoral kindness and skill.

### **Cunning artifices, deep devices, artful machinations**

It is one of the **cunning artifices**, the **deep devices**, the **artful machinations** of Satan—to lead men into self-deception, when he can no longer hold them in careless indifference; to ruin their souls in the church, when he cannot effect it in the world; to lull them asleep by the privileges of church fellowship, when he cannot continue their slumber amidst the pleasures of sin.

O how many is he leading captive this way? How many is he conducting to perdition, whom he has first blindfolded with the bandage of a false profession? How many are there in all our churches, who are in this dreadful state!

### **Consider Jesus!**

"Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, **consider Jesus**, the apostle and high priest of our confession." Heb 3:1.

Jesus was so **dead to this world**, that He renounced wealth, rank, ease and fame.

Jesus was so **holy** that He could appeal to the most malignant of his foes for the sinless purity of His conduct.

Jesus was so **submissive to the divine will**, that He drank the deepest, fullest, bitterest cup of human woe, without a murmur.

Jesus was so **meek and lowly**, as to bear the greatest injuries and insults with unruffled serenity and placability.

Jesus was so full of **benevolence**, as to pray for His foes, to die for them, and save them.

Yes, we say to the world, "Look at Jesus of Nazareth in His holy and beneficent career, or in his ignominious and agonizing death—see him whose whole character was **a compound of purity and love**—there is our model."

We confess that the salvation of immortal souls is the most momentous interest in the universe; and that our time, influence, talents and property—are at Christ's command.

We profess that we have received Christ as the end of our very existence.

We profess that we have ceased to live for wealth, ease, or reputation, as the supreme object of pursuit.

We profess that we receive Christ as our pattern and example, and that we are determined, as God shall assist us—to conform ourselves to Him in our spirit, temper, and conduct.

**Let your light shine!**

"You are to live blameless and pure lives, as children of God

without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe." Philippians 2:15

There is an ineffable beauty in the Christian character, as delineated by our Lord Jesus Christ in His personal ministry, and by His holy apostles.

A Christian ought to be a character of universal loveliness and holiness. He not only seeks freedom from and abhorrence of greater sins, but adds a sensitiveness to lesser sins, and a studious effort after universal purity. Perfection should be our wish and our aim. A Christian is not to allow himself to practice any degree of any sin; and is to seek every possible degree of every holy virtue.

"You are the light of the world. **Let your light shine** before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

### **Oh, that dreadful future!**

There are three questions which every considerate man will propose to himself in reference to his **present** state of being.  
What am I?  
Where did I come?  
What is my purpose here on earth?

And there are three more which he cannot help sometimes asking concerning the **future**.  
Where am I going?  
What will I be there?  
How shall I prepare for eternity?

There, before us, at no great distance, is the grave—into the solemn and mysterious obscurity of which, neither sense nor reason can dart one illuminating ray; nor can they extort from its sullen silence one whisper of information.

Oh, that dreadful future!

Into what will that one first step from the 'stage of earthly existence' plunge us? To unaided human reason, the future is an unbounded, mystifying, starless, midnight darkness—without one luminous point through infinite space!

What shall we be in eternity? Who shall reply? Think how profoundly this question, this mystery, concerns us—and in comparison with this—what are to us all questions of all sciences? What to us, are all the scientific researches into the material nature? What to us, are all the investigations into the history of past ages? What to us, are all the future career of events in the progress of states and empires? What to us, what shall become of this globe itself, or of all the systems of the universe? What, where, shall WE be ourselves, is the matter of surpassing, infinite interest. This an issue of such great magnitude and solemnity, that it transcends and overwhelms our utmost faculty of thought!

Man is a creature capable of happiness or misery, and tastes much of each on earth—and is anxious to know which will be his lot beyond the grave! He is conscious of sin, and feels solicitous to be informed whether the consequences of his sin will pursue him into an invisible state!

The world by its wisdom, knew not God, nor immortality, nor heaven. Unaided human reason, we repeat, never did, never can, assure us that there is a future state at all. If it could ascertain this, it could not tell us whether it is a limited or an endless duration. If it could ascertain this, and it were certain that there is to be everlasting existence, it would be at a loss to tell us whether it were a state of unmixed bliss, or misery, or a mixture of both. If it could ascertain this, it would still be unable to inform us how eternal felicity is to be obtained, and eternal misery avoided. Unaided human reason fails at every step!

The whole world is longing for an immortality  
to relieve them from the burden of . . .  
their sufferings,  
their cares, and  
their labors.

"And now He has made all of this plain to us by the coming of Christ Jesus, our Savior, who broke the

power of death and showed us the way to everlasting life through the Gospel!" 2 Timothy 1:10

What are all the volumes which philosophy ever wrote, compared to these few golden sentences! By the cross of Christ, the dark screen that blocked our view, and hid the realms of glory from our sight, is rent asunder, and the vista of heaven and eternal ages is laid open to the eye of faith!

Immortality, seen only as a dim object of hope, amid the midnight darkness of Paganism, and only as a dim object of faith amid the twilight of Judaism—is beheld amid the noontide splendor of Christianity in its magnitude and grandeur, as at once the object of a strong and steady faith and a lively and a saving hope.

It is hard to conceive that I, born after the manner of the brute creation; and like them sustained by the earth—a poor, frail, feeble creature of yesterday, and crushed before the moth—who, after a few fleeting years at most, shall return to the earth from which I sprang, and seem to be utterly blotted out from existence—shall continue to exist in some mode, and in some scene of existence, for millions of ages! How utterly surpassing all this to reason, and almost incredible to faith, when it contrasts this wondrous eternal existence—with the present little, insignificant, momentary creature—who flutters out his tiny being in this present, temporal, earthly, little world!

Everlasting felicity is something so vast, so wondrous, so magnificent—that unaided human reason never could have concluded that this gift, so rich, so splendid, so extraordinary, could be bestowed on a sinful child of dust!

The great mass of professing Christians, do not really believe in eternal felicity. Their conduct is utterly at variance with such a belief. Is the impress of immortality upon their character or their conduct? Are they not infinitely more swayed by the present time—than a future eternity? Has not earth infinitely greater attractions for them than heaven? Is not all their labor bestowed upon the present—while the endless future is neglected and forgotten? Immortality is not really believed by the great mass of professing Christians! It is a mere name, an opinion, a speculation;



anything but a deep practical conviction!

### **There is a tearless world**

Many are the afflictions even of the righteous. Though they are the children of God and the heirs of immortality, even they are not exempted from the common lot of humanity, as described by the patriarch of Uz, where he says, "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards!"

**There is a tearless world**—but it is reached by a valley of tears! As those who are exposed to such a variety and such a constant recurrence of trials, we need some principle to sustain us under them. We must find some source of consolation.

We are in danger in times of trouble, of resorting to many things that are inimical to our peace and to our holiness. Afflictions are not only hurtful in themselves, but are likely also, if care be not taken, to produce evil. They not only always lead to sorrow—but often to sin. A wounded spirit has frequently been the occasion of a burdened conscience. The wormwood and the gall of sorrow have fermented into the poison of iniquity, by impatience under the hand of God, and by revengeful feelings towards the human instruments of our griefs. How apt are we to sink into . . .  
heartless inactivity,  
hopeless despondency,  
sinful distrust and  
overwhelming sorrow.

In the dark and gloomy night of tribulation, when the sun of our prosperity has set; when the clouds of adversity have so overspread the heavens that not a star twinkles; and the tempest rages—how much do we need something to cheer us, something to keep down those unbelieving thoughts of God and His Providence which are then so apt to rise, and to relieve that intense wretchedness which then too often takes full possession of the soul.

### **One sinner!**

"I have not come to call the righteous, but **sinners** to repentance." Luke 5:32

"This man welcomes **sinners** and eats with them!"  
Luke 15:2

It is a sight . . .  
for heaven to wonder at,  
for angels to rejoice over,  
for devils to hate,  
for man to imitate,  
for and God to delight in;  
to see a poor creature polluted with almost every  
sin, broken-hearted yet not despairing; penitent  
and turning with loathing from his sins, and yet  
confidently relying upon the mercy of God in  
Christ, for a full, free, and cordial forgiveness!

"There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels  
of God over **one sinner** who repents." Luke 15:10

### **Pleased or profited?**

"**The word preached did not profit them.**" Hebrews 4:2

What countless millions of sermons seem to be preached  
in vain, so far as regards any appreciable result! What a  
small amount of profiting in the way of increased holiness!

To be truly profited from the hearing of sermons, is to have  
Scriptural truth deeply enstamped upon the heart and visibly  
upon character; the transformation of the whole heart and  
soul into the image of God and the mind of Christ; the  
cultivation of a godly temperament; and a fitness for glory.

This, and this only, is profiting from the preached Word.

Multitudes are **pleased** by sermons, who are not in the smallest degree **profited** by them!

The fault is partly to be ascribed to the **preachers**. Either their aim is often something else than the profiting their hearers, or else they know not how to accomplish this. One would suppose it impossible to hear a great deal of today's evangelical preaching of this age, without asking the question, "Who can be profited by this? What is there in all this, to instruct, sanctify, and comfort believers? It is all very fine—there is much to please the intellect, to gratify the taste, to exercise the imagination; but what spiritual edification is there in it?" It is my sad and serious conviction, that **the evangelical pulpit** is losing its power, just because it is losing sight of its object and its aim. A philosophized Christianity is finding its way into our pulpits; which, aided by a rationalistic taste, and set off by an aspiring intellectuality, is **seducing the church** from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus!

The goal of most preachers is to **please** their hearers; not to **profit** their souls.

### **May Christian parents pray for the salvation of their children?**

We must consider what these prayers for their conversion imply. They must proceed from a heart that really desires and longs for their conversion. It should be an intense yearning—a longing in some measure proportioned to the object itself. Their children's conversion must be the first object concerning them, to which all others must be subordinated. Their children's conversion must be sought by all the appropriate means of godly training and example. Everything must be done that would conduce to their conversion to God, and everything kept away that would hinder it. There must not only be instruction—but in the fullest sense of the term, godly education. The character must be formed; and in order to this, the parent must present a model of exemplary piety in himself. And with these conditions, the

father may go and pray for his children's conversion, and expect their conversion. Prayers so presented and so followed up, will very generally be answered.

It is, no doubt, a fact that very many do pray and see little result of their prayers—their children do not become godly. Why? I would by no means suggest that it is in **all** cases to be traced up to parental neglect. I would not pour vinegar upon the wounds of many a lacerated heart, bleeding under the misconduct of a prodigal son, by asserting that parental sins have led to this. But at the same time, there can be little doubt of the general principle—that godly training, carried on from the dawn of reason, through childhood and youth—with wisdom, uniformity, consistency, and affection—enforced by an eminently holy and consistent example—and sanctified by believing prayer—would be followed, in most cases, with the blessed result of their conversion to God.

### **God has no speechless children!**

Nothing seems too hard or too difficult for prayer to do. Prayer has a kind of omnipotence; for it moves the hand which moves all things!

Faith and prayer are the two arms by which the soul hangs upon the neck of infinite Love, and grasps the hand of omnipotent Power!

Prayer is the homage of a dependent creature paid to the author of its being, and the source of its happiness.

Prayer has a moral reflex influence on the soul of him who presents it, making him the holier

by his own devotions.

Prayer is a relief and comfort to the troubled soul.

Prayer is the communion of the regenerated soul with its Divine Parent.

Prayer is God's own instituted means of obtaining blessings from Him, the Fountain of life.

Prayer must be **sincere**—we must really be desirous to obtain the blessings we ask.

Prayer must be **holy**—for if we "regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not hear us."

Prayer must be **pious**—seeking to obtain blessings, not for our own gratification merely—but for God's glory.

Prayer must be **importunate**—for it is the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man, that prevails.

Prayer must be **submissive**—asking only for what it is God's will to bestow.

Prayer must be in **love**—for if our brother has anything against us, we must first go and be reconciled to our brother.

Prayer must be **reverent**—for our God is a consuming fire.

Prayer must be **humble**—for we are base, and sinful, and unworthy to lift up our eyes to heaven.

Prayer must be **persevering**—for men ought always to pray, and not to faint.

Prayer must be **particular**—for generalities mean little or nothing.

Prayer must be **universal**—entering into everything, all the concerns of life, all the means of grace.

Prayer must be of **all kinds**—social, domestic, private, spontaneous.

Prayer must be **grateful**—abounding in thanksgiving.

Prayer must be **expectant**—waiting and watching for answers.

Prayer must be **believing**—we must ask in faith.

Prayer must be **consistent with the Word** of God—we may ask for everything God has promised.

### **Singularly, solemnly, and perilously critical**

"Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."

1 John 5:4

The situation and circumstances of the Christian during his state of discipline and probation upon earth, are **singularly, solemnly, and perilously critical**. His attention is divided between two worlds. He is placed amid the scenes, the duties, the possessions, the trials of one world, all of which are ever appealing to the senses, and urging their claims upon the faculties and instincts of his nature; claims which he cannot, dare not, altogether resist or neglect.

And yet amid these earthly objects always present to him, he is supremely to value, pursue, and enjoy the objects of another, eternal world, of which he knows nothing but by report.

He must not omit the just and proper interests of this present life, to which he is related by his both various and tender ties; and yet he must regard, practically and constantly, as his highest interest, the life that is to come. He must, to a certain extent, attend to the things on earth, and yet his affections must be set on things in heaven. The visible must not be neglected, yet the invisible must be supremely regarded. The temporal

must be attended to in due season and measure, and yet the eternal must predominate.

### **Mortification and vivification**

**Mortification of sin** is but half the work a Christian has to do; for there is also **vivification of graces**, which is the other half.

No man ploughs his field, or tills his garden, merely to kill weeds—but to sow corn and to plant flowers.

A room may be clean—and yet empty.

It is not enough for our hearts to be swept of sin—unless they be also furnished with graces.

A man may not in disposition be a tiger or a demon—and yet he may not be a saint or an angel.

Now our religion requires not only putting away our pride, our malice, our covetousness, and our injustice—but also cultivating humility, liberality, and love.

True religion is of an aspiring nature, requiring us to proceed from grace to grace . . .

to **faith** adding virtue,  
to **virtue** adding patience,  
to **patience** adding temperance,  
to **temperance** adding godliness,  
to **godliness** adding brotherly-kindness,  
and to **brotherly-kindness** adding **love**.

Thus ascending by degrees, until at length the top of the lofty staircase reaches to heaven, and lands the soul so qualified in the mansions of glory!

Nothing but faith can enable the soul to accomplish this; and this it does, by obtaining through Christ that aid of the Holy Spirit, by whom alone our good works can be

accomplished.

### **Earth would reflect the face of heaven!**

"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

These few verses are worth incalculably more than all the volumes the pen of moral philosophy ever wrote! What a happy world, how nearly resembling heaven, we would live in—if this were the rule of conduct everywhere, always, in all things, and for all men. **Earth would reflect the face of heaven**, even as in the mirror of a peaceful lake, the quiet, noiseless, blue sky is to be seen.

### **We must love all for whom Christ died**

"God is love, and all who live in love, live in God, and God lives in them." 1 John 4:16

Realizing the love which Christ has towards His children, viewing them as the purchase of His blood and the objects of His tenderest affection—our hearts will by a kind of necessity, be knit to them. Every fresh view of the cross will endear them to our hearts.

How frequently, how variously, and how earnestly are we enjoined both by our Lord, and by that disciple whom Jesus loved, and who by leaning on His bosom seemed to have caught most of His spirit—to love our brethren.



Love to the brethren is **the law of Christ's kingdom**,  
"This is my commandment, that you love one another."

Love to the brethren is **the badge of discipleship**,  
"Hereby shall all men know that you are my disciples,  
if you love one another."

Love to the brethren is **the evidence of conversion**,  
"We know that we have passed from death unto life,  
because we love the brethren."

Love to the brethren is **the grand inference from the cross**, "Beloved, if God so loved us—we ought also to love one another."

Love to the brethren is . . .  
the natural yearning of the renewed heart;  
the instinctive promptings of the new nature;  
the reaching forth of the arm too feeble and too  
short to clasp the neck of the Divine Father, to  
entwine around His image in His children!

Why is it that the children of God do not love one another more, and allow such comparatively trifling matters to alienate them from each other? How is it that sectarianism gains such an ascendancy over the members of the redeemed family, and introduces so much coldness, distance, and even hostility?

### **We must love all for whom Christ died.**

Did we more powerfully realize the fact that . . .  
Jesus has died for us all,  
Jesus loves us all,  
Jesus claims us all,  
Jesus delights in us all;  
would not the effect of this persuasion be to  
check the progress of alienation and draw us  
closer to each other?

When the full power of the cross is felt in the hearts of believers—when all the constraining influence of the love of Christ is experienced—then will we be rooted

and grounded in love.

"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue;  
but with actions and in truth." 1 John 3:18

### **Faith overcomes the love of worldly things**

"Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the  
victory that has overcome the world, even our faith."  
1 John 5:4

**Faith overcomes the love of worldly things.** That eager  
ambition after wealth and affluence, for the sake of the  
luxuries and splendors which it enables its possessor to  
command—is transmuted by faith, into a desire to give.

Instead of an anxiety to obtain . . .  
noble mansions,  
elegant furniture,  
handsome equipages,  
expensive entertainments, and  
all the other luxuries of taste and fashion;  
the followers of Jesus should be distinguished  
by an obvious simplicity of habit and living.

Many professors spend too much upon selfish luxuries.  
Followers of Jesus should shrink their luxuries, that  
they may enlarge their charities. Frugality of living,  
should provide resources for liberality to those in need.

### **Nominalists, evangelical formalists, and legalistic pharisees!**

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the  
kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my  
Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day,

'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" Matthew 7:21-23

These are words solemn enough to fill the whole church with anxiety and alarm. How **prevalent**, according to this passage, is self-deception! MANY will say. How **far** it may be carried—even to the judgment tribunal! How **unlikely** are the subjects of it—professors, preachers, workers of miracles!

I tremble as I write! I tremble for multitudes all around!

Never, no never, were professors more in danger of **self deception** than in this age. If the standard of true religion is the New Testament, then a great proportion of the members of all our churches cannot be true Christians—but are merely **nominalists, evangelical formalists, and legalistic pharisees!**

### **JEWELS from JAMES**

(Choice devotional selections from the works of John Angell James)

### **God's hatred of sin**

The death of Christ, apprehended by faith, presents the strongest motives to holiness—by setting forth in the most vivid and striking manner . . .

- the holiness and justice of God;
- His determination to punish transgression;
- the immutable authority of the Divine law;
- the evil nature of sin; and
- the fearfulness of falling into the hands of the living God.

Not all the judgments God ever inflicted—nor all the threatenings he ever denounced, give such an impressive warning against sin, and admonition to righteousness—as the death of Christ.

**The torments of the bottomless pit** are not so dreadful a demonstration of **God's hatred of sin**, as **the agonies of the cross!**

### **Justification**

"Therefore, since we have been **justified** through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1

**Justification** is the opposite to condemnation.

Justification is act of God's boundless mercy in forgiving all the transgressions of the penitent believer, for the sake of atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son; and restoring the once guilty transgressor to the favor of God, and the hope of eternal life.

The **ground** on which justification proceeds, is the death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice for sin.

The the **source** from which justification flows, is the mercy of God.

The **instrumental cause** or means of justification, is faith in Christ.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done—but according to His mercy He saved us." Titus 3:5

### **Of little use**

"Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead." James 2:17

True religion begins in right believing and goes on to right doing; and right believing must, through the

whole of the Christian life, be the guide of right doing.

Faith is the root, out of which grows the whole tree of our godliness—its trunk, its branches, its leaves, and its fruit. It is faith which, striking its fibers into the Word of God as its proper soil, draws up the moisture which nourishes it, and which has first come down from heaven. It is only as we understand this, that we can begin or continue in a course of true, practical, and experimental religion.

To merely understand the grand truths of Scripture, is **of little use**—unless they produce . . .

repentance,  
faith,  
love, and  
holiness.

That is not right **faith** which does not lead to practice; and that is not a right **practice** which does not spring from faith.

### **A robust and healthful piety**

There is such a thing as the spiritual life. A religious profession is nothing apart from it. Without life, however correct may be its outward form and expression, it is but a picture or a statue. It may be a beautiful one, but it is dead! Faith is the expression of spiritual life, or rather it is the principle of life itself which develops in all other expressions of it. The spiritual life is subject to all the varieties which mark the course of our physical vitality; and hence the reality of what is called 'experimental religion' or 'religious experience'. There is perhaps no subject less understood, or more abused, than this.

Man is a being possessed of the various faculties of intellect, will, passions, and conscience. **True religion is designed to influence**

**all these**, for it takes the whole soul under its guidance, influence, and impulsion. **A robust and healthful piety** gives . . .

light to the **intellect**,  
determination to the **will**,  
emotion to the **heart**,

tenderness to the **conscience**, and  
purity to the **imagination**.

True piety brings out the effect of this joint operation of the soul in all the beauties of a holy life. It falls from heaven upon the whole soul like the solar ray upon the prism, which divides and distributes the distinct and separate colors over the whole glassy substance. But men are apt to distort this beautiful consummation, and represent religion too much as consisting only, or in the predominance, of one color.

In true godliness, there must be some great truths received in the exercise of intelligent faith upon the **mind**. These must be felt in their influences upon the **affections**, and carried out in practical and visible operation in the **life**. It is the glory of Christianity that it addresses itself to all our faculties; it meets us in all our changeful circumstances; and is adapted to all our conditions of existence.

### **Preach louder than a thousand voices**

There is nothing now **so much needed** by and for Christianity, as an earnest exhibition, demonstration and manifestation of Christ's own teachings in His Sermon upon the Mount, founded on the apostle's doctrine of justification by faith. This, exhibited by the church in the sight of all the world, would . . .

**preach louder than a thousand voices;**  
be more eloquent than ten thousand **volumes;**  
carry a deeper conviction than the most conclusive **logic;**  
do more to recommend true Christian doctrine than the  
most powerful and attractive **rhetoric.**

### **The unbroken peace of our churches**

What we need to preserve **the unbroken peace of our churches**, is a more distinct recognition and a more powerful influence of the principles of the gospel; more humility, more spirituality, more zeal for the

divine glory.

We often carry into the sanctuary, and into the church, our pride, our self-will, our personal taste. That spirit of mutual submission, brotherly love, and surrender of our own gratification to the good of others which the Word of God enjoins, would keep the church always happy and harmonious. But instead of seeking the good of the whole, the feeling of too many of our members may be thus summarily expressed, "I will have my way!" Such a spirit is a source of all the evils to which our churches are ever exposed, and of which it must be confessed they are but too frequently the miserable victims.

### **Cherishing a viper in its bosom!**

To allow sin to be committed, without being noticed and removed, is displeasing in the sight of God. Nothing can be conceived of, more likely to grieve the Holy Spirit, or to induce Him to withdraw his gracious influence from a church, than a **neglect of scriptural discipline**. When the church neglects to discipline its sinning members . . .  
backsliders are encouraged to go farther astray;  
hypocrites are patronized in their self-delusion;  
the ruin of men's souls abetted;  
the church is corrupted; and  
the honor of Christianity is compromised.

When a church neglects Scriptural discipline,  
it is **cherishing a viper in its bosom!**

### **He has some secret source of happiness**

It is highly incumbent upon Christians, to take care against **a worldly spirit**. They are in extreme peril of losing the power of godliness from their hearts, and joining the number of those, of whom it is said, in the expressive language of Paul, that "**they mind earthly**

**things!"**

Such earthlings look upon the possession of wealth as "the one thing needful." Wealth is their chief object of pursuit, the chief source of happiness. Nothing modifies or mitigates their desire for riches. They are of the earth, earthly!

Now certainly a Christian is, or ought to be, of another spirit than this! He should be industrious, frugal, and persevering in his attention to the concerns of this world. But still there should be in his mind, an ultimate and supreme regard for the possession of everlasting life. He ought not to be slothful in business; but then he must be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He should be seen to unite the 'diligent worker' and 'sincere Christian'—and to be busy for both worlds.

The men of this world should be constrained to say of him, "This man is as attentive to business, and as diligent in it as we are; but we can perceive in all he does, an inflexible regard to morality, and an invariable reference to piety. We can discover no lack of diligence or prudence; but it is perfectly evident, that **his heart and highest hope are in heaven**. He is neither so elated in **prosperity**, nor so depressed in **adversity**, as we are. **He has some secret source of happiness**, of which we are not possessed! His eye is upon some driving force, which we do not recognize."

What a testimony!

Who can obtain a higher one?

Who should seek less?

No prevalence of '**custom**' can make that right, which in itself is wrong. The standard of a Christian is the Bible; and whatever is opposed to that, he must avoid and abhor.



**Young Christians** should be very watchful against the sins to which the ardor and inexperience of their years may expose them. They should flee youthful lusts, and be very cautious to abstain from vanity and self-conceit.

### **That Cain-like spirit!**

**"Am I my brother's keeper?"** Genesis 4:9

This was an inquiry suitable enough in the lips of a murderer—but most unsuitable and inconsistent from a Christian. Love should induce us to WATCH over one another. We are brought into fellowship for the very purpose of being keepers of each other. We are to watch over our brethren—and admonish and reprove them as circumstances may require.

I do not mean that we should pry into each other's secrets, or be busy-bodies in other men's matters—for that is forbidden by God and abominable in the sight of man. Much less are they to assume authority over each other, and act the part of proud and tyrannical inquisitors. But still we are to "exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." We are not to allow sin to be committed, or duty to be omitted by a brother, without affectionately admonishing him. What can be more incumbent, more obligatory, than this? Can we indeed love anyone, and at the same time see him do that which we know will injure him—without entreating him to desist? "Brethren, if any man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness."

Let us then take heed against **that Cain-like spirit** which is too prevalent in our churches, and which leads many to act as if their fellow-members were no more to them than the stranger at the ends of the earth.

I know no duty more neglected than this. It is one of the most prevailing defects of Christians. Many a backslider would have been prevented from going far

astray, if, in the very first stages of his declension, some brother, who had observed his critical state, had faithfully and affectionately admonished and warned him. What shame, and anguish, and disgrace, would the offender himself have been spared, and what dishonor and scandal would have been averted from the church—by **this one act of faithful love!**

I am aware it is **a difficult and self-denying duty**, but that cannot excuse its neglect. Neglect of it violates the law of Christ. Love will enable us to perform it.

### **The cardinal virtue**

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: **Love each other**. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35

Love is enforced by our Lord as the identifying law of His kingdom. By this we learn that the subjects of Christ are to be known and distinguished among men—by their mutual affection.

The dispensation of Jesus Christ is a system of most wonderful, most mysterious grace! It is the manifestation, commendation, and perfection of divine love. It originated in the love of the Father, and is accomplished by the love of the Son. Jesus was an 'incarnation of love' in our world. He was **love living, breathing, speaking, acting**, among men!

His **birth** was the nativity of love!

His **teachings** were the words of love!

His **miracles** were the wonders of love!

His **tears** were the meltings of love!

His **crucifixion** was the agonies of love!

His **resurrection** was the triumph of love!

Hence it was natural, that love should be **the cardinal virtue** in the character of His people, and that it should be the law which regulates their conduct towards each other.

Jesus has made His love to us, not only the **motive** of our love to each other—but the **pattern** of our love to each other. "My command is this: Love each other **as I have loved you.**"

We bound to love one another, in spite of all those little infirmities of character and conduct which we daily discover in our fellow Christians.

### **Let your light shine!**

"**Let your light shine** before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

In order to comply with this, we must . . .  
act consistently with our profession;  
excel in the observance of social duties;  
abound in mercy;  
be most exact in performing all our promises;  
live in a most peaceable and neighborly manner;  
perform every office of kindness which can please or benefit;  
and set an example of industry, honesty, and generosity.

### **Frigid zone, or torrid zone?**

The fact is, that some people's religion is of that weak, unhealthy kind.

Those who have only 'head knowledge'—dwell in

the **frigid zone** of Christianity; and those who have only 'feeling'—occupy the **torrid zone**. The former are frozen amid mere cold and heartless speculation; the latter are scorched amid wild fanaticism.

How much more real enjoyment of the truth is possessed by him who clearly and comprehensively understands it! Every Christian should endeavor to unite the **knowledge of a good theologian** with the **experience of a real believer**. In order to accomplish this, we should set apart time not only for **reading**—but **studying** the Scriptures.

### **The most hopeless of all human undertakings**

"Now the natural man doesn't receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, and he **can't** know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2:14

The hearts of men are fully set to do evil. We find them taken up, occupied, influenced, and governed, by the palpable and visible things of the present life.

And our business as Christians, is to engage them in constant resistance to the undue influence of seen and temporal things, by a vigorous faith in the things that are unseen and eternal. Our aim and labor are, by the power of the unseen world to come, to deliver them from the spell of the present state, with whose pageantry they are enamored, and under whose fascination they are well pleased to continue. And all the while they are so occupied by the pursuits of business, so engrossed by the cares, comforts, and trials of life; and are in such breathless haste to pursue, such distracting bustle to possess, and such ardent hope to enjoy—the various objects of their earthly desires, that when we call their attention to serious godliness, as the one thing needful, we are deemed **intrusive, audacious, and troublesome**.

Even when we have succeeded in gaining a hearing and arresting attention, we have to contend not only with an indisposition to receive the truth—but a determined hostility against it.

To those who are naturally disposed to think well of themselves—we have to produce a sense of utter worthlessness and depravity!

To those who will only admit only a few imperfections and infirmities—we have to displace their feeling of self-esteem, by one of self-condemnation and self-abhorrence!

To these carnal minds and hearts, we offer salvation upon terms which leave not the smallest room for self-congratulation, or the operation of pride.

Indeed to carry such a message as frequently excites disgust, calls forth the bitterest enmity of the human heart, and arouses all its self-love in determined hostility!

The salvation exhibited in the gospel is not only opposed to the **pride** of sinful man, but also to the evil **passions** of fallen man. It requires the excision of sins dear as our right hand, the surrender of objects which have enamored our whole soul, the breaking up of habits which have grown and strengthened with age.

Who can pluck the worldling from the whirlpool of earthly-mindedness, which sucks down so many? Who can rescue our hearers from the ruinous fascinations of Mammon? Who can make inroads upon the money-loving, money-grasping spirit of this ungodly age?

To carry on the ministry of the gospel in this revolted world, with the intention and desire of recovering its carnal inhabitants from sin and Satan—must appear to every reflecting mind **the most hopeless of all human undertakings**—apart from the aid of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit alone, can induce us to continue in the ministry another hour. Without His agency, we would retire in utter despair!

### **Eternal, immutable truth!**

The God of truth Himself has placed the Bible on the seat of majesty in the temple of truth, and has called upon all systems of philosophy to fall down and do it homage.

This is our subject—**eternal, immutable truth!**

Truth given pure from its Divine Source, and bearing with it the evidence and impress of its own Omniscient Author. O what, compared with the truths of Scripture, are the loftiest and noblest of the sciences?

Chemistry, with its beautiful combinations and affinities; or astronomy, with its astounding numbers, magnitudes, distances, and revolutions, of worlds; or geology, with its marvelous and incalculable dates of bygone ages? What is matter, inert or organized, however diversified, classified, or combined with its laws of necessity, compared with minds and souls, and the laws of moral truth by which their actions are regulated? What is nature, compared with the God of nature? What are the heavens and the earth, compared with the 'marvelous mind' which looks out upon them through the organ of vision, as from a window commanding the grand and boundless prospect? What is the fleeting term of man's existence upon earth, with its little cycles of care, sorrow, and labor, compared with the eternal ages through which the soul holds on her course of deathless existence? The works of **creation** are a dim and twilight manifestation of God's nature, compared with the grandeur and more perfect medium of **redemption**.

## Our teaching

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we **persuade** men." 2 Corinthians 5:11

Though a careful analysis of the text should form the basis of almost all our sermons, there must be something more than mere exegesis, however clear, correct, and instructive.

We have to do not only with a **dark intellect** that needs to be informed—but with a **hard heart** that needs to be impressed, and a **torpid conscience** that needs to be awakened! We have to make our hearers feel that in the great business of godliness, there is much to be **done**—as well as much to be **known**. We must impart knowledge, for light is as essential to the growth of piety in the spiritual world, as it is to the growth of vegetation in the natural one. The analogy holds good in another point, we must not only let in light—but add great and vigorous labor to carry on the culture. We must therefore rise from exegesis into—exhortation, warning, and admonition.

The apostle's manner is the right one, "Whom we preach, **warning** every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." We must not only **direct**—but **impel** our hearers.

They all know far more than they practice of the Bible; the head is generally far in advance of the heart; and our great business is to persuade, to entreat, to beseech.

We have to deal with a dead, heavy, lethargic **mind!** Yes more, we have to overcome a stout resistance, and to move a reluctant **heart!** When we find every sinner we address, acting in opposition to the dictates of his judgment, and the warnings of his conscience, as well as to the testimony of Scripture; sacrificing the interests of his immortal soul to the vanities of the world, and the corruptions of his heart; madly bent upon his ruin, and rushing to the precipice from which he will take a fatal leap into perdition; can we, in that

case, be satisfied with merely explaining, however clearly, and demonstrating, however conclusively, the truths of Scripture? "We **implore** you on Christ's behalf—Be reconciled to God."

**Our teaching** should . . .  
be perspicuous and impressive,  
command the attention,  
instruct the judgment,  
engage the affections, and  
awaken the conscience.

### **The Christian minister**

**The Christian minister** is the spiritual shepherd of the flock. He has to increase not their knowledge only—but also their holiness, love, and spirituality. He has to aid them in performing all the branches of duty, and in cultivating all the graces of sanctification.

A lack of powerful, eloquent, yet simple and sincere exhortation—is among the greatest deficiencies of the modern pulpit.

### **The mainspring of all our power in the pulpit**

We are weak in the pulpit, because we are weak in the closet. An earnest pastor will discipline his heart—for there, within, is the spring of energy, the seat of impulse, and the source of power. If the heart beats feebly, the whole circulation must be sluggish, and the frame inert. So it is with us ministers—our own personal godliness is **the mainspring of all our power in the pulpit**. We are feeble as preachers, because we are feeble as Christians. Whatever other deficiencies we have, the chief of them all lies in our hearts. We have too much forgotten



that the fount of eloquence is in the heart; and that it is feeling which gives to words and thoughts their power.

Lukewarmness can excite no ardor, originate no activity, produce no effect—it benumbs whatever it touches. If we enquire what were the sources of the energy, and the springs of the activity, of the most successful ministers of Christ, we shall find that they lay in the ardor of their devotion. They were men of prayer and of faith. They dwelt upon the mount of communion with God, and came down from it like Moses to the people, radiant with the glory on which they had themselves been intently gazing. They stationed themselves where they could look at unseen and eternal things, and came with the stupendous visions fresh in their view, and preached under the impression of what they had just seen and heard. They drew their thoughts and made their sermons from their minds and from their books—but they breathed life and power into them from their hearts, and in their closets!

Trace Whitfield in his career, and you will see how beaten was the road between his pulpit and his closet—the grass was not allowed to grow in that path. This was in great part the secret of his power. He was mighty in public, because in his retirement he had clothed himself, so to speak, with Omnipotence. He reflected the luster he had caught in the Divine presence; and its attraction was irresistible.

If then we would see a revival of the power of the pulpit, we must first of all see a revival in the piety of those who occupy it!

### **What is meant by an earnest ministry?**

In the first place then, earnestness implies **the selection of some ONE object of special pursuit, and a vivid perception of its**

**value and importance.** It is next to impossible for the mind to be intently employed, or the heart to be very deeply engaged, on a multiplicity of objects at once. We have not energy enough to be so divided and distributed. Our feelings to run with force must flow pretty much in one channel—our attention must be concentrated, our purpose settled, our energy exerted—upon one thing, or we can do nothing effectually. The earnest man is a man of one idea, and that one idea occupies, possesses, and fills his soul. To every other claimant upon his time, and interest, and labor, he says, "Stand aside! I am engaged, I cannot attend to you; something else is waiting for me." To that one thing he is committed.

There may be many subordinate matters among which he divides any surplus water—but the current flows through one channel, and turns one great wheel. This "one thing I do," is his plan and resolution. Many wonder at his choice, many condemn it—no matter, he understands it, approves it, and pursues it, notwithstanding the ignorance which cannot comprehend it, and the diversity of taste which cannot admire it. He is no double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, whose preference and purpose are shaken by every cross gale of opinion. It is nothing to him what others do, or what they say as to what he does—he must do that, whatever else he leaves undone. No one can be in earnest who has not thus made up his mind; and he who has, and is resolutely bent upon an object, keeps it constantly before his mind. His attention is so strongly and tenaciously fixed upon it, that even at the greatest distance, "like the Egyptian pyramids to travelers, it appears to him with a luminous distinctness, as if it were near, and beguiles the toilsome length of labor and enterprise by which he must reach it." It is so conspicuous before him that he does not deviate a step from the right direction, he ever hears a voice calling him onward, and every movement and every day brings him nearer to the end of his journey. Break in upon him at any moment, you know where you will find him, and how he will be employed.

This is the first part of the description of an earnest minister—he too has selected his object, and made up his mind concerning it, and insulating it from all others, sets it clearly and distinctly before his mind.

Earnestness implies that the subject has not only been selected—but that it has taken full possession of the mind, and has kindled towards it an intense desire of the heart. It is something more than a correct theory and logical deductions; more than mere exercise of

the intellect, and the play of the imagination. Earnestness means that the understanding having selected and appreciated its object, has pressed all the faculties of both mind and body to join in the pursuit of it. It urges the soul onward in its career of action at such a speed that it is set on fire by the velocity of its own motion. The object of an earnest man is never for any long period of time absent from his thoughts. He meditates on it by day, and dreams of it by night—it meets him in his solitary walks as some bright vision which he loves to contemplate, and it comes over him in company with such power that he cannot avoid making it the topic of his conversation, until he appears in the eyes of those who have no sympathy with him, as an enthusiast.

His ministry is sought with the obligation of a principle, and the ardor of a passion. It is impressed upon his whole character, and is inseparable from his conduct.

### **The great difficulty**

**The great difficulty** in the Christian ministry, is that we have to deal with those who are unwilling to be saved, and to persuade the sinful, proud, and stubborn hearts of men, to surrender to holiness and grace. The faithful pastor carries the offer of infinite and ineffable blessedness, but it is to men who have no taste for that species of felicity. His would be an easy office, did he find men everywhere predisposed to close with the proposals of infinite benevolence. But wherever he goes he meets with hearts not only indifferent, but hostile, to his message. The parable which represents the excuses made for not coming to the marriage feast, is still applicable to men in reference to the invitations of the gospel—men are as they ever were, too busy, or too well satisfied with their enjoyments and possessions, to care about salvation. They are madly set upon the objects of the present world.

They are **asleep**, and need to be roused.

They are **careless**, and need to be interested.

They are **indolent**, and need to be stimulated.

And it is with the greatest difficulty we can engage their attention to the invisible realities of eternity.

No one who leaves out of view the desperate wickedness of the human heart, can form a true estimate of the nature, design, and difficulties of the pastoral office. And the reason why there is so little of hard labor, and intense earnestness, and beseeching entreaty, in the ministers of the gospel, is, that there is the lack of a deep conviction, or proper consideration, of the resistance to their endeavors in the sinner's heart, which is perpetually meeting them.

**Time is ever rolling on**, and carrying us upon its rapid and resistless torrent towards eternity.

### **This heavenly light of truth**

"All **Scripture** is inspired by God, and is **useful** for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:16-17

**The word of God** is the sword of the Spirit by which He slays our corruptions, and the fire by which He purifies our souls.

The doctrines of Scripture are facts, which involve corresponding emotions and principles of action, and must, from their very nature, if believed, be **operative upon the heart and the life.**

If the doctrines of Scripture . . .  
exert no influence,  
carry with them no practical weight,  
exert no moral power,  
they are not truly believed.

The doctrines of Scripture are at once . . .

the source of consolation, and  
the means of sanctification.

The doctrines of Scripture . . .  
come into the **mind** as knowledge,  
produce peace and love in the **heart**,  
spread the beauties of holiness over  
the **character** and **conduct**.

The doctrines of Scripture are light; and like the  
rays of the sun, they **sustain life** at the root of  
the vine, and **produce fruit** on its branches.

**This heavenly light of truth** gives . . .  
spiritual vitality to the soul,  
and holy conduct to the life.

"The Word of God is living and active!  
Sharper than any double-edged sword, it  
penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit,  
joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts  
and attitudes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

### **Your adversary!**

"Be sober, be vigilant; because **your adversary**  
the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking  
whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8, 9

What a description of **your adversary!** One who . . .  
for power is a "lion,"  
for cruelty and rage, a "roaring lion,"  
for activity, "walking about,"  
for diligence, "seeking" out his prey,  
for destructive purposes, "seeking whom he may devour."

Satan's **power**, though limited and restrained, is very  
great. His **trickery** is equal to his power. His **malignity**  
is not inferior to either. The very idea that this cunning  
foe that may be near us at any moment, unseen, and

therefore unnoticed, and may be preparing some new kind of attack, is indeed sufficient to alarm us, and to put us upon the best means of averting the danger.

"Be vigilant!" Watchfulness is an essential duty of the Christian life—none is more necessary—none is more frequently or more solemnly enjoined. Who that is asleep can defend himself against a lion? How cautiously, would we walk, if we were in a country where wild beasts are common, and saw the footprints, and actually heard the roar of a lion! Such is our situation! See to it, then, that you do walk vigilantly—looking all round, watching every object, lest it conceal the enemy! Be vigilant over . . .  
your trials,  
your comforts,  
your occupations,  
your tastes,  
your pleasures,  
your thoughts,  
your desires,  
your besetting sins,  
and especially, watch your hearts with all diligence!

An unwatchful Christian is sure to be an unsuccessful one.

### **One of Satan's masterpieces**

"This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the Devil, or Satan, **the one deceiving the whole world**—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels." Revelation 12:9

It is **one of Satan's masterpieces** to induce men to take some one truth of Scripture, and to magnify its importance beyond all due bounds, and to exalt it not only above all other truths—but to the utter exclusion of them, thus founding error upon truth, and heresies upon the sacred Scriptures.

"He was a murderer from the beginning and has always hated the truth. There is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for **he is a liar** and

the father of lies." John 8:44

### **Gratified by genius, eloquence, and oratory?**

"Take heed therefore how you hear!" Luke 8:18

Let us never forget that to have our souls profited, that is, to be spiritually improved in knowledge, faith, holiness, joy, and love—is the proper end of hearing sermons—and not merely to have our taste **gratified by genius, eloquence, and oratory**.

A right end and object in hearing the Word of God is necessary, for our souls to be in a healthful state.

We live in an age when talent is idolized, and genius adored. With too many it is not the truth of God that is thought of, valued, and delighted in—but the talent of man with which it is set forth.

### **To constitute a man a Christian**

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philip. 2:5

Jesus Christ is the only Teacher who ever made a 'similarity of disposition to Himself'—a test and badge of discipleship. He is not only the teacher, but the pattern of His own religion. His example is an essential part of His system.

**To constitute a man a Christian**, he must not only receive the doctrines of our Lord—but must imbibe His very spirit. He must not only believe all He taught—but he must **live** as He lived, **think** as He thought, and **feel** as He felt. Christ's mind must be in his mind, as far as he can contain it, and Christ's heart must be in his heart.

To be a Christian, it is not only necessary we should  
adopt Christ's doctrines,  
comply with His ordinances,  
observe His sacraments,  
associate with His church,  
espouse His cause,  
conform outwardly to His conduct;  
but we must have His very mind in us! The prevailing  
spirit and disposition of His mind, must be ours also.  
Unless the eye of man sees the image of Christ upon  
our character, and the eye of God sees the mind of  
Christ in our soul, we are not acknowledged as  
true Christians.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in  
Christ Jesus." Philip. 2:5

And what was the mind of Christ?

How holy was his **mind!** Not the shadow of sin, nor  
the least taint of moral evil ever passed over it, to  
becloud or pollute its immaculate purity. His mind  
was the seat of the most ineffable benevolence.

His **heart** was the very temple of love—nothing  
malevolent, vindictive, or cruel, ever found a  
place there.

All His **actions, words, and feelings** were the  
workings of incomparable love.

His **humility** was equal to His purity and benevolence.

Where and in whom, is to be seen the union of  
holiness, benevolence, and condescension, which  
formed the character of the Savior?

Is His **holiness** to be found in those professors who,  
though they are free from external vice and immorality  
—allow the corruptions of their heart to go unmortified;  
and who indulge, instead of crucifying—the passions  
and lusts of the flesh?



Is His **benevolence** to be found in those who are so fond of the world, so grasping, and so hoarding, that little or nothing can be extorted from their reluctant hands for the salvation of sinners, and the glory of God?

And then where is His **humility** to be seen in His followers? Is it to be found in those who will have their rights, and all their rights, at whatever cost of principle or peace; who will not tolerate the least offense, without all the boilings of wounded pride, and mortified vanity?

Oh, is this the mind that was in Christ?

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philip. 2:5

### **The most difficult lesson**

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." Phil. 2:3

The design of this passage is to enforce the injunctions to repress all selfish considerations of our own rights, interests, and dignity—and in the exercise of a kind and condescending regard to the welfare of others—to forego for their advantage what we might claim for our own.

The disposition which the apostle enjoins is that particular species of Christian virtue which consists of a meek humility, and benevolent condescension for the sake of promoting the comfort and interests of our fellow Christians. And because this is **the most difficult lesson for our proud and selfish hearts to learn in the school of Christ**, he enforces it by the power of the most cogent and splendid example which the universe contains—that of our Lord Jesus—in His striking condescension, and profound humility.

### **The most sublime doctrines**

The seat of all true religion is in the soul. The **soul** forms the **character** and guides the **conduct** by the power of an inward principle of spiritual life.

There is an intimate connection between Christian truth and Christian practice. The truth is employed by the sacred writers to enforce Christian practice.

**The most sublime doctrines** of our holy Christian religion, are **all practical in their design and tendency**. They are not mere theory or academics, but are "the truth which is according to godliness."

### **The religion which God demands**

Never forget, my dear friends, that **the religion which God demands** of you, and delights in and will accept, is a religion of the heart—a religion of . . .

penitence and faith in Christ,

love to God,

hope of heaven,

hatred of sin,

charity to man;

all existing in the soul as so many godly affections, called forth in the actions of a holy life, and rendered vocal in words of prayer and praise.

### **The palm tree!**

"The godly will flourish like **palm trees**." Psalm 92:12

**The palm tree** is indigenous to tropical and other warm climates. It grows to a considerable height and size, and presents a beautiful appearance. Its fruits are much valued and are eaten both fresh and preserved, and are also pressed for syrup and wine.

But it is not for its fruit alone that the palm tree is so valuable. From the boughs, which are yearly lopped off from the lower parts of the stem, are made baskets, cages, ropes, and sacks; from the leaves are made mattresses, sandals, etc. It is an evergreen, and lives to an extreme old age—the wood is durable and much used.

How striking an emblem of a godly man. He shall flourish like **the palm tree!**

### **Not how many tears we can shed**

The emotional part of true godliness may be, and is by many, overestimated. The question is not merely what we can feel—but what we can do, for Christ; **not how many tears we can shed**—but how many sins we can mortify; not what raptures we can experience—but what self-denial we can practice; not what happy frames we can enjoy—but what holy duties we can perform; not simply how much we are pleased at the sermon—but how much we can exhibit of the mind of Jesus in our communion with our fellow-men; not only how far above earth we can rise to the bliss of heaven—but how much of the love and purity of heaven we can bring down to earth. In short, not how much of rapt feeling we can indulge—but how much of godly principle we can bring to bear on our whole conduct.

### **The Scriptures should not be read**

Some prescribe to themselves the task of reading so many chapters of the Bible every day. But **the Scriptures should not be read**, merely for the sake of being read.

It is not the **quantity** of Scripture read, but the

**quantity** studied, understood, and applied, that does us good. One verse pondered upon, felt, and applied, is better than a whole chapter or book, read negligently, thoughtlessly, and without self-application.

A real, devout, and intelligent study of the Scriptures, is essential to great progress in godliness. SEARCH the Scriptures daily. Meditate on the Word of God day and night—and put it into practice. Study the Word of God with prayer for divine teaching. Take up David's petition, "Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in Your law."

There is much corruption in your heart generating a false bias, and beclouding your judgment—and likely therefore to lead you to misconception and error. Beseech of God to send forth His Spirit into your heart to purify it from depravity, that you may be better preserved from error. We must give up all preconceived ideas, all prejudices, all pride of intellect, and go in humility to the Scriptures as learners.

### **Guard your heart!**

"Above all else, **guard your heart**; for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23

The heart is . . .  
the great vital spring of the soul,  
the fountain of actions,  
the center of principle,  
the seat of motives

The heart is the center of the thoughts and feelings—out of which conduct comes.

The heart must be the first, chief, constant object of solicitude to the Christian. It is this which God sees, and because God principally looks at it, the heart must be ever uppermost in our concern.

To keep the heart must mean exerting ourselves

with great earnestness, in dependence upon Divine grace, to preserve it in a good state; laboring to preserve its vitality, vigor, and purity.

The heart is the citadel of the soul. If this is neglected, the enemy at the gates will soon be in and take possession. Set a watch, therefore, upon the heart. Let the sentinel be never off duty, nor sleeping at his post.

Keep out evil thoughts, and unholy affections, and vile imaginations. Without great vigilance they will elude observation. As soon as an enemy of this kind is detected, he must be seized and made captive, until every thought is brought into subjection to Christ.

As the state of the heart is, so is the man in reality—and before God. **Guard your heart!**

Christians should have a clear understanding, a deep conviction, and a very powerful impression, that they are called not only to holiness and happiness—but also to usefulness. Yet they are sometimes so much taken up with the enjoyment of their own personal religion and Christian privileges, as to sit down in luxurious ease and indolently enjoy the happiness to which they are brought. But let them know and remember, that **one of the strongest evidences of our own salvation, is a deep concern and a vigorous activity for the salvation of others.**

### **The concentrated nutriment of the divine life!**

In Scripture, there is no knowledge which is purely academic—**all, all is practical.** Every part is "a doctrine according to godliness." The design of the Bible, is "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Truth is but a means to an end, and that end is holiness.

Everyone of us ought to study our Bibles with that prayer upon our lips, "Sanctify me by Your truth; Your word is truth." We should grow in our understanding of the example of Jesus—that we might be more like Him.

A desire to know merely to know, is curiosity.  
A desire to know in order to **do**, is godliness.

Never was there an age when Bibles were more widely circulated, and never an age when they were less read!

Magazines, periodicals, and books of all kinds have come in upon us like a flood, which in many cases has almost swept away the Bible. It is Bible truth from its own source, which is **the 'concentrated nutriment' of the divine life!** It will be found that they are usually the strongest, healthiest, and most rapidly growing of the children of God, who live most upon the sincere, that is, the pure and "unadulterated" milk of the Word of God.

The writings of men are very useful in their place when they lead us to the Word of God. But too many people allow themselves to be kept away by these writings, from the fountains of pure truth—the sacred Scriptures!

### **Scriptural joy**

**Scriptural joy** makes . . .  
duty cheerful,  
trials light,  
temptations powerless, and  
worldly amusements insipid.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him." Romans 15:13

## Faith

"We live by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

**Faith** is the root of all true piety. Christians need faith for sanctification, consolation, and perseverance. Every act of the spiritual life is an act of faith; every step in the spiritual walk is a step of faith. The Christian's course is not one of doing merely, but of believing.

His **prayers** are the breathings of faith;  
his **works** are the actings of faith;  
his **penitence** is the tear of faith;  
his **joy** is the smile of faith;  
his **hopes** are the anticipations of faith;  
his **fears** are the tremblings of faith;  
his **strength** is the confidence of faith;  
his **submission** is the acquiescence of faith.

**Faith** is . . .

the **eye** that looks at Christ;  
the **foot** that moves to Him;  
the **hand** that receives Him;  
the **mouth** that feeds upon Him.

It is not only by the activity of obedience, but by the silent and passive power of dependence, that the Christian is strong and victorious.

Here is the reason why so many professors are so worldly and so weak; why they make such little progress, and such small attainments—they are so much under the dominion of sense, are so almost wholly given up to **a life of sight**, that they have neither time nor inclination to look at the things that are unseen and eternal.

There is in them no habitual looking to Christ, no abiding in Him, no vivid consciousness that all their springs are in Him, and that it is from His fullness they are to receive necessary grace.

We must prefer **the invisible realities of eternity**,  
to the visible things of time; and amid all that is . . .  
dazzling to sense,  
gratifying to appetite,  
and dear to passion,  
**by faith, spend a life of . . .**  
self-denial,  
mortification of sin, and  
separation from the world.

Be this then your sincere and earnest prayer, my dear friends, "**Lord, increase our faith!**" Be willing to have the world displaced from your soul, to make room for the objects of faith! Be ever ready to come from **the dazzling glare of earthly scenes**, to dwell in the calm and holy light of faith. Study the Scriptures, and meditate much upon their contents. Frequent and devout converse with the objects of faith, is the best way to have it increased.

Watch diligently against the influence of those objects which have a fatal tendency to eclipse faith's light, to obstruct its operation, and enfeeble its life—namely sensual pleasure; eager pursuit of the world; and a too intimate converse with those who mind earthly things.

### **An active, powerful, and craving principle**

"We live by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

Do not the great bulk of those who call themselves Christians appear to be living far too much by sight—and not by faith in eternal realities?

Not indeed that they are immersed in vice or amusing gaieties; but how deeply sunk in worldly care, how taken up with worldly comforts! No matter how pure, and how innocent the things may be in themselves, if they hide scriptural objects from the eye of faith—they are unlawful, as to their influence, when they do this.

Our profession implies a disposition, and a habit of seeking



our highest objects of interest and delight, in things unseen and eternal—a daily converse of the soul with God and Christ; with heaven and eternity. He who is thus walking will not allow himself to be long out of sight of the cross. He will not wander far from God in quest of happiness. He will not shut himself up amid terrestrial pleasures, however rational or innocent. He has a new principle in his nature, beside sense and reason—for he has faith. And faith is **an active, powerful, and craving principle**, which aspires after something higher, and better, and more enduring—than anything he can see, or touch, or taste!

He is the subject of wants and woes, which only faith can relieve and mitigate. Neither sense nor reason can assist him to throw off his load of guilt, or give satisfaction to desires, which the world is too poor to gratify.

Here, therefore, on this terrestrial globe, he finds himself a prisoner, sighing for escape from the dark and limited region which he inhabits—and it is only faith that can open for him the doors, and make way for his excursion into **the invisible realities of eternity!**

Alas! how small are our attainments in this divine life of faith! How much are we occupied and engrossed by things of time and sense.

What do **you** know of this life of faith?

You are all living by faith or sight; either upon heavenly things—or earthly things.

On what is **your soul** living?

What is it that supplies **your comfort**?

Where does your spirit go daily to quench her thirst after **happiness**—to the breaking cisterns of 'earthly good'—or to the fountains of living waters?

Sooner or later, the fullest store of the joys of earthly delights will be exhausted. **Pleasures, profits, honors**—what are they? The whole form only a kind of 'imaginary world', a sort of 'splendid show', like that in a dream,

which when you awake—**all is gone!**

To grasp it—is to grasp a shadow!

To feed upon it—is to feed upon the wind!

Christ and His salvation—heaven and eternity—are **the only substantial realities!** And these are the objects for which faith lives, and toward which it is perpetually walking.

### **How precious is the privilege of prayer!**

**How precious is the privilege of prayer!** We are at freedom to pour out the utmost secrets of our hearts, whether of sin, sorrow, or anxiety.

Some of your happiest, holiest seasons on earth have been spent in prayer. There you have communed with God! In prayer . . .  
your cares have been lightened,  
your sorrows alleviated,  
your fears dissipated,  
your souls invigorated.

In prayer you have . . .  
conquered the world,  
subdued your foes,  
mortified your corruptions.  
O what hours you have spent,  
what discoveries you have made,  
what joys you have experienced!

### **Stumbling blocks**

"We put no **stumbling block** in anyone's path."  
2 Corinthians 6:3

Be very careful not to throw **stumbling blocks** in a

Christian's path, even in little things. I do not now allude to immoralities and vice. But I refer to the lesser violations of Christian propriety; such as . . .  
the indulgence of bad dispositions;  
offences against love, gratitude, and humility;  
the practice of dishonorable business artifices;  
covetousness;  
hard-heartedness;  
indifference to the cause of Christ;  
conformity to the world in . . .  
spirit,  
entertainments,  
dress, and  
amusements.

I beseech you to abstain from such things!

Do not give the 'sanction of your example', or the 'aid of your influence' to the spread of a diseased religious profession, in which such leprous spots as these are continually breaking out! "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

You should be the first to set the example, and to give out a pattern of self-denial! You should be the leaders of the cross-bearing company! You should be advanced in the virtues of . . .  
forbearance,  
temperance, and  
separation from the world!

You should lend your example and aid in training the new converts to that hardy, enduring, self-denying religion, which is implied in the Christian profession.

"Make up your mind not to put any **stumbling block** or obstacle in another Christian's path." Romans 14:13

## **Real happiness**

There is more **real happiness** in the believer's mind,

when in the very midst of poverty and trouble, he exercises a lively confidence in God—than the richest worldling on earth enjoys, when surrounded by all his untold wealth, and incalculable possessions.

To feel our own poverty, emptiness, nothingness—and yet at the same time to feel in all the confidence of faith, our fullness in Christ and our title to that priceless inheritance, which God has reserved for His children, which is kept in heaven for them—pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay—is one of the most felicitous states of mind we can attain to in this world! It unites the deepest humility—with the most exalted and triumphant anticipations!

### **The life of faith**

**"We live by faith,** not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7

**The life of faith** means to be habitually influenced in the state of our minds and conduct, not by visible objects, but by the invisible realities which are revealed in the Word of God. It is said of Moses, "He persevered because he saw Him who is invisible." This is the life and walk of faith with respect to God—a realizing sense of His invisible presence—such a persuasion as leads us to all that conduct which He requires. This then is the life of faith—to believe that we are ever surrounded by an all-seeing, holy, and merciful God—and to conduct ourselves toward Him accordingly.

"The life I live in the body, **I live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20

### **No exclusive time, or place, or sphere**

Many professing Christians are far too limited in their ideas of the nature, design, and extent of

practical religion. They act as if religion had nothing to do either with business, with temper, or with our domestic and social relations! They act as if religion were a mere matter of opinion or ceremony—a thing of the cloister, the closet, or the sanctuary, which is to be confined to its own retreats, and never to be allowed to approach the scenes of worldly business, and secular pursuits!

They act as if religion were a mere rule to direct us how we are to behave ourselves in the house of God, and to regulate our worship; and which, having done this, has accomplished its object!

Is not this, I say, the view which if we may judge by their behavior, many take of religion? But can anything be more inaccurate?

True religion is a permanent, all-pervading, unchanging principle, possessing a kind of universality of nature! It must go with us, not only into the sanctuary of God, or into the closet of private devotion, but into all places! It must regulate our conduct, not only toward the church, but toward the world! It must operate upon us and influence us, not only on Sundays, but at all times! It must dictate, not only how we pray, and read the Bible—but how we buy, and sell, and get gain.

True religion has **no exclusive time, or place, or sphere**, of its own—but is a matter of all times, places, and scenes. Though heavenly in her origin, her nature, and her destiny—she is not so thoroughly ethereal as to turn away from the scenes of this mundane sphere, as beneath her notice and unworthy of her control.

Practical religion must be seen in everything!

### **If we are unamiable at home**

The influence of religion must be seen, and its power felt, in making a happy home. Religion ought to give strength, tenderness, and sanctity—to all the relationships of life. It should make . . .

husbands and wives more affectionate and devoted,  
parents more kind, judicious, and vigilant,  
children more dutiful, respectful, and attentive.

**If we are unamiable at home**, there must be something essentially defective in our profession.

### **Fearful instances of self-deception**

The man who assured he is saved, while he is habitually living in the habitual neglect of known duty, or in the indulgence of actual sin—is one of the most **fearful instances of self-deception** in our world.

The great design of the gospel, is to establish a God-like frame and disposition of spirit, which consists in righteousness and true holiness in the hearts of men.

He who has the most confident persuasion of his being a Christian now, and of his going on to heaven hereafter, and whose confidence rests on good ground, will be the holiest man.

### **A heavenly-minded man**

Heavenly-mindedness means the spontaneous, frequent, delightful, practical bent of our reflections toward eternal life. **A heavenly-minded man** is one who considers himself as a pilgrim and stranger upon

earth. He regards heaven as his native country, and as instinctively turns his thoughts to it. Scarcely a day passes during which no thought of his mind, no glance of the eye of faith, turns to the glory to be revealed.

Precious to him are those parts of Scripture which speak of the life to come, and exhibit to him, amid the darkness of his way—the distant lights of his father's house. Sermons that represent the holiness and happiness of heaven are delightful to his heart; books that describe it are congenial with his taste; and the songs of Zion, which sounds like the echo of its divine harmonies, excite all his hallowed sensibilities, and elevate his spirit to catch some of the falling rays of the excellent glory.

The beautiful symbols of heavenly bliss, seize and fix his imagination; while his enlightened judgment and his holy heart, repose upon . . .

the presence of God,  
the vision of the Lamb,  
the sinless purity,  
the eternal rest,  
the communion of the blessed,  
the fellowship of angels.

**A heavenly-minded man** not only employs his thoughts, but sets his **affections** on things above.

**A heavenly-minded man** goes farther than this, and **prepares** for future glory. Grace is the preparation for glory, and he who has most grace, is most fitted for glory.

The man who is going to occupy a place in the palace, endeavors to acquire courtly manners, and to provide himself with a court dress. So the eminently spiritual Christian considers himself as going in to dwell in the palace of the King of kings, and his great business upon earth is to prepare himself with the qualifications and dress of the celestial court. And as he clearly perceives that the prevailing dispositions of heaven are purity and love, he labors to grow in holiness and charity. If asked, in any situation or circumstance, or at any period, what are you engaged in or employed

about? his answer is, "I am dressing for heaven; making myself ready to go in and dwell with Christ! Having a post to fill in the divine palace, I am preparing for it by the mortification of sin, and a growth in grace."

Such is heavenly-mindedness—but, alas! where is it to be found? I know where it ought to be found—in every professing Christian. His principles demand it, his profession requires it, his prospects justify it.

But alas, how disgusting it is to witness the earthly mindedness, and to hear the worldly conversation of the great bulk of professing Christians—as if heaven were nothing more than a splendid painting to adorn their temples of religion, and to be looked at once a week; but not a glorious reality to be ever before their eyes . . .  
to form their character,  
to regulate their conduct,  
support them in trouble, and  
furnish their chief happiness!

### **Men's hopes always affect their conduct**

"Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as He is pure." 1 John 3:3

A heavenly-minded man is a holy man.

Heaven, being a holy state, yes, the very perfection of holiness; does, by a natural process, render those holy, who meditate upon it, believe it, hope for it, and long for it. **Men's hopes always affect their conduct,** and transform their characters into a likeness to the nature of the objects of their desires and expectations.

How effectually guarded from temptation to lust, worldly mindedness, and malice—is he whose affections are strongly fixed upon a state of purity, spirituality, and love! Who that is drinking happiness from the crystal river that flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, can take up with the filthy



puddle of worldly amusements?

What mortification of sin,  
what conquest of besetting corruption,  
what eradication of evil tempers,  
what suppression of unholy disposition goes on,  
when the soul fixes the 'eye of faith' on unseen and  
eternal realities! Yes, what discoveries of hidden and  
unsuspected sins are made, when the light of heavenly  
glory is let into the soul!

### **A sublime fiction**

"Their mind is on earthly things." Philip. 3:19

This is the description given by the apostle, of the  
predominant taste and pursuits of the men of the  
world

Sadly, this also describes a large proportion of those  
who have 'professed' to come out from the world, and  
to be a people separated unto God. How engrossed are  
they, not only in the business, but in the cares, the love,  
and the enjoyment of earthly vanities. Who would imagine,  
to see their conduct, to hear their conversation, to observe  
their spirit—so undevout, and so worldly—that these were  
the men, who have heaven in their eye, their heart, their  
hope? Even to them, we would be inclined to think, that  
heaven is nothing more than . . .

a mere name,

**a sublime fiction,**

a sacred vision,

which, with all its splendor, has scarcely power  
enough to engage their thoughts and fix their  
regards. How little effect has heaven . . .

to elevate them above a predominant earthly-mindedness,  
to comfort them in trouble,  
to minister to their happiness,  
to mortify their corruptions.

Can it be that they are seeking for, and going to glory, honor, and immortality—who think so little about it, and derive so small a portion of their enjoyment from the expectation of it?

"Their destiny is destruction,  
their god is their stomach, and  
their glory is in their shame.

**Their mind is on earthly things.**" Philip. 3:19

### **Spirituality of mind**

"For to be **carnally-minded** is death; but to be **spiritually-minded** is life and peace." Rom. 8:6

True spirituality is a living principle in the soul; yes, a divine life, a holy taste—whose seat and center is in the mind.

**Spirituality of mind** is the beginning of heaven upon earth. What is heaven, but the absence of all that is carnal, and the presence and perfection of all that is spiritual? It is by the habitual recurrence of holy thoughts that the lineaments of a heavenly character are impressed upon the soul, and by the ardor of holy affections, that they acquire an unfading beauty and an enduring form!

**Spirituality of mind** is a most blessed condition of the soul, much spoken of in conversation and in sermons; often discussed in books; frequently prayed for—yet little understood, and too rarely, at least in any high degree, possessed.

The Christian loves to think on divine things; they suit his taste, are congenial with his desires, and are productive of his happiness.

**Spirituality of mind** means the habitual and godly employment of the thoughts and affections on divine subjects. It is something more than . . .

morality of conduct, however pure and exemplary;  
attendance on the means of grace, however punctual;  
liberality, however diffusive;  
zeal, however active.

**Spirituality of mind** means, in addition to all this, a habitual devotional state of mind. It is such a minding of spiritual things as arises from interest and delight in them; such a proneness to meditate upon them as is produced by a strong attachment to them. The true indication of this state of mind, then, is to be found in the prevailing character and complexion of the thoughts.

Thoughts are the springs of feeling, the elements of action, and of character. The object of our thoughts in this state of mind is not merely future glory, it is not a mere looking up into heaven, a longing and craving, amid the sorrows of life, after immortality and eternal repose; but a devout and habitual reflection on the whole range of divine truth . . .  
the glorious character of God;  
the person and offices of Christ;  
the wise and gracious care of a superintending Providence;  
the covenant of grace;  
the exceeding great and precious promises of the word;  
the second coming of Christ,  
with all the other varieties of spiritual subjects.

Among all the objects to which the thoughts and affections of the spiritually-minded are directed, the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ stand preeminent . . .  
His divinity,  
His atonement,  
His intercession,  
His perfect righteousness for justification,  
His spotless example as the rule of their sanctification,  
His offices of prophet, priest and king  
—are all themes which have irresistible attractions for their thoughts.

Nothing more decidedly indicates spirituality, than this habitual tendency of the thoughts to Christ!  
The degree to which our thoughts and feelings are

drawn to the Redeemer, is the precise amount we possess of true spirituality of mind. To those who believe, Christ is precious! Jesus is the specific object and center of their devotional reflections.

The **thoughts** of the truly spiritually-minded always kindle religious **affections** and lead to corresponding **actions**. Spirituality of mind is not mere silent contemplation, inactive sentimentality, passionless quietism. No! it is habitual and delightful **thinking**, producing habitual and delightful **feeling**, and ending in habitual holy **actions**!

How would such **spirituality of mind** . . .  
lighten your cares,  
alleviate your sorrows,  
sweeten your comforts,  
sanctify your trials,  
elevate your devotions,  
anticipate heaven!

How many otherwise cheerless scenes would it enliven—and how many gloomy seasons would it irradiate! What a source of perennial delight would it open, where all else besides, is a desert of the soul. Blessed state, day and night to be conversant with holy, heavenly, peaceful thoughts!

It is a 'spurious spirituality', and one of the artifices by which Satan deceives and destroys unwary souls—to indulge in godly thoughts, and luxuriate in devotional feeling, while the temper is unsubdued, the corruptions of the heart unmortified, and the actions of the life are in little conformity with the word of God.

When there is no disposition or tendency to indulge in holy thoughts, but the whole character and complexion of the mind are worldly; when the domestic and private duties of devotion are little better than heartless forms; when the taste in regard to sermons is rather for talent and elegance, than for sound evangelical truth; when the society of worldly men is preferred to the company of the godly, and their discourse is more relished than that of the eminently godly; when cheerfulness degenerates into

levity, and there is no pleasure in spiritual conversation—in all these cases there is a sad indication of a lack of true spirituality of mind.

"For to be **carnally-minded** is death; but to be **spiritually-minded** is life and peace." Rom. 8:6

### **Mortification of sin**

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Gal. 5:24

We are too apt to be satisfied if the life is free from visible sins—forgetting that God sees and searches the heart.

As to **mortification of sin**, we must carry on a more determined crucifixion of . . .  
all heart-sins,  
all evil thoughts,  
all evil feelings.

### **Besetting sins**

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and **the sin which so easily besets us.**" Hebrews 12:1

Direct your attention more fixedly, and your aim more constantly, to the destruction of **besetting sins**. You know what they are, whether . . .  
lusts of the flesh, or  
lusts of the mind, or  
bad tempers toward man, or  
sinful dispositions toward God, or  
violations of piety.

Let us be distinguished by a great mortification of **besetting sins**, which, more than anything else . . .

distress us,  
disgrace us, and  
hindered us in our progress heavenward.

No sins require . . .  
such severe mortification,  
such incessant labor,  
such earnest prayer,  
such strong faith  
for their destruction as **besetting sins**. But all  
this is necessary, for if they are not destroyed,  
they will probably destroy us.

### **The kind hand which smote so deeply!**

(Letter to a friend who had lost a near relative)

Our hearts have bled. The wound inflicted has been deep. We have felt that the stroke was full of anguish, that it went to our very souls. We will not deny that this is all true. We will not please ourselves with the delusion that the deep, deep wound which the hand of God has inflicted, can ever cease to bleed. But, O my friend! 'is there not balm in Gilead? Is there not a physician there?' Is not that physician our Savior; wise to discern, prudent to manage, strong to save? Has not **the kind hand which smote so deeply**, accompanied the stroke with many softening, mitigating circumstances?

Oh yes! I trust we both feel that it is so. **It is God who has afflicted us**, the infinitely wise, compassionate, and faithful Jehovah, the Lord our God. And does it not argue great lack of confidence in Him—if we sink into despondency when He chastises us? Does it not show, either that we think we could manage things better than he can, or that there is something which we have not cordially submitted to His disposal?

"And now, O God, You are the potter—and we the clay!"  
O how this thought . . .

quells the murmurings of self-will;  
settles the restlessness of the troubled spirit;  
plucks the sting from the rod of affliction!

### **God knows best!**

Precious truth! It is an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, which keeps it from shipwreck, amid all the storms and tempests of the troubled sea of life.

Oh, for a firm, unwavering faith! This is all that is needed. By faith, we may rejoice when our beloved Christian friends are taken . . .

from the **stormy ocean**—to the peaceful haven;  
from the **weary wilderness**—to the happy home;  
from the **field of battle**—to the crown of victory;  
and trace with holy courage, our way through the same difficulties, to the same glorious reward.

But, ah! this, a firm unwavering faith, is too often lacking. We miss our dear friend. The **heart** which sympathized in all our pleasures and pains, has ceased to beat; the **ear** which was always open to listen to our afflictions and wishes, is closed; the kind **voice** of affection and unselfish love, is hushed; the **arm** which supported us, is withdrawn. It is a chilling thought. Cherished alone, we feel its freezing, benumbing influence fastening upon all the springs of comfort and hope, and turning every stream of joy into one wilderness of cold and motionless despair!

But, my dear friend, we must not view our trials thus. We must think much and often of the blessedness of those whose removal we lament, of the perfection of the divine government, of the certainty of the promise, that 'all things shall work together for good to those who love God,' of the rapid approach of that hour which will unite us eternally to those in Christ whom we love, of the danger of creature-comforts, and of the suffering life on earth of our glorious High-priest and head, and his assurance that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. Oh, my dear friend, if we are Christians, there is a glorious prospect before us—as much of the good things of this life as an infinitely wise and kind Father sees

to be best for us—and hereafter an eternity of unmingled and ineffable bliss!

**God loves His children too well** to keep them one moment longer from His house and home above—than is best for His glory—and their happiness!

**You are the one who has done this!**

"Be still, and know that I am God." Such is the admonition which comes to you—and which comes from heaven. **It is God Himself who has bereaved you**—through whatever second causes he has inflicted the blow. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge—much less a rational and immortal creature. He has the keys of death, and never for a moment entrusts them out of His hand—the door of the sepulcher is never unlocked but by Himself.

Though men die and drop as unheeded by many, as the fall of the autumnal leaf in the pathless desert—**they die not by chance!** Every instance of mortality, which has reduced you to your present sorrowful condition, is **an individual decision of infinite wisdom**. Whether therefore **the death of your husband** was slow or sudden; at home or abroad; by accident or disease—it was appointed, and all its circumstances arranged by God. Be still, therefore, and know that He is God, who does His will among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of earth, nor allows anyone to question Him.

Bow down before Him with unqualified submission—and find relief in acquiescence to His wise and sovereign will.

Submission forbids all passionate invective; all rebellious language; all bitter reflections on second causes; and all questionings about the wisdom, goodness, or equity of the God of Providence. You should not only suppress all murmuring, and complaining **language**—but all **thoughts** and **feelings** of this kind. Submission is that state of the



soul under afflictive dispensations of Providence, which produces an acquiescence in the will of God—as just, and wise, and good. It expresses itself in some such manner as the following; "I feel and deeply feel the heavy loss I have sustained, and my nature mourns and weeps; but as I am persuaded it is the Lord's doing, who has a **right** to do as He pleases, and who is at the same time too **wise** to mistake, and too **benevolent** to put me to unnecessary pain—I endeavor to bow down to His will."

"I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for **You are the one who has done this!**" Psalm 39:9

### **A humble and self-abased creature**

The act of humbling and abasing ourselves before God, is a duty of believers through every successive stage of their Christian career. As long as we are the subjects of sin—we ought also to be the subjects of contrition. Sin, and not merely punishment, is the ground of humiliation. It is the most detestable selfishness to imagine that because we are freed from the penal consequences of sin, we are under no obligation to lie low in the dust.

**A pardoned sinner**—and no believer is anything more—should ever be **a humble and self-abased creature** in the sight of God.

### **Who can contemplate it without horror?**

"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless." Romans 1:25-31

### **What a picture!! Who can contemplate it without horror?**

Yet such is the state of society—such the aspect of the moral world—such are the crimes that deform, and pollute, and torment the human race under the reign of Paganism, which, wherever it exists, converts earth into the vestibule of hell, a den of wild beasts, a range of malignant demons—which educates men for fiends amid the worst of excesses of depravity—and tortures its victims in this world, preparatory to their execution in the next.

Who that pretends to carry in his bosom the heart of a man, much more who that professes to have the spirit of a Christian, which is the mind of Christ—but must mourn in bitterness of soul over this frightful wilderness, and long to bring these habitations of cruelty under the reign of Christian love?

### **Easy is the descent to hell.**

The Scriptures everywhere represent true piety by terms, allusions, and figures which imply the greatest **effort**, and the most persevering **labor**. Hence we are commanded to . . .

"**strive** to enter in at the strait gate,"

"**run** with perseverance the race which is set before us,"

"**labor** for the food which endures unto eternal life,"

"**fight** the good fight of faith,"

"**mortify** the deeds of the body,"

"**crucify** the flesh."

What terms! what ideas! what metaphors! Can anything that is easily accomplished require or justify the use of such language? If it were

an easy thing to be a Christian, could the sacred writers with any propriety have employed such strong and very expressive figures?

Nothing, surely, can more impressively teach us the absolute and indispensable necessity of **incessant as well as vigorous effort**.

The course of a sinner is down-hill.

### **Easy is the descent to hell.**

A transgressor has nothing to do but to give himself up to the indulgence of his corruptions, and he will slide to perdition without effort !

Not so the true Christian. Heaven is represented as on a high eminence, which cannot be reached without constant and laborious climbing. We are speaking of the Christian temper, of practical religion, of sanctification, of going on through all the trials and temptations of life, to the possession of that crown of glory which Christ has merited for us; and if this is easy work, there is nothing difficult!

### **Sinking daily in crowds!**

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and **many** enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a **few** find it." Matthew 7:13-14

**This alarming statement** was given by the Lord Jesus! It is indeed a melancholy and a painful reflection; for it is saying in other words, there are but few who are saved.

Alarming, and truly dreadful is the idea—that the greatest part of mankind are moving towards the bottomless pit, and **sinking daily in crowds** to the miseries of eternal perdition!

**Such a sentiment ought not to be uttered**, except with a view to lessen the havoc which it describes, by disturbing the delusion which is the cause of this extensive ruin!

There are many more who perish—than are saved!

Dreadful, alarming idea!

I tremble as I write!

Reader! Let the dreadful announcement startle you like thunder, from your slumbers, and lead you to institute the most serious, and solemn, and impartial examination of your heart! Do not rest satisfied with a mere general, careless assumption that you are a Christian. Without true religion, you must perish eternally!

You have, perhaps, been a professor of religion, and have approved a gospel ministry, and have enjoyed the light and advantages of gospel ordinances; but this will only aggravate your guilt, and condemnation, and misery!

If you are not living under the influence of Christian love, you are living without true religion, and must have your doom with those of whom it is said, "The wicked shall be turned into hell!"

We are struck with the singularity of the fact, that the Bible resolves **the whole** of devotional piety into love to God; and **the whole** of morality into love to man.

### **JEWELS from JAMES**

(Choice devotional selections from the works of John Angell James)

### **One gracious purpose of mercy!**

"And we know that **God causes everything to work**

**together for the good of those who love Him**, and are called according to His purpose for them." Romans 8:28

**Providence** is God's government of the universe.

Providence is that mighty scheme . . .  
which commenced before time was born;  
which embraces the annals of other worlds besides ours;  
which includes the history of angels, men, and devils.

Providence comprises the whole range of events which have taken place from the formation of the first creature, to the last moment of time—with all the tendencies, reasons, connections, and results of things.

Providence encompasses the separate existence of each individual, with the continuation and influence of the whole, in one harmonious scheme.

We are puzzled at almost every step, at the deep, unfathomable mysteries of Providence!

How often is Jehovah, in His dealings with us, a God who hides Himself! How often does He wrap Himself in clouds, and pursue His path upon the waters, where we can neither see His goings, nor trace His footsteps! How many of His dispensations are inexplicable, and of His judgments how many are unfathomable by the short line of our reason!

But whatever we don't know now, we shall know hereafter. The crooked will be made straight, the clouds of darkness will be scattered, and all His conduct towards us placed in the broad day-light of eternity.

We shall see how all the varying, and numerous, and seemingly opposite events of our history, were combined into **one gracious purpose of mercy**, which was most perfectly wise in all its combinations.

Delightful, most delightful, will it be to retrace our winding and often gloomy course, and discern at each change and turning, the reason of the occurrence and the wisdom of God. Delightful will it be to discern the influence which all our

temporal circumstances, all our disappointments, losses, and perplexities, had upon our permanent and celestial happiness. How much of divine wisdom, power, goodness, and faithfulness, will our short and simple history present, and what rapturous fervor will the discovery give to the song of praise which we shall utter before the throne of God and the Lamb!

### **All the misery**

Sin is, in itself, an evil of enormous magnitude. As committed against a Being whom we are under infinite obligation to love, and serve, and glorify, it must partake of infinite degrees of demerit. Sin introduces the reign of confusion and misery.

**All the misery** which either is or ever will be on earth, or in hell—is the result of sin.

Sin is the greatest evil—the only evil in the universe.

Sin is the opposite, and the enemy to God. Sin is the contrast of all that is pure and glorious in His divine attributes and ineffably beautiful perfections; and as such it is that which he cannot but hate with a perfect hatred.

Sin is the contrary of holiness, and thus the enemy of happiness.

### **The secret of happiness**

"I have learned to be **content** whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in need." Phil. 4:11-12

We should labor to be content with such things as

we have. **Contentment is the secret of happiness**, whether we have much or little. The man who makes up his mind to enjoy what he has, is quite as happy as he who is possessed of twice as much.

### **Our evil temper**

If we are as angry and revengeful, as proud and envious, as selfish and unkind—as we were before **our supposed conversion**—we may be assured that it is but a supposed conversion.

It does not matter that we go regularly to worship. It does not matter that we strongly feel under sermons. It does not matter that we have happy frames and feelings—for a heart under the predominant influence of petulant passions can no more have undergone the change of the new birth, than one that is filled with a prevailing lecherousness.

And where the heart is renewed, and the badness of the temper is not constant, but only occasional—is not prevailing, but only prominent—it is, in so far as it prevails, a sad blot on real piety.

We must bring our mind under the influence of redeeming grace—we must ascend the hill of Calvary, and **gaze upon that scene of love**, until our cold hearts melt, our hard hearts soften, and all the cruel selfishness of our nature relaxes into gentleness. The example of the meek and lowly Jesus must be contemplated, admired, and copied. And especially after all, must we breathe forth internal longings for the influence of the Holy Spirit, who alone can subdue **our evil temper**.

### **A cold, heartless and uninfluential religion!**

"If I have the gift of **prophecy** and can fathom all **mysteries** and all **knowledge**, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, **but have not**

**love**, I am nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:2

Many conclude that they are true Christians, because of the clearness of their views, and their attainments in biblical knowledge. They have a singular zeal for the truth, and are great sticklers for the doctrines of grace. They look upon all, besides a few of their own class, as mere babes in knowledge. They themselves are the **eagles** who soar to the sun, and bask in its beams! While the rest of mankind are the **moles** that burrow, and the **bats** that flutter in the dark!

Doctrine is everything to them! Clear views of the gospel are their great desire. **Puffed up with pride, selfish, unkind, irritable, censorious, malicious**—they manifest a total lack of that humility and kindness which are the prominent features of true Christianity.

Let it be known, however, that clear views of Scripture are of themselves no evidence of true religion. A professor of religion be an enemy to God in his soul—with an evangelical creed upon his tongue!

Their religion begins and ends in . . .  
adopting a form of sound words for their creed,  
approving an evangelical ministry,  
admiring the popular champions of the truth,  
and joining in the criticism of error.

As to any spirituality of mind; any heavenliness of affection; any Christian love; any vital, elevating influence of those very doctrines to which they profess to be attached—they are as destitute as the greatest worldling! And like him, they are perhaps as selfish, revengeful, implacable, and unkind!

This is the religion but too common in our churches—**a cold, heartless and uninfluential religion**—a sort of lunar light, which reflects the **beams** of the sun, but not its **warmth!**

"If I have the gift of **prophecy** and can fathom all **mysteries** and all **knowledge**, and if I have a **faith** that can move mountains—**but have not love**, I am nothing!" 1 Corinthians 13:2



"Whoever does not love does not know God,  
because God is love." 1 John 4:8

### **The most crowded avenue to the bottomless pit!**

**Many** will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you! Depart from Me, you evildoers!" Matthew 7:22-23

**Delusion** on the nature of true piety prevails to a truly appalling extent! Millions are in error as to the real condition of their souls, and think that they are journeying to celestial bliss; when in reality they are **traveling to perdition!**

**Oh fearful mistake!**

**Oh fatal delusion!**

What terrible disappointment awaits them!

**What horror, and anguish, and despair,** will take eternal possession of their souls, in that moment of truth, when instead of awaking from the sleep of death amid the glories of the heavenly city—they shall lift up their eyes, "being in torment!"

No pen can describe the overwhelming anguish of such a disappointment! The imagination shrinks with amazement and horror, from the contemplation of her own faint sketch of the unendurable scene!

Millions of souls are irrecoverably lost by self-deception!

Delusion is **the most crowded avenue to the bottomless pit!**

Self-delusion is the 'common infatuation', the 'epidemic blindness', which has fallen upon multitudes!

### **We are to pity them**

The most perfect benevolence to men, is that which, instead of looking with complacency on their errors, warns them of their danger, and admonishes them to escape. It is no matter that they think they are right—this only makes their case the more alarming; and to act towards them as if we thought their mistaken views of no consequence, is only to confirm their delusion, and to aid their destruction!

It is true we are neither to despise them nor persecute them—we are neither to oppress nor ridicule them—we are neither to look upon them with haughty scorn, nor with callous indifference. But while we set ourselves against their errors, **we are to pity them** with sincere compassion, and to labor for their conversion with unselfish kindness. We are to bear with unruffled meekness all their provoking sarcasms; and to sustain, with deep humility, the consciousness of our clearer perceptions; and to convince them, that with the steadiest resistance of their principles, we unite the tenderest concern for their welfare.

### **Why is the life of the church so feeble?**

Why are spirituality of mind, and heavenliness of affection so low? Why have we such a race of worldly-minded professors? Why?

The private reading and study of the Scriptures are sadly neglected! Men are strangers to their Bibles! The Bible was never more widely circulated—but at the same time, never less devoutly read. Where are the men and the women to whom the Bible is a book of daily study and delight in the closet—to whom its words are "sweeter than honey or the honeycomb, and more desired than their necessary food?" The magazine, the review, and the newspaper, and the

last new novel or tale, have so far pushed out the Bible!

### **Floating to perdition on the stream of delusion!**

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!'" Matthew 7:21-23.

This is really one of the most alarming passages of Holy Writ, as showing how far people may go in self-deception, and how perseveringly they may continue in it—even to death, and through it, up to the very judgment seat of Christ!

I am truly alarmed and terrified at the thought of this state of things, when multitudes are going down to the pit with a lie in their right hand—**floating to perdition on the stream of delusion!**

There are many paths to perdition in the broad way, some of which are more cleanly and some more foul, yet they all lead to the same end. And they shall as certainly arrive at hell, who tread the cleanlier paths of a "refined hypocrisy", as those who track through the mire and dirt of the grossest abominations.

Under the most searching ministry, and the most alarming sermons—a fatal delusion sends multitudes to perdition!

How dreadful will be the disappointment and remorse of the hypocrite, when death, which closes his eyes to all the scenes of earth, shall open them to those of the bottomless pit!

What horror, and surprise, and overwhelming disappointment seize him who, when he expects to arise from the bed of death, to the felicities of heaven—sinks from it to the miseries of hell!

Oh, the indescribable, overwhelming astonishment, consternation,

and horror of the hypocrite, who wakes up amid the scenes of the bottomless pit! It is not for language to set forth nor imagination to conceive the torment that will in a moment come over the miserable soul, whose first words in eternity will be, "I am lost, lost, lost, forever! I am in hell." The wretched spirit will look through the vista of millions of ages, and see no glimmering spark of this to relieve its present sense of unutterable woe!

"The hope of the hypocrite shall perish!" Job 8:13

### **Because He first loved us**

"We love Him, **because He first loved us.**" 1 John 4:19

The work of the Holy Spirit is not only to reveal God's love to us—but to produce in us love to God in return.

Wherever the Holy Spirit really gives a clear view and deep sense of God's love to us, He, by the same operation of His grace, subdues the enmity of the carnal mind, and produces a genuine and supreme love to God.

### **Heavenly!**

"Nothing **impure** will ever enter it." Rev. 21:27

### **What is heaven?**

Heaven is a state where we shall see Christ as He is, and be like Him. It is the region of moral purity.

Its **inhabitants** are holy—  
the holy Father,  
the holy Savior,  
the holy Spirit,  
holy angels,  
holy men.

Its **occupations** are holy—the service of God—the song of cherubim and seraphim, crying "Holy, Holy,

Holy, Lord God Almighty!"—and all other things in harmony with this sacred employment and felicity.

Every contemplation of this holy heavenly state, tends to **assimilate the soul to its likeness**. While . . .

gazing upon it,  
delighting in it,  
longing for it,

**we grow in resemblance to it!** The soul of the believer turned heavenwards, becomes **heavenly!**

"Everyone who has this hope in him **purifies himself**, just as Christ is pure." 1 John 3:3

### **The model of Christian holiness**

**The model of Christian holiness** is Christ.

Christ . . .

as the man of sorrows,  
as exposed to temptation,  
as subject to affliction,  
as the servant of God,  
as the Son learning obedience  
by the things which He suffered,  
as separate from sin and sinners,  
though dwelling in the midst of them.

Here is our model—the infinite, eternal, almighty God, exhibited in the form of the perfect man, presented in dimensions the eye can comprehend.

Christ, the divine man, the model man, must be before us, and our eye must be ever upon our copy and our page.

### **The ultimate object of redeeming mercy**

"All who believe this will keep themselves **pure**, just as Christ is **pure**." 1 John 3:3.

Every view we can take of the work of redemption, shows its connection with **holiness**.

The **Father** has "chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy."

The **Son** did not die merely to save us from hell, and bring us to heaven—but to "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous for good works."

The **Spirit** is given to "create us anew unto good works."

If we are **called**, it is "with a holy calling."

If we are **afflicted**, it is that we might "be partakers of God's holiness."

If we possess the **Scriptures**, it is "that we might be sanctified by the truth."

Holiness is the image of God, stamped upon man's soul at his creation—which Satan marred, when his malignity could not reach the divine original.

And to restore us to holiness, is **the ultimate object of redeeming mercy**.

What would **justification** be without holiness—but like throwing a vestment of purple and gold over a leprous body?

What is **heaven**—but the region, the home, the very center of holiness?

Take away holiness from an angel, and he becomes a devil. Add holiness to the nature of a devil, and he becomes an angel.

Were a man without holiness to enter heaven, its blessed inhabitants would run from him with horror and alarm—as we would run from a person with the plague!

Without holiness, a soul in heaven would be like a nauseated man at a feast. He would desire nothing, taste nothing, relish nothing.

### **How insignificant, trivial, and paltry!**

"This world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever." 1 John 2:17

**How insignificant, trivial, and paltry**, are the objects of worldly desire and expectation!

What are wealth, rank, fame, pleasure—compared with the glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life, which the believer looks for beyond the grave?

They are all of the earth, earthly—this is heavenly.

They are human—this divine.

They are transient—this everlasting.

They are unsatisfying, leaving the soul a void unfilled—this replenishing its vast capacity.

They are fleeting, shadowy, and precarious—this absolutely certain.

They are but the children's toys which leave the poor, craving soul, exclaiming, "Who will show us any good?"

### **Why are Christians so worldly?**

This soft, extravagant, luxurious slothfulness—this ease-loving disposition—is the bane of the present

generation of professing Christians!

The robustness of spiritual strength,  
the hardihood of Christian courage,  
the self-sacrificing disposition of ardent love,  
the cross-bearing temper of ever-enduring self-denial  
**—where are they?**

The church is reposing too much in the lap of  
the world—or drowsily reclining on her bosom!

**Why are Christians so worldly?** Why have the scenes and  
circumstances of earth, so powerful an influence over us?

**Why?** Just because our desires and expectations of the  
eternal realities and infinite possessions of heaven are  
so little thought of—and so little cherished! Were the mind  
kept in contemplation of these realities, and the soul more  
frequently regaled with foretastes of the heavenly food and  
feast—it could not be content to feed on the ashes and  
husks of this world!

Did we but consider **what heaven is**—and how near; did we  
but really let our contemplation more steadily fix upon it;  
did we but redeem a little more time from secular pursuits  
and domestic or social pleasures, to meditate upon it; did  
we really and firmly believe all that is told us of it; did we  
but inflame our desires after it, and enlarge our expectations  
of it; did we but get a foresight and foretaste of its vast, rich,  
and imperishable delights—how much would our regard to this  
present world be diminished! How would the 'lights of earth'  
twinkle and pale, and all but go out—before the beams of the  
more excellent glory! What we have to do, then, is to get a  
more lively hope of our eternal home! "For God has reserved  
a priceless inheritance for His children! It is kept in heaven  
for you—pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change  
and decay!" 1 Peter 1:4

**We can't even imagine!**

"For God has reserved a priceless inheritance  
for His children! It is kept in heaven for you—



pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay!" 1 Peter 1:4

There is in that one word "heaven," **a balm for every wound, a cordial for every fear!**

To know that there is a heaven to come, and that it is **mine**, is a consolation to be felt—though not capable of being fully described.

"Yes, dear friends, we are already God's children, and **we can't even imagine** what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when He comes we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He really is!" 1 John 3:2

To lift the soul above the predominant influence of things seen and temporal, and bring it within the attraction of things unseen and eternal, is **the work of Omnipotence alone!**

### **With this hope**

What privations may we not endure, what afflictions may we not bear, when we can say,  
"God is my Father,  
Christ is my Savior,  
salvation is my portion,  
heaven is my home!"

This Christian hope has carried consolation into the darkest recesses of human woe, the lowest depths of poverty and need.

**With this hope**, we may live in happiness and die in peace. It is a jewel worth infinitely more than all the gems which have ever blazed on beauty or royalty. The man who can rejoice in saying he

is a Christian in reality, need not sigh over anything else that he is not.

### **A mighty power and impulse**

"No, dear friends, I am still not all I should be, but **I am focusing all my energies on this one thing**—Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven."

Philip. 3:13-14

**The Christian's mind** must be made up to this. His thinking must be somewhat as the following—"My purpose is fixed, and nothing on earth shall shake it, to reach heaven at last. My plan is laid, and nothing shall alter it. I see that all the richest possessions on earth—everything that can gratify taste, ambition, avarice, or appetite—is but the small dust of the balance to me. I am for heaven! God helping me, no sacrifice, no self-denial, no hardship, no suffering, shall hold me back. I am resolutely surrendered, irrevocably committed, indissolubly bound to that object. **Ridicule** shall not turn me aside; **persecution** shall not terrify me; **wealth** shall not seduce me; **pleasure** shall not allure me. I am for heaven, and none of these things attract or move me! I will forego everything, and sacrifice everything that stands in the way of everlasting glory!"

Ah! This is what is needed in the great bulk of Christian professors—this absolute determination to reach heaven at last! But how few of them have deliberately, determinedly brought their minds to this intelligent, ever-operative purpose! How comparatively rare, is the sight of a man, who seems to have **heaven** in his eye, his heart, his hope, as the great object of desire, pursuit, and expectation!

Look at the conduct of professing Christians, and see how different it is from this. They have **resolutions**—but these are of the earth, earthly! They have their fixed **purposes**—but how far below the skies do they reach! They have their **plans**—but they appertain to the present world!

Let no man deceive himself here! None will reach heaven—but as the result of fixed, deliberate, practical and persevering determination. It is the view of heaven's glories, the expectation of eternal life alone—which will lead to such a heroic resolution. **It must, indeed, be a mighty power and impulse, which will induce a man to surrender his whole life, and all that it contains, for the possession of its object!**

There is **nothing so beautiful** as a humble Christian!

**How soon** may we, from the highest pinnacle of earthly comfort, be plunged into the lowest extremity of woe and distress!

I did **many things** which I see now to be wrong—and left undone **many things** I now see to be right.

**Little events** form our future destinies!

Reason will lead us to take care, that the objects of our hope are worth the pains we take to possess them. It is for a lamentation to see on what worthless objects, multitudes are exhausting their energies. **What miserable trifles** inflame their desires and raise their expectations!

## Money, money, money

"What is the great end of my existence? I find myself in a world where innumerable objects present themselves to my notice, each soliciting my heart, and each claiming to be most worthy of its supreme regard. I have faculties of mind capable of high pursuits. I perceive, by universal experience, that my stay in this world will be very short, for I am only a stranger and a sojourner here upon earth, as all my fathers were; and as I am anxious not to go out of the world without answering the end for which I came into it, I would wish to know the chief purpose for which I exist!"

Such a reflection is what every person should make—but which very few do make. **Would they fritter away their lives as they do, on the most contemptible trifles**—if they seriously inquired for what purpose their lives were given?

RICHES, with peculiar boldness, assert their claims to be "the one thing needful," and multitudes practically confess the justice of the demand. Hence, there is no deity whose worshipers are more numerous than Mammon. We see many all round us who are obviously making this world the exclusive object of their solicitude. Wealth is with them the main chance. For this they rise early, and sit up late, eat the bread of anxiety, and drink the water of affliction. This is their language, "I care for nothing if I may but succeed in business, and acquire property. I will endure any fatigue, make any sacrifice, suffer any privation, so that I at last may realize a fortune!" It is perfectly evident that beyond this they have neither a wish nor an object. **Money, money, money**, is their chief good, and the highest end of their existence. God, the soul, salvation, heaven, hell, are as much forgotten as if they were mere fables, and all the energies and anxieties of their soul are concentrated in wealth.

Can riches then substantiate their claims to be the chief end of man? What, when it is so doubtful whether, after all our endeavors, we shall possess them? When the possession of them contributes so little to our real felicity? When their continuance is so uncertain? When their duration so short? When their influence upon our eternal destiny worse than nothing?

Will any reasonable creature have the folly to assert that the chief end for which God sent him into this world is . . .  
to amass property,  
to build a splendid house, and  
to store it with furniture equally splendid,  
to wear costly clothes,  
to feed on rich food,  
to live in affluence, and  
to die rich?

### **What a sad parting will that be!**

Do riches bring all the pleasures which they promise?

It is a very true remark, that a man's happiness is not in proportion to his wealth.

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for **a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**" Luke 12:15

Many act as if they denied the truth of the sentiment. Do you think that all rich men are happy, and that all poor men are miserable? As to mere animal enjoyment, does the affluent man receive a larger share than his poor neighbor? Whose **head** aches less, for the costly plume that waves on the brow? Whose **body** enjoys the glow of health more for the rich velvet which enwraps it, or the lace which adorns it? Whose **sleep** is sounder because it is enjoyed on a softer bed? Whose **palate** is more pleased because it is fed with many dishes instead of one, and in silver settings? Whose **heart** is more free from pain because of the diamond which sparkles there? Do riches insure **health**, keep off disease? Nothing of the kind! Numerous servants, splendid clothes, rich furniture, luxurious living, add very little to a man's happiness! We may say of these things as Pliny did of the pyramids of Egypt, "They are only proud proclamations of that wealth and abundance—which their possessor knew not how to use!"

Great wealth certainly gives a man many anxieties. 'What shall I do?' is a question often asked by affluence, as well as by poverty. There is nothing in earthly things suited as

a portion to the desires of the human mind. The soul of man needs something better for its provision than wealth. It is on this account, partly, that our Lord brands the rich man in the gospel for a fool, who, when he surveyed his treasures, said to his soul, "You have goods laid up for many years in store; eat, drink, and be merry."

When the rich man he leaves the present world, his riches do not go with him beyond the grave. **What a sad parting will that be**, when he leaves all his treasures behind in this world, and enter upon another state of existence, where he cannot take a penny, and where it would be useless if he could take all of his wealth. Then the miserable spirit, like a shipwrecked merchant, thrown on some strange coast after the loss of all his property, shall be cast on the shore of eternity, without one single comfort to relieve its pressing and everlasting necessities.

### **Vile thieves!**

"Be very careful, then, how you live—**not as fools** but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

Unprofitable reading is another consumer of time which must be avoided. Worldly amusements, and parties of pleasure, are also injurious. I do not by this mean to condemn the occasional communion of friends in the social circle, where the civilities of life are given and received, the ties of friendship strengthened, and the mind recreated, without any injury being done to the spiritual or moral interests.

But the theater, the card-table, the billiard-room, are all to be avoided as **vile thieves, which steal our time and hurt our souls!**

### **Rivaling the butterfly and the peacock!**

"Be very careful, then, how you live—**not as fools** but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

Redeem time from the vain pursuits of personal adornment and dress! It is shocking to think how much precious time is wasted at the mirror, in the silly ambition of **rivaling the butterfly and the peacock!** What a reproach to a rational creature, is it to neglect the improvement of the soul—for the adornings of the body! This is like painting the outside of a house, while the interior is left to be dark, damp, disheveled, and filthy!

### **A bubble that rises, and shines, and bursts!**

"Be very careful, then, how you live—**not as fools** but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

Paul implies that a man can give no greater proof of folly, nor more effectually act the part of a fool, than to waste his time. While on the other hand, a just appreciation and right improvement of time are among the brightest displays of true wisdom.

We must value time correctly, and improve it diligently.

**Time is the most precious thing in the world.** God distributes time miserly—by the moment—and He never promises us another moment! We are to highly **value**, and diligently to **improve** the present moment, by the consideration that for anything we know—it may be the last.

Time, when once gone, never returns. **Where is yesterday?** A moment once lost—is lost forever!

We should never forget that our time is among the talents for which we must give account at the judgment of God. Time will be required with a strictness proportionate to its value. Let us tremble at this idea, as well we may. We must be tried not only for what we have done—but for what we neglected to do. Not only for the hours spent in sin—but for those wasted in idleness. Let us beware of wasting time.

It might stir us up to diligence in the improvement of our time, to think how much of it has been already misspent. What days, and weeks, and months, and years, have already been utterly wasted, or exhausted upon trifles totally unworthy of them. They are gone, and nothing remains of them but the guilt of having wasted them. We cannot call them back if we would. Let us learn to value more highly, and to use more kindly, those days which remain.

How **much** of our time is already gone—and how **little** may be yet to come? The sands of our hour-glass may be almost out! **Death may be at the door!**

When you begin a day, you don't know that you shall end it!  
When you lie down, you don't know that you shall rise up!  
When you leave your house, you don't know that you shall ever return!

For what is your life? it is even as a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes! Life is **a bubble that rises, and shines, and bursts!** We know not in any one period of our existence—but that it may be the last. Surely, surely, we should then improve our time, when we may be holding, for anything we know, the last portion of it in our hands!

You are immortal creatures, and must live forever in torment or in bliss! And certainly you cannot be forming a right estimate of the value of time, nor be rightly employing it, if the soul be forgotten, salvation neglected, and eternity left out of consideration!



### **How like an angel does she appear!**

When a young lady, instead of  
frittering away her time in . . .  
frivolous pursuits,  
parties of pleasure,  
personal decorations,  
or scenes of vanity,  
employs her hours in . . .  
visiting the cottages of the poor,  
alleviating the sorrows of the wretched,  
reading Scripture to the sick,

### **how like an angel does she appear!**

Be frugal in your personal expenditure—that you  
may have the more to do good with. Waste not  
that upon unnecessary luxuries of dress or living  
—which thousands and millions need for necessities  
and pious instruction.

The noblest transformation of property is not  
into personal jewels, or splendid household  
furniture, or costly equipages—but into . . .  
clothing for the naked,  
food for the hungry,  
medicine for the sick,  
knowledge for the ignorant,  
holiness for the wicked,  
salvation for the lost!

I exhort, therefore, that you do all the good you  
can, both to the souls and bodies of your fellow  
creatures—for this end you were born into the world!

### **Amusements**

**Amusements**, in the usual acceptance of the word, are  
but the miserable expedients resorted to by the ignorant  
and unsanctified mind of man for happiness; the ineffectual  
efforts to restore that peace which man lost by the fall,  
and which nothing but true piety can bring back to the  
human bosom. In departing from God, the soul of man

strayed from the pasture to the wilderness, and now is ever sorrowfully exclaiming, as she wanders on—'who will show us any good?' To relieve her sense of need, and satisfy her cravings, she is directed to amusements. But they prove only to be like the flowers of the desert, which, with all their beauty, do not satisfy.

**Amusements** are but expedients to make men happy without piety. The mere husks, which those who are destitute of the bread which comes down from heaven, crave after, and feed upon—and which are rejected by those who have their appetite satisfied with this celestial manna.

Do not go to the polluting sources of worldly amusement for consolation.

It is the return of the soul to God through faith in Jesus Christ which can alone give true and satisfying delight.

But there are some who will reply, "I have no taste for true piety—what amusements do you recommend to me?"

None at all. What! that man talk of amusement, who, by his own confession, is under the curse of heaven's eternal law, and the wrath of heaven's incensed King?

AMUSEMENT! What! for the poor wretch who is on the brink of perdition, the verge of hell, and may the next hour be lifting up his eyes in torment, and calling for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue!

Diversion! What! for him who is every moment exposed to that sentence, "Depart from me, accursed one, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"

What! going on to that place where the worm dies not, and the fire is never quenched; where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth—**and calling for amusements!** Oh monstrous absurdity!

We have heard of prisoners dancing in their chains. But who ever heard of a poor creature asking for amusements on his way to the place of execution? This is your case.

While you have no taste for true piety, you are certainly under sentence of eternal wrath. You are every day traveling to execution. Yet you are asking for amusements!

And what will be your reflections in the world of despair, to recollect that the season of hope was employed by you, not in seeking the salvation of the soul, and everlasting happiness—but in mere idle diversions, which were destroying you at the very time they amused you!

Then will you learn that you voluntarily relinquished the fullness of joy which God's presence affords, and the eternal pleasures which are to be found at his right hand—for the joy of fools, which as Solomon truly says, is but as "the crackling of thorns beneath the pot."

Before you think of amusement—seek for true piety!

Nothing is more bewitching than the love of gambling. The **winner** having tasted the sweets of gain, is led forward by the hope of still greater gain. While the **loser** plunges deeper and deeper into ruin, with the delusive expectation of retrieving his lost fortune. How many have ruined themselves and their families forever by this mad passion! How many have thrown down the cards or dice, only to take up the pistol or the poison—and have rushed, with all their crimes about them, **from the gambling-table to the fiery lake of hell!**

Time is precious. Its fragments, like those of diamonds, are **too valuable to be lost.**

How many parents are accessory to **the murder of their children's souls!** Blood-guiltiness rests upon

their conscience, and the curses of their own offspring will be upon them through eternity!

### **A spring of comfort whose waters never fail**

Genuine piety comforts the mind, with the assurance of an all-wise, all-pervading Providence—so **minute** in its superintendence and control, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of our heavenly Father; a superintendence which is excluded from no point of **space**, no moment of **time**, and overlooks not the lowest creature in existence.

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Nothing that imagination could conceive is more truly consolatory than this—to be assured that all things, however painful at the time, not excepting . . .

the failure of our favorite **plans**,  
the disappointment of our fondest **hopes**,  
the loss of our dearest **comforts**,  
shall be overruled by infinite wisdom, for the promotion of our ultimate good. This is **a spring of comfort whose waters never fail**.

### **A balm for every wound, a cordial for every care**

**Some of the benefits of affliction**, are that it . . .  
crucifies the world,  
mortifies sin,  
quicken prayer,  
extracts the balmy sweets of the promises,  
endears the Savior.

And to crown all, affliction directs the mind to that glorious state where the days of our mourning shall be ended—that happy country where God shall wipe

every tear from our eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow or crying.

Nothing so composes the mind, and helps it to bear the load of trouble which God may lay upon it—as the near prospect of its termination.

In that one word, HEAVEN, genuine piety provides **a balm for every wound, a cordial for every care.**

In the prospect of eternity, with **heaven** spreading out its ineffable glories, and **hell** uncovering its dreadful horrors—**the only question** which a rational creature should allow himself to ask is, "What is necessary to avoid the torments of the one—and secure the felicities of the other?"

### **Splendid baubles!**

A desire after happiness is inseparable from the human mind. It is the natural and healthy craving of our spirit; an appetite which we have neither the will nor the power to destroy, and for which all mankind are busily employed in making provision. This is as natural, as for birds to fly, or fish to swim.

For this the **scholar** and the **philosopher**, who think happiness consists in knowledge, pore over their books—light the midnight lamp, and keep frequent vigils, when the world around them is asleep. The **worldling**, with whom happiness and wealth are kindred terms—worships daily at the shrine of Mammon, and offers earnest prayers for the golden shower. The **voluptuary** gratifies every craving sense, rejoices in the midnight revel, renders himself vile—and yet tells you he is in the chase of happiness. The **ambitious** man, conceiving that the 'great essential' hangs in rich clusters from the throne, consumes one half of his life, and embitters the other half—in climbing the giddy elevation of royalty.

All these, however, have confessed their disappointment; and have retired from the stage exclaiming, in reference to happiness, as Brutus, just before he stabbed himself, did in reference to virtue, "I have pursued you everywhere, and found you nothing but a name."

This, however, is a mistake; for both virtue and happiness are glorious realities—and if they are not found, it is merely because they are not sought from the right sources.

Crowns are **splendid baubles**, gold is sordid dust, and all the gratifications of sense but vanity and vexation of spirit, when weighed against the splendid blessings of true piety!

### **The greatest deceiver in the world!**

The detection of deceit, if not a pleasant employment, is certainly a profitable one. My object is to expose **the greatest deceiver in the world**, whose design is to cheat you, my dear children, not of your property, nor of your liberty, nor of your life—but of what is infinitely dearer than all these—the salvation of your immortal soul!

His success has been frightful, beyond description! Earth is full of his wives! Hell is full of his spoils. Millions of lost souls bewail his success in the bottomless pit, as the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever!

### **Who is this impostor, and what is his name?**

Is it the false prophet of Mecca? No!

Is it the spirit of paganism? No!

Is it the ploys of infidelity? No!

**It is the human heart**—in its deep devices and endless machinations!

"The human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked! Who really knows how bad it is?"

Jeremiah 17:9

This self-deception prevails to a most alarming extent in the business of personal piety. The 'road to destruction' is crowded with travelers, who vainly suppose that they are walking in the path of life, and whose 'dreams of happiness' nothing will disturb—but the dreadful reality of eternal misery!

### **The narrow gate**

"Enter through **the narrow gate**. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Mt. 7:13-14

Our Lord has most explicitly taught us, that the entrance to the path of life is attended with difficulty—and is not to be accomplished without effort. Into that road, we are not borne by the pressure of the thronging multitude, nor the force of natural inclination. No broad and flowery avenue attracts the eye; no siren songs of worldly pleasure allure the ear.

"Strive to enter in at the narrow gate—for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." This implies that there are obstructions to be removed, and difficulties to be surmounted.

The fundamental and universal obstruction with which everyone has to contend, is the darkness and depravity brought upon human nature by the fall; and the indulged sensuality, prejudice and enmity of the carnal mind.

### **He will strive to be like Him**

The true believer has a willingness to obey God in all

things. There must be . . .

a distinct acknowledgment of God's right to govern us;  
an unreserved surrender of our heart and life to His authority;  
a habitual desire to do what He has enjoined,  
a habitual desire to avoid what He has forbidden.

Where there is this desire to please God, this reluctance to offend God—he will read with constancy and attention the sacred volume, which is written for the express purpose of teaching us how to obey and please the Lord. Finding there innumerable injunctions against all kinds of immorality and sin, and as many commands to practice every personal, relative, and social duty—the true Christian will be zealous for all good works.

Remembering that Jesus Christ his example,

**he will strive to be like Him . . .**

in purity,  
in spirituality,  
in submission to the will of God,  
in devotedness to the divine glory.

Nor will he forget to imitate the beautiful meekness, humility, and kindness of Jesus.

Saving faith never fails to produce love to Jesus, which transforms the believer into His image.

The moral condition of the world is too bad for description. If it is ever to be improved—it must be done by Christians. Genuine piety is **the only real reformer of mankind.**

**Alas! alas!**

"Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." 1 Tim. 4:8

My children, true godliness will save you from much



present danger and trouble, promote your temporal interests, prepare you for the darkest scenes of adversity, comfort you on a dying bed, and finally conduct you to everlasting glory!

The lack of true piety will ensure misery on earth, and be followed with eternal torments in hell!

What then, my children, are all worldly acquirements and possessions, without true piety? What are the accomplishments of taste, the elegancies of wealth, the wreaths of fame? Authentic genius, a vigorous understanding, a well-stored mind, and all this adorned by the most amiable temper and most pleasing demeanor, will neither comfort under the trials of life, nor save their lovely possessor from the worm which never dies and the fire which is never quenched! **Alas! alas!** that such estimable qualities should all perish for lack of that piety which alone can give immortality and perfection to the excellences of the human character!

### **No wonder that their children go astray!**

It is a melancholy fact, that there are many families with professing Christian parents, where scarcely the semblance of domestic piety or instruction is to be found, where . . .  
no family altar is seen,  
no family prayer is heard,  
no parental admonition is delivered!

What! this cruel, wicked, ruinous neglect of their children's immortal interests in the families of professors! **Monstrous inconsistency!** Shocking dereliction of principle! **No wonder that their children go astray!** Some of the most profligate young people that I know, have issued from such households. Their prejudices against true religion are greater than those of the children of avowed worldlings!

Inconsistent, hypocritical, negligent professors of religion, frequently excite in their children, an unconquerable aversion and disgust against true piety—which seems to produce in

them a determination to place themselves at the furthest possible remove from its influence.

**Oh! this is a cold and selfish world!**

**Scattering the seeds of poison and death!**

"One sinner destroys much good." Ecclesiastes 9:18

To do good is God-like. To do evil is devil-like. And we are all imitating God or Satan—accordingly as we are leading a holy or a sinful life.

"One sinner destroys much good." He not only does not do good **himself**—but he destroys good in **others!** Instead of doing good, he does only evil. He not only leaves unassisted all the great means and instruments for improving and blessing the world, and has no share in all that is being done for the spiritual and eternal welfare of mankind; but he opposes it, and seeks to perpetuate and extend the reign of sin, and the kingdom of Satan! He . . .

    corrupts by his principles,  
    seduces by his example, and  
    leads others astray by his persuasions!

**He is ever scattering the seeds of poison and death in his path!**

**Who can imagine**, I again say, how many miserable specters await his arrival in hell—or follow him there to be his tormentors—in revenge for his having been their tempter!

True religion happily saves all who possess it from this mischief—it makes a man an instrument of good, and not of evil—to his fellow creatures. True religion renders him . . .  
    a blessing—and not a curse;  
    a savior—and not a destroyer;  
    a physician to heal—and not a murderer to destroy!

He lives to do good . . .  
good of the noblest and most lasting kind,  
good to the soul,  
good to distant nations,  
good to the world,  
good to unborn generations,  
good for eternity!

He is a benefactor to his race—a philanthropist of the noblest order! By a godly example, he adorns true religion, and recommends it to others, who, attracted by the beauties of holiness as they are reflected from his character—are led to imitate his conduct.

### God's eye!

"By **the fear of the Lord**, men depart from evil."  
Proverbs 16:6

True religion will implant in your hearts a regard to the authority and presence of God. This veneration for God comes in to aid the exercise of love for holiness.

By **the fear of God**, I do not mean a slavish and tormenting dread of the Divine Being, which haunts the mind like an ever-present spectre—that is superstition, not true religion.

But I mean a fear springing out of affection, the fear of a child dreading to offend the father whom he loves. What a restraint from sin is there in that child's mind! He may be absent from his father; but love keeps him from doing what his father disapproves.

So it is with true religion; it is love to God, and love originates fear. He who is thus blessed with the love and fear of God is armed as with a shield of triple brass, against sin. The temptation comes with all its seductive force—but it is repelled with the indignant question—"How shall I do this wickedness, and sin against God?"

And this awesome Being is felt to be everywhere!

Yes, God is in every place. Heaven and the earth are full of his presence. A person once dreamed that **the sky was one vast eye of God**, ever looking down upon him. He could never get out of the sight of **this tremendous eye**, he could never look up but this solemn eye was gazing upon him. The moral of this fearful dream is a fact. **God's eye** is always, and everywhere, upon us!

Who could sin, if he saw God in a bodily form looking upon him? Young man, could you go to the theater, or to still worse places, if you saw **this vast and searching eye**, with piercing looks, fixed upon you? Impossible! "No!" you would say, "I must wait until that eye is gone, or closed, or averted." But it is never gone, never closed, never averted! This the pious man knows, and therefore says, "O God, You see me!"

Would you sin, if your father were present? Would you enter the haunt of vice if he stood at the door, looking in your face, and saying, "My son, if sinners entice you, consent not; my son, do not walk in the way with them—turn your foot from their path!" You could not so insult and grieve your good father's heart. But though your earthly father is not there—your heavenly Father is. Your father's eye does not see you—but **God's eye** does! This the pious person believes and feels—and turns away from sin!

"O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my every thought when far away. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You both precede and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to know! I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night—but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.

To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are both alike to you. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, O God! They are innumerable!" Psalm 139.

### **Bias against the gospel**

"I will destroy the **wisdom** of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." 1 Corinthians 1:19

Man has an **intellectual bias against the gospel**, because it humbles the arrogance of his pride of intellect. He also has a **moral bias against the gospel**, because it would check the indulgence of his sinful passions.

"Light has come into the world, but **men loved darkness** instead of light because their deeds were evil." John 3:19

### **While looking on his breathless corpse!**

To a godly parent, the **profligate conduct** of a child is the bitterest disappointment of all. To see a young man who has been piously educated, and brought up in the fear of God—so far forgetting the instructions, prayers and examples of his father, and the tears and affectionate entreaties of his mother—as to "walk in the counsel of the ungodly, to stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful"—to see him forming bad associations, indulging his evil propensities, wandering off, like the prodigal, into **the paths of vice and profligacy, the slave of lust and wine**—how distressfully disappointing is all this!

**Unhappy parents!** who have been called to endure this trial!

"Oh," says the Christian parent, "has it come to this—that all my solicitude, my prayers, my tears for my son—end in his profligacy! That all my desires and expectations that he would become a child of God, terminate in his being a prodigal! All my hopes of his being a servant of Christ—disappointed in my seeing him **a slave of Satan!** How carefully have I watched him, how diligently have I instructed him, how earnestly have I prayed for him! And are all my prayers and tears as water spilt upon the ground? I have been laboring in vain, and spending my strength for nothing, yes, worse than in vain! My every instruction, correction, and reproof, has aggravated his guilt here—and will increase his misery hereafter! So that while, in intention I was acting the most kind and tender part, I was, in the result, only treasuring up for my son, wrath against the day of wrath. **Alas, alas! Woe is me! O my son, my son!**"

How tenfold more dreadful are these reflections if the son has died in his sins—a case by no means uncommon. How painful are the father's tears that his child has fallen into a state of everlasting ruin! "Oh," will the afflicted parent say, "how comparatively light would be my sorrows, if, **while looking on his breathless corpse**, and mourning the disappointment of my hopes as to the present life, I could look forward to the world of glory, and see the branch of my family, which is cut off from earth, transplanted there and flourishing there. Joy would then mingle with my paternal sorrows, and praises with my tears. **But alas! I have reason to fear that it was cut down—that it might be cast into everlasting burnings!**"

### **Your journey to eternity!**

"They confessed that they were **strangers and pilgrims here on earth.**" Heb. 11:13

Christian! Your earthly sojourn is **a pilgrimage to heaven!**

Look up to that better country which is above and beyond the boundaries of earth and time—the home of the holy, the good, and the blessed . . .

where there shall be no more death, or sorrow, or crying;  
where there shall be no more pain;  
where fears, anxieties and labors have no place;  
where the turmoils and the strifes of life are unknown;  
where the wicked cease from troubling;  
where the weary are at rest;  
where temptation will be over;  
where the conflict will cease.

Blessed country! May it be your chief concern to travel to that joyful and glorious land.

From this present world you must depart. No choice is left you. The hour of departure draws on—but whether it will be in youth, in manhood, or in old age, is known only to God.

Shall there be no preparation for your eternal home?  
Shall there be no thoughtfulness or concern given to **your journey to eternity?**

There are but two places of abode beyond the grave—heaven and hell. To one or the other you must soon depart! Which? Which?

### **Lifestyle evangelism**

Let your piety be neither ostentatiously displayed, nor timidly concealed. At first it would be well to say little about the gospel to others—until you have gained their confidence and affection. Let there be no bustling and meddlesome zeal, nothing like parading your piety, and proclaiming your intention to convert everyone.

Your light must shine before others—by your good works! Your piety must be **seen** in all its loveliness and consistency—before it is **heard!** Be known as the humble, meek, and gentle follower of the Lamb—the

friend of everyone—the enemy of none.

Take especial care that your **conduct** be uniformly consistent. When it is known—and known it ought to be—that you are a Christian, **you will be watched by the malignant eyes** of those who wait for your failing, and whose ingenuity will be taxed to lay snares for your feet. **One wrong step will destroy all your influence!** By defacing the beauty and impairing the strength of your example, you will subject not only yourself—but Christianity, to the suspicion of hypocrisy.

### **On the high road to poverty!**

"He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich." Proverbs 21:17

Never were truer words uttered. The man who is bent upon what is called "enjoying himself," who will have his mirthful companions, his amusements, and his frequent seasons of recreation. The man who is fond of parties, entertainments, the gaming table, the ball room, the concert, and the theater—is **on the high road to poverty** in this world—and to hell in the next!

Let the lover of pleasure read the history of **Sampson** in the Old Testament—and of the **Prodigal** in the New Testament.

**Beauty** is the production of God, and, as one of His gifts, is, like every other, to be considered good in itself, and to be received with thankfulness. But how often does it prove a snare to its possessor—and a temptation to others!



### **How could I ever do such a wicked thing?**

"Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." 1 Tim. 4:8

True piety is the parent of every virtue which is either useful to man, or pleasing to God.

Sincere, heartfelt and very decided piety is necessary to prepare for those sudden, violent, and unexpected temptations which often beset the young traveler on life's eventful journey.

There are temptations so strong, so violent, so fascinating to our corrupt natures—that all other restraints but those of true piety will be swept away before them, like cobwebs or chaff by the force of a tempest.

**"How could I ever do such a wicked thing?** It would be a great sin against God." Genesis 39:9

### **Instructive, entertaining, and interesting**

The Bible is the most **instructive, entertaining, and interesting** volume in the world—uniting, as it does, every species of writing, every variety of subject, and every style of composition. Much of the Bible is historical and biographical. It is a gallery of portraits, both of good and bad men; some merely sketched in outline; some showing part of the figure only, and some drawn at full length. This makes the Scriptures at once interesting and instructive.

We see SIN in living shapes—depraved, leprous, beastly, diabolical—and learn to hate it.

We see HOLINESS, fair and beautiful, though by no means perfectly angelical and heavenly—and we are by such examples taught to love it, and

helped to acquire it.

### **Piety and morality**

Saving faith is intended to produce two results—love to God and love to man. In other words **piety and morality**.

Remember this, for it is of vast importance that you should remember it. Penitence, faith, inward holiness, devoutness, heavenliness, are all parts of saving faith, without which the fairest morality, and most beautiful amiability, are, in the sight of God, worth nothing, and will be found totally unavailing to salvation.

There may be much general amiability and morality, without an atom of genuine piety!

### **The amiable profligate!**

Of all the characters on earth that are dangerous to you, and should be shunned by you, **the amiable profligate** is the one most to be dreaded. The man of kind disposition, insinuating address, polished manners, sparkling wit, and keen humor—but of bad principles or bad conduct—is the most seductive agent of the Wicked One for the ruin of youth!

He has the fascination of the eye of the basilisk (a legendary reptile with fatal breath and glance); he has the glossy and beautifully variegated skin of the serpent, concealing the fang and the venom; he is the golden chalice that contains the poisonous draught; or, to reach the climax, **he is Satan transformed** into a personification of **polished and attractive vice!** Of such men beware!

## Incurable propensity to idolatry

"Ephraim is joined to idols!" Hosea 4:17

A strange and almost **incurable propensity to idolatry** had ever been evinced by the Israelitish race, obviously springing from that depravity of their nature which made them long for deities congenial to their own corrupted taste. The spirituality and purity of the true God offended them. They could not be content with a religion of which faith was the great principle of action—but coveted objects of worship which could be presented to the senses, and which would be tolerant of their vices.

Such is the power of example, especially when it agrees with our corrupt inclinations, that the Jews, notwithstanding the revelation they had received from God, and the care He took to preserve them from the abominations of the surrounding nations, often forsook the worship of Jehovah for idols, or attempted to incorporate idolatry with Judaism. Ahab, one of the wickedest of their monarchs, had married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of the Zidonians, by whom Baal was worshiped. **Through the influence of this wicked woman**, the worship of Baal was diffused to an enormous extent in the kingdom of Israel.

## The virtuous woman

"She will do him good and not harm, all the days of her life." Proverbs 31:12

**The virtuous woman** will be inventive, ingenious, and laborious to promote his comfort, his health, and his interest.

She will smooth by her sweet words his brow,  
when wrinkled with care.

She will hush the sigh that misfortune extorts  
from his bosom.

She will answer with gentleness the sharp words that in moments of irritation drop from his lips, and will do all this, not by fits and starts when in congenial moods, but continually.

### **To sum up all**

And now, **to sum up all**, consider—

A mother's **charge**—an immortal creature.

A mother's **duty**—to train him up for God, heaven and eternity.

A mother's **dignity**—to educate the family of the Almighty Creator of the universe.

A mother's **difficulty**—to raise a fallen sinful creature to holiness and virtue.

A mother's **encouragement**—the promise of Divine grace to assist her in her momentous duties.

A mother's **relief**—to bear the burden of her cares to God in prayer.

A mother's **hope**—to meet her child in glory everlasting, and spend eternal ages of delight with him before the throne of God and the Lamb!

### **This inward spring of grace in the soul**

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up to eternal life!" John 4:13-14

True religion is a **new**, a **spiritual**, a **divine**, a **heavenly life**—the life of God in the soul of man!

While the pleasures of the world—the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, and the lust of the eyes, are but as drops which inflame rather than allay the thirst of the natural man after true happiness, or at best leave him unsatisfied; the grace of Christ in renewing and sanctifying the soul, leads it to the true fountain of bliss, and compels it in the fullness of satisfaction, to exclaim, "I have found it; I have found it!"

And this source of happiness is not far off, for it is within and not outside its possessor. It will become in him a spring of water! He carries the spring about with him as an abundant, an unfailing source, a constant supply—a well ever accessible and never dry—a spring whose sparkling and gushing ebullitions shall be ever bubbling up, and forming an ever-living fountain that flows at all seasons of the year, in heat or cold, and in all the circumstances of the weather, whether foul or fair, wet or dry. True religion always lives, always shows its beauties—and amid all changes of external circumstances.

**This inward spring of grace in the soul** is represented as rising higher and higher, and never stopping until it reaches eternal life; swelling into a stream which refreshes others in its course to eternity, making all around it fruitful and pleasant; just like a river flowing through a country which irrigates the land and covers it on every hand with fertility and beauty!

### **Is this descriptive of your religion?**

Do you know anything of this . . .  
indwelling of the Spirit of God?  
inward supply from a divine source of sanctity and bliss?  
holy ebullition of sanctified feeling?  
rising up of an inward principle to a divine source?

Do you know anything of this something . . .  
**godlike**, which aspires to God,

**heavenly**, which aspires to heaven,  
**eternal**, which rests not until it has reached the eternal?

The Christian life is a state of . . .  
self-denial,  
intense desire,  
deep solicitude,  
of strenuous, unwearied action,  
of constant progress.

### **The most attractive of all female graces**

"And I want women to be **modest** in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes." 1 Timothy 2:9

**Modesty** is **the most attractive of all female graces**.

What is **intelligence** without it, but bolder impudence; or **beauty** but a more seductive snare?

Modesty is a woman's ornament, investing all her other excellences with additional charms—the blush of purity upon the cheek of beauty. It is her power, by which she subdues every heart that is worth the conquest.

**Chastity** is the robe which every woman should wear, and **modesty** is the golden clasp that keeps it upon her, and the fringe that adorns it.

### **A bad disposition**

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other." Ephesians 4:32

There is a saying, that "disposition is everything." This is going too far, since it is not to be doubted good disposition is sometimes associated with bad

principle. While on the other hand, there are many high-principled and noble-minded individuals, who are troubled, equally to their own annoyance and that of their friends, with infirmities of disposition.

Still, though not everything, good disposition is a great thing. Reason and religion may do much, and in myriads of instances have done much, to correct and improve a naturally bad disposition.

**A bad disposition** will torment you through life. With this you will carry your own curse with you everywhere.

**A bad disposition** will multiply your enemies, and alienate your friends.

**A bad disposition** will becloud your reason and benumb your religion.

**A bad disposition** will embitter your comforts and envenom your trials.

**A bad disposition** will make you unhappy at home, and secure you distress when away from home.

**A bad disposition** will give you wretchedness at the time, and conscious guilt and painful reflections afterwards.

**A bad disposition** will deprive your days of peace and your nights of sleep.

In short, **a bad disposition** will be to the soul what a chronic and painful disease is to the body—a constant source of uneasiness and distress, with this difference, that whereas the one brings its own consolation with it to the Christian, the other brings nothing but punishment and shame.

**How is a mother's heart grieved** to see her daughters, after all the pains she has taken to form their pious character, more taken up with fashion, company, and

gaiety—than with eternal realities! And their father, how is he distressed to see his counsels unheeded, his prayers unanswered, and they whom he had hoped to lead to God, far more fond of the fleeting mirthful vanities of the world!

### **Young women!**

**Young women!** Deeply ponder, that character for life is usually formed in youth. It is the golden season of life, and to none more truly and eminently so than to the young woman. Her leisure, her freedom from care, and her protected situation, give her the opportunity for this, which it is her wisdom and her duty to consider, embrace, and improve.

Set out in life with a deep conviction of the momentous consequence of self-discipline. Let your mind, your heart, your conscience, be the chief object of your solicitude.

Lay the basis of all your excellences in true religion . . .  
the religion of the heart,  
the religion of penitence,  
faith in Christ,  
love to God,  
a holy and heavenly mind.

No character can be well-constructed, safe, complete, beautiful, or useful, without this.

Cultivate a thoughtful, reflective turn of mind. Look beneath the surface of things; beyond their present aspect to their future consequences. Be somewhat meditative, and learn to restrain your words and feelings, by a rigid self-control. Pay most anxious attention to your temper, and acquire as much as possible its perfect command. More women are rendered miserable, and render others miserable, by neglect of this, than perhaps from any other cause whatever. Let meekness of disposition and gentleness of manner be a constant study.

These are woman's amiabilities, which fit her



for her future situation far better than the bold, imposing, and obtrusive airs of those who mistake the secret of woman's influence.

Contentment and patience;  
self-denial and submission;  
humility and subordination;  
prudence and discretion,  
are all virtues, the seeds of which should be sown by you in early youth, that their rich ripe fruits might be gathered in future life.

Benevolence of heart, and kindness of disposition, must be among your foremost studies, the most prominent objects of your pursuit and most laborious endeavors; for they are the virtues which in their maturity are to form excellence in Christian character, and constitute you the fit companion for a husband.

Make worldly accomplishments subordinate to more substantial excellences. And as matters of mental taste are to be less thought of, than the state of the heart and the formation of moral character, so let especially bodily adornments be in low estimation compared with those of the mind.

To prepare you to carry out the duties of your future mission with ease to yourself, with satisfaction to a husband, and comfort to a household, pay attention to the minor virtues—punctuality, love of order, and efficiency. These are all of immense importance, the lack of them in the female head of a family, must necessarily fill the home with confusion, and the hearts of its inhabitants with sadness. Set out in life with a deep conviction of the importance of habits, and a constant recollection that habits for life are formed in youth and that these habits, if not acquired then, are likely never to be.

Aim at universal excellence. Do little things well. Avoid with extreme dread a loose, slovenly, and careless way of doing anything proper to be done.

Young women, your whole future life will illustrate and

confirm the truth and propriety of this advice, either by the comfort and usefulness which will result from your attending to it—or by the miseries which you will endure yourself and inflict on others, if you allow it to sink into oblivion.

### **Home, sweet home**

HOME is the proper sphere of woman's action and influence!

There are few terms in the language around which cluster so many blissful associations as that delight of every English heart—the word HOME.

The paradise of love.

The nursery of virtue.

The garden of enjoyment.

The temple of harmony.

The circle of all tender relationships.

The playground of childhood.

The dwelling of adulthood.

The retreat of old age.

HOME is where health loves to enjoy its pleasures, wealth to revel in its luxuries, and poverty bears its rigors—where best sickness can endure its pains, and dissolving nature expire—which throws its spell over those who are within its charmed circle, and even sends its attractions across oceans and continents, drawing to itself the thoughts and wishes of the man who wanders from it, to the opposite end on the globe—this, **home, sweet home**—is the sphere of wedded woman's mission!

Is it any hardship upon woman, any depreciation of her importance, to place her sphere of action and influence there? Is it to assign her a circle of influence unworthy of herself, to call her to preside over that little home?

Shall we estimate the importance of such a scene of action? Shall we tell of the varied and momentous interests which are included in that circle? Shall we speak of the happiness of a **husband**, whose bliss, to so considerable an extent, is created by herself—and which involves **her own** happiness; or the character and future well-being for both worlds of her **children**?

It is the privilege of the woman . . .  
to make one such home a seat of holiness and happiness;  
to fill one such sphere with an influence so sweet and sacred;  
to throw the fascination of wedded delight and of maternal influence over one such home; to irradiate so many faces with delight; to fill so many hearts with contentment, and to prepare so many characters for their future part in life!

One of the most hallowed, lovely, and beautiful sights in our world—is a woman at home discharging in all the **meekness** of **wisdom**, the various duties of wife and mother, with an **order** that nothing is allowed to disturb; a **patience** which nothing can exhaust; an **affection** which is never ruffled; and a **perseverance** that no difficulties can interrupt, nor any disappointments arrest!

### **Satan's baits!**

Bring up your children with low notions of the importance of **riches** and **worldly show**, and of the power which these things have either to give respectability to the character, or to procure happiness.

Do not let them hear you magnify the value of wealth by your words—nor see you do it by your actions. Avoid a servile attention to the rich and great—do not point to them as the individuals

most to be admired and envied. Do not have an undue solicitude about grandeur of abode, or furniture. From the time that they are capable of receiving an idea, or an impression, teach them it is godly character that constitutes true respectability.

Remind them of the danger of **riches**, and that they are **Satan's baits** to tempt men to love the world—and lose their souls!

Not that you should produce a cynical disposition towards either riches or the rich; much less repress industry, and foster indolence. No—but encourage them to consider and seek wealth, rather as a means of usefulness, than a source of personal gratification.

### **It is indeed a fearsome thing to be a parent**

On parents it depends in a great measure what their children are to be . . .  
miserable or happy in themselves,  
a comfort or a curse to their relationships,  
an ornament or a deformity to society,  
a fiend or a seraph in eternity!

**It is indeed a fearsome thing to be a parent,**  
and is enough to awaken the anxious, trembling enquiry in every heart, "Lord, who is sufficient for these things?"

### **Conducting their children to the bottomless pit!**

A graceless parent is a most dreadful character! Oh! to see the father and mother of a expanding family, with a crowd of young immortals growing up around them, and teaching worldliness to their offspring, and leading them to perdition, by the power of their

own example!

A sheep leading her twin lambs into the den of a hungry tiger would be a shocking sight! But to see parents **conducting their children to the bottomless pit, is most horrible!!**

### **He who has most piety**

A good Christian cannot be a bad husband, or father. **He who has most piety**, will shine most in all the relationships of life.

A bible placed between man and wife as . . .  
the basis of their union,  
the rule of their conduct,  
and the model of their temper, will . . .  
make up many a difference,  
comfort them under many a cross,  
guide them in many a strait,  
support them in their last sad parting from each other,  
and reunite them in eternal glory!

### **To make her holy**

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her **to make her holy.**"  
Ephesians 5:25-26

**In a Christian marriage**, there should be the exercise of a constant reciprocal solicitude, watchfulness, and care, in reference to their **spiritual and eternal welfare**. One of the ends which every true believer should propose to himself, on entering the marriage state, is to secure one faithful friend, at least, who will be a helpmate for him in reference to the eternal world, assist him in the great business of his soul's salvation, and that will pray for him

and with him; one that will affectionately tell him of his sins and his defects; one that will stimulate and draw him by the power of a holy example, and the sweet force of persuasive words; one that will warn him in temptation, comfort him in dejection, and in every way assist him in his pilgrimage to the skies. The highest end of the marital state is lost, if it be not rendered helpful to our piety.

Do we converse with each other as we ought on the high themes of redemption by Christ, and eternal salvation? Do we study each other's dispositions, snares, troubles, decays in piety—that we may apply suitable remedies? Do we exhort one another daily, lest we should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Do we practice faithfulness without censoriousness; and administer praise without flattery?

Do we encourage one another to the most quickening and edifying means of grace, and recommend the perusal of such instructive and improving books as we have found beneficial to ourselves? Do we mutually lay open the state of our minds on the subject of personal piety, and state our perplexities, our joys, our fears, our sorrows?

Alas, alas! who must not blush at their neglects in these particulars? And yet such neglect is as criminal as it is common. Fleeing from the wrath to come—and yet not doing all we can to aid each other's escape! Contending side by side for the crown of glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life—and yet not doing all we can to ensure each other's success!

Is this love?

Is this the tenderness of marital affection?

**Love is patient and kind.**

**"Love is patient and kind."** 1 Corinthians 13:4

For this love there is both need and room in every relation

of life. Wherever sin or imperfection exists, there is scope for the patience of love. There is no perfection upon earth. Lovers, it is true, often fancy they have found it; but the more sober judgment of husbands and wives generally corrects the mistake; and first impressions of this kind, usually pass away with first love.

We should all enter the married state, remembering that we are about to be united to a sinful person—and it is not two 'angels' that have met together, but two 'sinful people', from whom must be expected much weakness and selfishness.

We must expect some imperfection in our spouse. Remembering that we ourselves have no small share of sinfulness, which calls for the forbearance of the other party—we should exercise the patience that we ask from them. Where both have infirmities, and they are so constantly together, innumerable occasions will be furnished, which, if they do not produce a permanent suppression of love, lead to its temporary interruption. Many things we should overlook, others we should pass by with an unprovoked mind, and in all things most carefully avoid even what at first may seem to be an innocent disputation.

Love does not forbid, but actually demands that we should mutually point out the faults of our spouses; but this should be done in all the meekness of wisdom united with all the tenderness of love, lest we only increase the evil we intend to remove, or substitute a greater one in its place. Justice, as well as wisdom, requires that in every case, we set the good qualities against the bad ones, and in most cases we shall find some redeeming excellencies, which, if they do not reconcile us to the failings we deplore, should at least teach us to bear them with patience. And the more we contemplate these better aspects of the character, the brighter will they appear—for it is an indubitable fact, that while faults diminish, virtues magnify in proportion as they are steadily contemplated.

As to bitterness of speech, and harshness of conduct—this is so utterly disgraceful, that it scarcely needs be mentioned even by way of cautioning against it.