



Articles and Sermons :: A Word in Season to Suffering Saints - Brooks

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The special presence of God with His people,
in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses,
and most deadly dangers.

By Thomas Brooks, London, 1675

CHOICE EXCERPTS

Look upon death

Look upon death as that which is best.

"Better is the day of death, than the day of one's
birth." Ecclesiastes 7:1

"I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is
better by far." Philippians 1:23

The Greek is very significant—"far, far the better!"
A saint's dying day is the daybreak of eternal glory!
In respect of pleasure, peace, safety, company and
glory—a believer's dying day is his best day.

Look upon death as a remedy, as a cure. Death
will perfectly cure you of all bodily and spiritual diseases
at once: the infirm body and the defiled soul, the aching
head and the unbelieving heart. Death will cure you of
all your ailments, aches, diseases, and distempers.

In Queen Mary's days, there was a lame Christian,
and a blind Christian—both burned at one stake.
The lame man, after he was chained, casting away
his crutch, bade the blind man to be of good cheer;
"For death," says he, "will cure us both; you of
your blindness, and me of my lameness!"

As death will cure all your bodily diseases, so it will
cure all your soul distempers also. Death is not the
death of the man—but the death of his sin! Death
will at once free you fully, perfectly, and perpetually
from all sin; yes, from all possibility of ever sinning!
Sin was the midwife which brought death into the
world—and death shall be the grave to bury sin.

Why, then, should a Christian be afraid to die,
unwilling to die—seeing death gives him an
eternal separation . . .

from infirmities and weaknesses,
from all aches and pains,
from griefs and gripings,
from distempers and diseases,
both of body and soul?

When Samson died, the Philistines died together with
him. Just so, when a saint dies, his sins die with him.

Death came in by sin, and sin goes out by death!
Death kills sin which bred it.

Look upon death as a rest, a full rest.
A believer's dying day is his resting day . . .

from sin,
from sorrow,
from afflictions,
from temptations,
from desertions,
from dissensions,
from vexations,
from oppositions,
from persecutions.

This world was never made to be the saints' rest.
Arise and depart, for this is not your resting place,
because it is polluted! (Micah 2:10)

Death brings the saints . . .
to a full rest,
to a pleasant rest,
to a matchless rest,
to an eternal rest!

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The dirty lane

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. 1:21

Look upon your dying day as a gainful day. There is
no gain compared to that which comes in by death.
A Christian gets more by death, than he does by life.
To be in Christ is very good—but to be with Christ
is best of all, "I desire to depart and be with Christ,
which is better by far!" Phil. 1:23. It was a mighty
blessing for Christ to be with Paul on earth—but it
was the top of blessings for Paul to be with Christ
in heaven! Seriously consider these things—

By death you shall gain incomparable crowns!
A crown of life, Rev. 2:10; James 1:12;
A crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. 4:8;

An incorruptible crown, 1 Cor. 9:24-25;

A crown of glory, 1 Pet. 5:4.

There are no crowns compared to these crowns!

By death you shall gain a glorious kingdom!

"It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom!"

We must put off our rags of mortality—that we may put on our robes of glory. There is no entering into paradise—but under the flaming sword of this angel, death—who stands at the gate. Death is the dirty lane through which the saint passes . . .

to a kingdom,
to a great kingdom,
to a glorious kingdom,
to a peaceful kingdom,
to an unshaken kingdom,
to a durable kingdom,
to a lasting kingdom, yes,
to an everlasting kingdom!

Death is the dark, short way, through which the saints pass to the marriage-supper of the Lamb!

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The funeral of all your sorrows!

At death, you shall gain full freedom and liberty from all your enemies within and without—namely, sin, Satan, and the world!

Death will free you from the indwelling power of sin. In this present world, sin plays the tyrant; but in heaven there is no tyranny—but perfect felicity. As in hell there is nothing but wickedness, so in heaven there is nothing but holiness.

Death will free you from all provocations, temptations, and suggestions to sin. You shall be above all Satan's assaults. The old serpent is cast out, and shall be forever kept out of the new Jerusalem above!

Death will free you from all the effects and consequences of sin—namely, losses, crosses, sicknesses, diseases, disgraces, sufferings, etc. When the cause is taken away, the effect ceases. When the fountain of sin is dried up, the streams of afflictions, of sufferings, must be dried up. Sin and sorrow were born together, live together, and shall die together. Death will free you from all bodily infirmities and diseases.

Death will free you from all your sorrows, whether inward or outward, whether for your own sins or the sins of others, whether for your own sufferings or the sufferings of others. Now, it may be, you are seldom without tears in your eyes, or sorrow in your heart. Oh, but death will be the funeral

of all your sorrows! Death will wipe all tears from your eyes, "and sorrow and mourning shall flee away!"

Dear friend, death shall do that for you, which all your physicians could never do for you. It shall both instantly and perfectly cure you of all sorts of weaknesses and maladies, both inward and outward, of both your body and your soul! O my dear friend, is it not better to die, and be rid of all sin; and be rid of all temptations; and be rid of all sorts of miseries; than to live, and still carry about with us our sins, our sorrows, our burdens, and our constant ailments?

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You have afflicted me

"I know, O Lord, that Your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness You have afflicted me."
Psalm 119:75

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey Your word." Psalm 119:67

God's corrections are our instructions,
His lashes are our lessons,
His scourges are our schoolmasters,
His chastisements are our admonishments.

By afflictions, troubles, distresses and dangers—the Lord teaches His people to look upon sin as the most loathsome thing in the world; and to look upon holiness as the most lovely thing in the world. Sin is never so bitter, and holiness is never so sweet—as when our troubles are greatest and our dangers highest.

By affliction, the Lord teaches His people to sit loose from this world, and to be prepared for eternity.

By affliction, God shows His people the vanity, vexation, emptiness, weakness, and nothingness of all created things; and the choiceness, preciousness and sweetness of communion with Himself.

It has been the lot and portion of God's dearest children, to be exercised with very great and grievous afflictions; in order . . .
to the discovery of sin,
to the embittering of sin,
to the preventing of sin,
to the purging away of sin; and
to the discovery of grace,
to the trial of grace,
to the exercise of grace,
to the increase of grace; and

to the weaning of them from this world; and
to the ripening of them for heaven; and
to the completing of their conformity to Christ,
the captain of their salvation, "who was made
perfect through sufferings," Hebrews 2:10; and
to work in them more pity and compassion to
those who are in misery, and who sigh and
groan under their Egyptian taskmasters.

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They poured out a prayer

The greatest antidote against all the troubles of
this life, is fervent prayer.

"Lord, in trouble have they visited You; they
poured out a prayer when Your chastening
was upon them." Isaiah 26:16

"They poured out a prayer." Before, they would
say a prayer—but now, they poured out a prayer.

Saints never visit God more with their prayers
—than when He visits them most with His rod.

Saints never pray with . . .

that seriousness,
that spiritualness,
that heavenliness,
that humbleness,
that brokenness,
that fervency,
that frequency—as they do, when they are
under the mighty chastening hand of God!

A sincere Christian never prays so sweetly—as
when under God's rod. When a Christian is in
trouble—then prayer is his food and drink.

Oh, what a spirit of prayer was . . .

upon Jonah—when he was in the whale's belly; and
upon Daniel—when he was among the lions; and
upon David—when fleeing in the wilderness; and
upon the dying thief—when he was on the cross; and
upon Jacob—when his brother Esau came to meet him
with four hundred bloody cut-throats at his heels!

When a Christian is under great troubles, deep distresses,
and most extreme dangers; he should pray . . .
more for the sanctification of affliction—than its removal;
more to get off his sins—than to get off his chains;
more to get good by the rod—than to get free from the rod;
that his afflictions may be a purifying and refining fire,
that his heart may be low and his graces high,
that he may be more weaned from this world,
that he be more ripe for eternal glory.

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Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolized!

What are all . . .
the silks of Persia,
the spices of Egypt,
the gold of Ophir, and
the treasures of both Indies—
compared to the glory of heaven?

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind
has conceived what God has prepared for
those who love Him!" 1 Corinthians 2:9

One of the ancients says, "Our conception
of heaven, is as a little drop from the sea.
For those glorious things of heaven are . . .
so many that they exceed number,
so great that they exceed measure,
so precious that they are above all estimation!"

Says another, "Do you ask me what heaven is?
When I meet you there, I will tell you!"

Says Jerome, "Are you able to put the whole earth,
and all the waters of the sea—into a little pot? Can
you hold the oceans in your hand? Can you measure
the heavens with your fingers—or weigh the hills
and mountains with a scale? Just so, it is impossible
that you can comprehend the least of the joys of
heaven! Certainly, the least of the joys of heaven
are inconceivable and inexpressible!"

Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolized!

"You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with
eternal pleasures at Your right hand!" Psalm 16:11

"They feast on the abundance of Your house; You give
them drink from Your river of delights!" Psalm 36:8

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The Land of Cabul

"An incorruptible inheritance." 1 Peter 1:4

All earthly inheritances are liable to corruption; they
are true gardens of Adonis—where we can gather
nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many
briars, thorns and thistles.

Oh, the hands, the hearts, the thoughts, the lives—
which have been corrupted by earthly inheritances!
Oh, the impure love, the carnal confidence, the vain
boastings, the sensual joys—which have been the
products of earthly inheritances!

If a man's estate lies in money—that may rust, or
thieves may break in and steal it. If a man's estate
lies in cattle—they may die, or fall into the hands of
the Sabeans and Chaldeans. If a man's estate lies
in houses—they may be burnt. Witness the recent
dreadful fire that turned London into a ruinous heap!
If a man's estate lies in lands—a foreign enemy may
invade them and conquer them.

All earthly inheritances are no better than the cities
which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called Cabul,
that is, 'worthless, good-for-nothing, displeasing, dirty.'

"But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns that
Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them.
'What kind of towns are these you have given me, my
brother?' he asked. And he called them the Land of
Cabul, a name they have to this day." 1 Kings 9:12-13

Earthly inheritances do but dirt, daub, and dust people.
It is only the heavenly inheritance which is incorruptible.

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They chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post

"Moses said unto God—If Your presence does not go
with us, do not send us up from here!" Exodus 33:15

Nothing would satisfy Moses, below the presence of God,
because he knew that it would be better that they should
never move a foot farther—as to go on without God's
favorable presence.

God promised that His angel would drive all their
enemies out of the land. "Oh, but if Your presence
does not go with us—do not send us up from here!"

"Yes, but I will bring the necks of all your proud, stout,
strong, and subtle enemies under your feet!" "Oh, but if
Your presence does not go with us—do not send us up
from here!"

"Yes, but I will bring you to a land flowing with milk and
honey. I will make you to suck honey out of the rock, and
oil out of the flinty rock; and you shall drink the finest
wine!" "Oh, but if Your presence does not go with us—do
not send us up from here!"

"Yes, but I will bring you to the paradise of the world—to a

place of pleasure and delight, to Canaan, a type of heaven!"
"Oh, but if Your presence does not go with us—do not send us up from here! O Lord, if I might have my wish, my desire, my choice—I had infinitely rather to live in a barren, howling wilderness with Your presence—than in Canaan without it! It is a mercy to have an angel to guard us, it is a mercy to have our enemies sprawling under our feet, it is a mercy to be brought into a pleasant land. Oh, but if Your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here! Lord, nothing will please us, nothing will profit us, nothing will secure us, nothing will satisfy us—without Your presence!"

I have read of the Tyrians, that they bound their gods with chains—that they might secure them, and not be conquered by their enemies. And among the rest, they chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post—that they might be sure to keep their idol, because they thought their safety was in it.

I am sure of this—that our safety, our comfort, our all—lies in the special presence of God with us! Therefore let us, by faith and prayer—chain God to our self! If we let Him go, a thousand worlds cannot make up His absence!

The heathens in Troy imagined that so long as their idol was kept safe, they were unconquerable; all the strength and power of Greece would never be able to prevail against them. Therefore the Grecians sought by all the means they could—to get this idol from them.

O my friends, so long as you keep the presence of God with you—I am sure you are unconquerable! But if God withdraws His special presence—the weakest enemy will be too hard for you; yes, wounded men will prevail over you!

The burning bush, which was a type of the Church, was not consumed—because God was in the midst of it. Oh, do but keep God's special presence with you—and nothing shall hurt you, nothing shall burn you! But if God's special presence departs—nothing can secure you!

"Moses said unto God—If Your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here!" Exodus 33:15

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I bequeath my pastor's soul to the devil

"Covetousness, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5

Covetousness is explicit idolatry.

Covetousness is the darling sin of our nation.

This leprosy has infected all sorts and ranks of men.

Covetousness being idolatry, and the root of all evil,

is highly provoking to God.

Whatever a man loves most and best—that is his god.
The covetous man looks upon the riches of the world
as his heaven—his happiness—his great all.

His heart is most upon the world,
his thoughts are most upon the world,
his affections are most upon the world,
his discourse is most about the world.

He who has his mind taken up with the world, and
chiefly delighted with the world's music—he has also
his tongue tuned to the same key, and takes his joy
and comfort in speaking of nothing else but the world
and worldly things. If the world is in the heart—it will
break out at the lips. A worldly-minded man speaks
of nothing but worldly things. "They are of the world,
therefore they speak of the world," 1 John 4:5. The love
of this world oils the tongue for worldly discourses,
and makes men . . .

forget God,
neglect Christ,
despise holiness,
forfeit heaven.

Ah! the time, the thoughts, the strength, the efforts,
which are spent upon the world, and the things of the
world; while sinners' souls lie a-bleeding, and eternity
is hastening upon them!

I have read of a greedy banker, who was always best
when he was most in talking of money and the world.
Being near his death, he was much pressed to make
his will. Finally he dictates:

First, I bequeath my own soul to the devil
—for being so greedy for the muck of this world!

Secondly, I bequeath my wife's soul to the devil
—for persuading me to this worldly course of life.

Thirdly, I bequeath my pastor's soul to the devil
—because he did not show me the danger I lived in,
nor reprove me for it.

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and
a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that
plunge men into ruin and destruction." 1 Timothy 6:9

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The Scriptures are sufficient

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching,
rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so
that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for

every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Scriptures are sufficient . . .

to inform the ignorant,
to confute the erroneous,
to reform the wicked, and
to guide and direct, support and comfort, the godly.

Here a lamb may wade, and here an elephant may swim!

Here is milk for babes, and meat for strong men!

Here is . . .

comfort for the afflicted, and
support for the tempted, and
ease for the troubled, and
light for the clouded, and
enlargement for the straitened, etc.

Oh,

how full of light,
how full of life,
how full of love,
how full of sweetness,
how full of goodness,
how full of righteousness,
how full of holiness, etc.,

is every chapter, and every verse in every
chapter, yes, and every line in every verse!

No human writings are comparable to Scripture:

1. for antiquity;
2. for rarity;
3. for variety;
4. for brevity;
5. for plainness;
6. for harmony;
7. for verity.

All which should greatly encourage Christians to a
serious perusal of them. "Oh, how I love Your law!
I meditate on it all day long." Psalm 119:97

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Secret prayer

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful
and thankful." Colossians 4:2

A Christian can as well . . .

hear without ears, and
live without food, and
fight without hands, and
walk without feet—

as he is able to live without secret prayer.

Secret prayer is the life of our lives, the soul, the sweet, the heaven of all our earthly enjoyments. Of all the duties of piety, secret prayer is the most . . .
soul-sweetening,
soul-strengthening,
soul-nourishing,
soul-fattening,
soul-refreshing,
soul-satisfying, and
soul-encouraging duty.

In all the ages of the world, the saints have kept up secret prayer. In spite of all opposers and persecutors, in prisons, in dungeons, in dens, in chains, on racks, in banishments, and in the very flames—the saints have still kept up this secret prayer.

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He has all comforts at His disposal

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles."
2 Corinthians 1:3-4

God is the God of all sorts and degrees of comfort. He has all comforts at His disposal. This phrase, "The God of all comforts," intimates to us:

1. That no comfort can be found anywhere else; God has the sole gift of comfort.
2. God has not only some—but all comfort! No imaginable comfort is lacking in Him, nor to be found outside of Him. Nothing can soundly comfort us without God.
3. All degrees of comfort are to be found in Him—in our greatest troubles and deepest distresses. The deeper the distress—the greater the comforts.

"God, who comforts the downcast." 2 Cor. 7:6

When we are in a very low condition, when we are spent with grief and swallowed up in sorrows, when we are destitute of all relief and comfort—the then the God of all comforts comes to console us!

No tribulations, no persecutions, no grievances, no prison doors, no bolts, no bars—can keep the consolations of God from flowing in upon His people. God loves to comfort His people—when all their outward comforts fail them. God's comforts are not only sweet, but seasonable; He never

comes too soon, nor ever stays too long.

The comfort of God is His most sweet attribute;
it is a breast which we should be always sucking at.

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No sin, no sinner, no devil!

"An undefiled inheritance." 1 Peter 1:4

There are few earthly inheritances— but some defilement or other sticks close to them. Many times they are gotten by fraud, oppression, violence, injustice, etc. And as they are often wickedly gotten— so they are as often wickedly kept!

The heavenly inheritance is the only undefiled inheritance. No sin, no sinner, no devil— can enter to defile or pollute the heavenly inheritance, the incorruptible crown. The Greek word signifies a precious stone, which though it be ever so much soiled— yet it cannot be blemished nor defiled. Yes, the oftener you cast it into the fire and take it out— the more clear, bright, and shining it is!

No unclean thing shall enter into heaven to defile this crown, this inheritance! The serpent got into the earthly paradise, and defiled Adam's crown— yes, he robbed him of his crown! But the subtle serpent can never enter into the heavenly paradise!

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:27

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Fading glory!

"An inheritance which does not fade away." 1 Peter 1:4

This is a metaphor taken from flowers. The beauty of flowers, and the sweetness of flowers— wither in a moment, and are quickly gone. And then they are good for nothing but to be cast upon the ash-heap!

So it is with all earthly inheritances— they soon lose their glory and fragrancy. Where is the glory of the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms? Fading glory! has been long since, written upon them all! Yes, all the glory of the world is like the flower of the field— which soon fades away!

How many great men and great kingdoms have for

a time shined in great glory, even like so many suns in the sky— but are now vanished away like so many blazing comets! How soon is the courtier's glory eclipsed— if his prince does but frown upon him! And how soon does the prince become a peasant— if God does but frown upon him!

Indeed the excellency of the heavenly inheritance, is that it will never fade or wither away. All the glory of heaven is like God Himself— lasting, yes, everlasting! This never-fading inheritance of believers is always fresh and resplendent. The glory of believers shall never fade nor wither, nor grow old nor rusty. Thrice happy are those who have a share in this incorruptible inheritance!

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An ever-present help in trouble

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3

This divine presence is the greatest good in the world.

The people of the Lord should be very thankful for His presence with them in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. O Sirs! this divine presence is a great mercy. It is a special mercy, it is a distinguishing mercy, it is a big-bellied mercy— which has many mercies in its womb. It is a mercy-greatening mercy; it greatens all the mercies we enjoy. It is a mercy-sweetening mercy; it sweetens health, strength, riches, honors, trade, relations, etc. It is a soul-mercy, a mercy which reaches the soul, which cheers the soul, which lifts up the soul, which quiets the soul, which satisfies the soul, and which will go to heaven with the soul. Will you not be thankful for such a mercy? Will you be thankful for temporal mercies— and will you not be thankful for spiritual mercies? To enjoy the presence of God when we most need it, is a mercy which deserves perpetual praises. It is the greatest mercy in this world, to enjoy the gracious presence of God in our great troubles and desperate dangers. Therefore be much in blessing God, and in admiring God— for His presence with you in a dark and trying day.

"I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." Joshua 1:5

"The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress!" Psalm 46:7

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

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A most sovereign antidote

God is with His people to counsel them in all doubtful and difficult cases, and to defend and secure them against all their enemies and opposers. God's presence is infinitely better than the presence of all outward comforts.

A sound sincere Christian can . . .
never have enough power against sin,
nor ever enough strength against temptation,
nor ever enough weanedness from this world,
nor ever enough ripeness for heaven,
nor ever enough of the presence of the Lord.

The special presence of God with His people
is a most sovereign antidote.

Troubles will be no troubles,
distresses will be no distresses,
dangers will be no dangers,
—if the divine presence is with you.

Mountains will be molehills, stabs at the heart
will be but as scratches upon the hand—
if the divine presence is with you.

God's special presence will turn . . .
storms into calms,
winter nights into summer days,
prisons into palaces,
banishments into enlargements,
weakness into strength,
poverty into plenty,
death into life.

Just so, while a Christian enjoys the singular
presence of God with him, he will make nothing
of this affliction and that affliction, of this trouble
and that trouble, of this loss and that loss. God's
presence makes . . .
heavy afflictions light, and
long afflictions short, and
bitter afflictions sweet.

A man in misery, without this gracious presence
of God, is in a very hell on this side of hell. God's
gracious presence makes every condition to be
a little heaven to the believing soul. There is
nothing, there can be nothing, but heaven—
where God is specially present.

"The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob
is our fortress!" Psalm 46:7

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present
help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

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The great master-scar of the soul

"I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13

Take heed of pride and haughtiness of spirit. Pride
is the great master-scar of the soul; it will bud
and blossom—it cannot be hidden. Pride is the
leprosy of the soul, which breaks forth in the
very forehead! Pride is . . .
the sum of all vileness,
a sea of sin,
a mother sin,
a breeding sin—
a sin which has all sorts of sin in its womb!
In pride, all vices are wrapped up together in a bundle!

"The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of
this: They will not go unpunished!" Proverbs 16:5

God will have nothing to do with proud people.

He won't come near such loathsome lepers!

Therefore as ever you would enjoy God's presence,
arm yourself against pride,
watch against pride, and
pray hard against pride!

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The presence of a loving God!

"Since you were precious in My sight, and
I have loved you." Isaiah 43:4

God loves His people with a first love! 1 John 4:19
"We love Him because He first loved us." By nature
we were without God, and afar off from God; we were
strangers to God, and enemies to God, yes, haters
of God! Therefore if God had not loved us first—
we would have been everlastingly undone!

God loves His people with a free love! Hosea 14:4,
"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely."
I know they are backslidden—but I will heal their
backslidings. I know there is nothing at all in them,

which is excellent or eminent, which is honorable or acceptable, which is laudable or lovely—yet "I will love them freely"—of My own, free, rich, absolute, and sovereign grace!

God loves His people with an everlasting love!
Jer. 31:3, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn you." That is, "I love you with the love of perpetuity, or with the love of eternity. My love and My affections to you shall continue forever!"

God loves His people with an unchangeable love!
Mal. 3:6, "I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed." Men change, and counsels change, and occurrences change, and friends change, and relations change, and kingdoms change; but God never changes! "He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man, that He should change His mind," 1 Sam. 15:29. God is immutable in His nature, in His essence, in His counsels, in His attributes, in His decrees, in His promises, etc. He is Omnina immutabilis, "Altogether immutable!"

God loves His people . . .
with a special love,
with a peculiar love,
with a distinguishing love,
with a superlative love!

God loves His people with the greatest love, with a matchless love! John 3:16, "God so loved," etc. This signifies . . .
the greatness of God's love,
the vehemency of His love, and
the admirableness of His love

What an unspeakable comfort must this be to God's people—to have the presence of a loving God, to have the presence of such a loving God with them in all their troubles and deep distresses! If the presence of a loving friend, a loving relation in our troubles and distresses, is such a mercy—oh, what then is the presence of a loving God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The presence of a compassionate God!

"His compassions never fail!" Lamentations 3:22

Each believer has the presence of . . .
a God of mercy,
a God of tenderness,
a God of compassion.

Mercy is as essential to God—[^]as light is to the sun, or as heat is to the fire. He delights in mercy. Patience, and mildness, and mercy, and compassion, and peace are the fruits of His heart. God's compassions are . . .

fatherly compassions, Psalm 103:13;
motherly compassions, Isaiah 49:15;
brotherly compassions, Hebrews 2:12;
friendly compassions, Canticles 5:1-2.

Oh, how sweet must the presence of a God of mercy, a God of compassion—[^]be to the saints in a day of trouble! The presence of a compassionate friend in a day of distress is very desirable and comfortable; what then is the presence of a compassionate God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Have you seen the One my heart loves?

"All night long on my bed I looked for the One my heart loves; I looked for Him but did not find Him."
Song of Songs 3:1

"Have you seen the One my heart loves?"
Song of Songs 3:3

"I opened for my lover, but my lover had left; He was gone! My heart sank at His departure. I looked for Him but did not find Him. I called Him but He did not answer." Song of Songs 5:6

Let your hearts lie humble and low under the loss of God's gracious presence.

The loss of God's gracious presence is the greatest loss.

The loss of God's gracious presence is a loss-embittering loss; it is a loss that will greatly embitter all your worldly losses. "I have lost my health, I have lost a precious child, I have lost a gracious spouse, who was the delight of my eyes and the joy of my heart; I have lost a costly estate, I have lost an intimate friend, I have lost a thriving trade. Oh, but that which embitters all my losses, and puts a sting into them, is this—[^]that I have lost the gracious presence of God that once I enjoyed!"

The loss of God's gracious presence is a loss that all outward comforts can never make up. When the sun is set, nothing can make it day with us.

The loss of God's gracious presence is a soul loss; and no losses can be compared to soul losses. As there are no mercies compared to soul mercies, so there are no losses to soul losses.

The loss of God's gracious presence is a loss which will cost a man dearly, before it will be made up again. Oh the sighs, the groans, the strong cries, the earnest prayers, the bottles of tears that the recovery of the divine presence will cost!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I cried

The child has got many a kiss, and many a hug
Â—by crying.

"In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my
God for help. From His temple He heard my voice;
my cry came before Him, into His ears." Psalm 18:6

Prayer is the only means to supply all defects;
prayer gets all, and makes up the loss of all.

It is not the lengthÂ—but the strength of prayer;
it is not the labor of the lipÂ—but the travail of the
heartÂ—which prevails with God. It is not . . .
the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor
the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they are; nor
the geometry of our prayers, how long they are; nor
the music of our prayers, how sweet they are; nor
the logic of our prayers, how methodical they are
Â—which will prevail with God. It is only fervency in
prayer, which will make a man prevalent with God.
Fervent prayer hits the mark, and pierces the walls
of heaven!

"In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and He
answered by setting me free." Psalm 118:5

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Enthralled with the doll or the rattle

"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek You; my
soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, in a dry
and weary land where there is no water. I have seen
You in the sanctuary and beheld Your power and Your
glory. Because Your love is better than life, my lips
will glorify You!" Psalm 63:1-3

Be sure you don't take up your greatest delight . . .
in any creature,
in any comfort,
in any contentment,
in any worldly enjoyment.

When the mother sees that the child is enthralled
with the doll or the rattleÂ—she comes not in sight.

If you take up your rest in any of the dolls and rattles
—in any of the poor things of this world, God will
certainly keep out of sight. He will never honor them
with His gracious presence—who are enthralled with
anything below Himself, below His presence.

When you begin to be tickled and enthralled with
this and that worldly enjoyment, reason thus—"Here
is a gracious spouse, here are precious children, here
is a pleasant home, here is a wonderful climate, here
is a gainful trade, etc. But what are all these to me,
so long as God has withdrawn His presence from me?"

Remember this once for all—that the whole world
is but a barren wilderness—without the gracious
presence of God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The eye of heaven

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of
Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13

Each believer has the presence of a WISE God, of an
omniscient God. God fills all things, He encompasses
all things, and He sustains all things—and therefore
He must need know all things! The whole world is
to Him, as a sea of glass—clear and transparent.
There is nothing hidden from His eyes!

The eye of heaven sees all, and knows all of . . .
your troubles and trials,
your sorrows and sufferings,
your losses and crosses!

Is it such a comfort to have the presence of a wise
and knowing friend with us in our greatest troubles
and deepest distresses? What a transcendent comfort
must it be then to enjoy the presence of an all-seeing
and an all-knowing God in all our troubles and distresses!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I am with you

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed,
for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Is. 41:10

Oh! this special, this favorable presence of the Lord with
His people, in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses,
is a sweet presence, a comfortable presence, a delightful
presence, a blessed presence!

O Christian, be in whatever place you will, and with whatever company you will, and in whatever condition you will—yet your loving God, your kind Father, your bosom Friend, will be still with you! He will never leave you, nor forsake you! Oh what a spring of comfort this should be to you!

O Christian! are your troubles . . .
many in number,
strange in nature,
heavy in measure,
much in burden, and
long in continuance?

Remember that your God is near . . .
whose mercies are numerous,
whose wisdom is wondrous, and
whose power is miraculous!

O my friends, how can you lack comfort—who have the God of all consolation present with you?

How can you lack counsel—who have the wonderful Counselor so near unto you?

How can you lack grace—who have the God of all grace standing by you?

How can you lack peace—who have always the presence of the Prince of peace with you?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The highest heavens and the lowest hearts

"For this is what the high and lofty One says—He who lives forever, whose name is holy—I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." Isaiah 57:15

The highest heavens and the lowest hearts, are the habitation of God's glorious presence. He who would in good earnest enjoy the gracious presence of God with him in his great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, he must keep humble, and walk humbly with his God. God will keep house with none but humble souls.

There are none who feel so great a need of the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who so prize the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who so love the divine presence, and who are so enamored with the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who so thirst and long for much of the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who so lament and bewail the loss of the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who make such a singular and thorough improvement of the divine presence as humble souls.

Therefore, it is no wonder that of all the men in the world, God singles out the humble Christian, to make his heart the habitation where His honor delights to dwell.

He who is little in his own account, is great in God's esteem, and shall be sure to enjoy most of His presence. God can dwell, God will dwell with none but those who are lowly in heart; and therefore as ever you would enjoy the special presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses—be sure that you walk humbly with your God. Many may talk much of God, and many may profess much of God, and many may boast much of God; but he only enjoys much of God who makes conscience of walking humbly with God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God's gracious presence and assistance

"Lo, I am with you always," Matthew 28:20

This is a promise of God's gracious presence and assistance.

Lo, I am with you, to own you!

Lo, I am with you, to counsel and direct you!

Lo, I am with you, to cheer and comfort you!

Lo, I am with you, to assist and strengthen you!

Lo, I am with you, to shelter you and protect you!

Lo, I am with you, to strengthen your graces!

Lo, I am with you, to weaken your sins!

Lo, I am with you, to scatter your fears and answer your doubts!

Lo, I am with you, to better your hearts and to mend your lives!

Lo, I am with you, to bless you and crown you with immortality and glory!

What can the soul desire more?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Earthly crowns are like tennis-balls

1 Peter 5:4 "You will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away,"—as the garlands faded, with which the conquerors at games, races, and combats were crowned— which were made of herbs, leaves, and flowers.

A crown imports perpetuity, plenty, dignity.

A crown is the height of human ambition.

A believer's crown, his inheritance, his glory, his happiness, his blessedness—shall be as fresh and flourishing after he has been many millions of years in heaven—as it was at his first entrance into it.

Earthly crowns are like tennis-balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another, and in time wear out. When time shall be no more, when earthly crowns and kingdoms shall be no more, yes, when the world shall be no more—a Christian's crown of glory shall be fresh, flourishing, and continuing.

All the devils in hell shall never wrangle a believer out of his heavenly inheritance, nor deprive him of his crown of glory. The least thing in heaven, is better than the greatest things in this world. All things on earth are fading—but the crown of glory never fades away.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Growth in grace

Commonly the Christian's spiritual growth in grace, is carried on by such divine methods, and in such ways as might seem to deaden grace, and weaken it—rather than any ways to augment and increase it.

We know that winter is as necessary to bring on harvest, as the spring; and so fiery trials are as necessary to bring on the harvest of grace, as the spring of mercy is. Though fiery trials are grievous; yet they shall make the saints more gracious. God usually, by sharp sufferings, turns His people's . . . sparks of grace into a mighty flame; their mites into millions; their drops into seas.

All the devils in hell, and all the sinners on earth, cannot hinder the Lord from carrying on the growth of grace in His people's souls. When men and devils have done their worst, God will, by all sorts of providences, and all sorts of changes—make His people more and more holy, and more and more humble, and more and more meek and lowly, and more and more heavenly, wise, faithful, fruitful, sincere, courageous, etc.

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Not all the powers of hell

The covenant of grace is founded . . .
upon God's free love,
upon God's everlasting love,
upon God's special and peculiar love,
upon God's unchangeable love—
so that God can as soon cease to be, as He can cease to love those whom He has taken into covenant with Himself, or cease to keep covenant with them.

The covenant of grace is also founded upon God's immutable counsel and purpose. The decree and purpose of God's election stands firm and sure.

The covenant of grace is also founded . . .
upon God's glorious power,
upon God's infinite power,
upon God's supreme power,
upon God's invincible power,
upon God's independent power,
upon God's incomparable power;
and until you can find a power that can overmatch this divine power, the saints' covenant-relation holds good.

It is not the indwelling power of sin, nor violent temptations, nor heavy afflictions—which can dissolve our covenant-relation with God. Though sin may work, and Satan may tempt, and fears may be high—yet God will still maintain His covenant interest in His people, and His people's relation to Himself.

"I will betroth you unto Me forever." Hosea 2:19

"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Heb. 13:5

It is not all the powers of hell, nor all the powers on earth, which can make null or void our covenant-relation.

Those whom free grace has brought into covenant, shall continue in covenant forever and ever. Once in covenant with God—forever in covenant with God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Never will I leave you

"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."
Hebrews 13:5

These Hebrew Christians had been plundered of all they had (Hebrews 10:34). Though they had nothing they must be content. If men cannot bring their means to their minds, let them bring their minds to their means; a little will serve our turn until we get to heaven, until we come to our Father's house.

"Never will I leave you." This promise includes all times, all places, all states, all needs, all dangers, all distresses, all necessities, all calamities, all miseries, which can befall us in this world.

These two phrases, "God's not leaving, God's not forsaking," imply all needful assistance.
I will supply all your needs,
I will heal all your diseases,
I will secure you against all sorts of dangers,
I will ease you of all your pains,
I will free you of all your oppressors,
I will break all your bonds,
I will bring you out of prison,
I will vanquish all your enemies,
I will knock off all your chains, and
I will make you triumph over all your sufferings!

God being with us, and for us, and on our side, we may boldly, safely, and confidently, rest upon it—that He will freely, readily, graciously, give all needful help, assistance, and support—when we are in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

When all human help fails!

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." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"
Hebrews 13:5-6

Assurance of God's presence to help at all times

and circumstances, should raise us up above all base and slavish fears of the power of men, of the harmings of men, of the evil designs of men, etc. God being with us, and for us, and on our side—we may boldly, safely, and confidently, rest upon it—that He will freely, readily, graciously, give all needful help, assistance, and support, when we are in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers.

The Greek word "helper," according to the notation of it, signifies one who is ready to run at the cry of another. This notation implies a willing readiness, and a ready willingness in God—to help and support His people when they are in deep distress. You know the tender father, the indulgent mother—they immediately run when they hear the child cry, or see the child in any danger or distress. Just so, when God sees His poor children in any danger or distress, when He hears them complain and cry out of their sufferings, their bonds, their burdens, their oppressions, their dangers, etc., He immediately runs to their relief and support!

Who is like Him in all the world—to help His people in each and every direful circumstance?
When friends cannot help,
when power cannot help,
when human wisdom cannot help,
when riches cannot help,
when princes cannot help,
when governments cannot help;
yet then God can and will help His people
—when all human help fails!

"The Lord will judge His people and have compassion on His servants when He sees their strength is gone and no one is left," Deut. 32:36. When God's people are at the very brink of ruin, then God will come in seasonably to their help. Their extremity shall be His opportunity, to support His people, and to judge their enemies. No men, no devils, no power, no policy, can hinder God from helping, aiding, assisting, and supporting of His people in any needful circumstance!

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All the afflictions, troubles and evils

As the apothecary makes one poison to drive out another poison—so can God make the poison of afflictions, to drive out the poison of sin. All the afflictions, troubles and evils which befall the people of God, work together for their good; for God uses these afflictions . . .
to reveal sin;
to prevent sin;
to embitter sin;

to mortify sin;
to revive His children's decayed graces;
to exercise His children's graces;
to increase His children's graces.

I have read a story of Pereus, who, attempting to kill another with a thrust of a sword, only pierced and opened his abscess; and so he was instrumental to save him, whom he designed to have killed!

Just so, all the afflictions and troubles which the righteous meet with— they do but serve to cure them . . .

of the abscess of pride, or
of the abscess of earthly-mindedness, or
of the abscess of self-love, or
of the abscess of hypocrisy.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

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He may murmur and struggle at first

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey Your word." Psalm 119:67

Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make our graces shine. Affliction is the remedy which cures all our spiritual diseases.

By afflictions, God humbles the hearts of His people, and betters the hearts of His people, and draws the hearts of His people nearer and closer to Himself.

"It was good for me to be afflicted." Psalm 119:71

The saints gain by their crosses, troubles, and distresses. Their graces are more raised, their fellowship with God is more multiplied, their comforts are more augmented, their communion with God is more heightened. The grand design of God in all the afflictions which befall His people—is to bring them nearer and closer to Himself.

When a great affliction arrests a sincere Christian, he may murmur and struggle at first; but when he considers it as sent from God, to bring him to God, the King of glory—he willingly and readily submits to the rod, and kisses the rod, saying, "It was good for me to be afflicted!" Ps. 119:71

The power of God, the love of God, and the grace of God—
are most gloriously manifested by bringing the hearts of His people nearer and closer to Himself by all the troubles, distresses, and dangers which attend them. In the winter season, all the sap of the tree runs down to the root; just so—in the winter of affliction, the soul runs out more and more to God, and gets closer and nearer to God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Precious promises

There are many precious promises of God's . . .
defending His church,
hearing the cries of His people,
arising for their relief and support.

These precious promises are grounded upon all the glorious attributes of God, namely, His power, love, wisdom, goodness, and all-sufficiency, etc., all which are engaged in the covenant of grace—to save, protect, and secure His people in their greatest troubles and most deadly dangers.

The Lord manifests His favorable, His special presence with His people—in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers!

"But now, this is what the LORD says—He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isaiah 43:1-3

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A tender heart, a soft hand, an iron memory

Look upon your dying day as your reaping day.
Now you shall reap the fruit of . . .
all the prayers that ever you have made, and
of all the tears that ever you have shed, and
of all the sighs and groans that ever you have fetched, and
of all the good words that ever you have spoken, and
of all the good works that ever you have done, and
of all the great things that ever you have suffered.

When mortality shall put on immortality, you shall then reap a plentiful crop, a glorious crop, as the fruit of that good seed, which for a time, has seemed

to be buried and lost.

As Christ has a tender heart and a soft hand, so He has an iron memory. He precisely remembers . . .
all the sorrows, and
all the services, and
all the sufferings of His people,
to reward them and crown them.

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." Revelation 22:12

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Great is your reward in heaven!

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." Revelation 22:12

Though God does not reward men simply for their works, namely, for the merit of them—yet He rewards according to their works.

"He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." Hebrews 11:25-26.

Keep your eye upon the recompense of reward, as Moses did. This will work you—
(1.) To walk more holily, humbly, thankfully;
(2.) To live more cheerfully and comfortably;
(3.) To suffer more patiently, freely, resolutely;
(4.) To fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil more valiantly;
(5.) To withstand temptations more steadfastly and strongly;
(6.) To be contented with a little;
(7.) To leave the world, relations, and friends more willingly;
(8.) And to embrace death more joyfully.

A Christian will never repent of all the hard things that he has suffered for Christ or His truth. Every one of his sufferings shall be a sparkling jewel to give a luster to his crown of glory.

"Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven!" Luke 6:22-23

O Christians, all your sufferings will certainly increase your future glory! Every affliction, every persecution, will add to your heavenly glory! God will richly reward you for every tear, for every sigh, for every groan, for every hazard, and

for every hardship that you have met with, in the way of your duty.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

El-Shaddai

"I am God Almighty" Genesis 35:11
In Hebrew, it is "I am El-Shaddai."

El-Shaddai signifies omnipotence
and sufficiency. God is . . .
an all-sufficient good,
a self-sufficient good,
an independent good,
an absolute good,
an original good,
a universal good,
the only satisfactory good,
a suitable good to our souls!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A strong tower

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the
righteous run to it and are safe." Proverbs 18:10

God is . . .
so strong a tower that no cannon can pierce it,
so high a tower that no ladder can scale it,
so deep a tower that no subverter can undermine it.
Therefore they must needs be safe and secure—
who lodge within a tower so impregnable, so indomitable.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

You are Mine!

"But now, this is what the Lord says—He who created
you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel—Fear not,
for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by
name; you are Mine!" Isaiah 43:1

"You are Mine—for I have made you.
You are Mine—for I have chosen you.
You are Mine—for I have bought you, purchased you.
You are Mine—for I have called you.
You are Mine—for I have redeemed you.
You are Mine—for I have stamped My image upon you.
You are Mine—for I have put My Spirit into you!"

"You are precious and honored in My sight," Is. 43:4

God prizes His people . . .

as His "peculiar treasure;" Exod. 19:5,

as His "portion;" Deut. 32:9,

as His "pleasant portion;" Jer. 12:10,

as His "jewels;" Mal. 3:17,

as His "glory;" Isaiah 4:5,

as His "crown and royal diadem."

Yes, God prizes the poorest, the lowest, and the weakest saint in the world—above a multitude, yes, above a world of unforgiven sinners.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Those who strike at God's eyes

"Whoever touches you, touches the apple of His eye."

Zechariah 2:8

The apple (or pupil) of the eye is the tenderest piece of the tenderest part. The eye is kept most diligently, and strongly guarded by nature. A man can better bear a thump on the back, the biting of his finger, the cutting of his hand, the pricking of his leg, or a blow upon his arm—than a touch on the eye.

Oh, that persecutors would be quiet, and let God's people alone, and take heed how they meddle with God's eyes! There is no touching of them, to wrong or injure them, but you wrong and injure the Holy One of Israel, who will certainly revenge Himself upon you. Those who strike at God's eyes, do through them strike at God Himself, which He will never put up with. It is a dangerous thing to molest and trouble, to afflict or annoy the people of God; for God Himself is very sensible of it, and accordingly He will certainly requite it. Acts 9:4, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" Those who persecute the servants of Christ—they persecute Christ Himself, who lives in them, and is mystically united to them.

Look! as there is by virtue of the natural union a mutual sympathy between the head and the members, the husband and the wife—so it is here between Christ and His saints, for He is a most sympathizing, compassionate, tender-hearted Savior. Those who shoot at the saints, hit Christ; their sufferings and their reproaches are counted His. He who bore the saints' griefs when He was on earth, really and properly, He bears them still now He is in heaven, in a way of sympathy. Christ in His glorified state, has a very tender sense of all the evil that is done to His children, His members, His spouse—and looks upon it as done to Himself!

I say to the persecutors of Christians, "Let the people of God alone, for if you do but make their finger ache, God will make your heads and hearts ache for it before He has done with you!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Neither the devil nor his imps

"The LORD foils the plans of the nations; He thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He chose for His inheritance." Psalm 33:10-12

Consult, conclude, determine, resolve upon whatever you please—you shall never be able, by all your power and policy, to prevail against the people of God! His favorable, special, and eminent presence is constantly with them—to assist, counsel, and protect them against all oppositions and assaults.

God brings to nothing, the counsel of the nations. Neither the devil nor his imps, nor any of their counsels, or enchantments, shall ever be able to stand before the presence of the Lord with His people! Let men and devils conspire, let them plot, consult, and determine—all shall be in vain, because there is no counsel against the Lord, there is no possibility of prevailing against the presence of the Lord with His people. His special presence will be their greatest safety and security in the midst of all plots, designs, dangers, etc. The special presence of God with His people mars and frustrates all the plots, counsels, and intricate contrivances of the world's wizards—as might be showed in those instances of Balaam, Pharaoh, Saul, Herod, with many others.

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Sitting at the table with King Jesus

"While the King was at His table, my perfume spread its fragrance." Song of Songs 1:12

That is, let Jesus Christ be but present with us, and then our graces, which are compared to perfume, will send forth its fragrance. Sitting at the table with King Jesus intimates the sweetest friendship and fellowship with Him.

"My perfume spread its fragrance," that is, my faith is actuated, and all my other graces are exercised and increased. Christ's presence puts life into all our graces.

If the sun shines upon the flower—you shall see how soon does the flower open. Just so, when the Sun of righteousness does but shine upon a Christian's graces—you shall see how do they open and act!