

ABILITIES

Observe and weigh well that the issue of all depends not upon the abilities of man, but upon the all-disposing hand of God. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding." All our abilities are under God's providence, who puts an efficacy into man's abilities, even as He pleaseth.

♦ ISAAC AMBROSE

"The Practice of Sanctification," in *Works*, 94

ACCOUNTABILITY

No man that is in his right wits will lay open to everyone his bodily infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, ailments, and griefs, but to some near relation, bosom friend, or able physician. So no man that is in his right wits will lay open to everyone his soul infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, ailments, and griefs, but to the Lord or to some particular person that is wise, faithful, and able to contribute something to his soul's relief.

♦ THOMAS BROOKS

Privy Key of Heaven, 18

If yet Satan dogs thee, call in help and keep not the devil's counsel. The very strength of some temptations lies in the concealing of them, and the very revealing of them to some faithful friend gives the soul present ease. Satan knows this too well, and therefore, as some thieves, when they come to rob a house either gag them in it or hold a pistol to their breast, frightening them with death if they cry or speak;

thus Satan, that he may the more freely rifle the soul of its peace and comfort overawes it so that it dares not disclose its temptation. "O," saith Satan, "if thy brethren or friends know such a thing by thee they will cast thee off; others will hoot at thee." Thus many a poor soul hath been kept long in its pangs by biting them in. Thou lovest, Christian, a double help by keeping the devil's secret: the counsel and prayers of thy fellow brethren. And what an invaluable loss is this!

♦ WILLIAM GURNALL

Christian in Complete Armor, 68

Let not a day pass without serious communing with your own hearts. Inquire of your poor soul whether there be anything of the acting of grace in duty; anything of faith, love, humility, zeal; what answer you have of prayer; what of God you enjoy in all ordinances. In all companies inquire what progress you make heavenward and what declinings and backslidings you are guilty of, and do not bear with your hearts when they begin to be dull, indifferent, and formal.

♦ JAMES JANEWAY

Saint's Encouragement, 132–33

ACTIONS TRUER THAN WORDS

It is not the knowing, nor the talking, nor the reading man but the doing man that at last will be found the happiest man.

♦ THOMAS BROOKS

Great Gain, 12

I care not what words I hear when I see deeds. I am sure what a man doeth, he thinketh; not so always what he speaketh. Though I will not be so severe a censor that for some few evil acts I should condemn a man of false-heartedness; yet in common course of life, I need not be so foolish as not to believe rather the language of the hand than of the tongue. He that says well and doeth well is without exception commendable, but if one of these must be severed from the other, I like him well that doeth well and saith nothing.

♦ JOSEPH HALL
Meditations and Vows, 79

ADAM

Union and similitude is the ground of fellowship and communion. That union was gracious, that communion would have been glorious; for grace is the seed of glory. There was a twofold union between Adam and God, a union of state and a union of nature: he was like God, and he was God's friend. All the creatures had some likeness to God, some engravings of His power and goodness and wisdom. But man is said to be made according to God's image: "Let us make man like unto us."

♦ HUGH BINNING
Common Principles of the Christian Religion, in *Works*, 1:19

"I heard thy voice in the garden" (Gen. 3:10). It is a word from without that does it. While Adam listened to his own heart, he thought fig leaves a sufficient remedy, but the voice that walked

in the garden shook him out of all such fancies.

♦ JOHN BUNYAN
Riches, 144

When Adam was thrust naked out of Paradise into the cold blast of a miserable world where, from his own guilty conscience within and crosses without, he was sure to meet with trouble enough, then God gave him a word of promise, as you may observe, to fence his soul before He taught him to make coats to clothe his body (Gen. 3:15; cf. v. 21). The Lord knew how indispensably necessary a word of promise was to keep him from being made prey the second time to the devil and from being swallowed up with the dismal sight of those miseries and sorrows in which he had thrown himself and posterity; therefore, He would not suffer him to lie open to the shock of their assaults one day, but presently puts the sword of a promise into his hand, that with it he might defend and comfort his sorrowful heart in the midst of all his troubles.

♦ WILLIAM GURNALL
Christian in Complete Armor, 583–84

All were hewn out of this rock [i.e., Adam], an observation that puts us upon sundry useful considerations. It teaches us humility. As we were from Adam, so he was from the dust of the earth, and that dust from nothing. Our father was Adam, our grandfather dust, our great-grandfather nothing.

♦ WILLIAM JENKYN
Exposition upon the Epistle of Jude, 299

O, consider those fearful sins that are packed up in this one evil [i.e., Adam's sin]: (1) Fearful apostasy from God like a devil. (2) Horrible rebellion against God in joining sides with the devil and taking God's greatest enemies' part against God. (3) Woeful unbelief, in suspecting God's threats to be true. (4) Fearful blasphemy in conceiving the devil (God's enemy and man's murderer) to be more true in his temptations than God in His threatening. (5) Horrible pride, in thinking to make this sin of eating the forbidden fruit to be a step and a stair to rise higher and to be like God Himself. (6) Fearful contempt of God, making bold to rush upon the sword of the threatening secretly, not fearing the plague denounced. (7) Horrible unthankfulness, when God had given him all but one tree, and yet he must be fingering that too. (8) Horrible theft, in taking that which was none of his own. (9) Horrible idolatry, in doting upon and loving the creature more than God the Creator, who is blessed forever.

♦ THOMAS SHEPARD
Sincere Convert, 36–37

Compare the children of God with Adam in a state of innocency. Adam was a person of honor. He was the sole monarch of the world; all the creatures did vail to him as their sovereign. He was placed in the garden of Eden, which was a paradise of pleasure. He was crowned with all the contentments of the earth. Nay, more, Adam was God's lively picture; he was made in the likeness of God Himself. Yet the

state of the meanest of God's children by adoption is far more excellent and honorable than the state of Adam was when he wore the robe of innocency, for Adam's condition, though it was glorious, was mutable and soon lost. Adam was a bright star, yet a falling star; but God's children by adoption are in a state unalterable. Adam had a possibility of standing, but believers have an impossibility of falling; once adopted, and ever adopted.

♦ THOMAS WATSON
The Beatitudes, in *Discourses*, 2:320

ADMONITION

Silence is consent by God's law (Lev. 5:1). And by ill silence to leave men in sin is as bad as by ill speech to draw them to sin.

♦ JOHN TRAPP
Marrow of Many Good Authors, 1046

ADOPTION

Adoption follows reconciliation, whereby the Lord accounts us sons: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The Lord accounts us just in our justification, friends in our reconciliation, sons in our adoption. Now this adoption is either begun in this life or perfected in the world to come, when we shall receive all the privileges of sons. Sanctification follows adoption: no sooner are we sons, but we receive the image of our heavenly Father in sanctification.

♦ ISAAC AMBROSE
"The Practice of Sanctification," in *Works*, 78

Adoption is the gracious sentence of God whereby He accepts the faithful for Christ's sake unto the dignity of sons.

♦ WILLIAM AMES
Marrow of Sacred Divinity, 135

Adoption is the taking of persons that are strangers and undeserving in themselves into a state and relation of sons and heirs, bringing them into a new family and condition. And such is the adoption of the sons of God: [it] is a translation of called and sanctified souls out of the family of Satan into the family of God (Col. 1:13).

♦ BARTHOLOMEW ASHWOOD
Best Treasure, 258

Now in the adoption of sanctified souls there are these...things.... [There is] a change in their state and condition; they are brought into a state of glorious privileges in respect of (1) liberty, (2) rights and interests, (3) boldness, (4) instruction, (5) correction, (6) provision, (7) protection, (8) inheritance. And by these the state of an adopted soul appears to be a glorious state.

♦ BARTHOLOMEW ASHWOOD
Best Treasure, 260

The Spirit cannot, after He hath come to the soul as a Spirit of adoption, come again as a Spirit of bondage to put the soul into his first fear—to wit, a fear of eternal damnation—because He cannot say and unsay, do and undo. As a Spirit of adoption, He told me that my sins were forgiven me and I was included in the covenant of grace, that God was my Father through

Christ, that I was under the promise of salvation, and that this calling and gift of God to me are permanent and without repentance. And do you think that after He told me this and sealed up the truth of it to my precious soul He will come to me and tell me that I am yet in my sins, under the curse of the law and the eternal wrath of God? No, no, the word of the gospel is not yea, yea; nay, nay. It is only yea and amen; it is so “as God is true” (2 Cor. 17:20).

♦ JOHN BUNYAN
Riches, 195–96

Once more, frequency and fervency in prayer will be a great evidence of your regeneration and adoption. The child when born cries, and the sinner when born again prays. Of Paul it was said as soon as he was converted, “Behold he prayeth.” It is the “Spirit of adoption” that makes us cry “Abba Father.” If we cannot be satisfied unless we approach God and value His favor and fellowship above all earthly things and are chiefly desirous of those blessings He never gives in wrath and, having given, never takes away again, we may conclude from our spiritual breathing our spiritual life.

♦ NATHANIEL VINCENT
Spirit of Prayer, 45

ADULTERY

Indeed, the devil tempts to it by hopes of secrecy and concealment, but though many other sins lie hid and possibly shall never come to light until that day of manifestation of all hidden things, yet [adultery] is a sin that

is most usually discovered. Under the law, God appointed an extraordinary way for the discovery of it (Num. 5:13). And to this day, the providence of God doth often very strangely bring it to light, though it be a deed of darkness. The Lord hath many times brought such persons, either by terrors of conscience, temporary madness, or some other means, to be the publishers and proclaimers of their own shame.

✦ JOHN FLAVEL

“The Harlot’s Face in the Scripture Glass,”
in *Navigation Spiritualized*, 181

EUCHEDIDASCALUS: What remedies have you against the temptations of adultery?

PHILEUCHES: I must meditate here:

1. that God sees me (Prov. 5:21);
2. that God can punish me (Gen. 20:3);
3. that He will punish me (2 Sam. 12:11–12);
4. that I am a member of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15);
5. that adulterers shall not inherit heaven (1 Cor. 6:9);
6. that such people seldom repent (Prov. 7:26–27);
7. that such a thing should not be done in Israel (Deut. 23:17–18);
8. that it made Solomon to commit idolatry (1 Kings 11:4);
9. that for the whorish woman, a man is brought to a morsel of bread (Prov. 6:26);
10. that I do not as I would be done to (Matt. 7:12);

11. that I wrong the church and commonwealth by obtruding to both a bastardly generation, for neither can know their true children;

12. that as by this I endanger my soul, so must I needs decay my body and when I am dead leave a blot behind me which never can be wiped out (Prov. 6:32–33).

✦ ROBERT HILL

Pathway to Piety, 1:95

Suffer not these bodies of yours to dishonor your Christ while you are upon earth. Let not those eyes be windows of lust and inlets to adultery with which you one day hope to behold your Father and your Redeemer Jesus Christ in glory.

✦ CHRISTOPHER LOVE

Heaven’s Glory, 105

By wanton touches and dalliance, mental adultery is oft committed.

✦ JOHN TRAPP

Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, 1:142

ADVERSITY

A humble soul knows that to bless God in prosperity is the way to increase it, and to bless God in adversity is the way to remove it.

✦ THOMAS BROOKS

Unsearchable Riches of Christ,
in *Select Works*, 1:23–24

The wounds of mercy are better than the embraces of anger. If sickness, poverty, dishonor be in mercy, why dost

thou shrink at them? Wrath in prosperity is dreadful, but mercy makes adversity comfortable.

♦ WILLIAM JENKYN

Exposition upon the Epistle of Jude, 30

Divine grace, even in the heart of weak and sinful man, is an invincible thing. Drown it in the waters of adversity, it rises more beautiful, as not being drowned in deed but only washed; throw it into the furnace of fiery trials, it comes out purer and loses nothing but the dross that our corrupt nature mixes with it.

♦ ROBERT LEIGHTON

A Commentary upon the First Epistle of Peter, in Whole Works, 1:61

Adversity is a condition of life which consists in the want of outward good things and presence of outward evil things, as sickness, disgrace, poverty, imprisonment, and the like.

♦ GEORGE SWINNOCK

A Christian Man's Calling, in Works, 2:82

ADVICE AND COUNSEL

A counselor's part is not only to give counsel but to keep counsel, to be secret and reserved. To keep your friends' secrets is religion; to keep your own is safety. For so shall you not be prevented in your designs, which will be sooner effected by a prudent disguising of your purposes, like the watermen who in rowing turn their backs to the landing place. Depend not upon human wisdom and policy, but depend on God. Choose the fittest

means to your just ends and leave the success to Him.

♦ WILLIAM HIGFORD

Institutions, 66

AFFECTIONS

Labor for intenseness of affection. In meditation, prayer, or any other work, be intense. We used to say, "When the candle burns, the mouse does not nibble; but when the candle is out, then the mouse nibbles." When our hearts are warm and lively in prayer and meditation, we are free from distractions; the mouse nibbles not.

♦ WILLIAM BRIDGE

Christ and the Covenant, in Works, 3:150

The affections are the forcible and sensible motions of the heart, or the will, to a thing or from a thing, according as it is apprehended to be good or to be evil.

♦ WILLIAM FENNER

A Treatise of Affections, in Works, 2

The main work of grace is the ruling of the affections aright. It takes them off from the things here on earth and lifts them up to the things that are in heaven. When grace does convert a man, it does not take away the affections, but it rules them.

♦ WILLIAM FENNER

A Treatise of Affections, in Works, 22

Grace comes not to take away a man's affections, but to take them up.

♦ WILLIAM FENNER

in Horn, Puritan Remembrancer, 22; Thomas, Puritan Golden Treasury, 89

Here be directed in a way how to enlarge your love to Godward. God's kindness has an operative virtue in it and much affects those who set their minds upon it. Naturally we have no heat of love to God in our hearts; they are frozen and cold. But as iron put into the fire soon becomes red hot, so upon a due consideration of God's mercies toward us, our affections cannot but glow with heat and be much inflamed.

♦ NEHEMIAH ROGERS
*The Penitent Citizen, in Mirrour
of Mercy, 106*

Give God thine affections, else thine actions are stillborn and have no life in them.

♦ JOHN TRAPP
*Commentary...upon...the
New Testament, 856*

AFFLICTION

A just view of afflicting incidents is altogether necessary to a Christian deportment under them, and that view is to be obtained only by faith, not by sense; for it is the light of the Word alone that represents them justly, discovering in them the work of God.... When these are perceived by the eye of faith and duly considered, we have a just view of afflicting incidents, fitted to quell the turbulent motions of corrupt affections under dismal outward appearances.

♦ THOMAS BOSTON
Crook in the Lot, 11

In comforting others who are afflicted under the sense of God's wrath, it

should teach us to speak in that manner to them that they may discern what God speaks in and by us and that that comfort we desire to possess them with is a divine comfort and has its ground from God's own Word, else comfort will be but vain. Yea, we shall show ourselves but lewd and profane persons if we shall endeavor to comfort God's child by any other kind of comfort than that which proceeds from God, this being to teach them to despise God.

♦ WILLIAM BRADSHAW
Meditation of Mans Mortalitie, 65

What is affliction? Affliction is all that is contrary to one's will; thereby God eats out the core of our wills. Whosoever therefore you meet with any affliction, pray over it and beg that God would eat out the core of your wills thereby; and the more the core of your wills is eaten out, the more willing will you be to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ.

♦ WILLIAM BRIDGE
*Seasonable Truths in Evil Times,
in Works, 3:342*

Shall we bind God to give us a reason of His doings, who is King of kings and Lord of lords and whose will is the true reason and only rule of justice? If the general grounds and reasons that God hath laid down in His Word, why He afflicts His people—namely, for their profit (Heb. 12:10); for the purging away of their sins (Isa. 1:25); for the reforming of their lives (Ps. 119:67, 71); and for the saving of their souls (1 Cor. 11:32)—should work them to

be silent and satisfied under all their afflictions; though God should never satisfy their curiosity in giving them an account of some more hidden causes which may lie secret in the abyss of His eternal knowledge and infallible will.

♦ THOMAS BROOKS
Mute Christian, 79

Let not men and women pore too much on their afflictions—that is, busy their thoughts too much to look down into their afflictions. You shall have many people that all their thoughts are taken up about what their crosses and afflictions are; they are altogether thinking and speaking of them. It is just with them as with a child that hath a sore about him; his finger is always upon the sore. And so men and women, their thoughts are always on their afflictions. When they awake in the night, their thoughts are on their afflictions, and when they converse with others—nay, it may be when they are praying to God—they are thinking of their afflictions. Oh! No marvel though you live a discontented life if your thoughts be always poring upon such things. You should rather labor to have your thoughts on those things that may comfort you.

♦ JEREMIAH BURROUGHS
Rare Jewel, 82

Materially, all afflictions belong to the covenant of works, but by the cross of Christ they are transferred to the new covenant. They are thereby made healthful, as the tree that Moses cast into the waters took away their bitterness, which some think was a type

of this. Afflictions are bitter, and men murmur at them as the Israelites at the bitter waters. But the cross of Christ makes them wholesome waters; they are like salt to the sacrifices (Lev. 2:13). They consume men's corrupting humors.

♦ ALEXANDER CARMICHAEL
Believer's Mortification of Sin, 54

Afflicted Hannah was large and long in prayer, insomuch that Eli, observing her moving her lips so long, said, "How long wilt thou be drunken?" When David's spirit is so hard placed, then does he pour out a complaint. And when so persecuted and reproached, then is employed in little else but praying. And this argues that some spiritual principles are within, that such griefs and ails enlarge their hearts which naturally rather contract the spirits of men and silence them, as in hypocrites which are then straitened. Bonds of afflictions are bonds to their spirits; they cry not when God binds them. But afflictions sanctified to the saints make them more abound in prayer.

♦ THOMAS COBBET
Gospel Incense, 394

Affliction is a gift of love even as faith is. It's grace as well to bleed for as to believe in Christ. It may be fair overhead when and while foul under foot. In a bad way a man may have good weather. A fair sky and a filthy way may consist. The shepherd may pipe, though the dog bark. Build upon it, ye suffering saints!

♦ JOHN DURANT
Sips of Sweetness, 150