

“The Heart”

A. Seat of:

Adultery-----Matthew 5:28

Matthew 5:28 (Amplified Bible)

²⁸But I say to you that everyone who so much as looks at a woman with evil desire for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

The seventh commandment

Victory over the desires of the heart must be attended with painful exertions. But it must be done. Everything is bestowed to save us from our sins, not in them. All our senses and powers must be kept from those things which lead to transgression. Those who lead others into temptation to sin, by dress or in other ways, or leave them in it, or expose them to it, make themselves guilty of their sin, and will be accountable for it. If painful operations are submitted to, that our lives may be saved, what ought our minds to shrink from, when the salvation of our souls is concerned? There is tender mercy under all the Divine requirements and the grace and consolations of the Spirit will enable us to attend to them. (Mt 5:33-37)

Desire-----Romans 10:1

Romans 10:1 (Amplified Bible)

¹BRETHREN, [with all] my heart's desire and goodwill for [Israel], I long and pray to God that they may be saved.

The apostle's earnest desire for the salvation of the Jews

The Jews built on a false foundation and refused to come to Christ for free salvation by faith, and numbers in every age do the same in various ways. The strictness of the law showed men their need of salvation by grace, through faith. And the ceremonies shadowed forth Christ as fulfilling the righteousness and bearing the curse of the law. So that even under the law, all who were justified before God, obtained that blessing by faith, whereby they were made partakers of the perfect righteousness of the promised Redeemer. The law is not destroyed, nor the intention of the Lawgiver disappointed; but full satisfaction being made by the death of Christ for our breach of the law, the end is gained. That is, Christ has fulfilled the whole law, therefore whoever believeth in him, is counted just before God, as much as though he had fulfilled the whole law himself.

Sinners never could go on in vain fancies of their own righteousness, if they knew the justice of God as a Governor, or his righteousness as a Savior. (Ro 10:5-11)

Doubt-----Mark 11:23

Mark 11:23 (Amplified Bible)

²³Truly I tell you, whoever says to this mountain, Be lifted up and thrown into the sea! and does not doubt at all in his heart but believes that what he says will take place, it will be done for him.

Prayer in faith

The disciples could not think why that fig-tree should so soon wither away; but all wither who reject Christ; it represented the state of the Jewish church. We should rest in no religion that does not make us fruitful in good works. Christ taught them from hence to pray in faith. It may be applied to that mighty faith with which all true Christians are endued, and which does wonders in spiritual things. It justifies us, and so removes mountains of guilt, never to rise up in judgment against us. It purifies the heart, and so removes mountains of corruption, and makes them plain before the grace of God. One great errand to the throne of grace is to pray for the pardon of our sins; and care about this ought to be our daily concern. (Mk 11:27-33)

Fear-----Isaiah 35:4

Isaiah 35:4 (Amplified Bible)

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful and hasty heart, Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance; with the recompense of God He will come and save you.

Hatred-----Leviticus 19:17

Leviticus 19:17 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁷You shall not hate your brother in your heart; but you shall surely rebuke your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. (

Galatians 6:1 (Amplified Bible)

¹BRETHREN, IF any person is overtaken in misconduct or sin of any sort, you who are spiritual [who are responsive to and controlled by the Spirit] should set

him right and restore and reinstate him, without any sense of superiority and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also

Exhortations to meekness, gentleness, and humility

We are to bear one another's burdens. So, we shall fulfill the law of Christ. This obliges to mutual forbearance and compassion towards each other, agreeably to his example. It becomes us to bear one another's burdens, as fellow-travelers. It is very common for a man to look upon himself as wiser and better than other men, and as fit to dictate to them. Such a one deceives himself; by pretending to what he has not, he puts a cheat upon himself, and sooner or later will find the sad effects. This will never gain esteem, either with God or men. Everyone is advised to prove his own work. The better we know our own hearts and ways, the less shall we despise others, and the more be disposed to help them under infirmities and afflictions. How light soever men's sins seem to them when committed, yet they will be found a heavy burden, when they come to reckon with God about them. No man can pay a ransom for his brother; and sin is a burden to the soul. It is a spiritual burden; and the less a man feels it to be such, the more cause has he to suspect himself. Most men are dead in their sins, and therefore have no sight or sense of the spiritual burden of sin. Feeling the weight and burden of our sins, we must seek to be eased thereof by the Savior and be warned against every sin. (Ga 6:6-11)

1 John 2:9

⁹Whoever says he is in the Light and [yet] hates his brother [Christian, ^[a]born-again child of God his Father] is in darkness even until now.

The advantage of faith, love, and obedience

What knowledge of Christ can that be, which sees not that he is most worthy of our entire obedience? And a disobedient life shows there is neither religion nor honesty in the professor. The love of God is perfected in him that keeps his commandments. God's grace in him attains its true mark and produces its sovereign effect as far as may be in this world, and this is man's regeneration; though never absolutely perfect here. Yet this observing Christ's commands, has holiness and excellency which, if universal, would make the earth resemble heaven itself. The command to love one another had been in force from the beginning of the world; but it might be called a new command as given to Christians. It was new in

them, as their situation was new in respect of its motives, rules, and obligations. And those who walk in hatred and enmity to believers remain in a dark state. Christian love teaches us to value our brother's soul, and to dread everything hurtful to his purity and peace. Where spiritual darkness dwells, in mind, the judgment, and the conscience will be darkened, and will mistake the way to heavenly life. These things demand serious self-examination; and earnest prayer, that God would show us what we are, and whither we are going. (1Jn 2:12-14)

Gladness-----Acts 2:26

Acts 2:26 (Amplified Bible)

²⁶Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue exulted exceedingly; moreover, my flesh also will dwell in hope [will encamp, pitch its tent, and dwell in hope in anticipation of the resurrection].

Peter's address to the Jews

From this gift of the Holy Ghost, Peter preaches unto them Jesus: and here is the history of Christ. Here is an account of his death and sufferings, which they witnessed but a few weeks before. His death is considered as God's act; and of wonderful grace and wisdom. Thus, Divine justice must be satisfied, God and man brought together again, and Christ himself glorified, according to an eternal counsel, which could not be altered. And as the people's act; in them it was an act of awful sin and folly. Christ's resurrection did away the reproach of his death; Peter speaks largely upon this. Christ was God's Holy One, sanctified and set apart to his service in the work of redemption. His death and sufferings should be, not to him only, but to all his, the entrance to a blessed life for evermore. This event had taken place as foretold, and the apostles were witnesses. Nor did the resurrection rest upon this alone; Christ had poured upon his disciples the miraculous gifts and Divine influences, of which they witnessed the effects. Through the Savior, the ways of life are made known; and we are encouraged to expect God's presence and his favor for evermore. All this spring from assured belief that Jesus is the Lord, and the anointed Savior. (Ac 2:37-41)

Love-----Mark 12:30, 33

Mark 12:30; 33 (Amplified Bible)

³⁰And you shall love the Lord your God ^[a]out of and with your whole heart and out of and with all your soul (your ^[b]life) and out of and with all your mind (with ^[c]your faculty of thought and your moral understanding) and out of and with all your strength. ^[d]This is the first and principal commandment. ^(A)

³¹The second is like it and is this; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. ^(B)

³²And the scribe said to Him, Excellently and fitly and admirably answered, Teacher! You have said truly that He is One, and there is no other but Him;

³³And to love Him out of and with all the heart and with all the understanding [with the ^[e]faculty of quick apprehension and intelligence and keenness of discernment] and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. [I Sam. 15:22; Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:6-8; Heb. 10:8.]

The great command of the law

Those who sincerely desire to be taught their duty, Christ will guide in judgment, and teach his way. He tells the scribe that the great commandment, which indeed includes all, is that of loving God with all our hearts. Wherever this is the ruling principle in the soul, there is a disposition to every other duty. Loving God with all our heart will engage us to everything by which he will be pleased. The sacrifices only represented the atonements for men's transgressions of the moral law; they were of no power except as they expressed repentance and faith in the promised Savior, and as they led to moral obedience. And because we have not thus loved God and man, but the very reverse, therefore we are condemned sinners; we need repentance, and we need mercy. Christ approved what the scribe said and encouraged him. He stood fair for further advance; for this knowledge of the law leads to conviction of sin, to repentance, to discovery of our need of mercy, and understanding the way of justification by Christ. (Mk 12:35-40)

Lust-----Romans 1:24

Romans 1:24 (Amplified Bible)

²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their [own] hearts to sexual impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves [abandoning them to the degrading power of sin],

The sins of the Gentiles set forth.

The apostle begins to show that all mankind needs the salvation of the gospel, because none could obtain the favor of God, or escape his wrath by their own works. For no man can plead that he has fulfilled all his obligations to God and to his neighbor; nor can any truly say that he has fully acted up to the light afforded him. The sinfulness of man is described as ungodliness against the laws of the first table, and unrighteousness against those of the second. The cause of that sinfulness is holding the truth in unrighteousness. All, more or less, do what they know to be wrong, and omit what they know to be right, so that the plea of ignorance cannot be allowed from any. Our Creator's invisible power and Godhead are so clearly shown in the works he has made, that even idolaters and wicked Gentiles are left without excuse. They foolishly followed idolatry; and rational creatures changed the worship of the glorious Creator, for that of brutes, reptiles, and senseless images. They wandered from God, till all traces of true religion must have been lost, had not the revelation of the gospel prevented it. For whatever may be pretended, as to the sufficiency of man's reason to discover Divine truth and moral obligation, or to govern the practice aright, facts cannot be denied. And these plainly show that men have dishonored God by the most absurd idolatries and superstitions; and have degraded themselves by the vilest affections and most abominable deeds. (Ro 1:26-32)

Meditation-----Psalms 19:14

Psalm 19:14 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my [firm, impenetrable] Rock and my Redeemer.

Prayer for the benefit of them

God's word warns the wicked not to go on in his wicked way and warns the righteous not to turn from his good way. There is a reward, not only after keeping, but in keeping God's commandments. Religion makes our comforts sweet, and our crosses easy, life truly valuable, and death itself truly desirable. David not only desired to be pardoned and cleansed from the sins he had discovered and confessed, but from those he had forgotten or overlooked. All discoveries of sin made to us by the law, should drive us to the throne of grace, there to pray. His dependence was the same with that of every Christian who says, Surely in the Lord Jesus have I righteousness and strength. No prayer can be acceptable before God which is not offered in the strength of our Redeemer or Divine Kinsman, through Him who took our nature upon him, that he might redeem us unto God, and restore the long-lost inheritance. May our hearts be much affected with the excellence of the word of God; and much affected with the evil of sin, and the danger we are in of it, and the danger we are in by it.

Mischief-----Psalms 28:3

Psalm 28:3 (Amplified Bible)

³Drag me not away with the wicked, with the workers of iniquity, who speak peace with their neighbors, but malice and mischief are in their hearts.

A prayer in distress

David is very earnest in prayer. Observe his faith in prayer; God is my rock, on whom I build my hope. Believers should not rest till they have received some token that their prayers are heard. He prays that he may not be numbered with the wicked. Save me from being entangled in the snares they have laid for me. Save me from being infected with their sins and from doing as they do. Lord, never leave me to use such arts of deceit and treachery for my safety, as they use for my ruin.

Believers dread the way of sinners; the best are sensible of the danger they are in of being drawn aside: we should all pray earnestly to God for his grace to keep us. Those who are careful not to partake with sinners in their sins, have reason to hope that they shall not receive their plagues. He speaks of the just judgments of the Lord on the workers of iniquity, ver. # (4). This is not the language of passion or revenge. It is a prophecy that there will certainly come a day, when God will punish every man who persists in his evil deeds. Sinners shall be reckoned with; not only for the mischief they have done, but for the mischief they designed, and did what they could to affect. Disregard of the works of the Lord, is the cause of the sin of sinners, and becomes the cause of their ruin. (Ps 28:6-9)

Obedience-----Romans 6:17

Romans 6:17 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁷But thank God, though you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient with all your heart to the standard of teaching in which you were instructed and to which you were committed.

And are freed from the dominion of sin

Every man is the servant of the master to whose commands he yields himself; whether it be the sinful dispositions of his heart, in actions which lead to death, or the new and spiritual obedience implanted by regeneration. The apostle rejoiced now they obeyed from the heart the gospel, into which they were delivered as into a mould. As the same metal becomes a new vessel, when melted and recast in another mould, so the believer has become a new creature. And there is great difference in the liberty of mind and spirit, so opposite to the state of slavery, which the true Christian has in the service of his rightful Lord, whom he is enabled to consider as his Father, and himself as his son and heir, by the adoption of grace. The dominion of sin consists in being willingly slaves thereto, not in being harassed by it as a hated power, struggling for victory. Those who now are the servants of God once were the slaves of sin. (Ro 6:21-23)

Pride-----Proverbs 16:5

Proverbs 16:5 (Amplified Bible)

⁵Everyone proud and arrogant in heart is disgusting, hateful, and exceedingly offensive to the Lord; be assured [I pledge it] they will not go unpunished. [\(A\)](#)

Proverbs 8:13 (Amplified Bible)

¹³The reverent fear and worshipful awe of the Lord [includes] the hatred of evil; pride, arrogance, the evil way, and perverted and twisted speech I hate.

The nature and riches of Wisdom

Wisdom, here is Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; it is Christ in the word, and Christ in the heart; not only Christ revealed to us, but Christ revealed in us. All prudence and skill are from the Lord. Through the redemption of Christ's precious blood, the riches of his grace abound in all wisdom and prudence. Man found out many inventions for ruin; God found one for our recovery. He hates pride and arrogance, evil ways and forward conversation; these render men unwilling to hear his humbling, awakening, holy instructions. True religion gives men the best counsel in all difficult cases and helps to make their way plain. His wisdom makes all truly happy who receive it in the love of Christ Jesus. Seek him early, seek him earnestly, seek him before any thing else. Christ never said, Seek in vain. Those who love Christ are such as have seen his loveliness and have had his love shed abroad in their hearts; therefore, they are happy. They shall be happy in this world, or in that which is beyond compare better. Wealth gotten by vanity will soon be diminished, but that which is well got, will wear well; and that which is well spent upon works of piety and charity, will be lasting. If they have not riches and honor in this world, they shall have that which is infinitely better. They shall be happy in the grace of God. Christ, by his Spirit, guides believers into all truth, and so leads them in the way of righteousness; and they walk after the Spirit. Also,

they shall be happy in the glory of God hereafter. In Wisdom's promises, believers have goods laid up, not for days and years, but for eternity; her fruit therefore is better than gold. (Pr 8:22-31)

Proverbs 11:20-21(Amplified Bible)

[View commentary related to this passage](#)

²⁰They who are willfully contrary in heart are extremely disgusting and shamefully vile in the eyes of the Lord, but such as are blameless and wholehearted in their ways are His delight!

²¹Assuredly [I pledge it] the wicked shall not go unpunished, but the multitude of the [uncompromisingly] righteous shall be delivered

Purpose-----2 Corinthians 9:7

2 Corinthians 9:7 (Amplified Bible)

⁷Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He ^[a]takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving].^(A)

The Corinthians to be liberal and cheerful, and the apostle thanks God for his unspeakable gift

Money bestowed in charity, may to the carnal mind seem thrown away, but when given from proper principles, it is seed sown, from which a valuable increase may be expected. It should be given carefully. Works of charity, like other good works, should be done with thought and design. Due thought, as to our circumstances, and those we are about to relieve, will direct our gifts for charitable uses. Help should be given freely, be it more or less; not grudgingly, but cheerfully. While some scatter, and yet increase; others withhold more than is meet, and it tends to poverty. If we had more faith and love, we should waste less on ourselves, and sow more in hope of a plentiful increase. Can a man lose by doing that with which God is pleased? He is able to make all grace abound towards us, and to abound in us; to give a large increase of spiritual and of temporal good things. He can make us to have enough in all things; and to be content with what we have. God gives not only enough for us, but that also wherewith we may supply the wants of others, and this should be as seed to be sown. We must show the reality of our subjection to the gospel, by works of charity. This will be for the credit of our profession, and to the praise and glory of God. Let us endeavor to copy the example of Christ, being unwearied in doing good, and deeming it more blessed to give than to receive. Blessed be God for the

unspeakable gift of his grace, whereby he enables and inclines some of his people to bestow upon others, and others to be grateful for it; and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity, for Jesus Christ, that inestimable gift of his love, through whom this and every other good thing, pertaining to life and godliness, are freely given unto us, beyond all expression, measure, or bounds.

Reason-----Mark 2:8

Mark 2:8 (Amplified Bible)

⁸And at once Jesus, becoming fully aware in His spirit that they thus debated within themselves, said to them, Why do you argue (debate, reason) about all this in your hearts?

Christ heals one sick of the palsy.

It was this man's misery that he needed to be so carried and shows the suffering state of human life; it was kind of those who so carried him, and teaches the compassion that should be in men, toward their fellow-creatures in distress. True faith and strong faith may work in various ways; but it shall be accepted and approved by Jesus Christ. Sin is the cause of all our pains and sicknesses. The way to remove the effect is to take away the cause. Pardon of sin strikes at the root of all diseases. Christ proved his power to forgive sin, by showing his power to cure the man sick of the palsy. And his curing diseases were a figure of his pardoning sin, for sin is the disease of the soul; when it is pardoned, it is healed. When we see what Christ does in healing souls, we must own that we never saw the like. Most men think themselves whole; they feel no need of a physician, therefore despise or neglect Christ and his gospel. But the convinced, humbled sinner, who despairs of all help, excepting from the Savior, will show his faith by applying to him without delay. (Mk 2:13-17)

Rebellion-----Jeremiah 5:23

Jeremiah 5:23 (Amplified Bible)

²³But these people have hearts that draw back from God and wills that rebel against Him; they have revolted and quit His service and have gone away [into idolatry].

Sorrow-----John 14:1

John 14:1 (Amplified Bible)

¹DO NOT let your hearts be troubled (distressed, agitated). You believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely on God; believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely also on Me.

Christ comforts his disciples.

Here are three words, upon any of which stress may be laid. Upon the word troubled. Be not cast down and disquieted, the word heart. Let your heart be kept with full trust in God. However, others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this present time, be not you so. Christ's disciples, more than others, should keep their minds quiet, when everything else is unquiet. Here is the remedy against this trouble of mind, to believe. By believing in Christ as the Mediator between God and man, we gain comfort. The happiness of heaven is spoken of as in a father's house. There are many mansions, for there are many sons to be brought to glory. Mansions are lasting dwellings. Christ will be the Finisher of that of which he is the Author or Beginner; if he has prepared the place for us, he will prepare us for it. Christ is the sinner's Way to the Father and to heaven, in his person as God manifest in the flesh, in his atoning sacrifice, and as our Advocate. He is the Truth, as fulfilling all the prophecies of a Savior; believing which, sinners come by him the Way. He is the Life, by whose life-giving Spirit the dead in sin are quickened. Nor can any man draw nigh God as a Father, who is not quickened by Him as the Life, and taught by Him as the Truth, to come by Him as the Way. By Christ, as the Way, our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us; this is the Way that leads to rest, the good old Way. He is the Resurrection and the Life. All that saw Christ by faith saw the Father in Him. In the light of Christ's doctrine, they saw God as the Father of lights; and in Christ's miracles, they saw God as the God of power. The holiness of God shone in the spotless purity of Christ's life. We are to believe the revelation of God to man in Christ; for the works of the Redeemer show forth his own glory, and God in him. (Jn 14:12-17)

Thought-----Matthew 9:4

Matthew 9:4 (Amplified Bible)

⁴But Jesus, knowing (^[a]seeing) their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil and harbor ^[b]malice in your hearts?

Jesus returns to Capernaum and heals a paralytic.

The faith of the friends of the paralytic in bringing him to Christ was a strong faith; they firmly believed that Jesus Christ both could and would heal him. A strong faith regards no obstacles in pressing after Christ. It was a humble faith; they brought him to attend on Christ. It was an active faith. Sin may be pardoned, yet the sickness not be removed; the sickness may be removed, yet the sin not pardoned: but if we have the comfort of peace with God, with the comfort of recovery from sickness, this makes the healing a mercy indeed. This is no encouragement to sin. If thou bring thy sins to Jesus Christ, as thy malady and misery to be cured of, and delivered from, it is well; but to come with them, as thy darlings and delight, thinking still to retain them and receive him, is a gross mistake, a miserable delusion. The great intention of the blessed Jesus in the redemption he wrought, is to separate our hearts from sin. Our Lord Jesus has perfect knowledge of all that we say within ourselves. There is a great deal of evil in sinful thoughts, which is very offensive to the Lord Jesus. Christ designed to show that his great errand to the world was, to save his people from their sins. He turned from disputing with the scribes, and spake healing to the sick man. Not only he had no more need to be carried upon his bed, but he had strength to carry it. God must be glorified in all the power that is given to do good. (Mt 9:9)

B. Of the wicked described as:

Blind-----Ephesians 4:18

Ephesians 4:18 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁸Their ^[a]moral understanding is darkened and their reasoning is beclouded. [They are] alienated (estranged, self-banished) from the life of God [with no share in it; this is] because of the ignorance (the want of knowledge and perception, the willful blindness) that is ^[b]deep-seated in them, due to their hardness of heart [to the insensitiveness of their moral nature].

To purity and holiness

The apostle charged the Ephesians in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, that having professed the gospel, they should not be as the unconverted Gentiles, who walked in vain fancies and carnal affections. Do not men, on every side, walk in the vanity of their minds? Must not we then urge the distinction between real and nominal Christians? They were void of all saving knowledge; they sat in darkness and loved it rather than light. They had a dislike and hatred to a life of holiness, which is not only the way of life God requires and approves, and by which we live to him, but which has some likeness to God himself in his purity, righteousness, truth, and goodness. The truth of Christ appears in its beauty and power, when it appears as in Jesus. The corrupt nature is called a man; like the human body, it is of divers' parts, supporting and strengthening one

another. Sinful desires are deceitful lusts; they promise men happiness but render them more miserable; and bring them to destruction, if not subdued and mortified. These therefore must be put off, as an old garment, a filthy garment; they must be subdued and mortified. But it is not enough to shake off corrupt principles; we must have gracious ones. By the new man, is meant the new nature, the new creature, directed by a new principle, even regenerating grace, enabling a man to lead a new life of righteousness and holiness. This is created or brought forth by God's almighty power. (Eph 4:25-28)

Darkened-----Romans 1:21

Romans 1:21 (Amplified Bible)

²¹Because when they knew and recognized Him as God, they did not honor and glorify Him as God or give Him thanks. But instead they became futile and ^[a]godless in their thinking [with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning, and stupid speculations] and their senseless minds were darkened.

The sins of the Gentiles set forth.

The apostle begins to show that all mankind needs the salvation of the gospel, because none could obtain the favor of God, or escape his wrath by their own works. For no man can plead that he has fulfilled all his obligations to God and to his neighbor; nor can any truly say that he has fully acted up to the light afforded him. The sinfulness of man is described as ungodliness against the laws of the first table, and unrighteousness against those of the second. The cause of that sinfulness is holding the truth in unrighteousness. All, more or less, do what they know to be wrong, and omit what they know to be right, so that the plea of ignorance cannot be allowed from any. Our Creator's invisible power and Godhead are so clearly shown in the works he has made, that even idolaters and wicked Gentiles are left without excuse. They foolishly followed idolatry; and rational creatures changed the worship of the glorious Creator, for that of brutes, reptiles, and senseless images. They wandered from God, till all traces of true religion must have been lost, had not the revelation of the gospel prevented it. For whatever may be pretended, as to the sufficiency of man's reason to discover Divine truth and moral obligation, or to govern the practice aright, facts cannot be denied. And these plainly show that men have dishonored God by the most absurd idolatries and superstitions; and have degraded themselves by the vilest affections and most abominable deeds. (Ro 1:26-32)

Covetous-----2 Peter 2:14

2 Peter 2:14 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁴They have eyes full of harlotry, insatiable for sin. They beguile and bait and lure away unstable souls. Their hearts are trained in covetousness (lust, greed), [they are] children of a curse [^[a]exposed to cursing]!

The effects of saving knowledge in producing obedience, and love to the brethren

Impure seducers and their abandoned followers give themselves up to their own fleshly minds. Refusing to bring every thought to the obedience of Christ, they act against God's righteous precepts. They walk after the flesh, they go on in sinful courses, and increase to greater degrees of impurity and wickedness. They also despise those whom God has set in authority over them and requires them to honor. Outward temporal good things are the wages sinners expect and promise themselves. And none have more cause to tremble, than those who are bold to gratify their sinful lusts, by presuming on the Divine grace and mercy. Many such there have been, and are, who speak lightly of the restraints of God's law, and deem themselves freed from obligations to obey it. Let Christians stand at a distance from such. (2Pe 2:17-22)

Full of Evil-----Genesis 6:5

Genesis 6:5 (Amplified Bible)

⁵The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination and intention of all human thinking was only evil continually.

The wickedness of the world which provoked God's wrath

The most remarkable thing concerning the old world is the destroying of it by the deluge, or flood. We are told of the abounding iniquity of that wicked world: God's just wrath, and his holy resolution to punish it. In all ages there has been a peculiar curse of God upon marriages between professors of true religion and its avowed enemies. The evil example of the ungodly party corrupts or greatly hurts the other. Family religion is put an end to, and the children are trained up according to the worldly maxims of that parent who is without the fear of God. If we profess to be the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, we must not marry without his consent. He will never give his blessing, if we prefer beauty, wit, wealth, or worldly honors, to faith and holiness. The Spirit of God strove with men, by sending Enoch, Noah, and perhaps others, to preach to them; by waiting to be gracious, notwithstanding their rebellions; and by exciting alarm and convictions in their consciences. But the Lord declared that his Spirit should not thus strive with men always; he would leave them to be hardened in sin and ripened for destruction. This he determined on, because man was flesh: not only frail and feeble, but carnal and depraved; having misused the noble powers of his soul to gratify his corrupt inclinations. God sees all the wickedness that is among the children of men; it cannot be

hid from him now; and if it be not repented of, it shall be made known by him shortly. The wickedness of a people is great indeed, when noted sinners are men renowned among them. Very much sin was committed in all places, by all sorts of people. Any one might see that the wickedness of man was great: but God saw that every imagination, or purpose, of the thoughts of man's heart, was only evil continually. This was the bitter root, the corrupt spring. The heart was deceitful and desperately wicked; the principles were corrupt; the habits and dispositions evil. Their designs and devices were wicked. They did evil deliberately, contriving how to do mischief. There was no good among them. God saw man's wickedness as one injured and wronged by it. He saw it as a tender father sees the folly and stubbornness of a rebellious and disobedient child, which grieves him, and makes him wish he had been childless. The words here used are remarkable; they are used after the manner of men, and do not mean that God can change, or be unhappy. Does God thus hate our sin?

And shall not we be grieved to the heart for it? Oh, that we may look on Him whom we have grieved and mourn! God repented that he had made man; but we never find him repent that he redeemed man. God resolves to destroy man: the original word is very striking, to **◆**I will wipe off man from the earth, to **◆** as dirt or filth is wiped off from a place which should be clean, and is thrown to the dunghill, the proper place for it. God speaks of man as his own creature, when he resolves upon his punishment. Those forfeit their lives who do not answer the end of their living. God speaks of resolution concerning men, after his Spirit had been long striving with them in vain. None are punished by the justice of God, but those who hate to be reformed by the grace of God. (Ge 6:8-11)

Unrepentant-----Romans 2:5

Romans 2:5 (Amplified Bible)

⁵But by your callous stubbornness and impenitence of heart you are storing up wrath and indignation for yourself on the day of wrath and indignation, when God's righteous judgment (just doom) will be revealed.

The Jews could not be justified by the Law of Moses, any more than the Gentiles by the law of nature.

The Jews thought themselves a holy people, entitled to their privileges by right, while they were unthankful, rebellious, and unrighteous. But all who act thus, of every nation, age, and description, must be reminded that the judgment of God will be according to their real character. The case is so plain, that we may appeal to the sinner's own thoughts. In every willful sin, there is contempt of the goodness of God. And though the branches of man's disobedience are very various, all spring from the same root. But in true repentance, there must be hatred of former sinfulness, from a change wrought in the state of the mind, which disposes it to choose the good and to refuse the evil. It shows also a sense of inward wretchedness. Such is the great change wrought in repentance, it is conversion, and is needed by every human being. The ruin of sinners

is their walking after a hard and impenitent heart. Their sinful doings are expressed by the strong words, to treasuring up wrath. In the description of the just man, notice the full demand of the law. It demands that the motives shall be pure and rejects all actions from earthly ambition or ends. In the description of the unrighteous, contention is held forth as the principle of all evil. The human will is in a state of enmity against God. Even Gentiles, who had not the written law, had that within, which directed them what to do by the light of nature. Conscience is a witness, and first or last will bear witness, as to there nature. Conscience is a witness, and first or last will bear witness. As they kept or broke these natural laws and dictates, their consciences either acquitted or condemned them. Nothing speaks more terror to sinners, and more comfort to saints, than that Christ shall be the Judge. Secret services shall be rewarded; secret sins shall be then punished and brought to light. (Ro 2:17-24}

Lustful-----Proverbs 6:25

Proverbs 6:25 (Amplified Bible)

²⁵Lust not after her beauty in your heart, neither let her capture you with her eyelids.

Exhortations to walk according to God's commandments

The word of God has something to say to us upon all occasions. Let not faithful reproofs ever make us uneasy. When we consider how much this sin abounds, how heinous adultery is in its own nature, of what evil consequence it is, and how certainly it destroys the spiritual life in the soul, we shall not wonder that the cautions against it are so often repeated. Let us notice the subjects of this chapter. Let us remember Him who willingly became our Surety, when we were strangers and enemies. And shall Christians, who have such prospects, motives, and examples, be slothful and careless? Shall we neglect what is pleasing to God, and what he will graciously reward? May we closely watch every sense by which poison can enter our minds or our affections.

Proud-----Jeremiah 49:16

Jeremiah 49:16 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁶Your [object of] horror (your idol) has deceived you, and the pride of your heart [has deceived you], O you who dwell in the clefts of the rock [Sela or ^[a]Petra], who hold and occupy the height of the hill. Though you make your nest as high as the eagle's, I will bring you down from there, says the Lord.

Uncircumcised-----Acts 7:51

Acts 7:51 (Amplified Bible)

⁵¹You stubborn and stiff-necked people, still heathen and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are always ^[a]actively resisting the Holy Spirit. As your forefathers [were], so you [are and so you do]! ^(A)

Stephen reproves the Jews for the death of Christ

Stephen was going on, it seems, to show that the temple and the temple service must come to an end, and it would be the glory of both to give way to the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth; but he perceived they would not bear it. Therefore, he broke off, and by the Spirit of wisdom, courage, and power, sharply rebuked his persecutors. When plain arguments and truths provoke the opposers of the gospel, they should be shown their guilt and danger. They, like their fathers, were stubborn and willful. There is that in our sinful hearts, which always resists the Holy Ghost, a flesh that lusts against the Spirit and wars against his motions; but in the hearts of God's elect, when the fullness of time comes, this resistance is overcome. The gospel was offered now, not by angels, but from the Holy Ghost; yet they did not embrace it, for they were resolved not to comply with God, either in his law or in his gospel. Their guilt stung them to the heart, and they sought relief in murdering their reprover, instead of sorrow and supplication for mercy. (Ac 7:54-60)

C. God's action upon:

Knows-----Psalms 44:21

Psalm 44:21 (Amplified Bible)

²¹Would not God discover this? For He knows the secrets of the heart.

Psalms 44:17-26

In afflictions, we must not seek relief by any sinful compliance; but should continually meditate on the truth, purity, and knowledge of our heart-searching God. Hearts sins and secret sins are known to God and must be reckoned for. He knows the secret of the heart, therefore judges of the words and actions. While our troubles do not drive us from our duty to God, we should not suffer them to drive us from our comfort in God. Let us take care that prosperity and ease do not render us careless and lukewarm. The church of God cannot be prevailed on by persecution to forget God; the believer's heart does not turn back from God. The Spirit of prophecy had reference to those who suffered unto death, for the testimony of Christ. Observe the pleas used, ver. # (25, 26). Not their own merit and righteousness, but the poor sinner's pleas. None that

belong to Christ shall be cast off, but every one of them shall be saved, and that for ever. The mercy of God, purchased, promised, and constantly flowing forth, and offered to believers, does away every doubt arising from our sins; while we pray in faith, Redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

Searches-----1 Chronicles 28:9

1 Chronicles 28:9 (Amplified Bible)

⁹And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father [have personal knowledge of Him, be acquainted with, and understand Him; appreciate, heed, and cherish Him] and serve Him with a blameless heart and a willing mind. For the Lord searches all hearts and minds and understands all the wanderings of the thoughts. If you seek Him [inquiring for and of Him and requiring Him as your first and vital necessity] you will find Him; but ^[a]if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever!

David exhorts the people to the fear of the Lord.

During David's last sickness, many chief priests and Levites were at Jerusalem. Finding himself able, then David spoke of his purpose, that is to build a temple for God and of God's disallowing that purpose. He opened to them God's gracious purposes concerning Solomon. David charged them to cleave steadfastly to God and their duty. We cannot do our work as we should, unless we put on resolution, and fetch in strength from Divine grace. Religion or piety has two distinct parts. The first is knowledge of God; the second is worship of God. David says, Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. God is made known by his works and word. Revelation alone shows the whole character of God, in his providence, his holy law, his condemnation of sinners, his blessed gospel, and the ministration of the Spirit to all true believers. The natural man cannot receive this knowledge of God. But thus, we learn the value of the Savior's atonement, and of the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and are influenced to walk in all his commandments. It brings a sinner to his proper place at the foot of the cross, as a poor, guilty, helpless worm, deserving wrath, yet expecting everything needful from the free mercy and grace of God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Having been forgiven much, the pardoned sinner learns to love much. (1Ch 28:11-21)

Enlightens-----2 Corinthians 4:6

2 Corinthians 4:6 (Amplified Bible)

⁶For God Who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts so as [to beam forth] the Light for the illumination of the knowledge of the majesty and glory of God [as it is manifest in the Person and is revealed] in the face of Jesus Christ (the Messiah). ^(A)

The apostles labored with much diligence, sincerity, and faithfulness.

The best of men would faint, if they did not receive mercy from God. And that mercy which has helped us out, and helped us on, hitherto, we may rely upon to help us even to the end. The apostles had no base and wicked designs, covered with fair and specious pretences. They did not try to make their ministry serve a turn. Sincerity or uprightness will keep the favorable opinion of wise and good men. Christ by his gospel makes a glorious discovery to the minds of men. But the design of the devil is, to keep men in ignorance; and when he cannot keep the light of the gospel of Christ out of the world, he spares no pains to keep men from the gospel, or to set them against it. The rejection of the gospel is here traced to the willful blindness and wickedness of the human heart. Self was not the matter or the end of the apostles' preaching; they preached Christ as Jesus, the Savior and Deliverer, who saves to the uttermost all that come to God through him. Ministers are servants to the souls of men; they must avoid becoming servants to the humors or the lusts of men. It is pleasant to behold the sun in the firmament; but it is more pleasant and profitable for the gospel to shine in the heart. As light was the beginning of the first creation; so, in the new creation, the light of the Spirit is his first work upon the soul. The treasure of gospel light and grace is put into earthen vessels. The ministers of the gospel are subject to the same passions and weaknesses as other men. God could have sent angels to make known the glorious doctrine of the gospel or could have sent the most admired sons of men to teach the nations, but he chose humbler, weaker vessels, that his power might be more glorified in upholding them, and in the blessed change wrought by their ministry. (2Co 4:8-12)

Opens-----Acts 16:14

Acts 16:14 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁴One of those who listened to us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a dealer in fabrics dyed in purple. She was [already] a worshiper of God, and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

Paul proceeds to Macedonia, The conversion of Lydia.

The removals of ministers, and the dispensing the means of grace by them, are in particular under Divine conduct and direction. We must follow Providence: and whatever we seek to do, if that suffers us not, we ought to submit and believe to be for the best. People greatly need help for their souls, it is their duty to look out for it, and to invite those among them who can help them. And God's calls must be complied with readily. A solemn assembly the worshippers of God must have, if possible, upon the Sabbath day. If we have not synagogues, we must be thankful for more private places, and resort to them; not forsaking the assembling together, as our opportunities are. Among the hearers of

Paul was a woman, named Lydia. She had an honest calling, which the historian notices to her praise. Yet though she had a calling to mind, she found time to improve advantages for her soul. It will not excuse us from religious duties, to say, We have a trade to mind; for have not we also a God to serve, and souls to look after? Religion does not call us from our business in the world but directs us in it. Pride, prejudice, and sin shut out the truths of God, till his grace makes way for them into the understanding and affections; and the Lord alone can open the heart to receive and believe his word. We must believe in Jesus Christ; there is no coming to God as a Father, but by the Son as Mediator. (Ac 16:16-24)

Recreates-----Ezekiel 11:19

Ezekiel 11:19 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁹And I will give them one heart [a new heart] and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony [unnaturally hardened] heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh [sensitive and responsive to the touch of their God], ^(A)

Ezekiel 18:31 (Amplified Bible)

³¹Cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed against Me and make you a new mind and heart and a new spirit. For why will you die, O house of Israel? ^(A)

Ephesians 4:22 (Amplified Bible)

²²Strip yourselves of your former nature [put off and discard your old unrenewed self] which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion;

²³And be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude],

To purity and holiness

The apostle charged the Ephesians in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, that having professed the gospel, they should not be as the unconverted Gentiles, who walked in vain fancies and carnal affections. Do not men, on every side, walk in the vanity of their minds? Must not we then urge the distinction between real and nominal Christians? They were void of all saving knowledge; they sat in darkness and loved it rather than light. They had a dislike and hatred to a life of holiness, which is not only the way of life God requires and approves,

and by which we live to him, but which has some likeness to God himself in his purity, righteousness, truth, and goodness. The truth of Christ appears in its beauty and power, when it appears as in Jesus. The corrupt nature is called a man; like the human body, it is of divers' parts, supporting and strengthening one another. Sinful desires are deceitful lusts; they promise men happiness but render them more miserable; and bring them to destruction, if not subdued and mortified. These therefore must be put off, as an old garment, a filthy garment; they must be subdued and mortified. But it is not enough to shake off corrupt principles; we must have gracious ones. By the new man, is meant the new nature, the new creature, directed by a new principle, even regenerating grace, enabling a man to lead a new life of righteousness and holiness. This is created or brought forth by God's almighty power. (Eph 4:25-28)

Examines----- Jeremiah 12:3

Jeremiah 12:3 (Amplified Bible)

³But You, O Lord, know and understand me and my devotion to You; You see me and try my heart toward You. [O Lord] pull [these rebellious ones] out like sheep for the slaughter and devote and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

Strengthens-----Psalms 27:14

Psalm 27:14 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁴Wait and hope for and expect the Lord; be brave and of good courage and let your heart be stout and enduring. Yes, wait for and hope for and expect the Lord.

His desire toward God, and expectation from him

Wherever the believer is, he can find a way to the throne of grace by prayer. God calls us by his Spirit, by his word, by his worship, and by special providences, merciful and afflicting. When we are foolishly making court to lying vanities, God is, in love to us, calling us to seek our own mercies in him. The call is general, to Seek ye my face; but we must apply it to ourselves, to I will seek it. The word does us no good, when we do not ourselves accept the exhortation: a gracious heart readily answers to the call of a gracious God, being made willing in the day of his power. The psalmist requests the favor of the Lord; the continuance of his presence with him; the benefit of Divine guidance, and the benefit of Divine protection. God's time to help those that trust in him is, when all other

helpers fail. He is a surer and better Friend than earthly parents are or can be. What was the belief which supported the psalmist? That he should see the goodness of the Lord. There is nothing like the believing hope of eternal life, the foresights of that glory, and foretastes of those pleasures, to keep us from fainting under all calamities. In the mean time he should be strengthened to bear up under his burdens. Let us look unto the suffering Savior, and pray in faith, not to be delivered into the hands of our enemies. Let us encourage each other to wait on the Lord, with patient expectation, and fervent prayer.

Establishes-----1 Thessalonians 3:13

1 Thessalonians 3:13 (Amplified Bible)

¹³So that He may strengthen and confirm and establish your hearts faultlessly pure and unblamable in holiness in the sight of our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) with all His saints (the ^[a]holy and glorified people of God)! Amen, (so be it)!

And for their increase in grace

Prayer is religious worship, and all religious worship is due unto God only. Prayer is to be offered to God as our Father. Prayer is not only to be offered in the name of Christ, but offered up to Christ himself, as our Lord and our Savior. Let us acknowledge God in all our ways, and he will direct our paths. Mutual love is required of all Christians. And love is of God and is fulfilling the gospel as well as the law. We need the Spirit's influences in order to our growth in grace; and the way to obtain them, is prayer. Holiness is required of all who would go to heaven; and we must act so that we do not contradict the profession we make of holiness. The Lord Jesus will certainly come in his glory; his saints will come with him. Then the excellence as well as the necessity of holiness will appear; and without this no hearts shall be established at that day, nor shall any avoid condemnation.

D. Regenerates, described as:

Circumcised-----Romans 2:29

Romans 2:29 (Amplified Bible)

²⁹But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and [true] circumcision is of the heart, a spiritual and not a literal [matter]. His praise is not from men but from God.

The sins of the Jews confuted all their vain confidence in their outward privileges

No forms, ordinances, or notions can profit, without regenerating grace, which will always lead to seeking an interest in the righteousness of God by faith. For he is no more a Christian now, than he was really a Jew of old, who is only one outwardly: neither is that baptism, which is outward in the flesh: but he is the real Christian, who is inwardly a true believer, with an obedient faith. And the true baptism is that of the heart, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost; bringing a spiritual frame of mind, and a willing following of truth in its holy ways. Let us pray that we may be made real Christians, not outwardly, but inwardly; in the heart and spirit, not in the letter; baptized, not with water only, but with the Holy Ghost; and let our praise be, not of men, but of God.

Clean-----Psalms 73:1

Psalm 73:1 (Amplified Bible)

A Psalm of Asaph

¹TRULY GOD is [only] good to Israel, even to those who are upright and pure in heart.

The psalmist's temptation

The psalmist was strongly tempted to envy the prosperity of the wicked; a common temptation, which has tried the graces of many saints. But he lays down the great principle by which he resolved to abide. It is the goodness of God. This is a truth which cannot be shaken. Good thoughts of God will fortify against Satan's temptations. The faith even of strong believers may be sorely shaken, and ready to fail. There are storms that will try the firmest anchors. Foolish and wicked people have sometimes a great share of outward prosperity. They seem to have the least share of the troubles of this life; and they seem to have the greatest share of its comforts. They live without the fear of God, yet they prosper, and get on in the world. Wicked men often spend their lives without much sickness and end them without great pain; while many godly persons scarcely know what health is and die with great sufferings. Often the wicked are not frightened, either by the remembrance of their sins, or the prospect of their misery, but they die without terror. We cannot judge men's state beyond death, by what passes at their death. He looked abroad and saw many of God's people greatly at a loss. Because the wicked are so very daring, therefore his people return hither; they know not what to say to it, and the rather, because they drink deep of the bitter cup of affliction. He spoke feelingly when he spoke of his own troubles; there is no disputing against sense, except by faith. From all this arose a strong temptation to cast off religion. But let us learn that the true course of sanctification consists in cleansing a man from all pollution both of soul and body. The heart is cleansed by the blood of Christ laid hold upon by faith; and by the begun works of the Lord's Spirit, manifested in the hearty resolution, purpose, and study

of holiness, and a blameless course of life and actions, the hands are cleansed. It is not in vain to serve God and keep his ordinances. (Ps 73:15-20)

Contrite-----Psalms 51:17

Psalm 51:17 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁷My sacrifice [the sacrifice acceptable] to God is a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart [broken down with sorrow for sin and humbly and thoroughly penitent], such, O God, You will not despise.

God is pleased with a contrite heart. (A prayer for the prosperity of Zion)

Those who are thoroughly convinced of their misery and danger by sin would spare no cost to obtain the remission of it. But as they cannot make satisfaction for sin, so God cannot take any satisfaction in them, otherwise than as expressing love and duty to him. The good work wrought in every true penitent, is a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, and sorrow for sin. It is a heart that is tender, and pliable to God's word. Oh, that there was such a heart in every one of us!

God is graciously pleased to accept this; it is instead of all burnt-offering and sacrifice. The broken heart is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ; there is no true repentance without faith in him. Men despise that which is broken, but God will not. He will not overlook it; he will not refuse or reject it; though it makes God no satisfaction for the wrong done to him by sin. Those who have been in spiritual troubles know how to pity and pray for others afflicted in like manner. David was afraid lest his sin should bring judgments upon the city and kingdom. No personal fears or troubles of conscience can make the soul, which has received grace, careless about the interests of the church of God. And let this be the continued joy of all the redeemed, that they have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.

Enlarged-----Psalms 119:32

Psalm 119:32 (Amplified Bible)

³²I will [not merely walk, but] run the way of Your commandments, when You give me a heart that is willing.

Psalms 119:25-32

While the souls of the children of this world cleave to the earth as their portion, the children of light are greatly burdened, because of the remains of carnal affections in their hearts. It is unspeakable comfort to a gracious soul, to think with what tenderness all its complaints are received by a gracious God. We can talk of the wonders of redeeming love, when we understand the way of God's precepts, and walk in that way. The penitent melts in sorrow for sin: even the patient spirit may melt in the sense of affliction; it is then its interest to pour out its soul before God. The way of lying means all false ways by which men deceive themselves and others or are deceived by Satan and his instruments. Those who know and love the law of the Lord, desire to know it more, and love it better. The way of serious godliness is the way of truth; the only true way to happiness: we must always have actual regard to it. Those who stick to the word of God, may in faith expect and pray for acceptance with God. Lord, never leave me to do that by which I shall shame myself, and do not thou reject my services. Those that are going to heaven should still press forward. God, by his Spirit, enlarges the hearts of his people when he gives them wisdom. The believer prays to be set free from sin. (Ps 119:33-40)

Enlightened-----2 Corinthians 4:6

2 Corinthians 4:6 (Amplified Bible)

⁶For God Who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts so as [to beam forth] the Light for the illumination of the knowledge of the majesty and glory of God [as it is manifest in the Person and is revealed] in the face of Jesus Christ (the Messiah).^(A)

The apostles labored with much diligence, sincerity, and faithfulness.

The best of men would faint, if they did not receive mercy from God. And that mercy which has helped us out, and helped us on, hitherto, we may rely upon to help us even to the end. The apostles had no base and wicked designs, covered with fair and specious pretences. They did not try to make their ministry serve a turn. Sincerity or uprightness will keep the favorable opinion of wise and good men. Christ by his gospel makes a glorious discovery to the minds of men. But the design of the devil is, to keep men in ignorance; and when he cannot keep the light of the gospel of Christ out of the world, he spares no pains to keep men from the gospel, or to set them against it. The rejection of the gospel is here traced to the willful blindness and wickedness of the human heart. Self was not the matter or the end of the apostles' preaching; they preached Christ as Jesus, the Savior and Deliverer, who saves to the uttermost all that come to God through him. Ministers are servants to the souls of men; they must avoid becoming servants to the humors or the lusts of men. It is pleasant to behold the sun in the firmament; but it is more pleasant and profitable for the gospel to shine in the heart. As light was the beginning of the first creation; so, in the new creation, the light of the Spirit is his first work upon the soul. The treasure of gospel light and grace is put into earthen vessels. The ministers of the gospel are subject to the same passions and weaknesses as other men. God could have sent angels to make known the glorious doctrine of the gospel or could

have sent the most admired sons of men to teach the nations, but he chose humbler, weaker vessels, that his power might be more glorified in upholding them, and in the blessed change wrought by their ministry. (2Co 4:8-12)

Fixed-----Psalms 57:7

Psalm 57:7 (Amplified Bible)

⁷My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is steadfast and confident! I will sing and make melody.

He concludes with joy and praise.

By lively faith, David's prayers and complaints are at once turned into praises. His heart is fixed; it is prepared for every event, being stayed upon God. If by the grace of God, we are brought into this even, composed frame of mind, we have great reason to be thankful. Nothing is done to purpose, in religion, unless it is done with the heart. The heart must be fixed for the duty, put in frame for it; fixed in the duty by close attention. Our tongue is our glory, and never more so than when praising God; dull and sleepy devotions will never be acceptable to God. Let us awake early in the morning, to begin the day with God; early in the beginning of a mercy. When God comes toward us with his favors, let us go forth to meet him with our praises. David desired to bring others to join in praising God; and in his psalms, he is still praising God among the people, singing to Him among the nations. Let us seek to have our hearts fixed to praise his boundless mercy and unfailing faithfulness; and to glorify him with body, soul, and spirit, which are his. Let us earnestly pray that the blessings of the gospel may be sent through every land.

Joyful in God-----1 Samuel 2:1

1 Samuel 2:1 (Amplified Bible)

¹HANNAH PRAYED, and said, My heart exults and triumphs in the Lord; my horn (my strength) is lifted up in the Lord. My mouth is no longer silent, for it is opened wide over my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation.

Hannah's song of thanksgiving

Hannah's heart rejoiced, not in Samuel, but in the Lord. She looks beyond the gift and praises the Giver. She rejoiced in the salvation of the Lord, and in expectation of His coming, who is the whole salvation of his people. The strong are soon weakened, and the weak are soon strengthened, when God pleases. Are we poor? God made us poor, which is a good reason why we should be content and make up our minds to our condition. Are we rich? God made us rich, which is a good reason why we should be thankful, and serve

him cheerfully, and do good with the abundance he gives us. He respects not man's wisdom or fancied excellences, but chooses those whom the world accounts foolish, teaching them to feel their guilt, and to value his free and precious salvation. This prophecy looks to the kingdom of Christ, that kingdom of grace, of which Hannah speaks, after having spoken largely of the kingdom of providence. And here is the first time that we meet with the name MESSIAH, or his Anointed. The subjects of Christ's kingdom will be safe, and the enemies of it will be ruined; for the Anointed, the Lord Christ, is able to save, and to destroy. (1Sa 2:11-26)

Meditative-----Psalms 4:4

Psalm 4:4 (Amplified Bible)

⁴Be angry [or stand in awe] and sin not; commune with your own hearts upon your beds and be silent (sorry for the things you say in your hearts). Selah [pause]

The children of men proved, and the happiness of godly people.

Hear me for thy mercy-sake, is our best plea. He, who will not ask such blessings as pardon, and justifying righteousness, and eternal life, must perish for the want of them. Alas! that so many should make so fearful a choice. The psalmist warns against sin. Keep up holy reverence of the glory and majesty of God. You have a great deal to say to your hearts, they may be spoken with, let it not be unsaid. Examine them by serious self-reflection; let your thoughts fasten upon that which is good and keep close to it. Consider your ways, and before you turn to sleep at night, examine your consciences with respect to what you have done in the day; particularly what you have done amiss, that you may repent of it. When you awake in the night, meditate upon God, and the things that belong to your peace. Upon a sick-bed, particularly, we should consider our ways. Be still. When you have asked conscience a question, be serious, be silent, and wait for an answer. Open not the mouth to excuse sin. All confidence must be an answer. Open not the mouth to excuse sin. All confidence only: therefore, after commanding the sacrifices of righteousness, the psalmist says, Put your trust in the Lord. (Ps 4:6-8)

Perfect-----Psalms 101:2

Psalm 101:2 (Amplified Bible)

²I will behave myself wisely and give heed to the blameless way--O when will You come to me? I will walk within my house in integrity and with a blameless heart.

Prayerful-----1 Samuel 1:12-13

1 Samuel 1:12-13 (Amplified Bible)

¹²And as she continued praying before the Lord, Eli noticed her mouth.

¹³Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved but her voice was not heard. So, Eli thought she was drunk.

Hannah's prayer

Hannah mingled tears with her prayers; she considered the mercy of our God, who knows the troubled soul. God gives us leave, in prayer, not only to ask good things in general, but to mention that special good thing we most need and desire. She spoke softly, none could hear her. Hereby she testified her belief of God's knowledge of the heart and its desires. Eli was high priest, and judge in Israel. It ill becomes us to be rash and hasty in censures of others, and to think people guilty of bad things while the matter is doubtful and unproved. Hannah did not retort the charge and upbraid Eli with the wicked conduct of his own sons. When we are at any time unjustly censured, we have need to set a double watch before the door of our lips, that we do not return censure for censure. Hannah thought it enough to clear herself, and so must we. Eli was willing to acknowledge his mistake. Hannah went away with satisfaction of mind. She had herself by prayer committed her case to God, and Eli had prayed for her. Prayer is heart's ease to a gracious soul. Prayer will smooth the countenance; it should do so. None will long remain miserable, who use aright the privilege of going to the mercy-seat of a reconciled God in Christ Jesus. (1Sa 1:19-28)

Pure-----Matthew 5:8

Matthew 5:8 (Amplified Bible)

⁸Blessed (happy, ^[a]enviably fortunate, and ^[b]spiritually prosperous--possessing the ^[c]happiness produced by the experience of God's favor and especially conditioned by the revelation of His grace, regardless of their outward conditions) are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!^(A)

Who are blessed

Our Savior here gives eight characters of blessed people, which represent to us the principal graces of a Christian. 1. The poor in spirit are happy. These bring their minds to their condition, when it is a low condition. They are humble and lowly in their own eyes. They see their want, bewail their guilt, and thirst after a Redeemer. The kingdom of grace is of such; the kingdom of glory is for them. 2. Those that mourn are happy. That godly sorrow which workout true repentance, watchfulness, a humble mind, and continual dependence for acceptance on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, with constant seeking

the Holy Spirit, to cleanse away the remaining evil, seems here to be intended. Heaven is the joy of our Lord; a mountain of joy, to which our way is through a vale of tears. Such mourners shall be comforted by their God. 3. The meek are happy. The meek are those who quietly submit to God; who can bear insult; are silent, or return a soft answer; who, in their patience, keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarcely keep possession of anything else. These meek ones are happy, even in this world. Meekness promotes wealth, comfort, and safety, even in this world. 4. Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness are happy. Righteousness is here put for all spiritual blessings. These are purchased for us by the righteousness of Christ, confirmed by the faithfulness of God. Our desires of spiritual blessings must be earnest. Though all desires for grace are not grace, yet such a desire as this is a desire of God's own raising, and he will not forsake the work of his own hands. 5. The merciful are happy. We must not only bear our own afflictions patiently, but we must do all we can to help those who are in misery. We must have compassion on the souls of others and help them; pity those who are in sin and seek to snatch them as brands out of the burning. 6. The pure in heart are happy; for they shall see God. Here holiness and happiness are fully described and put together. The heart must be purified by faith and kept for God. Create in me such a clean heart, O God. None but the pure are capable of seeing God, nor would heaven be happiness to the impure. As God cannot endure to look upon their iniquity, so they cannot look upon his purity. 7. The peace-makers are happy. They love, and desire, and delight in peace; and study to be quiet. They keep the peace that it be not broken and recover it when it is broken.

If the peace-makers are blessed, woe to the peace-breakers! 8. Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are happy. This saying is peculiar to Christianity; and it is more largely insisted upon than any of the rest. Yet there is nothing in our sufferings that can merit of God; but God will provide that those who lose for him, though life itself shall not lose by him in the end. Blessed Jesus! how different are thy maxims from those of men of this world! They call the proud happy, and admire the gay, the rich, the powerful, and the victorious. May we find mercy from the Lord; may we be owned as his children and inherit his kingdom. With these enjoyments and hopes, we may cheerfully welcome low or painful circumstances. (Mt 5:13-16)

Glad and sincere-----Acts 2:46

Acts 2:46 (Amplified Bible)

⁴⁶And day after day they regularly assembled in the temple with united purpose, and in their homes, they broke bread [including the Lord's Supper]. They partook of their food with gladness and simplicity and generous hearts,

The piety and affection of the disciples

In these verses we have the history of the truly primitive church, of the first days of it; its state of infancy indeed, but, like that, the state of its greatest innocence. They kept close

to holy ordinances, and abounded in piety and devotion; for Christianity, when admitted in the power of it, will dispose the soul to communion with God in all those ways wherein he has appointed us to meet him, and has promised to meet us. The greatness of the event raised them above the world, and the Holy Ghost filled them with such love, as made everyone to be to another as to himself, and so made all things common, not by destroying property, but doing away selfishness, and causing charity. And God, who moved them to it, knew that they were quickly to be driven from their possessions in Judea. The Lord, from day to day, inclined the hearts of more to embrace the gospel; not merely professors, but such as were actually brought into a state of acceptance with God, being made partakers of regenerating grace. Those, whom God has designed for eternal salvation, shall be effectually brought to Christ, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of his glory.

Tender-----2 Kings 22:19

2 Kings 22:19 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁹Because your heart was [tender and] penitent and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I said against this place and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation, [an astonishment and] a curse, and you have rent your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you, says the Lord.

Josiah consults Huldah the prophetess

The book of the law is read before the king. Those best honor their Bibles, who study them; daily feed on that bread, and walk by that light. Convictions of sin and wrath should put us upon this inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? Also, what we may expect, and must provide for. Those who are truly apprehensive of the weight of God's wrath cannot but be very anxious how they may be saved. Huldah let Josiah know what judgments God had in store for Judah and Jerusalem. The generality of the people was hardened, and their hearts unhumbléd, but Josiah's heart was tender. This is tenderness of heart, and thus he humbled himself before the Lord. Those who most fear God's wrath is least likely to feel it. Though Josiah was mortally wounded in battle, yet he died in peace with God, and went to glory. Whatever such persons suffer or witness, they are gathered to the grave in peace, and shall enter into the rest which remained for the people of God.

Treasury of good-----Matthew 12:35

Matthew 12:35 (Amplified Bible)

³⁵The good man from his inner good treasure ^[a]flings forth good things, and the evil man out of his inner evil storehouse ^[b]flings forth evil things.

Evil words proceed from an evil heart.

Men's language discovers what country they are of, likewise what manner of spirit they are of. The heart is the fountain, words are the streams. A troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring, must send forth muddy and unpleasant streams. Nothing but the salt of grace, cast into the spring, will heal the waters, season the speech, and purify the corrupt communication. An evil man has an evil treasure in his heart, and out of it brings forth evil things. Lusts and corruptions, dwelling and reigning in the heart, are an evil treasure, out of which the sinner brings forth bad words and actions, to dishonour God, and hurt others. Let us keep constant watch over ourselves, that we may speak words agreeable to the Christian character. (Mt 12:38-45)

Wise-----Proverbs 10:8

Proverbs 10:8 (Amplified Bible)

⁸The wise in heart will accept and obey commandments, but the foolish of lips will fall headlong.

E. Regenerates, responses of:

Believe with-----Romans 10:10

Romans 10:10 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁰For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation.

The difference between the righteousness of the law, and the righteousness of faith

The self-condemned sinner need not perplex himself how this righteousness may be found. When we speak of looking upon Christ, and receiving, and feeding upon him, it is not Christ in heaven, nor Christ in the deep, that we mean; but Christ in the promise, Christ offered in the word. Justification by faith in Christ is a plain doctrine. It is brought before the mind and heart of everyone, thus leaving him without excuse for unbelief. If a man confessed faith in Jesus, as the Lord and Savior of lost sinners, and really believed in his heart that God had raised him from the dead, thus showing that he had accepted the atonement, he should be saved by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him through

faith. But no faith is justifying which is not powerful in sanctifying the heart and regulating all its affections by the love of Christ. We must devote and give up to God our souls and our bodies: our souls in believing with the heart, and our bodies in confessing with the mouth. The believer shall never have cause to repent his confident trust in the Lord Jesus. Of such faith no sinner shall be ashamed before God; and he ought to glory in it before men. (Ro 10:12-17)

Keep with diligence-----Proverbs 4:23

Proverbs 4:23 (Amplified Bible)

²³Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.

Cautions against bad company, Exhortation to faith and holiness

The way of evil men may seem pleasant, and the nearest way to compass some end; but it is an evil way and will end ill; if thou love thy God and thy soul, avoid it. It is not said, Keep at a due distance, but at a great distance; never think you can get far enough from it. The way of the righteous is light; Christ is their Way, and he is the Light. The saints will not be perfect till they reach heaven, but there they shall shine as the sun in his strength. The way of sin is as darkness. The way of the wicked is dark, therefore dangerous; they fall into sin, but know not how to avoid it. They fall into trouble, but never seek to know wherefore God contends with them, nor what will be in the end of it. This is the way we are bid to shun. Attentive hearing the word of God is a good sign of a work of grace begun in the heart, and a good means of carrying it on. There is in the word of God a proper remedy for all diseases of the soul. Keep thy heart with all diligence.

We must set a strict guard upon our souls; keep our hearts from doing hurt and getting hurt. A good reason is given; because out of it are the issues of life. Above all, we should seek from the Lord Jesus that living water, the sanctifying Spirit, issuing forth unto everlasting life. Thus, we shall be enabled to put away a froward mouth and perverse lips; our eyes will be turned from beholding vanity, looking straight forward, and walking by the rule of God's word, treading in the steps of our Lord and Master. Lord, forgive the past, and enable us to follow thee more closely for the time to come.

Love God with all-----Matthew 22:37

Matthew 22:37 (Amplified Bible)

³⁷And He replied to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (intellect). ^(A)

The substance of the commandments

An interpreter of the law asked our Lord a question, to try, not so much his knowledge, as his judgment. The love of God is the first and great commandment, and the sum of all the commands of the first table. Our love of God must be sincere, not in word and tongue only. All our love is too little to bestow upon him, therefore all the powers of the soul must be engaged for him and carried out toward him. To love our neighbor as ourselves is the second great commandment. There is a self-love which is corrupt, and the root of the greatest sins and it must be put off and mortified; but there is a self-love which is the rule of the greatest duty: we must have a due concern for the welfare of our own souls and bodies. And we must love our neighbor as truly and sincerely as we love ourselves; in many cases we must deny ourselves for the good of others. By these two commandments let our hearts be formed as by a mould. (Mt 22:41-46)

Sanctify God in-----1 Peter 3:15

1 Peter 3:15 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁵But in your hearts set Christ apart as holy [and acknowledge Him] as Lord. Always be ready to give a logical defense to anyone who asks you to account for the hope that is in you but do it courteously and respectfully. ^(A)

The apostle looks forward to his approaching decease.

We sanctify God before others, when our conduct invites and encourages them to glorify and honor him. What was the ground and reason of their hope? We should be able to defend our religion with meekness, in the fear of God. There is no room for any other fears where this great fear is; it disturbs not. The conscience is good, when it does its office well. That person is in a sad condition on who sin and suffering meet: sin makes suffering extreme, comfortless, and destructive.

Surely it is better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing, whatever our natural impatience at times may suggest. The example of Christ is an argument for patience under sufferings. In the case of our Lord's suffering, he that knew no sin, suffered instead of those who knew no righteousness. The blessed end and design of our Lord's sufferings were, to reconcile us to God, and to bring us to eternal glory. He was put to death in respect of his human nature but was quickened and raised by the power of the Holy Spirit. If Christ could not be freed from sufferings, why should Christians think to be so? God takes exact notice of the means and advantages people in all ages have had. As to the old world, Christ sent his Spirit; gave warning by Noah. But though the patience of God waits long, it will cease at last. And the spirits of disobedient sinners, as soon as they are

out of their bodies, are committed to the prison of hell, where those that despised Noah's warning now are, and from whence there is no redemption. Noah's salvation in the ark upon the water, which carried him above the floods, set forth the salvation of all true believers. That temporal salvation by the ark was a type of the eternal salvation of believers by baptism of the Holy Spirit. To prevent mistakes, the apostle declares what he means by saving baptism; not the outward ceremony of washing with water, which, in itself, does no more than put away the filth of the flesh, but that baptism, of which the baptismal water formed the sign. Not the outward ordinance, but when a man, by the regeneration of the Spirit, was enabled to repent and profess faith, and purpose a new life, uprightly, and as in the presence of God. Let us beware that we rest not upon outward forms. Let us learn to look on the ordinances of God spiritually, and to inquire after the spiritual effect and working of them on our consciences. We would willingly have all religion reduced to outward things. But many who were baptized, and constantly attended the ordinances, have remained without Christ, died in their sins, and are now past recovery. Rest not then till thou art cleansed by the Spirit of Christ and the blood of Christ. His resurrection from the dead is that whereby we are assured of purifying and peace.

Serve God with all-----Deuteronomy 26:16

Deuteronomy 26:16 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁶This day the Lord your God has commanded you to do these statutes and ordinances. Therefore, you shall keep and do them with all your [mind and] heart and with all your being.

The covenant between God and the people

Moses here enforces the precepts. They are God's laws, therefore thou shalt do them, to that end where they given thee; do them, and dispute them not; do them, and draw not back; do them, not carelessly and hypocritically, but with thy heart and soul, thy whole heart and thy whole soul. We forswear ourselves, and break the most sacred engagement, if, when we have taken the Lord to be our God, we do not make conscience of obeying his commands. We are elected to obedience, 1Pe 1:2; chosen that we should be holy, Eph 1:4; purified a peculiar people, that we might not only do good works, but be zealous in them, Tit 2:14. Holiness is true honor, and the only way to everlasting honor.

Walk before God with all-----1 Kings 2:4

1 Kings 2:4 (Amplified Bible)

⁴That the Lord may fulfill His promise to me, saying, If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and mind and with all their soul, there shall not fail you [to have] a man on the throne of Israel.

David's dying charge to Solomon.

David's charge to Solomon is, to keep the charge of the Lord. The authority of a dying father is much, but nothing to that of a living God. God promised David that the Messiah should come from his descendants, and that promise was absolute; but the promise, that there should not fail of them a man on the throne of Israel, was conditional; if he walks before God in sincerity, with zeal and resolution: in order hereunto, he must take heed to his way. (1Ki 2:5-11)

Trust the Lord with all-----Proverbs 3:5

Proverbs 3:5 (Amplified Bible)

⁵Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding.

Exhortations to obedience and faith

In the way of believing obedience to God's commandments health and peace may commonly be enjoyed; and though our days may not be long upon earth, we shall live for ever in heaven. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; God's mercy in promising, and his truth in performing: live up to them, keep up thine interest in them, and take the comfort of them. We must trust in the Lord with all our hearts, believing he is able and wise to do what is best. Those who know themselves, find their own understandings a broken reed, which, if they lean upon, will fail. Do not design any thing but what is lawful, and beg God to direct thee in every case, though it may seem quite plain. In all our ways that prove pleasant, in which we gain our point, we must acknowledge God with thankfulness. In all our ways that prove uncomfortable, and that are hedged up with thorns, we must acknowledge him with submission. It is promised, He shall direct thy paths; so that thy way shall be safe and good, and happy at last. (Pr 3:7-12)

Regard not iniquity in-----Psalms 66:18

Psalm 66:18 (Amplified Bible)

¹⁸If I regard iniquity

And the psalmist's praise for his experience of God's goodness

We should declare unto those that fear God, what he has done for our souls, and how he has heard and answered our prayers, inviting them to join us in prayer and praise; this will turn to our mutual comfort, and to the glory of God. We cannot share these spiritual privileges, if we retain the love of sin in our hearts, though we refrain from the gross practice, Sin, regarded in the heart, will spoil the comfort and success of prayer; for the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination of the Lord. But if the feeling of sin in the heart causes desires to be rid of it; if it be the presence of one urging a demand, we know we must not, cannot comply with, this is an argument of sincerity. And when we pray in simplicity and godly sincerity, our prayers will be answered. This will excite gratitude towards Him who has not turned away our prayer nor his mercy from us. It was not prayer that fetched the deliverance, but his mercy that sent it. That is the foundation of our hopes, the fountain of our comforts; and ought to be the matter of our praises.

Do God's will from-----Ephesians 6:6

Ephesians 6:6 (Amplified Bible)

⁶Not in the way of eye-service [as if they were watching you] and only to please men, but as servants (slaves) of Christ, doing the will of God heartily and with your whole soul;

Of servants and masters

The duty of servants is summed up in one word, obedience. The servants of old were generally slaves. The apostle was to teach servants and masters their duties, in doing which evils would be lessened, till slavery should be rooted out by the influence of Christianity. Servants are to reverence those over them. They are to be sincere; not pretending obedience when they mean to disobey but serving faithfully. And they must serve their masters not only when their master's eye is upon them; but must be strict in the discharge of their duty, when he is absent and out of the way. Steady regard to the Lord Jesus Christ will make men faithful and sincere in every station, not grudgingly or by constraint, but from a principle of love to the masters and their concerns. This makes service easy to them, pleasing to their masters, and acceptable to the Lord Christ. God will reward even the meanest drudgery done from a sense of duty, and with a view to glorify him. Here is the duty of masters. Act after the same manner. Be just to servants, as you expect they should be to you; show the like good-will and concern for them and be careful herein to approve yourselves to God. Be not tyrannical and overbearing. You have a Master to obey, and you and they are but fellow-servants in respect to Christ Jesus. If masters and servants would consider their duties to God, and the account they must shortly give to him, they would be more mindful of their duty to each other, and thus families would be more orderly and happier. (Eph 6:10-18)