

THE THIRD TREATISE

Containing THE CHARACTERS OF A TRUE BELIEVER

It was the usual saying of Ignatius the martyr, that good and wicked men are like true and counterfeit money. The one seems to be good and is not; the other both seems to be and is good. Some Christians are only gilt; others are pure gold. Some are only seemingly religious; others really are religious. Some are pious only in show and appearance; others, with the king's daughter, are all glorious within. Some deceive themselves, and delude the eyes of others with glittering shows of holiness. Others are true Nathanaels, Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile. The former are often admired of men, while abhorred by God; the latter are owned and honored of God, while many times condemned of men.

Yet the best of God's children do not pass one day without many offenses. Though they commit many sins without their knowledge, still throughout their whole life they find much matter for repentance, and have much cause to lie low at God's feet in tears and sorrow. There is a wide difference between them and others, however, as will easily appear by considering the following representation, in which are laid down some few characteristics whereby we may discern the true believer better than old

Eli discerned Hannah. And happy are they who, viewing themselves in this looking-glass, see the image of Christ lively and truly drawn and stamped by the Spirit of God upon their souls.

A true believer judges God's ways as being the easiest, God's people as the happiest, God's rewards the highest, God's comforts the sweetest, God's promises the surest, and the love of God greater gain than to have all the world. He that gets the world, drinks brine that makes him thirstier. He has the wolf of covetousness and the greedy worm of earthliness, so that he is never satisfied. But he that hath the love of God is content. He is better content with his shilling than the worldling with his palace, better content with his plough than the worldling with his greatest plenty. He can be as cheerful with twenty pounds as some with two thousand pounds, yea, even more, for his soul finds joy in God, and the joy of riches is nothing to the joy of the Holy Ghost.

A true believer enjoys duties as well as privileges. He would not only enjoy the blessings God hath promised, but his heart is bent to the duties God hath commanded. He loves not only the privileges of God's children, but their work also. He loves not only the advantages of religion. Many do the easy duties of religion, and yet leave the difficult duties undone. They will hear, pray, read, come to the Lord's Supper, but as for the severer duties of mortifying their corruptions, combatting and fighting

against temptations, they do not know or practice them. There is too much of the Jewish spirit to be found in Christians. They will pray, but not fervently; walk, but not swiftly; strive, but not wrestle and combat. They will make an offer for heaven, but do not offer violence to heaven. They will do some duties, but not all. Whereas the true believer makes his answer as large as God's call.

A true believer sets God before him, possesses his heart with the apprehension of God's presence, and so studies to walk with God, as being in His eye and seeing Him that is invisible. His desire and endeavor is to think, speak, and act, at all times, and in all duties and places, as under the eye and in the presence of God. He knows that although men can make no thorough lights to look clearly into his heart, yet it lies embowelled and dissected unto His all-seeing eye, to whom all things, even the most dark, hidden, and undiscernible, are both naked, opened, and transparent. He is as good a saint in his retired chamber (if not better) than in society. An hypocrite looks as an angel of light, till he come into the dark (Ezek. 8:12). He looks and speaks and deports himself as a saint in public, but his closet-sins and curtain-sins do condemn him. If we could dig through the wall, we should find the believer crying and bemoaning himself, as if his heart would burst. Oh, how many offers he makes to get into God's bosom. He is no stranger to familiar converse and communion with God, and he hates secret sins as hell.

Wicked men do not consider God as the beholder of all their thoughts, words, and actions. "God is not in all their thoughts." They are described by this, "that they have not set God before them" (Ps. 86:14). Many of them have nothing before their eyes but the world and worldly business, but the believer always considers himself as being under the eye of God. He supposes the Lord always seeing him. "I have set the Lord always before me" (Ps. 16:8). He thinks often of God, and his heart is sweetly overawed by the serious thoughts of God's presence with him and of His eye upon him. He abstains from doing what is evil, because he believes God sees what he does (Gen. 39:9). He is serious in all his addresses unto God, because he sees Him who is invisible. He believes that all he speaks is spoken to that God, who searches the heart and tries the reins. When he goes into the house of God, he keeps his feet. He does not only keep the outward man, avoiding all light, indecent, unseemly carriage, but he also keeps the inward man. He keeps the affection clean from all sensual lusts, wanton and wicked inclinations and from all thoughts of worldly concerns. He believes that God's eye sees him, that God standeth in the congregation, and is sensible. He feels he is now in the presence-chamber of the great King of the world, whose throne of glory is in heaven above, but whose throne of grace is in His temple here below. "Surely (saith he) the Lord is in this place: , how dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God! This is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:16-17)! "How amiable are

Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee" (Ps. 84:1-2,4).

And I would be most happy if I could behave myself in Thy house with that reverence and carefulness that the divine Majesty deserves. Yea, when he performs those duties he owes to man, he does it as in the sight and presence of God. He desires to approve himself to God, and to act as before God, not only when praying to God, but when trading with man. "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord" (Ps. 25:15). And when at any time he forgets himself to be in his Father's presence and corruption gets the best of grace, he is afterwards sore troubled and mourns in secret before the Lord, though the world knows it not.

A true believer is always walking, always in motion; and his spiritual motions are not from outward impulse, but inward life. He prays, hears, reads, and meditates out of an inclination of soul to the work. He is charmed by the melody and music of gospel promises and the love of God, rather than scared into obedience by the sound of thundering threatenings, or the clamors of a scolding conscience.

A true believer gives God that worship, and man that righteousness, which God calls for. He not only observes God's sabbaths, family prayer, and hearing the Word, but

his actions are devoid of fraud, cozenage, and over-reaching. His words are devoid of all guile, falsehood, and lying. He is no oppressor, but believes that he that oppresses the poor is a constant ordinary liar. He is no griping usurer, but believes that the griping, covetous usurer shall as assuredly be damned as the blasphemer, atheist, and idolater. Some are honest, but not strict towards God. Others are seemingly strict towards God, but dishonest and unjust in their civil dealings with men. But the true believer is for doing justice and equity, as well as worship. "He keeps a conscience void of offense towards man, as well as towards God" (Acts 24:16). He is not only a religious man, but a righteous man.

A true believer is deeply and dearly enamored of Jesus Christ. He advances Him highest in his thoughts as the only jewel and joy of his heart, without whom he accounts all he hath worth nothing at all. All his knowledge is brutishness, all his wealth is rotten and stinking dungs, all his hope is presumption, and all his happiness is misery without Jesus Christ; He prefers and prizes Christ far above the riches, pleasures, and the glory of the whole earth. Many esteem Him not; they value a good farm, a fair house, etc., more than Jesus Christ. With the Gadarenes, they esteem their swine above the Saviour of the world. But to the true believer, Christ is better than all and infinitely more than all. He chooseth Christ rather than all, or any other thing whatsoever. He would rather possess Christ than all things else. He prefers the poorest

condition with Christ above the highest condition without Christ. He says, as that noble and pious Marquis of Vico, Galeacius Caraciolus, when a Jesuit offered him a large sum of money to forsake his religion and turn Papist: "Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the world worth one day's society with Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit." He can take joyfully the spoiling of his goods, rather than to be deprived of Jesus Christ. He so remembers, so esteems, and so longs after Christ that he remembers, prizes, and desires nothing in comparison to Christ, be it otherwise never so dear or precious.

A true believer receives Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient Savior and Redeemer, and rests upon Him alone for salvation. He receives the whole Christ, Christ in all His offices, both as his Saviour to save him, and also as his Lord to rule over him and to guide him. Many boast they are believers who never received Christ to dwell in their hearts by faith. They regard iniquity in their hearts. Oh, but Christ will not dwell in a heart where sin is entertained with delight. There is no communion between light and darkness. Any one-allowed lust and the Lord Jesus can never lodge together in the same soul. Therefore the true believer resolves to part with all sin, to spare none. He puts his raging lusts out of doors, thrusts out his formerly pleasant sins by repentance, and receives Christ as a complete Saviour, who saves not only from hell, that place of darkness, dread, and terror, but also

from sin, the great enemy both of God and man. Christ saves not only from the guilt, but from the power and prevalency of sin.

The true believer renounces his own prayers and tears, his own duties and performances, his own care and resolutions regarding justification and salvation. He casts himself into Christ's blessed bosom with all the spiritual strength he can, saying secretly to himself, "Come life, come death, come heaven, come hell, come what can come, here will I stick forever. If I perish, they shall pluck me out of the hands, and rend me from between the arms of this glorious and mighty Redeemer."

A true believer delights in Christ. He delights in the person of Christ; in His incomparable beauty, "who is fairer than the children of men," clothed with all spiritual excellencies, the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His Person (Cant. 2:3). He delights in the offices of Christ. Christ is become his Prophet, effectually to enlighten the eyes of his soul, and to instruct him in heavenly and divine mysteries. Christ is become his Priest, to purge away his sins, to reconcile him to God, and to make continual intercession for him. Christ is become his King, to rule in his heart by His grace, and to subdue all his enemies, both inward and outward. He delights in the ordinances, to see the King in His beauty in His sanctuary. He delights in His answers of prayer, and in all the disclosures of His love and power. His heart

is warmed with heavenly joy, when in his private meditations he recounts with himself what great things Christ hath done, and will do for his soul. He is warmed with heavenly joy when he thinks how mightily Christ wrought in him by His Spirit to make him alive, when once dead in trespasses and sins. He delights when he thinks what happiness he has in his favor for the present, and what happiness He will one day bring him unto, when He shall make him like Himself, most glorious in his body, most righteous in his soul, most blissful in all, and that forever. In a word, he so delights in Christ that he looks and longs for more of Christ every day.

A true believer has a real spiritual life, distinct from that of carnal men, and can perform many actions which ungodly men, while such, cannot perform. He can live sometimes as comfortably upon a promise, as in possession of the mercy promised. He can muse on death without dread. He can love his enemies and hate to take revenge on them. He can deny the most pleasant lust and scorn to be captivated by it. He can defy and beat the devil, that strong man armed. He can be humble in his highest advancement and cheerful in his lowest poverty. He cannot bear injuries done to God, and yet can with patience abide wrongs offered to himself. He is meek as a lamb in his own cause and yet zealous and full of lion-like fury for God. He can live in the world and follow his calling diligently, and yet his heart is weaned from the world and his conversation is in heaven.

A true believer labors to propagate, increase, and spread the life of grace wherever he comes. As the wicked labour to poison all that come nigh them, and to make them seven times more the children of the devil than themselves, so the believer labours to get others to Christ, and to help them along heaven's way. As the wicked seek the damnation of others, so the believer seeks the salvation of others. As the wicked watch over others for evil, so the believer watches over others for good. As the wicked make proselytes for hell, so the believer makes proselytes for heaven. As the wicked are factors for the devil, and agents for the prince of darkness, so the true believer is a factor for Christ the prince of peace. He does his utmost to make others the children of God, to turn them from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of heaven. Though it be not in his power to give them a new nature, yet he will do what in him lies that they may be renewed. Though he cannot save them as the principal agent, yet, he will endeavour to save them as a subordinate instrument. If he see any in a natural unregenerate estate, without God and Christ in the world, his soul bleeds over such, and his heart's desire is that they may be converted. If he meets with any that are ignorant, he hath compassion on such, as it is said of Christ, and instructs them in the mysteries of the gospel. If any be overtaken with sin, he reproveth them with all meekness. He is not censorious, rigid, and harsh, but covers and reproveth their infirmities with a spirit of love. If he see any going on in a soul-destroying way, he knows they are undone forever

if they continue in their sinful course. Therefore he endeavours their salvation and does what he can to pluck them out of the fire.

The true believer frames his conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ, so that others beholding it may glorify God, and be drawn to the love and practice of true piety. In his life he holds forth the Word of life, and by his good example endeavours to do good to others, as he hath opportunity. He labours to deliver them from those sins into which they have fallen already, and from that destruction into which they are falling, by good instructions and admonitions. He informs them of the dangerous and damnable nature of sin, shows them the difference between good and evil, and between the service of Christ and the service of Satan. He acquaints them with that unavoidable destruction both of soul and body which is the consequence of sin, strives to draw them to those duties that have drawn him and may draw them to God. In a word, he is not lacking in the use of any good means to help others unto grace and to further their everlasting state.

A true believer bemoans them that are spiritually dead, those that are like Sennacherib's host, dead corpses without spiritual life. "Were my house," saith the believer, "the sepulchre of my dear relations, how bitterly would I weep at the sight thereof. If when I arise the next morning, I found but one in my family suddenly struck dead

without giving so much as a departing groan, how would it affect me? And if I would mourn for one naturally dead, shall I not much more mourn for those families in which scarce one is spiritually alive? And yet such is the case of many families today."

A true believer grows in strength and experience, in grace and in the knowledge of God. He grows in love, patience, and humility. He grows in victory over his corruptions and in desires and endeavours after holiness. He does not stay at a standstill, but grows from one degree and measure of grace to another, "until he come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). He is like the morning sun, "that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). He grows in grace until he attains the height in eternal glory. And though, when fallen into a fit of sickness, he may seem to be weaker and lower in grace than ever, and to have lost all his spiritual strength and beauty, yet he will recover his lost vigour and do his first works. Though for a while he may seem to be at a standstill, yet he will be progressive in godliness. He will grow deeper at the root, if not taller in branches and fuller in fruits, as an apple grows in mellowness and sweetness when it does not grow in bulk and greatness. It is the great desire and ambition of his soul to be growing higher in grace more every day. He can neither rest nor be quiet, till (like Saul) he grow taller than worldly, moral, hypocritical

men, taller by both head and shoulders, in virtue and piety.

A true believer is truly thankful to God for His mercies. He vows, and pays unto the Lord his vows. A wicked man's vows are soon made, and soon forgotten. But a good man looks upon himself as bound by the laws of reason, religion, and righteousness to pay the rent and right of thankfulness to God. He is ashamed to be less thankful in the enjoyment of mercies than prayerful in his wants. He is ashamed to be less forward in acknowledging the mercies he receives than in begging for mercies. He labours to be more thankful for a little mercy, than discontent for a great affliction. He looks on his affliction by parts, views all its ingredients, and finds some mercy to assuage his pain or countervail his loss. Though there be not complete deliverance, yet he blesses God for any dawnings of deliverance. Though his burden be heavy, he blesses God that he is enabled to bear it, and that God doth not leave him without some hope of a blessed issue. Though sore afflicted, he blesses God he is not damned. Though he lies in the furnace of affliction, yet he blesses God that he is not in hell. The furnace of affliction is hot, but hell-fire is ten thousand times hotter. And as he is thankful to God for all his other blessings, so especially for calling him by His grace into a state of salvation. "Oh, how shall I be thankful to God," saith the believer, "for calling me when I fled from him? He called me, though He needed me not. He called, and called

again till I was made to obey His call." He is transported and ravished when he considers this. His heart runs, yea, even boils over with praise. Haman was transported with the happiness conferred upon him by Queen Esther, in calling him to the banquet she had prepared for the king (Esther 5:12). So the believer is transported with the happiness God hath conferred upon him, in calling him to partake of the glory prepared for the saints.

A true believer accounts his life to be in God's favour. He saith with the Psalmist, "In Thy favour is life." His life is not so much in what he hath received from God, as in what he is in God's favour. Hypocrites desires are only for the enjoyment of mercies, and if they enjoy what they desire they are contented, though they have no presence of God in them at all. If they enjoy health, strength, peace, and plenty, then the enjoyment of God's favour they regard not. But the true believer is not contented with the most precious mercies without the favour of God with them. If he have health from God, but lacks a warm heart to God, if he have peace among men, and not peace with God, it does not satisfy him. His cry is, as in Psalm 4:6-7, "Lord, lift thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us..." The light of God's countenance is more to him than the plentiful affluence of corn, and wine, and oil. If he have abundance of creature-comforts, but see not the light of God's countenance with them, they cannot cheer his soul. But if he have God's countenance, he can be cheerful without them. "Although the fig tree

shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. 3:17-18).

A true believer looks upon religion, not as a burden which he must be forced to endure, but as a privilege which it is his happiness to enjoy. There is nothing in the world which he more passionately desires than that he could live exactly and precisely according to the excellent precepts of religion. The holy ordinances and exercises of religion (which unto an ungodly man are tedious, dry, unsavoury things), to a good man are very pleasant and satisfactory. He is not forced to his duty, but does willingly delight in it and in that law that prescribes it. "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23 12) He knows the Word doth maintain a more noble life than that which is maintained by bodily food and is more necessary and sweet than any creature-comforts. He knows it will sweeten all other smart and cold entertainments, and therefore he prizes it more than his daily bread. He prefers a day spent in the courts and service of God before a thousand employed in balls or plays, or any other of the toys and trifles of human life.

A true believer is adorned with a meek and quiet spirit.

He sits down with a becalmed spirit amidst crosses of all sorts. "He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him; he putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope" (Lam. 3:28-29). His boisterous passions are soon laid aside. Excessive heats either rise not or are easily cooled. He commits himself to God's supreme sovereignty, to will or to nill at God's pleasure. "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and shew me both it, and His habitation: but if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him" (2 Sam. 15:25-26). "Let God lift me up," saith he, "or cast me down; let Him tread me to death, or write my name in the dust, if He will. I refer myself to His wisdom." Just as he can endure patiently what the hand of God more immediately lays upon him, so he can suffer wrongfully at the hands of men. He can do well, and suffer for it when he has done it. He can cleave to Christ, notwithstanding all the hard usage, all the evil entreatings and cruelties of the world. As Christ suffered for him, so he is resolved to suffer with Christ, to take his lot as it falls, to follow Christ through rivers and flames, to mortify, deny, and renounce self, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

The true believer is known in the day of adversity by three characters. First, he is content under every affliction; let it be fashioned for nature, measure, time, continuance, as God will. He welcomes the cross and embraces

it. If God suffers the spiteful tongues of graceless persons to slay his good name with slander, if the Lord break him with breach upon breach, and his children and friends die one after another, he sits down and says as old Eli in I Samuel 3:18, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." He will sooner die than blame God. Yea, if his affliction be lined with pain, and overlaid with shame, "yet he endureth the cross, and despiseth the shame" (Heb. 12:2). Secondly, he rejoicingly thanks God for afflictions, as in Job 1:21, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord." Thirdly, he reveals as little of his sufferings by his expressions, or his actions, as he can. He would gladly swallow down God's medicines, without making any noise. Indeed in some cases it is lawful to reveal one's grief, as when it glorifies God's justice for some scandalous sin or when a poor Christian stands in great need of counsel and advice. Oh, but there are some who tell almost everyone they meet of their weary nights and sore pains. All their discourse, from first to last, is most commonly spent in the history of their sufferings, which is not to be approved of. If this be by way of complaint, then it is rank impatience. If it be out of a secret desire to show how patient and calm their spirits lie under it, is it not horrible pride? And so food becomes Poison, and that which should humble them puffs them up.

A true believer is more angry with himself for his corruptions that still remain in him, than with his enemies

for the injuries offered by them to him. He is more angry for a little offence, wherein God's glory is touched and defiled, than for a greater offence, wherein only his own credit is impaired and his profit damaged. And he will chide a child more smartly for wounding the Name of God with an oath, than for aspersing his own name with infamous lies.

A true believer is most severe against his own sins. He cannot endure sin in any, but least of all in himself. The hypocrite is eagle-eyed in discovering, and very severe in censuring the faults of others, but very unwilling to see, and very backward to censure the same or greater faults in himself. When he looks upon the sins of others, he sets down an hundred for fifty, but when he looks upon his own, he sets down fifty for an hundred. But the true believer hates sin most in himself, and therefore would rather use the mirror of the Word to see his own sins than the large spectacles of censoriousness to see the faults of others. None can say so much against him, but he is ready to say much more. A censorious spirit he knows to be a proud spirit, a spirit very injurious to the interest of religion. We may be zealous to quench other men's lusts, while lust burns in our own bosoms. The true believer knows he is more in danger of being hurt by his own, than by other men's sin. Therefore he keeps court rather within his own jurisdiction, than the jurisdiction of another. He contends with himself as well as with others to be holy and is ready to extenuate the failings of

others, while he magnifies his own.

A true believer is a sin-hater. His love of God causes in him a just hatred of sin. God, who is the principal sovereign good, is the object of his life, and sin, which is the deadliest evil, is the object of his hatred. He measures the happiness of his condition more by his freedom from sin, than by his freedom from affliction. Affliction is indeed a bitter portion, but he chooseth it before the sweet and pleasing delights of sin. Affliction is welcome to him for godliness sake. Oh, but he so hates sin, that he thinks that sin and he can never get too far apart. He thinks he can never get far enough away from the devil, who is the arch-forger and supreme promoter of sin in the world.

A true believer is a sin-forsaker; he abstains from it not only publicly before the eyes of man, but also privately before the eyes of God. He avoids it not only in adversity when the sea rages and is troublesome, but also in prosperity when all is calm and quiet. He flees not only from some, but as far as possible, from all iniquity. Sin is not his ordinary and customary practice. He knows that grace and glory are inconsistent with a wicked life. He knows that a bare profession of faith, without a reformation of life, is not enough to salvation. He knows that to call Christ Lord in prayer, and yet to crucify Him by sin after prayer, is gross hypocrisy. He knows that to complain of sin in the church, and yet to continue with sin at home, is but to mock God. He knows there is no

dying as an heir of God, should he live as a rebel against God. There is no dying as a child of God, if he lives as a stranger. There is no dying as a friend, if he lives as an enemy, and therefore he abandons all known sins. He abandons them upon right grounds and motives. A wicked man may forbear his profane lewd courses, but he is moved to it, not by love to God, nor hatred of sin, but by fear of hell. The fear of hell which is only an inferior motive, he makes his principal motive.

I grant, however, the wrath and vengeance of God may be a cause for a godly man to forsake sin. God bears not His sword in vain, no more than the magistrate. The threatenings of the Scripture are as thorns in his side to drive him forward, and as iron yokes upon his neck to make him stoop to God's commandments, but yet these are not his principal motives. His principal motives are drawn, not from hell, but from sin. He forsakes sin, first, because of that unthankfulness that is in sin. He considers that God is his Sovereign, and so sin is an act of rebellion. He considers that God is his Father, and so sin is an act of the great unkindness and baseness (Gen. 39:9). "Surely," saith he, "this is a bad requital to God, who gave me life, breath, being, and the gospel, yea, even the grace of the gospel. God gave me the covenant of His peace and hath promised to give me happiness at His return."

A true believer counts ingratitude to God a great offense.

Secondly, he forsakes sin because sin bears an everlasting opposition to God's holy law and commandments. Suppose hell had never been threatened, yet there would have been a dislike and disapproval of sin, because of its contrariety to, and enmity against the purity and spirituality of God's law (Rom. 7:12). Thirdly, believers forsake sin because of their hatred to sin, and love to God and His grace. Wicked men forsake sin, but hate it not. They part with it unwillingly, as mariners in a storm throw away their precious Indian goods, their gold, silk, and jewels to save their lives. As Pharaoh sent away the Israelites out of Egypt with jewels and earrings, lest Moses God should waste him, so many leave their sins, and yet love their sins. It may be their sins leave them, and not that they leave their sins. As the devils came out of the possessed unwillingly, and with constraint, so the wicked forsake sin.

The true believer forsakes sin willingly. Once sin and his soul were congealed, oh, but the love of God hath so melted his soul, that the union is broken, and sin voluntarily sent away.

A true believer not only strives against actual iniquity, but is sensible of, and humbled for his birth-sin, his cradle-sin, his conception-sin, his radical, original, natural sin. He knows he hath an hereditary, evil disease that sticks to him. He knows that his heart is like Noah's ark wherein the unclean beasts were, like Peter's sheet,

wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and like Ezekiel's wall, where he saw portrayed every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel. He knows that even if he could live on earth without spot or blemish of visible sin, yet this original sin would give hell and the devil an undeniable right to him. Therefore, he is deeply humbled by it, and looks up daily to heaven for help against it, begging the blood of Christ to wash away the guilt and the Spirit of Christ to destroy the power of it.

A true believer hath his heart broken off from his formerly beloved sin, which was as it were commander and lord-general of the wicked bands. He is so far from delighting in it that he bends the strength of his soul against it. As when lustful Ammon had polluted and humbled Tamar, "He hated her more than ever he loved her." So the believer, having been truly and deeply humbled for his darling sin, hates it more than ever he loved it. He remembers how many bloody stripes, how many smarting strokes, and bleeding wounds this sin gave his senseless conscience. He now dreads the flames in which he was so often scorched and burned. He fears to handle that serpent that so stung his bosom. He sets himself against it and cannot endure to be near it. He trembles at the approach of it. "This sin," saith he, "is the curse parent that brought forth and brought up innumerable other sins, and shall it not be destroyed? This sin was the power, and

strength, and head of other sins, and shall I not fight against it? This sin was Satan's castle of defense. Shall it not be battered down, and not one stone left upon another?"

A true believer is a man of heavenly prudence and of singular and excellent wisdom, which he demonstrates in four things. First, he shows wisdom in providing an ark for his safety and security before the storm comes (Prov. 22:3; 27:2). He sees the danger he is in of losing his soul and heaven, and therefore hides himself in that rock of refuge, Jesus Christ. He gets God reconciled in Christ for his ark, whereas the secure, lazy sinner is insensible of the greatest dangers, and therefore careless and fearless. The simple fears not the wounds of conscience, fears not the fire of God's wrath, but is like unto children, who play in the midst of thunder and lightning. A holy fear and wisdom would make him inquisitive to avoid the wrath of God. Secondly, the believer is wise in taking the opportunity for soul-work (Eph. 5:15-16). He knows that time past is irrecoverable, and time to come uncertain. He knows that heaven and an immortal soul may both be lost in an hour. He knows that thousands are trudging to their everlasting home every day. He knows that there shall be no sermons in heaven, for all are full of grace there. He knows there shall be no sermons in hell, for all are past grace there. Therefore, thankfully and carefully he lays hold on the present opportunity for bringing honour to God, doing good to others, and settling the peace

of his own conscience. Thirdly, when two commands at the same time cannot be observed, he shows wisdom in that he prefers and obeys the greater before the lesser (Hosea 6:6). This is not violating the lesser law, but preferring the greater before it. He prefers morals before ceremonials, substantials before circumstantials, and spirituals before temporals. To abide in our calling is one command, and to pray morning and evening is another. Now it is wisdom to take time for the worship of God, whatever our worldly employment be. Fourthly, it is high wisdom to do in spiritual matters what God enables us to do, when we are not enabled to do what we would. Power is seldom or never so large as renewed will. However, a true believer will combat, if he cannot conquer; he will resist Satan, if he cannot defeat and overcome Satan. He will pray constantly, if he cannot pray fervently. And if he cannot confess sin with that brokenness of heart he doth desire, yet he will confess it to gain a broken heart.

A true believer is a man of courage and resolution. He is not dismayed at the threats of men, and does not fear what man can do unto him (Ps. 3:6). Others fly when none pursueth, but he is as bold as a lion. He is valiant for the truth. He contends earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints; he is not ashamed to own Christ, but stands up boldly in the cause and interest of God and souls. When the wicked let fly at God and religion, he, with a holy warmth, will vindicate them to the faces of

the wicked, against all their false charges and blasphemous lies. As he hath faith in his heart, so he confesses it with his tongue, as he hath call and opportunity. He confesses Christ not only in times of encouragement, but in contradiction when he is denied by many. Though men forbid him, nay, threaten him, he will profess the Name of Christ, and go forth bearing his reproach. Yea, he will not only suffer reproach, but loss also for the sake of Christ. He will part with estate, riches, wealth, houses, lands, and whatever he hath in this world. "Thou knowest, Oh Lord (said one of the martyrs, in Queen Mary's time, in his last prayer) that if we would but seem to please men in things contrary to the Word, we might enjoy the commodities of life as others do; but seeing the world will not suffer me to enjoy them, except I sin against Thy holy laws, behold, I have here left all the pleasures of this life, for the hope and sake of eternal life, purchased by Christ's blood, and promised to all them that fight on His side." Thus the true believer suffers the loss of his goods and worldly enjoyments. He tramples them underfoot, as dross and dung, when they come in competition with Christ. Yea, he courageously follows his captain Christ through mud and blood, and freely parts with his life when called thereunto for Christ's sake. "If every hair of my head were a man (said John Ardley) it should suffer death in the faith I now stand in." A noble gentleman, during the persecution of the church of Christ, in the Valto line, being threatened with death unless he would abjure his faith, answered, "God forbid,

that to save this natural life I should deny my Lord Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood upon the cross, redeemed me at so dear a rate, and having so long freely and publicly professed Him, should now hazard the loss of eternal life, to which I was elected before the foundation of the world, I say, God forbid." Whereupon they murdered him. "Let fire, cross, breaking of bones, (saith Ignatius the martyr in an epistle to Onesimus) quartering my members, crushing my body, or all the torments men and devils can invent befall me, so that I may but enjoy my Lord Jesus." And in another epistle, he writes, "Oh that I were with the wild beasts, that are prepared for me; I would allure them to make a quick dispatch of me, and if they would not, I would provoke them." "If my father was weeping on his knees before me (said Hierom) my mother leaning on my neck behind, my brethren, sisters, children and kinsfolks howling on every side, to retain me in a sinful life, I would fling my mother to the ground, run over my father, despise all my kindred, and tread them under my feet that I might run to Christ."

Oh, the numberless millions that have suffered as martyrs, and died for the faith! Some were rich, others poor; some learned, others unlearned; some old, and others young. They died with torments of all sorts: some slow, some speedy, some usual, some unusual, some hewed in pieces, some burnt in the fire, some cast to lions, some drowned in the waters, some stoned, some beheaded, and some roasted before the fire. Yet they endured all with

unspeakable courage and constancy, singing psalms, even in the midst of the flames. The true believer is full of spiritual courage because he knows he hath God to stand up for him, and to stand by him in all his sufferings. Therefore, he rejoices in his sufferings, and like the cricket sings in the very fire.

A true believer is faithful unto God in the worst of times. When the evil of sin aboundeth, he does not run with others to the same excess of riot. He does what he can to hinder wickedness, and mourns for the wickedness he cannot hinder. He strives against the stream. He walks differently than others do. He is far from complying with the wickedness of the times, either out of fear of man's hatred or to gain man's favour. The more others abound in sin and wickedness, the more conscientious and diligent he is to abound in grace and holiness. The more bold he sees others are in sin, the greater distance he keeps from anything that is sinful. He improves the sin of others to the advantage of his own soul, for the more God is dishonoured by others, the more honour He receives from him. The further others draw from God, the nearer he draws to God. When others serve various lusts and pleasures, he says as Joshua, in Joshua 24:15, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." When he meets with scorn and reproach in his Master's service, he says as David, "And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the (servants of God) of them shall I be had in honour" (2 Sam. 6:22). When

enticed by evil company, he says, as in Psalm 119:115, "Depart from me, ye evil doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God."

Thus also, when tribulation and persecution ariseth, the true believer is not offended. Though men cast him into prison, yet doth he not cast off God. Though the winds and waves of manifold troubles blow and beat upon him, yet as a rock, he remains immoveable. When Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was urged by the proconsul to blaspheme and revile Christ, he answered, "Fourscore and six years have I served Christ, neither hath He ever offended me at any time; how then can I revile my King that hath thus preserved me?" And when the proconsul, upon his refusal, threatened him with wild beasts, fire, and other torments, he said, "You threaten me with fire that shall last but an hour, and is quickly quenched, but you are ignorant of everlasting fire at the day of judgment, and of those endless torments which are reserved for the wicked. But why do you delay? Appoint me to what death you please." Thus the true believer serves the Lord constantly, even unto death. He cleaves to the Lord with full purpose of heart, in all times and conditions of life.

In danger for God's cause, the true believer says, as the three children did to the King of Babylon in Daniel 3:17-18, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us

out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy god, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." He is not a fugitive soldier, but faithfully fights the Lord's battles, and retains his integrity. In things indifferent, he is a willow and not an oak; he will do what lies in his power to comply with them. But in matters of evident duty he is an oak, not a willow, as Luther expresses it. He will not be driven out of the Lord's pasture, nor stir an inch from God's plough, as it is said of Athanasius, He is no mushroom that soon dies, no meteor that soon falls, no halting temporary. He cannot play fast and loose. He may be moved by frowns and flatteries, but he cannot be removed, for he is built upon a rock.

A true believer hath warm affections to God; God hath the prevailing love of his soul. The desire of the believer's soul is to Him, and to the remembrance of His Name (Isa. 26:8; Ps. 42:1-2). All things in the world are nothing to him without God. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and mine heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Ps. 73 :25-26). He looks more at God than at all that is God's. Not Thine, but Thee, saith the believer. Saints and angels are nothing to him without God. All the riches, pleasures, and honours this world can afford are nothing but dross and dung to him without God. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my

Lord" (Phil. 3:8). And indeed, where should a Christian's heart be, but where his happiness is; and it is God, and God only, that is man's happiness.

A true believer is called from darkness into God's marvellous light (1 Pet. 2:9). Once his understanding was darkened (Eph. 4:18). He was not only in the dark, but was darkness (Eph. 5:8), and in danger of dropping into hell, that place of outer darkness where there is nothing but darkness, thick darkness, and that forever. Oh, but now he is light in the Lord. His eyes are anointed with sovereign eyesalve, and he who was formerly blind now sees. God hath clearly revealed to him the ugliness of sin, the beauty of holiness, and the way to heaven. "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). Though his light be but in part, yet blessed be God, at least it is in part. Though in part he still remains dark, yet he is in part enlightened. He sees as much difference between his present and past life, as between day and night. His darkest day is brighter and lighter than the carnal man's clearest night. His condition even in desertion is comfortable and light, if compared with his former natural condition.

A true believer is the world's non-conformist. He lives in the world, but is not conformed to the world. The men of the world live breaking the sabbath, but he does not.

They neglect closet and family prayer, but he does not. They are for any company, but he is not. They mind nothing but earthly things (Phil. 3:19) - earthly profits, pleasures, honours, but his heart is in heaven. Their souls are bowed downwards to the earth, but his soul is lifted up to God. His thoughts are most seriously intent upon and taken up with heavenly things, which are the chief things. "That which the soul (saith Justin Martyr) is in the body, that is the believer in the world; for as the soul is in, but not of the body, so the believer is in, but not of the world." The life the world lives is a sinful, worldly, miserable life, but the life he lives is a holy, happy, and heavenly life. He lives not by worldly laws, not by worldly comforts, not by worldly privileges. His affections are not only taken off from things unholy and unlawful, but also his love, desire, care, and delight about lawful things is moderated. His heart doth not run after these things in such an inordinate way as sometimes it did. Neither is he wholly taken up in seeking and following after them. There is much of heaven in his thoughts, much of heaven in his language, and much of heaven in his life and conversation.

A true believer is a person devoted, and set apart for God. As vessels and sacrifices were set apart under the law, and taken from common as well as unclean uses, so the believer is separated from the world, from its ways, its works, its courses. He is no longer his own to serve himself. He inquireth not in every thing what is his own will,

but what is God's pleasure. Hence the godly are called a peculiar people (1 Pet. 2:9), made God's all ever and forever. He is given to the Lord wholly. He is no more at the command of Satan, or self, or the world, but at God's command. When tempted to sin, he answers with Joseph, "How shall I do this wickedness, and sin against God?" God hath a stronger claim to my soul and body than I myself have. If I comply with the temptation and sin, I become a robber of God, a sacreligious person, therefore tempt me not to rob the Lord.

A true believer fearingly and reverently uses God's ordinances, and all belonging to God, and about Him. He is possessed with an holy awe, reverence, and fear of God. He is so far from belching out oaths in passion or profaneness, that he never thinks or speaks of God's Name unless it is with reverent and religious thoughts. He highly prizes every religious duty. Yes, whatever hath the stamp, image, or print of God upon it, is had by him in reverent esteem. And his reverence in ordinances is seen in his doing all out of spiritual and holy intentions, as the heathens, Jehu, and the Pharisees did all for selfish ends.

A true believer is a high prizer and strict observer of the sabbath day. He cannot prefer gold before God, the world before godliness, earth before heaven, time before eternity, body before soul, shadows before substance, onions before manna, pottage before birthright, darkness before light, or death before life. No more can he prefer a play

day, or a trading day, before the sabbath day; he counts them hogs and swine that despise holy things. As it is the sure mark of an ungodly man to be a sabbath-breaker, so it is the sure mark of a child of God to sanctify the sabbath. Ungodly men are usually careless of their thoughts and words and ways on the sabbath. They can walk in the streets or in the fields at their pleasure. They can lie upon their beds, and at their doors. They can eat and drink even to excess. Yes, they do worse than all this upon the best days, and in the best hours of the day. And though formal hypocrites may on that day abstain from their ordinary sins and labours, yet they make not the sabbath a delight. Their thoughts are upon their earthly pleasures and profits.

The godly man is careful to celebrate the sabbath to God's glory. With Ignatius, he calls it the queen of days. With the primitive Christians, he saith, "I am a Christian; how then can I choose and love the Lord's day?" The godly eunuch is described by his observing of God's sabbath (Isa. 56:3). And the prophet setteth it as a special mark upon the children of God. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him; not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy

father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 58:13-14). That special momento God hath set upon the fourth commandment, "Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day," is deeply rooted in his heart. He is so much affected with it, that he makes a conscious effort to keep the sabbath day. He rises as soon (if not sooner) from his bed on that day, as on other days, and having dressed his body, endeavours by reading, praying, and meditating to dress his soul also. He carefully addresses himself to the hearing of the Word preached, to public prayers, to receiving the sacrament at the times appointed. He is much in private meditation, which was the exercise of St. John the apostle at the time he was banished into the isle of Patmos for the Word of God. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10), i.e., in sweet and heavenly meditation.

The godly man loves to have his mind employed at all times, but especially on the Lord's day, in feeling meditation upon spiritual affairs, upon the examination of his former life, the state of the other world, the slights and subtleties of Satan, the work of man's redemption, the work of regeneration, the excellency of an holy life, the hour of death, the tribunal of judgment, etc. The sabbath is a jubilee to his heart, and the joy of his thoughts. It is the desire, longing, and endeavour of his soul to spend it holily and religiously in such holy exercises and employments as are fitting the feast day of the soul and the Lord's holy day. And when, at any time, he is drawn

away to the profaning or careless keeping of it, his soul is cast down within him. He is greatly grieved and troubled before God, and prays earnestly to God for more zeal and care and conscience for the time to come. And since he desires and strives to keep the sabbath holy, God accepts of his desires and endeavours. Abraham's determining to offer his son was accepted of God, as if he had actually offered him up (Heb. 11:17). So the imperfect keeping of the sabbath (if sincere) is in God's computation a complete keeping of it under the covenant of grace.

A true believer is willing to know and see the worst of himself. A carnal man who lives in sin (though possibly he may pray for knowledge in some things, and would be a knowing man, yet he) hath no mind to know himself, to know his own vileness and wickedness. He loves not to see the worst of himself. He as little loves to see his sin as to have it seen but the believer never thinks he sees his sins enough. No matter how little he sins, he thinks he sins too much; and no matter how much he sees his sins, he thinks he sees them too little.

A true believer is a daily wrestler. He struggles and wrestles with many things: some outward, some inward, some carnal, some spiritual, some of one condition, some of another. By believing prayer he wrestles with God and will not let Him go except He bless him, except He grant him his desire, and refresh his soul (Gen. 32:24; Matt. 15:22). He wrestleth with devils and damned angels

(Eph. 6:12). Nay, rather than lack one to wrestle with, he fights with himself. He keeps under his body, and brings it into subjection (1 Cor. 9). He wrestles against sin, not only against the outward act, but the inward motion of sin. He fights against sin when he finds it first stirring in him, before it be exposed to the view of the world. If, when he hath been helped to pray affectionately, he find any motion to pride begin to stir, he endeavors presently to crucify it, lest it spoil his prayers and turn them into sin.

A true believer is no stranger at the throne of grace. The ungodly are described by this, "that they seek not God" (Ps. 10:4); "Do not call upon the Lord" (Ps. 14:4). They love their ease too well to take the pains to seek God. Their pleasures are more to them than God's presence, but the godly man is often with God upon his knees. Prayer is a sweet diversion to his soul, it is a spiritual feast to him to enjoy God in private, and therefore he says with David in Psalm 73:28, "It is good for me to draw near to God." He comes cheerfully and unbosoms himself to God as a man would do to his friend. He is not dragged into His presence, as into the presence of a judge, but comes freely to Him, as a child to his Father. He preserves a constant acquaintance with God, and keeps a daily course of communion with Him in prayer because he loves Him and His service. He is out of his element, except when he is either praying to God, or

speaking of God, or thinking of God, as it is said of Bradford, that preaching, reading, and praying, was his whole life. It is said of St. James that he had knees as hard as camels knees with continual kneeling. Hilarian was found dead in his oratory with knees bent and eyes and hands lifted up. Bishop Latimer was wont to pray so fervently and oftentimes continued kneeling so long, that for feebleness he was not able to rise without help. Greg Naz reports of his sister Gorgonia that her knees seemed to cleave to the earth, by reason of her often kneeling. And the same Greg reports of his Aunt Priscilla that her elbows were as hard as an horn by her often leaning upon a desk when she prayed. The hypocrite doth not delight himself in the Almighty, and therefore will not always call upon God (Job 27:10). But the true believer delights in God as his only portion and happiness, and therefore continues instant in prayer. He looks on prayer as a part, a great part of every day's work, as his duty in all times and conditions, and finds much ease and refreshment by conversing with God in it. I have read of a gentlewoman, that in her parlour, at meditation and prayer, that she cried out, "Oh, that I might ever enjoy this sweet communion with God!" And one reports of Joachim, that he used to say "Prayer is my meat and drink." Such, therefore, as wholly omit prayer or pray but seldom are not true believers, whatever they may pretend. He that hath obtained favour to find grace prays daily for grace, but he who prays not, never received grace to this day.

A true believer seeks to enjoy God in His ordinances. It is not the empty formality in ordinances which he prizes, but to meet with God (Ps. 63:2). The profane, blind world neither careth for ordinances, nor God in ordinances. The formal hypocritical part of the world rests satisfied with the bare ordinances, but the sincere Christian seeks to find God, and His lively operations upon his heart there. It is Christ in a sermon that the spiritual soul feeds on. Some are taken with rich, magnificent, painted, and pompous words, with that art, learning, and elegancy of style with which sermons are compounded, but yet they neglect Christ. This is like children feeding on ashes. As a morsel of gold will not satisfy an hungry stomach, no notion in a sermon will (unless accompanied with the power and Spirit of Christ) stay the appetite of the soul. Oh, but Christ is savoury meat, such as the gracious soul loves to feed upon. Nothing without this can give contentment. Absalom thought it a small thing that he lived at Jerusalem. Nay, he esteemed his life as nothing, unless he might see the king's face. So the true believer esteems it a small thing to live at Jerusalem, that is, to enjoy all God's ordinances, unless he enjoys the face of Christ with them. His very life without this seems but a burden. When the face of God shines, there is exceeding joy and rejoicing, but when the face of God is hid there is a cry with much mourning and lamentation.

A true believer is a constant peripatetic. He sits not still, but walks. He walks not in by-ways, but in the King's

highway, not in the broad way, but in the strait and narrow way that leadeth unto life. He straitens and hems up his desires. He afflicts his flesh and unrenewed part by refusing and rejecting unruly desires. He rows against wind and stream, against the current of examples in the world. He presses forward in his way, through good report, and evil report, in want, in abundance, in every state and condition. His way pleases him all the more, because there is no elbow room for his lusts in it. He would have nothing allowed which corruption and lust craveth. And if at any time his heart look back to sin, as Lot's wife did to Sodom, he afflicts his spirit with godly sorrow for every step he hath again taken towards the broad way.

A true believer is a public mercy; wicked men are a public judgment. They are as thorns in the bosom of a land. They are the troublers of Israel, the fire-brands of a nation, the evening wolves that suck the blood of the people's joy. But believers are the chariots and horsemen of Israel, the props and pillars of a nation, the very storehouses and granaries of much good to others, the only excellent ones of the earth. The lips of the righteous feedeth many, and disperseth wisdom and knowledge. By his counsel and direction, he is as eyes to the blind. By his example, he is as feet to the lame; by his holy life and gracious deportment, he puts a check to the overspreading wickedness of the place where he lives. And by his earnest and importunate prayers, he staves off God's judgments from it. He is a blessing everywhere, for

wherever he is God is with him, and others are saved for his sake. He is a Lot to save Zoar, and a Joseph for whose sake Potiphar's house is blessed. He is a Moses standing in the gap, that a murmuring and rebellious people be not destroyed. He is an Aaron running with his censer, and standing between the dead and the living, and making atonement for others when wrath is gone out from the Lord against them. His prayers are like a strong wall against the rage of the enemy. In a word, he is good and doth good, and therefore, every one that hath an interest in heaven begs his life. When his work is done, and he is gathered to his fathers, every godly man's eye doth lament him, as one taken away to the great loss of others, though it is to his own unspeakable gain.

A true believer contents not himself with shows of goodness, and a form of godliness, but labors to get the life of religion into his heart. He labours to express the power of it in his life, by departing from all iniquity and walking in all the commandments of the Lord blameless (Luke 1:6). He worships God, not only outwardly but inwardly, not only with zealous expressions but devout affections, not only with a decent, becoming gravity, but with faith and love, in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Though he serves God with his body and is not altogether careless of the outside of worship, yet his great care is about his heart and the inside of worship. And as he worships God in the spirit, so he walks after the spirit. As he prays fervently, so he lives holily. Others pretend to godliness, but

live wickedly. In their words they profess to know God, but by their works they deny Him (Titus 1:16). Their works and practices give the lie to their words and profession, but the true believer cautiously declines whatever evils are condemned, and conscientiously performs whatever duties are commanded in the Word of God. His daily care is denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world.

A true believer's conscience guards his thoughts and cogitations, as well as his words and actions. Whatever the life of a wicked man seems to be, yet his heart is of little worth. It is filled with voluptuous thoughts: let us eat and drink. Better is a living dog than a dead lion. Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. Filled with malicious, revengeful thoughts, he asks, who will give me of his flesh to eat? I will be revenged. My wrath shall be satisfied upon him. I will watch him for an opportunity to be even with him, so he is filled with covetous thoughts. Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. To-day or tomorrow we will go unto such a city, and there continue a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain. What shall we do to purchase such a field, to raise such a child, to grow rich in the world? These are the mighty employments of wicked men's thoughts, about which they often lose their sleep, and busy themselves day and night. The Lord knows the thoughts of wicked men, that they are

but vanity, yes, gross impiety. Their thoughts run upon these matters for whole weeks, even the whole year. The devil runs away with their minds, even when they are at church, at prayers, in hearing, or any good exercise. They allow sinful thoughts to come in all the day long and cocker them with delight. Their hearts are stews and brothel-houses, shambles of mischief, and dens of wickedness.

Whereas the true believer is careful in watching sinful thoughts. I do indeed grant that the most watchful and mortified saints on earth are not entirely free from evil thoughts, but yet, as Christ whipped the buyers and sellers out of the temple, so he ejects and casts evil thoughts out of his heart with abhorrence. His customary and allowed thoughts are tending to God, to heaven, and the things above, and his heart is still inditing a good matter, wherein the greatest part of his soundest joy and comfort is placed. The course of sanctified thoughts in a child of God may, and is sometimes interrupted, both by the relics of corruption within, and by the temptations of Satan and the world without. Yet he is sensible of the evil of his thoughts, judges himself worthy to be destroyed for it, prays against it, repents of it, and afterwards guards his heart more strongly. He then watcheth over his thoughts more narrowly than ever.

A true believer is thoughtful of death, and his thoughts of death do him good all his life. He considers the fact

that death will cut him off from the inhabitants of the world, and therefore is diligent in doing his duty towards them while he lives with them. He considers death will cut him off from the public assemblies, and therefore is diligent in hearkening to the voice of the Lord while it is today. He considers death will cut him off from the comforts of life, and therefore uses them with moderation and sobriety, turns his superfluities into alms, dies to the world, abridges himself not only of excess, but sometimes of variety. He remembers these creature-comforts may leave him, because they are transitory. But he is sure he must leave them, because he is mortal, and therefore he labours so to use the world as not abusing it.

A true believer hath a well-grounded hope of heaven and glory. The wicked man's hope is groundless. It is built upon a sandy foundation, and therefore is as a spider's web, soon destroyed. When death appears, his hopes vanish. The coming of judgment is the departing of his hope. But the righteous hath hope in his death. His hope is built upon the mercy, and love, and power of God, upon the death and intercession of Jesus Christ, upon the covenant of grace, and the earnest of the spirit. Therefore, when his earthly comforts are leaving him, and he them, he rejoices in the hope of the glory to come. This is his comfort, that he is now going to possess that happiness that he hath long prayed, desired, and looked for.

A true believer is willing to move to heaven to enjoy God

(Phil. 1:23). His desire is not to dwell forever in the inn of this world, but to dwell in those glorious chambers that are above. He enjoys Christ's company on earth, and longs to enjoy it in heaven. He sets no store by the pleasures of the world. He hath a heavenly spark of holy ambition, whereby he overlooks the glistening glory of the world, and breathes after the society of angels and the presence of the Lord. He prefers the holy estate of the other life before the most flourishing estate in this life. His mind and motion lie upward. He calls Christ Hephzibah; his delight is in Him, and his desire to be with Him. He longs to leave the tents of Kedar and to live with Christ in the palace of Zion, to leave Babylon, the city of sin and confusion, and to live with Christ in Jerusalem, that holy and quiet city above. He hath heard glorious things of Christ on earth, and therefore longs to see Him eye to eye in heaven. As he desires Christ to come down into his heart, so he desires to ascend to Christ into heaven. Here his marriage to Christ is but initial. Here he is but contracted or espoused to Christ. For I have espoused you unto one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). Oh, but in heaven the nuptials shall be celebrated with the highest solemnities. Therefore the Spirit and the bride say come (Rev. 22:17). Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly (verse 20).