

THOUGHTS FROM THE FATHERS.

WE are too prone to seek our happiness in the creature, and to take more delight in the enjoyment of outward delights than in the enjoyment of God.

Sin will never leave thee so long as thou art in the body, and will never be got out till the vessel be broken; as it was with the vessel of earth defiled with leprosy, it behoved to be broken—no washing or scouring would do.

Labour to die to this life, the enjoyments and comforts of it, more and more every day; loose thy rooting in this world, and the tree will fall the more easily. Lie with Christ in thy arms and a promise in thy hand.

Know ye not, drooping saints, that there is a seed of enjoyment in all your disappointments. There is a sun under your cloud, your light shall shine out of obscurity, there is a harvest of joy in your tears, ye may have sown light in your darkness, faith under your doubtings, hope under your fears, and these in due time shall bring forth light.

JOHN SPALDING, 1690.

Loose professors are soon shaken off, and dead fish swim with the stream.

The more we desire holiness, the more ripe for heaven. This is a rule. The nearer we are to any good our hearts are set upon, the more impatient are we in the want of it.

If we will find the sin and disposition of heart, God will find the occasion; and a man that hath a commodity to put off (faith and a good conscience) will soon find a chapman to truck with him.

The promises of God are so many bonds wherein He stands bound to us; and these bonds may be put in suit, and His people have liberty and confidence to ask what He hath promised them.

The way to be fervent is to be frequent and often with God. A key seldom turned rusts in the lock. The fire of the sanctuary was never to go out; by great interruptions we lose what we have wrought. "The way of the Lord is strength to the upright."

THOMAS MANTON, 1677.

Christ, in the Gospel, calls out of heaven to sinners by that very name, and tells them He hath salvation for them if they will believe Him. Nor doth He stand upon what sins, less or more, greater or smaller; so as none can say they are not called on, and proffered salvation, be they never so sinful.

The comeliness of Christ in the Gospel is a most desirable comeliness for the sons of men to love; it is the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace, the sweetest object for those in misery to delight in. This is that beloved which is more than another beloved.

God takes us into covenant, not upon any condition in us before; He brings with Him Christ, and in Him all the conditions, and makes us as He would have us; not for the covenant, but in it, or under it; we are not His people before He be our God first. "I will make a new covenant with thee. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

JOHN SALTSMARSH, 1647.

God will have His children live by faith, as well for the preservation of their bodies as for the salvation of their souls. He will try hereby whether they that say they depend upon Him for the greater, will trust Him in the lesser. And God liketh to see and hear His children off in His presence. He hath, therefore, so ordered it, that their necessary occasions shall bring them before Him day by day.

Make no question what can God do, for He can do anything but this one, to deny Himself, and cease to be infinite—this He cannot do; and remember always that God's glory is the chiefest good; man's life, yea, man's salvation, is to be set behind it, which made Moses to wish rather to have his name blotted out of God's Book, than that God should be dishonoured by the Egyptians. Who would say, if God destroyed the Israelites in the wilderness, that for mischief He did bring them out to slay them.

HENRY SCUDDER, 1590.

Let me tell thee, poor trembling soul, God invites thee in particular, as by name, and all the sweetness in Christ, and in His precious promises, appertaining to thy poor soul; and thou hast as great an interest in them as any servant of God in the world whatsoever.

There was never any saved that was not a rebel first; nor any received to mercy that first opposed not the mercies of God, and His grace in Christ. The fiery serpents did sting the people in the wilderness. First, then, they were stung, and, being stung, there was a brazen serpent to heal them.

As you desire the comfort of your souls, and to partake of that rich grace that is in Christ; as you desire to have the rich promises of the Gospel put over to you, as ever you would have the Lord Jesus Christ a guest to your souls; you are entreated to give your souls no content till you have your eyes so opened to see your sins, that you may be convicted of them.

THOMAS HOOKER, 1647.

Thou that art running to God, and waiting on Him for an issue of thy pressures, and see no appearances of the day breaking, but rather that the night groweth darker, do not think that it will be aye so; do not follow out thy work and task as a hopeless undertaking; follow not Christ as Thomas did, to die with Him, but sow in hope, thy expectation shall not be cut off—then will be a performance of the things promised thee from the Lord.

There is no condition of the saints so low, no pit so deep, wherein they can be caught, but an humble suppliant will from thence reach the throne. A David buried quick in a cave, a Daniel in the lion's den, find that prayer can win up to God, and find audience, for the high and lofty One, who hath the heaven for His throne, and the earth for His footstool, hath an eye to them also who are of a poor and contrite spirit, and therefore no desperate case of the people of God renders prayer useless.

GEORGE HUTCHESON, 1691.

God never armeth His creatures in vain; He never sendeth them out to do His errand, that they return empty; but as He directeth them, so they accomplish His direction.

By the name of God is understood God Himself, as He maketh Himself known in the wonderful works which He worketh; as when He hath mercy on His Church, He is called a merciful God; when He keepeth His promises, He is called a true God; when He delivereth mightily, He is called a potent God. And so many works as He worketh, so many names He hath.

It is a matter of great consequence to subdue and tame the great idol of evil will. We may speak of it as we please, and say that we are able to do it, but of all the works of the earth it is the greatest; for such is the stubbornness of our will, that it will do nothing but what it liketh itself. The perfection of a Christian standeth in striving; we must either strive, or we shall not be crowned.

ROBERT BRUCE, 1631.

As Jacob smelled sweetly in Isaac's sight, when he came clothed with his elder brother's garment, they only then are acceptable to God, both in their persons and prayers, who are in Christ Jesus.

The cause that so few see Christ, the true Solomon, in His spiritual glory, beauty, and majesty, and be enamoured with Him, to seek after Him and delight in Him, is this—that they have never learned to go forth out of themselves, renouncing their own righteousness, evil, and corruption.

The two main temptations whereby Satan seeks to alienate or draw away our hearts from the love of Christ and His truth, and make us quit the same, are, on the one hand, the waters and floods of trouble and persecution; and if these cannot serve the turn, then the allurements of worldly riches which overcame Judas, and wherewith he tempted Christ himself, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof.

WILLIAM GUILD, 1657.

Believers are never more beautiful in Christ's eyes than when their own spots are discernible to themselves; and oftentimes when they are sharpest in censuring themselves, He is most ready to absolve and commend them.

Must not Christ be lovely when His people get eyes to see Him? And must it not be a heartsome life to be in heaven, where they behold Him, who is fair and lovely, as He is, and have their eyes fixed on Him for ever; when He is so beautiful even hereaway; when we see Him but darkly through a glass, and much of His beauty is veiled from our eyes?

JAMES DURHAM, 1656.