

TRUE GODLINESS DESCRIBED

Benjamin Keach (1640-1704)

(In the late 1600s Benjamin Keach wrote an allegory entitled *The Travels of True Godliness*, which was similar in style to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. In this article Keach portrays the Christian faith as a male character named True Godliness.)

TRUE GODLINESS being a great stranger to most men and indeed known but by few, I shall in the first place, before treating of his travels and of the entertainment¹ he meets with, give you a description of him. Many persons are subject to so great an error as to take *Morality* for him; some have mistaken *Counterfeit Godliness* for him; and others, either through ignorance or malice, rail and ignominiously² call him *Singularity*,³ *Stubbornness*, *Pride*, or *Rebellion*. These last declare him not fit to live, being a seditious⁴ disturber of peace and order, wherever he comes. Yea, such a factious⁵ and quarrelsome companion, that he is indeed the cause of all those unhappy differences, divisions, troubles, and miseries with which the world abounds. I conclude, therefore, that nothing is more necessary than to take off that mask which his implacable⁶ enemies have put upon him and clear him of all the slanders and reproaches of the sons of Belial.⁷ When he is thus made to appear in his own original and spotless innocency, it will be seen that none need be afraid of him, or be unwilling to entertain him, or ashamed to own him and make him their bosom companion.

Know, therefore, in the first place that Godliness consists in the right knowledge of divine truths or fundamental principles of the Gospel, which all men ought to know and be established in, that would be saved. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1Ti 3:16). You see from this text that the great truths of the Christian religion are called Godliness.

¹ **entertainment** – treatment.

² **ignominiously** – shamefully; disgracefully.

³ **Singularity** – differing from others in matters of behavior or religion for the purpose of drawing attention to one's self. Keach's point is that the faithful Christian will be accused of acting peculiarly just to be noticed.

⁴ **seditious** – guilty of engaging in or provoking rebellion against the authority of the state.

⁵ **factious** – characterized by causing dissension and division.

⁶ **implacable** – cannot be satisfied or pacified; irreconcilable.

⁷ **Sons of Belial** – Belial means “wicked, worthless, lawless,” and came to be used in Hebrew literature as a name for Satan. A Son of Belial then is a wicked and worthless person.

Now, should any demand to hear more particularly what are those principles of divine truth or fundamentals of the Christian faith, which are the essentials of *True Godliness*, I answer,

1. That there is one eternal, infinite, most holy, most wise, just, good and gracious God, or glorious Deity, subsisting⁸ in three distinct Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—and these are one, that is, one in essence.

2. That this God, out of His great love and goodness, hath given us one sure and infallible rule of faith and practice, viz.,⁹ the Holy Scriptures, by which we may know, not only that there is a God and Creator, but the manner of the creation of the world, together with the design or reason wherefore He made all things; and also how sin came into the world, and what righteousness it is which God requires to our justification (or discharge from the guilt of sin), viz., by a Redeemer—His own Son, whom He sent into the world. There is no other rule or way to know these things so as for men to be saved but by revelation or the sacred records of the Holy Scriptures, the mystery of salvation being far above human reason and [cannot] be known by the natural light in men.

3. That our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Surety¹⁰ of the New Covenant and only Mediator¹¹ between God and man, is truly God of the essence of the Father and truly man of the substance of the virgin Mary, consisting of these two natures in one Person, and that redemption, peace, and reconciliation are by this Lord Jesus Christ alone.

4. That justification and pardon of sin are alone by that full satisfaction which Christ made to God's justice and are apprehended by faith alone through the Holy Spirit.

5. That all men who are or can be saved must be renewed, regenerated,¹² and sanctified¹³ by the Holy Spirit.

6. That there will be a resurrection of the bodies of all men at the Last Day.

7. That there will be an eternal judgment, that is, all shall be brought to the tribunal¹⁴ of Jesus Christ in the great Day and give an account for all things done in the body, and that there will be a future state of glory and

⁸ **subsisting** – existing.

⁹ **viz.** – from Latin *videcilet*: that is to say; namely.

¹⁰ **Surety** – one who enters into a bond to undertake the responsibilities or debt of another.

¹¹ **Mediator** – a go-between; one who intervenes between two hostile parties for the purpose of restoring them to a relationship of harmony and unity.

¹² **regenerated** – born again; brought from spiritual death to spiritual life and union with Jesus Christ by the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.

¹³ **sanctified** – made holy by the divine grace of the Holy Spirit; set apart for God's use.

¹⁴ **tribunal** – judgment seat.

eternal happiness of all true believers and of eternal torment and misery of all unbelievers and ungodly persons, who live and die in their sins.

Now, I say, in the true knowledge and belief of these principles (which comprehend the fundamentals of true religion or the Christian faith) does *True Godliness* consist as to his essential part.

Secondly, *Godliness* as to his inward parts is a holy conformity to these sacred and divine principles, which natural men understand not. *True Godliness* consists in the light of supernatural truths and life of grace, God manifesting Himself in the light of those glorious principles and working the life of supernatural grace in the soul by the Holy Ghost. It consists in the saving and experimental¹⁵ knowledge of God and Jesus Christ [and] in having the evil qualities of the soul removed and heavenly habits infused¹⁶ in their room or in a gracious conformity and affection¹⁷ of the heart to God, cleaving to all truths made known to us and finding the powerful influences of the Gospel and Spirit of Christ upon us, whereby our souls are brought into the image and likeness of His death and resurrection. This is *True Godliness*. [It is] not a bare living up to the natural principles of morality; nor an historical, notional, or dogmatical knowledge¹⁸ of the sacred Gospel and its precepts; but a faithful conformity to the principles of the Gospel, discharging our duties with as much readiness¹⁹ and faithfulness towards God as towards man, so that our conscience may be kept void of offence towards both (Act 24:16).

It consists in forsaking sin and loathing it as the greatest evil and in cleaving to God in sincerity of heart, valuing Him above all; being willingly subject from a principle of divine love to all His laws and appointments. Godliness makes a man say with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" (Psa 73:25). St. Austin²⁰ saith, "He loves not Christ at all, that loves him not above all." He that entertains²¹ *True Godliness* is as zealous for the *work* of religion as for the *wages* of religion. Some there are who serve God that they may serve themselves upon God. But a true Christian desires grace, not only that God would glorify him in heaven, but that he may glorify God on earth. He

¹⁵ **experimental** – having a personal experience of anything; experiential.

¹⁶ **infused** – to put into, as if by pouring; imparted by divine influence.

¹⁷ **affection** – the state of mind toward something; inclination.

¹⁸ **historical, notional, or dogmatical knowledge** – *historical* = being acquainted with the truth, but not believing it by the regenerating power of God's Spirit; *notional* = imaginary; existing in ideal only; and *dogmatical* = acknowledging something on the basis of the theological tradition without personally trusting it by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ **readiness** – willingness.

²⁰ **St. Austin** or **St. Augustine** (354–430) – Bishop of Hippo, early church theologian considered by many the father of orthodox theology. Born in Tagaste, North Africa.

²¹ **entertains** – to hold in the mind with favor; to experience.

cries, “Lord, rather let me have a good heart than a great estate.” Though he loves many things beside God, yet he loves nothing above God. This man fears sin more than suffering, and therefore he will suffer rather than sin.

Thirdly, that you may have a complete and perfect knowledge of him, it may not be amiss if I describe his form (2Ti 1:13; 3:5) together with the habiliments²² he continually wears. The external parts of *True Godliness* are very beautiful. And no wonder that they are so, seeing he was fashioned by the wisdom of the only wise God our Savior, the works of Whose hands are all glorious. But this, viz., the formation of Godliness, being one of the highest and most admirable contrivances²³ of His eternal wisdom, must of necessity excel in glory and amiableness.²⁴ His form and external beauty, therefore, are such that he needs no human artifice²⁵ to adorn him or to illustrate or set off his comeliness²⁶ of countenance; for there is nothing defective as to his evangelical and apostolical form, as he came out of his great Creator’s hands. And as there is nothing from head to foot that is superfluous,²⁷ so every line and lineament,²⁸ vein, nerve, and sinew are in such an exact and admirable order placed, that to his beauty there can be no addition. Everyone, therefore, that adds to or alters anything touching the form of *True Godliness*, mars and defiles instead of beautifying. Besides, God hath strictly forbidden anything of this nature to be done. “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Pro 30:6), by ascribing²⁹ that to God which is none of His. Do not the Papists call those superstitious and vain ceremonies used in their church by the name of God’s worship? And what is this less than putting a lie upon Him? Besides, it reflects upon the wisdom of God, to attempt to change or alter anything in the form of Godliness, as if God did not know best how He Himself would be worshipped, but must be indebted to man for his help, wisdom, and contrivances, touching many things that are called decent and necessary. And does it not reflect upon the care and faithfulness of God, to suppose that He should not Himself take care to lay down in His blessed Word things which are all necessary to the form of Godliness, without weak man’s care and wisdom to supply what He should omit?

All, therefore, may perceive that *True Godliness* never changes his countenance. He is not altered in the least from the aspect he bore in primitive times. Nay, there is indeed nothing more foreign to him than those pompous

²² **habiliments** – the apparel or garments appropriate for any occasion.

²³ **contrivances** – ingeniously, skilfully planning or accomplishing something.

²⁴ **amiableness** – loveliness.

²⁵ **artifice** – trickery.

²⁶ **comeliness** – beauty.

²⁷ **superfluous** – beyond what is required; excessively abundant.

²⁸ **lineament** – contour of the body; distinctive feature.

²⁹ **ascribing** – to attribute credit to; to reckon or account.

garbs,³⁰ superstitious vestments,³¹ images, crossings, salt, oil, holy water, and other ceremonies, which are by many thought necessary to his existence. Therefore, take heed you do not mistake the counterfeit form of Godliness for the true one. It is only necessary to note one thing more, viz., you must be sure to receive the *power* of Godliness with his form; for his form without his inward life and power will do you no good: it is but as the body without the soul, or the shell without the kernel, or the cabinet without the jewel. Neither [should] any slight his form, for you may remember what the Apostle speaks of “the form of doctrine” (Rom 6:17) and of “the form of sound words” (2Ti 1:13); for as the true faith must be held fast, so must the profession of it also. You may, it is true, meet with a shell without the kernel; but it is rare to meet the kernel without the shell!

From *The Travels of True Godliness*.

Benjamin Keach (1640-1704): important Particular Baptist preacher, author, and ardent defender of Baptist principles, even against Richard Baxter. Often in prison and frequently in danger for preaching the Gospel, he was the first to introduce singing hymns in the worship of English congregations. Prolific author of *Tropologia* (reprinted as *Preaching from the Types and Metaphors of the Bible*), *Gospel Mysteries Explained* (reprinted as *Exposition of the Parables*), and numerous other works. Born at Stokeham, Buckinghamshire, England.



God knows what godliness is, for He has created it, He sustains it, He is pledged to perfect it, and His delight is in it. What matters it whether you are understood by your fellow-men or not, so long as you are understood by God? If that secret prayer of yours is known to Him, seek not to have it known to anyone besides. If your conscientious motive be discerned in heaven, mind not though it be denounced on earth. If your designs—the great principles that sway you—are such as you dare plead in the great Day of Judgment, you need not stop to plead them before a jesting, jeering generation. Be godly, and fear not. And, if you be misrepresented, remember that should your character be dead and buried among men, there will be “a resurrection of reputations” as well as of bodies. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Mat 13:43). Therefore be not afraid to possess this peculiar character, for though it is misunderstood on earth, it is well understood in heaven.

—Charles Spurgeon

³⁰ **pompous garbs** – characterized by an exaggerated display of self-importance; pretentious.

³¹ **vestments** – any of the ritual robes worn by members of the clergy or assistants at services or rites.

THE NATURE OF AN UPRIGHT MAN

Richard Steele (1629-1692)

“With an upright man, thou wilt shew thyself upright”—Psalm 18:25.

AN UPRIGHT HEART IS SINGLE WITHOUT DIVISION. To a hypocrite, there are many gods and many lords; and he must have a heart for each. But to the upright, there is but one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ, and one heart will serve them both. He who fixes his heart upon the creature, for every creature he must have a heart; and the dividing of his heart destroys him (Hos 10:2). Worldly profits knock at the door, and he must have a heart for them. Carnal pleasures present themselves, and he must have a heart for them also. Sinful preferments¹ appear, and they must have a heart too. Of necessary objects, the number is few; of needless vanities, the number is endless. The upright man has made choice of God and has enough.

A single Christ is enough for a single heart; hence holy David prayed in Psalm 86:11: “Unite my heart to fear thy name.” That is, “Let me have but one heart and mind, and let that be Thine.”

As there are thousands of beams and rays, yet they all meet and center in the sun. So an upright man, though he has a thousand thoughts, yet they all (by his good will) meet in God. He has many subordinate ends—to procure a livelihood, to preserve his credit, to provide for his children—but he has no supreme end but God alone. Hence he has that steadiness in his resolutions, that undistractedness in his holy duties, that consistency in his actions, and that evenness in the frame of his heart, which miserable hypocrites cannot attain.

2. AN UPRIGHT HEART IS SOUND WITHOUT ROTTENNESS. “Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed” (Psa 119:80). The more sincerity, the less shame. Integrity is the great author of confidence. Every frost shakes an unsound body, and every trial shakes an unsound soul. An upright man does not always have so pure a color as a hypocrite may have, but his color is natural: it is his own; it is not painted; his constitution is firm. The hypocrite’s beauty is borrowed; the fire of trial will melt it off.

An upright man has his infirmities, his diseases; but his new nature works them out, for he is sound within. Leprosy overspreads the hypocrite, but he hides it. “For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful” (Psa 36:2). He endeavors to hide himself from God, more from men, but most from himself. He would fain² be in with himself howsoever, and this trade he drives “till his iniquity be found to be hateful.” But an upright man is always sifting³ and trying himself: “Am I sound? Am I right?”

¹ **preferments** – preferences; desirable or favored choices.

² **fain** – gladly; willingly.

³ **sifting** – examining and sorting carefully.

Are my services rightly done? Are my infirmities consistent with integrity? An upright saint is like an apple with rotten specks, but a hypocrite is like the apple with a rotten core.

The sincere Christian has a speck of passion here, there one of worldliness, and there one of pride. But cut him up and anatomize him, and he is sound at heart; there Christ and Christianity live and reign. A hypocrite is like an apple that is smooth and lovely on the outside, but rotten within. His words may be exact, his duties devout, and his life blameless; but look within, and his heart is the sty of sin, the den of Satan.

3. AN UPRIGHT HEART IS PURE WITHOUT MIXTURE. It is not absolutely pure, for that happy condition is reserved for heaven; but it is compared with the pollution and base mixture that constitutes a hypocrite. Though his hand cannot do all that God bids, yet his heart is sincere in all he does. His soul is bent for perfect purity, and so he has his name from that. “Blessed are the pure in heart” (Mat 5:8). In his words he sometimes fails and also in his thoughts and deeds. But open his heart, and there is a love, a desire, a design, and an endeavor after real and absolute purity. He is not legally pure, that is, free from all sin; but he is evangelically pure, free from the reign of all sin, especially of hypocrisy, which is so flatly contrary to the covenant of grace. And in this sense the upright man is the Scripture Puritan, and so is further from hypocrisy than any other man. He is really glad that God is the Searcher of hearts, for then he knows that He will find His name and nature in His own [chosen people].

And yet the most upright man in the world has some hypocrisy in him. “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Pro 20:9). But he detects, resists, and hates this hypocrisy; and so it cannot denominate him as a hypocrite in this world, nor damn him as one in another. His ends are generally purely for the glory of God; his frame of heart and thoughts are pure, and generally better than his outside; the farther you trace him, the better he is. He is pure from dishonesty in his dealings, purer yet in his family from all appearance of evil, purer still in his closet, and most pure in his heart. Though there is sin there, yet there is also there an antipathy⁴ against it, so that it does not mingle with it.

The hypocrite chooses sin; the upright man would have no sin if he could choose. The traveler meets with dirt on his way, but he keeps it off as well as he can and does not mingle with it. And if he gets soiled, he rubs it off as soon as may be. But the swine delights in it and cannot be well without it. It is just so between the upright man and the hypocrite. The most upright saint on earth is mired with sin sometimes, but he did not design it in the morning, nor does he sleep with it at night. But a hypocrite designs it and delights in it;

⁴ **antipathy** – a strong feeling of intense dislike; hostile feelings toward.

he is never so well contented as in sin. In a word, the hypocrite may avoid sin, but no man can abhor sin save the upright man.

4. AN UPRIGHT MAN IS PERFECT AND ENTIRE WITHOUT RESERVATION. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright” (Psa 37:37). You may see them both at once. His heart is entirely devoted to the will and ways of God. The hypocrite ever has some exceptions and reservations. “Such a sin I must not leave; such a grace I can not love; such a duty I will not practice. Thus far I will yield but no farther; thus far I will go. It is consistent with my carnal ends, but all the world shall not persuade me farther.” The judgment of the hypocrite will drive beyond his will, his conscience beyond his affections; he is not entire, his heart is parted, and so he is off and on.

The upright man has but one happiness, and that is the enjoyment of God; he has but one rule, and that is His holy will; he has but one work, and that is to please his Maker. Thereupon he is entire and certain in his choices, in his desires, in his ways and contrivances.⁵ And though there may be some demurs⁶ in his prosecution of his main business, yet there is no hesitancy and wavering between two objects; for he is entirely fixed and resolved therein, and so may be said to be “perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

There is in every hypocrite some one fort or stronghold that has never yielded to the sovereignty and empire of God’s will. Some lust fortifies itself in the will; but where integrity enters, it brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. “Lord,” he says, “I am wholly Thine; do what Thou wilt with me. Say what Thou wilt to me. Write what Thou wilt upon me. ‘O LORD our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name’” (Isa 26:13). Here is the upright man.

5. AN UPRIGHT HEART IS PLAIN WITHOUT GUILLE.⁷ “Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psa 32:2). Here is a blessed word indeed. Alas! We have great and many iniquities; would it not be happy for us to be as if we had never sinned? Why, non-imputation will be as well for us as if there had been no transgression; sins remitted are as if they had not been committed; the debt-book crossed as good as if no entries had ever been made. But who is this blessed man? “In whose spirit there is no guile,” that is, no fundamental guile. He is the man who has not deceitfully covenanted with his God. He has no approved guile, to approve and yield to any way of wickedness. He does not juggle with God or men or with his own conscience. He does not hide his idols under him when God is searching his tent. Rather, as it follows in verse five, he acknowledges,

⁵ **contrivances** – plans.

⁶ **demurs** – delays; lingerings.

⁷ **guile** – cunning; deceit; treachery.

hates, and leaves his sin.

When the upright man confesses his sin, his heart aches, and he is deeply troubled for it; he does not dissemble.⁸ The hypocrite proclaims open war, but maintains secret intelligence⁹ with his lusts. When the upright man prays for any grace, he earnestly desires it, and he takes pains to compass it too; for he is in good earnest and does not dissemble.

He who will dissemble with God will dissemble with any man in the world. See the wide difference between Saul and David. Saul is charged with a fault in 1 Samuel 15:14. He denies it, and the charge is renewed in verse 17. Still he minces¹⁰ the matter and looks for fig-leaves to cover all. But plain-hearted David is another man: he is charged, and he yields; one prick opens a vein of sorrow in his heart. He tells all, he makes a psalm of it, and therein concludes this in Psalm 51:6: “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.” The plain-hearted man says, “As for me, with the upright man I will show myself upright.”

From *The Character of the Upright Man* reprinted
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Richard Steele (1629-1692): Puritan preacher and author; ejected from his pulpit by the Act of Uniformity in 1662 and later by The Five Mile Act. But he never stopped verbally proclaiming the riches of Christ. Remembered as “a very valuable and useful man, a good scholar, a hard student, and an excellent preacher.” Born at Bartholmley, Cheshire, England.



Can a man be like to God? Ah, me! What a wide discrepancy there must always be between God and the best of men! We are unlike God even in our likeness to Him. . . . Yet grace does make us like God in righteousness and true holiness and especially in love. Has the Holy Spirit taught thee, my dear friend, to love even those that hate thee? Hast thou a love that leaps out, like the waters from the smitten rock that every thirsty one may drink? . . . Dost thou love even those that render thee no love in return, as He did who gave His life for His enemies? And dost thou choose that which is good? Dost thou delight thyself in peace? Dost thou seek after that which is pure? Art thou ever gladdened with that which is kind and just? Then art thou like thy Father Who is in heaven, thou art a godly man, and this text is for you: “Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself” (Psa 4:3). —*Charles Spurgeon*

⁸ **dissemble** – disguise so as to conceal or deceive.

⁹ **intelligence** – communication; a good understanding between.

¹⁰ **minces** – makes little of; minimizes.

SIGNS AND CHARACTER OF A GODLY MAN

Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686)

“For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee”—Psalm 32:6.

WHO is the godly man? For the full answer whereunto, I shall lay down several specific signs and character of a godly man.

The first fundamental sign is a godly man is a *man of knowledge*: “The prudent are crowned with knowledge” (Pro 14:18). The saints are called “wise virgins” (Mat 25:4). A natural man may have some discursive¹ knowledge of God, but he knoweth nothing as he ought to know (1Co 8:2). He knows not God savingly: he may have the eye of reason open, but he discerns not the things of God after a spiritual manner. Waters cannot go beyond their spring-head; vapors cannot rise higher than the sun draws them. A natural man cannot act above his sphere. He is no more able to judge aright of sacred things, than a blind man is to judge of colors. 1. *He sees not the evil of his heart*: if a face be ever so black and deformed, yet it is not seen under a veil. The heart of a sinner is so black, that nothing but hell can pattern it, yet the veil of ignorance hides it. 2. *He sees not the beauties of a Savior*: Christ is a pearl, but an hidden pearl.

The knowledge of a godly man is *quickenin*g²: “I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me” (Psa 119:93). Knowledge in a natural man’s head is like a torch in a dead man’s hand; true knowledge animates. A godly man is like John Baptist, “a burning and a shining lamp” (Joh 5:35). He doth not only shine by illumination, but burn by affection. The spouse’s knowledge made her “sick of love” (Song 2:5), [or] “I am wounded with love. I am like a deer that is struck with a dart; my soul lies a bleeding and nothing can cure me but a sight of Him whom my soul loves.”

The knowledge of a godly man is *appropriating*: “I know that my Redeemer liveth” (Job 19:25). A medicine is best when it is applied; this applicative knowledge is joyful. Christ is called a Surety³ (Heb 7:22). O what joy, when I am drowned in debt, to know that Christ is my Surety! Christ is called an Advocate (1Jo 2:1). The Greek word for *advocate* signifies “a comforter.” O what comfort is it, when I have a bad cause, to know Christ is my Advocate, Who never lost any cause He pleaded!

Question: But how shall I know that I make a right application of Christ? An hypocrite may think he applies when he doth not.

¹ **discursive** – rambling; rapidly passing from one subject to another.

² **quickenin**g – animating; makes him alive spiritually.

³ **Surety** – one who assures the fulfillment of something; a guarantor.

Answer: *He, who rightly applies Christ, puts these two together:* Jesus and Lord (Phi 3:8). Christ Jesus my Lord: many take Christ as a Jesus, but refuse Him as a Lord. Do you join Prince and Savior? (Act 5:31). Would you as well be ruled by Christ’s laws as saved by His blood? Christ is “a priest upon his throne” (Zec 6:13). He will never be a priest to intercede, unless your heart be the throne where He sways His sceptre. A true applying of Christ is when we so take Him for an husband that we give up ourselves to Him as a Lord.

The knowledge of a godly man is *transforming*: “We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image” (2Co 3:8). As a painter looking upon a face, draws a face like it in the picture; so looking upon Christ in the glass of the Gospel, we are changed into His similitude.⁴ We may look upon other objects that are glorious yet not be made glorious by them: a deformed face may look upon beauty and yet not be made beautiful. A wounded man may look upon a surgeon and yet not be healed. But this is the excellency of divine knowledge: it gives us such a sight of Christ as makes us partake of His nature. As Moses, when he had seen God’s back parts: his face shined, [for] some of the rays and beams of God’s glory fell upon him.

The knowledge of a godly man is *growing*: “Increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col 1:10). True knowledge is like the light of the morning, which increaseth in the horizon till it comes to the meridian.⁵ So sweet is spiritual knowledge, that the more a saint knows, the thirstier he is of knowledge. It is called the riches of knowledge (1Co 1:5). The more riches a man hath, the more still he desires. Though Paul knew Christ, yet he would know him more: “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection” (Phi 3:10).

Question: But how shall we get this saving knowledge?

Answer: Not by the power of nature: some speak of reason well-improved how far it will go; but alas, the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom the deep things of God; a man can no more by the power of reason reach the saving knowledge of God, than a pigmy can reach the pyramids; the light of nature will no more help us to see Christ, than the light of a candle will help us to understand. “The natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them” (1Co 2:14). What shall we do then to know God in a soul-saving manner? I answer, “Let us implore the help of God’s Spirit.” Paul never saw himself blind till a light shined from heaven (Act 9:3). God must anoint our eyes ere⁶ we can see. What needed Christ to have bid Laodicea to come to Him for eye-salve, if she could see before? (Rev 3:18) O let us beg the Spirit, which is a Spirit of revelation (Eph 1:17). Saving knowledge is not by

⁴ **similitude** – likeness; resemblance.

⁵ **meridian** – mid-day; noon; hence, the highest perfection.

⁶ **ere** – before.

speculation, but by inspiration (Job 32:8). The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding.

We may have excellent notions in divinity,⁷ but the Holy Ghost must enable us to know them after a spiritual manner; a man may see the figures upon a dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes unless the sun shine. We may read many truths in the Bible, but we cannot know them savingly till God's Spirit doth shine upon us. "The Spirit searching all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1Co 2:10). The Scripture discovers Christ *to* us, but the Spirit reveals Christ *in* us (Gal 1:16). The Spirit makes known that which all the world cannot do, namely, the sense of God's love.

The godly man is a man acted by faith: as gold is the most precious among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Faith cuts us off from the wild olive of nature and innoculates⁸ us into Christ. Faith is the vital artery of the soul: "The just shall live by faith" (Hab 2:4). Such as are destitute of faith though they breathe, yet they [lack] life. Faith is the quickener of the graces; not a grace stirs, till faith sets it a-work. Faith is to the soul, as the animal spirits⁹ are to the body: they excite lively operations in the body. Faith excites repentance; it is like the fire to the still which makes it drop. When I believe God's love to me, this makes me weep that I should sin against so good a God. Faith is the mother of hope: first we believe the promise, then we hope for it. Faith is the oil which feeds the lamp of hope. Faith and hope are two turtle-graces; take away one and the other languisheth.¹⁰ If the sinews be cut, the body is lame. If the sinew of faith be cut, hope is lame. Faith is the ground of patience: he who believes God is his God and all providences work for his good, doth patiently yield up himself to the will of God. Thus faith is a living principle, and the life of a saint is nothing else but a life of faith. His prayer is the breathing of faith (Jam 5:15). His obedience is the result of faith (Rom 16:26). A godly man by faith lives in Christ, as the beam lives in the sun: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal 2:20). A Christian by the power of faith sees above reason, treads above the moon (2Co 4:18). By faith his heart is finally quieted (Psa 12:7). He trusts himself and all his affairs with God: as in a time of war, men get into a garrison and trust themselves and their treasure there; so the name of the Lord is a strong tower (Pro 18:10). And a believer trusts all that ever he is worth in this garrison: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2Ti 1:12). God trusted Paul with His Gospel, and Paul trusted God with his soul. Faith is a catholicon¹¹ or remedy

⁷ **divinity** – theology.

⁸ **innoculates** – unites by insertion of a twig into a stock; engrafts.

⁹ **animal spirits** – the supposed "spirit" or principle of sensation and voluntary motion, answering to nerve fluid, nerve force, nervous action; life, vigor, energy.

¹⁰ **languisheth** – to become weak and feeble.

against all troubles. It is a godly man's sheet-anchor¹² that he casts out into the sea of God's mercy and is kept from sinking in despair.

Question: Wherein do the godly discover their holiness?

Answer: 1. *In hating the garment spotted by the flesh* (Jud 23). The godly do set themselves against evil both in purpose and practice. They are fearful of that which looks like sin (1Th 5:22). The appearance of evil may prejudice a weak Christian: if it doth not defile a man's own conscience, it may offend his brother's conscience; and to sin against him is to sin against Christ (1Co 8:12). A godly man will not go as far as he may, lest he go further than he should.

2. *The godly discover their holiness in being advocates for holiness:* "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed" (Psa 119:6). When piety is calumniated¹³ in the world, the saints will stand up in the defence of it. They will wipe off the dust of a reproach from the face of religion. Holiness defends the godly, and they will defend holiness. It defends them from danger, and they will defend it from disgrace.

A godly man is very exact and curious about the worship of God: the Greek word for *godly* signifies "a right worshipper of God." A godly man doth reverence divine institutions and is more for the purity of worship than the pomp.¹⁴ . . . The Lord would have Moses make the tabernacle according to the pattern in the mount (Exo 25:40). If Moses had left out anything in the pattern or added anything to it, it would have been very provoking. The Lord hath always given testimonies of His displeasure against such as have corrupted His worship: Nadab and Abihu "offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" (Lev 10:1, 2). Whatsoever is not of God's own appointment in His worship, He looks upon as strange fire. And no wonder He is so highly incensed at it: for as if God were not wise enough to appoint the manner how He will be served, men will go to prescribe¹⁵ to Him, and as if the rules for His worship were defective, they will attempt to mend the copy and superadd¹⁶ their inventions. . . . A godly man dares not vary from the pattern which God hath shown him in the Scripture; and probably this might not be the least reason, why David was called a man after God's own heart because he kept the springs of God's worship pure and in matters sacred did not superinduce¹⁷ anything of his own devising.

¹¹ **catholicon** – a universal remedy, which heals all diseases.

¹² **sheet-anchor** – an anchor, formerly always a ship's largest anchor, used only in an emergency; hence, that on which one's reliance rests when all else has failed.

¹³ **calumniated** – falsely and maliciously accused; slandered.

¹⁴ **pomp** – splendid display; magnificent show.

¹⁵ **prescribe** – to lay down a rule.

¹⁶ **superadd** – to add over and above.

¹⁷ **superinduce** – to introduce an addition to something already in existence.

A godly man is a *Christ-prizer*: To illustrate this, I shall show *that Jesus Christ is in Himself precious*: “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious” (1Pe 2:6). Christ is compared to things most precious.

He is precious in His *Person*. He is the picture of His Father’s glory (Heb 1:3).

Christ is precious in His *offices*, which are several rays of the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2): 1) *Christ’s prophetic office is precious*: He is the great oracle of heaven; He hath a preciousness above all the prophets which went before Him; He teacheth not only the ear, but the heart; He who hath the key of David in His hand opened the heart of Lydia (Act 16:14). 2) *Christ’s priestly office is precious*: This is the solid basis of our comfort, “Now once hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb 9:16). By virtue of this sacrifice, the soul may go to God with boldness: “Lord, give me heaven; Christ hath purchased it for me. He hung upon the cross, that I might sit upon the throne.” Christ’s blood and incense are the two hinges on which our salvation turns. 3) *Christ’s regal office is precious*: “And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev 19:16). Christ hath preeminence¹⁸ above all other kings for majesty. He hath the highest throne, the richest crown, the largest dominions, and the longest possession: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (Heb 1:8). . . . Christ sets up His sceptre where no other king doth. He rules the will and affections; His power binds the conscience.

If we are prizers of Christ, then we prefer Him in our judgments before other things. We value Christ above honor and riches, the pearl of price lies nearest our heart; he who prizeth Christ esteems the gleanings of Christ better than the world’s vintage. He counts the worst things of Christ better than the best things of the world: “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt” (Heb 11:26). And is it thus with us? You shall hear some say, they have honorable thoughts of Christ, but they prize their land and estate above Him. The young man in the Gospel preferred his bags of gold before Christ (Mar 10:17-22); Judas valued thirty pieces of silver above Him (Mat 26:15). May it not be feared, if an hour of trial come, there are many would rather renounce their baptism and throw off Christ’s livery¹⁹ than hazard the loss of their earthly possessions for Him.

If we are prizers of Christ, we cannot live without Him. Things which we value, we know not how to be without: a man may live without music, but not without food. A child of God can want²⁰ health and friends, but he cannot want Christ. In the absence of Christ he saith as Job, “I went mourning without the sun” (Job 30:28). I have the starlight of creature comforts, but I want

¹⁸ **preeminence** – to have first place; to be above all else.

¹⁹ **livery** – a distinctive uniform worn by the servants of a household.

²⁰ **want** – lack.

the Sun of Righteousness. “Give me children,” said Rachel, “or I die” (Gen 30:1). So saith the soul, “Lord, give me Christ or I die; one drop of the water of life to quench my thirst!” . . . Do these prize Christ, who can sit down content without Him?

If we are prizers of Christ, then we shall not grudge at any pains to get Him. He, who prizeth gold, will dig for it in the mine: “My soul followeth hard after God” (Psa 63:8). Plutarch²⁰ reports of the Gauls, an ancient people in France, after they had tasted the sweet wine of the Italian grape, they inquired after the country and never rested till they had arrived at it. He in whose eye Christ is precious never rests till he hath gotten Christ: “I sought him whom my soul loveth, I held him, and would not let him go” (Song 3:1, 2, 4).

If we are prizers of Christ, then we will part with our dearest lusts for Him. Paul saith of the Galatians, they did so esteem him, that they were ready to have pulled out their own eyes and have given him (Gal 4:15). He, who esteems Christ, will pull out that lust which is his right eye. A wise man will throw away a poison for a cordial;²¹ he, who sets an high value upon Christ, will part with his pride, unjust gain, sinful passions. He will set his feet upon the neck of his sins (Jos 10:24). Try by this: how they can be said to prize Christ, who will not leave a vanity for Him? What a scorn and contempt do they put upon the Lord Jesus, who prefer a damning lust before a saving Christ?

If we are prizers of Christ, we will be willing to help others to a part in Him: that which we esteem excellent, we are desirous our friend should have a share in. If a man hath found a spring of water, he will call others that they may drink and satisfy their thirst. Do we commend Christ to others? Do we take them by the hand and lead them to Christ? This shows how few prize Christ because they strive not more that their relations should have a part in Him. They get land and riches for their posterity, but have no care to leave them the Pearl of Price for their portion. . . . O then, let us have endearing thoughts of Christ; let Him be accounted our chief treasure and delight. This is the reason why millions perish because they do not prize Christ. Christ is the Door by which men are to enter into heaven (Joh 10:9). If they do not know this Door, or are so proud that they will not stoop to go in at it, how can they be saved?

A godly man is a lover of the Word. “O how love I thy law!” (Psa 119:137).

1. *A godly man loves the Word written.* Chrysostom²² compares the Scripture to a garden set with knots and flowers. A godly man delights to walk in

²¹ **Plutarch** (AD 46-120?) – Greek biographer and philosopher, who wrote *Parallel Lives*, a collection of biographies that Shakespeare used in his Roman plays.

²² **cordial** – a tonic that is stimulating, comforting, or invigorating to the heart.

²³ **John Chrysostom** (AD 347-407) – early theologian and expositor of the Greek Church, whose name means “golden mouthed.”

this garden and sweetly solace himself; he loves every branch and parcel of the Word.

a. *He loves the counselling part of the Word, as it is a directory and a rule of life:* it contains in it *credenda et facienda*, [meaning] “things to be believed and practiced.” A godly man loves the aphorisms²⁴ of the Word.

b. *A godly man loves the minatory²⁴ part of the Word.* The Scripture, like the Garden of Eden, as it hath a tree of life in it, so it hath a flaming sword at the gates of it. This is the threatening of the Word; it flasheth fire in the face of every person that goes on obstinately in wickedness: “But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses” (Psa 68:21). The Word gives no indulgence to evil. It will not let a man halt between sin and God: the true mother would not let the child be divided, and God will not have the heart divided.

c. *A godly man loves the menaces of the Word.* He knows there is love in every threatening; God would not have us perish, therefore doth mercifully threaten us, that He may scare us from sin. God’s threatenings are as the sea mark,²⁵ which shows the rocks in the sea and threateneth death to such as come near. The threatening is a curbing bit to check us that we may not run in a full career to hell; there is a mercy in every threatening.

d. *A godly man loves the consolatory part of the Word, the promises.* He goes feeding upon these, as Samson went on his way eating the honeycomb. The promises are all marrow and sweetness; they are our bezoar stone²⁶ when we are fainting; they are the conduits of the water of life. “In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul” (Psa 94:19). The promises were David’s harp to drive away sad thoughts; they were the breasts which milked out divine consolation to him.

A godly man shows his love to the Word written :

1. *By diligent reading of it:* the noble Bereans did search the Scriptures daily (Act 27:11). Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures. The Word is our Magna Charta²⁷ for heaven; we should be daily reading over this charter. The Word shows what truth is and what error is. It is the field where the Pearl of price is hid: how should we dig for this Pearl! A godly man’s heart is the library to hold the Word of God; it dwells richly in him. The Word hath a dou-

²⁴ **aphorisms** – a brief and concise statement of truth or opinion.

²⁵ **minatory** – threatening; menacing.

²⁶ **sea mark** – a clearly visible object distinguishable at sea which serves as a guide or warning to sailors in navigation.

²⁷ **bezoarstone** – hard, indigestible mass of material found in the stomach or intestines of animals, formerly considered to be an antidote for poisons.

²⁸ **Magna Charta** – the charter of English political and civil liberties granted by King John at Runnymede in June 1215; hence, a document that guarantees basic rights.

ble work: to *teach* us and to *judge* us. They that will not be taught by the Word shall be judged by the Word. Oh let us make the Scripture familiar to us! What if it should be as in the time of Diocletian,²⁸ who commanded by proclamation the Bible to be burned; or as in Queen Mary’s days, wherein it was death to have a Bible in English? By diligent conversing with Scripture, we may carry a Bible in our head.

2. *By frequent meditating:* “It is my meditation all the day” (Psa 119:97). A pious soul meditates of the verity and sanctity of the Word; he hath not only a few transient thoughts, but lays his mind a-steeping³⁰ in the Scripture: by meditation he sucks from this sweet flower and concocts³¹ holy truth in his mind.

3. *By delighting in it:* it is his recreation. “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (Jer 15:16). Never did a man take such delight in a dish that he loved, as the prophet did in the Word. And indeed, how can a saint choose but take great complacency in the Word because all that ever he hopes to be worth is contained in it? Doth not a son take pleasure in reading over his father’s will and testament, where he makes a conveyance of his estate to him?

4. *By hiding it:* “Thy word have I hid in my heart” (Psa 119:11), as one hides a treasure that it should not be stolen away. The Word is the jewel, the heart is the cabinet where it must be locked up; many hide the Word in their memory but not in their heart. And why would David enclose the Word in his heart? “That I might not sin against thee.” As one would carry an antidote about him when he comes to an infected place, so a godly man carries the Word in his heart as a spiritual antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin: why have so many been poisoned with error, others with moral vice, but because they have not hid the Word as an holy antidote in their heart?

5. *By preferring it above things most precious:* a. Above *food*: “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12). b. Above *riches*: “The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver” (Psa 119:72). c. Above *worldly honor*: Memorable is the story of King Edward VI, who upon the day of his coronation, when they presented before him three swords signifying to him that he was monarch of three kingdoms, the king said, “There is yet one sword wanting.” Being asked what that was, he answered, “The Holy Bible,” which is the sword of the Spirit and is to be preferred before these ensigns of royalty.

²⁹ **Dioclesian** or **Diocletian** (A.D. 245-313) – Roman emperor, who initiated the last great persecution against Christians.

³⁰ **steeping** – to soak in water for the purpose of cleansing.

³¹ **concocts** – digests in the mind; thinks over.

6. *By conforming to it*: the Word is his sun dial by which he sets his life; the balance in which he weighs his actions. He copies out the Word in his daily walk.

A godly man loves the Word preached: which is a commentary upon the Word written. The Scriptures are the sovereign oils and balsams;³² the preaching of the Word is the pouring of them out. The Scriptures are the precious spices; the preaching of the Word is the beating of these spices, which causeth a wonderful fragrantcy and delight. . . . The preaching of the Word is called, “the power of God to salvation” (1Co 1:24). By this, Christ is said to speak to us from heaven (Heb 12:25). A godly man loves the Word preached partly from the good he hath found by it: he hath felt the dew fall with this manna; and partly because of God’s institution: the Lord hath appointed this ordinance to save him.

A godly man is a praying man. This is in the text, “Every one that is godly shall pray unto thee” (Psa 32:6). As soon as grace is poured in, prayer is poured out: “But I give myself to prayer” (Psa 109:4). In the Hebrew it is, “But I pray.” Prayer and I are all one. Prayer is the soul’s traffic with heaven: God comes down to us by His Spirit, and we go up to Him by prayer. A godly man cannot live without prayer: a man cannot live unless he takes breath nor can the soul unless it breathes forth its desires to God. As soon as the babe of grace is born, it cries; no sooner was Paul converted but, “Behold, he prayeth” (Act 9:11). No doubt he prayed before, [having been] a Pharisee, but it was either superficially or superstitiously; but when the work of grace had passed upon his soul, behold, now he prays. A godly man is every day upon the mount of prayer; he begins the day with prayer: before he opens his shop, he opens his heart to God. We used to burn sweet perfumes in our houses; a godly man’s house is an house of perfume: he airs it with the incense of prayer. He engageth in no business without seeking God. A godly man consults with God in everything.

From “The Godly Man’s Picture Drawn with a Scripture-Pencil” in *The Sermons of Thomas Watson* reprinted by Soli Deo Gloria.

Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686): non-Conformist Puritan preacher. Beloved and prolific author of *A Body of Divinity*, *The Lord’s Prayer*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Heaven Taken by Storm*, and numerous others. Actual place and date of birth unknown.



HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES

William Gouge (1575-1653)

“*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*”—Ephesians 5:25.

As the wife is to know her duty, so the husband much more his because he is to be a guide and good example to his wife. He is to dwell with her according to knowledge (1Pe 3:7). The more eminent¹ his place is, the more knowledge he ought to have to walk worthy thereof. Neglect of duty in him is more dishonorable unto God because, by virtue of his place, he is the image and glory of God (1Co 11:7). [This is] more pernicious² not to his wife only, but also to the whole family because of that power and authority he hath, which he may abuse to the maintenance of his wickedness. [There is in his] house no superior power to restrain his fury, whereas the wife, though never so wicked, may by the power of her husband be kept under and restrained from outrage.

Of that love which husbands owe their wives: this head of all the rest—Love—is expressly set down and alone mentioned in this and in many other places of Scripture, whereby it is evident that all other duties are [included] under it. To omit other places where this duty is urged, *Love* in this place is four times by name expressed. Beside that, it is intimated under many other terms and phrases (Eph 5:25, 28, 33).

Of an husband’s wife maintaining his authority: All the branches which grow out of this root of love, as they have respect to husbands’ duties, may be drawn to two heads: 1) a wife maintaining of his authority; [and] 2) a right managing of the same.

That these two are branches of an husband’s love is evident by the place wherein God hath set him, which is a place of authority. For the best good that any can do and the best fruits of love which he can show forth to any are such as are done in his own proper place and by virtue thereof. If then an husband *relinquish* his authority, he disableth himself from doing that good and showing those fruits of love which otherwise he might. If he *abuse* his authority, he turneth the edge and point of his sword amiss: instead of holding it over his wife for her protection, he turneth it into her [heart] to her destruction and so manifesteth thereby more hatred than love. Now then, to handle these two severally and distinctly:

1. *That an husband ought wisely to maintain his authority is implied under this Apostolical precept:* “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge” (1Pe 3:7), that is, as such as are well able to

¹ **eminent** – exalted; dignified.

² **pernicious** – having the quality to destroy; tending to injure; ruinous.

³² **balsams** – healing or soothing medicinal preparations.

maintain the honor of that place wherein God hath set you, not as sots³ and fools without understanding.

The honor and authority of God and of His Son Christ Jesus is maintained in and by the honor and authority of an husband, as the King's authority is maintained by the authority of his Privy Council⁴ and other Magistrates under him, yea, as an husband's authority is in the family maintained by the authority of his wife: "For as the man is the glory of God, so the woman is the glory of the man" (1Co 11:7).

The good of the wife herself is thus also much promoted, even as the good of the body is helped forward by the head's abiding in his place. Should the head be put under any of the parts of the body, the body and all the parts thereof could not but receive much damage thereby. Even so, the wife and whole family would feel the damage of the husband's loss of his authority.

Question: How may an husband best maintain his authority?

Answer: That direction which the Apostle had given to Timothy to maintain his authority may firstly be applied for this purpose unto an husband: "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1Ti 4:12). . . . Even thus may husbands best maintain their authority by being an ensample in love, gravity, piety, honesty, etc. The fruits of these and other like graces showed forth by husbands before their wives and family cannot but work a reverent and dutiful respect in their wives and whole house towards them; for by this means they shall more clearly discern the image of God shine forth in their faces.

Of husbands losing their authority: Contrary is their practice who by their profaneness, riotousness, drunkenness, lewdness, lightness, unthriftiness, and other like base carriage⁵ make themselves contemptible and so lose their authority. Though a wife ought not to take these occasions to despise her husband, yet is it a just judgment on him to be despised, seeing he maketh himself contemptible.

Contrary also to the forenamed directions is the stern, rough, and cruel carriage of husbands, who by violence and tyranny go about to maintain their authority. Force may indeed cause fear, but a slavish fear, such a fear as breedeth more hatred than love, more inward contempt than outward respect.

Of husbands' high account of wives: As authority must be well maintained, so must it be well managed: for which purpose two things are needful: 1) that an husband tenderly respect his wife; [and] 2) that providently he care for her.

³ **sots** – foolish, stupid persons; blockheads.

⁴ **Privy Council** – the body of advisors and counselors for a king.

⁵ **base carriage** – despicably mean behavior.

Her place is indeed a place of inferiority⁶ and subjection, yet the nearest to equality that may be. [Hers is] a place of common equity in many respects, wherein man and wife are, after a sort, even fellows and partners. Hence then it followeth that the husband must account his wife a yoke-fellow and companion (1Pe 3:7). This is one point of giving honor to the wife: and it is implied under that phrase whereby the end of making a wife is noted (Gen 2:18), which in our English is translated, "meet for him," word for word "as before him," that is, like himself, one in whom he might see himself.

As a wife's acknowledgement of her husband's superiority⁷ is the groundwork of all her duties, so an husband's acknowledgement of that fellowship which is between him and his wife will make him carry himself much more amiably,⁸ familiarly, lovingly, and every way as besemeth a good husband towards her.

Of husbands' too mean account of wives: Contrary is the conceit of many who think there is no difference between a wife and servant but in familiarity,⁹ and that wives were made to be servants to their husbands because subjection, fear, and obedience are required of them. Whence it cometh to pass that wives are oft used little better than servants. [This is] conceit and practice savoring too much of heathenish and sottish arrogance. Did God at first take the wife out of man's side that man should tread her under his feet? Or rather than he should set her at his side next to him above all children, servants, or any other in the family, how near or dear unto him soever? For none can be nearer than a wife, and none ought to be dearer.

Of husbands' entire affection to their wives: an husband's affection to his wife must be answerable to his opinion of her: he ought therefore to delight in his wife entirely, that is, so to delight in her as wholly and only delighting in her. In this respect the Prophet's wife is called "the desire [delight, pleasure] of thine eyes" (Eze 24:16): that wherein he most of all delighted and therefore by a propriety,¹⁰ so called. Such delight did Isaac take in his wife as it drove out a contrary strong passion, namely the grief which he took for the departure of his mother. For it is noted that he loved her and was comforted after his mother's death (Gen 24:67).

This kind of affection the wise-man doth elegantly set forth in these words, "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe . . . and be thou ravished always with her love" (Pro 5:18, 19).

⁶ **inferiority** – inferiority here means "a role of submission." It does not mean a woman is an inferior creature, but of a different rank in God's order.

⁷ **superiority** – again, superiority here refers to the husband's *role*, not his created nature.

⁸ **amiably** – a friendly, good-tempered disposition.

⁹ **familiarity** – behavior due from a familiar friend or family member.

¹⁰ **propriety** – fitness; appropriateness.

Here note both the metaphors and also the hyperbole¹¹ which are used to set forth an husband's delight in his wife. In the metaphors, again note both the creatures whereunto a wife is resembled and also the attributes given to them. The creatures are two, an hind and a roe, which are the females of an hart and a roe-buck. Now it is noted of the hart and roe-buck that of all other beasts they are most [passionate] with their mates and even mad again in their heat and desire after them.

These comparisons applied to a wife do lively set forth that delight which an husband ought to take in her. . . . First so far to exceed, as to make a man oversee some such blemishes in his wife, as others would soon espy and mislike, or else to count them no blemishes, delighting in her never a whit the less for them. For example, if a man have a wife, not very beautiful or proper, but having some deformity in her body, some imperfection in her speech, sight, gesture, or any part of her body; yet so to affect¹² her and delight in her, as if she were the fairest and every way most complete woman in the world. Secondly, so highly to esteem, so ardently to affect, so tenderly to respect her as others may think him even to dote¹³ on her. An husband's affection to his wife cannot be too great if it is kept within the bonds of honesty, sobriety, and [decency].

Of husbands' forbearing to exact¹⁴ all that they may: as a wife's reverence, so also her obedience must be answered with her husband's courtesy. In testimony whereof, an husband must be ready to accept that wherein his wife showeth herself willing to obey him. He ought to be sparing in exacting too much of her. In this case, he ought so to frame his carriage towards her, as the obedience which she performeth, may rather come from her own voluntary disposition from a free conscience to God-wards, even because God hath placed her in a place of subjection, and from a wife-like love than from any exaction on her husband's part, and as it were by force.

Husbands . . . must observe what is lawful, needful, convenient, expedient, fit for their wives to do, yea, and what they are most willing to do before they be too [obstinate] in exacting it. For example,

1. Though the wife ought to go with her husband and dwell where he thinks meet, yet ought not he [unless by virtue of some urgent calling he be forced thereto] remove her from place to place, and carry her from that place where she is well settled without her good liking. Jacob consulted with his wives, and made trial of their willingness, before he carried them from their father's house (Gen 31:4).

¹¹ **hyperbole** – figure of speech used consisting of exaggeration for the purpose of making an impression.

¹² **affect** – have an affection for; be fond of.

¹³ **dote** – to bestow excessive fondness; to be foolishly in love.

¹⁴ **exact** – to require by force or with authority the performance of some duty.

2. Though she ought cheerfully to entertain what guests he bringeth into the house, yet ought not he to be grievous and burdensome therein unto her: the greatest care and pains for entertaining guests lieth on the wife: she ought therefore to be tendered therein.

If he observe her conscionable¹⁵ and wise, well able to manage and order matters about house, yet loath to do anything without his consent, he ought to be ready and free in yielding his consent, and satisfying her desire, as Elkanah (1Sa 1:23). And if she be bashful and backward in asking consent, he ought voluntarily of himself to offer it: yea and to give her a general consent to order and dispose matters as in her wisdom she seeth meet, as the said Elkanah did; and the husband of that good housewife which Solomon describeth (Pro 31:10-31).

A general consent is especially requisite for ordering of household affairs; for it is a charge laid upon wives to guide the house (1Ti 5:14): whereby it appeareth that the businesses of the house [pertain] and are most proper to the wife in which respect she is called the housewife. So as therein husbands ought to refer matters to their ordering, and not restrain them in every particular matter from doing anything without a special license and direction. To exemplify this in some particulars, it appertaineth in peculiar to a wife, 1. to order the decking and trimming¹⁶ of the house (Pro 31:21, 22); 2. to dispose the ordinary provision for the family (Pro 31:15); 3. to rule and govern maid servants (Gen 16:6); 4. to bring up children while they are young with the like (1Ti 5:10; Tit 2:4). These therefore ought he with a general consent to refer to her discretion (2Ki 4:19) with limitation only of these two cautions: 1. That she have in some measure sufficient discretion, wit, and wisdom, and be not too ignorant, foolish, simple, lavish, etc; 2. That he have a general oversight in all, and so interpose his authority as he suffer nothing that is unlawful or unseemly to be done by his wife about house, children, servants, or other things.

Of husbands' too much strictness towards their wives: Contrary is the rigor and austerity of many husbands, who stand upon the uttermost step of their authority, and yield no more to a wife than to any other inferior. Such are they 1. Who are never contented or satisfied with any duty the wife performeth, but ever are exacting more and more.

2. Who care not how grievous and burdensome they are to their wives: grievous by bringing such guests into the house as they know cannot be welcome to them, burdensome by *too frequent* and *unseasonable* inviting of guests or imposing other like extraordinary businesses over and above the ordinary affairs of the house: *too frequent* imposing of such things cannot but

¹⁵ **conscionable** – conscientious; principled.

¹⁶ **decking and trimming** – decorating and remodeling.

breed much wearisomeness, [and] *unseasonable* cannot but much disquiet her and give her great offence [as when the wife is weak by sickness, child-bearing, nursing, or other like means, and so not able to give that contentment which otherwise she would].

3. Who hold their wives under as if they were children or servants, restraining them from doing anything without their knowledge and particular express consent.

Of husbands' ungrateful discouraging their wives: Contrary is an ungrateful, if not envious disposition of such husbands as passing by many good things ordinarily and usually every day done by their wives without any [approval], commendation, or [reward] are ready to dispraise the least slip or neglect in them; and that in such general terms as if they never did anything well, so as their wives may well complain and say as it is in the proverb, "Oft did I well, and that hear I never: Once did I ill, and that hear I ever."

Of an husband's manner of instructing his wife: To instruction the Apostle expressly annexeth meekness. Instruct [saith he] with meekness those that oppose themselves. If Ministers must use meekness when they instruct their people, much more husbands when they instruct their wives: if in case of opposition meekness must not be laid aside, then in no case, at no time.

In this case to manifest meekness, let these rules be observed.

1. *Note the understanding and capacity of thy wife, and accordingly fit thine instructions:* if she be of mean capacity, give precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little; a little at once oft given [namely every day something] will arise in time to a great measure, and so arise, as, together with knowledge of the thing taught, love of the person that teacheth will increase.

2. *Instruct her in private between thyself and her, that so her ignorance may not be blazed forth:* private actions passing between man and wife are tokens of much kindness and familiarity.

3. *In the family so instruct children and servants when she is present, as she may learn knowledge thereby:* there can be no more meek and gentle manner of instructing, than by one to instruct another.

4. *Together with thy precepts mix sweet and pithy persuasions, which are testimonies of great love.*

Contrary is an harsh and rough manner of instructing, when husbands go about to thrust into their wives' heads, as it were by violence, deep mysteries which they are not able to conceive, and yet if they conceive not, they will be angry with them, and in anger give them evil language, and proclaim their ignorance before children, servants, and strangers. This harshness is ordi-

narily so fruitless, and withal so exasperateth a woman's spirit, as I think he were better [to] clean omit the duty than do it after such a manner.

Of an husband's providing means of spiritual edification for his wife: For her soul, means of spiritual edification must be provided, and those both private and public. Private means are holy and religious exercises in the house, as reading the word, prayer, catechizing, and such like; which being the spiritual food of the soul are to be every day, as our bodily food, provided and used. An husband as a master of a family must provide these for the good of his whole house; but as an husband, in special for the good of his wife: for to his wife, as well as to the whole house he is a King, a Priest, and a Prophet.

By himself therefore, for his wife's good, ought he to perform these things or to provide that they may be done by some other. Cornelius himself performed those exercises (Act 10:2, 30). Micah hired a Levite [though his idolatry were evil, yet his care to have a Levite in his house was commendable] (Jdg 17:10). The Shunammite's husband provided a chamber for the Prophet and that especially for his wife's sake; for it was at her request (2Ki 4:11).

Public means are the holy ordinances of God publicly performed by God's Minister. The care of an husband for his wife in this respect is to order his habitation and provide other needful things, as his wife may be made partaker thereof. It is expressly noted of Elkanah that he so provided for his wives, that they went with him every year to the house of God (1Sa 1:7; 2:19): the like is intimated of Joseph, the husband of the virgin Mary (Luk 2:41). In those days there was a public place and house of God, whither all God's people [how far soever they dwelt from it] were to resort every year: the places where Elkanah and Joseph dwelt were far remote from the house of God, yet they so provided, as not only themselves, but their wives also went to the public worship of God. Now there are many houses of God, places for the public worship of God, but yet through the corruption of our times, the ministry of the Word [the most principal means of spiritual edification] is not everywhere to be enjoyed: therefore such ought an husband's care for his wife in this respect to be, as to dwell where she may have the benefit of the Word preached, or else so to provide for her, as she may weekly go where it may be had.

Of neglecting their wives' edification: Contrary is their practice, who having their calling in places where the Word is plentiful, yet upon outward respects of pleasure, delight, ease, and profit, remove their families into remote places where preaching is scarce, if at all; and there leave their wives to govern the family, not regarding their want of the Word, for as much as they themselves oft coming to London or other like places by reason of their calling, enjoy the Word themselves. Many citizens, lawyers, and others are guilty of great neglect of their wives in this respect. So also are they, who abandon all religious exercise out of their houses, making their houses rather

stews¹⁷ of the devil than churches of God. If for want of means, either public or private, a wife live and die in ignorance, profaneness, infidelity, and impenitency, which cause eternal damnation, assuredly her blood shall be required at his hands: for an husband is God's watchman to his wife (Eze 3:18).

Of an husband's care to provide for his wife so long as she shall live: The continuance of an husband's provident care for his wife must be so long as she liveth, yea though she outlive him: not that he can actually when he is dead provide for her, but that he may before his death so provide for her, as she may have wherewithal to maintain herself, and to live according to that place whereunto by him she is advanced: at least that he leave her not only so much as he had with her, but something more also in testimony of his love to her, and care for her. Husbands have the example of Christ to press this duty upon them: for when He went away from His Church here on earth, He left His Spirit, which furnished [her] with gifts as plentifully, as if Christ had still remained with her, if not more abundantly (Eph 4:8). At the time of a man's departure out of this world from his wife, will the truest trial of his affection to his wife be given: for many that bear their wives' fare in hand while they live with them, at their death show that there was no soundness of affection in their heart towards them: all was but a mere show for some by-respects.¹⁸

Of the freeness of husbands' love: The cause of Christ's love was His love, as Moses noteth, He set His love on you because He loved you (Deu 7:7, 8). His love arose only and wholly from Himself and was every way free: as there was nothing in the Church, before Christ loved her, to move Him to love her, so can there be nothing that He could hope for afterwards, but what Himself bestowed. Indeed He delighteth in that righteousness wherewith as with a glorious robe she is clothed; and with those heavenly graces, wherewith as with precious jewels she is decked: but that righteousness and those graces are His own and of His free gift. He presents it to Himself a glorious Church (Eph 5:27).

In imitation hereof husbands should love their wives, though there were nothing in wives to move them so to do, but only that they are their wives: yea though no future benefit could after be expected from them. True love hath respect to the object which is loved, and the good it may do thereunto, rather than to the subject which loveth, and the good that it may receive. For love seeketh not her own (1Co 13:5). . . . Christ's love in this branch thereof should further move husbands to do what lieth in their power to make their wives worthy of love. Thus will it be in truth said that they dwell with their wives according to knowledge (1Pe 3:7), and thus will their love appear to be as Christ's love—free.

Of husbands loving their wives more than themselves: The quantity of

¹⁷ stews – brothels; houses of prostitution.

¹⁸ by-respects – regard to something other than the main object; a side aim.

Christ's love cannot be expressed: for the measure of it was above measure. He gave Himself for His Church (Eph 5:25), and in that respect He calleth Himself that Good Shepherd that gave His life for His sheep (Joh 10:11). Greater love than this hath no man (Joh 15:13). What will He not do for His spouse, [Who] gave His life for her?

Of husbands' unkindness: Contrary is their unkindness that prefer every trifle of their own before the good of their wives: their profit, their pleasure, their promotion, clean draw away their hearts and affections from their wives. If any extraordinary charge must be laid out or pains taken for their wives' good, little love will then appear.

Of husbands' constancy in love: The continuance of Christ's love was without date: "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end" (Joh 13:1). His love was constant [not by fits, now loving, then hating] and everlasting (Hos 2:19) [never repenting thereof, never changing or altering His mind]. No provocations, no transgressions could ever make Him forget to love and cease to do that good which He intended for His Church. Note what He said to her even when she revolted from Him, "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me" (Jer 3:1): and again, "My mercy shall not depart away" (2Sa 7:15). . . . For His love resteth not on the desert of His Church, but on the unchangeableness of His own will. As this manifested Christ's love to be true, sound love, so it made it profitable and beneficial to the Church, which, notwithstanding her many frailties, by virtue hereof is glorified.

Of husbands' loving their wives as themselves: To the example of Christ the Apostle annexeth the pattern of one's self in these words: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies" (Eph 5:28). . . . Christ's example is a full, complete, perfect, and every way sufficient pattern, far more excellent than this of a man's self. This is not annexed to add anything to that or in regard of the excellency hereof, but only in regard of our dullness to make the point somewhat more plain and perspicuous. For this pattern is more sensible and better discerned. Every one knoweth how he loveth his own body, but few or none know how Christ loveth His Church. Besides, that example of Christ may seem too high and excellent for any to attain unto, even [out of reach]. Therefore to show that he requireth no more than a man may perform, if he will set himself with care and conscience to do his duty, [the Apostle] addeth the pattern of one's self; that which one doth to his body, if he will, he may do to his wife.

No other man will or can so tenderly handle a man's hand, arm, leg, or any other part of his body as himself: he is very sensible of his own smart. The metaphors which the Apostle useth in these words, "He nourisheth and cherisheth it," do lively set forth this tenderness (Eph 5:29): for they are taken from fowls and birds which very [carefully] and tenderly hover over their

young ones, covering them all over with their wings and feathers, but so bearing up their bodies as no weight lieth upon them. . . . Thus ought husbands with all tenderness and mildness to deal with their wives, as we have before noted in many particulars: only this example of a man's self I thought good to set before husbands, as a lively pattern wherein they might behold a precedent without exception going before them, and whereby they might receive excellent direction for the better performing of the particulars before noted.

Such affection ought husbands to have to their wives: they ought more willingly and cheerfully to do anything for their wives than for parents, children, friends, or any other. Though this cheerfulness be an inward disposition of the heart, yet may it be manifested by a man's forwardness and readiness to do his wife good. When his wife shall no sooner desire a kindness, than he will be ready to grant it: as Boaz saith to Ruth, "I will do to thee all that thou requirest" (Rut 3:11).

Contrary is the disposition of those husbands who so grudgingly, repiningly,¹⁹ and discontentedly do those things which they do in their wives' behalf, as their wives had rather they were not done at all. The manner of doing them causeth more grief to tender-hearted wives, than the things themselves can do good.

Of Christ's example, a motive to provoke husbands to love their wives:

The forenamed examples of Christ and of ourselves as they are patterns for our direction, so general motives to provoke and stir us up the more to perform all the forenamed duties after the manner prescribed. . . . A greater and stronger motive cannot be yielded than the example of Christ. Example in itself is of great force to provoke us to do anything: especially if it be the example of some great one, a man of place and renown. But who greater than Christ? What more worthy pattern? If the example of the Church be of great force to move wives to be subject to their husbands, the example of Christ must needs be of much greater force to move husbands to love their wives. A great honor it is to be like unto Christ: His example is a perfect pattern.

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William Gouge (1575-1653): minister for 46 years at Blackfriars, London, which was considered the number one preaching center of that day. Many believe that thousands were converted under Gouge's heart-searching expository preaching. Mighty in Scripture and prayer, Gouge preached for thirty years on *Hebrews*, the substance of which became a famous commentary. Born in Stratford-Bow, Middlesex County, England.



¹⁹ **repiningly** – grumblingly.

THE CONVERSION OF FAMILY MEMBERS

Samuel Lee (1627-1691)

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved"—Romans 10:1.

QUESTION: "What course shall we take, what means shall we use, what method will you prescribe, that we may be able to manage this important and weighty duty, [and] that we may be helpful towards the conversion and salvation of our near relations that are in the state of nature¹?"

I shall draw up directions under [several] heads. Some whereof, though usual and obvious in such as treatment upon [household] duties, yet being further improved, may by no means be here passed by in silence, since they are exceeding useful and no less practical than others. Most men under the Gospel perish for want of practising known duties. Wherefore let me beg of thee, O Christian, that every prescription may be duly weighed and conscientiously improved; so shalt thou not doubt of admirable success through Divine assistance.

1. Preserve and uphold the honor and preeminence of that station wherein God hath set you by all wise and cautious means. The Prophet bewails those times wherein "the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable" (Isa 3:5). Distance of years calls for distance of behavior. . . . There is a great deal of reverence to be manifested by adults towards youth, if they would cherish and preserve that due reverence which ought to be in the hearts of young ones towards themselves. And yet notwithstanding, you must not carry yourselves with any proud, haughty, or pretentious behavior. Your countenance, though grave, yet must not be stern. As you need not indent your cheeks with continual smiles, so neither to plough your foreheads with rough and sour wrinkles. Rigid severity in words and actions will produce a slavish, disheartened temper in children.

2. Be frequent, pithy,² and clear in family instruction. We are all like barren wildernesses and stony deserts by nature: instruction is the culture and improvement of the soul. It is observed by naturalists, that bees "do carry small gravel in their feet" to poise their little bodies through the stormy winds. Such are instructions to the floating and wavering minds of youth. The keel of their weak judgments would soon capsize without the ballast of discipline. . . . But in all your instructions, have a care of being tediously

¹ **state of nature** – this means "in an unconverted state; those who are not born of God's Spirit, and therefore unrepentant and unbelieving."

² **pithy** – containing much matter in a few words.

long-winded. Make up the shortness of your discourse by frequency. Thou art enjoined to talk of God's precepts "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou lest down, and when thou risest up" (Deu 6:7; 11:19), a little now and a little then. Long orations burden their small memories too much and through such imprudence may occasion the loathing of spiritual manna, considering their being yet in the state of nature. A young plant may quickly be overloaded with manure and rotted with too much watering. Weak eyes, newly opened from sleep, cannot bear the glaring windows: "Line upon line, and precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little" (Isa 28:10). You must drive the little ones as Jacob did, very gently towards Canaan (Gen 33:13).

Entertain their tender attentions with discourses of God's infinite greatness and amiable goodness, of the glories of heaven, of the torments of hell. Things that affect the senses must be spiritualized to them: catch their affections by a holy cunning. Deal as much in allegories as thou canst. If you be together in a garden, draw some sweet and heavenly discourse out of the beautiful flowers; if by a riverside, treat of the water of life and the rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand; if in a field of corn, speak of the nourishing quality of the bread of life; if you see birds flying in the air or hear them singing in the woods, teach them the all-wise providence of God that gives them their meat in due season; if thou lookest up to the sun, moon, and stars, tell them they are but the shining spangles of the outer rooms of heaven. O then what glory is there within! If thou seest a rainbow adorning some waterish cloud, talk of the covenant of God. These and many more may be like so many golden links drawing divine things into their memories. "I have spoken by the prophets, and used similitudes," saith God (Hos 12:10). Moreover, let young ones read and learn by heart some portions of the historical books of Holy Scripture. But, above all, the best way of instruction, especially as to the younger sort, may be performed by catechisms—question and answer in a short, concise method—whose terms, being clear and distinct, might be phrased out of Holy Scripture and fitted to their capacities by a plain, though solid style and to their memories by brief expressions.

3. Add to thine instructions mandatory requirements. Lay it as a charge upon their souls in the name of God that they hearken to and obey thine household regulations and practices. An instance we have in the case of Solomon, who acquaints us that he was "my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live" (Pro 4:3, 4). . . . For this matter, Abraham was commended by God Himself as a pattern to all posterity: "I know him," says God, "that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment" (Gen 18:19), and therefore God was pleased to reveal secrets to him.

4. Set a narrow guard upon the first sproutings of sin in their behavior. Crush vipers in the egg. Exercise your hazel-rods upon the serpents' heads, when they first creep out of their holes, being chill and feeble in the beginning of the spring. "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land," says David (Psa 101:8). You must set about this work early in life [and] stop every evil and disagreeable word at the first hearing. Watch the beginnings, the first bubbings of corruption in them. A man may pull off a tender bud with ease; but if he let it grow to a branch, it will cost him some pains.

O that you would then begin to cast water upon the first kindlings of sin in your little ones! Cut off the occasions of sin by prudent interference. It is strange to see what excuses and disguises for sin, what deceitfulness in speech [that] little children will use! Before thou canst teach them to speak plain English, the devil and a corrupt heart will teach them to speak plain lies. While their tongues do yet falter much in pronunciation, they will falter more in double-speaking. What great need is there then to put a curb and bridle upon thy child's tongue as well as thine own! (Psa 39:1).

Undermine their fallacies by discerning examinations and shrewd questions. If this work be not set to early in their lives, possibly in process of years they may prove too cunning to be caught, unless thou inspire them quickly with the awe of God's judgments and the danger of sin. Teach their conscience to blush, as well as their cheeks, that they may from an inwrought principle avoid the evil and do the good. If thou suffer a child to go on in sin unregarded, untaught, unrebuked, and think it is too little to give attention to at first, that sinful folly will be thy scourge in the end. God many times whips an aged parent by that child which was unwhipped at first.

5. Preserve them from evil society. David not only hated sin in general, but especially he detested having it become an inmate in his house. "He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight" (Psa 101:7); that so the evil example and spiritually-darkened companionship of wicked persons might not cleave to and corrupt his close relations. Imitation is natural to children: associates and companions are the patterns of their imitation. For, according to the proverb, "He that lives with a lame man will learn to limp." [Solomon] tells us that "with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways" (Pro 22:24, 25). Children especially may be dangerously infected by lewd and corrupt company. Many children of godly parents have had their manners fouled and extremely corrupted by frequent and familiar consorting with the naughty children of wicked neighbors.

6. Let well-timed and prudent rebukes be administered according to the nature and quality of their offences. Begin gently. Use all persuasive motives to draw and allure them, if possible, to the ways of God. Tell them of the

rewards of glory, of the sweet society in heaven; endeavor to satisfy their hearts that God is able to fill their souls with such joys as are not to be found in the creatures. "Of some have compassion, making a difference" (Jud 22). But if this will not do, then begin to mix some more severe expressions of thy holy anger against sin. As there is a linking-together in virtues, so in passions. Love and anger are not altogether "incompatible affections." Nay, love may be the principle and foundation of that anger, which shoots its rebuking arrows against the [target] of sin. . . . Thou mayest tell thy child, and that with some grains of severity, that if he continue in sinful courses, God will be angry, and thou wilt be angry. Then let him know what a "fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31). This is the way to "be ye angry, and sin not" as the apostle commands (Eph 4:26). Let not your passions, like unruly torrents, overflow the banks that are limited by Scripture and reason. There is a grave and sober anger that will procure reverence and advance reformation. That which is mixed with horrid noise and shouting floweth from the breasts of fools. In vain shalt thou attempt to reclaim others, who art so excessive and frantic thyself. How shall that person in his rebukes speak reason to another that hath lost his own? He that is a slave to his hot-tempered appetite can never manage noble reproofs. A child can never persuade himself that such anger proceedeth from love, when he is made the sink to receive the daily vomitings of a fiery stomach, when the unhappy necessity of his relation ties him to be always in the way where an angry disposition must vent and empty itself. . . . Observe, therefore, a prudent administration of thy rebukes. Gild those bitter pills³ with the hopes of recovering thy favor upon amendment.⁴

Consider, likewise, the station and place of thy several relations. A wife ought not to be rebuked before children and servants, lest her subordinate authority be diminished. Contempt cast upon the wife will reflect upon the husband at last. Yea, for smaller offences in children and servants, if they be not committed openly, rebuke them apart and in private. But, above all, take heed thou be not found more severe in reproving faults against thyself, than sins against the great God. If thou hast cause to be angry, yet let not thy storms run all upon the rocks, but endeavor speedily to cool the inflammation, to abate the fever, and slake the fire of anger.

Wink at infirmities: if not such as are immediately sinful, chide them with frowns and not with bitter assaults. Reserve thy public and sharp reprehensions for open and scandalous offences, for reiterated and repeated transgressions which bear a show of great neglect, if not of some contempt and disdain.

7. Keep up a constant and vigorous practice of holy duties in thy family. "As for me and my house," says Joshua, "we will serve the Lord" (Jos 24:15).

³ **gild those bitter pills** – to soften or tone down something unpleasant.

⁴ **amendment** – reforming; changing for the better.

Moses commanded the Israelites to go over the laws and precepts which he had given them from God in their own families in private among their children (Deu 6:7). The instructions and exhortations of God's ministers in public should be repeated at home and whetted to and again upon the little ones. Samuel had a feast upon the sacrifice in his own house (1Sa 9:12, 22). Job and others had sacrifices in their own families. The passover-lamb was to be eaten in every particular house (Exo 12:3, 4). God says He will "pour out his fury upon the families that call not upon his name" (Jer 10:25).

The keeping up of family-duties makes every little house become a sanctuary, a Beth-el, a house of God. And here I would advise that Christians be not over-tedious in their duties of private worship. Take heed of making the ways of God burdensome and unpleasant. If God draw forth thy heart sometimes, do not reject and repress Divine breathings; but usually labor for conciseness and brevity. The spirit is willing many times, when the flesh is weak. And a person may better for a little time keep his thoughts from wandering and disarray, whenas the large expense of expressions gives occasion for too much diversion. "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Ecc 5:2). It is of good use likewise to vary the duties of religion: sometimes sing and sometimes read, sometimes repeat, sometimes catechise, sometimes exhort. But in two things be principally frequent: the offering up the sacrifice of prayers and the keeping of children to read daily some portion of Holy Scriptures.

8. Endeavor by all good means to draw them to public ordinances. For there God is in a more special manner present. He makes the place of His feet to be glorious. Though it were God's appointment that the males only should at the solemn feasts repair to Shiloh, yet Elkanah carries up all his house to the yearly sacrifice (1Sa 1:21). He would have his wife, children, and servants "to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple" (Psa 27:4). Cornelius also, when Peter came to preach at Caesarea upon God's immediate command, calls together all his kindred and acquaintants to hear the sermon (Act 10:24). . . . As for such as can be present at ordinances, remember to examine them of what they heard as our blessed Lord, the grand pattern of our imitation, dealt by His beloved disciples, when He had preached that famous sermon by the seaside. Jesus asks them, "Have ye understood all those things?" (Mat 13:51). And when they were alone and apart from the multitude, then He expounded and explained all things that He taught more fully to them (Mar 4:34).

9. If all these things forementioned will not prevail, but inferiors will still run on in a course of sin, then aughtest thou to resort to paternal correction. Now chastisements must be suited to their age, the temperament of their natures, [their] dispositions, [and] the various qualities and kinds of their offences. Indulge a pardon sooner to lesser faults upon repentance and sorrow.

You must consider whether their faults proceed from imprudence and weakness, upon what ground and occasion, [and] upon what provocation or seduction. Observe whether they appear to be deeply sorrowful and truly humbled. . . . In these and the like cases, you must apply great diligence and prudence. Due punishment is a part of family justice, and there must be care taken, lest by frequent exemption from punishment they and their fellows be hardened in the ways of sin and grow obstinate and rebellious against the commandments of God. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Pro 13:24; 23:14). *This is an ordinance and appointment of God.* "Our fathers corrected us, and we gave them reverence" (Heb 12:9).

There be some cruel parents and masters that carry themselves more like raging brutes than men, that take pleasure in tyrannical corrections. They can let their children swear, and lie, and steal, and commit any other sin, and yet correct them not. But if they do not what they would have them, then they fall upon them and tear them like wild beasts. Know that God will require such vile acts at your hands in the great Day! O rather let them see that thou art angry for God's sake and not for thine own! There must be a great deal of gracious pity to their souls and holy love mixed with thine anger against sin. . . . Be careful to use both your ears, and hearken to both parties in matters of complaint. But if upon deliberate and mature conviction nothing less will prevail, follow God's command herein and "thy son shall give rest unto thy soul" (Pro 29:17). . . . But take heed of all violent and passionate corrections. He that smites when his passion boils, is too, too subject to transcend the limits of moderation . . . take heed lest thou make thy child to become vile in thine own eyes by too many stripes (Deu 25:3).

10. If the forementioned means through Divine blessing prove effectual, then praise and encourage them, when they come on, though yet but a little. As magistrates, so parents must be sometimes praisers of them that do well (Rom 13:3). Our Lord comes in sometimes with, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mat 25:21). So must you, when they show promise and a sense of duty, encourage them by showing your approval. . . . Only take heed of exceeding too much, for little vessels can bear no great sails. Pride and arrogance are many times nursed up by overflowing and lavish expressions, and sometimes inappropriate haughtiness and familiarity appear.

11. Do they flourish and thrive in duty and obedience and begin to take in precepts freely and kindly? Then win them on further by rewards according to their several capacities and the quality of thine own estate. God is pleased most graciously to draw and allure us on in the ways of holiness by the proposal of reward: "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6). As to years of further growth, such rewards as become them may

be more proper. In some cases, these have proved great spurs and incitations, at least to the outward work of religion in younger ones . . . you know the father of the prodigal in the parable, when his son returned home to lead a new life—he killed a fatted calf for him, put the best robe upon his back, a ring upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet (Luk 15:22).

From "What Means May Be Used towards the Conversion of Our Carnal Relations?" in *Puritan Sermons 1659-1689, being the Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, Vol 1, reprinted by Richard Owen Roberts, Publishers.*

Samuel Lee (1627-1691): Congregational Puritan minister of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate. Persecution drove him to New England for several years. But upon his attempted return to England, his ship was captured by French privateers, and he died in prison in France. Born in London, England.



My brethren, let me say, be ye like Christ at all times, imitate Him in public. Most of us live in some sort of publicity; many of us are called to work before our fellow men every day. We are watched; our words are caught; our lives are examined—taken to pieces. The eagle-eyed, argue-eyed world observes everything we do; and sharp critics are upon us. Let us live the life of Christ in public. Let us take care that we exhibit our Master and not ourselves, so that we can say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." Take heed that you carry this into the church too, you who are church members. Be like Christ in the church. How many there are of you like Diotrefes, seeking pre-eminence (3Jo 1:9). How many are trying to have some dignity and power over their fellow Christians, instead of remembering that it is the fundamental rule of all our churches, that there all men are equal-alike brethren, alike to be received as such. Carry out the spirit of Christ then, in your churches, wherever ye are: let your fellow members say of you, "He has been with Jesus." . . . But most of all take care to have religion in your houses. A religious house is the best proof of true piety. It is not my chapel, it is my house—it is not my minister, it is my home companion who can best judge me. It is the servant, the child, the wife, the friend, that can discern most of my real character. A good man will improve his household. Rowland Hill once said he would not believe a man to be a true Christian, if his wife, his children, his servants, and even the dog and cat, were not the better for it. . . . If your household is not the better for your Christianity, if men cannot say, "This is a better house than others," then be not deceived—ye have nothing of the grace of God. . . . Carry out your godliness in your family. Let every one say that you have practical religion. Let it be known and read in the house, as well as in the world. Take care of your character there; for what we are there, we really are—*Charles Spurgeon.*

A GODLY FATHER'S ANGER

John Gill (1697-1771)

FIRST, negatively expressed: “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath” (Eph 6:4) which may be done, (1.) *By words*: by laying upon them unjust and unreasonable commands, by frequent, public, and severe [scolding]; by indiscreet and passionate expressions, and by [humiliating] and [abusive] language; such as that of Saul to Jonathan (1Sa 20:30).

(2.) *By deeds*: as by showing more love to one than to another, as Jacob did to Joseph, which so incensed his brethren that they hated Joseph and could not speak peaceably to him (Gen 37:8); by not allowing them proper food and a sufficiency of it (Mat 7:9, 10; 1Ti 5:8); by not indulging them with innocent recreation, which children should have (Zec 8:5); and when at a proper age for marriage, of [giving] them to persons not agreeable to their inclinations; and by restraining them from those that would be without any just reason; [or] by squandering away their substance in riotous living, when they should have preserved it and laid it up for the present use or future good of their children; and especially by any cruel and inhuman treatment as that of Saul to Jonathan, when he made an attempt on his life (1Sa 20:33, 34). Such provocation should be carefully avoided, since it renders all commands, counsel, and corrections ineffectual, alienating the affections of their children from them. The reason to [avoid] it, given by the apostle, is “lest they be discouraged” (Col 3:21); [they may] be overwhelmed with grief and sorrow and thereby their spirits be broken [and] become [cowardly], disheartened, and dispirited. Despairing of pleasing their parents and sharing in their affections, [they may] become careless of duty and [lazy in] business. Parents, no doubt have a right to rebuke and reprove their children when they do amiss: it was Eli’s fault that he was too soft and lenient and his reproofs too easy, when he should have restrained his sons from acting the vile part. [He] should have frowned upon them, put on stern looks, laid his commands on them, and severely threatened them, and punished them if [obstinate and disobedient] (1Sa 2:23, 24; 3:13). And they may use the rod of correction, which they should do early, and while there is hope; but always with moderation and in love; and should take some pains with their children to convince them that they do love them; and that it is in love to them, and for their good, that they chastise them. “Fathers” are particularly mentioned because they are apt to be most severe, and mothers most indulgent.

From *A Body of Divinity*, reprinted by The Baptist Standard Bearer

John Gill (1697-1771): Baptist minister, theologian, and biblical scholar. Author of *A Body of Divinity*, *The Cause of God and Truth*, and his nine-volume *Expositions of the Old and New Testaments*. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, England.

THREATS TO GODLINESS IN YOUNG MEN

John Angell James (1785-1859)

It is well to know what these are and where they lie, that you may know how to avoid them. Ignorance on such a subject would be itself one of the chief dangers. In many cases, to know our perils is itself one way of avoiding them. Steadily, then, contemplate the following:

I. You are in danger of falling into evil from the removal of parental inspection, admonition, and restraint. It must be admitted, that home itself is sometimes a scene of peril to morals and religion. In some homes, young people see and hear very little but what is calculated to do them harm: parental example is on the side of sin, and almost everything that is said or done is of a nature likely to produce impressions unfavorable to piety and perhaps even to morality. Where this is the state of things, removal is a benefit. . . . Many a young man, who at the time of leaving home, wept over the necessity which caused him to quit the scenes of his childhood and to go from beneath the wing of his parents, has lived to consider it the brightest era of his life, inasmuch as it took him away from scenes of moral danger and led him to the means of grace and the path of eternal life. . . . This, however, is not applicable to all families: if there are some parents who take no care about the religious or even moral character of their children, who neither set them good examples, nor deliver to them any instruction, nor impose upon them any restraint, but who allow them the unchecked gratification¹ of their passions and the unproved commission of sin,² there are many others who act a wiser and a better part.

In [many] instances, parents are moral; in many they are pious.³ And while the former are anxious to keep their sons from vice and train them to virtue, the latter go further and endeavor to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. . . . You have been brought up in habits of rigid morality. Your parents have been solicitous⁴ to form your character on a right basis. You have been long familiar with the voice of instruction, admonition, and warning. You have been the constant subject of an anxiety which you could neither be ignorant of nor mistake. If you were seen in company with a stranger or with a youth of doubtful character, you were questioned and warned. If you brought home a book, it was examined. If you stayed out at night later than usual, you saw a mother’s anxious eye turned upon you and heard a father’s voice saying,

¹ **unchecked gratification** – unrestrained self-satisfying.

² **unproved commission of sin** – sins committed without disapproval or correction.

³ **pious** – faithfully obedient and reverent to God; devout; godly.

⁴ **solicitous** – careful; desirous.

“My son, why so late, where have you been?” In short, you felt yourself within the range of an ever-present inspection and under the pressure of a never-relaxing restraint. The theater and other places of pollution were strictly forbidden, and indeed you felt little inclination to visit those haunts of vice. Morning and evening you heard the Scriptures read, and the voice of prayer ascend to God and ascend for you. With such examples, under such instruction, and amidst such scenes, you had no opportunity and felt no disposition to be vicious.⁵ Sometimes you thought, perhaps, that the restraint was too severe and the care too fastidious⁶ . . .

All this is now over: you have left or are leaving home. The moment has arrived or is past and will never be forgotten, when those arms which sustained your infant frame were thrown around your neck and pressed you to the bosom that nourished you, while a mother’s faltering voice exclaimed, “Farewell, my boy.” And a father, always kind, but kinder than ever, prolonged the sad [farewell] and said, “My son, I can watch over you no longer. The God Whose providence removes you from your father’s house be your Protector and preserve you from the evils of this sinful world. Remember, that though my eye cannot see you, His can and ever does. Fear Him.” And there, young man, you now are, where your parents’ hearts trembled to place you, amidst the snares and perils of this evil world, where your father’s inspection cannot reach you or your mother’s tearful eyes behold you. . . . Away from home, a viciously inclined youth will find opportunities for the gratification of his evil [inclinations] in situations the most friendly to virtue. His wicked heart, rejoicing in the absence of his parents, will make that absence [a motivation] to sin. Ever and anon⁷ the whisper will come from within, “My father is not here to see it; my mother will not know it; I am not under inspection now; restraint is over. I can go where I like, associate with whom I please and fear neither rebuke nor reproach.” O young man, think of the unutterable baseness⁸ of such conduct as this. Ought you not to despise yourself, if you can thus meanly, as well as wickedly, take advantage of a father’s absence to do that which you know would excite his strongest [disapproval] and afflict him with the bitterest grief, if he were present? Yet multitudes are thus base and wicked and have gone from their parents to ruin themselves for ever. Act, young man, act as you would do, if you were conscious that your father’s eye were upon you.

II. Your danger is increased by the spirit of independence and self-confidence (connected, as of course it must be, with much ignorance and inexperience) which young men are apt to assume, when they leave their father’s

⁵ **vicious** – addicted to vice or immorality; wicked. Throughout this article the author does not use *vicious* in the modern sense of “savage” or “malicious.”

⁶ **fastidious** – exacting; difficult to please.

⁷ **everand anon** – every now and then.

⁸ **baseness** – contemptible meanness; shameful selfishness.

house and go out into the world. “Paternal rule is now over; my parents are not at hand to be consulted or obeyed; and if they were, it is time for me to think and act for myself. I am my own master now. I am a young man, and no longer a child. I am capable of judging, discriminating, and determining between right and wrong. I have the right, and will exercise it, of forming my own standard of morals, selecting my own models of character, and laying down my own plans of action. Who has authority to interfere with me?”

Such probably are your thoughts, and they are encouraged by many around you, who suggest that you are not always to go in leading strings,⁹ but ought now to assert your liberty and act like a man. Yes, and how many have employed and abused this liberty to the most criminal and fatal purposes: it has been a liberty to destroy all the habits of virtue formed at home, to subvert all the principles implanted by their parents’ [anxious care] and to rush into all the evil practices against which the voice of warning had been raised from their boyhood. Many young men have no sooner been freed from parental restraint and become their own masters, than they have hurried to every place of amusement, resorted to every species of vicious diversion, initiated themselves into all the mysteries of iniquity, and with prurient¹⁰ curiosity to know what it is bliss to be ignorant of, [and] have entered into fellowship with all the unfruitful works of darkness. Happy, happy had they been, had they considered that an independence which sets them free from parental advice and control is the bane¹¹ of piety, morality, and happiness and has proved, where it has been assumed, the ruin for both worlds of multitudes of once hopeful youths. Wise is that young man and blessed in all probability he will be, who though he has left his father’s house, and it may be has arrived at the age of maturity, feels it his privilege as well as his duty to look up to his parents as his counselors, his comforters, and, in some respects, his rulers; who allows the restraints of home to follow him abroad; and who amidst the dangerous intricacies of life is thankful to accept the kind offices of a [wise] father to be the guide of his youth.

III. The numerous incentives to vice with which every place, but especially the [cities] and large provincial towns, abounds, and the opportunities of concealment which are to be found there are a source of great danger. At the head of all these must be placed the theater, which is there to be found in all its most powerful attractions and most destructive fascinations. Nothing can be said too strong or too bad of the injurious tendency of the stage; nor too earnest or impassioned in the way of warning young men from venturing

⁹ **leading strings** – strings with which children used to be guided and supported when learning to walk; to be still a child; to be in a state of dependence.

¹⁰ **prurient** – inordinate interest in lewd ideas; inordinate interest in sexual matters.

¹¹ **bane** – a cause of destruction or ruin; deadly poison.

within its precincts. It is emphatically and eminently the broad road and wide gate that leads to destruction.

The staple matter of which the ordinary run of dramatic representations are composed is altogether adapted to corrupt the youthful mind by appealing to the most inflammable, powerful, and dangerous of its passions. Tragedy, with whatever fine passages and occasional lofty sentiment it may be adorned, is usually calculated to produce pride, ambition, and revenge; while comedy, such as is most suited to the public taste, and therefore most in demand, is the school for intrigue, amours,¹² and licentiousness.¹³

It is not, however, the subject matter only of the play itself that is corrupting, but the representation of it upon the stage with all the accompaniments of the theater. . . . It is bad sentiment,¹⁴ borrowing every possible aid to render it still worse: it is vice recommended by the charms of music, painting, architecture, oratory, and eloquence with all that is fascinating in female beauty and dazzling in elegant costume. . . . It were easy to enumerate the evils, though they are many and great, to which frequenting the theater will expose you. . . . It raises the passions above their proper tone and thus induces a dislike for those grave and serious subjects of life which have nothing but their simplicity and importance to recommend them. It kindles low and base appetites and creates a constant [craving] after their indulgence. It not only hardens the heart against religion, so that a theater-loving man never becomes religious until he is persuaded to abandon these amusements, but it gradually [numbs] the conscience into an insensibility to good morals.

Bad companions are a source of danger. Perhaps more young men are ruined by this than by any other means that could be mentioned. Many who have left home with a character unsullied and a mind not only comparatively pure, but really ignorant of the crooked ways of vice, who, simple, [inexperienced], and without guile, would have shuddered at the temptation to any of the grosser acts of sin, have at length fallen sacrifices to the powerful influence of evil associates. Man is a social being, and the propensity for company is peculiarly strong in youth, the season when it requires to be watched with greater care than at any other because of the greater force which it exerts in the formation of character. Now and then we meet with a youth who is so engrossed with business, so intent on cultivating his mind, or so reserved in disposition, as to have no desire for companions. But by far the greater number are fond of society and eager to enjoy it; and, if not extremely careful in the selection of their friends, are in imminent peril of choosing such as will do them harm. It is next to impossible, young man, for you to remain virtu-

¹² **intrigue, amours** – secret, illicit love affairs.

¹³ **licentiousness** – lewdness; inclined to lust; preoccupied with lustful desires.

¹⁴ **sentiment** – emotional thought conveyed in literature or art.

ous in vicious society . . . and they will never cease till they have made you as bad as themselves. The more agreeable, amiable, and intelligent they are, the more dangerous and ensnaring is their influence. A youthful profligate¹⁵ of elegant manners, lively humor, amiable temper, and intelligent mind is Satan's most polished instrument for ruining immortal souls.

Vicious women are as much to be dreaded as bad men and far more so. . . . Youthful reader, be upon your guard against this peril to your health, your morals, your soul. Go where you will, this snare is spread for your feet. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. Set a strict guard upon your senses, your imagination, and your passions. Once yield to temptation, and you are undone. Purity is then lost; and sunk from self-esteem,¹⁶ you may give yourself up to commit all uncleanness with greediness.

Drinking parties, though not so common as they were or as are some other snares, are still sufficiently prevalent to be pointed out as a source of danger. . . . Still it is an object of ambition with some misguided youths to be able to drink the bumper¹⁷ and the toast with convivial¹⁸ grace as a matter of course. What a low and sensual aim! Young man, as you would not lie down in the grave of a drunkard, worn out by disease, and closing your miserable career in poverty and wretchedness, beware of the filthy, degrading, and destructive habit of drinking. Remember the words of the wisest of men: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine" (Pro 23:29, 30). Study this inimitable¹⁹ and graphic picture of drinking and its consequences, and begin life with a horror of drunkenness . . . I again say and *with all possible emphasis*, begin life with a horror of drunkenness.

IV. I close this fearful list of perils by mentioning the prevalence of infidelity²⁰ and the zeal and wily arts of its [instigators] and propagators, as forming another source of danger to youth. There never was an age when infidelity was busier than it is now . . . the efforts of infidels to diffuse their principles among the common people and middle classes are peculiarly energetic just now . . . the system [of *socialism*], if system it may be called . . . announces as its leading dogma that man is entirely the creature of circumstances;²¹ is in no

¹⁵ **profligate** – one recklessly given to lewd, sensual pleasures and extravagance.

¹⁶ **self-esteem** – favorable opinion of one's self.

¹⁷ **bumper** – a glass of wine filled to the brim.

¹⁸ **convivial** – sociable; fond of feasting, drinking, and good company.

¹⁹ **inimitable** – without compare; defying imitation; having no match or equal.

²⁰ **infidelity** – the attitude of one who has no religious belief, especially of Christianity.

²¹ **man . . . the creature of circumstances** – socialism teaches that human action is determined by external forces acting upon man's will; he is therefore not responsible for what he does.

sense the author of his opinions and volitions; nor the founder or supporter of his own character. . . . As if it were not enough to shock the public mind by a system so monstrous, the public taste and all our social feelings are outraged by the unblushing avowal of its author,²² *that it is his design and wish to abolish the institution of marriage* and reconstruct society upon the basis of the unlegalized association of the sexes and the unrestricted freedom of divorce. Absurd and demoralizing as such a system is, it is popular with many. The reason is obvious: its very immorality proves to them its recommendation. If they can believe it, they feel that, commit what crimes they may, accountability is gone and remorse is extinguished. The blame rests not on them, for any sin whatever, but on the circumstances which led to it:²³ a short way to be very wicked and yet very easy.

It must be obvious that between immorality and infidelity there is a close connection and a constant reaction going on in some minds. A young man falls into temptation and commits sin: instead of repenting, as is his duty and his interest, he in many cases attempts to quiet his conscience by persuading himself that religion is all hypocrisy and the Bible untrue. His infidelity now prepares him to go greater lengths in sin: thus vice calls in the aid of error, and error strengthens vice, while both together lead their victim to ruin and misery. To guard yourselves against such dangers, study well the evidences of revelation . . . *[Christ] in the heart is the only thing to be relied upon as a defense against the attacks of infidels and the influence of their principles.*

It has been a dark day in the annals of myriads of families, when a son bade adieu to his parents, and commenced his probation and his struggles in the great business of human life. The tears that fell on that occasion were a sad [prediction], though unknown at the time, of others that were to flow in long succession over the follies, vices, and miseries of that unhappy youth. The history of ten thousand prodigal sons, the untimely graves of ten thousand broken-hearted parents, and the deep and heavy woes of ten thousand dishonored families attest the fact of the dangers that await a youth on leaving home: and he is most in danger, who is ignorant of what awaits him or who on being informed treats the subject with indifference, smiles at the fears of his friends and feels no fear for himself. Young man, there is hope of you if this representation shall awaken alarm, produce self-distrust, and excite vigilance and caution. Inexperienced, [self-confident], and rash with all your appetites sharpening and all your passions strengthening; with an imagination lively, a curiosity prurient, and a heart susceptible; eager to act for yourself, panting to try your scarcely fledged wings on leaving the nest, and perhaps ambitious of distinction, you are in imminent peril of the lusts of the

²² **Karl Marx (1818-1883)** – German atheist, revolutionary, founder of socialism.

²³ **blame rests . . . led to it** – this is highly visible in our modern courtrooms.

flesh and of the mind. All but yourself are anxious. Pause and consider what you may become—an ornament of the profession you have chosen, a respectable member of society, a holy professor of religion, a useful citizen of your country, a benefactor of your species, and a light of the world. But according to the height to which you may rise is the depth to which you may sink: for as the bottom of the ocean is supposed to be proportioned in measurement to the tops of the mountains, so the dark gulfs of sin and [damnation] into which you may plunge, sustain a similar relation to the summits of excellence and happiness to which you may ascend. . . . Survey for a moment the sphere which you may occupy and fill up with misery, desolation, and ruin. See what opportunities of destruction are within your reach, and to what suicidal and murderous havoc sin may lead you, if you give yourself up to its influence and government.

You can blast your *reputation*. After building up with great care your good name for some years and acquiring respect and esteem from those who knew you, “in one single hour, by yielding to some powerful temptation, you may fix a dark stain upon your character, which no tears can ever wash away or repentance remove, but which will cause you to be read and known of all men, till the grave receives you out of their sight. You may render yourself an object of the universal disgust and abhorrence of the good and be the taunt and scorn of the wicked; so that wherever you turn your eyes, you will find none to bestow upon you a single smile of complacency. How many in this condition, bitterly realizing that, ‘without a friend, the world is but a wilderness,’ have in a paroxysm²⁴ of desperation, committed suicide.”

Your *intellect*, strong by nature and capable of high cultivation, may, like a fine flower, be suffered to run wild by neglect, be trodden down by brute lusts, or be broken by violence. Your *affections*, given to be your delight by virtuous exercise on right objects, may be all perverted so as to become like so many demons, possessing and tormenting your soul because they are set on things forbidden and indulged to excess. Your *conscience*, granted to be your monitor, guide, and friend, may be wounded, benumbed, seared till it is insensible, silent, deaf, and of no use in warning you against sin, in restraining or reproving you for it. In short, you may destroy your immortal soul; and what ruin is like that of the soul, so immense, so horrible, so irretrievable? You may break the hearts of your parents; make your brothers and sisters ashamed to own you; be a nuisance and pest to society; a bane to your country; the corrupter of youthful morals; the seducer of female virtue; the consumer of the property of your friends; and to reach the climax of your mischief, you may be the Apollyon²⁵ of the circle of immortal souls in which

²⁴ **paroxysm** – a violent outburst of emotion.

²⁵ **Apollyon** – the destroyer, a name given to the devil.

you move, sending some to perdition before you reach it yourself and causing others to follow you to the bottomless pit, where you will never escape the sight of their torments nor the sound of their [curses]. How great the power, how malignant the virulence²⁶ of sin that can spread its influence so widely and exert its force with such deadly effect, not only destroying the sinner himself, but involving others in his ruin! No man goes alone to perdition, no one perishes alone in his iniquity; a consideration which every transgressor should regard: he sustains the character not only of a suicide, but of a murderer, and the worst of all murderers, for he is *the murderer of souls*. What a critical position you now occupy, between the capability of rising to so much excellence or sinking to ruin so deep and misery so intense! Reflect. Oh that you were wise; that you understood this; that you would consider your end!

From *Addresses to Young Men: a Friend and Guide*
reprinted by Soli Deo Gloria.

John Angell James (1785-1859): a humble and unpretentious author of numerous practical books, he beautifully balanced his convictions with practical piety in his life and his ministry. He preached and wrote to the common man and woman of every age group and station in life. He was the author of 17 titles, which include *The Anxious Inquirer*, *The Church Member's Guide*, *Female Piety*, and *The Christian Father's Present to His Children*.



The true Christian is to be such a husband as Christ was to His church. The love of a husband is special. The Lord Jesus cherishes for the church a peculiar affection, which is set upon her above the rest of mankind: "I pray for them, I pray not for the world" (Joh 17:9). The elect church is the favorite of heaven, the treasure of Christ, the crown of His head, the bracelet of His arm, the breastplate of His heart, the very center and core of His love. A husband should love his wife with a constant love, for thus Jesus loves His church. He does not vary in his affection. He may change in his display of affection, but the affection itself is still the same. A husband should love his wife with an enduring love, for nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:39). A true husband loves his wife with a hearty love, fervent and intense. It is not mere lip-service. Ah! Beloved, what more could Christ have done in proof of His love than He has done? Jesus has a delighted love towards His spouse: He prizes her affection and delights in her with sweet complacency. Believer, you wonder at Jesus' love; you admire it—are you imitating it?—*Charles Spurgeon*

²⁶ **virulence** – extreme bitterness of temper or speech; bitterly hostile and hateful.

HOW TRUE MANHOOD IS RESTORED

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

To help the seeker to a true faith in Jesus, I would remind him of the work of the Lord Jesus in the room and place and stead of sinners. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1Pe 2:24). "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa 53:6). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1Pe 3:18).

Upon one declaration of Scripture let the reader fix his eye. "With his stripes we are healed" (Isa 53:5). God here treats sin as a disease, and He sets before us the costly remedy which He has provided.

I ask you very solemnly to accompany me in your meditations for a few minutes, while I bring before you the stripes of the Lord Jesus. The Lord resolved to restore us, and therefore He sent His only begotten Son, "very God of very God,"¹ that He might descend into this world to take upon Himself our nature in order for our redemption. He lived as a man among men. In due time, after thirty years or more of obedience, the time came when He should do us the greatest service of all, namely, stand in our stead and bear "the chastisement of our peace" (Isa 53:5). He went to Gethsemane; and there at the first taste of our bitter cup, He sweat great drops of blood. He went to Pilate's hall and Herod's judgment-seat, and there He drank draughts of pain and scorn in our room and place. Last of all, they took Him to the cross and nailed Him there to die—to die in our stead.

The word *stripes* is used to set forth His sufferings, both of body and of soul. The whole of Christ was made a sacrifice for us. His whole manhood suffered. As to His body, it shared with His mind in a grief that never can be described. In the beginning of His passion, when He emphatically suffered instead of us, He was in an agony; and from His bodily frame a bloody sweat distilled so copiously² as to fall to the ground.

It is a very rare occurrence that a man sweats blood. There have been one or two instances of it, and they have been followed by almost immediate death. But our Savior lived—lived after an agony which to anyone else would have proved fatal. Before He could cleanse His face from this dreadful

¹ **very God of very God** – from the Nicene Creed, originally the theological confession resulting from the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. This confession reflects the teaching that the Son is of one substance with the Father.

² **copiously** – profusely; abundantly.

crimson, they hurried Him to the high priest's hall. In the dead of night they bound Him and led Him away. Anon³ they took Him to Pilate and to Herod. These scourged⁴ Him, and their soldiers spat in His face and buffeted⁵ Him, and put on His head a crown of thorns.

Scourging is one of the most awful tortures that can be inflicted by malice. It was formerly the disgrace of the British army that the "cat"⁶ was used upon the soldier—a brutal infliction of torture. But to the Roman, cruelty was so natural that he made his common punishments worse than brutal. The Roman scourge is said to have been made of the sinews of oxen, twisted into knots, and into these knots were inserted slivers of bone and huckle-bones⁷ of sheep. Every time the scourge fell upon the bare back, "the plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows⁸" (Psa 129:3). Our Savior was called upon to endure the fierce pain of the Roman scourge; and this not as the finish of His punishment, but as a preface to crucifixion. To this His persecutors added buffeting and plucking out the hair. They spared Him no form of pain.

In all His faintness, through bleeding and fasting, they made Him carry His cross until another was forced by the forethought of their cruelty to bear it, lest their victim should die on the road. They stripped Him, threw Him down, and nailed Him to the wood. They pierced His hands and His feet. They lifted up the tree with Him upon it and then dashed it down into its place in the ground, so that all His limbs were dislocated according to the lament of the psalmist, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint (Psa 22:14a).

He hung on the cross in the burning sun until the fever dissolved His strength, and He said, "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd;⁹ and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death" (Psa 22:14b–15). There He hung, a spectacle to God and men. The weight of His body was first sustained by His feet, until the nails tore through the tender nerves. Then the painful load began to drag upon His hands and rend those sensitive parts of His frame. How small a wound in the hand has brought on lockjaw! How awful must have been the torment caused by that dragging iron tearing through the delicate parts of the hands and feet!

³ **anon** – straightway; at once.

⁴ **scourged** – beaten with a whip; severely flogged.

⁵ **buffeted** – beaten repeatedly with the fist.

⁶ **cat** – a whip used to inflict punishment or scourging.

⁷ **huckle-bones** – small bones or knuckle-bones of a sheep.

⁸ **furrows** – long, narrow, shallow trenches; used metaphorically of the cuts made by the whips on Christ's body.

⁹ **potsherd** – a fragment of broken pottery.

Now were all manner of bodily pains centered in His tortured frame. All the while His enemies stood around, pointing at Him in scorn, thrusting out their tongues in mockery, jesting at His prayers, and gloating over His sufferings. He cried, "I thirst" (Joh 19:28), and then they gave Him vinegar mingled with gall. After a while He said, "It is finished" (Joh 19:30). He had endured the utmost of appointed grief and had made full vindication to divine justice. Then, and not until then, He gave up the ghost.

Holy men of old have enlarged most lovingly upon the bodily sufferings of our Lord, and I have no hesitation in doing the same, trusting that trembling sinners may see salvation in these painful "stripes" of the Redeemer. To describe the outward sufferings of our Lord is not easy. I acknowledge that I have failed.

Christ's soul-sufferings, which were the soul of His sufferings, who can even conceive, much less express what they were? At the very first I told you that He sweat great drops of blood. That was His heart driving out its life-floods to the surface through the terrible depression of spirit which was upon Him. He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Mat 26:38). The betrayal by Judas and the desertion of the twelve grieved our Lord, but the weight of our sin was the real pressure on His heart. Our guilt was the olive-press which forced from Him the moisture of His life. No language can ever tell His agony in prospect of His passion. How little then can we conceive the passion itself?

When nailed to the cross, He endured what no martyr ever suffered. Martyrs, when they have died, have been so sustained of God that they have rejoiced amid their pain. But our Redeemer was forsaken of His Father until He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Mat 27:46). That was the bitterest cry of all, the utmost depth of His unfathomable grief.

Yet it was necessary that He should be deserted because God must turn His back on sin and consequently upon Him who was "made to be sin for us" (2Co 5:21). The soul of the great Substitute suffered a horror of misery instead of that horror of hell into which sinners would have been plunged had He not taken their sin upon Himself and been made a curse for them. It is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal 3:13). But who knows what that curse means?

The remedy for your sins and mine is found in the substitutionary sufferings of the Lord Jesus and in these only. These "stripes" of the Lord Jesus Christ were on our behalf. Do you ask, "Is there anything for us to do, to remove the guilt of sin?" I answer: "There is nothing whatever for you to do. By the stripes of Jesus we are healed. All those stripes He has endured and left not one of them for us to bear."

"But must we not believe on Him?" Yes, certainly. If I say of a certain ointment that it heals, I do not deny that you need a bandage with which to apply

it to the wound. Faith is the linen which binds the plaster of Christ's reconciliation to the sore of our sin. The linen does not heal; that is the work of the ointment. So faith does not heal; that is the work of the atonement of Christ.

"But we must repent," cries another. Assuredly we must and shall, for repentance is the first sign of healing. But the stripes of Jesus heal us and not our repentance. These stripes, when applied to the heart, work repentance in us. We hate sin because it made Jesus suffer.

When you intelligently trust in Jesus as having suffered for you, then you discover the fact that God will never punish you for the same offense for which Jesus died. His justice will not permit Him to see the debt paid, first by the Surety, and then again by the debtor. Justice cannot twice demand a recompense. If my bleeding Surety has borne my guilt, then I cannot bear it. Accepting Christ Jesus as suffering for me, I have accepted a complete discharge from judicial liability. I have been condemned in Christ, and there is therefore now no condemnation to me any more. This is the groundwork of the security of the sinner who believes in Jesus. He lives because Jesus died in his place and stead. He is acceptable before God because Jesus is accepted. The person for whom Jesus is an accepted Substitute must go free. None can touch him. He is clear.

O my hearer, will you have Jesus Christ to be your Substitute? If so, you are free. "He that believeth on him is not condemned (Joh 3:18). Thus "with his stripes we are healed (Isa 53:5).

From Around the Wicket Gate.

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): Influential Baptist minister in England. History's most widely read preacher (apart from those found in Scripture). Today, there is available more material written by Spurgeon than by any other Christian author, living or dead. Born at Kelvedon, Essex.



All men are not godly. Alas! The ungodly are the great majority of the human race. When a man is beginning to be godly, this is the first sign of the change that is being wrought in him: "Behold, he prayeth." Prayer is the mark of godliness in its infancy. Until he has come to pleading and petitioning, we cannot be sure that the divine life is in him at all. There may be desires; but if they never turn to prayers, we may fear that they are as the morning cloud and as the early dew, which soon pass away. But when the man comes to real pleading terms with God, when he cannot rest without pouring out his heart at the mercy-seat, you begin to hope that now he is indeed a godly man. Prayer is the breath of life in the newborn believer. Prayer is the first cry by which it is known that the newborn child truly lives. If he does not pray, you may suspect that he has only a name to live, and that he lacks true spiritual life.—*Charles Spurgeon*