



Remedies for Division among God's People

Thomas Brooks (1608-1680)

REMEDIES FOR DIVISION AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE

Contents

Remedy 1: Dwell upon one another's graces.	3
Remedy 2: Consider that union makes most for your own security.....	4
Remedy 3: Dwell upon those commands of God that require love.	5
Remedy 4: Focus on your points of agreement.	6
Remedy 5: Consider that God is the God of Peace.....	6
Remedy 6: Keep up your own peace with God.....	7
Remedy 7: Dwell much upon the close relation between you.....	7
Remedy 8: Dwell upon the miseries of discord.	8
Remedy 9: Be first in seeking peace.	8
Remedy 10: Make the Word the infallible rule for agreement.....	9
Remedy 11: Be much in self-judging.....	10
Remedy 12: Labor to be clothed with humility.	11

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REMEDIES FOR DIVISION AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE

SATAN hath his devices to destroy the saints, and one great device that he hath to destroy the saints is by working them first to be strange,¹ then to divide, then to be bitter and jealous, and then to “bite and devour one another” (Gal 5:15).

Our own woeful experience is too great a proof of this. The Israelites in Egypt did not more vex one another than Christians in these days have done, which occasioned a deadly consumption² to fall upon some.

Now, the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy 1: Dwell upon one another's graces.

The first remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell more upon one another's graces³ than upon one another's weaknesses and infirmities.⁴ It is sad to consider that saints should have many eyes to behold one another's infirmities and not one eye to see each other's graces, [and] that they should use spectacles to behold one another's weaknesses rather than looking glasses to behold one another's graces.

Erasmus⁵ tells of one who collected all the lame and defective verses in Homer's⁶ works but passed over all that was excellent. Ah, that this was *not* the practice of many who shall at last meet in heaven, that they were *not* careful and skillful to collect all the weaknesses of others and to pass over all those things that are excellent in them. The Corinthians did eye more the incestuous person's sin than his sorrow, which was like to have drowned him in sorrow (2Co 2:7).

Tell me, saints, is it not a more sweet, comfortable, and delightful thing to look more upon one another's graces than upon one another's infirmities? Tell me what pleasure, what delight, what comfort is there in looking upon the enemies, the wounds, the sores,

¹ **be strange** – have the feelings alienated from others.

² **consumption** – wasting of the body by disease.

³ **graces** – evidences of God's gracious work of salvation, including the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9-10).

⁴ **infirmities** – defects in a person's character.

⁵ **Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam** (1466?-1536) – Dutch Renaissance humanist, Roman Catholic theologian, and advocate of church reform. He published the first Greek New Testament. Erasmus contended for an unbiblical notion of free will. He did not appreciate man's utter deadness in sin and alienation from God (Joh 6:44; Rom 8:7). See *Bondage of the Will* by Martin Luther (1483-1546); excerpt available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

⁶ **Homer** – ancient Greek author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; believed to be the greatest of the epic poets.

the sickness, the diseases, the nakedness of our friends? Now, sin, you know, is the soul's enemy, the soul's wound, the soul's sores, the soul's sickness, the soul's disease, the soul's nakedness—and, ah, what a heart hath that man that loves thus to look! Grace is the choicest flower in all a Christian's garden. It is the richest jewel in all his crown. It is his princely robes. It is the top of royalty. Therefore, [grace] must necessarily be the most pleasing, sweet, and delightful object for a gracious eye to be fixed upon. Sin is darkness; grace is light. Sin is hell; grace is heaven. And what madness it is to look more at darkness than at light, more at hell than at heaven!

Tell me, saints, doth not God look more upon His people's graces than upon their weaknesses? Surely He doth. He looks more at David's and Asaph's uprightness than upon their infirmities, though they were great and many. He eyes more Job's patience than his passion. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job" (Jam 5:11)—[but] not a word of his *impatience*. He that drew Alexander⁷ whilst he had a scar upon his face, drew him with his finger upon the scar. God puts His fingers upon His people's scars that no blemish may appear. Ah, saints! That you would make it the top of your glory in this: to be like your heavenly Father. By so doing, much sin would be prevented, the designs of wicked men frustrated, Satan outwitted, many wounds healed, many sad hearts cheered, and God more abundantly honored.

Remedy 2: Consider that union makes most for your own security.

The second remedy against this device of Satan is to solemnly consider that love and union make most for your own safety and security. We shall be...*invincible* if we are *inseparable*. The world may frown upon you and plot against you, but it cannot hurt you. Unity is the best bond of safety in every church and commonwealth.

And this did that Scythian⁸ king in Plutarch⁹ represent [clearly] to his eighty sons, [when], being ready to die, [he] commanded a bundle of arrows fast bound together to be given to his sons to break. They all tried to break them, but being bound fast together, they could not. Then he caused the band to be cut, and they broke them with ease. He applied it thus: "My sons, so long as you keep together, you will be invincible; but if the band of union be broken between you, you will easily be broken in pieces."

Pliny¹⁰ writes of a stone in the island of Skyros¹¹ that if whole, though large and heavy, it swims above water;¹² but being broken, it sinks. So long as saints keep whole

⁷ **Alexander the Great** (356-323 BC) – Greek king of Macedon, a state in northern ancient Greece. Before his death at age 33, he had conquered most of the known world.

⁸ **Scythian** – native of ancient Scythia, a region north of the Black Sea, regarded by the Greco-Roman world as utterly pagan and uncivilized.

⁹ **Plutarch** (AD 46-120?) – Greek biographer and philosopher who wrote *Parallel Lives*, a collection of biographies that Shakespeare used in his Roman plays.

¹⁰ **Pliny the Elder** (Gaius Plinius Secundus, AD 23-79) – Roman author, naturalist, and natural philosopher, as well as naval and army commander of the early Roman Empire; friend of the emperor Vespasian.

¹¹ **Skyros** – the largest, most easterly of the Greek Sporades Islands in the Aegean Sea.

¹² No doubt a volcanic, porous product.

nothing shall sink them, but if they break they are in danger of sinking and drowning (Ecc 4:9-12).

Remedy 3: Dwell upon those commands of God that require love.

The third remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell upon those commands of God that do require you to love one another. Oh, when your hearts begin to rise against each other, charge the commands of God upon your hearts and say to your souls, “O our souls, hath not the eternal God commanded you to love them that love the Lord? And is it not life to obey and death to rebel?” Therefore, look that you fulfil the commands of the Lord, for His commands are not like those that are easily reversed. They are like those of the Medes¹³ that cannot be changed (Dan 6:8, 15).

Oh, be much in pondering upon these commands of God:

“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (Joh 13:34). It is called a new commandment because it is renewed in the gospel and set home by Christ’s example, and because it is rare, choice, special, and remarkable above all others.

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (Joh 15:12).

“These things I command you, that ye love one another” (Joh 15:17).

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:8).

“Let brotherly love continue” (Heb 13:1).

“Love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God” (1Jo 4:7).

“See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1Pe 1:22).

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1Pe 3:8).

“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another” (1Jo 3:11).

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment” (1Jo 3:23).

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” (1Jo 4:11).

Oh, dwell much upon these precious commands, [so] that your love may be inflamed one to another.

In the primitive times, it was much taken notice of by the heathens that in the depth of misery, when fathers and mothers forsook their children, Christians [who were] otherwise strangers stuck one to another; [their] love of religion proved firmer than that of nature. Ah, that there were more of that spirit among the saints in these days! The world

¹³ **Medes** – ancient Indo-European people group who established an empire in Media, southwest of the Caspian Sea and including most of Persia (now Iran), in the 7th century BC.

was once destroyed with water for the heat of lusts, and it is thought it will be again destroyed with fire for the coldness of love (Gen 6; 2Pe 3).

Remedy 4: Focus on your points of agreement.

The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell more upon these choice and sweet things wherein you agree than upon those things wherein you differ. Ah, did you but [do] thus, how would sinful heats be abated,¹⁴ your love raised, and your spirits sweetened one to another. You agree in most; you differ but in a few. You agree in the greatest and weightiest concerning God, Christ, the Spirit, the Scripture; you differ only in those points that have been long disputable amongst men of greatest piety and parts.¹⁵ You agree to own the Scripture, to hold to Christ the Head, and to walk according to the law of the new creature. Shall Herod and Pilate agree (Luk 23:12)? Shall Turks and pagans agree? Shall bears and lions, tigers and wolves—yea, shall a legion of devils agree in one body? And shall not saints agree, who differ only in such things as have least of the heart of God in them and that shall never hinder your meeting in heaven?

Remedy 5: Consider that God is the God of Peace.

The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is to solemnly consider that God delights to be styled “the God of peace” (Rom 15:33; 16:20); and Christ to be styled “The Prince of Peace” (Isa 9:6)...and the Spirit is a Spirit of peace, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace” (Gal 5:22). Oh, why then should not the saints be children of peace? Certainly, men of froward,¹⁶ unquiet, fiery spirits cannot have that sweet evidence of their interest in the God of peace, in the Prince of peace, and in the Spirit of peace, as those precious souls have that follow after the things that make for love and peace (Rom 14:9). The very name of peace is sweet and comfortable, the fruit and effect thereof pleasant and profitable—more to be desired than innumerable triumphs. It is a blessing that ushers in a multitude of other blessings (2Co 13:11; Isa 9:6).

The ancients were wont to paint¹⁷ peace in the form of a woman with a horn of plenty in her hand. Ah, peace and love among the saints are what will secure them and their mercies¹⁸ at home; yea, they will multiply their mercies. They will engage the God of mercy (Luk 6:36) to crown them with the choicest mercies. And they are what will render them most terrible, invincible, and successful abroad. Love and peace among the saints are what put the counsels of their enemies to a [standstill] and render all their enterprises abortive.¹⁹ They are what do most weaken their hands, wound their hopes, and kill their hearts.

¹⁴ **heats be abated** – passions be reduced.

¹⁵ **parts** – gifts; abilities.

¹⁶ **froward** – stubbornly contrary and disobedient.

¹⁷ **wont to paint** – in the habit of painting.

¹⁸ **mercies** – blessings given by God in His mercy.

¹⁹ **abortive** – failed; unsuccessful.

Remedy 6: Keep up your own peace with God.

The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is to make more care and conscience of keeping up your peace with God. Ah, Christians, I am afraid that your remissness²⁰ herein is that which hath occasioned much of that sourness, bitterness, and divisions that be among you. Ah, you have not, as you should, kept up your peace with God; and [this is why you] so dreadfully break the peace among yourselves. The Lord hath promised, “When a man’s ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Pro 16:7). Ah, how much more, then, would God make the children of peace to keep the peace among themselves, if their ways do but please Him!

All creatures are at His beck and check.²¹ Laban followed Jacob with one troop; Esau met him with another—both with hostile intentions (Gen 31-33). But [because] Jacob’s ways pleased the Lord, God by His mighty power so worked that Laban left him with a kiss, and Esau met him with a kiss. He hath an oath of one, tears of the other, peace with both. If we make it our business to keep up our league with God, God will make it His work and His glory to maintain our peace with men. But if men make light of keeping up their peace with God, it is just with God to leave them to a spirit of pride, envy, passion, contention, division, and confusion—to leave them to bite and devour one another till they be consumed one of another (Gal 5:15).

Remedy 7: Dwell much upon the close relation between you.

The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell much upon that near relationship and union that is between you and your brethren. This consideration had a sweet influence upon Abraham’s heart: “And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren” (Gen 13:8). That is a sweet word in the psalmist, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psa 133:1). It is not “good and not pleasant,” or “pleasant and not good,” but “good and...pleasant.” Some things are good and not pleasant, [such as] patience and discipline. Some things are pleasant but not good, [such as] carnal pleasures and voluptuousness.²² Some things are neither good nor pleasant, [such as] malice, envy, and worldly sorrow. And some things are both good and pleasant, [such as] piety, charity, peace, and union among brethren. Oh, that we could see more of this among those that shall one day meet in their Father’s kingdom and never part!

As they are brethren, so they are all fellow-members: “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1Co 12:27). Again, “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph 5:30). Shall the members of the natural body be serviceable and useful to one another, and shall the members of this spiritual body cut and destroy one another? Is it against the law of nature for the natural members to cut and slash one

²⁰ **remissness** – carelessness; negligence.

²¹ **beck and check** – commands to come and to halt, signifying absolute sovereignty.

²² **voluptuousness** – abundant sensual pleasure.

another? Is it not much more against the law of nature and of grace for the members of Christ's glorious body to do so?

As you are all fellow-members, so you are fellow-soldiers under the same Captain of salvation, the Lord Jesus, fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And as you are all fellow-soldiers, so you are all fellow-sufferers under the same enemies: the devil and the world. As you are all fellow-sufferers, so are you fellow-travelers towards the land of Canaan, the new Jerusalem that is above (Gal 4:26). "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb 13:14). The heirs of heaven are strangers on earth. And as you are all fellow-travelers, so are you all fellow-heirs of the same crown and inheritance.

Remedy 8: Dwell upon the miseries of discord.

The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is to dwell upon the miseries of discord. Dissolution²³ is the daughter of dissension.²⁴ Ah, how doth the name of Christ and the way of Christ suffer by the discord of saints! Many that are entering upon the ways of God are hindered and saddened—and the mouths of the wicked opened and their hearts hardened against God and His ways—by the discord of His people! Remember this: the disagreement of Christians is the devil's triumph. What a sad thing this is, that Christians should give Satan cause to triumph!

It was a notable saying of one, "Take away strife and call back peace, lest thou lose a man, thy friend—and the devil, an enemy, joy over you both."

Remedy 9: Be first in seeking peace.

The ninth remedy against this device of Satan is to seriously consider that it is no disparagement²⁵ to you to be first in seeking peace and reconciliation, but rather an honor to you that you have begun to seek peace. Abraham was the elder, and more worthy²⁶ than Lot was in respect of both grace and nature, for he was uncle unto Lot—and yet he first seeks peace of his inferior, which God hath recorded as his honor.

Ah! How the God of peace, by His Spirit and messengers, doth pursue after peace with poor creatures! God first makes [an] offer of peace to us: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2Co 5:20). God's grace first kneels to us, and who can turn their backs upon such blessed and bleeding embracements...God is the party wronged, and yet He sues for peace with us at first: "I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name" (Isa 65:1).

Ah, how the sweetness, the freeness, and the riches of His grace do break forth and shine upon poor souls. When a man goes from the sun, yet the sunbeams follow him; so

²³ **dissolution** – destruction or disintegration of the existing condition.

²⁴ **dissension** – disagreement that produces strife or contention.

²⁵ **disparagement** – dishonor; disgrace.

²⁶ **worthy** – honorable; of higher status (not indicating merit before God).

when we go from the Sun of righteousness (Mal 4:2), yet then the beams of His love and mercy follow us. Christ first sent to Peter, who had denied Him, and the rest who had forsaken Him: “But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you” (Mar 16:7). Ah, souls! It is not a base, low thing, but a God-like thing, though we are wronged by others, yet to be the first in seeking after peace. Such actings will speak out much of God with a man’s spirit.

Christians, it is not [a] matter of liberty whether you will or you will not pursue after peace, but [a] matter of duty that lies upon you. You are bound by express precept to follow peace; and though it may seem to fly from you, yet you must pursue after it. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). Peace and holiness are to be pursued after with the greatest eagerness that can be imagined. So the psalmist: “Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it” (Psa 34:14). The Hebrew word that is here rendered “seek”...signifies to seek earnestly, vehemently,²⁷ affectionately, studiously, industriously.

“And pursue it.” That Hebrew word signifies earnestly to pursue, being a metaphor taken from the eagerness of wild beasts or ravenous fowls, which will run or fly both fast and far rather than be disappointed of their prey. So the apostle presses the same duty upon the Romans: “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom 14:19). Ah, you froward, sour, dogged Christians, can you look upon these commands of God without tears and blushing?

I have read a remarkable story of Aristippus,²⁸ though but a heathen, who went of his own accord to Æschines²⁹ his enemy and said, “Shall we never be reconciled until we become a table talk to all the country?” When Æschines answered [that] he would most gladly be at peace with him, “Remember, then,” said Aristippus, “that though I am the elder and better man, yet I sought first unto thee.” “Thou art indeed,” said Æschines, “a far better man than I, for I began the quarrel, but thou the reconcilment.” My prayer shall be that this heathen may not rise in judgment against the flourishing professors³⁰ of our times, “who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words” (Psa 64:3).

Remedy 10: Make the Word the infallible rule for agreement.

The tenth remedy against this device of Satan is for saints to cooperate—to join together and walk together—in the ways of grace and holiness as far as they do agree, making the Word their only touchstone³¹ and judge of their actions. That is sweet advice which the apostle gives:

²⁷ **vehemently** – with intense feeling; eagerly.

²⁸ **Aristippus** (c. 435-c. 360 BC) – Greek philosopher who studied with Socrates in Athens.

²⁹ **Æschines** (c. 390-c. 314 BC) – Greek orator and statesman.

³⁰ **professors** – those who profess belief in the Christian faith.

³¹ **touchstone** – rock used to test the genuineness of precious metals; thus, metaphorically, that by which things are evaluated.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. (Phi 3:14-16)

Ah, Christians! God loses much,³² you lose much, and Satan gains much by this: that you do not, that you will not, walk lovingly together so far as your ways lie together. It is your sin and shame that you do not, that you will not, pray together, hear together, confer together, and mourn together because, in some far lesser things, you are not agreed together.

What folly and madness it is in those whose way of a hundred miles lies fourscore and nineteen³³ together, yet will not walk so far together, because they cannot go the other mile together! Yet such is the folly and madness of many Christians in these days who will not do many things they may do, because they cannot do everything they should do. I fear God will whip them into a better temper before He hath done with them. He will break their bones and pierce their hearts, but He will cure them of this malady.³⁴

And be sure you make the Word the only touchstone and judge of all persons and actions. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa 8:20). It is best and safest to make that to be the judge of all men and things now, that all shall be judged by in the latter day. “The word,” saith Christ, “that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Joh 12:48). Make not your dim light—your notions, your fancies,³⁵ your opinions—the judge of men’s action, but still judge by rule, and plead, “It is written.”

When a vain, importunate³⁶ soul cried out in contest with a holy man, “Hear me, hear me,” the holy man answered, “Neither hear me, nor I thee, but let us both hear the apostle.”

Constantine,³⁷ in all the disputes before him with the Arians,³⁸ would still call for the Word of God as the only way, if not to convert, yet to stop their mouths.

Remedy 11: Be much in self-judging.

The eleventh remedy against this device of Satan is to be much in self-judging. “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (1Co 11:31). Ah, were Christians’

³² The author’s sense is that the cause of God is dishonored or hindered; ultimately God loses nothing, because through all events God will be glorified and man’s sin judged (Psa 76:10).

³³ **four score and nineteen** – 99.

³⁴ **malady** – disease.

³⁵ **fancies** – imaginations.

³⁶ **vain, importunate** – foolish, insistent.

³⁷ **Flavius Valerius Constantine** (c. AD 280-337) – the first Roman emperor to profess Christianity.

³⁸ **Arians** – followers of Arius of Alexandria (c. 256-336), an early Church theologian who believed that Jesus was the first and highest created being of God, but not true Deity.

hearts more taken up in judging and condemning themselves, they would not be so apt to judge and censure³⁹ others, and to carry it sourly and bitterly towards others who differ from them. There are no souls in the world that are so fearful to judge others as those that do most judge themselves; nor so careful to make a righteous judgment of men or things as those that are most careful to judge themselves. There are none in the world that tremble to think evil of others, to speak evil of others, or to do evil to others as those that make it their business to judge themselves. There are none that make such sweet constructions and charitable interpretations of men and things as those that are best and most in judging themselves.

One request I have to you that are much in judging others and little in judging yourselves, to you that are so apt and prone to judge rashly, falsely, and unrighteously. It is that you will every morning dwell a little upon [the following] Scriptures:

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Mat 7:1-2).

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (Joh 7:24).

“Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him...But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Rom 14:3, 10, 13).

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1Co 4:5).

“Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?” (Jam 4:11-12).

“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand” (Rom 14:4).

One Delphidius, accusing another before Julian about that which he could not prove, the party denying the fact, Delphidius answers, “If it be sufficient to deny what is laid to one’s charge, who shall be found guilty?” Julian answers, “And if it be sufficient to be accused, who can be innocent?” You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Remedy 12: Labor to be clothed with humility.

The twelfth remedy against this device of Satan is this: Above all, labor to be clothed with humility (1Pe 5:5). Humility makes a man peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well-doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking. Humility fits for the highest services we owe to Christ, and yet will not neglect the lowest service to the

³⁹ **censure** – harshly criticize.

meanest⁴⁰ saint (Joh 13:5). Humility can feed upon the meanest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies,⁴¹ [such] as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him that curses him and pray for those that persecute him (Mat 5:44). A humble heart is a habitation for God, a scholar for Christ, a companion of angels, a preserver of grace, and a fitter for glory. Humility is the nurse of our graces, the preserver of our mercies, and the great promoter of holy duties.

Humility cannot find three things on this side [of] heaven: it cannot find fullness in the creature, sweetness in sin, or life in an ordinance⁴² without Christ. A humble soul always finds three things on this side [of] heaven: the soul to be empty, Christ to be full, and every mercy and duty to be sweet wherein God is enjoyed. Humility can weep over other men's weaknesses, and joy and rejoice over their graces. Humility will make a man quiet and contented in the meanest condition, and it will preserve a man from envying other men's prosperous condition (1Th 1:2-3). Humility honors those that are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those that are weak in grace. Humility makes a man richer than other men, and it makes a man judge himself the poorest among men (Eph 3:8). Humility will see much good abroad when it can see but little at home.

Ah, Christian! Though faith be the champion of grace, and love the nurse of grace, yet humility is the *beautifier* of grace. It casts a general glory upon all the graces in the soul. Ah, did Christians more abound in humility, they would be less bitter, froward, and sour; they would be more gentle, meek, and sweet in their spirits and practices. Humility will make a man have high thoughts of others and low thoughts of [himself]. It will make a man see much glory and excellency in others, and much baseness and sinfulness in [himself]. It will make a man see others rich and himself poor, others strong and himself weak, others wise and himself foolish. Humility will make a man excellent at covering others' infirmities, at recording their gracious services, and at delighting in their graces. It makes a man joy in every light that outshines his own and every wind that blows others good.

Humility is better at believing than it is at questioning other men's happiness. "I judge," saith a humble soul, "it is well with these Christians now, but it will be far better with them hereafter. They are now upon the borders of the New Jerusalem, and it will be but as a day before they slide into Jerusalem." A humble soul is more willing to say, "Heaven is that man's [more] than mine; and Christ is that Christian's [more] than mine; and God is their God in covenant [more] than mine." Ah, were Christians more humble, there would be less fire and more love among them than now is.



⁴⁰ **meanest** – in the lowest condition.

⁴¹ **delicates** – delicious foods.

⁴² **life in an ordinance** – blessing from God in duties ordained by God.