THE CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN

A Handbook for Christian Living

William Secker, 1660

INTRODUCTION

by Theodore L. Cuyler

This is a wonderful book! At whatever page you open it, your eye lights upon *pithy aphorisms*, which combine the sententiousness of Benjamin Franklin with the sweet holy savor of Samuel Rutherford. It contains hundreds of bright seed-thoughts like these: "There is one way to *keep* a man out of Hell — but there is no way to *get* a man out of Hell." "The world is very large in our *hopes* — but very small in our *hands*." "The water *outside* the ship may toss it — but it is the water *inside* the ship which sinks it." "God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves." "Moses had more glory by his *veil* — than he had by his *face*." "A saint is not free *from* sin — that is his *burden*. A saint is not free *to* sin — that is his *blessing*. Sin is in him — that is his lamentation. His soul is not in sin — that is his consolation." Matthew Henry, as rich a writer as he was — did not surpass this little volume in gems of condensed and quickening thought.

It is a wonder, that such a book should have laid in utter obscurity for fifty years. Another wonder is that Religious encyclopedias make no mention of the name of that *genius* who produced this unique book.

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RECOMMENDATORY NOTE

by Alexander McLeod

The Character described in this small volume, is unhappily a very uncommon one — the *consistent Christian*. It is drawn, more from the holy scriptures, than from living examples. Those people however, who are sincerely desirous of knowing and becoming such Christians, will derive advantage from a perusal of Secker's "Consistent Christian." It is written for men and women of plain sense, and is adapted to the taste of no 'scholarly' reader. It is a book of *practical godliness*. Without that show of 'learning', which is attractive to the scholar, it explains and applies the Word of God to the heart and life of man. And without formal scholarly discussion, it is replete with sentiments corresponding with the analogy of faith.

There is nothing to *amuse* or *gratify* the 'fine scholar'; neither is it calculated to comfort the 'mere religionist', who builds his hope of immortality upon zeal for his denomination, or upon the inward feelings of an indistinct and uncertain experience. Mr. Secker points to Jesus as the rock upon which the soul rests, and insists upon *godly works* as the only conclusive evidence, that the professor of religion can give of his having the faith of God's elect. The style is clear and pointed. The attentive reader cannot mistake the meaning of the author. We recommend the book to those who are desirous of being humbled and sanctified, as an excellent help in their endeavors to live to Him — who died for them!

EDITOR'S NOTE

Without doubt, this is the *richest* book we have ever read on practical Christian living. In order to gain the most spiritual profit from the book — it must be carefully perused. It is much like the book of Proverbs, where each line must be contemplated. Concerning the *literary style* of the author, Secker abounds in the use of comparisons and contrasts — often using several analogies in the same sentence. Similar to the Old Testament authors, at times Secker 'purposely exaggerates' the wording to make his point. This *handbook for Christian living* will be a treasure to all serious Christians.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

— TO —

Sir Edward Barkham, Knight and Baron
and his pious wife, Frances Barkham

You have tied me with so many *silken cords of kindness*, that I must live and die in these pleasant bonds! The only return I can make to you is, by pen and ink, to acknowledge myself as your debtor; persuaded that your noble minds are like that of *Artaxerxes*, as condescending to *receive small things from others* — as to *grant great things himself.*

I am sensible what prejudices are conceived against 'dedicatory epistles'. I presume I shall not kindle *strange fire upon your altar* — by informing you, that I believe you take more pleasure in *godliness* than in *greatness*. You have learned that *piety is the best parentage*; and that to be *new* born is better than to be *high* born.

It is reported, in the houses of some great personages, that there are more *oaths* heard in one day — than *prayers* in one year! But in your house, there are more *prayers* heard in one day — than *oaths* in one year. God has ornamented your *terrestrial* crowns with many choice jewels. He has given you of the *fatness of the earth* — as well as of the *dew of heaven!* He has given you *Esau's venison* — as well as *Jacob's blessing!* He has given you the *nether* springs of *common bounty* — as well as the *upper* springs of *special mercy*.

There are *four showers* which have watered your garden: a fruitful posterity, an inward tranquility, a faithful society, and a grateful memory. Ah, how liberal has *God's hand* been towards you; and how lively should *your hearts* be towards Him! You have a large room in many godly bosoms; but, alas, the best man's confidence on earth — is insufficient to carry you to Heaven! A crack in the *greatest pebble* — is not equal to a flaw in the *smallest diamond*.

I here present you with a book, which is more *practical* than *notional*; more fit for a *Christian* to *live* upon, than for a *scholar* to *look* upon. I trust the *dregs* do not lie so thick in it — as to prevent your drawing *clear wine* from it.

I have attempted from this scripture, to draw a *believer's picture*, and hope you will view it with an *attentive eye!* May you remember, that by how much more you are *made greater* than others — by so much more, should you *live better* than others! On earth it is your chief business to *seek* God—and in Heaven it will be your chief blessedness to *see* God. While some look with envy on the rich man's *estate* — may you look with trembling on the rich man's *accounts!*

You know you should not only be *pictures* of piety — but also *patterns* of piety! Then, while you are *descending the hill of nature* — you will also be *ascending the hill of grace*; and you will prove yourselves to be such *jewels of mercy* — as shall be *locked up in the cabinet of glory!*

Now, that your *happiness* may exceed your *hope*; that your *little* family below may compose a part of the *heavenly* family above; that they may live *holily* with you on earth — and *eternally* with God in Heaven — is the earnest prayer of your humble servant, *William Secker*

PREFACE

Christian *Reader,*
To serve man's *necessity* is charitable; to serve his *convenience* is warrantable; to serve his *iniquity* is blamable — but to serve his *purity* is honorable!

The design of this piece is not the ostentation of the author — but the edification of the reader. The *works* enjoined in it are weighty, and the *blessings* annexed to it are many. Christianity is here dressed in the white linen of purity. As grace begins in God's love to us — so it ends in our love to Him. Grace both makes our comforts greater — and our crowns brighter. Those children of God who are found moving in the orbits of obedience — shall enjoy the clearest sunshine of their Father's countenance!

Beloved, be sure to raise your superstructure upon an immovable foundation; and enter into such a business, as has an immediate tendency to blessedness. It is an unparalleled mercy — to be preserved from corruption in the midst of general infection. But it is far better to be *innocent* than *penitent*; to *prevent* the malady, than *invent* the remedy!

Remember, reader that we can call no *time* our own — but the present. How carefully should we shoot — who have but *one arrow* to direct at the mark! The more you enjoy the smiles of God — the more you will shine in the eyes of those saints, who judge of the trees of righteousness, by the *fruits* of righteousness. The enjoyment of this world is neither an evidence of divine *favor* — nor of divine *anger*. Do not judge yourself, therefore, by the *gold* in your *bags* — but by the *grace* of God in your *heart*; not by your *wealth* — but by your *works*. If Christianity is your vineyard to labor in — eternity shall be your bed to rest upon. Every *grace* that is here exercised — shall there be glorified!

It is an unseemly thing to put on the *fair suit of profession* — and to do the foul *work of corruption*. The time is approaching, when God will burn up those vines which bear only sour grapes. The gospel not only requires *diligence* — but it also requires *excellence*; that by the singularity of your *actions* — you may prove the sincerity of your *disposition!*

Christian, the *race* is short in which you run — but the prize is great for which you run. I wish this *gale of divinity* may speed your vessel to the haven of felicity! And when God gives in more to me — I shall give out more to you. In the mean time, I shall deem it my highest honor to be instrumental to others' conversion, and in this relation I beg to subscribe myself, yours in the Lord, *William Secker*

OUTLINE

TEXT: "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, **what are you doing more than others?** Do not even pagans do that?" — Mat 5:46-47

DOCTRINE: That singular Christians will perform singular actions.

I. Eight reasons WHY a Christian should do more than others:

Because more is done FOR him than for others.

Because he is more nearly RELATED to God than others.

Because he PROFESSES more than others.

Because he is inwardly CONFORMED to the Redeemer more than others.

Because he is WATCHED more than others.

Because if he DOES no more than others — it will appear that he IS no more than others.

Because he is appointed to be a JUDGE of others.

Because he EXPECTS more than others.

II. WHAT the Christian does more than others:

He does much good — and makes but little noise.

He brings up the bottom of his life — to the top of his light.

He prefers the duty he owes to God — to the danger he fears from man.

He seeks the public good of others — above the private good of himself.

He has the most beautiful life — among the vilest people.

He chooses the worst of sorrows — rather than commit the least sin.

He becomes a father to all in charity — and a servant to all in humility.

He mourns most before God — for those lusts — which appear least before men.

He keeps his heart lowest — when God raises his estate highest.

He seeks to be better inwardly in his substance — than outwardly in appearance.

He is grieved more at the distresses of the church — than affected at his own happiness.

He renders the greatest good — for the greatest evil.

He takes those reproofs best — which he needs most.

He takes up duty in point of performance — and lays it down in point of dependence.

He takes up his contentment — in God's appointment.

He is more in love with the employment of holiness — than with the enjoyment of happiness.

He is more employed in searching his own heart — than in censuring other men's states.

He sets out for God at his beginning — and holds out with Him to the end.

He takes all the shame of his sins to himself — and gives all the glory of his services to Christ.

He values his heavenly inheritance — above all earthly possessions.

III. APPLICATION

A. Twenty PRINCIPLES which a believer should walk by:

- That whatever is transacted by men on earth — is eyed by the Lord in Heaven.
- That after all his present receivings — he will be brought to his future reckonings.
- That God bears a greater respect to his heart — than to his works.
- That there is more final bitterness in reflecting on sin — than there can be present sweetness in the commission of sin.
- That there is the greatest vanity — in all created excellency.
- That duties can never have too much attention paid to them — nor too little confidence placed in them.
- That those precious promises, which are given to insure his happiness — do not supersede those directions which are laid down for him to seek after happiness.
- That it is dangerous to dress himself for another world — at the looking-glass of this world.
- That where sin proves hateful — it shall not prove hurtful.
- That inward purity is the ready road — to outward plenty.
- That all the time which God allows him — is but enough for the work which He allots him.
- That there can never be too great an estrangement from defilement.
- That whatever is temporarily enjoyed — should be spiritually improved.
- That he should speak well of God — whatever trials he receives from God.
- That the longer God forbears with the unrelenting sinner in life — the sorer He strikes him in the judgment-day.
- That there is no judging of the inward conditions of men — by the outward dispensations of God.
- That it is safest to cleave to that good which is the choicest.
- That no present worldly business — should interrupt his pursuit of future blessedness.
- That gospel integrity towards God — is the best security against wicked men.
- That the richness of the crown which shall be received—shall more than compensate for the bitterness of the cross which may here be endured.

B. Seven DIRECTIONS to those who wish to do more than others —

- You must deny yourself more than others.
- You must pray more than others.
- You must resolve more than others.
- You must love more than others.
- You must believe more than others.
- You must know more than others.
- God must reveal Himself more to you, than He does to others.

TEXT: "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, **what are you doing more than others?** Do not even pagans do that?" — Mat 5:46-47

I. WHY a Christian should do more than others.

In a mountain, the law was *propounded* to Moses — and in a mountain the law was *expounded* by Jesus; the former to a *man* of God — the latter by the *Son* of God; the one to a *prophet* of the Lord, the other by the *Lord* of the prophets.

As the *works* of Christ were miraculous — so the *words* of Christ were mysterious; they were such a depth which none could sound but those whom God had furnished with the plummet of an enlightened understanding. Before any one can peruse the Scriptures to profit, the Lamb of God must open the 'seven seals'.

In this chapter, the *soul*-justifying Savior condemns the *self*-justifying Scribes and Pharisees. Never did men make more boast in the law — but never had men less cause. They knew but little as to the *letter* — but even less of its *spirit*. They were better acquainted with the customs of *nature* — than the canons of *Scripture*. Alas! how shall the blind see — when the seers are blind! They who should have put the eyes of others in, had put their own out!

The righteous *laws* of God cannot connive at the unrighteous *lives* of men; they not only require truth without — but within also. The rays of this sun enter the most secret chambers of the heart, therefore he who *lusts after*, and he who *lies with* a woman are *both* adulterers. He is a murderer whose *heart* is full of hatred, though his *hands* are free from violence. Thus the *lusts* of men may be predominant, when the *lives* of men are not inordinate; as guests may be in the house, when they look not out of the windows. He who begins religion where it should end — will end religion where it should be begun.

But as the suburbs direct to the city, and the portal leads to the palace — so the *context* will guide us to the *text*.

"If you love those who love you — what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?" As an echo returns the voice it receives — so many will show kindness where kindness is shown; but shall tax collectors be as godly as the Lord's disciples? Shall the sons of men — equal the sons of God? Shall the law of *nature* swell to so high a tide — as the law of *grace*? This were for the dribbling rivulet to vie with the swelling ocean; this were for royalty to degenerate into beggary; and for the meridian sun to yield no more light than midnight shadows.

"And if you greet only your brothers — what are you doing more than others?" I shall not meticulously dissect these words, lest I should present to your view a frightful skeleton; nor shall I lavishly paint these windows, lest my deep colors should shut out the light. The native loveliness of Scripture scorns the unnatural color of a bewitching Jezebel. One rough diamond is of more value — than many smooth counterfeits.

My subject treats not of *oratory* — but *divinity*; and my design in it is rather to *express affections*, than to *affect expressions*. Though the *sweetness of the sauce* may yield pleasure to the palate — yet it is only the *soundness of the meat* which can administer nourishment to the blood.

"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" — Mat 5:46-47

This text is like a precious jewel — small in *quantity*, but great in *quality*. The words contain two parts:
I. An *action* propounded.
II. A *question* proposed.

I. An action propounded, touching that which is lawful: "If you *love* those who love you." "And if you *greet* only your brothers." This means to greet — with kisses and affection; therefore, what one verse calls *greeting*, the other calls *loving*; because greeting is a pledge of affection, it is the overflowing of the heart at the lips. There is a kiss of subjection and obedience — that is the subject's kiss; there is a kiss of wantonness and temptation — that is the harlot's kiss; there is a kiss of deception — that is the traitor's kiss; there is also a kiss of tenderness and affection — and that is the brother's kiss.

Now this Scripture enjoins you, not only to greet your *friends* — but your *enemies* also. Party esteem is but withered fruit, and falls rather from Sodom's vines — than Zion's trees. There is therefore a kiss of pity and forgiveness — and that is the Christian's kiss. If this is lacking — the others are vain. For, if you greet your brethren only, then observe what follows, which is:

II. A question proposed, "What are you doing — more than others?" What great or singular thing do you do? The words thus understood contain this golden head of instruction,

That singular *Christians* will perform singular *actions*.

This is the *well* from which I shall draw the water; and the *foundation* upon which I shall raise the *superstructure*. You cannot rationally imagine that you will be supplied with bitter *streams* — from so sweet a *spring*; or that I should make a crooked wall or tottering fence — with such choice materials. Those who collect pearls from this spot — will leave as many *behind* them, as they carry *with* them.

As the disciples of Christ are *more than others* — so the disciples of Christ *do* more than others. A religious hypocrite may move beyond a Sodomite — but a true Christian moves beyond them both. Though the *naturally* dead can do nothing — yet the *spiritually* dead may do something. Though they can do nothing to *merit* the grace of life — yet they may do something as to using the *means* of life.

Cicero complains of Homer, that 'he taught the gods — to live like men'. But grace teaches men — to live like gods. *It is lamentable that we should live so long in the world — and do so little for God; or that we should live so short a time in the world — and do so much for Satan.* Other creatures are not more below a sinner, than a saint is above a sinner. *Man* is the excellency of the creation, the *saint* is the excellency of man, *grace* is the excellency of the saint, and *glory* is the excellency of grace!

Believers are among others, as Saul was among the Israelites — the *tallest* by the head and shoulders. Their birth is truly low — who are not born from above. What are such *earthly shrubs* — compared with *heavenly cedars*? Those trees which have their *top branches* of hope in Heaven — will have their *lower boughs* of activity on earth. Those who look for a Heaven made ready — will live as though they were already in Heaven.

Grace not only makes a man more a man — but it also makes him *more* than a man. The primitive Christians were the best of men. None were more *lowly* in their dispositions, or more *lovely* in their conversation. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation. He was not a *sinner* among saints — but he was a *saint* among sinners. Who would have looked for so fair a bird — in so foul a nest! Though he once acted as the sons of *men* do — yet he was numbered with the sons of *God*. A field of *wheat* may be good — and yet have a *weed* in it. A saint is not free *from* sin — that is his burden; a saint is not free *to* sin — that is his blessing. Sin is in him — that is his lamentation; his soul is not in sin — that is his consolation.

Mark how an immaculate Savior glories in one of these singular saints, "And the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered My servant Job?" Why, what is there in him so considerable? "There is none like him in all the *earth*." Though there were none in Heaven so bad as Job — yet there were none on *earth* so good as Job. He was a man so like unto God — that there was no man like him.

A gracious person, once hearing how far a hypocrite might go, said "Let hypocrites proceed as far as they can in that which is laudable; and when they can advance no further — I will go beyond them." A true Christian not only does more than others will *do* — but he also does more than others *can* do. Whatever is not the *top of nature*, is below the *bottom of grace*. There are some who pretend to believe — but *work* not; there are others who *work* — but believe not. But a saint does both, he *so obeys the law*, as if there were no gospel to be believed; and *so believes the gospel*, as though there were no law to be obeyed. True religion consists not singly in believing or doing — but in *both*.

There are four sorts of things in the world:

1. There are some things which are *neither good nor pleasant*, such as envy and slander. The eclipsing of another's sun — will not make your own shine with brighter beams. O pare off those envious nails, which are ever disfiguring that face which is fairer than your own. Why do you wound yourself — with that plaster which is laid upon your brother's sore? Why do you weep at every *shower* — which falls beside your own field? Why would you envy an ox that *pastures* — which only *fits* it for the slaughter? Who would envy the malefactor that *carriage* — which only conveys him to the place of execution? *You have no less — because others have much; nor have they much — because you have little*. Another's wealth is no more the cause of your need, than Leah's fruitfulness was the cause of Rachel's barrenness. O never pine at your neighbor's prosperity — and you shall never pine away through your own scarcity. He enjoys much — who is thankful for a little. A *grateful* mind is a *great* mind.

2. There are some things which are *pleasant* — but not *good*, such as youthful lusts and worldly delights. These *bees* carry *honey* in their mouths — but they have a *sting* in their tails! When this Jael brings forth her *milk* and her *butter* — then beware of the *nail* and the *hammer!* Death is in the *pot* — while you are tasting the soup! The world always presents a *deadly potion* — in the gilded *cup of worldly pleasure*. If the cup is sinful — do not taste it; if it is lawful — do not carouse over it. Reason forbids you, either to taste known poison — or to be intoxicated with pleasant wine. The fish is caught upon the *hook* — by leaping at the *bait*. Sin is like a river, which begins in a quiet spring — but ends in a tumultuous sea. "Flee from youthful lusts — and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace."

3. There are some things good — but not *pleasant*, such as sorrow and affection. *Sin is pleasant* — but unprofitable. *Affliction* is unpleasant — but profitable. "Before I was afflicted I went astray — but now I keep Your word!" "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I could learn Your statutes!" By affliction, the Lord separates the sin that He hates — from the soul that He loves. He sends affliction — to take the *dirt of the world* out of the *hearts of His children*. It is not sent to take down the tabernacle of *nature* — but to rear up the temple of grace within you. As waters are purest when they are in motion — so saints are generally holiest when in affliction. Some Christians resemble those foolish children, who will learn their lessons — but no longer than while the rod is on their backs! It is well known that by the *greatest affliction* — the Lord has sealed the *sweetest instruction*. Many are not bettered by the judgments they *see* — when they have been bettered by the judgments they have *felt*. The *purest* gold is the most *pliable* by being in the *furnace*. That is the best blade which bends well, without retaining its crooked figure.

4. There are some things both *good* and *pleasant*, and those are gracious operations on the soul. A believer's bed of *graces* — is more fragrant than the most precious bed of *spices*. He who freely gives His image to us — must of necessity love His image in us. How illustrious do the heavens appear — while the *sun* is radiating them with his beams! "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things!"

But, as you cannot see so well by a candle under a *bushel*, as upon a table — I shall therefore hold up the subject to your view in the following light:

Firstly, I shall touch upon the explanation of that which is **doctrinal**.

Secondly, Upon the application of that which is **practical**.

The former is like cutting the garment *out* — the latter is like putting the garment *on*.

I am first to treat of that which is DOCTRINAL.

And here I shall show, first — WHY a Christian does more than others; secondly — WHAT a Christian does more than others.

WHY a Christian does more than others.

1. Because more is done FOR them — than is done for others.

There is that done for them — which none but He who made them could do. They are *loved*, they are *atoned for*, they are *prayed* for, and they are *provided for* — more than others. Now where there is an overabundance of *privilege* — there should be an overabundance of *practice*. We naturally expect more splendor from the beaming of the *sun* — than from the burning of a *candle*; and we look for more moisture from the drops from a *cloud* — than from the drops from a *bucket*. The same heat which melts the wax — will harden the clay. The dew which distills into a *rose* — is returned in a sweet perfume; but that which drops upon a *nettle* — is returned in an ill savor. If the mercies of God are not *loadstones* to draw us to Heaven — they will be *millstones* to drown or sink us to Hell! "Do you despise the riches of His kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed!"

"To whom much is given — of them much shall be required." The blessings we enjoy are not the fruit of our *merit* — but the fruit of God's *mercy*. By how much the more grace we have received — by so much the more glory we are obliged to return to the giver. He does not exact *much* — where *little* is bestowed; nor does He accept *little* — where *much* is received. A *drop of praise* is an unsuitable acknowledgment for an *ocean of mercy!* "Hear this word that the Lord has spoken against you, O children of Israel — You only have I loved of all the families of the earth." But was their *return* according to the *benefit*? Surely not — otherwise He would not have added, "Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." They were more *loved* by God than others — therefore they should have *acknowledged* Him more than others.

Those who have tasted the goodness of God — can never speak good enough of God. Reason teaches, that those should *bless most* — who are *most blessed*. What are *carnal* men — compared to *Christian* men? The *power* of God appears in the formation of the *carnal* man — but the *stupendous grace* of God shines illustriously in the transformation of the Christian man. In *creation* God has given the productions of the *earth* for our bodies — but in *redemption* He has given *Himself* for our souls! Thus, it is a greater favor to be *converted* than to be *created*; yes, it were better for us to have no being — than not to have a new being.

When you were *sailing* to destruction, before *sin's dangerous blast* — then the most blessed *gales of mercy* sprung up, and changed your course! When you lay in the blood of your *transgression* — then God beheld you with affections of His *compassion*. His *heart* pitied you — and His *hand* helped you! Now where there is *distinguishing mercy* — there ought to be distinguishing *duty*. The gardener who holds the largest farms — will pay the greatest rent; and he who sows the most precious seed — will expect the choicest crop. Now read the Great Gardener's complaint against His vineyard: "My beloved has a vineyard on a rich and fertile hill. He *plowed* the land, *cleared* its stones, and *planted* it with choice vines." Here is an inventory of God's goodness to His vineyard. Now what follows? "He waited for a harvest of sweet grapes — but the grapes that grew were wild and sour!" God looked that they should be better to Him than others — because He had been better to them than He had been to others.

God had made them *flowers of His paradise*; while others were left as the *weeds of Satan's wilderness*. While others were Satan's thoroughfare — they were God's choice enclosed garden.

God has made you His own dials — on which the beams of the Sun of righteousness shines! He has made you *gems* for His crown — while others are *stools* for His feet! "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself unto us — and not unto the world?" As if he had said: "Lord, what are we more than others — that You should show Yourself to us; when You might have shown Yourself to them — and not to us?"

Reader! has God made you a vessel unto honor — out of the same lump — as another unto dishonor? Has He shown Himself to you — and not to the world? And will you not show yourself for God — and not for the world? Remember, that it lay as a great blotch on Hezekiah's escutcheon, that, "he rendered not to the Lord — according to the benefit done to him."

2. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is —

Because they stand in a nearer RELATION to God than others.

The nearer the *relation* — the stronger are the ties of *obligation*. In this view, *believers on earth* are superior to *angels in heaven*. Christ is related to the angels as a *master* to His servants — but He is united to believers as a *head* to its members. In this head, there are no glazed eyes — nor are there any withered or dead members in this body. While others are *made* of God — believers are *born* of God. While others stand before Him as *prisoners before their judge* — believers appear before Him as *children before their father*, and as a *bride before a bridegroom*. There are no *stillborn children* in the family of grace. God is the *living* Father, and therefore all His children live by Him; He is also the everlasting Father, and therefore He will have that honor paid Him. "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. But if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is your fear of Me?" As a Father — He will be *revered* for His *goodness*; and as a master — He will be *feared* for His *greatness*.

If honor is not the Lord's due — let Him not have it; if it is His due — let Him not be denied it. As man was born to serve God — he had better never have been born, than to refuse God that service.

This is the language of God to His children — I did not give you bodies and souls to serve *sin* with — but to serve *Me* with. Our bodies were not formed to be the instruments of unrighteous actions — nor our souls the gloomy abodes of foul spirits.

The everlasting Father cannot endure the ungrateful behavior of His own children. Therefore, attend to the great complaint He makes against them. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for My children refuse to hear! I have nourished and brought up children — and they have rebelled against Me!" Where the *relation* is the nearest — there the *provocation* is the greatest. It is far more pleasing to behold *rebels becoming children* — than to behold *children becoming rebels*.

When Caesar was wounded by the senators of Rome, Brutus, a Roman of an illustrious family, also made a thrust at him. With that Caesar gave him a wistful look, saying, "What you — *my son* Brutus!" How can that tender mother endure to feel those lips sucking her *blood* — which used to draw her maternal breast? The unkindness of a *friend* is more sensibly felt — than that of an *enemy*.

The Roman censors took such an utter dislike to the debauched son of Africanus, that they refused to let him wear a ring on which his father's likeness was engraved; alleging, "That he who was so unlike the father — was unworthy to wear the father's picture." Thus God will never grant any to enjoy the *love of Christ in Heaven* — who are destitute of the *likeness of Christ on earth*.

Alexander, who was reported to be an exceeding swift runner, was once solicited to run in the Olympic games. He answered "I will, if *kings* are my competitors." Give me such a saint who will pursue nothing on earth, which may be unsuitable to his birth from Heaven. What! Shall he walk in darkness — whose Father is light! What! Shall those *lips* be found *broaching falsehood* — which were found *breathing out prayers!* What! Shall those *eyes* be found *gazing on sinful objects* — which were found *reading the living Word of God!*

The remembrance of our *dignity* — should engage us to our heavenly *duty*. "It is not for *kings*, O Lemuel, it is not for *kings* to drink wine and strong drink." Such a sin is detestable in a *sovereign*, who has the eyes of his subjects upon him; but it is aggravated in a *saint*, who has the eyes of his Savior upon him. A spot in *scarlet*, is worse than a stain in cotton.

3. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is —

Because they PROFESS more than others.

Though there are many professors who are not true believers; yet there are no true believers — who are not professors. As trees are known by their *fruits* — so believers are known by their *works*. Such as have received *Christ's bounty* — are unwilling to fight under *Satan's banner*.

There are many who "claim to know God — but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good." Man is not what he *says* — but what he *does*. For a man to say what he does — and not to do what he says — is to resemble those trees which are *full of leaves* — but *void of fruits*; or those barns wherein there is *much chaff* — but *no wheat*. "There is a difference between chaff and wheat! — says the Lord."

Ah, how intolerable will the punishment of those professors be — who have appeared as *burnished gold* to men — and are found only *base metal* in the sight of God! What will it profit, to put off the old manners — and not put off the old *man*? A snake may change its *skin* — and yet preserve its *sting*. The gospel professed, may *lift* a man unto Heaven — but it is only the gospel possessed, that *brings* a man into Heaven. To profess piety — and yet to practice impiety — will be so far from advancing a man's commendation, that it will assuredly heighten his condemnation!

"Why do you call Me, *Lord, Lord* — and do not do the things that I say?" As if He had said, "Either keep My words more — or else call Me Lord no more! Either take Me into your lives — or cast Me out of your *lips*." As princes disdain to have their images on *base counterfeits* — so the Lord Jesus cannot delight to see His name on *rotten hypocrites*. Therefore He says, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ, depart from all iniquity." If godliness is evil — why is it so much professed? If godliness is good — why is it so little practiced?

"Who has saved us — and called us with a *holy calling*." Now a holy *calling* — will be attended with a holy *carriage*. Many may be found who can *talk of grace* — but very few can be found who *taste of grace*. It is not everyone who looks like a Christian — who *lives* like a Christian. For there are some who make their *boast* of the *law*, and yet through *breaking* the law, they dishonor God. It is a greater glory to us, that we are allowed to serve God — than it is to Him, that we offer Him that service. He is not beholden to us — but we are made happy by Him. He can do without such *earthly servants* — but we cannot do without such a *heavenly master*.

It is unnatural for a Christian's *tongue* — to be larger than his *hand*. It is lamentable for him to hold a lamp to others — and yet to walk in darkness himself. There are more infected by the *undue conduct* of some — than there are instructed by the *righteous doctrines* of others. He who gives proper precepts, and then sets improper examples, resembles that foolish person, who labors hard to kindle a fire, and when he has done it, throws cold water upon it to quench it. Though such a physician may administer the reviving cordial to some *fainting* disciple — yet he is in danger himself of dying in a *swoon*. I may say of such professors, as was once said of a certain preacher, that "when he was in the pulpit, it was a pity he should ever leave it — for he was *so excellent an instructor*. But when he was out of the pulpit, it was a pity he should ever ascend it again — for he was *so wretched a liver!*"

Many people are offended with the profession of religion, because all are not truly *pious* who make a *profession*. A *little* consideration will correct this error. Does the sheep despise its fleece, because the wolf has worn it? Who blames a crystal river — because some melancholy men have drowned themselves in its streams? Will you refuse medicine — because some have wantonly poisoned themselves with it? He is a bad steward, who having a spot in his garment, cuts off the cloth, instead of rubbing off the dirt. God rejects all religion — but His own.

4. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is —

Because they are inwardly CONFORMED to the image of their Redeemer more than others.

As Jesus Christ is the *fountain* of all excellency — to which all must *come*; so He is the *pattern* of excellency — to which all must *conform*. He is the *root* on which a saint *grows*; so He is the *rule* by which a saint *walks*. God has made one Son in the image of us all — that He might make all His sons in the image of that one. Jesus Christ *lived* to teach us how to *live* — and *died* to teach us how to die. Therefore He commands us, saying, "Learn of Me — for I am meek and lowly in heart — and you shall find rest unto your souls." O Reader! if the *life of Christ* is not your *pattern* — the *death* of Christ will never be your *pardon!* Though the Lord Jesus was a man of *many sorrows* — yet He was not a man of the *least sin*. No man can *equalize* Him in holiness; yet every man ought to *imitate* Him in holiness.

As the sun is the glory of *creation* — so is Christ the glory of *redemption*. The summit of true religion consists in imitating God. Without this, your religion will be found a *Tekel* — when it is weighed in the balance, it will be wanting. It would be well if there were as great a similarity between the *life of Christ* — and the *life of Christians*; as there is between a *copy* and the *original*. What He was by *nature* — that we should be by *grace*. As face answers to face in water — so should life answer to life in Scripture. He who has a way to others — never went out of the way Himself.

A truly pious life, is a looking-glass, wherein Christ sees His own likeness. In our *sacramental participations*, we show forth the death of Christ; and in our *evangelical conversation*, we show forth the life of Christ. An excellent Christ — calls for excellent Christians. As He was never unemployed, He was never *ill-employed*. For, "He went about doing good." As our *happiness* lay near His heart — so *His honor* should lie near our hearts.

Jesus Christ even submits His person to be judged by His actions: "If I do not the works of My Father — do not believe Me." As if He had said, "Never take Me for a Savior — if I act contrary to a Savior." Though it should be a little profound, "Never take me for a Christian — if I live contrary to the life of a Christian." If professors do no more than others, it might be said, "*Those are professors; but not Christians*."

Man is naturally an aspiring being, and loves to be nearest to those who are highest. Why does he not therefore take as much delight in those precepts which *enjoin holiness* — as in those promises which *ensure happiness?* All those who are conformed to the image of the Redeemer, are as willing to be *ruled* by Christ, as they are to be *esteemed* by Him.

By David's language, there were many singular saints in his day: "To the saints that are in the earth, and to the *excellent*, in whom is all my delight." Was it so then? And should it not be so now? We know the New Testament outshines the Old, as much as the sun outshines the moon. If we then live in a more glorious dispensation, should we not maintain a more glorious *conversation?*

How blessed would it be for us, to have that blessed Scripture fulfilled in us, "As He was — so are we in this world." Now if we are in this world as He was — we shall be in Heaven as He is! If there be no likeness between Christ and you on earth — there can be no friendship between Christ and you in Heaven!

5. Another reason why Christians do more than others, is —

Because they are WATCHED more than others.

If once a man commences to be a *professor* — the eyes of all are upon him; and well they may, for his *profession* in the world, is a *separation from* the world. Believers condemn those by their *lives* — who condemn them by their *lips!* Righteous David saw many who were waiting to triumph in his mistakes. Hence the more they watched — the more he prayed: "Teach me Your way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of my *enemies*." It may be rendered, "because of my *observers*."

Christian, if you dwell in the *open tent of licentiousness* — the wicked will not walk backward, like modest Shem and Japheth, to cover your shame; but they will walk forward, like cursed Ham, to publish it. Thus they make use of your *weakness* — as a plea for their *wickedness*.

Men are merciless in their censures of Christians! They have no *sympathy* for their *infirmity*. But God weighs them in more equal scales, and says, "The spirit is willing — but the flesh is weak." While the saint is a *dove* in the eyes of God — he is only a *raven* in the estimation of sinners. Consider Christian — that an unholy life strips off the rich ornamental jewels from the neck of the bride, the Lamb's wife! Sin indulged in a believer, is like a tear in a richly embroidered garment; or like a crack in a golden bell. A *foul spot* is soonest discerned — in the *fairest cloth*. The world will sooner make an excuse for its *own enormities* — than for *your infirmities*.

The behavior of some professors has often given the wicked an opportunity to reproach religion. Lactantius reports, that the heathens were accustomed to say, "The *Master* could not be good — when His *disciples* were so bad." The malice of sinners is such, that they will reproach the rectitude of God's Word — for the blemishes of the lives of professors who swerve from it. O that your pure life, did but hang a *padlock* upon their impure lips! Such will ever be throwing the dirt of professors — upon the face of profession!

If the sun is *eclipsed* one day — it attracts more spectators than if it *shone* a whole year! So if you commit one sin — it will cause you many sorrows — and the world many triumphs. Dr. Whitaker, on reading the Sermon on the Mount, broke out, saying, "either *this* is not the gospel — or *we* are not of the gospel." The cruelty of the Spaniards to the Indians, made them refuse Christian baptism, "For," said they, "He must be a wicked God, who has such wicked servants!" *O that God's jewels would sparkle more — in this benighted world!*

That was a glorious eulogy given to Zacharias and Elizabeth: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." God made them both righteous — and then men saw them righteous. Their religion was *undefiled before God* — and their lives were *unspotted from the world.*

Reader! would you be righteous in God's sight? Then you must be righteous in God's *Son*. Would you be unspotted from the world? Then remember, you are not *of* the world. When the godly are left to fall, then the envious sinner will exclaim, "So that is your religion!" No wonder if a Barbarian gives the alarm — when the leprosy is in an Israelitish house.

6. Another reason why believers do more than others, is —

Because if they *DO* no more — it will appear that they *ARE* no more than others.

As there is no *vicious* — but some good may be performed by him to man; so there is no one so *religious* — but some *evil* may be committed by him against God. As one *bird* does not prove the approach of summer — neither does *one good action* prove a man to be a believer. There is in every being a natural tendency to some center. *God* is the center of the saints — and *glory* is the center of grace. Now where we do not discover that *bias* towards grace — we may deny the *being* of grace.

Reader! would you be *thought* more than tax collectors and sinners? Then beware of *living* as tax collectors and sinners! Jesus Christ gives you an excellent mirror in His memorable sermon upon the mount, for you to behold your own likeness in: "You shall know them by their *fruits*." There is no ascertaining the quality of a *tree* — but by its *fruits*. When the *wheels* of a clock move *within* — the *hand* on the dial will move *without*. When the heart of a man is *sound* in *conversion* — then the life will be *fair* in *profession*. How shall we judge of the *well* — but by the *waters* which run through the pipes?

As a sinner will reveal the good he *desires*; so a saint will show the good he *enjoys*. When the *sun* dawns upon the earth, it is presently *known*; and when the *Son of righteousness* arises upon the heart — it cannot be hidden. It is said of the Savior, that "He could not be hidden." As it is with the *head* — so it is with the *members*: "You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine among men, that they may see your good works." When Saul was made a sovereign, he had another spirit poured out upon him; a spirit of government, for a place of government: and when a sinner is made a saint, he has also another spirit poured out upon him. As he *is* what he was not — so he *does* what he did not.

It is reported of a harlot, that when she saw a certain person with whom she had committed immorality, she renewed her enticements; to whom he replied, "I am not now what I once was!" Though she was the same woman that she was before — yet he was not the same man that he was before.

Were the sun to give no more *light* than a *star*, you could not believe he was the regent of the day; were he to transmit no more *heat* than a *glow-worm*, you would question his being the source of earthly heat. Were *God* to do no more than a creature — where would His Godhead be? Were a *man* to do no more than a brute — where would his manhood be? Were not a *saint* to excel the sinner — where would his sanctity be?

Professor, if you live and walk as a worldling, you subject yourself to that apostolic rebuke, "Are you not carnal — and walk as men?" If men *debase* themselves as beasts — the Lord will *denominate* them beasts. If professors live like other men — God will call them unregenerate men. There is no passing for current coin in Heaven — without the stamp and signature of Heaven.

7. The disciples of Christ do more than others —

Because they are appointed to be JUDGES of others.

If you consult the Holy Scriptures, you will find that both the *Father*, the *Son* — and the *saints* are to judge the world. The *ordination* is the Father's, the *execution* is the Son's, and the *approbation* is the saints'. This shall no more derogate from the honor of Christ, than the sessions of the *justices* derogate from the authority of the *judges*.

When the apostle Paul would quash the sinful suits among the believing Corinthians, he informed them that they did not so much require men of *eminence* to terminate their controversy, as men of *godliness*. "Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? If you are to judge in cases between God and man — how much more in controversies between man and man?" If about matters that are *eternal* — why not in affairs that are *temporal*?

Felons may be jovial in the prison, and bold at the bar — but they will tremble at the hangman's halter. When wicked men come like miserable captives out of their holes, the godly shall rise like an unclouded sun above the horizon of the grave.

There is a *cloud of witnesses* to prove the Christian's judicial process — Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." Again he says, "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, *judging* the twelve tribes of Israel." Now the *world* judges the godly — but then the *godly* shall judge the world. The act of the *head* is imputed to the members, and the act of the *members* is acknowledged by the head.

Reader! in the great day there will be no distinction made between him who now sits on the bench, and him who stands at the bar. Tell me — how will you be capable of passing a righteous sentence on others, for those evils which you have lived in the constant commission of? The true Christian can cordially subscribe to that ancient maxim, "Because I enjoy the *greatest* share of religious majesty, I am therefore entitled to the *least* share of licentious liberty." It was once said to Caesar, "Seeing all things are lawful to Caesar, therefore it is the less lawful for Caesar to do them."

"By *faith* Noah, being warned of God, prepared an ark — by which he *condemned* the world." Noah's *believing* set him to *building*. Thus the consistent Christian judges the world, both by his *faith* and his *practice*.

Christian Reader! remember, that the gospel *purity* of your life — shows to worldlings the *impurity* of theirs. The usual prejudices which the world has against religion, is — that it makes no man better, though it may make some men stricter.

We too frequently behold that those who exclaim against the pride of *others* — are as proud as *others*. As they so constantly meet together, they are expected to be more godly — but they are not more godly for their meeting together. Take away their *profession*, and you take away their *religion*. They have nothing belonging to the *sheep* — but its *skin*.

Mark, how the God of Israel expostulates with the professing Israel of God, "Has a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit." Here is a professing people, outdone by a people who made no profession. If heathens had stuck to their gods — they will zealously keep up their gods. They were *true* to the false gods — while Israel was *false* to the true God.

"Hear, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth!" Why, what is the matter? "Even the animals — the donkey and the ox — know their owner and appreciate his care — but not My people Israel. No matter what I do for them, they still do not understand." God does not call in a jury of *angels* to condemn them — but He calls a jury of *oxen* and *donkeys*, to pass sentence upon them. Alas, that *oxen* and *donkeys* should be more religious — than *men* who professed religion! In their kind they are more kind. If their owners feed them, they readily own their owners.

8. And lastly, the disciples of Christ do more than others —

Because they EXPECT more than others.

A true hope of *Heaven* — excites an utter dislike to the earth. "And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure." Hope is too *pure* a plant — to flourish or grow in an *impure* soil.

Reader! you must not expect to toil for the *prince of darkness* all the long day of your life — and then sup with the *Prince of light* at the evening of death. There is no going from Delilah's lap — to Abraham's bosom. It is not the *tyrannic reign of sin* in your mortal body — which makes way for the *triumphant reign of your soul* in eternal glory. Grace is such a pilot, as without its steerage you will certainly suffer shipwreck in your *voyage to everlasting tranquility*.

There is no gaining admittance into the King of *Heaven's privy chamber of felicity* — without passing through the *strait gate of purity*. "Blessed are the pure in heart — for they shall see God." A dirty looking-glass will not clearly represent the face. To look for a *Muslim paradise* where they expect to bathe themselves in *carnal pleasures* is to conceive the heaven of purity — as a house of impurity. True believers look to be the chaste and happy spouse of the Lamb!

The Lord's *gratuitous bestowments* on saints — awaken the *grateful sentiments* of saints. "Giving thanks unto the Father — who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Men commonly season the vessel with *water* — before they trust it with costly *wine*. Thus God will season the vessel of your heart with His *grace*—before He pours into it the wine of His *glory*. It is hard to say, whether God discovers more love in preparing *heavenly mansions* for the soul — than in preparing the soul for heavenly mansions.

Reader! if the Lord has made you a true believer, you earnestly desire that your *present deportment* may be suitable to your *future preferment*. You know there is no *living a wicked life* — and *dying a righteous death*. As divine justice crushes none on earth before they are *corrupted* — so divine mercy crowns none in Heaven before they are *converted*.

Holiness and *happiness* are so wisely joined together — that God will never allow them to be put asunder: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Though holiness is that which a *sinner scorns* — yet it is that which a *Savior crowns*.

The *soul* of man is the Lord's casket, and grace the jewel. Now, wherever the *jewel* is not found — the *casket* will be thrown away. Though the *wheat* is for the *garner* — yet the *chaff* is for the *fire*. The Scripture presents you, not only, with an account of what *God* will do for a Christian — but also what a *Christian* will do for God.

The high prize of heavenly bliss, is at the end of the gospel race: "So run — that you may obtain." To neglect the *race of holiness*, is to reject the *prize of happiness*. He who made you without *your assistance* — will not crown you until He has saved you from *your disobedience*.

It would be well for fruitless sinners, were they seriously to consider that fearful Scripture: "Every tree that does not produce good fruit — is cut down and thrown into the fire!" If you are not *fruit-bearing plants* — you must be *burning brands*. There is no *making out* your salvation, where there is no *working out* your salvation. Men are condemned, not only for their *profaneness* — but also for their *slothfulness*. Men may perish for being *unprofitable* servants, as well as for being *abominable* servants.

The Lord binds none in the *bundle of life* — but such as are *heirs* of life. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." How cheerfully should those cast in their *net* — who are sure to enclose so excellent a catch of fishes!

Reader! why do you *expect* more than others in Heaven — if grace has not *made* you more than others on earth? "If you love those who love you — what reward do you have?" It is but natural, that love should be returned to those from whom it has been received. Now, natural works — shall have only natural wages. If you would not have God put you off with a Pharisee's *portion* — how can you put Him off with a Pharisee's *performance*?

The Lord hangs the *bait of duty* — upon the *hook of mercy*. He sets the promises of the *gospel* — in the galleries of His *ordinances*. The hardy soldier will undergo a bloody seed time — to enjoy a happy harvest. He has nothing more than *earthly mammon* in his pursuit — but the saint has nothing less than *heavenly mansions* in his pursuit.

Thus have I dispatched the first general head, namely, **WHY the disciples of Christ do more than others.** I therefore come secondly to consider,

II. WHAT a Christian does more than others.

And here I shall form a *golden chain of twenty links* — for believers to wear about their necks.

1. The first singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To do much good — and make but little noise.

Some people say much — and do nothing. But Christians do *much* — and *say* nothing. To *deserve* praise where none is obtained — is better than to *obtain* praise where none is deserved. The old maxim is worthy to be revived — he *who desires* honor, is not *worthy* of honor.

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men — to be *seen* by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in Heaven." A saint may be seen doing more works than any — and yet he does not do any of the works to be seen. An alms which is seen, is by no means unpleasant to God, provided it be not given with a design to have it seen. Though *good ends* do not make *bad actions* lawful; yet *bad ends* make *good actions* sinful. The *harp* sounds sweetly; yet it hears not its own melody. Moses had more glory by his *veil* — than he had by his *face*. It is truly pleasant to behold those living in the *dust of humility* — who have raised others from the dust by their liberality.

That ancient caution of our Savior is very suitable to modern times: "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the *hypocrites* do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full." What the first verse calls doing to be *seen* by men, this calls doing to *receive honor from men*.

Hypocrites would never be anxious for men to see them — but that by seeing them — men should praise them. The indigent are more indebted to their *vanity* — than their *charity*. They give alms, not so much for the *poor* to live upon — as for the *rich* to *look* upon. This is employing the *master's* coin — for the *servant's* gain. Hypocrites are more zealous for the *market* — than for the *closet*. They can pray better in the corners of the *streets* — than in the corners of their *houses*.

It is both fool and drink to a formalist to fast — if others do but see it. It is reported, that the nightingale never sings so *sweetly* — as when others stand by to hear its melody. "Come — see my zeal for the Lord!" when there was no zeal for the Lord to be seen. Jehu only made religion a *stirrup* — to mount upon the *saddle of popularity*. Sounding souls are seldom souls that are sound. The *heart* of a *Jehu* is always linked to the *heart* of a *Judas*. Some people are like *hens* — which no sooner drop their eggs than they begin to *cluck*. If such become a little money in a church's *repairs* — it must be recorded upon a church's *plaque*.

How frequently do the *enemies of grace* — lurk under the *praises of nature!* While a hypocrite is extolled — grace is injured. By how much we arrogate to our honor — we derogate from God's honor. What are the acclamations of *man* — compared to the approbation of *God*? Of what real advantage is it, to be *praised on earth*, by those about us — and *damned in Heaven*, by Him who is above us? One *flaw* in a diamond diminishes both its splendor and value. Where SELF is the *end* of our actions — there Satan is the rewarder of them!

"But when you give to the needy — do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." Acts of mercy are *right hand* acts — but the *left hand* must not know them, because it will make them known. It is a singular thing for Christians to do much in secret — and to *keep it secret* when it is done. God is nearer to us — than we are to ourselves. We need not sound a *trumpet* for any 'acts of righteousness'; for when the *great trumpet* shall sound — every work shall be revealed.

Where the river is the *deepest*, the water glides the *smoothest*. Empty containers *sound* most; whereas the well-fraught vessel *silences* its own sound. As the shadow cast of the sun is longest, when its beams are lowest; so we are always least — when we make ourselves the greatest. Rather Socrates said, "The greatest Wicked Socrates would rather resign his *crown* — than his *honor*: "Honor me before the people!" There is little worth in *outward splendor* — if grace yield it not an *inward lustre*.

When the *sun of worldly grandeur* is in its meridian, it may be masked with a cloud. By climbing too high on the *bough of honor* — you may hang yourselves on the *tree of dishonor*. Some would rather suffer the *agony* of the cross — than the *infamy* of the cross. It is worse, in their esteem, to be *disgraced* — than it is to be *destroyed*. Thus Abimelech, the fratricide, conceived of it: "A woman on the roof threw down a millstone that landed on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. He said to his young armor bearer, 'Draw your sword and kill me! Do not let it be said that a *woman* killed Abimelech!'" Poor man, *he dies* — but his *pride* does not die!

How frequently does God reject those as *reprobate silver* — whom men esteem as *fine gold!* "A man is a *Jew* if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men — but from God." The praise of a hypocrite is not *of God* — but *of man*; the praise of a true Israelite is not *of man* — but *of God*. The former desires to appear *good* — that *he* may be admired. The latter desires to be *good* — that *God* may be honored. The *self-abased* saint on earth, imitates the holy angels in Heaven; while the *self-admired sinner* on earth, imitates the fallen angels in Hell.

The cherubim in Ezekiel's vision "had the hands of a man under their wings." They had not their wings under their hands — but their hands under their wings. Their hands denoted *skill*, their wings denote *celerity*. Their hands *under* their wing's, denote the *secrecy* of their actions. They would not have others fold down and worship them, who were only *around* the throne — but they fell down themselves to worship Him, who is *upon* the throne!

It was foretold of our Lord Jesus Christ, who did the most excellent works that ever were done, that "He will not cry out or shout or make His voice heard in the streets." "It will not cry out," that is — He would not be *contentious*. "His will not shout or make His voice heard in the streets," that is — He would not be *vain-glorious*.

How repugnant to this, was the conduct of the boasting Pharisee. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself — God, I thank You, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector." Hypocrites are better in setting forth their own *worth* — than their own *wants*; in displaying the banners of their *perfections* — than in revealing the heinousness of their own *transgressions*. "I am not as other men are!" Because he was not so bad as most — he thought himself as good as the best. Ambition is so great a *planet* — that it must have a whole orbit to move in. Ambition is *envious* of its *equals*.

A sun-burned face seems fair, compared with an Ethiopian — but *ciphers* can never constitute a *sum*. This Pharisee was as far from being *religious*, as he was from being *scandalous*. But upon what foundation did he rear his superstructure? "*I fast* twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." He proclaims all *out* of doors — which was done *within* doors. He hid his *sins* — which he should have *confessed*; and he published his *good deeds* — which he should have *concealed*.

What *victory* a formalist seemingly obtains over one lust — he loses, by being *overcome* by another. He trades, not for God's *glory* — but for his own vain-glory. If a tear is shed, or a prayer is made, as it is *performed* by him — so it is *divulged* by him. He who traffics in God's service, to freight himself with man's *praises* — shall suffer shipwreck in the haven!

It is reported of Alexander's footman, that he ran so swift upon the sand, that the prints of his *footsteps* were not to be seen. Thus may it be with Christians. Nothing is more pleasing to God, than a *hand* liberally opened — and a *tongue* strictly silent!

Most people are like Themistocles, who never found himself to be so much contented as when he heard himself praised. I will not say a gracious heart never lifts up itself in pride — but I will say, that *grace in the heart* never lifts it up. Grace in the heart constantly acts like itself — but a gracious heart does not always do so.

Saints should resemble a spire steeple, which is *smallest* where it is *highest*; or those orient stars, which the *higher* they are seated — the *less* they are seen. Usually the *greatest boasters* — are the *smallest workers*. The *deep rivers* pay a larger tribute to the sea than *shallow brooks* — and yet empty themselves with *less noise*. What will a hypocrite not *do* — so he might but see his own *signet* upon it when it is done?

2. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To bring up the bottom of his life — to the top of his light.

By how far our hearts are set upon God's precepts — to love them; by so far are God's ears set upon our prayers — to answer them. David knew this when he said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Since the tree of *knowledge* has been *tasted* — the key of knowledge has been *rusted*.

Therefore, "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Spiritual truths oppose the *wickedness* of human reason — because they are *against* it, and therefore natural men cannot receive them. Spiritual truths also exceed the *weakness* of human reason — because they are *above* it, therefore the natural man cannot perceive them. It is better to be a *toe* in the *foot* — and that be sound; than to be an *eye* in the *head* — and that be blind.

There is a great propriety in the exhortation of Peter, "But *grow* in grace, and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." No *knowledge* can equal that of Christ; no *growth* can equal that of grace. Without grace, there may be *seeming knowledge* — but without grace, there can be no *saving knowledge*.

There were more *enlightened*, than *enlivened*, in the days of Christ; hence He said, "If you *know* these things, you are blessed if you *do* them." To *obey* the truth, and not to *know* it — is impossible. To *know* the truth, and not *obey* it — is unprofitable. For, "Not everyone who says unto Me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven — but he who *does* the will of My Father who is in Heaven." Saving knowledge is not as the light of the *moon* — to *sleep* by; but as the light of the *sun* — to *work* by. It is not a *loiterer* in the market-place — but a *laborer* in the vineyard.

A man may be a great *scholar* — and yet be a great *sinner*. Judas the *traitor* — was Judas the *preacher!* The snake which has a *pearl* in its head — has *poison* in its body! The tree of *knowledge* has often been planted, and flourished — where the tree of *life* never grew. A man may be acquainted with the grace of truth, and yet not know the truth of grace. All *abilities* and *gifts* — without grace and holiness — are but like *Uriah's letters*, which were the *death warrants* of him who carried them!

Mere head knowledge will be as unhelpful to the soul on the *judgment day* — as a *painted fire* is unhelpful to the frozen body on a *cold* day. As some articles are *tanned* by the same sun in which others are *whitened* — so are some professors *hardened* under the same gospel by which others are *softened*.

I would never have that the *brand of Christians*, which was the *bane of heathens*, "Though they knew God — they did not *glorify* Him as God." As it is lost labor to unite the flint — if it disperses no sparks; so it is *fruitless toil* to furnish our heads with light — if it does not refine our hearts. Satan may as well put out our *eyes* — that we should not *see* the truth; as cut off our *feet* — that we should not walk in the truth. *Mere theoretical* knowledge may make the *head giddy* — but it will never make the *heart holy*.

Who would wait for such a gale, as would drive them *farther* from the desired haven? or freight their vessels with such a cargo, as would ruin the owner? Shall we hold the *candle of the gospel* in one hand — and the *sword of rebellion* in the other? How many professors are there, who have *light* enough to know what *should* be done — but have not *love* enough to do what they know! Such people have no advantage from carrying a *bright candle* in a *dark lantern*. Give me the Christian who perfectly sees the way he should go — and readily goes the way he sees!

That is *barren ground* — which brings forth *no fruit*. "To him who *knows* to do good, and does it not — to him it is sin." The sins of *ignorance* are most numerous — but the sins of *knowledge* are most dangerous! That sinner's *darkness* will be the greatest in Hell — whose *light* was the clearest on earth!

Pharnaces, the Prince of Pontus, sent a crown to Caesar, at the time he was in rebellion against him. Caesar refused the present, saying, "Let him first lay down his rebellion, and then I will receive his crown." There are many who set a crown of glory upon the head of Christ by a *good profession*, and yet put a crown of *thorns* upon His head by an *evil conversation*. By the *words of our mouth* — we may affect to *adore* religion; but it is by the *works of our lives* — that we *adorn* religion.

It was a just saying of one, "That in the *best reformed churches*, there were the *most deformed professors*." Look to this, reader — that all will be pulled down *without* you — if there be no grace set up *within* you. As trees without fruits are unprofitable — so knowledge without good works is abominable! *Rachel* and *Leah* are fit emblems of *knowledge* and *obedience*. Knowledge, like Rachel, is beautiful — but obedience, like Leah, is fruitful. He who dislikes to do what he knows — will one day not know what to do.

"Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Wise as serpents to guard against the wolf's rapacity; and harmless as doves that you do may do no man any injury. Thus, the *serpent's eye* is an ornament when placed in the *dove's head*. The *lives* of many professors are awfully unlike their *lights*. They have the *light of the sun* — for wisdom; but lack the *heat of a candle* — for grace and holiness.

I have read of a *painter* who, being reprehended by a cardinal for putting too much red in the faces of St. Paul and St. Peter, answered, "It is to show how much they blush at the conduct of many who style themselves their successors!" Were Abraham the father of the faithful now on earth, how would he disclaim all relation to many who call themselves his offspring! Though there was less grace *revealed* to the saints of old — yet there was more grace *manifested* by them. They knew little — and did much; we know much — and do little.

John the Baptist "was a *burning* and a *shining* light" To *burn* is not enough, a firebrand will do so; to *shine* is not enough, a glow-worm will do so. Heat without light — does much harm; and light without heat — does but little good. Give me those Christians who are *burning lamps* — as well as *shining lights*.

The sun is as vigorous in its *moving* — as it is illustrious in its *shining*. I know the *light* of nature requires grace, to repel the *lusts* of nature. Will any say, "The day of hope is dawning within them — when the powers of darkness are ruling over them?" How monstrous is it to see a Christian's *tongue* larger than his *hand!* To *speak* so much of *God* and yet *act* so *little* for God.

3. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To prefer the duty he owes to God — to the danger he fears from man!

Christians in all ages have prized their *services* — above their *safety*. "The wicked flee, when no man pursues — but the righteous are bold as a lion!" The *fearful* hare trembles at every noise — but the *courageous lion* is unmoved by the greatest clamors. Were believers to shrink back at every *contrary wind* which blows — they would never make their *voyage* to Heaven.

"My righteousness I hold fast — and will not let it go." Poor *Job* could hold nothing fast — but his *integrity*. Grace kept his *heart* — when he could not keep his *gold*. Uprightness is so fair a complexion, as not to be subject to any alteration by the *scorching beams* of persecution. The *laurel* preserves its verdure amidst the *severest blasts of winter*. Times of trouble have often been times of *triumph* to a believer. *Suffering* seasons have generally been *sifting* seasons — in which the Christian has lost his chaff, and the hypocrite his cloak!

Dangers

have frequently made the worldling leave his *duties*. The *scythe of persecution* — cuts down the *fragile grass of his devotion*. Those who always refuse to carry the *yoke* of Christ upon their necks — will also refuse to carry the *cross* of Christ upon their backs. Nothing less than the true enjoyment of God, who is altogether *good* — can permanently support us under the suffering of that which is *evil*. The *flesh* is an enemy to suffering; because *suffering* is an enemy to the flesh. The flesh may make a man an *earthly courtier* — but it will never make a man a *Christian martyr*.

Wicked men stumble at every *straw* on the way to *Heaven* — but they climb over *mountains* in the way to destruction! Hang *weights* on *rotten boughs* — and they will suddenly break. If mere professors take up religion in a fair day — they will eagerly lay it down in a *foul one*. The language of such is "Lord we are willing to serve You — but unwilling to *suffer* for You. We will go to sea with You — but on condition we have no *storms*. We have no objections to enter into the war — but upon the promise that we have no fighting!" Such would gladly be wafted to the *port of felicity* — in such vessels as would not be tossed in the *sea of calamity!* They fear too much of wearing a *thorn* — though it is borrowed from Christ's *crown of thorns!*

There are some who would sacrifice a *stout heart* — to a *stubborn will*; and would rather die martyrs *for their sins* — than servants *for the truth*. How shall those stand for Christ — who never stood in Christ? True believers are more studious how to *adorn* the cross — than how to *avoid* the cross. They deem it better to be *saved in troubled water* — than to be *drowned in a calm ocean!*

Temporary professors are like *hedge-hogs* which have two holes; one to the north and another to the south; when the *south* wind *chafs* them — they turn to the north; and when the *north* wind *chills* them — they turn to the south. Thus they lose their *activity* to preserve their *security*. That was a beggarly saying which fell from a prince's lips, "I will sail no further in the cause of Christ — than while I can preserve my safe retreat to land."

Man is a short-sighted creature; he is afraid to follow *too far* upon the heels of truth — lest it should lead him into danger. *Weak* grace may *do* for God — but it must be *strong* grace which will *die* for God. A true Christian will lay down his *lusts* — at the command of Christ; and his *life* — for the cause of Christ. The more a tree of righteousness is *shaken by the wind* — the more it is *rooted in the ground*. What, are you a *member* of Christ — and afraid to be a *martyr* for Christ? If those are blessed who *die* in Christ — what must they be who *die for* Christ!

What though the *flesh* returns to dust — so long as the *spirit* returns to Heaven? What is the body of man, for a soul to *live in* — compared with the bosom of Abraham, for a soul to *lie in*? Righteous Abel, the first *martyr* in the church *militant*, was the *first saint* in the church *triumphant*. He offered up a *sacrifice* — when the altar was sprinkled with his own blood. As his *body* was the first which ever went into the *earth* — so his *soul* was the first which ever went into *Heaven!*

"Should such a man as *I* flee?" says Nehemiah — a man so much owned and honored by God? It is better to die a *conqueror* through Christ, than to live a *coward* in religion. None are so truly *courageous* — as those who are truly Christian. If a Christian lives — he knows by Whom he must *stand*; and if he dies — he knows for Whom he *falls*. Where there is no *confidence* in God — there will be no *continuance* with God. When the *wind of faith* ceases to fill the sails — the *ship of obedience* ceases to plough the seas! The taunts of *Ishmael* — shall never make an *Isaac* disesteem his inheritance.

Reader! if a *righteous cause* brings you into sufferings — a *righteous* God will bring you out of sufferings. A Christian is as much indebted to his *enemies* — as to his *friends*. The *malicious crucifixion* of Christ — wrought out the *glorious exaltation* of Christ. The *worst* that men can do *against* believers — is the *best* they can do *for* believers. The worst they can *against* them — is to send them out of the earth; and the best they can *do for* them — is to send them into Heaven!

That was a Christian expression of one of the martyrs to his persecutors, "You take a life from me, which I *cannot keep* — and bestow a life upon me, which I *cannot lose!* This is as if you should *rob* me of my *pennies* — and *load* me with *diamonds!*" He who is assured of a *heavenly* life which has no *end* — need not care how soon this *earthly* life shall *end!*

Neither the *persecuting* hand of men, nor the *chastising* hand of God — relaxed ancient singular saints. "All this happened to us, yet we had not forgotten You or been false to Your covenant. Our hearts had not turned back; our feet had not strayed from Your path." Believers resemble the *moon*, which emerges from her *eclipse* by keeping her *motion*; and ceases not to *shine*, because the *dogs* bark at her. Shall we cease to be *professors*, because others will not cease to be *persecutors?*

By the *seed of the serpent* — the *heel of the woman* may be *bruised* — but by the *seed of the woman* — the *head of the serpent* shall be *broken!* A Christian may *enjoy a calm of inward peace* — while he *sustains the storms of outward trouble*. If he enjoys the *former* — he may expect the *latter*. If he suffers the *latter* — he may expect the *former*. There is no *summer* without its *winter*.

"Many waters" (may drown the world, but) "cannot quench love." The *water of affliction* cannot extinguish the *fire of affection*. If true religion goes against their lusts, formalists will quickly shut up their hearts against it. They will rather tarry out of the land of *Canaan* — than swim to it through the *Red Sea*. A man will never *sustain trouble for Jesus* — until he finds *rest in Jesus*.

Adventurous Peter could cry, "Lord! if it is *You* — bid me come to You on the water." Love to Christ can walk on the water without drowning, and lie in the fire without burning. It is said of the serpent, "That it cares not to what danger it exposes its *body* — so long as it can but secure its *head*." Thus a Christian cares not to what danger he is liable, so long as *Jesus* is but honored thereby.

Paul, who turned the world upside-down, could not be turned upside-down by the world. "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." A saint is *inwardly pious* — when he is *not outwardly prosperous*. The *stronger the medicine* is — the *sounder* the *patient* becomes for taking it. The higher the flood swells on earth — the nearer the ark mounts to Heaven.

God can strike straight strokes — with crooked sticks; and make Satan's dross burnish His choice vessels. Christians are crucified by the world — that they might be crucified *to* the world. God makes it their enemy — that He might make them enemies to it. Christianity is like that 'phoenix' which has always flourished in its own ashes. While reprobates *attack* the truth with their sword — martyrs *defend* it with their blood. The loss of their *heads* — hastens the reception of their *crowns*.

We would never land in triumph at the *haven of rest* — if we were not tossed upon the *sea of trouble*. If Joseph had not been Egypt's *prisoner* — he would never have been Egypt's *governor*. The iron *chains* about his *feet* — ushered in the golden chains about his *neck*. *Temporal* losses are only gentle breezes — but *eternal* losses are insupportable storms.

Reader! tell me, is not Christ, with His cross for a few years — better than Dives, with his dainties for a few days? What comparison is there between the *short-lived happiness* of the wicked — attended with *everlasting misery*; and the *short-lived misery* of the righteous — attended with *everlasting happiness*?

4. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To seek the public good of others — above the private good of himself.

The sentiment of Plato, a heathen, is worthy to be adopted by every Christian, "I was not born for myself alone; for my *country* claims a part, my *relations* claim a part, and my *friends* claim a part in me." As we are not born *by* ourselves — so we are not born *for* ourselves.

Baruch, the man of God, was forbidden to make *SELF* the center of his wishes, "Are you seeking great things for yourself? Seek them not!" For saints to set their *hearts* — upon that whereon beasts set their *feet*; is as if a king should abdicate his *throne* — to follow the plough; or, as if a man should desert a gold mine — to dig in a pit of gravel. When we *hide* ourselves — it denotes that we are *virtuous*; but when we *seek* ourselves — it denotes that we are *covetous*.

I am unwilling to draw a defective feature in any man's picture; yet how many are there, who have occupied *public places* — with *private* aspirations! While they pretended to undertake everything for the *good* of *others*; it has appeared that they undertook nothing but for the good of *themselves*. Such *suckers* at the *roots* — have drawn away the sap and nourishment from the tree. They have set kingdoms on *fire* — that they might roast their own venison at the flames. Their *drones* stealing into the hive — have fed upon the honey; while the *laboring bees* have been famished! Too many resemble ravenous birds, which at first seem to bewail the dying sheep — but at last, are found picking out their eyes!

There is a proverb — but not none of Solomon's, "Every man for himself — and God for us all." But where every man is for himself — the devil will have all. Whoever is a *seeker* for himself — is not *found* of God. Though he may find himself in this life — he will lose himself in eternity.

The public spirit of Seneca is a sharp censure to many private-spirited professing Christians; "I would so live," said he, "as if I knew I received my being only for the benefit of others." How justly might that complaint be taken up, which was so sadly laid down by Paul, "All men seek their own — not the things of Jesus Christ." If some heathens excel some Christians — it is not because Christianity does not surpass heathenism.

A selfish man will not sow his seed — unless he reap the whole harvest! Nor will he plant the vines — unless he presses all the grapes into his own vessel. The *wheel of his diligence* will not move — unless the *oil of profit* is in it. It may be said to many, as a great personage once said to his servant; "your *rise* has been my *fall*."

If Dives is tormented — because he refused to *impart* his own goods; what shall their torment be — who *take* that which is another's! If those *fingers* are cut off, which so closely clasp their own property; what will become of those *hands*, which are always grasping at *other* men's property!

It was Israel's lamentation — that those who were once clad in scarlet — now embraced the dunghill. It may now be England's lamentation — that many who once embraced the dunghill, are now by injustice, clothed in scarlet. Every man's private interest — is best secured in the public good. A drop of water will soon be dried up if *alone* — but, in the ocean, it will retain its moisture. A single beam of light is suddenly obscured — but in the body of the sun, it retains its splendor.

Too many, in all ages, have turned a common weal — into a common woe. They have spun themselves *superfine suits*, out of the nation's *fleece*. When any springs have been opened — they have laid pipes to convey the water into their own cisterns. Such pretended pilots have steered the *ship of plenty* into their own haven — but God's justice will certainly squeeze such *sponges*, and leave them as dry at last as they were at first. All those *moths* shall be destroyed — which eat into other men's garments. For a man to advance his interest, out of another's property — is to keep all the meat in his mouth, and starve all the body beside. Naturally, every man is his own *Alpha* and his own *Omega*. He has his *beginning* from himself — and his *ending* in himself.

That was a monster speech of Cain to the Almighty: "Am I my brother's keeper?" He thought it was not his duty to be his brother's *keeper* — but did not consider that it was against his duty to be his brother's *assassin*. There are many who will not be their brother's *keepers*, and yet will be their *butchers*. They have riveted themselves to their possessions by the *bones* of their murdered brethren; and paved causeways to honor with the *skulls* of honest men.

Self-seeking has been so long pulling the ropes, that it has rung the death-bell of many nations. It is sad to see the house in flames, while the chamber is being furnished; the ship sinking, while the cabin is being equipped; or the tree falling, while the nest is a building. But better fruit cannot grow upon the *trees of cruelty*, than wantonness and oppression. God will compel them to drink the dregs of that cup, which they have so unjustly mingled for others.

Queen Esther was a singular saint; for she preferred the *public* to her *private* good. "If I perish, I perish! For how can I endure to see the evil which shall come upon my people?" This Israelitess was not more lovely in *appearance*, than benevolent in her *disposition*. She did not prefer her own life to her people's — but her people's to her own.

When Theodosius lay on his dying pillow, he was more studious how to do his kingdom good — than how to sustain his torturing pains; as appears by his counsel to his sons, to whom he left it. "I counsel you to be deeply concerned for the promotion of religion, and the good of man; for by this, peace will be preserved, and wars no more known."

Though the *eagle* is the queen of birds — yet she was not offered up in sacrifice, because she lived upon the spoil of others. Grace teaches a Christian not only to act like a man to God — but also like God to man.

Our Lord Jesus Christ pleased not *Himself*; that thereby He might eternally *profit us*. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor; that you through His poverty might become rich!" A *drop* of His blood is worth more than a *sea* of ours! And yet He died our *death* — that we might live *His life*; and He suffered our *Hell* — to bring us to *His Heaven*. He lay in the feeble arms of His mother — that we might lie in the tender bosom of His Father. His love began in His eternal *purposes of grace* — and ends in our eternal *possession of glory*.

Why was the *Bread of Life* hungry — but to feed the hungry with the bread of life! Why was *Rest itself* weary — but to give the *weary* rest! Why did He hang upon the *cross* on Mount Calvary — but that we might sit upon the *throne* on Mount Zion! His *glorious* face was covered with *spittle* — that our *disfigured* faces might be enameled with *glory!* Why did this *Jonah* cast Himself into the sea of His Father's wrath — but to save the *ship of His church* from sinking! Christ is not only the *vessel* in which the waters of life are contained — but He is also the *pipes* through which they are conveyed.

If the mountains overflow with moisture — the valleys are the richer; but if the *head* is full of disease — the whole *body* is the worse. Happy are those people, whom God will use as brooms, to sweep out the dust from His temple; or who shall hang up as an ear, in the boat where Christ and His church are embarked.

David was a king who ruled in righteousness, and studied not so much to make *himself great* — as to make his *people happy*. For David, after he had *served his own generation*, by the will of God, fell asleep. His royal services were not swallowed up in the narrow gulf of *SELF*. He did not draw all his lines — to the ignoble center of his own ends. Such birds are bad in the nest — but worse when they fly abroad. He served *his own* generation, not the *preceding*; for they were dead before he was alive; nor the *following*, for he was dead before they were alive.

Every *gracious* person is benevolent — but not every *benevolent* person is gracious. An *iron* key may open a *golden* treasury; and *lead* pipes convey pleasant waters. Though *earthly* blessings may be communicated to a spiritual man — yet *spiritual* blessings will not be communicated to a carnal man.

While meteors keep *above* in the skies, they yield a pleasing luster — but when they *decline*, and fall to the earth, they come to nothing.

Though the name of the author of Psalm 137 is not recorded; yet his generous *disposition* should ever be admired. "May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not exalt *Jerusalem* as my greatest joy!" Good old Eli mourned more for the loss of the *ark* — than for the loss of his *children*. His *heart* was broken before his *neck*.

Augustus Caesar possessed such an entire attachment to his country, that he called it his own *daughter*, and refused to be called its *master*; because he ruled it, not by fear — but by love. After his decease, his disconsolate people lamented over him, saying, "O that he had never lived — or that he had never died!" Those whose *lives* deserve no praises, their *death* deserves no tears.

A self-seeker lives *unrespected* — and dies *unlamented*. When once a man becomes a *god* to himself, he then becomes a *devil* to others! Such a one cares not who *sinks* — so long as he arrives *safe* at shore. Those execrable wretches, whose conduct is recorded in the book of Acts, cared not whether a whole city *lost* their *souls* — so that a few shrine-makers might but *preserve* their *gain*.

It is reported of Agrippina, the mother of Nero, who being told that if her son ever came to be an *Emperor* — he would be her *murderer*, made this reply, "I am content to perish, if he may be Emperor." What after-conveyed vain-gloriously, that we may do righteously, "Let us perish — so long as our neighbors, our relations, and our country — is bettered; and the gospel, and the Savior — is honored." But there are many who entirely reverse this language; if not in *words*, yet in *heart* they say, "Let relations, neighbors, country, and religion perish — so long as we are benefited thereby."

When the Lord proposed to Moses that He would destroy Israel and make a great nation of him — Moses, with such a public spirit, became *intercessor* for the children of Israel; yes, even when they were ready to stone him! His affections as a *ruler* — were stronger than his affections as a *father* of his own great nation. Thus *Joshua*, his honorable successor, so far imitated him, that he first divided Canaan into several allotments and portions for the tribes of Israel, *before* he made any provision for his own family. Give me such *carvers* as lay not all the meat upon their own dishes!

5. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To have the most beautiful lives — even among the vilest people.

As an ungodly man *poisons the air* in which he breathes; so he *pollutes the age* in which he lives. The putrid grape corrupts the sound cluster. Pious *Joseph*, by living in the court of Pharaoh, had learned to *swear* by the life of Pharaoh. A high priest's hall instructed *Peter* how to deny his suffering Master. Fresh waters lose their sweetness — by gliding into the salt sea. Those who sail among the *rocks* — are in danger of splitting their ships.

When vice runs in a single stream, it is then a fordable shallow — but when many of these meet together, they then swell into a deeper channel. The *Lord* has appointed from the beginning, that enmity shall exist between the righteous seed of the *woman* — and the unrighteous seed of the *serpent*. It is far better to have the ungodly man's *enmity* — than his *society*. By enmity — he is most *hateful*; but by his society — he is most *hurtful*. A *pious* man in the company of *wicked* men — is like a green branch among dry and burning brands; they can sooner *kindle* him — than he can *quench* them.

As *sheep* among the *thorns* injure their fleeces; so *saints* among *sinners* do an injury to their *graces*. Hence it is said, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." To see a *saint* and a *sinner* maintaining familiar fellowship with each other — is to behold the *living* and the *dead* keeping house together! The godly are more frequently corrupted by the evil deportment of the worldling — than the *worldling* is refined by the *chaste life* of the godly.

The impious lives of the wicked, are as contagious as the most fearful plague which infects the air. When the pure doves of Christ lie among such filthy pots — their white feathers are sullied. You may observe, that if you mix an equal portion of sour vinegar and sweet wine together; you will find that the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine sweeten the vinegar.

That is a sound body which continues healthful in a *pest* house. It is a far greater wonder to see a *saint* maintain his purity among *sinners*, than it is to behold a *sinner* becoming pure among saints. Christians are not always like *fish* — which retain their *freshness* in the *salt* sea; or like the *rose* — which preserves its *sweetness* among the most foul weeds; or like the *fire* — which burns the hottest when the season is coldest.

A godly man was once heard to lament, "that as often as he went into the company of the wicked, he returned less a man than he was before he joined with them." As it is a difficult thing to touch *melting pitch* — and not be defiled; so it is for saints so to act toward sinners as not to partake of their sins. When we cannot help them — it is *their unholiness*; if they hurt us — it is *our unhappiness*. The Lord's people, by keeping evil company, are like people who would approach the sun — insensibly *tanned* and *darkened*.

Every Christian is a *light* in the world — though he is *not* the light *of* the world. "Let your *light* shine before men — that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in Heaven!" O that Christians were more like the *light*, which abides pure, though the air in which it dwells is corrupted! Men may defile *themselves* in the *light* — but they cannot defile the *light* itself. The sun shines throughout an impure world, and yet remains pure. Who can tell, how many resemble *swine* in the fairest meadow; which would break every fence to *roll in the mire*! They remind me of impious Judas, who, instead of being a disciple among devils — was a devil among disciples. Poor man, he was *all precept* — and *no example*. He could attempt to reprove one, who was innocent *itself*; and encourage one, who was sin *itself*.

Pious company brings *fire* to our graces, to kindle them when they are *freezing* — but impious company brings *water* to quench them, when they are *flaming*.

It is observed by some, "that the sweetest flowers may be found among the most offensive herbs." The poets affirm, that "Venus never appeared so beautiful, as when she sat by black Vulcan's side." This we are sure beyond a doubt, that Stephen's face never shone so gloriously in the *church*, where he was *admired*; as in the *council*, where he was *abhorred*. Had he been *like* them — they would not have *disliked* him. Had not God given him *spiritual life* — they would never have put him to *temporal death*. *How* will the fire consume *dry fuel*, when it prevailed to such a degree over the *green*.

That jewel must be glorious in the *sun* — which glitters in the *shade*. There are *many* men that can match with *any* men; they can be *professors* among those that are professors, and *scorners* among those that are scorners. These appear *good* in conjunction with those that are good — but *evil* in conjunction with those that are evil. Every man loves to be a man that is *beloved* — and is apt to take pleasure in them who take pleasure in Him. Take heed of coming to be good a *Christian*, that others may think you a *good companion*. It is hard to be conformed to the world in the *outward* man AND transformed to God in the *inward* man; to be an *outward heathen* — and an *inward Christian* is an oxymoron. It is a Spanish proverb, "Tell me with whom you go — and I will tell you what you do." And our English proverb well Englishes this proverb, "Birds of a feather — will flock together." To be too *intimate* with sinners — is to *intimate* that you are a sinner!

"After they were released, they went to *their own company*." To whom should believers join — but to *believers*. There is no trusting the tamest natures; let but the *lions* out of their fetters — and they will soon show you their bloody natures! How dare you be found *lodging* — in that house where God Himself is not found *dwelling*. There is no sleeping with *dogs* — without swarming with *fleas*.

It is a royal diadem that Christ sets on the head of His spouse. "Like a *lily among thorns* — is My beloved among the maidens." There are many thorns that are among the lilies — but few lilies that are among the thorns. How rare a spectacle is it to see a believer keep his *purity* — in the midst of *vanity*; to be like Noah — a new man in an old world. If Lot had been polluted with Sodom's *sins* — he might have been consumed in Sodom's *flames!*

It is ill breathing — in an infectious air. Satan's progeny do not want to go to Hell — without *society*. A man may *pass* through Ethiopia and yet be unchanged — but if he *remains* there, he will be discolored.

Where the Catholic Church is fallen away from God — there let us fall away from them. Where such *worms* breed in the body of a nation — they will be sure to eat out the vitals of true religion. Not to take away such *traitors* — is to make a nest wherein to hatch their treasons.

6. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To choose the worst of sorrows — before he will commit the least of sins.

The wicked entirely reverse this — for they prefer the *greatest sin* — to the *least sufferings!* This is to leap out of the *hot pan* — into the *consuming fire!* By seeking to shun an *external calamity* — they rush into *eternal misery!* This is as if a man should lose his *head* — to preserve his *hat!* Or, as if the mariner should sink the vessel — to avoid the rising storm.

Above every evil, we should consider sin as the *greatest evil*. Sin is the only *target* — at which all the *arrows of divine vengeance* are shot! Sinners are those spiders which weave their own webs — and are afterwards entangled in them. Our own *destruction* — is but the fruit of our own *transgression*.

Sin has every evil united to it. *Sin is the fountain and origin of all evils*. Thus the prophet viewed it, "Why does a living man complain — for the punishment of his sins?" When man had no evil *within* him — he had no evil *upon* him. He began to be *sorrowful* — when he began to be *sinful*. When the soul shall be fully released from the *guilt of iniquity* — the body shall be wholly delivered from the *burden of infirmity*. *Sorrow* shall never be a *visitant* — where *sin* is not an *inhabitant*. *Sorrow* would be a *foreigner* — if sin were not a *sojourner*.

God is as far from chastening His children *for nothing* — as He is from beating them to nothing. A hole in the ship will sink it to the bottom. A small bite from a poisonous serpent will affect the whole body. There is no way to *calm* the *sea* — but by excommunicating *Jonah* from the ship. If the *root* is killed — the *branches* will soon be withered. If the *spring* is diminished — there is no doubt but the *streams* will soon fail. Where the *fuel of corruption* is removed — there the *fire of affliction* is extinguished.

The wages of sin — is death. As the *works* of sin are dishonorable; so the wages of sin are deadly! The *corruption* of nature is the cause of the *dissolution* of nature. The *candle of our lives* — is blown out by the *wind of our lusts!* Sin is that *noxious weed* — which chokes out the *choicest grain*. Sin is that *offensive smoke* — which depresses the *rising flame*. Sin is that *dismal cloud* — which overshadows the *beaming sun*.

Were it not for sin — death would never have had a beginning! Were it not for death — sin would never have an ending! Man, as a creature, is a debtor to the *commands* of God, as a *Sovereign* — but as a sinner, he is a debtor to the *severity* of God, as a *Judge*.

What is so *sweet* a good as Christ? And what is so *great an evil* as lust? Sin has brought many a believer into suffering — and suffering has instrumentally kept many a believer out of sin. It is better to be *preserved in brine* — than to *rot in honey!* The *bitterest medicine* is to be preferred — before the *sweetest poison*. In the same fire wherein the *dross* is consumed — the *precious* gold is refined.

There are many thousands of souls would never have obtained the *hopes of Heaven* — if they had not been brought there by the *gates of Hell*. As every *mercy* is a drop derived from the ocean of God's goodness; so every *misery* is a grain weighed out by the supreme wisdom of God's providence.

When Eudocia angrily threatened Chrysostom with banishment, he calmly replied; "Go tell her I fear nothing but sin!" He who serves *God* — need fear nothing so much as sin!

Those who launch out into any voyage, should always previously look well to their tackling, lest a destructive storm should drown them. A bad conscience *embitters the sweetest comforts* — but a good conscience *sweetens the bitterest crosses*. How great a wound do vices make in the conscience; yes, even in our infant years! Though the hardened sinner is not afraid to *do* evil — yet he will be afraid to *suffer* evil. They need not fear a *cross* on their *back* — who feel a *Christ* in their *heart!*

The water *outside* the ship may *toss* it — but it is the water *inside* the ship, which *sinks* it! It is better to have the body consumed to ashes for the sake of Christ — than to have the soul dwell in everlasting burnings, through being ashamed of Christ! Though Christians have no warrant to expect that they shall live here *without* afflictions; yet in the exercise of them, faith will teach them to live *above* afflictions.

That noble servant of Christ, Ignatius, gloried in reproaches for his Lord. He truly delighted to suffer for Christ, "I am not *worthy* to suffer for Jesus." Every Christian's *Patmos* — is his way to *paradise*.

Suppose the furnace is heated 'seven times hotter' — yet God can make the sufferer *seventy times happier*. Those who are persecuted for *well-doing*, shall hereafter be crowned with *well-dying*. There are none more welcome to the *spiritual Canaan* — than those who swim to it through the *red sea of their own blood*.

Christian Reader! when you *come* into the world — you do but live to die again! And when you *leave* the world — you do but die to live again! What is the *grain* the worse — for the *fan* by which it is *winnowed*? What is the *gold* the worse — for the *fire* by which it is *refined*?

Pendleton, a self-confident professor, promised to fry out his fat body in the flames of martyrdom, rather than betray religion. But when the trial approached, he changed his note, and said, "I came not into the world burning — neither will I go out of the world flaming."

Those who refuse to give up their *lusts* for Christ — will never be inclined to give up their *lives* for Christ! Paul and Silas had their prison *songs* — in their prison *sufferings*. Those *caged* birds sang with as much melody — as any which have their liberty. Thus Ignatius, in his epistle to the persecutors of the church, gloried, saying, "The wild beasts may grind me, as corn between their teeth — but I shall by that become as *choice bread*, in the hand of my God!"

Have read an account of a woman, who was imprisoned for her Christianity; and being in travail with child, she cried out with pain. The keeper derided her, saying. "How can you endure the *fire* — seeing you make so much noise in bringing forth a child?" "Very well," said she, "for now I suffer as a *sinner* — but then I shall suffer *for my Savior*."

There is more real evil in a *particle of corruption*, than in an *ocean of tribulation!* In *suffering* — the offence is offered to *us*; in *sinning* — the offence is committed against *God*. In suffering, there is an infringement of *man's liberty*; in sinning, there is a denial of *God's authority*. The evil of suffering is *transient* — but the evil of *sin* is *permanent*. In *suffering* — we lose the favor of *men*; but in *sinning* — we hazard the favor of *God*.

The rose is sweeter under the *still* where it drops — than upon the *stalk* whereon it grows. The *face of godliness* is never so beautiful — as when it is *spit* upon! The best of wheat — is that which sustains all the drifts of wintry snow.

That was an heroic saying of Vincentius, to his hardened persecutors, "You may rage and do your worst — but you shall find the Spirit of God administering more strength to the tormented, than is the spirit of the *devil* affording strength to my tormentors!" Where Christians choose that which is truly *best* — there let malicious persecutors do their *worst*. Though you may feel their *might* — yet you need not feel their *malice*. They can have no just grounds of fear, whose confidence is in *God*. *Life* is only to be desired — by those to whom *death* would be no gain.

It is reported of Hooper, the martyr, that when he was going to suffer, a certain person addressed him, saying, "O Sir, take care of yourself! *Life* is *sweet* — and *death* is *bitter!*" "Ah, I know that," he replied, "but *eternal life* is full of more sweetness than this mortal life! And *eternal death* is full of more bitterness than this fiery death!" A man may suffer without sinning — but he cannot sin without suffering.

That was animating language which dropped from the lips of the three Hebrew *children*, or rather of the three *champions*. "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your hand. But even if He does not, Your Majesty can be sure that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up!" Either they must *sin foully*—*or suffer sadly*. They must either *bow to a golden image* — *or burn in a flaming furnace*. But they were as far from *worshipping his gods* — as he was from *worshipping their God!*

The beloved Daniel chose rather to *die* in the den of lions; than shamefully *desert* the cause of the Lamb. Shall not we, for His sake, bear the wrath of man — who, for our sakes, bore the wrath of God? Though obedience is better than sacrifice — yet sometimes, for a man to sacrifice himself is the best obedience. He who loses a *base life* for Christ — shall hereafter find a *better life* in Christ.

When some attempted to turn Polycarp from the faith, by insinuating, that, "there was no evil in calling Caesar *LORD*, and offering sacrifices to him." He replied, "He had served Jesus Christ for many years, and had always found Him a good Master — that he would therefore, submit himself to all the tortures they should inflict; rather then deny Him."

Moses, that memorable worthy, "Chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the short-lived pleasure of sin." What a cup of *medicine*, which removes a disease; compared with a cup of *poison*, which takes away the life? Those who can *live* upon God, in the *use* of the creature; can also live upon Him, in the *loss* of the creature. That was a noble expression, of a noble Christian, "Whatever I thankfully receive as a token of *God's love to me*; I part with contentedly as a token of *my love to Him*."

"Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die." Shall one even dare to die for a *good man* — and shall we refuse to die for a *good God*?

"Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection." Some would have used any pick-lock, to have opened a passage to their liberty; but they knew too much of another world to bid at so high a rate for the present.

It is reported of Hormisdas, a nobleman of Persia; who being degraded of all his promotions, because he would not change his profession of Christ; that afterward, his persecutors restored them all again, and solicited him to deny Christ. But he rent his purple robe, and laid all his honors at the feet of the Emperor, saying, "If you restore these honors, with an intention to make me desert my Savior; I decline to accept them, upon such conditions!" Good man, he thought, and that justly too — that Christ without worldly honor — was better than worldly honor without Christ.

It is recorded concerning one of the martyrs, that when he was going to the stake, a nobleman besought him, in a compassionate manner, to take care for his soul. "So I will, he replied, "for I give my *body* to be burnt — rather than have my *soul* defiled." How many professors are there, who would rather have *sinful* self satisfied, than crucified!

As the power of grace, comes in at one door — the love of vice, will go out at another!

The only way, to have the house of *Saul* weakened; is to get the house of *David* strengthened. Those Philistines, who lacked courage to meet Sampson when he was in *vigor*; could insultingly dance round him, when he was in *weakness*.

Reader! consider seriously — that it is sin which in this *life debases* a person; and in the next *life destroys* him. Their state must be dreadful, whose *end* is damnation, because their *damnation* is without end. No condition can be so intolerably *doleful* — as that which is unalterably *dreadful*.

A certain person, on seeing a Christian woman go cheerfully to prison, said to her, "O you have not yet tasted of the bitterness of death!" She as cheerfully answered, "No, nor shall I ever; for Christ has promised, that those who keep His sayings, shall never see death."

A believer may feel the *stroke* of death; but he shall never feel the *sting* of death. The *first* death may bring his *body* to corruption; but the *second* death shall never bring his *soul* to destruction. Though he may endure the *cross* — yet he shall not endure the *curse*. There can be no condemnation to those Christians who belong to Christ.

7. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To be a father to all in charity — and yet a servant to all in humility.

First, to be a father to all — in charity. That crop that is *sown* in mercy — shall be *reaped* in glory. In Heaven, there are *riches* enough — but no *poor* to receive them. In Hell, there are *poor* enough — but no *riches* to relieve them. How many of the most wealthy — are deaf to the most importunate requests for mercy! They will do no good in the world — with the goods of the world. They too much resemble sponges — which greedily *suck up* the waters, but will not yield a return of them again, until they are well *squeezed*.

Necessity, is not likely to be supplied by the hand of misery; while so many, who would help, cannot for lack of *ability*; and so many, who could help, will not for lack of *charity*. There is not a drop of water — for such a *Dives* in Hell; who has not a crumb of bread — for a poor distressed *Lazarus* upon earth. Every act of *charity* — is but an act of *equity*. It is not the bestowment of our *gifts*; but the payment of our *debts*.

The rich man's *excess* was ordained to relieve the poor man's *necessity*. A lady on giving sixpence to a beggar, said thus to him, "I have now given you more than ever God gave to me." To whom he replied, "No, madam! No, madam — God has given you all your abundance." "That is your mistake" said she, "for He has but *lent it* to *me* — that I might bestow it on such as you."

John, the beloved disciple of Christ, inculcates the doctrine of *love*, to the disciples of Christ, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father — loves His children, too." As holiness works a *likeness* to Him who begets it; so it works a *love* to those who enjoy it. It is impossible for anyone to love the *person* of Christ — who does not delight in the *picture* of Christ. While he is out of charity with his *brother* — he shows that God is out of charity with him. We lose more for lack of *God's love* — than our brethren lose for lack of *our* love.

He is *not* a covetous man, who lays up something *providentially* — but he is a covetous man, who gives out nothing *willingly*. Men frequently manifest more willingness in laying *up* — than in laying *out*. He is a prudent a man who *distributes discreetly* — as he who *accumulates carefully*.

Reader! the hope of living long on earth, should not make you *covetous* — but the prospect of living long in Heaven should make you *bounteous*. Though the *sun of charity* rises at *home* — yet it should always set *abroad*.

Seneca, the heathen, inculcates a principle worthy of the acceptance of every Christian, "I truly enjoy no more of the world's affluence — than what I willingly distribute to the needy." Without *your mercy* — the *poor* cannot live on earth; and without *God's mercy* — you shall not live in Heaven! Some men's *charlishness* entirely swallows up their *charitableness*. Instead of *praying* one for another — they are making a *prey* of one another.

When I consider that our hearts are no *softer* — I wonder that the times are no *harder*. It is a reproach to many rich men, that God should give them so *much* — and that they should give the poor so *little*.

Some observe that the *most barren grounds* — are nearest to the *richest mines*. It is too often true in a spiritual sense, that those whom God has made the most *fruitful in estates* — are most *barren* in *good works*. It is too generally true, that the rich spend their substance *wantonly* — while the poor give their alms *willingly*. A penny comes with more difficulty out of a bag that is pressing full — than a dollar out of a purse that is half empty.

Why does the Lord make your cup run over — but that other men's lips might taste the liquor? The showers which fall upon the highest mountains, should glide into the lowest valleys. "Give — and it shall be given you," is a maxim little believed.

It is *infidelity* which is the *spring* of all *cruelty*. Wherever you can discover the face of one, you may also hear the sound of the other's feet. If you deny relief to those who are *virtuous* — you kill *laborious bees*; if you bestow your gifts on those who are *wicked* — you do but support *drones*. But it is better to *favor* an illegitimate *child* — than to *murder* a legitimate *child*. God looks not so much on the *merits of the beggar* — as upon the *mercy of the giver*.

"The Lord has already told you what is good, and this is what He requires: to *do what is right*, to *love mercy*, and to *walk humbly* with your God." Here is a trinity of *precepts* — from a trinity of *persons*. Pharisees more delight to *hear* this precept, than to *practice* it; which is, as if a man should cry up the kindness of his king — and at the same time join in rebellion against him. If all were rich — no alms need be received; if all were poor — no alms could be bestowed.

God, who could have made all men wealthy, has made most men poor; that the *poor* might have Christ for an example of *patience* — and the *rich* might have Him for an example of *goodness*. *Cruelty* is one of the highest scandals to piety; for instead of turning *lions* into *lambs* — it turns lambs into lions!

"Be *merciful* — as your Father in Heaven is merciful." *Clemency* is one of the brightest diamonds in the crown of *majesty*. How cheerfully should we practice benevolence, when we consider who has set us the example! "Be *perfect* — even as your heavenly Father is perfect." What one Scripture calls *mercy* — the other styles *perfection*; as if this *one perfection of mercy* included all. He who shows mercy when it may be *spared* — will receive mercy when it shall be *needed*.

It is reported of one of the dukes of Savoy, that being asked by certain ambassadors at his court what hounds he kept; he conducted them into a large room, where there were a number of poor people sitting at his table. "These" said he, "are all the hounds I have upon earth, and with whom I am in pursuit of for the kingdom of Heaven." It is counted an honor to *live* like *princes* — but it is a greater honor to *give* like princes.

"Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world." The *flames of piety* towards God — must be accompanied with the *incense of charity* towards man. Mercy is so good a *servant* — that it will never allow its master to die a *beggar*.

Those who have drained their own wells dry, in order to fill the poor man's cistern — shall never perish for lack of water to quench their thirst. Those who have blessed others — shall be blessed themselves.

"Then the King will say to those on His right — Come, you who are blessed of My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me." *Mercy is the queen of beauty — and the blessed offspring of the King of glory!*

Scarcely any virtue in the whole Scripture has been returned with greater interest — than the love of mercy. Though charity may make your purse *lighter* one day; yet God will make it *heavier* another. All who have their names registered in the *book of eternity* — will have the poor man's distresses recorded upon the *heart of sympathy*. For though they are so *poor* as to be *unable* to relieve him — yet they are so *tender* as to *pity* him. I know no better way to preserve your *meal* — than by parting with your *cake*. Large *springs* should send forth their waters, without *pumping*. Your *benevolence* should seek the *poor* — before the *poor* seek your benevolence.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness . . . ." He who distributes in compassion, has put on the badge of election. Many can love at their *tongue's* end — but the godly love at their *finger's* end. If a man is without proper clothing, it is easy for the miser to bid him be clothed; or if he is empty, he can easily bid him be filled; as if poor Christians were able to live upon the air. Liberality does not consist in *good words* — but in *good works!* The *doubtful* are to be resolved by our counsels — but the *necessitous* are to be relieved by our morsels. It is exceedingly lovely to behold the *pictures of purity*, though they be hung in the *frames of poverty*.

Reader would you be covetous of anything? let it be rather to *lay out on necessity*, than to *lay up for posterity*. Generosity is seed; and the gardener does not become wealthy by saving his seed — but by *sowing* of his seed.

Secondly, A servant to all — in humility. Our first *fall* was by rising against God — but our best *rise*, is by falling down before Him. The acknowledgment of our own *impotence*, is the only stock upon which the Lord engrafts divine *assistance*.

A humble saint — looks most like a citizen of Heaven. "Whoever will be *chief* among you — let him be your *servant*." He is the most *lovely* Christian, who is the most *lowly* Christian. As incense smells the sweetest when it is *beaten smallest* — so saints look loveliest when they *lie lowest*. God will not allow a weed of pride to grow in His garden, without taking some course to root it up. A believer is like a vessel cast into the sea — the more it *fills*, the more it *sinks*.

"Pride goes before destruction — and a haughty spirit before a fall." The world can neither pull a *humble* man down — because God will *exalt* him; nor keep a *proud* man up — because God will *debase* him.

Do but mark how one of the best of saints, views himself as one of the least of saints; "For I am the least of the apostles — and do not even deserve to be called an apostle!" In the highest heavens — the beams of *majesty* are displayed; but to the lowest hearts — the streams of *mercy* are discovered. "Be clothed with humility." Humility is a *saint's ornament* but a *sinner's torment*. The *garment of humility* should always be worn on the *back of Christianity*.

God many times places a *thorn in the flesh* — to pierce the *balloon of pride*. He makes us feel a sense of our *misery* — that we may sue for His unmerited *mercy*. The first Adam was for self-advancement — but the second Adam is for self-abasement. The former was for having *SELF deified* — the latter is for having *SELF crucified*.

Though there may be something *left* by self-denial; yet there can be nothing *lost* by self-denial. Nay, a man can never *enjoy* himself — until he is brought to *deny* himself. We *live* — by *dying to ourselves*; and *die* — by *living to ourselves*. There is no *proud man* — who is not a *foolish man*, and scarcely is there any *foolish man* — who is not a *proud* man. It is the *night-owl of ignorance*, which broods and hatches the *peacock of pride*.

God *abhors* those people worst — who *adore* themselves most. Pride is not a *Bethel* — that is, a house where *God* dwells; but a *Babel* — that is, a stinking dungeon in which *Satan* abides. Pride is not only a most *hateful* evil — but it is a *radical* evil. As all other lusts are found *lodging* in it — so they are found *springing* from it. Pride is a *foul leprosy*, in the *face of morality*; and a *hurtful worm*, gnawing at the *root of humility*. Pride is a cancer within, and a spreading plague without.

"God *resists* the *proud* — but gives grace unto the *humble*." Give me the lovely vessel of humility, which God shall preserve and fill with the wine of His grace; rather than the varnished cup of pride, which He will dash in pieces like a potter's vessel. Where *humility* is the corner-stone — there *glory* shall be the top-stone.

It is impossible to have *low* thoughts of ourselves, while we entertain *high* thoughts of ourselves. "Even if everyone else deserts You, I never will!" Poor Peter, he was the most *impotent* — when he was the most *arrogant*. He had no doubt of *standing*, while others were *falling*. But it proved at last, that he fell while others stood.

That was an excellent saying of one; "Where a gracious person would sit below me — I will acknowledge his *dignity*; but where a proud person would move above me — I would abhor his *vanity!*" A humble heart may meet with opposition from *man* — but it shall meet with approbation from *God*. As humility is a grace very *excellent* in itself; so it is very *pleasing* to God. He who is a subject of the *former* — shall hereafter be an inheritor with the *latter*.

8. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To mourn most before God — for those lusts which appear least before men.

Others cannot mourn in secret for *public* sins — but we should mourn in public for our *secret* sins. That must be sought with *repentance*, which has been so long lost by *disobedience*. *Outward acts* are most *scandalous* among *men* — but *inward lusts* are most *atrocious* before *God*.

Reader! if you would know the heart of your sin — then you must know the sins of your heart! "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are the things that defile a man!" These *streams of defilement* which appear in your *life* — do but show what a *fountain of wickedness* there is in your *heart!* Even the "thought of foolishness is sin!" "When sin has conceived, it brings forth death!" There is no sin so little — as not to merit Hell! Sin's first-born is death — and its last-born is Hell.

Though *repentance* is the *act of man* — yet it is the *gift of God*. It requires the same power to *melt* the heart — as to *make* it. As we are deeply *fallen* from a state of *innocence*, so we should *rise* to a state of *penitence*. Those sins shall never make a *Hell* for us — which are a *hell* to us. Some people do nothing more — than make work for repentance; and yet do nothing less — than repent of their works. They have sin enough for all their *sorrows* — but not sorrow enough for all their *sins*. Their *eyes* are *windows* to let in *lusts* — when they should be *flood-gates* to pour out *tears!*

When godly sorrow takes possession of the house — it will quickly shut sin out of doors. There must be a falling *out* with our lusts — before there can be a genuine falling *off* from our lusts. There must be a sincere *loathing of sin in our affections* — before a true *leaving* of sin in *our actions*. It is a *hearty mourning* for our transgressions, which makes way for a *happy funeral* of our corruptions!

Sinner, you have filled the *book* of God with your *sins* — and will you not fill the *bottle* of God with your *tears?* Remember, that when Christ draws the likeness of the new creature, His first brush is dipped in water: "Unless you *repent* — you shall all likewise *perish!*" It is not better to *repent* without *perishing* — than to *perish* without *repenting!* Godly sorrow is such a grace, that without it — not a *soul* shall be saved; and with it — not a *soul* shall be lost! It is not therefore better to swim in the *water-works of godly repentance*—than to burn in the *fire-works of divine vengeance?* Do not think that the *tears* which are *shed* in Hell — will in the least abate the *torments* which are *suffered* in Hell!

Repentance is a priceless *grace* — for it is the bestowment of a priceless *Savior*. "God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins." As a *Prince* He gives *repentance* — and as a *Priest* He gives a *pardon*. Our *humiliation* — is the fruit of His *exaltation*. As He was abased for the sinner's *advancement* — so He was exalted for the sinner's *abasement!* Remember, sinner, if your *heart* is not broken for your *sins* — your *guilt* is not broken from you. If you lay not your sins to heart — that you may be humbled; God will lay your sins to your charge — that you may be damned. Though repentance is not a pardon's *obtainer*; yet it is a pardon's *forerunner*.

He who *lives* in sin, without *repentance* — shall *die* in sin, without *forgiveness*. There is no coming to the *fair haven of glory* — without sailing through the *narrow strait of repentance*. Christ rejoices over those as *blessed* — who mourn over themselves as *cursed*. "Blessed are those who mourn — for they shall be comforted." Out of the *saltiest* water — God can brew the *sweetest cordial*. The skillful bee gathers the *best honey* — from the *bitterest herbs*. When the cloud has been dissolved into a *shower* — there soon follows a glorious *sunshine*. The more a stone is *chiseled* by the hand of the engraver — the greater the *beauty* of the gem. By *groans unutterable* — the Lord ushers in *joys unspeakable*.

None do more *sing* in the *possession* of Christ, than such as most *lament* the *departure* of Christ. Usually their *joys* — are commensurate to their *sorrows*. A *tender heart* is like *melting wax* — ah what *choice impressions* are made upon such *soft dispositions!*

A Christian should mourn more for the *lusts* of the flesh — than for the *works* of the flesh; for the sin of our *nature* transcends the nature of all our outward sins. *Carnal* sins defile the *soul* by the *body* — but *spiritual* sins defile the soul in the body. Many people can mourn over a body from which a *soul* is departed — but they cannot mourn over a soul from which God has deserted! Alas! What is the *bite* of a *flea* — compared to the bite of a *lion*? What is a *spot* in the *face* — compared to a *stab* in the *heart*? *Inward* diseases are least visible — and yet most fatal. A man may die of an *internal cancer* — although a *spot* never appears on his *body*.

Sin in the soul, is like Jonah in the ship — it turns the *smoothest water* into a *troubled ocean*. We must mourn for *sin on earth* — or *burn for sin in Hell!* It is the *coldness* of our hearts — which kindles the *fire* of God's anger. "They will look on Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for Him as for a firstborn son who has died!" Christians! he nails which pierced *Christ's hands* — should now pierce your *hearts!* You should now be deeply wounded with *godly sorrow*, for having so deeply wounded Him with your *ungodly sins!* It should grieve *your spirits* — to remember how much you have grieved *His Spirit*.

A believer puts on the *sackcloth of contrition* — for having put off the *garment of perfection*. As the *sugar-cube* is dissolved, and weeps itself away—when dipped in wine—likewise do our *hearts* melt under a sense of divine love. Our language at such a season is, "O that we should be such *base children* — to such a *blessed Father!*"

Man must be convinced of *sin* — before he can be truly *repentant* of sin. *Unbelief* in the heart is like the *worm* in Jonah's *gourd* — an unseen adversary. Unbelief is *least visible* — but *most hurtful*. Unbelief is the worst of robbers — it both *plunders* and *wounds* the soul. Christ may dwell in the *heart* — where unbelief *lurks* — but not where it *reigns*. If Christ destroys its *armor* — it becomes as weak as other men. The chief strength in which unbelief trusts — is *ignorance!* It is no wonder why men *sigh* so little for sin — when they *see* so little of sin. They have tears enough for their *outward losses* — but none for their *inward lusts!* They can mourn for the *evil* which sin *brings* — but not for *sin* which brings the evil.

Pharaoh more lamented the hard *strokes* that were upon him, than the hard *heart* which was within him! *Esau* did not mourn because he sold the *birthright*, which was his *sin* — but because he lost the *blessing*, which was his *punishment*. This is like *weeping over an onion* — the eye sheds tears because it *hurts!* When the sailing is smooth, the mariner has his heart set on his costly *cargo* — yet he casts it overboard in a *storm*. Many complain more of the *sorrows* to which they are born — than of the *sins* with which they were born! They tremble more at the *vengeance* of *sin* — than at the *venom* of sin. The *venom* of sin *delights* them — the *vengeance* of sin *affrights* them!

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling seizes the ungodly!" *Why* — *what is the matter?* "Who among us can dwell with a consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" They feared *sin* — not as it was a *black coal which defiled* — but as it was a *fire which burned them!*" A *stroke from God's justice* broke the heart of Judas into despair; while a *look from Christ's mercy* melted Peter's heart into tears!

There are two evil things in our sins: the *devilishness* of them, and the *dangerousness* of them. Now, take a saint and an unregenerate sinner, the saint says, "What evil have I *done*?" The sinner says, "What evil must I *suffer*?" One mourns for the *sin* — the other mourns for the *punishment!* The saint grieves because his soul is *defiled* — the sinner grieves because his soul is *damned*. Water may gush from a *rock* — when it is smitten with a *rod*. But all such streams are *lost*; for they neither quench the flames of Hell — nor fill God's bottle in Heaven.

Our whole life should be a life of *repentance* — and such repentance, as needs not to be repented of. While the *vessel* is leaking, the *pump* may be going. Reader, it is an unfavorable symptom, if you can *wipe away tears* from your eyes — before God has *washed away guilt* from your conscience! It is better traveling to *Heaven sadly* — than to *Hell merrily!* Give me a *sorrowful saint* — rather than a *merry sinner*.

Did the *rock* rend — when Christ died for sin? And shall not our *hearts* rend — for having lived in sin? "If we confess our sin — He is faithful and just to *forgive* us our sin; and to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness." Did ever tears like these drop from the lips of any being — except God? Here, the sinner is desired only to *acknowledge* the *debt* — and the mountain of sin shall be canceled. Is it not therefore better to be *saved by divine mercy* — than to be *damned by divine justice?* As soon as we are oppressed, and groan under our burden of sin—we are sure to be *eased* by Christ's shoulders. If we repent of our offences with sincere grief — the offended Lord joyfully forgives and forgets them all.

Where misery passes undiscerned — there mercy passes unheeded. Christ may *knock* long at such doors — before He gains *admittance*. He only enters into those — who enter into themselves. "Behold I stand at the door and knock!" Christ offered comes to the *door*— than He enters the *house*. As we knock at His door for *audience* — so He does at ours for *entrance*. If *Christ* is shut out of our *heart* — our *prayers* will be shut out of His heart. Why should those be heard by Him — who never acknowledged *His* voice?

Bernard says, "The tears of penitents — are the wine of angels!" When a *sinner repents* — the *angels rejoice!* Give me such a *mourning* on earth — as creates *music* in Heaven. Many are *battered as lead by the hammer* — who were never *bettered as gold by the fire*. Sometimes, that repentance which begins in the *fears of Hell* — ends in the *flames of Hell!*

9. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To keep his heart the lowest — when God raises his *estate* the highest.

Paul saw the need of this, when he enjoined Timothy to charge those who were *rich* in this world not to be proud-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches. *Sinful arrogance*, usually attends *creature-confidence*. *Worldly wealth* is a bellows to swell the balloon of pride! For when men's *estates* are lifted up — it is but too common for men's *hearts* to be puffed up. Oh! how fond is *thin dust* — of *thick clay!* *Pride* breeds in *great estates* — as *worms* do in *sweet fruits*.

Remember, Christian, if you are *poor* in the *world* — you should be *rich* in *faith*; and if you are *rich* in this *world*, you should be *poor* in *spirit*. The way to *ascend* — is to *descend*; the deeper a tree *roots* — the wider do its *branches* spread. The sun of *prosperity* shines the *dimmest* — in the *sphere of humility*. The true *nobility* of the *mind* — consists in the *humbleness* of the mind. Consider, that as some have *so little* — that they may never *have cause* to *boast*; so none have so *much* — as to have the *least cause* to *boast* before God.

Shall the theatrical vagrant be proud of his borrowed robes, or the mud wall swell because the beams of a beautiful sun shine upon it? *Gold* in your *bags* may make you *great* — but it is *grace* in your *hearts* which makes you *godly*. Godliness, without greatness, shall be esteemed; when greatness, without godliness shall be confounded. *Proud sinners* are the fittest companions — for *proud devils*. The more *prosperity* man enjoys — the more *humility* God enjoins.

Nature teaches us, that those trees bend the most *freely* — which bear the most *fully*. As a proud heart loves none but itself — so it is *beloved* by none but itself. Who would attempt to gain those *pinnacles* — that none have ascended without *fears*, or descended without *falls*? When men through *daring pride* cast off all *allegiance* to *God* — He in *just derision* casts them out from the *inheritance* of God. If we refuse to *acknowledge* Him — He will refuse to *acknowledge* us.

It is reported of Philip of Macedon, that after having obtained the honor of an unexpected victory, he was observed to look very much dejected. On being asked the reason, he replied, "that the honors which were *obtained* by the *sword*, might also be *lost* by the sword." Was he *pensive* — when providence crowned him with *victory?* and shall we be vainly *elated* — when providence makes us wealthy? The Supreme Majesty cannot allow us to glory in any, but Himself. Therefore, when we *glory* in our *pride* — He *stains* the pride of our glory. It is a difficult matter — to be *grand* in the estimation of *others* — and *base* in our own estimation. The face of no mere man ever shone so illustriously, as that of the ancient Jewish lawgiver's; and yet it is affirmed that no man's heart was ever so meek. But most men resemble chameleons; which no sooner take in the *air* — than they begin to *swell*.

As that is a *rebellious heart* — in which sin is allowed to reign; so that is not a very *enlarged heart* — which the world can fill. Alas, what will it profit us to sail before the *pleasing gales of prosperity* — if we are afterwards overset by the *gusts of vanity?* Your bags of gold should be *ballast* in your vessel — to keep her always *steady*; instead of being *topsails* to your masts — to make your vessel *giddy*. Give me that distinguished Christian, who is rather *pressed down* under the weight of all his honors — than *puffed up* with vain-glory.

It has been observed by those who are experienced in the sport of angling, that the *smallest* fishes bite the *fastest*. Oh, how few great men do we find so much as *nibbling at the gospel hook!* "But the leaders had utterly rejected their God." *Mercy* favored them — but *gratitude* could not bind them.

When King James' *tutor* lay upon his expiring pillow, his Majesty sent to inquire how he did, "Go tell my royal sovereign, that I am going where *few kings go*." The *tree of life* is not often planted — in an *earthly paradise*. Under the Levitical law, the *lamb* and the *dove* were offered in sacrifice — when the *lion* and the *eagle* were rejected. The shining diamond of a *great estate* — may frequently be found upon an unsound and *idolatrous heart*. Great *prosperity* is not to be deemed the greatest *security*. The *lofty unbending cedar* is more exposed to the injurious blast, than the *lowly shrub*. The little rowboat rides safely along the shore — while the gallant ship is wrecked in the wide ocean. Those sheep which have the *most wool* — are generally the *soonest fleeced*. *Poverty* is its own defense against *robbery*. Who would shake those trees — upon which there is little fruit? A *fawning* world — is worse than a *frowning* world.

Many think they are saved — because they are *poor*; and others — because they are *rich* — but these are all *capitally* mistaken! For much of the former are not saved, and not many of the latter will be saved. "Not many of the worldly wise; not of the influential; not many of noble birth — are called." You nobles, I call you to see — that not many nobles are called. He does not say, not *any* — but not *many*. Blessed be God, we can say of them, as Luther once said of Elizabeth, a pious queen of Denmark, "Christ will sometimes carry a queen to Heaven." *Rich men are choice dishes* at God's table.

Some people, when their *estates* are low — their *hearts* are high. But true believers, when their *estates* are high — their *hearts* are low. What an excellent commendation does the beloved *prophet* of Israel give the beloved *prince* of Israel, "Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and prayed — Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that You have brought me this far?" The *weighty clusters of mercy* completely bowed the branches of this royal vine! He does not *contend* with God for mercies *denied* — but he *adores* Him for mercies *granted*. The *eye of his humility* views the grace of God — and then he is *thankful*; it also views the *folly of his heart* — and this makes him *mournful*.

Theodosius deemed it more honorable to be a *child* of God — than a *monarch* of the world; and so did King David. Ah! why will you set your heart upon vanity? For everything will come to nothing — but He who formed all things out of nothing. Many think it must go well with them *hereafter*, because it is so well with them *here*; as if silver and gold, which came out of the dirt of the earth — would carry them to the bosom of the God of Heaven. Though the *gates* of Heaven will open to admit the Heaven-*born* soul; yet they are not unlocked with a *golden* key. A man may bask in the *beams of prosperity now* — and yet burn in the *flames of eternity hereafter!*

The *worm of pride* is always injurious to *celestial plants!* Either this vice must be shut out *on earth* — or we shall be shut out in *Heaven*. The *bowing reed* of a humble mind — shall be preserved entire; while the *sturdy oak* of a proud lofty mind — shall be broken to shivers. A proud person thinks everything too *much* — which is done by *him*; and everything too *little* — which is done *for* him. God is as far from pleasing him with His gifts — as he is from pleasing God with his works. Remember what the observant prophet Habakkuk declares, "Behold! his soul which is lifted up in him, is not upright." Observe, he introduces the subject with a "Behold!" He who lifts up himself — is not lifted up of God. I will not say, 'a godly man is never proud' — but I will say, 'a proud man is never godly.'

10. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To seek to be better inwardly in his substance — than outwardly in appearance.

"Having a *form of godliness* — but denying its power." This is a business which no hypocrite chooses to be employed in — he prefers *varnish* — to *solid gold*. It little concerns him how much the house is infected with the leprosy — just so long as it is but outwardly fair to human inspection. He forgets that, "A man is not a Jew if he is only one *outwardly*, nor is circumcision merely *outward* and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one *inwardly*; and circumcision is circumcision of the *heart*, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God."

Formality frequently takes its dwelling near the chambers of *integrity*, and so assumes its name; the soul not suspecting that *Hell* should make so near an approach to *Heaven*. A rotten post, though covered with gold, is more fit to be *burned* in the *fire*, than for the *building of a fabric*. Where there is a *pure conscience* — there will be a *pure conversation*. The dial of our faces does not infallibly show — the time of day in our hearts. The *humblest looks* may *enamel* the *face* — while *unbounded pride* governs the *heart!* Unclean spirits may inhabit the *house* — when they look not out at the *window*.

A hypocrite may be both the *fairest* and the *foulest* creature in the world! He may be *fairest outwardly* in the eyes of *man* — and *foulest inwardly* in the sight of God. How commonly do such *unclean swans* cover their *black flesh* with their *white feathers!* Though such *wear* the *mantle* of Samuel — they *bear* the *name* of *Satan!*

Many appear righteous — who are only *righteous in appearance*. While they are deceiving others with the false *shows of holiness* — they are also deceiving themselves with the false *hopes of happiness*. The hypocrite would not willingly *appear evil* — and yet would *inwardly* be *evil*. He would gladly be *accounted* godly — and yet would not *be* godly. Man, either *appear* what you are — or *be* what you appear. What will the *form* of godliness do for you — if you deny the *power thereof?* *Own this* — or *God will disown you!* Those who have the power of godliness, cannot deny the form; while those who have the *form* of godliness, may deny the power.

Hypocrites resemble looking-glasses — which present the faces that are not in them. Oh, how desirous are men to put the fairest gloves — upon the foulest hands; and the fairest paint — upon the rottenest posts! To counterfeit the *coin of Heaven*, is to commit treason against the King of Heaven. Who would spread an exquisite *cloth* — upon a *dirty table?*

If a mariner sets sail in an unsound ship — he may reasonably expect to lose his voyage. No wise virgin would carry a *lamp* — without *light*. O professor, either get the *light* — or part with the *lamp*. None are so black in the eyes of the all knowing God — as those who paint for spiritual beauty.

Some people are better in *show* — than in *substance*. But not so with true Christians; they are not like painted tombs, which enclose decayed bones. The king's daughter "is all glorious *within*!" She is all glorious *within* — though within is not all her glory. That is a sad charge, which the God of truth brings against certain *false* professors, "I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and *are not* — but are the *synagogue* of *Satan!*" A *false friend* — is worse than an *open enemy*. A painted harlot is less dangerous — than a painted hypocrite. A treacherous Judas is more abhorred by God — than a bloody Pilate!

Professors! Remember the *sheep's clothing* will soon be stripped from the *wolf's back!* The *velvet plaster of profession* — shall not always conceal the *offensive ulcer of corruption*. Neither the ship of *formality* nor *hypocrisy* — will carry one person to the *harbor of felicity*. The blazing lamps of foolish virgins may light them to the Bridegroom's *gate* — but not into His *chamber*. Either get the *nature* of Christ within you — or take the *name* of Christ away from you.

Oh, what vanity is it to lop off the *boughs* — and leave the *roots* which can send forth more; or to empty the *cistern*, and leave the *fountain* running which can soon fill it again! Such may swim in the water as the visible church — but when the *net* is drawn to shore, they will be thrown away as *bad fishes*. Though the *tares* and the *wheat* may grow in the *field* together — yet they will not be stored in the granary together.

How pious and devout did the *Pharisees* appear before men! The people concluded these religious leaders, to be the only saints upon the earth. They judged the *inward* man by the *outward* — but not so with the heart-searching God! For He said unto them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men — but God knows your hearts! What is highly valued among *men* — is detestable in *God's* sight!" That sepulcher is not always the repository of *gold* — which is *outwardly garnished*. Herod was a god in the esteem of the *people* — when he was but a *fiend* in the sight of the *Lord*; they *adored* him — but *God destroyed* him.

A man's *outward life* may be civilized — when his *heart* is not evangelized. There is as much difference between *nature restrained* — and *nature renewed*, as between the glimmering of a *glowworm* — and the splendor of the *noonday sun!* A bad man is certainly the *worst* — when he is seemingly the *best*. We must not account everyone a *soldier* — who swaggers with a *sword*. A *rusty sword* — may frequently be found in a *highly decorated scabbard*. What good is it to have our *hands* as white as snow — if our *hearts* are as black as the bottomless pit! Such professors resemble *soap bubbles* — smooth and pretty without — yet only filled with air!

A man may wear the *Savior's livery* — and yet be busied in *Satan's drudgery!* The *skin* of an apple may be fair — when it is *rotten at the core!* Though all gold may glitter — yet all is not gold that glitters. The worst hypocrite may have the *color of gold* — but not the *value* of gold. What comparison is there, between the *golden* cup filled with putrid water — and the *clay* cup filled with fine wine?

Very few deceivers duly weigh that notable saying of the wise man, "The man of *integrity* walks securely — but he who takes *crooked* paths will be found out!" God, who promises to *cover* the true Christian's *infirmities* — threatens also to *disclose* the hypocrite's *impieties*. Well would it be for such to remember that arch-traitor Judas who purchased nothing by his *deceitful dealings* — but a *halter* for his *body*, in which he was *hanged*; and *fire* for his *soul*, in which he is *burning!*

11. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To be more afflicted at the distresses of the church — than affected at his own happiness.

When we suffer not from the enemies of Christ by *persecution* — we should then suffer for the *friends* of Christ by *compassion*. Let not Zion's sons be *rejoicing* — while their *mother* is *mourning*. "Are not her breaches like the sea — and there is none to heal her?" If her *breaches* be *irreparable* — our *hearts* should be *inconsolable*. It is observed of *doves*, that if one is sick, the other laments. Yes, the savage beasts will mourn over the afflicted creatures of their own species; and shall the best lost among men — which is found among *beasts?*

Christianity never was designed to strip men of *humanity*. Reader! Can you see the church *bleeding* — and never ask balm for her wounds? How can you *rejoice* when she *stands* — if you do not *mourn* when she *falls?* It thrilled impious Nero to see the Christians burning — but it should wound us to hear of it. The *cruel massacre* of the Judaean infants — was a *pleasant sight* to bloody Herod.

We may justly prefer that charge against many nominal Christians, which God did against nominal Israel. "You drink wine by the bowlful, and you perfume yourselves with exotic fragrances, caring nothing at all that your nation is going to ruin!"

Many can weep a flood for the groans of a *child* — but they cannot drop a tear for the groans of the *church*. Their love to *relations* transcends their love to *religion*. He who has property on board the church's ship, cannot but be alarmed at every *storm*. Many professors are like a *silver eye* in the spiritual head, and a *wooden leg* in the spiritual body — which are insensible to all its sorrows. That man who has no compassion for afflicted Christians, may rest persuaded that *God* will have no compassion on him! His language will be, "Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite Me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe Me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after Me."

The enemies of the church may tear her as *waves* — but they shall not split her as *rocks*. She may be *dipped* in water as a *feather* — but shall not *sink* therein as *lead*. He who is a wall of *water* within her, to keep her from *fainting* —will also prove a *wall of fire* about her, to preserve her from *falling*. *Tread* she may be — but *destroyed* she cannot be. *Her* foundation is the Rock of Ages — and *her defense* the everlasting Arms. It is only such structures as are founded upon the *sand* — which are overthrown by the wind. The adversaries of God's people will push at them as far as their *horns* will go — but when they have ensured them by prosecution as tarnished vessels — then God will throw such whips into the fire!

Many would rather see the church's *expiration* — than her *reformation*. It would afford them more pleasure to find her *nullified*, than *purified*; for they suppose that *happiness* increases — in proportion as *holiness* decreases. Christians! when persecutors make *long furrows upon the saint's back* — then we should cast in the *seed of sympathetic tears!* "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" Thus the *head* cries out in Heaven — while the *toe* is trod upon the earth!

Though Jesus Christ has altered His *condition* — yet He has not changed His affection. Death took away His *life* for us — but not His *love* from us. He who washed away the *blood* of *guilt* from our *hearts* — will soon wipe away those *briny tears* which disfigure our cheeks. He who paid so great a price for our redemption, will not resign us into the hands of our cruel tormentors. "Comfort, comfort My people — says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Tell her that her sad days are gone and that her sins are pardoned." If the Father of mercies thus proclaims pardon to *returning prodigals* — we may expect soon to hear of music and rejoicing among *all* the *heavenly harpers!*

When we see the church suffering in the *cup of affliction* — we should then help her with the *cup of consolation*. A heavy burden may easily be borne — by the assistance of many shoulders. Some are like Gallio, "none of these things concerned them." Nay, when they should be *sympathizers*, they are *censurers*. They conclude that the gold is not good, because it is *tried*; and that the ground is worthless, because it is *ploughed*. They wound those with the *arrows of reproach* — whom God has only *corrected* with the *rod of reproof*. It is dangerous to smite those with our *tongues* — whom God has smitten with His *hand*. His right to correct — is not our right to correct.

Because Christ *suffered* for transgressors, *many numbered* Him with transgressors — but that was to give Him the *sharpest vinegar*, when they should have given Him the *sweetest wine*. "Pour out Your fury on them; consume them with Your burning anger!" Why, David? "For they persecute those You wound and talk about the pain of those You have wounded."

Sympathy is a *debt* we owe to *sufferers*. For Christians to be *rejoicing* when their brethren are *weeping* — is like putting silver-lace upon a mourning suit. Our own particular losses and distresses resemble the extinguishing of a *candle*, which only occasions darkness in one room — but the general distresses of the *church* are like the eclipsing of the sun, which overshadows the whole hemisphere. Pliny informs us of two goats meeting together on a narrow bridge, where neither of them could either go forward or recede; at last one of them lay down, that the other might go over him. How much of the man was there in those *beasts* — and how much of the *beast* is there in some *men!*

It is certainly better to be in the humble posture of a *mourner* — than in the proud gesture of a *scorner*. The woman of Canaan could not *rest* — while her daughter was *restless*. The *torture* of one — was the *torment* of the other — but a word from *Jesus* relieved them both. Sympathy renders a *doleful* state — more *joyful*. Alexander refused water in a time of great scarcity, because there was not enough for his whole army.

It should be among Christians, as among lute-strings — when one is *touched*, the others *tremble*. Believers should be neither *proud* flesh — nor *dead* flesh. Fellow *members* — should ever have fellow *feelings*. Other men's woes are our *warnings* — their desolation should be our *information*.

Jeremiah suffered not in his own person, being under the protection of the Divine Being — but though he dwelt securely from the hand of *mortality* — yet he was filled with the affections of *sympathy*. Though he wrote of the *Jews desolations* — yet he named them *Jeremiah's Lamentations*.

12. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To render the greatest good for the greatest evil.

Mariners look for a *storm* at sea, when the waters begin to utter a murmuring noise. Theodosius the emperor, being urged to execute one who had reviled him, answered, "I am so far from gratifying your wish; that were it in my power, if he were dead, I would raise him to life again; rather than, being alive, to put him to death."

He makes a good market of bad commodities, who with *kindnesses overcomes injuries*. For a man to be captivated by his own angry passions, and conquer another person — is but to lose the *palace of a prince* — to gain the *cottage of a peasant*. A spark of fire falling in the ocean, expires immediately; but dropping upon *combustibles*, burns furiously. God has bound every believer in *gospel cords* — to godly behavior.

A *carnal* man may love his *friends* — but it is a *Christian* man who loves his *enemies*. "But I tell you — love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you." He calls to *patience*, who is *patience* itself! He who gives the *precepts* — *enforces* it by His own example. It is *unnatural* to hate those who love us; and it is *supernatural* to love those who hate us. A sinner can *do* much evil — but he can *suffer* none; a saint can *suffer* much evil — but he will *do* none.

He who takes up fire to throw at his *adversaries*, is in great danger of burning his own fingers! A badly loaded gun, instead of hitting the mark, does but recoil on him who discharges it. He who glories in wounding others — will finally wound himself. If *injuries* are our *enemies' weapons*, forgiveness should be ours. How many have had their *blood* shed, because they would not have their *backs* seen. Men's bad actions towards *others* — are generally excused by others' bad actions towards *them*. There is a two-fold madness: that of the *head* — which deprives men of *prudence*; and that of the *heart* — which deprives them of their *patience*. To *forget* an injury, is more than *nature* can promise — but to *forgive* it, is what *grace* can perform. *Patience* affords us a *shield* to defend ourselves — but *innocence* denies us a *sword* to offend others. If ever you hope that your *charity* should live *after* you — then let *resentment die before* you.

It is written in the law of Mahomet, that "God made *angels* of *light* — and *devils* of *flame*." But of this I am sure — that they are of hellish constitutions, who play off the fire-works of contention. "The angry — and sin not." Anger should not be a burning coal from Satan's furnace — but a *blazing coal* from *God's altar*. It should resemble fire in straw — which is as easily quenched, as suddenly kindled. He who would be angry and *not* sin — must be angry at nothing *but* sin! "Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil!" He who carries angry passions to *bed* with him — will find that the Devil will creep between the *sheets!* Why should we give place to Satan — who crowds in so fast himself?

O man, shall your *life* be mortal — and your *wrath* immortal? Should we not give place to an offending brother, rather than to be a designing murderer? How many are there who profess to *forgive* — but *cannot forget* an injury! Such are like people who sweep the *chamber* — but leave the dust behind the door. Whenever we grant our offending brethren a discharge — our hearts also should set their hands to the acquittance.

We should not only break the *teeth* of malice by *forgiveness* — but pluck out its *sting* by *forgetfulness*. To store our memories by dwelling on injuries — is to fill that chest with *rusty iron* — which was made for *refined gold*. The *pot* of *malice* should not stand upon the fire until it boils over. Christian, can you expect better treatment in the world — than He who was better than the world?

When Aristides, the Athenian general, sat to arbitrate a difference between two people, one of them said, "This fellow accused you at such a time!" To whom Aristides answered "I sit, not to hear what he has done against *me* — but against *you*." How should a Christian *shine*, if a heathen gives such *light!* "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Not the coals of *vengeance* to consume him — but the coals of *kindness* to *soften* him.

Jesus was an intercessor both in His life and death; His *dying* breath was *praying* breath — and that not only for His *sorrowful disciples* — but for His *enraged murderers* also. "Father, forgive them — for they know not what they do." Thus He gave them the *best wine* — for the *bitterest gall*. The Lord Jesus spreads a *large table* every day, and the major part who feed thereat — are His *enemies!* "In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard and the goat will be at peace. Calves and yearlings will be safe among lions, and a little child will lead them all!" The Lord Jesus can both *tame* the most *cruel beast* — and *quench the most raging lust!*

None but a *patient Christ* — can make us patient *Christians*. As our passions were the *cause* of His — so *His* passion is the *cure* of ours. Reader, if you cannot forgive *others* — God will not forgive *you*. You have His own authority for this, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." In vain do we ask God to be *pacified* to us — while we live at *variance* with others. How can we expect to have *pounds* remitted to us — if *pence* are not remitted by us?

I have read of a person who imbrued his hands in his own blood, because they were too short to reach his enemy's. Poor revenge! How repugnant was this to the apostolic advice, "Do not take revenge, my friends — but leave room for God's wrath." This was the conduct of dying Stephen, "Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice — Lord, do not charge them with this sin!" Could *living* men do worse to a *dying* man — or a *dying* man pray better for *living* men?

To do evil for good, is human corruption; to do good for good, is civil retribution — but to do good for evil, is Christian perfection. Though forgiveness is not the *grace of nature* — yet it is the *nature of grace*.

When Shimei cursed David in his distress, Abishai was for an immediate retaliation. "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the King? Let me go over and cut off his head!" What was David's answer? "No!" the king said. "If the Lord has told him to curse me, who am I to stop him?" He was so far from *taking off his head*, that he does not even attempt to *shut his mouth*. The *shoulders of charity* — are able to carry the *burden of injury* — without either being moved with violence, or removed from patience.

Though God does not allow His people to sin in avenging their enemies — yet He allows not the sin of their enemies to go unavenged. "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay! says the Lord." "Anger rests in the bosom of fools." Where there is the *most indignation*, there is the *least discretion*. No men do more readily brook *insults from others* — than such as have learned to *despise themselves*. Make not an *enemy* of your *friend* — by returning evil for good; but make a *friend* of your *enemy* — by returning him good for evil.

13. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To take those reproofs best — which he needs most.

It was the saying of a heathen, though no heathenish saying, "That he who would be good, must either have a *faithful friend* to *instruct* him, or a *watchful enemy* to *correct* him." Should we *murder* a physician — because he comes to *cure* us? Should we like him *worse* — because he would make us *better*?

The *flaming sword of reprehension* — is but to keep us from the *forbidden fruit of transgression*. "Let the godly *strike* me! It will be a kindness! If they reprove me, it is soothing medicine. Do not let me refuse it." 'Let him smite me as with an hammer,' for so the word signifies. A *Boanerges* is as necessary as a *Barnabas*.

"Have I become your enemy — because I tell you the truth?" *Truth* is not always *relished* — where *sin* is *nourished*. Light is *pleasant* — yet it may be *offensive* to sore eyes. Honey is *sweet* — though it causes the wound to *smart*. We must not neglect the sinful actions of *friends* — for fear of drawing upon ourselves the suspicions of being *enemies*. It is better to lose the *smiles* of *men* — than the *souls* of men. "You must not hate your brother in your heart. *Rebuke* your neighbor directly, and you will not incur guilt because of him." He who loves a *garment* — hates the *moths* which fret it.

"Rebuke a wise man — and he will love you. Rebuke a *scorner* — and he will *hate* you." Reproof slides from a scorner's breast — as water from an oiled post. Instead of *loving* a man amidst all his *injuries* — he will *hate* him for all his *civilities*. Most people are like *unruly horses*, which no sooner feel the 'bit' — than they strike with their heels. Or like bees, which no sooner are angered — than they give a sharp sting!

There is much *discretion* to be manifested in *reprehension*. A word will do more with some — than a *blow* with others. A *Venetian* glass is not to be rubbed so hard — as an *iron kettle*. The *tender reed* is more easily bowed — than the *sturdy oak*. Christ's warfare requires no carnal weapons. Dashing *storms* do but destroy the *seed* — while gentle showers nourish it. Chariots too furiously driven, may be overturned by their own vehemence.

How many are there, who check passion — with passion; and are very angry — in reproving anger! Thus to slay one devil — they raise another; and leave more work to be *undone*, than they found to be *done*. Such a reproof of vice — is a vice to be reproved. In reprehension, we should always beware of carrying *out* teeth in our *tongues*; and of *biting* while we are *speaking*. A surgeon would not be justifiable in dismembering a body—if he could effect a cure without such drastic measures.

"Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should *restore* such a person with a gentle spirit." The word signifies, to set a dislocated bone. This requires the lady's hand; *tenderness* — as well as *skillfulness*. Reprehension is not an act of *butchery* — but an act of *surgery*. Take heed of putting too keen an edge, upon this scalpel. Mark the reason which the apostle assigns for gentle reproof: "But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted."

If your *neighbor's* house is on fire — your own may be in danger. We should be willing to *lend* mercy at one time — as we may have occasion to *borrow* it at another. We should do with other's *sins*, as we do with our own *sores*; which, if a *gentle* cut will produce a sufficient healing, we avoid *sharp slashing*. If ravenous birds can be scared away by a *look* — we need not expend powder and shot.

It is true, open *sinners* deserve open *censures* — but *private admonitions* will best suit *private offences*. While we seek to *heal* a wound in our brother's *actions*, we should be careful not to leave a *scar* upon his *person*. That is a choice friend, who *conceals* our faults from the view of others — and yet *reveals* them to our own view. That *medicine* which *rouses* the evil humors of the body, and does not carry them off — only leaves it in a worse condition than it found it.

It must be lamented, that many are as deaf to the *softest tongue of reproof* — as the adder is deaf to the sweet voice of the charmer. They are always administering the bitter *pills of calumny* — for the *sweet cordials of charity*. Men *love to be adored* — yet *hate to be reproved*. But how can we *praise* what they *do* — when they are so far from *doing* that is worthy to be praised?

How securely would *David* have slept — if *Nathan* had not been sent to rouse him! How far do many travel in the downward road — for lack of a wholesome friend to stop them in their journey! Private admonition is rather a proof of *benevolence*, than of *malevolence*. It was the saying of Augustine, when his hearers resented his frequent reproofs, "Change your *conduct* — and I will change my *conversation!*" The more a serpent is *stirred* — the more he gathers up his poison!

Some are to reproof, as tigers are to drums; because they cannot stop them, they will tear their own flesh. Man is a cross creature — yet cannot endure to be crossed. He would have a "touch me not" written upon himself — but who would chide the dog for barking, when the thief is approaching? Sin is like a *nettle*, which stings when it is *gently touched* — but hurts not when it is *roughly* handled. Beloved, this *rough hewing* of reproof is but to *square* us for the celestial building. As for *flatterers*, they may be named the *devils upholsterers*. They no sooner see men troubled at their *lusts* — than they are for *laying pillows* under their elbows! But let such know, that their lack of the *fire of zeal* — will be punished with the fire of *Hell*. He is an unskillful artist — who paints *deformities* with the *loveliest* of colors.

Reprehension should tread upon the heels of *transgression*. The *plaster* should be applied — as soon as the *wound* is received. It is easier to extinguish a *burning match* — than a *burning house*. *Gentle medicine* will serve for a new *distemper* — but *chronic* diseases require *powerful remedies*.

The sword of reproof should be drawn against the *offence* — and not against the *offender*. Man thinks this cup is not sufficiently bitter — unless he mingles it with his wormwood and gall. But the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. The severest reproofs of the godly are not *mortal* — but *medicinal*. They are to raise the *dead* to *life* — and not put the *living* to *death*.

Who knows how much the *kindness* of a *reprover* — may tame the *insolence* of an offender. He who hates reproof is brutish. He is brutish, like an angry dog, that snarls and bites while the festering thorn is being taken out of his foot! Or like a wicked horse, that kicks the groomer while he is rubbing off the dirt.

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over." The *spaniel* loses the *prey* — by *barking* at the game. The presence of a *multitude* — makes a man take up an *unjust defense*, rather than lie down under *just shame*. It is better to censure a man in *private* — than to *spread* his guilt by proclamation. How many do that in the *market*, which they should do in the *closet!* Sin is a slippery mire; if we attempt to help others out, and do not — we sink them the deeper. Remember, *tender lambs*, if straying, must be *gently restored* to the fold.

14. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To take up every duty in point of performance — and lay down in point of dependence.

When the *pure duties* have been performed — the purest *mercies* should be *implored*. Many have passed the *rocks of gross sins* — who have suffered shipwreck upon the *sands of self-righteousness*. Some people live more upon their *customs* — than they do upon *Christ*; more upon the *prayers* which they make to God — than upon the *God* to whom they make their prayers. This is, for the redeemed captive to reverence the *sword* — instead of the *hand* which wrought his rescue!

The Name of God with a sling and a stone — will do more than Goliath with all his armor. *Duties* are but *dry pits*, though ever so meticulously wrought — until Christ fills them. Reader, I would neither have you be *idle* in the means — nor make an *idol* of the means. Though it be the *mariner's* duty to weigh his anchor, and spread his sails — yet he cannot make his voyage until the wind blow. The pipes will yield no *conveyance*, unless the springs yield their *concurrence*.

What is *hearing without Christ* — but like a *cabinet without a jewel?* What is *receiving* without Christ — but like a glass without a cordial? We can only *ascend* to Heaven — upon that ladder which was let down from Heaven.

The most diligent saint — has been the most *self-distrusting* saint, "that I may gain Christ and be found in Him — not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law — but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." If you are *found* in your own righteousness, you will be *lost* by your own righteousness. That *garment* which was worn to shreds on *Adam's back* — will never make a complete covering for *you*.

Duties may be *good crutches* to go upon — but they are *bad Christs* to *lean* upon. When Augustus Caesar desired the senate to join some person with him in the consulship, they replied, "They held it as a great dishonor to him — to have anyone joined with him, who was so capable himself." It is the greatest disparagement that Christians can offer to Christ — to put their *services* in the scale with *His suffering*. The *beggarly rags of the first Adam* — must never be put on with the *princely robe of the second Adam!*

Man is a creature too much inclined to warm himself by the *sparks* of his own fire — though he lies down in eternal flames for kindling them! Though Noah's dove made use of her *wings* — yet she found no rest but in the *ark*. Duties can never have too much of our *diligence* — or too little of our *confidence*. "For he who is entered into rest — has ceased from his own works." A believer does not perform good works to *live* — but he lives to perform good works.

It was a haughty saying of one, "I will not accept of Heaven, *gratis*." But he shall have *Hell* as his *debt* — who will not take *Heaven* as a *gift*. "For we are the true circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh." A true Christian stands at as great distance from trusting in the *best of his services* — as in the *worst of his sins*. He knows that the greatest part of his *holiness* — will not make the least part of *his justifying righteousness*. He has unreservedly subscribed to that sentiment, "That when we have done all — we are only unprofitable servants."

When we have kept all the commandments, there is one commandment above all to be kept; that is, "all our righteous acts are like filthy rags!" In *most* of our works — we are *abominable sinners*; and in the *best* of our works — we are *unprofitable servants*. Our works are not like the crystal streams of a living fountain — but like the *impure overflowings* of an unruly torrent. "I will go in in the strength of the Lord God. O Sovereign Lord, I will proclaim Your righteousness, Yours alone." You see, beloved, the righteousness of *Christ* is to be *magnified* and the righteousness of a *Christian* is not to be *mentioned*.

It is hard for us to be "nothing in ourselves" amidst all our *works*; and to be "all things in Christ," amidst all our *weakness*. To *undertake* every duty — and yet to *overlook* every duty — is a lesson which none can learn — but Christ's scholars.

Our obedience, at best, is like *good wine* — which relishes of a *bad cask*. The 'Law of God' will not accept *ninety-nine* for a *hundred*. It will not accept the *coin* of our *obedience*, either short in *quantity* — or base in *quality*. The *duty* it exacts, is as impossible to be performed in this our *fallen state* — as the *penalty* it inflicts is intolerable to be endured in our *eternal state!*

We do not sail to glory — in the *salt sea of our own tears* — but in the *red sea of the Redeemer's blood!* The *cross* of *Christ* — is the only *key* of paradise! We owe the *life of our souls* — to the *death of our Savior*. It was His going into the fiery furnace — which keeps us from the *devouring flames!* *Man lives* — by *death*: his *natural life* is preserved by the death of the *creature*; and his *spiritual life* by the death of the *Redeemer*.

Moses must lead the children of Israel through the *wilderness* — but *Joshua* must conduct them into *Canaan*. While we are in the wilderness of this world, we walk under the guidance of Moses — but when we enter the spiritual Canaan, it must be under the leadings of *Jesus*. The same hand which shut the *doors* of *Hell* — to keep us *out* of perdition — has *opened* the *gates* of *Heaven* — to admit us to its eternal fruition.

Those who carry their *vessel of hope* to the *puddle of their own merit* — will never draw the *water of comfort*, from the *fountain of God's mercy!* Luther compares the *law* and *gospel* — to *earth* and *Heaven*. We should walk in the circle of the *law*, in *point of obeying*; and in the *Heaven* of the *gospel*, in point of believing. It was the saying of one, that "He would swim through a sea of brimstone — if he might but arrive safely at Heaven." Ah, how would natural men *sing* — if they could but *soar* to Heaven upon the pinions of their own merit! The *sunbeams of Divine justice* — will soon melt such weak and waxy wings!

He who has no better *righteousness* than what is of his *own providing*, shall meet with no higher *happiness* than what is of his own *deserving*. "They disregarded the righteousness from *God* — and attempted to establish their own righteousness." If such people *rest* not *from duty* — then they *rest* in *duty*. They are determined to sail in their own ship — though they sink in the ocean! I would that all such did but know, that though good works are not *destroyed* by *Christ* — yet they must be *denied* for Christ.

When a looking-glass reflects the brightness of the sun, there is but an *acknowledgment* of what was — not an *addition* of what was not. A well-drawn picture praises a beautiful face; not by communicating what it lacks — but by presenting what it has. As God has none the *less* — for the *mercy* He gives; so He has none the *more* — for the *duty* He receives. Man is such a *debtor* to God, that he can never pay his *obligation* to God; yes, the more we pay Him — the more we owe Him for our payments.

It is Christ alone, who is the righteousness of God to man, and man to God. We are so far from paying the utmost farthing — that at the utmost, we have not a farthing to pay! That man will be a miserable spectacle of vanity — who stands upon the lame feet of his own ability.

15. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To take up his contentment, in God's appointment.

As many do the things which God dislikes — so they dislike the things which God does. If the children of Israel obtain no meat for their *lusts*—then they are weary of their *lives*. They are delighted with their *burning corruption* — but are enraged with their *trying condition*. This is nothing less, than to be in *love* with their *malady* — and to *hate* their *remedy*. They studied more how to *gratify* their *humor* — than to *satisfy* their *hunger*. They complained of the *shoe* — but the disease lay in the *foot*.

Those who think too *highly* of their *own deserts* — will think too *lowly* of their *estates*. It is the *task* of God — to satisfy the *desires* of men. He can do *everything* — but they are not pleased with *anything*.

There is no man, but who has *received more good* — than he has deserved. Likewise, there is no man, who has done *less evil* — than has been inflicted upon him. He should therefore be *contented*, though he sees but *little good*. And he should not be *discontented*, though he suffers *much evil*. "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be *content* with what you have, because God has said — Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Where the *seal of faith* has been set to the *bond of truth* — He who has said it will maintain you in the lack of earthly provisions.

When a wicked man's *purse grows light* — his *heart grows heavy*. When he has *something without* to *afflict* him — he has *nothing within* to *support* him. That well known Scripture is unknown to him: "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in need. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

It is hard to carry a *full cup* — without *spilling*; or to *stand* under a heavy load — without bowing. It is difficult to walk in the clear day of *prosperity* — without *wandering*; or in the dark night of *adversity* — without *stumbling*. But from whatever point the wind blows — the skillful mariner knows how to meet it with his sails.

Repenting is the act of *Christian men* — but *repining* is the act of *carnal* men. Though their *estates* are like a *fruitful paradise* — yet their *hearts* are like a *barren wilderness*. Such people are like those *spiders* — which *suck poison* out of the *sweetest flowers* — and by an infernal chemistry, extract dross from the purest gold!

Outward prosperity cannot create *inward tranquility*. Hearts-ease is a flower which never grew in the world's garden. The ground of a wicked man's trouble, is not because he *has not enough of the creature* — but because he *cannot find enough in the creature* to satisfy him! His possession is great enough — but his *disposition* is not good enough.

Some are *satisfied* under the hand of God, because they are not *sensible* of the hand of God. They *never fret*, because they *never feel*.

We are not to be troubled — that we *have* no more from God; but we are to be troubled — that we *do* no more for God. Christians, if you are well pleased with your *eternal salvation* — should not you be well pleased with your *temporal condition?*

Believers should be like *sheep*, which change their pastures at the will of the shepherd; or like *vessels* in a house, which stand to be filled or emptied — at the pleasure of their owner. He who sails upon the sea of this world in his own ship — will sink at last into a bottomless ocean. Never were any their own *carvers* — but they were sure to cut their own fingers.

A covetous man is *fretful* — because he has not as much as he *desires*. But a gracious man is *thankful* — because he has more than he *deserves*. It is true, I have not the *sauce* — but then I merit not the meat. I have not the *lace* — but then I deserve not the coat. I lack that which may support my *vanity* — but I have that which supplies my *necessity*. "If we have *food* and *clothing*, we will be content with these." Here is the *flesh* of the creature to *fill us* — and the *fleece* of the creature to cover us.

It is reported of a woman, who being sick, was asked whether she was willing to live or die; she answered, "Whatever God pleases." "But," said one "if God should refer it to you, which would you choose?" "Truly," replied she, "I would refer it to Him again." Thus, that man obtains his will from God — whose will is subjected to God.

A contented heart is an *even sea* in the midst of all *storms*. It is like a tree in autumn, which secures its *life* — when it has lost its *leaves*. When worthy Mr. Hern lay upon his deathbed, his wife, with great concern, asked him what was to become of her and her large family? he answered, "Peace, sweetheart. That God who feeds the ravens, will not starve the Herns." If the child questions his father's *affection* — he will soon be dubious of his father's *provision*.

Our most golden conditions in this life are set in *bronze* frames. There is no gathering a *rose without a thorn* — until we come to Immanuel's land. If there were nothing but *showers* — we would conclude the world would be *drowned*. If there were nothing but *sunshine* — we would fear the earth would be *burned*. Our *worldly comforts* would be a sea to drown us — if our *crosses* were not a plank to save us! By the *fairest gales* — a sinner may sail to destruction! By the *fiercest storms* — a saint may sail to glory! When our *circumstances* become *successions*, our *corruptions* become *impetuous*; they rage the more, because stopped by the *dam of poverty*. If God withholds the *hand of providence*, we sinfully employ the *tongue of insolence*. We too frequently bite at the stone — until we break our teeth! We murmur because we are in want — and therefore want because we murmur.

Contentment is the best *food* to preserve a *sound* man — and the best *medicine* to restore a *sick* man. It resembles the coating on bitter pills, which makes a man willing to take them — without tasting their bitterness. Contentment will make a cottage look as fair as a palace. He is not a poor man who *has* but little — but he is a poor man who *desires* much. In this sense, the poorest are often the richest, and the richest the poorest.

"Godliness with contentment is great *gain*." This is too precious a flower to grow in every soil. Though every godly man may not always be contented — yet every truly contented man is godly. "The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need." Such a Scripture will bring us *plenty* in *scarcity*; and *fullness* out of *emptiness*. The water in a *cloud* soon ceases — but the *water* of a fountain continues.

As Seneca said to Polybius, "Never complain of your hard condition, so long as Caesar is your friend." So say I to you, "Never complain of your hard condition, Christian, so long as Jesus is your Friend!"

Let your condition be ever so *flourishing* — it is a *Hell* without Him. Let your condition be ever so *fluctuating* — it is a *Heaven* with Him. Can that man lack anything — who enjoys Christ; or can he be said to enjoy anything — who is without Christ? Why should Hagar lament the loss of the water in her *bottle* — while there is a *well* so near?

16. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To be more in love with the employment of holiness, than with the enjoyment of happiness.

Thousands of professors prize the wages of religion above its *works* — but a Christian will prize its *works* above its *wages*. Give me that singular preacher, who prefers his *labor* — to his *lucre*; and who prefers the *flock* he attends — to the *fleece* he obtains.

Some men serve God — that they may serve *themselves* upon God. He loves not religion *sincerely*, who does not love it *superlatively*.

"Israel is an *empty* vine — he brought forth *fruit* for himself." Empty — and yet fruitful; fruitful — and yet empty. Thus that fertility which springs up from the *bitter roots of self* — has nothing but vacuity in the account of God.

Such professors do not make *gain* stoop to *godliness* — but *godliness* to *gain*; which is, as if a man should fit his *foot* to the *shoe* — when he should fit the *shoe* to his *foot*. In all the good a carnal man does for God — he seeks *himself* more than God. The *clock* of his *heart* will *stand still* — unless its *wheels of profit* are oiled.

If the virgin should only give her hand in matrimony for her bridegroom's *riches* — she would not espouse herself unto his *person* — but unto his *portion*. This would not make a *marriage* with him — but a *merchandise* of him. Augustine has an excellent saying; "He loves not Christ *at all* — who does not love Christ *above all*."

"You seek Me, not because you saw the *miracles* — but because you ate the *loaves*, and were filled." Christ was the *object* of their *actions* — but *self* was the *end* of their actions. They came to Christ — to serve their own turns; and when their turns were served — they then turned away their service. When the *loaves* were *gone* — these 'disciples' were *gone*. When He left *off feeding* them — they left off *following* Him!

Reader, until you can love the *naked* truth — you will never love to go naked for the truth. Most people are *servitors* to God, rather than *sons* to God; they are *mercenary* in those works, wherein they should be *filial* and *free*. They look more after the *streams* — than upon the *spring* from whence they constantly run; and admire the *beams* more than the *sun* from whence they are emitted. The desire for pardon, is the only spring of a servile man's duty; while he pleases his prayers, as sailors do their pumps — only in a *storm*, or when fearful of *sinking!*

"And now, O Father, glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You." Christ prayed for glory, more for the Father's sake, who bestowed it — than for His own sake, who received it. A true Christian not only desires grace that God may glorify him — but that he may also glorify God.

Could carnal men find the *mercies* of God — they would never seek the *God* of *mercies*. Could they tell how to be well *without* Him — they would never desire to come *to* Him. God has but little of their society — except when they can find no other company.

Worldlings, instead of looking upon *godliness* as their greatest gain, will look upon *gain* as their greatest *godliness*. They love religion, not for the *beauty* existing in it — but for the *dowry* annexed to it. They are like the fox, that follows the lion for the prey that is falling from him. If there is no honey in the pot — such wasps will hover no longer about it!

Mark how the long-suffering God expostulates with self-seeking Israel, "During those seventy years of exile, when you *fasted* and mourned in the summer and at the festival in early autumn, was it really for Me that you were fasting? And even now in your holy *festivals*, you do not think about Me but only of pleasing yourselves." In *fasting* and in *festivals* — their eyes were not cast upon God — but upon themselves! They did not forget to eat when they were *hungry* — but they forgot to praise God when they were *full*. Their *greediness* swallowed up all their *thankfulness*.

Reader! Remember that God will shut *your duties* out of Heaven — if your *duties* shut Him out on earth. I have heard an account of a woman, who had *fire* in one hand and *water* in the other — and was asked what she was going to do with them. She answered, "With this *fire* I am going to burn up all the joys of *Heaven*; and with this *water* I am going to quench all the flames of *Hell*; that my services to my God might neither arise from the fear of punishment, nor hope of reward."

The less emphasis you lay upon your own works — the more will God lay upon them. Those who are most righteous in themselves — are least righteous to God. God has three sorts of servants in the world: some are 'slaves' and serve Him from a principle of fear; others are 'hirelings' and serve Him for the sake of wages; and the last are 'sons' and serve Him under the influence of love.

Now a *hireling* will be a *changeling*. He who will not serve *God* except something is given to him — would serve the *devil*, if the devil would give him more! Either one shall have his *works* — who will but augment his *wages*. Many are advocates for the *enjoyment* of happiness, and enemies to the *employment* of holiness.

Demetrius cries up the goddess Diana; yet it was not her *temple* — but her *silver shrines*, he so much adored. He was more in love with her *wealth* — than with her *worship*. "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business." If her *temple* had been demolished, their *trade* would have been diminished. "Does Job serve God *for nothing*?" Yes, for Job served God when he *had* nothing. He was as pious in his *poverty* — as in his *plenty*. In this sense, many men will not serve God for nothing — is nothing in His services.

Love does not serve for selfish returns — but it amply pays itself in serving its beloved. It is reported of one, who, being asked for whom he labored *most*, he answered, "For my friends." And being asked for whom he labored least, he answered, "For my friends." Love *does most* — and yet *thinks least* of what it does.

Hypocrites are more in love with the *gold* of the altar, than with the *God* of the altar. "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for you devour widows houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you shall receive the greater damnation!" They *painted* their *avarice* in *religious colors*, and put the arms of Christ upon the *devil*; that insipidly might, by that means, be esteemed under the garb of religion. They *fasted* all the *day* — that they might *feed* upon the widows houses at *night*. They hatched the *birds of oppression* in the *nests of devotion*. These *spiders* weaved the web of their own works — to catch the flies of other men's wealth!

The observation of Augustine is founded on much truth: "There is often a *vast difference* between the *face* of the workman — and the *heart* of the workman." But a man influenced by the Lord in His services, though he may find *self* in them as a *servant* — yet he will not *allow self* in them as a *leader*.

A Christian is more in love with his *present duty* — than he is with his *future glory*. Paul was contented to stay a while *out* of Heaven — that he might be the instrument of bringing other souls *into* Heaven. "To me — to live is Christ, and to die is gain." His *life* was most useful to *others* — but his *death* was most profitable to *himself*. By dying, he might have enjoyed his *inheritance* sooner; but by living, God made his *usefulness* greater.

Were it possible to put those things asunder — which God Himself has joined together, a Christian would rather be *holy* without any *happiness* — than *happy* without any *holiness*.

Luther had this expression; "I had rather be in *Hell with Christ* — than in *Heaven without Christ*." Indeed, Hell itself would be a Heaven — if Christ was in it; and Heaven would be a Hell — if Christ was not in it. These are hard sayings to an *unconverted* ear — but the real choice of every *renewed heart*.

A gracious man makes request of his soul: "Lord, let me rather have a gracious heart — than a great estate; let me rather be pious without prosperity — than prosperous without piety." Though he may leave many things *besides* true religion — yet he would not leave anything *above* true religion.

The earth is our *work-house* — but Heaven is our *store-house*. The earth is a place to *run in* — and Heaven is a place to *rest in*.

17. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To be more employed in searching his own heart — than he is in censuring other men's states.

Those bishops are *too busily employed* — who lord it over another man's diocese. "Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and look well to your herds." It is a matter of greater importance, to know the state of our *hearts* — than the state of our *flocks*.

Censorious men commonly take up *magnifying* glasses — to look at other people's imperfections; and *diminishing* glasses — to look at their *own enormities*.

Plato was entertaining a few friends at an elegantly spread table, and Diogenes, a famous cynic philosopher came in, and at the same time, trampled upon the table saying, "I trample upon the *pride* of Plato!" To whom Plato immediately replied, "Yes, but by the greater *pride* in Diogenes!"

They are the first to find fault — in whom there is much fault to be found. "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye — and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." He who blows into a heap of dust — is in danger of putting out his own eyes.

"What makes you better than anyone else?" Reader, are there not the same *lusts lodging* in your *heart* — which are *reigning* in other men's *lives?* The reason why there is so little self-condemnation, is because there is so little self-examination. For lack of this, many people are like *travelers*, skilled in other countries — but ignorant of their own.

It is an evidence that those tradesmen are bankrupt in their *estates* — who are afraid to look into their *books*. Likewise, it is plain that there is something wrong within, among all those who are afraid to *look within*. The *trial of ourselves* — is the ready road to the *knowledge of ourselves*. He who buys a jewel in a box, deserves to be deceived with a fake stone.

Reader, would you see God? then cast your eyes *upwards*; would you see yourself? then cast your eyes *inward*. *Contemplation* is a *magnifying glass* to see our Savior in — but *examination* is a *looking-glass* to view *ourselves* in. Are we then in the *narrow* way which leads to *life* — or in the *broad* way which leads to *death*? Are we Christ's *bride* — or Satan's *harlots?* Are our hearts *chairs* for *vice* to sit on — or *thrones* for *grace* to rule in?

Nero thought no person *chaste* — because he was so unchaste himself. Such as are troubled with the *jaundice* — see all things *yellow*. Those who are *most pious* — are *least censorious*. "Who are you that judges another man's servant?" Those who are *fellow creatures* with men — should not be *fellow judges* with God. Reader, why will you probe another man's wound — while your own is festering? Take heed that your own *window* is not full of *dirt* — when you are brushing the *dust* off your neighbor. Complain not of dirty *streets* — when heaps of rubbish lie at your *own doors!* Many people are not happy — unless they are poking their fingers into another's sores. Such are no better in their conduct than *crows* — which prey only upon *carrion*. "But let every man prove his own work — and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

For lack of self-examination, men have their accounts to *cast up* — when they should have them to *deliver up*. They have their evidences of grace to *seek* — when they should have them to *show*. They lie down with such hopes in their beds of *rest* — with which they dare not lie down in their bed of *dust*. *Conversion* begins in *consideration*. The *hasty shower* falls *fastest* — but the *soft snow* sinks the *deepest*.

As that mariner who is inattentive to his helm, is in danger of wrecking his *vessel* — so he who knows not *himself*, is likely to *lose* himself. "Examine yourselves — to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves." If your *heart* is not the *cabinet of such a jewel* — your head will never be graced with a *diadem* in *glory*. If you must needs be a judge — then play your part upon your own bench. I shall ever esteem such to be real religious lovers — who care not for *Scripture looking-glasses*. He who never cries out, "Woe is me — for I am undone!" will never hear Christ's "Go in peace." Self-examination, is the beaten path to *perfection*; it is like fire — which not only *tries* the *gold* — but *purifies* it also.

The heathen tell us, that "*Know yourself*" was an oracle which came down from Heaven. It is this oracle, which will lead us up to the God of Heaven. The sight of *yourself in grace* — will bring you to the sight of *God in glory!* The plague of the *body* is not every man's plague — but the plague of the *soul* is. If the plague of the *soul* were known more — the plague of the *body* would be feared less. Though there may be a more *pleasant* sight — yet there is not a more *profitable* sight. Until you know how deep the pit is, into which you are fallen — you will never properly praise that hand which raises you out of it.

The *bottom* of our diseases — lies in not *searching* our diseases, to the *bottom*. So we put on some filthy rags to cover our nakedness — and we then wickedly despise the Savior's righteousness.

"He who trusts his own heart is a fool!" And yet such fools are we — as to trust our own hearts! The Lord searches all hearts by His omniscient eye; but He searches His people's hearts by the *eye of His mercy*. If a man would know whether the sun shines — it is better to view its beams on the pavement, than its body in the sky. The readiest way to know whether *you are in Christ* — is to know whether *Christ is in you*. For the *fruit* on the tree, is more visible than the *root* of the tree.

18. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To set out for God at our beginning — and to *hold out* with God unto the end.

First — To *set* out for God at our beginning. "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come." In the distillation of strong waters, the first drawn is fullest of spirits. "The first of the first-fruits of your land — you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God." God prizes a Christian in the *bud* — and delights in the *blossoms of youth*, above the *shadings of old age*.

Naturalists inform us, that the most orient pearls, are generated from the *morning dew*. That field is full of the richest *corn* — which is cleansed from its noxious weeds in the *spring*. How pleasant is it to see the thousands of spiritual Israel, seeking the heavenly manna in the *morning* of their lives. It is not better to cry for *mercy* on *earth* with the publican — than to call for *water* in *Hell* with Dives? To discover grace in an old sinner is well — but to view it in vigorous youth is better. All the sacrificial animals, were offered to God in their *prime*. Jesus was carried in triumph upon a *colt*.

No music could ever equalize the *heaven*-born cries of *new*-born babes. When the snow-drops of *youth* appear in the garden of the church — it shows that there is a *glorious summer* approaching.

If youth is *sick* of the *shall-nots*, old age is in danger of *dying* of the *will-nots*. *It is hard to cast off the devil's yoke — when we have worn it long upon our necks!* "Can a man be born again — when he is old?" Grace seldom grafts upon such withered stocks. An *old sinner* is nearer to the *second death* — than he is to the *second birth*. It is more likely to see his *soul* taken out of the *flesh* — than the *flesh* taken out of his *soul*. His *body* is nearer to *corruption*, than his *soul* is to *salvation*.

Where the enemy is the *strongest* — there the victory is the hardest. Usually, where the devil pleads *antiquity* — he keeps *propriety*. As there are none so *old*, as that they should *despair* of mercy — so there are none so *young*, as that they should *presume* on mercy. If God's "today" is too soon for your repentance; your "tomorrow" may be too late for His acceptance. *Mercy's clock* does not always strike at *our beck!* The longer poison stays in the body — so much the more harmful are its effects. O how amiable are the *golden apples of grace* — in the silver pictures of blooming youth! God *prizes a young friend* — but *punishes an old enemy*. Old sinners are much like old serpents — the fullest of poison!

It is singularly pleasant to view the *Ancient* of Days — in *infants* in days; and to see *green pieces* of timber — being squared for the celestial building. Blessed are those in whom *grace* is in its *prosperity*, while their *nature* is in its *minority*. "I have more understanding than my teachers." His *youth* — was wiser than their *age*. His *dawning* was brighter than their *noontide*. And this was the more admirable, because it was in his youth; for when our *lives* are the most vigorous — our *lusts* are the most *boisterous*.

You teach a *dog* while he is a *pup*; and break a *horse* while he is a *colt*. A *plentiful harvest*, is the outcome of an *early seed time*. Young reader, remember that your *youthful sins* — lay a foundation for *aged sorrows*. You have but one arrow to shoot at the mark — and if that is shot at random, God may never put another into your bow?

"I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the ending; the first and the last." He who is the first and the last, should be served from the *first* to the *last*. You can never come too soon — to Him who is your *beginning*; and you can never stay too long — with Him who is your *ending*. The *flower of life* is Christ's setting, and shall it be of the devil's cropping?

But what is *setting out*, without *holding out*? *Mutability* is at best but the *badge of infirmity*. It can only be those trees which are unsound at their *roots* — which cease from putting forth *leaves* in their season. Those who at *present* are *inwardly corrupt* — will in the *future* be *openly profane*. False grace is always declining, until it is wholly lost. But true grace goes from a morning's dawn — unto a meridian splendor. It is just to be *cast off* from God — for *casting off* the ways and works of God.

"Be faithful unto death — and I will give you the crown of life." He has a *crown* for the *runner* — but a *curse* for the *run-away*. God accounts not Himself served at all — if He is not always served. It is not enough to *begin* our course well — unless it is *crowned* with *perseverance*. Some trees put forth fair blossoms — but their *flattering* spring is turned into an *unfruitful* winter. Some clear mornings have become overcast with the *thickest* clouds. The *corn* which promised a large harvest in the *blade* of profession, is blasted in the *ear*. The light remains — no longer than while the sun shines. When God ceases to be *gracious* — man ceases to be *righteous*.

The *flowers of paradise* would quickly *wither* on earth — if they were not *watered* with drops from Heaven. How have the mighty fallen — when the Almighty has not stood by them! The devil would soon put out our *candles* — if Christ did not carry them in His lantern. "Do not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." To see a *ship* sink in the *harbor of profession*, is more grievous, than if it had perished in the open sea of profaneness.

There goes forth the same power of God — to *strengthen a saint* — as to *quicken a sinner*. He who *sets* us up and makes us *holy* — must *keep* us up and make us *steady*. How many professors have seemed to be just ready to cast an eternal anchor — when a *contrary wind* has driven them to sea, and they have perished forever! "O Israel and Judah, what should I do with you?" Why, what is the matter? "Your love vanishes like the morning mist and disappears like dew in the sunlight."

Some have beat Jehu's march; they have driven furiously in religion; but within a few years, they have knocked off their chariot wheels. After they have lifted up their *hands to God* — they have lifted up their *heels against Him!* That man's *beginning* was in *hypocrisy* — whose *ending* is in *apostasy!* Reader, you look for happiness as long as God has a being in Heaven — and God looks for holiness as long as you have a being on earth. "He who *endures* to the end — shall be saved."

"If any man draws back — My soul shall have no pleasure in him." He who draws back from his *profession on earth* — shall be kept back from any *possession in Heaven*. He that departs in the faith, shall be saved; but he who departs from the faith, shall be damned.

That *mariner* has no *praise* — who sinks his ship before he comes to the harbor. That *soldier* obtains no *glory* — who lays down his weapons in the heat of the battle. Some say, that the chrysolite, which is of a golden color in the morning, loses its splendor before the evening. Such are the *glittering shows* of hypocrites. Though *fiery meteors* fall to die on earth — yet *fixed stars* remain in Heaven.

When once that fire which is laid on God's altar is kindled, it shall never be quenched. True grace may be shaken in the *soul* — but it cannot be shaken *out* of the soul. It may be a *bruised* reed — but it shall never be a *broken* reed.

Christ is more tender of His *mystical* body — than He was of His *natural* body. Though a believer may fall *foully* — yet he shall never fall *finally*. The *gates* of *Hell* shall not prevail — against the *heirs* of *Heaven*. The fiery darts of the devil, which in themselves are intentionally *mortal* — shall be to saints eventually *medicinal*. These *bees* may *sting* him — but their venom shall not *destroy* him. His light may be eclipsed for a time; but the sun will break forth again.

Under the law, the Lord had His *evening* sacrifice — as well as His *morning* sacrifice. "No man who puts his hand to the plough — and looks back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Our *labors* are never fulfilled, until our *days* are fulfilled. There is nothing *pleasant* — but what is constant. Though a saint may sometimes be *weary* in doing the work of the Lord — yet he is at no time *weary* of doing the work of the Lord. There may be a *suspension* of the *operation* of grace; but there cannot be a *destruction* of the *being* of grace. This *babe* may be *sick* — but it shall not die. The *soul* may lie upon a *sick-bed*; but it shall never lie upon a *death-bed*.

Christ is called the *Finisher* of our faith — as well as the *Author* of our faith. There is as much necessity for the Spirit to *keep up* our graces — as there is to *bring forth* our graces.

Indifference in religion — is the first step to *apostasy* from religion. Though Christians are not altogether kept from falling; yet they are kept from *falling altogether*. They may have an *apathy* toward Christ for a time; but they shall not *depart* from Christ forever. The trees of righteousness may have their *winter*; but they shall also have their *spring*. There is never so low an *ebb* — but there is also a high *tide*.

Christians are like crocodiles — which grow until they die! They are like the moon, which *increases* in her beauty, until she is at the *full*. They have no desire of putting off the robes of *purity* — while they are on this side *eternity*. They wish to hold the *sword of piety* in their hands — until God sets the *crown of glory* upon their heads!

Professing reader, if *piety* is not the way of *safety* — why do you set forth in it? And if piety is the way — why do you shrink back from it? Usually those who ride fastest at the *beginning* of their journey — are the first who talk of *halting* on the road.

See what a sparkling diamond there is set in the apostle's crown, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith! Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of glory!" Paul the *warrior* — was Paul the *conqueror*. And Paul the *conqueror* — was Paul the *crowned*. Jesus Christ is never a father of *abortive children*. Where He gives strength to *conceive*, He gives strength to *bring forth*. He turns the *bruised reed* — into a *brazen pillar*; and the *smoking flax* — into an *enduring flame*.

19. Another singular action of a consistent Christian is:

To take all the *shame* of his sins unto *himself* — and to give all the glory of his services unto *Christ*.

Many people take all the glory of their services to *themselves* — and lay all the share of their sins on Christ; as if He who died on earth to redeem us from sin — should live in Heaven to confirm us in sin.

The devil may *flatter* us — but he cannot *force* us. He may *tempt* us to sin — but he *cannot* compel us to sin. He could never come off a conqueror, were he not joined by our *forces*. The *fire* is his — but the *tinder* is ours. He could never enter into our houses — if we did not set open our doors.

Many complain for lack of liberty — who thrust their feet into Satan's fetters! "Then the man replied — The woman You gave to be with *me* — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate." As if he had said, "I took that as a gift from *her* — whom You gave as a gift to *me*." It is the worst of sins — to charge God with our sins! They may receive their *punishment* from Him — but they shall never receive their *temptation* from Him. He cannot be the *unrighteous upholder* — of that He is the *righteous avenger*. O blasphemy, to charge that sun with darkness, by which the heaven's are enlightened; or that sun with a lack of moisture, by which the whole earth is watered! Our *impiety* is as truly the offspring of *our souls* — as our *posterity* is the issue of our bodies. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Whatever is truly *good* — has its origin in God. Now the same *spring* cannot send forth *both sweet* and *bitter* waters. It is a known rule — contraries destroy each other.

Many have more *leaves* to cover their *wickedness* — than they have *garments* to cover their *nakedness*. They lay their *heresy* at the door of the *sanctuary*; and call their *diabolical seductions*, 'evangelical revelations'. As if the Father of *light*, could bring forth the *darkness* of sin. It was thus, not to set a *crown* of *lead*, upon a *head* of *gold!* We can *defile* ourselves — but we cannot *cleanse* ourselves. The sheep can go *astray* alone — but can never *return* to the *fold*, without the assistance of the shepherd. Until we taste the *bitterness* of our own *misery* — we shall never relish the *sweetness* of *God's mercy*. Until we see how *foul* our *sins* have made us — we shall never pay our tribute of praise to Christ for *washing* us. If we were *left* to ourselves but for a moment — we would *destroy* ourselves in that moment!

Many advance themselves — to depreciate Christ; but we should look upon *ourselves* as *nothing* — and *Christ* as *everything*. "I am less than the least of all God's people." Paul was willing to be esteemed a *cipher* — so that Christ might stand for a *figure*. Well may we abase ourselves for *His* advancement, who abased Himself for *our* salvation. "Let Luther be accounted a devil — so long as Christ may be exalted as Savior!" said that flaming seraph of himself.

"Without Me, You can do nothing." The pen may as soon write without the hand which holds it — as our hearts work unless the Spirit moves them. Not only the *enjoyment* of our talents, is from God; but the *improvement* of them, is from Him. "Lord, Your pound has gained ten pounds." It is not *my pains* — but *Your pound* which has done it. The children of God are like a clock, which soon stands still — if it is not wound up. "Did not our hearts burn within us!" But how long did the flame last? All the time He talked with them. When He gave over breathing on them — their fuel gave over burning. Gracious hearts are like stars in the heavens — which shine not by their own splendor. He who takes the *brick* — must give the *straw* to make it. There is no *water* — unless He smites the *rock*; nor *fire* — unless He strikes the flint.

If He calls us to the *work* of angels — He will supply us with the *strength* of angels. "For when we were *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." A *Christless* soul — is also a *strengthless* soul. *Man* is indebted to God for what he has — but *God* is not indebted to man for what He does. "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever!" The *humble* heart knows no *foundation* but God's grace; and the *upright* man knows no *end* but God's glory.

Whatever action has God for its *author* — has God for its *center*. A circular line makes its *ending*, where it had its *beginning*. Reader, take heed of turning a *sacred privilege*, into a *privy sacrilege*. If God gives that *grace*, which is due to you — you will deny the *praise*, which is due to Him?

The wicked make their end — their god; but we make God — our end. The sky is made more glorious by one sun — than by all the stars which stud the heavens. Thus Jesus Christ has more glory given to Him from one *saint* — than from all the *world* besides. He takes more *pleasure* in their *prayers* — and is more *honored* by their *praise*.

"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do — do all to the glory of God." From the lowest act of nature, to the highest act of grace, there is no argument for the *pride of man* — but every argument for the *praise of God*. If He makes our *nature gracious* — we should make His *name glorious*. He that would be stealing the honor of God — is not worthy to receive the honor of a man.

Caesar once said to his opponent, "Either I will be Caesar — or nobody." So the Lord says, "Either I will be a *great God* — or *no God*." That man disparages the *glory of the sun* — who sets it upon a level with the *twinkling stars*. The *glory of God* is the golden mark — at which all the arrows of obedience are shot, otherwise they fall short of their mark. The body has two eyes — but the soul must have but one; and that so firmly fixed upon Christ, as never once to glance beside Him. A *single eye* is fittest for a *single object*.

"When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying — The *gods* have come down to us in the form of men!" But do they take that glory to themselves, which is idolatrously given to them from others? No! "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you." As if they had said, "We are so far from possessing the glorious perfections of God, that we are clothed with all the weaknesses and sins of men."

Ungodly Herod was not like Paul and Silas, "The people gave a shout, saying — 'This is the voice of a god, not of a man!'" What the people *gave foolishly* — he *took fearlessly*. "Immediately, because Herod did not give glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died!" Ah, how soon this worm-eaten wretch — was a wretch eaten up by worms! Every little river pays its tribute to the great *sea* — and shall we refuse ours to the great *God?*

As there is no time, in which God is not *blessing* His children — there should be no time, in which His people are not *praising* Him. As He designs *our happiness*, in all He does — it is but reasonable that we should seek *His honor* in all we do. We have no way to turn the *streams* unto God, the *ocean* of all bounty — but through the *pipes* of *gratitude*.

"Giving thanks unto the Father who has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." It is very fit — that He should be *magnified* by us; when He makes us fit — to be *glorified* with Him.

As the *best of means* should make us fruitful, so the *least of mercies* should make us thankful. "The twenty-four elders fall down and worship the One who lives forever and ever! And they lay their crowns before the throne and say — You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power!" Whatever ointment is poured out upon Christ's *head*, will run down to the *skirts* of His garment. What a saint gives to Christ in copper, shall be returned to him in silver! Yes, the only way to keep our crowns on our heads — is to cast them down at His feet!

20. The last singular action of a consistent Christian is:

That he values his *heavenly inheritance* — above all *earthly possessions*.

"God has reserved a priceless inheritance for His children. It is kept in Heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay." "Our citizenship is in Heaven!"

Some say, that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush — but surely *such* a bird in the bush, is worth two in the hand. If others dote upon the *streams* — let us admire the *fountain*. Socrates being asked what his native country was; answered, "I am a citizen of the whole world." But ask a Christian what his native country is — and he will answer, "I am a citizen of all Heaven!" Believers build their *tombs* — where worldlings build their *habitations*. The men of the world — fix their hearts upon the things of the world. This fleeting world, is the cabinet in which they lock up all their jewels! Though God has given the earth to beasts — yet such beasts are men — as to give themselves to the earth!

It was the saying of a cursed cardinal, "I prefer a part in the *honors of Paris* — to a part in the *happiness of paradise*." What is the glimmering of a *candle*, compared to the shining of the *sun*? or the value of dirt, compared with gold? Foolish children are taken up more with fleeting pleasures — than with eternal glory. Thus while the *shadow* is embraced, the *substance* is neglected.

That man who is a *laboring bee*, for earthly prosperity; will be but an *idle drone*, for heavenly felicity. "If you are risen with Christ — seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God."

There is no need of blotting out the characters of our affections — but of writing them on fairer paper. There is no necessity for drying up these running waters — but for diverting them into their proper channels. Why should we wholly destroy these valuable plants — when they might thrive so well in a better soil? He who looks upon *Heaven* with *desire* — will look upon *earth* with *disdain*. Our affections were made for the things which are *above* us — and not for the things which are *about* us.

What is an *earthly manor* — compared to a *heavenly mansion!* As *carnal* things seem small to a spiritual man — so *spiritual* things appear small to a carnal man. There is no desiring, and living for things, which are beyond the sphere of our own knowledge. Heaven is to the worldling — as a mine of gold which is buried deep in the earth — he does not realize that it exists. But if he had the *eyes* of an eagle to see it — he would wish for the *wings* of an eagle to soar unto it.

How *little* would the *great world* seem to us — if the *great God* were not so *little* in us! Either men have *no* thoughts of a future state — or else they have *low* thoughts of a future state. If we had souls without any bodies — then there would be no need of the earth to keep us; if we had bodies without any souls — there would be no need of Heaven to crown us. Such as have no present *holiness* — are for a present *happiness*.

"Many are saying — who will show us *any* good?" *Any* good will serve those — who know not the *chief* good. But David adds, "O Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us." O how sordid is it for men to prefer the garlic and onions of Egypt — to the milk and honey of Canaan! *Visible trifles* to them — are better than *invisible realities*. They mind the *present* world so much — as if it would never have any end; and the *eternal* world so little — as if it would never have a beginning.

Reader, why should you be so *taken up* with your riches — when you will be so soon *taken from* your riches? Why do you dote upon a *flower* — which may *wither* in an hour? As you are traveling *beyond* the world — it would be your wisdom to be trading *above* the world. But alas, such are not easily *awakened* — who fall so *fast asleep* on the world's pillow!

When the Gauls had tasted the wine of Italy — they asked where the grapes grew; and would never *rest* until they came there. Thus may you cry, "O that I had the wings of a dove — that I might fly away and be at *rest!*" A believer is willing to *lose* the world — for the enjoyment of *grace*. He is willing to *leave* the world — for the fruition of *glory*. As the *worst* on this side of eternity, compared with Hell — is *mercy*; so the *best* on this side of eternity, compared with Heaven — is *misery*. There is no more comparison to be made between *Heaven* — and *earth*; than there is between a piece of refined gold — and rusty iron.

Augustine says, "The *hope* of immortal life — is the *life* of our mortal lives." It is the expectation of a future glorious inheritance, which is the *Jacob's staff* of saints — with which they walk through this dark pilgrimage. "If *in this life only*, we have hope in Christ — we are of all men the most *miserable!*" But because we have hope in Christ, *after this life* — we may be of all men the most *comfortable!*

Though we have desires *in* the world — yet we have no desires *after* the world. "In this world we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling." A believer longs most for that place — where he shall be *best*. He not only *grows in grace* — but *groans for glory*. *Perfection* is the boundary of the *strongest expectation*. As it is *satisfied* with nothing less — so it *looks* for nothing more. Everything in eternity — is wound up to its highest capacity. It is in Heaven, that *mercy* will be received *unmixed* — and *majesty* viewed *unveiled*. What is a *worthless pebble* — compared with a *matchless diamond!*

What a sweet salutation is that of the *Savior* to His *servant*, "Enter into the joy of your Lord!" O, what *joy* shall enter into the *believer* — when he shall enter into the *joy* of his *Redeemer!* Then the vessels of mercy, shall have sea-room enough — in the *ocean of glory!*

Those whom *love* has closely united *together* — cannot contentedly dwell forever *asunder*. "Come, you who are blessed by My Father — inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world!" That which makes *Hell* so full of *horror* — is that it is below all *hopes*; and that which makes *Heaven* so full of *splendor* — is that it is above all *fears*. Hell is a night — without the return of day; Heaven is a day — free from the approach of night. Who would not *seek* after glory with the greatest *diligence*, and *wait* for glory with the greatest *patience*; seeing we *increase the interest*, while we *wait for the principle*.

There are some deluded professors, who aspire after earthly grandeur; as if the place where saints are crucified, were the place where they are glorified. This were to consider the church, in a *triumphant* condition, rather than a *militant* condition. The *ark* of the church, which is now tossed upon a *tumultuous sea* — shall then rest in the *harbor of eternal tranquility*.

"In My Father's house are many mansions — I go to prepare a place for you." Our *Redeemer* is our *forerunner*. He who takes possession *of* us on earth — takes possession *for* us in Heaven. As we are not long *here* without Him — so He will not be long *there* without us. Here on earth — all the *world* is not enough for one carnal man; but there in eternity — one *Heaven* shall be enough for all Christians. In this life — there are *showers of tears* which fall from the saint's eyes; but in that eternal life — there shall be a perpetual *sunshine of glory* in the saint's heart.

Many *temptations* may *accost* a heaven-born soul — but no temptation shall finally *prevail* against him. *Flying birds* are never taken in a fowler's snare. What is all that we enjoy here on earth; but as a *dying spark* — of that living flame! as a *languishing ray* — of that illustrious sun! or as a *small drop* — of that overflowing spring!

"You love Him, though you have not seen Him. And though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy!" If there is so much delight in *believing* — oh, how much is there in *beholding!* What is the *wooing* day, compared to the *wedding* day! What is the sealing of the *will*, compared to the enjoyment of the *inheritance!* What are the *foretastes* of glory, compared to the *fullness* of glory! The good things of that life are so *great* — as not to be measured; they are so *many* — as not to be enumerated; and so *precious* — as not to be estimated!

If the *picture of holiness* is so lovely — in its *rough draft*; how lovely a piece will it be — in all its perfections! Every *grace* which is here seen in its *minority* — shall be seen there in its *maturity*.

APPLICATIONS

Having dispatched that which is **doctrinal** — I now come to the discussion of that which is **practical**. And I shall here propose two considerations:

Firstly, for the *erection* of singular ***principles.***

Secondly, the *direction* of singular ***practices.***

Application #1

Twenty PRINCIPLES which a believer should walk by.

Natural men obey *natural* principles — and spiritual men obey *spiritual* principles. No man can expect that *bitter roots* — should produce *sweet fruits*. Though *civil* principles may be kindled at the torch of *nature* — yet *sacred* principles are lighted at the blaze of *Scripture*. Now there are *twenty singular principles* which I shall consider, as the rise and spring of singular practices.

1. The first principle which believers walk by is this:

That whatever is *transacted* by *men on earth* — is *eyed* by the *Lord* in *Heaven*.

A man may hide *God* from himself — and yet he cannot hide *himself* from God. This, even a prodigal could acknowledge, "I have sinned against *Heaven* — and in *Your* sight." When a man wishes God to be like himself — it argues that he is *wicked*; but when he desires to be like God — it indicates that he is *virtuous*.

A false *god* — would be most acceptable to a false *heart*. For, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands." They have *mouths* — but they speak not for our direction; they have *eyes* — but they cannot see our condition; they have *ears* — but they cannot hear our supplication; they have *hands* — but they cannot work our redemption. These were not the God that *made men* — but the gods that *men made*.

"All things are naked and open before the eyes of Him, with Whom we have to do." We cannot always see His *will* in His *works* — but He can always discover our *works* in our *will*. To Him the most *hidden roots* are as visible — as the *uppermost branches*. Though the place where we sin, is to men as *dark* as *Egypt* — yet to God, it is as *light* as *Goshen*. That advice which one gave to his friend *privately* — is worthy to be adapted *publicly*. "So *act towards men* — as in the sight of God; and so *pray to God* — as in the sight of men." He is a bold thief — who will cut your purse while you look in his face!

"All a man's ways seem right in his own eyes — but the Lord weighs the motives." The *Lord* sees faults — where *men* see none. Atoms which are invisible in the *candle light of reason* — are all made to dance naked in the *sun-shine of omniscience!* Cato was so grave and so good a man, that none would behave wrongly in his presence: whence it grew to a proverbial caution, "Take heed what you do — for *Cato* sees you!" How reproachful is it to us — that the *eyes* of a *man* should have more effect upon our actions — than the penetrating eyes of *God!*

God has a *clear window* into the darkest houses. He sees what is done in them, when none other can. To God's *omnipotence*, there is nothing *impossible*; and to God's *omniscience*, there is nothing *invisible*. I never look for those people to *strain at gnats* — who will easily and greedily *swallow camels*.

What is the reason that men do the works of darkness — but that they think they do their works in thick darkness? They suppose that no eye sees them — no, not God's eye, which does nothing else but see. "Yet you say — What does God know? Can He judge through thick darkness? Clouds veil Him — so that He cannot see!" Ah, how gladly would the *hand of man* — draw a *veil* over the *face of God!*

A *sinful* man — would be an *unseen* man! "Pay attention, you stupid people! Fools, when will you be wise? Can the One who shaped the *ear* — not hear? Can the One who formed the *eye* — not see?" Will you make Him *deaf* — who gives you ears? Will you make Him *blind* — who gives you eyes? This is acting like a *beast among men*; and not as a *man among beasts*. But, "The Lord knows the thoughts of man; He knows that they are futile!" Foolish men think that God does not know the vanity of their thoughts. This is the vainest thought of them all!

Reader, you cannot set down your lusts, in such characters — but what the eyes of God can read them! As He can *save* in the greatest extremity, so He can see in the deepest obscurity. Though we cannot see God *while* we live — yet He can see *how* we live. "His eyes are on the ways of men; He sees their every step. There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide." Man may gild over the leaves of a *blurred life*, with the profession of holiness; but God can unmask the *painted Jezebel of hypocrisy*, and lay her naked to her own shame!

Because sin has put out *our* eyes, we vainly imagine — that it has put out *God's* eyes! Because we cannot see what *God* does in Heaven *for* us; we think, that He cannot see what *we* do on earth *against* Him.

Men do not care what sins they do — when they believe that God does not see what sins are done. "They kill the widow and the foreigner, and murder the fatherless. They say — The Lord does not see it. The God of Jacob does not pay attention!"

The *adulterer* waits for the twilight. His *sin gets up* — when the *sun goes down*. The *time* of darkness, pays most tribute to the *prince* of darkness. There are many that blush to *confess* their faults, who never blush to *commit* them. When poor Adam had sinned, he sought not the *fairest fruits* to satisfy his hunger — but the *broadest leaves* to cover his nakedness.

It is God's *gracious* eye placed upon us — which *makes* us pious; and it is our *believing* eye fixed on Him — which *keeps* us pious. What *servant* is there — who would pilfer, under the view of his master? What *soldier* would appear a coward, in the presence of his prince?

2. Another principle by which a Christian should walk, is this:

That after all his *present receivings* — he will be brought to his *future reckonings*.

Thus the certain rich man dealt with his steward, "Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward!" Man's enjoyment of outward blessings, is not a *lordship* but a *stewardship*. God communicates those good things of life to men — not that they should lay them up for *their own vanity* — but that they should lay them out for *His glory*. The richest man had as poor a *beginning* — as the poorest; and the poorest will have as rich an *end* — as the wealthiest.

"So teach us to *number our days*, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Augustine says, "We can never do that — unless we number every day, as our last day." Many put their last day — far away. They refuse to leave the earth, when the earth is about to take its leave of them. People of the greatest eminence, have anciently had their monitors — to remind them of their mortality. Agathocles, a Sicilian Prince, had his earthen plate set before him, to remind him that he had been a potter. The Roman triumphers in the meridian of their splendor, had a servant behind them, crying to each, "Remember that you are only a man!"

Men, who are gods in *office* — are too apt to think themselves gods in *essence*; but the change of the *name*, can make no change in the *man*. The royal Psalmist, who was raised to princely dignity, ridicules such a haughty prince's vanity, "I have said, you are gods — but you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler." All human *divinity*, will soon be shrouded in *mortality*; and those who would appear as *gods* before men — shall soon appear as *men* before God.

Death levels the *highest mountains* — with the *lowest valleys*. Death mows down the *fairest lilies* — as well as the *foulest thistles*. The robes of illustrious princes, and the rags of destitute peasants, are both laid aside in the *wardrobe of the grave*. As the cloud and pillar which led Israel through the wilderness, left them on the brink of Jordan — so shall all the glittering shows of life be forgotten, in the solemn article of death!

Then those ungodly mortals, who were determined not to approach the throne of *grace* — shall be obliged to appear before the throne of *judgment*. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

At the shrill voice of the last trumpet, every jailer shall deliver up all his prisoners. Now we see the *living* fall into the arms of death; but then we shall behold the *dead* awake, and rise to an unchanging life! Then the scattered dust of all Adam's children, shall ride upon the wings of the wind, until it meets together in its own bodies. Then the purchased bodies of saints, shall be claimed by their heavenly owner. "But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead."

All the various animals which have feasted on human flesh — shall then find that their food was too rich for digestion. The bellies of beasts and whales, are not to be always the bed of God's *Jonahs*. Death will *cut* us down — but it shall not eternally *keep* us down. Now the same glorious Person who shall come to *raise* the dead, will also come to *judge* the dead. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." The *same rule* which God has given the world to *act* by — the same rule has He taken to Himself to *judge* by. Reader, if you obstinately and finally disobey the *precious Word of God* — revealed from Heaven *to* you; you must suffer the *eternal wrath of God* — revealed from Heaven *against* you. Though you may now obstinately resist the judgments which He sets before your *eyes*; yet you cannot then resist those judgments, which He will angrily pour out upon your *souls*.

Poor sinner, will you yet so willfully embrace those poisonous vipers, your lusts, which will so assuredly sting you with the pains of eternal damnation? Why will you rashly pursue anything in *this* world, which will subject you to the intolerable curse of God in the *eternal* world? "God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He has ordained." It is the Son of man — by whom the believing world was *redeemed*; and it will be by the same Son of man — that the whole world shall be *judged*. He who was guarded to the cross by a band of soldiers — shall soon be attended to the bench by a shining company of angels!

The ancient Thebans pictured their judges without *eyes* — that they might not favor persons; and without *hands* — to denote that no bribes should be received. "But the Judge of all the earth shall do right." The wills of human judges, are to be regulated by the laws of righteousness; but so glorious is the heavenly judge, that even the laws of righteousness are regulated by His will. As all His *works* are great and marvelous — so are all His *ways* just and righteous.

Reader, there will be no possibility of standing *before* Christ — but by standing *in* Christ. What hopes can you entertain of an acquittal at the final judgment, if your conscience condemns you before you appear at the bar?

Those who freight their minds with *carnal pleasures*, will one day be condemned for carrying *contraband commodities*. "Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see." This were brave indeed, if it could but be secured forever: but alas, after the flash of lightning — then comes the dreadful clap of thunder, "But know that for all these things — God will bring you to judgment!" This is just as if God had said, "Well, poor sinner, run down the hill as fast as you please; but know, that you will be sure to break your neck at last!"

This is the day of God's long-suffering — but the *judgment* day will be the day of the sinner's long-suffering. Here the cords of patience do, as it were, tie the hands of vengeance; but our *Samson* will at last be roused, and break all these cords, and then, woe be to all the *Philistines!* Sinners may have *sparing patience* exercised towards them — and yet, not have *converting grace* revealed in them. All such, at the *world's end* — will be at their *wit's* end.

He who now *shakes* His sword over the hardened sinner's *head* — will in the great day, *sheathe* it in his *heart!* In the awful storm of death, if his vessel be wrecked — there will be no plank to swim to shore upon. "Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks — 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of Their wrath has come, and who can stand?'"

Thus, all who refuse and reject Him as a *refining* fire — must be obliged to meet, and feel Him as a *consuming* fire! How can they endure the *wrath* of the Lamb, who have consistently disregarded the *death* of the Lamb? If the *night of death* finds them graceless — the *day of judgment* will find them speechless!

Peter informs us of some, who deridingly challenge God to come to judgment, "In the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say — 'Where is this 'coming' He promised?'" These scoffers may boast and discharge the artillery of their venom, and appear as conquering heroes now; but when God appears with His naked sword, they will wish for the wings of the wind, with which to make their escape!

As a *dying man* has generally a short resurgence before his departure; and as an *expiring candle* gives a brighter glare when just going out, so these, in their *boasted security* — will be surprised with *eternal misery!* As God's *mercy* lets no *service* pass unregarded — so God's *justice* lets no *sin* pass *unrevenged*. He who now takes *no* account of His coming — will have a *sad* account to give at His coming.

One observes, that the resurrection of the body, is placed between the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting glory; to show, that only then can the resurrection of the body be a benefit, when remission of sin precedes it, and eternal life follows it.

It is reported of a Hungarian king, who being extremely dejected, was asked the cause of it by his brother, "O, I have been a great sinner against God!" said he, "and know not how I shall appear before Him in judgment!" His brother ridiculed these thoughts as too melancholy, and as unworthy of the king's thought. The king then made no further reply; but it was customary in that country, that if the executioner sounded a trumpet at any man's door, he was immediately to be brought forth to execution. The king, at midnight, sent the trumpeter to sound an alarm at his brother's door; which so terrified him, that he ran to the king with a trembling heart, a pale and frightful countenance, and besought him to make known, wherein he had offended him.