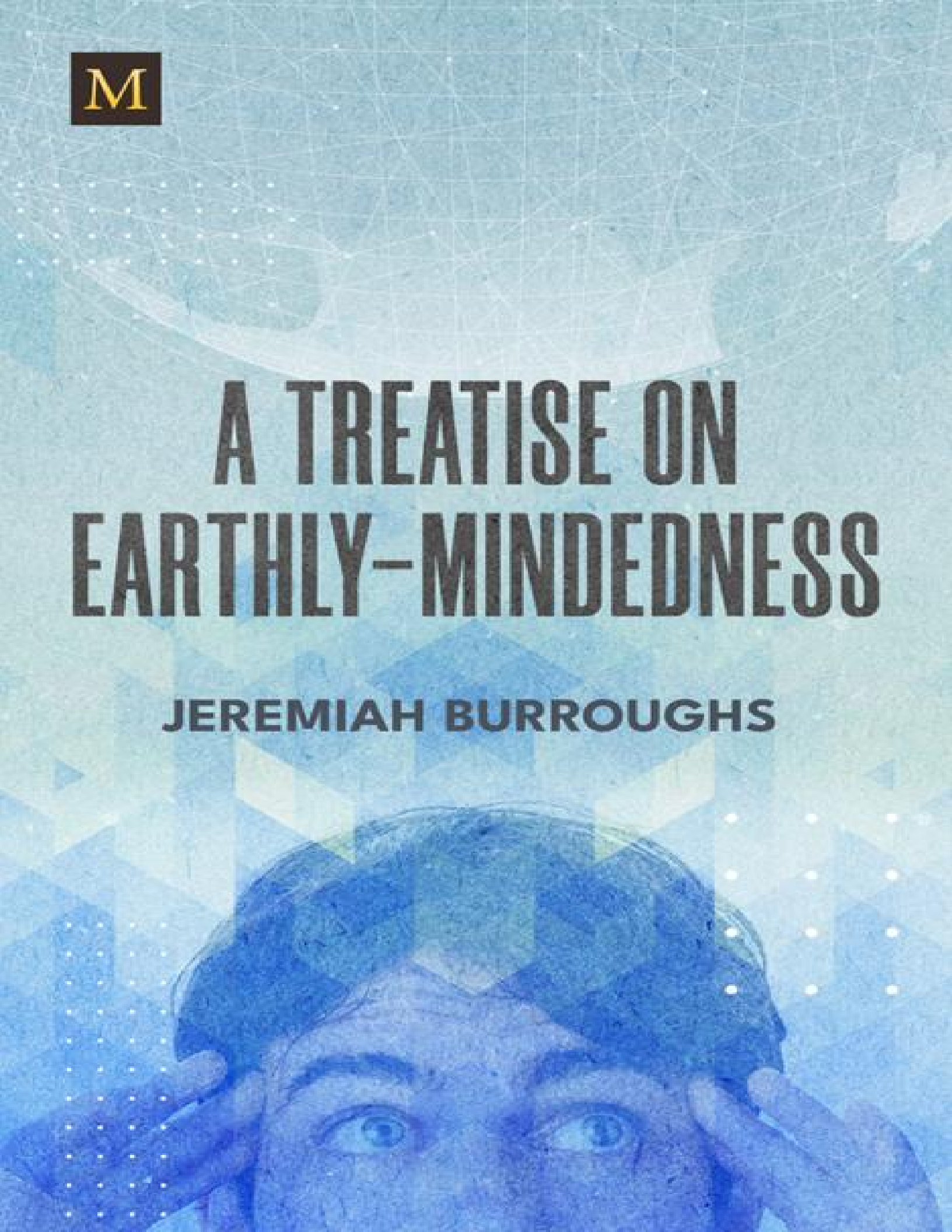




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A TREATISE ON EARTHLY-MINDEDNESS

JEREMIAH BURROUGHS

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A Treatise on Earthly-Mindedness

by Jeremiah Burroughs

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TO THE READER

A servant of Christ once said, "Every day a Christian spends on earth is a day lost in heaven." He meant that union and communion with God in Jesus Christ is what makes heaven. Since this is attainable in life, what keeps a Christian from living in heaven while on earth? Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). Our conversation is in heaven, as another apostle said (Phil. 3:20). "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Galatians 2:20).

These men were on earth, subject to infirmities like us, yet living in heaven. In this declining, wanton, Christ-denying age, there is still a generation upon earth who live like this. Their lives and graces, though hidden under a plain exterior, under many reproaches and infirmities, shine inwardly with the glory of Christ. They follow the Lord with a different spirit than the spirit of the world. Among these hidden ones of the Lord was the Preacher of these sermons, who, while on earth, lived in heaven. The end and purpose of these sermons is to encourage you to have a similar attitude. Take your mind off of fleeting vanities and set it on what is real and durable.

We can see how weak worldly pomp and glory is, and how the Lord is putting an end to the kingdoms of men who have not contributed their strength and power to advancing the glory of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, but rather to its decline and obscurity. Besides what the world tells us, our days have more examples of the vanity of the world than any other age. Therefore, our hearts should not be attached to things that cannot stretch themselves to eternity. The Apostle's reasoning is weighty.

The message is that those who have wives should live as if they do not, and those who weep should live as if they do not weep. Those who rejoice should live as if they do not, and those who buy should live as if they do not possess. Those who use the world should do so without abusing it.

The preacher supports this exhortation with the argument that time is short and life is shorter still, and that the end of all things is near. We should focus on greater things and set our hearts on them. This holy man's spirituality is evident in the fact that even though he enjoyed many comforts on earth, he still viewed them as a stranger would and used them to raise his soul to a more holy, humble, and self-denying walk with God. It is more impressive for someone who is surrounded by creature comforts to reject them with a divine spirit and elevate themselves to a state of higher enjoyment with Jesus Christ. This is comparable to someone who is made a partaker of the Divine nature and who lives above the world in the enjoyment of it.

These sermons are printed twice: once in the practice of the holy man and once again in these papers presented in a preaching style, which is more desired, more acceptable to his hearers, and, if not mistaken, more effective in working upon the affections and being profitable to the majority of Christians. Although the papers could have been more condensed, this preaching style is chosen because it is more appealing to the audience.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit, and go along with these, and all his other precious labors, to the furtherance of the joy of your faith, building you up in the inner man, and directing you in the way to your eternal rest.

Thomas Goodwin, William Bridge, William Greenhill, William Adderly, John Yates, Sydrach Simpson, Philip Nye.

Chapter One:

**Doctrine: There is a great difference
between a wicked man and a godly man.
The one minds the earth; the other's
conversation is in heaven**

The passage is a commentary on Philippians 3:19 which states, "...they mind earthly things...". This Scripture provides insight into the different attitudes and behaviours of wicked and righteous individuals, particularly those who oppose the Gospel. The apostle Paul specifically refers to those who are enemies of the cross of Christ and seek to hinder the success of his ministry.

The phrase "mind earthly things" refers to those who are focused on the material and worldly things of life, such as earthly beauty, glory, and pleasures. This applies to both the actions of the understanding and the will, but primarily to the actions of the will and affections. Wicked individuals are preoccupied with these things to the point of inordinacy.

Conversely, those who are righteous and citizens of the city of Heaven, as the original text suggests, are concerned with heavenly things. They conduct themselves as free citizens of the heavenly city, with their conversation revolving around heavenly things. Paul uses this as an argument against following the example of wicked individuals who make their belly their god and are wholly focused on earthly things.

The primary difference between the wicked and the righteous is that the former mind earthly things, while the latter have their conversation in heaven. The author intends to explore both of these concepts further.

One of these individuals focuses on earthly things. This verse parallels Romans 8:5, which says, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh." The word "set their minds on" is the same in both verses. The first part of this point is a description of wicked individuals who are enemies of the cross of Christ and godliness. They are people who have their minds set on earthly things, and the most depraved among them are described as worshipping their bellies. Some of them are very sensual, drunk, unclean, and entirely given to satisfying the fleshly desires of their bodies. However, there are others who do not appear to be so debased, yet their minds are fixated on earthly things, and these are the individuals who are secret enemies of the cross of Christ, and sometimes it will become apparent. Such an individual, whose mind has been consumed by earthly things for a long time, will ultimately appear to be an enemy of Christ's cross. Now, in the discussion of this point, I will present five things:

Firstly, let us understand what it means to be excessively focused on earthly things in a sinful manner. In other words, how can we identify someone as having an earthly-minded disposition? This is important to establish before we can move on to the rest of the discussion.

Secondly, we will delve into the significant harm that comes with being preoccupied with earthly things. There is a greater evil involved in this practice than one might think.

Thirdly, we will provide evidence to help those who believe they are free from this sin realise that they are, in fact, individuals who are excessively focused on earthly things.

Fourthly, we will examine the reason why people are so inclined to concentrate on earthly things.

Fifthly, we will attempt to divert our hearts away from earthly things. These are the five essential components of the initial section of this

topic, which outlines the characteristics of wicked individuals who are preoccupied with earthly things.

Firstly, it is important to distinguish who are the ones that mind earthly things. It is not all those who enjoy earthly things that can be condemned for minding them. Even Paul, in this very epistle, Philippians 4:12, wrote that although he knew how to live in need, he also knew how to live in abundance. He knew how to make use of earthly things and he instructs that those who have taught others should be made partakers of all their goods. Paul gives this charge. Furthermore, in that Scripture where Christ Himself labors most to take the thoughts of men off the earth and not to worry about what they should eat or drink, He still says, "Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things," Matthew 6:32. Galatians 6:6 states, "Let him who is taught in the word share all good things with him who teaches." And even if there are any objections to this, he says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

Therefore, it is not a sign of an evil person to have earthly things and to rightfully claim what is due to them, as Paul does here. The Galatians could not even accuse Paul of breaking his own rule which he wrote to the Philippians. Hence, we must examine what is meant by minding earthly things. When does a person mind earthly things in a sinful manner? There are several particulars to consider.

Chapter Two:

Earthly-Mindedness Discovered in Nine Particulars

The first sign of a person who is too focused on earthly things is when they consider them to be the most important things in life. They have a high regard for earthly possessions, thinking that if only they had what others have, they would be truly happy. They see material things such as homes, furniture, and wealth as the pinnacle of happiness and fulfilment.

When someone promises themselves happiness in earthly things, they are guilty of minding earthly things. Chrysostom once spoke of a covetous man who saw more beauty in his money than in the sun that shines in the sky. Such people look upon the things of the earth as the most beautiful things, which is a sign of a disordered mind. God never intended for earthly things to be the primary means of conveying His blessings to His people. He places no great importance on material possessions, and a person's estimation of their own worth is revealed by where they find their value.

In Genesis 27:28-39, we see the difference in the blessings given to Jacob and Esau by their father, Isaac. In Jacob's blessing, God gives him the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, along with an abundance of crops and wine. Esau's blessing, however, is more focused on earthly things, with the fatness of the earth being mentioned before the dew of heaven. A godly person certainly needs earthly things, but the priority of their heart is the dew of heaven first and the blessings of the earth second. Conversely, a worldly person acknowledges their need for heavenly things but desires the fatness of the earth more. This is why the thoughts of an earthly-minded person are always preoccupied with worldly objects.

Secondly, when the rich, valuable thoughts of men and women are occupied with earthly things, they are preoccupied with them in a sinful manner. You can discern what kind of hearts you have by your thoughts about anything. Thoughts are the immediate eruptions or outbursts of the heart, like the bubbles that arise from the heart directly.

A person cannot know what is in their heart as well by their words and actions as they can by their thoughts since thoughts arise directly from the heart. For instance, I can tell what the water is in a fountain better by the water that immediately bubbles up from the source than by the water that runs in the stream a mile or two away that never came from the source. That which immediately bubbles up from the source shows the nature of the fountain.

Thoughts are, so to speak, the firstborn of the heart and, therefore, the heart can be discerned by the thoughts. The Holy Ghost said in Proverbs 23:7, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." This can be applied in general, not just in particular. As a person thinks in their heart, so are they; their thoughts reveal who they are. The heart is as the mind's thoughts are. People can keep their words and actions in check out of respect. If you could know what the heart is and look into its private dwelling places, that would reveal to you what a person is really like. Many of your servants may behave themselves well in your presence or in front of others out of respect, but to truly know them, try to understand what they do when they are alone in their private places.

So, if you want to know your own hearts, don't just look at how you behave in front of others, but also what they are like in your private thoughts. That's where your heart is most revealed. By private thoughts, I don't mean every kind of idea or suggestion, because sometimes the devil may put evil thoughts into even the most holy people. But I mean thoughts that are sweet to the soul, where the soul comes to find contentment. That's when you're minding earthly things: when you find your thoughts focused on earthly things and they seem more suitable to your heart than any other. It's not when the mind is simply wandering, or through suggestions or temptations, but when you are truly yourself, alone and free. Can you say that when you're alone, "Oh, the very thoughts of God are sweet to me, I meditate on His law day and night"? Can you find sweetness in prayer, as from a honeycomb? But an unclean person will find sweetness in impure thoughts when alone. An earthly-minded

person will find sweetness in earthly thoughts, and an ambitious person will find sweetness in pride when alone. These are the most satisfying thoughts to them. They can spend hours lost in them, that's earthly-mindedness.

The third thing is this: an earthly-minded person is someone whose heart clings to the earth. As I said earlier, the word "minding" means not only to think about, but to savour the things of the earth, and their heart clings to the earth. The Psalmist, in a very different context, said that his soul clung to the dust, but that's true of many people in this case. Their very souls cling to the dust, their spirits are mixed with the earth, and so they are dross. They may have some good common gifts, some good natural abilities, and some workings of the Holy Spirit upon them, but their spirits are impure, because they are mixed with the earth. Talk to these people about the vanity of earthly things and they will listen, but when you're done, their souls still cling to the earth. Talk to them about the excellence of heavenly things, and they will listen, but when you're done, their souls still cling to the earth, like a person whose soul clings in love to someone (as it's said of Samson, his soul clung to Delilah). Say what you will against that person, or of the excellence of anyone else, yet their soul clings to that person. So it is with an earthly-minded person: no matter what you say against earthly things, or what you say in praise of heavenly things, their soul still clings to the earth, like the serpent's belly clings to the dust of the ground. That's an earthly-minded person.

Fourthly, an earthly-minded person is one whose heart is consumed by distracting concerns about earthly matters: what to eat, what to drink, what to wear, how to provide for oneself and their family, and what the future may hold. Even if they are doing well now, they worry about what will happen later. The more these earthly concerns dominate their heart, the more they can be considered earthly.

There are only two things that cause distracting worries about any business:

The first is the fear of a great disaster. If I were to fail, I would consider it an unbearable disaster. If I fail, I don't know what I will do. That is the first.

The second is uncertainty about the means of avoiding this disaster. If I see failure as a great evil, I cannot rely on the things that are supposed to prevent it. I see them as too weak to help me. Despite these means, I may still fail, which causes distracting thoughts.

An earthly-minded person is one whose thoughts are consumed with worries about worldly things, such as what to eat, drink, wear, how to provide for themselves and their families, and what will happen in the future. They fear disappointment and see it as a great evil that could lead to their undoing. They do not have confidence in the means of provision and experience uncertainty in them. Even the promise in Scripture that God will provide for them and their families does not give them peace, as they consider it the weakest means of support.

However, if the soul were not earthly-minded, it would not be greatly concerned about the things of the world. Even if one's estate is taken away, as happened to Job, they would not be undone or lose their happiness. They would have something that would comfort them even if everything else is lost. A person who invests their entire estate abroad in a venture is very anxious because bad news could mean their undoing. But another person who has many riches, property, and a stock at home to maintain them and their family, is not as anxious. Similarly, a godly person has treasures in heaven to rely on, and therefore, is not as concerned about losing their earthly possessions.

And then the second concern is the uncertainty of means and help. A godly person knows that outward causes are uncertain, but they can rely on the promise of God: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." They can cast their cares upon Him because He cares for them. This promise is certain, and it helps to alleviate their worries. But an

earthly-minded person's heart is filled with distracting cares because they believe that they are undone if they fail in this world and have nothing more than the creature to rely on for their provision.

Fifthly, an earthly-minded person is someone whose primary focus and life's work revolve around the things of the earth. They make it their top priority, and their strongest efforts are dedicated to these things. They are eager and greedy in their pursuit of worldly goods; their entire being is consumed by it. It is the only thing that their soul desires.

You might argue, "Other people are busy with their jobs just like these earthly-minded people." Yes, but they are busy with their work out of obedience to God. For outward things, they put aside their obedience to God. If it weren't for the fact that they were obeying God in their work, the things that they busy themselves with in the world would not be enough to occupy their souls completely. By an "adequate object," I mean something that is sufficient to fully engage the strength of the soul.

I'll give you an example to show you what I mean by an adequate object. Imagine a little child playing a sport. This sport has as much in it as there is in the child's spirit, there is a kind of equality between the child's spirit and such a sport. A child receives enough benefit from a sport that it's worth putting all their effort into it. Now, it may be, sometimes a person will play with their child. They will play as the child does, but this sport is not an adequate object. A person will play with the child for a while, but there is not enough good in this play to fill their souls, though it is fully adequate to the desires of the child. These things are not fully adequate to the desires of a person. They have other matters in their minds than these, and businesses of a higher nature. And so it is in those that are not earthly-minded. Though they may be busy with worldly things, yet they use the world as if they do not fully rely on it. The things of the world are not adequate objects to their hearts. A spiritual heart reserves the chief

strength of it for higher things. They follow these things in the world, but they reserve the chief strength for a more desirable good.

If a person has friends come to them, perhaps some of an ordinary rank come first. They make ordinary provision for them, but if they have any choice things for entertaining, they reserve them for some choice friends that are coming. So a person that is not of the world, though they may be busy with earthly things, yet the choice of their heart is reserved for things of a higher nature. I remember Tertullian had a speech about Christians and how they ate and drank when they supped. "They ate and drank so as they remembered they were to pray that night before they slept." So a gracious, spiritual heart follows their outward business in the world, but remembers they are to converse with God that night before they sleep, so that they reserve the strength of their spirit for communion with God. But the other lays out all their strength as if they have nothing to do afterward. In this, an earthly and a spiritual heart are quite contrary.

The Apostle urges godly people to use the world without becoming overly attached to it. Conversely, those who are earthly-minded treat spiritual matters as if they were unimportant. Even if an earthly-minded person engages in spiritual activities, such as attending church or praying, their heart is not fully present. They go through the motions without truly committing themselves. In contrast, a spiritually-minded person regards worldly pursuits as secondary to spiritual ones. They devote their full energy to the latter. Earthly-minded individuals resemble Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, who were swallowed up by the earth, and their hearts are consumed by earthly concerns, such as contentment and providing for themselves and their families.

Furthermore, even if a person does not appear overly focused on earthly things, they are still considered earthly-minded if they pursue material goods for their own sake, rather than in service of a higher good. In 2 Corinthians 4:18, Paul speaks of how we should not focus on the temporal and earthly things that we can see, but rather seek

them in subordination to something higher. For instance, a godly person goes about their daily business like anyone else, but their ultimate goal is to serve God in their generation. Even when they engage in outward activities, their aim is to use those means to better serve God. This is the purpose that underlies everything they do.

But now on the other hand, an earthly-minded person's goal is to follow their business and focus on the work of their profession in order to gain material possessions. They want to acquire more for themselves and their children so that they can be somebody in the world. They may have enough to satisfy their desires, so they pursue their work with great intensity just to satisfy their fleshly desires. Indeed, all the good deeds they perform are done in subordination to their pursuit of material wealth. To put it simply, a spiritually-minded person does not seek earthly possessions for their own benefit, but an earthly-minded person does. Or to be more precise, an earthly-minded person is focused on material possessions in all that they do, both in earthly and spiritual matters. In contrast, a spiritually-minded person is focused on spiritual things in all that they do, both in spiritual and earthly matters. When an earthly-minded person is engaged in earthly activities, their focus is solely on material gain and they do not consider obedience to God in their actions. On the other hand, a spiritually-minded person says, "I will pursue my calling because God has called me to do it," but an earthly-minded person thinks, "I will pursue it because I see financial gain coming from it." This mindset is focused on earthly things. Although the activities themselves may be lawful (and it is one's duty to pursue their calling), to pursue it solely for financial gain is earthly. Pursuing it because it is one's duty and the place where God has placed them is spirituality in earthly matters. An earthly-minded person is focused on material gain in earthly matters and even more so in spiritual matters. When they engage in spiritual activities, they have an earthly goal in mind, whether it is to gain the esteem of others or to cover up some wrongdoing. Perhaps they do it simply as a formality or for their own peace of mind.

In contrast, a spiritually-minded person is spiritual even in earthly matters. Someone with a spiritual mindset is more heavenly and spiritual even when engaged in the most mundane tasks, such as cutting hedges, digging ditches, pulling ropes or lines, or using an axe or hammer. They are more focused on spiritual matters than an earthly-minded person is when praying, hearing, or receiving sacraments. This is certainly true and will be proven on the Day of Judgment, when all the secrets of every heart will be revealed.

The seventh thing we may add is that an earthly-minded man is also earthly in spiritual things. Although the best of saints may have some earthly tendencies in spiritual matters, I speak of those in whom earthliness predominates. The frame of their heart in the performance of spiritual duties is earthly, and their ends are also earthly.

The eighth thing in which we find an earthly-minded man is that he faces many great difficulties in earthly matters, yet they seem insignificant to him. Though he labours hard in earthly things, he is never weary because it is his natural element. Therefore, no matter what difficulties arise, which would be too great for another man, he disregards them. Even though there is much toil and labour, he does not grow weary. Why? Because he is in his own element. Just as a fish does not tire of swimming, so an earthly-minded man does not tire of pursuing earthly things. When a man's spirit is in this state, no difficulties can hinder him in his pursuit of earthly gain. He will wake up early in the morning to attend to his affairs and not let any weather or obstacles deter him. Men will endure all sorts of hardships, storms at sea, hazards on land, sit up late, and rise early, and work tirelessly for earthly gain, but when it comes to spiritual matters, every little difficulty puts them off. Every small obstacle becomes a mountain in their way. They may complain that it is too hard to wake up early in the morning, especially in cold winters, or that it is very difficult to read and pray.

Keeping watch over one's heart is a challenging task. For an earthly-minded individual, anything that pertains to the spirit is difficult, and the obstacles discourage them. They become exhausted with spiritual matters, as we see in Malachi 1:13, where they exclaim, "What a burden!" However, they can work tirelessly all day long in worldly affairs, just like a horse. I challenge you to try spending one Sabbath day focusing on spiritual and heavenly thoughts, rising early in the morning, praying alone in your closet, reading, listening, meditating, and discussing good things with others. See how tiresome it will be to your heart if it is carnal.

On the other hand, a spiritual heart considers the Sabbath a joy, and for such a person, it is merely a type and precursor of the eternal rest they will experience in the kingdom of heaven. A spiritual person views the Sabbath as a day of rest, but an earthly-minded person becomes quickly fatigued by spiritual matters and gives up. In Nehemiah 4:6, we read about the challenges that Nehemiah and his team faced while working, yet they persevered because they were determined. Therefore, the willingness to complete a task depends on a person's state of mind. If someone is earthly-minded, they will complete their worldly work because they enjoy it, whereas if they undertake a spiritual work, they will abandon it halfway through. They rarely finish any spiritual work because they lack the desire to do so. However, if someone has a spiritual heart and begins a spiritual task, they will see it through to completion.

Lastly, an earthly-minded individual is one who understands the heavenly truths revealed in the Bible through an earthly perspective based on their intellect, disposition, and temperament. I believe this is a particular emphasis in this context since the Apostle is discussing those who opposed his ministry and were adversaries to the cross of Christ. These individuals have earthly thoughts, and, as a result, it is unsurprising that they fail to appreciate the spiritual and heavenly truths that we present to them. Their minds are earthly, so they only comprehend such things from an earthly perspective.

What was the main message that the Apostle brought to the Philippians? It was the way of reconciling the world to God, making peace with God, and our justification through Jesus Christ. There is no aspect of religion more spiritual, heavenly, and divine than the doctrine of reconciliation and justification through Jesus Christ. Even though someone with an earthly disposition may understand the necessity of pardoning sin and making peace with God, they may think of it in an earthly manner. They have worldly thoughts and beliefs about their relationship with God and obtaining forgiveness for their sins. They believe that making peace with God is similar to how two people reconcile after a fight and that obtaining forgiveness from God is something they must do. However, free justification by the grace of God in Christ is too divine, spiritual, and heavenly for an earthly-minded person to comprehend. Their understanding of God is only in a worldly, earthly way.

As the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 1:3, "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib." Similarly, an earthly-minded person knows God like an ox knows its owner and a donkey knows where it gets fed. The ox knows its owner because it is fed daily, so an earthly-minded person's understanding of God is limited to the benefits they receive from God in this world. God makes their crops grow or ensures their safe travels. An earthly-minded person may reach a level of understanding where they view God as the provider of good things in this life, but a spiritual and heavenly-minded person perceives God as God. They do not simply view God as good in respect to the benefits they receive from God in this world, but they see God as God is. They see the face of God. There is a significant difference between someone who knows another person and an animal that recognizes a person.

The ox knows its owner, the man who brings it hay and provisions, but a human being knows another human being in a deeper way. A human being knows the nature of humanity, what it means to be a rational creature. Similarly, a spiritual person knows God in a deeper way than others do. They see the face of God and understand God's

nature as it truly is. The difference between the knowledge of God that a spiritual person has, someone who is pure in heart, and the knowledge of God that an earthly-minded person has, is vast. Just as the ox knows the person who leads it to rich pastures, an earthly-minded person knows God as the giver of good things. In contrast, a spiritual person knows God in the same way as one person knows another, although not in full excellency. There is a significant difference between how a spiritual heart apprehends God and how an earthly heart apprehends God.

There are many other spiritual and divine truths that an earthly mind apprehends only in an earthly way. For example, consider heaven. How does an earthly mind perceive it? They perceive that they will be freed from pain and will experience some kind of glory, but they do not know what it is. They imagine it as some grand, glorious thing where they will live in pleasure and not in pain, and therefore they view all the glory of heaven in a sensual way. A spiritual heart looks at heaven differently. They see the enjoyment of communion with God and Jesus Christ in heaven and living the life of God in heaven. This is something an earthly heart cannot understand or appreciate.

Thus far, I have revealed what an earthly-minded person is like. I urge you to examine yourselves and consider to what extent these things apply to you. In addition to these, I have other arguments to persuade men and women that there is still much earthliness in them, but we will address them later in an orderly manner.

The second point to consider is this: the great harm of being earthly-minded is that they focus on earthly things. "Is that such a big deal?" you may ask. "We cannot comprehend how bad it truly is. We believe there's a lot of wrongdoing in cursing, fornicating, drinking, and similar disgraceful sins. But to have an earthly mind? We don't believe it to be such an immense harm." Yet you will find that the Bible speaks of this most severely, and if God is willing to impress

this upon your hearts, I trust that much honour may be given to God, and much good to you in particular.

Chapter Three:

Six Evils of Earthly-Mindedness

THE FIRST EVIL: The Bible refers to it as adultery. James 4:4 calls it spiritual adultery, "You adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" They were adulterers and adulteresses in terms of their love for the world. Even if you abhor the idea of committing adultery, you may still commit spiritual adultery. A person can be an adulterer or adulteress before the Lord, even if they do not engage in sexual intercourse with another. But if their hearts are set on someone else, they are guilty of unfaithfulness. Christ said that whoever looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery in his heart. In other words, he has broken the commandment that forbids adultery. If a man's heart is drawn more to another woman than his wife, or if a wife's heart is drawn more to another man than her husband, this is adultery before the Lord. Similarly, if our hearts are more set on something other than the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom we profess to be married and who is our Husband, this is adultery in Scriptural terms.

THE SECOND EVIL: Worldliness or an earthly mind is called "idolatry" in Ephesians 5:5. Paul lists covetousness among other sins that should not even be named among the saints. And he adds, "greed, which is idolatry." Now, what is an earthly-mindedness but greed, which is idolatry? A person who is earthly-minded is an idolater. You all know that worshipping sticks and stones is a great sin, but be careful of another form of idolatry that may be just as bad.

This is to make the god of this world, the cursed mammon of unrighteousness, your God. It is to make earthly things your Christ by bowing down and worshipping the golden calf of the world. The thing a person's heart is most drawn to and set upon is their god. Therefore, in this verse, it is said that they made their bellies (earthly things) their god. The voluptuous and drunkards make their bellies their god, and the sexually immoral make their partners their goddess and worship them.

Whatever your heart is most set upon, that is your God. Therefore, you must understand that the commandment "You shall have no other gods before Me" means that you must give your soul's strength to Me alone, and not to anything else. I become a God to My creation when its strength is focused on Me, lifting Me up as the highest good. But if there is anything else that your soul values as the highest good, that thing becomes your god, and that is worse than bowing the knee. You surrender your soul to that thing.

The more base something is that we make a God of, the more vile is the idolatry. When the Egyptians worshipped various gods, they were considered the most vile idolaters because they worshipped dogs, cats, onions, and other despicable things. So, the more vile anything is that we set our hearts upon, the more vile is our idolatry. To make unclean desires our god and to satisfy those desires is abominable. To make any earthly thing our god is even more vile, for the earth is the lowest thing that God has created. It is the least beautiful and the most dull and unremarkable of all the elements. Making earthly things our god is the most contemptible form of idolatry.

OBJECTION: You may say, "What is so bad about this idolatry or earthly-mindedness?" **ANSWER:** There are two aspects that reveal the evil of idolatry or earthly-mindedness.

Firstly, the evil of idolatry lies in the fact that you turn away from God. By letting your heart be set on other things, you move away from God and reject His protection, goodness, and mercy. This is

similar to what Hosea 4:12 says about those who go after idols: they go a-whoring from under their God. When they worshiped the true God, they were under His protection, but when they turned to idols, they went out from under His protection and care. When you lift up the infinite First Being of all things as the Chief Good to your soul, you experience God's grace and mercy. However, when you depart from Him and make other things your chief good, you forsake His protection, goodness, and mercy.

Secondly, when you choose to make the earth your god instead of the infinite First Being of all things, you are disrespecting and condemning God. It would be a grave insult to leave a Queen or Empress, the most beautiful woman in the world, and choose a base dunghill raker instead. Similarly, when you forsake the blessed, eternal God as your Chief Good and choose the things of the earth, you are insulting and rejecting God. The earth is the lowest and most insignificant of all God's creatures, and to make it your god is an abominable sin. The prophet Jeremiah calls the heavens and earth to be amazed at this idolatry, saying in Jeremiah 2:12, "Be astonished, O ye heavens at this, and be horrible afraid. be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. Why? What's the matter? For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." In this way, you forsake the fountain of living waters, the blessed God, and seek contentment and happiness in cisterns that can hold no water. This is a horrible wickedness that should leave the heavens astonished.

THE THIRD EVIL. Thirdly, being focused on earthly matters is enmity against God. No one would want to be found to be an enemy of God. However, it is true that a person who is focused on earthly matters is an enemy of God. This is made clear in Scripture, James 4:4, which states that loving the world is enmity against God. There is much to be learned from this. If God were to impress this on our hearts, we would come to realize that earthly-mindedness makes us enemies to spiritual goodness. Thus, the Holy Ghost rightly calls it

enmity to God, because anything that is against spiritual goodness is also against God. The degree to which our hearts are against anything that is spiritual is the same degree to which our hearts are enemies of God. In this text, earthly-minded people are portrayed as enemies to the cross of Christ, which means they are enemies to the spiritual preaching and teaching of Christ. They would have been content if Christ and circumcision were mixed together, but this pure and spiritual way of preaching Christ and being justified by faith alone was not suitable to their worldly hearts, and so they were enemies to it.

Oh! Earthly-mindedness makes us enemies to spiritual things. There are no greater enemies to the things of God, to spiritual matters, to the ministry of the Word, and to the work of God's grace on people's hearts than those who are focused on worldly matters. They can go up and down, and they do not care as long as they can go about their business, grow rich in the world, and indulge themselves every day like Dives, making provision for the flesh to fulfill its desires. They have an innate aversion to Jesus Christ and all goodness.

THE FOURTH EVIL. Fourthly, there are few mindsets more opposed, more contrary to the work of grace and godliness in a person's own heart than earthly-mindedness. It is so strongly opposed to the nature of grace that if earthly-mindedness prevails, you might as well ask men and women if there is any grace in their hearts. If God allows your corruptions to take over so that you commit some notorious sins, then you may begin to think, "Can this coexist with grace? How can that coexist with the workings I had before? Do I have reason to fear that I am a hypocrite, a rotten professing Christian?" This earthly-mindedness is as opposed to the nature of grace and the power of godliness in the heart as almost any sin that you can name. It is entirely contrary to the very beginning of the work of grace, not just to the degrees, but to the very beginning! The primary work of God when first working grace in the soul is to disengage the soul from the creature. It is to detach it from the earth and from all creatures here below. It is natural that, as we are of the

earth, so we are earthly and our spirits are attached to earthly things. But then comes the work of grace upon the soul and takes it off, and discharges the heart from the earth. Therefore you find that Christ lays this in as the first lesson: "He that wants to be My disciple must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." He is saying, "Never think of being a Christian unless you deny yourselves." What is the self? It is all natural contentment, natural self, and sinful self.

To be completely emptied of yourselves, creature comforts, and contentments, and take up His cross, to be willing to suffer anything in regards to earthly comforts, to be willing to give up all at His feet, to give up your interest in everything and take up His cross, this is the very first beginning of Christ's bringing disciples to Himself. The soul then says, "Let me have my sin pardoned, and farewell earth; my heart is focused on heaven, holiness, renewal in the image of God, communion and union with God, and living to the eternal praise of His name in Christ." This is the beginning of God's work in the heart.

When the work of grace is first initiated, it is referred to as "calling" or "vocation." But what does it mean to be called? One must strive to make their calling and election certain. To be called means that before, one was entirely preoccupied with seeking happiness in worldly pursuits, but then God graciously speaks to the soul and declares, "O wretched soul, your contentment is not here. There are greater things that constitute the highest good. You were made for more exalted and superior purposes than these. God has greater intentions for humankind than simply allowing them to find some satisfaction in the world."

The soul is summoned to leave behind the earthly things and pursue the higher things, and this is the initial phase of grace's work. This is the soul's answer to God's call, "Lord, I am coming," and the soul surrenders the earthly things to God, which marks the commencement of the work of grace. Consequently, how antithetical is the earthly-mindedness to God's work of extending grace to the heart?

Consider these three points.

The very process of conversion is described in Scripture as God's calling the soul out of the world. Those whom He has predestined, He has called. When God begins to work upon the heart of a sinner, He causes a voice to be heard in the soul, saying, "Oh soul! You have been busy with many things, but there is one thing necessary. Come out of your current way of life, for you will never find happiness there. You will be undone if you continue in it." The Lord calls the soul out of the world, and this is the very process of conversion, the soul's response to God's call. One cannot answer God's call and still have a heart attached to worldly things. Such a person is not yet effectively called out of the world.

The soul's response to this call follows next. The Lord disengages the heart from all creature comforts and teaches the first lesson of self-denial and taking up Christ's cross. What is more opposed to self-denial and taking up the cross of Christ than earthly-mindedness? As the text says, those who are earthly-minded are enemies to the cross of Christ.

The third aspect of conversion is the resigning of the soul to God as the Chief Good. Upon God's call, the soul learns the lesson of self-denial and taking up the cross and becomes disengaged from the creature, resigning itself to God as an infinite, soul-satisfying good forever. Earthly-mindedness is entirely opposed to this.

Now, let us turn to the work of grace upon the heart after the heart is converted and turned to God. First, grace brings a new light into the soul. A spiritual and divine light is set up in the soul upon the conversion of a sinner to God. However, the earth is a dark part of the world, and earthly-mindedness causes darkness to be upon the spirit. The interposition of the earth between us and the sun hinders the sight of the sun from us. Similarly, the interposition of earthliness in the soul of man between God and itself hinders the sight of God from the soul. A divine light is set up in the soul, and

God works grace that reveals things of a higher, more excellent, and glorious nature than those things to which the soul previously clung.

In the second place, the Scripture describes the work of grace as creating a "new creature." In the soul, everything becomes new, old things pass away. Whoever is in Christ is a new creation. Earthly-mindedness is contrary to this new creation of the soul, for it is the old self that is of the earth. The first man was from the earth, earthy. Therefore, if you are an earthly-minded person, you are still part of the stock of the first man, who was from the earth. You are not of the second man, who is the Lord from heaven. This opposition to grace is evident, for grace works a new creation in the soul.

Thirdly, grace elevates the heart above itself, the creature, the world, and even above angels, principalities, and powers, and all created things. Grace is uplifting, but an earthly-minded person sinks down to low and base things.

Fourthly, grace expands the heart so much that it cannot be satisfied with anything on earth. Even if God were to give the entire world to a heart filled with grace, it still wouldn't be enough to satisfy it. Why? Because the work of grace is the divine nature, the image of God in the soul, and it makes the soul like God. In Isaiah 40:15, it says that to God, all the nations of the earth are just like a drop in the bucket, and like fine dust on the scales. Now, an earthly-minded person may work hard, but he will eventually get over it. However, if a person's heart is taken off the earth, even if they have never been so involved in business, a matter of conscience that is in doubt may be enough to stop them. Just a doubt that something is a sin would be enough for them to say, "Let the business fall if it will. There may be a snare in this, and I see some cause to doubt." If the heart were spiritual, it would be taken off, but an earthly mind will go through many terrible things without troubling itself. This can lead to extreme entrapment in order to acquire or maintain an estate.

THE SIXTH EVIL. The sixth problem with being focused on earthly matters is that it is one of the greatest obstacles to benefiting from the ministry of the Word. Many of you cannot help but be convinced in your consciences that you have not benefited from the Word, and sometimes you will complain of the lack of profit under the means! If only you had hearts to examine the cause of it, and why you profit so little! It will appear that it comes from your earthly-mindedness. You bring a heart full of the world, full of impurities, with you. It is no wonder that you do not see those spiritual, heavenly things that are in the Word when there is so much impurity in your eyes.

Summer travelers, traveling in the midst of dust and in company, do not have the freedom of their eyes to see things like they do at other times. Many people come to the Word with their thick mud, and a great deal of filth that clouds up their very eyes, and deadens their hearts in the hearing of the Word! You know what Christ said to Martha, when Mary was sitting at Christ's feet and hearing His Word. Martha was encumbered with many things. So it is many times with those who come to hear the Word. Although they are in the presence of Christ and have the sound of the Word in their ears, their hearts are encumbered with many things. There's a great noise in their hearts. They are busy with the world even while they are hearing the Word. As you find in Ezekiel 33:3, there's a notable description which, I fear, may be true of many of you, "And they come to you (said the Lord to the prophet) as the people come, and they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they will not do them, for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness."

They sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, and they show much love with their mouth. They will commend the sermon. It may be that they will say, "He is an excellent preacher, it was a very good sermon that we heard today." They will show love with their mouths, but yet their hearts go after their covetousness all the same. They heard a man speak fine things, and bring excellent expressions

to set forth the matter at hand, but their hearts are after the things of the earth, and after their covetousness.

They had worldly, materialistic hearts, and as a result, they did not benefit from the ministry of the Word. This is made clear in Matthew 13:22, which describes the different types of ground that received the seed of the Word. Only one of the types was good and faithful, while the others were unproductive. The thorny ground represents those who hear the Word but are overcome by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. I urge you to take note: the people that our Savior speaks of in this parable who do not benefit from the Word are not those who live immoral lives (such as drunkards, swearers, or prostitutes), but those who have materialistic hearts. The passage says, "the deceitfulness of riches." The things of this world do not hinder in an obvious way, as thousands of people with materialistic hearts do not realize that they have such hearts. Rather, it is the deceitfulness of riches that chokes the Word. It may be that the Word affects them when they hear it, and they think it is sweet and memorable, but the deceitfulness of riches and the cares of this world soon take over. When these things come, such as worldly affairs, houses, gardens, income, and other pleasures, they take over the heart and choke the Word. The Word cannot penetrate the soul and produce fruit. It is choked.

Many of you attend church three times on the Lord's Day and hear valuable teachings, but how often is it choked by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of material possessions? You bring with you, keep with you, and carry along with you, materialistic thoughts, and that is why the Word does not prevail in your hearts. Oh! What do you lose through this materialism? You lose the fruit of the Word that should save your souls. A spiritual heart that has received one truth is blessed by God and would not trade it for ten thousand worlds. Such a person has reason to be grateful for that moment, that day, when they received such a precious truth from God. When it takes root, it is more valuable than if God had given them thousands of worlds to possess.

But now, many of you are so focused on trivial matters of this world that the blessed truths you hear from time to time, things that even the angels desire to understand, are choked and unproductive. Why did the young man who asked Jesus how to inherit eternal life not receive any benefit? The scripture says he had great possessions. It's true that a person can be rich and still be godly and holy. But in this case, it was his attachment to the world that hindered the young man from following Jesus Christ. Young men are usually more prone to fleshliness than to chasing after worldly wealth, but sometimes it has been the downfall of some young men. They were very enthusiastic when they were servants, and the Word of God was precious to them! But when they entered the world and tasted its sweetness, the Word was choked within them, and they lost their love for it. They lost their delight in the Word. This is the great danger of being attached to the world; it hinders the great benefits of the Word, and this is a terrible evil. If you had hearts that were open to receiving what is being preached, your hearts would tremble at the thought of this. Lord! What should I do so that I am not hindered from benefiting from Your Word? It is the great blessing of God to the world. It is the Word that must save my soul, and it is more valuable than ten thousand worlds. Whatever might hinder me from profiting from Your Word, I must beware of it. Beware of being attached to the world. Many of you know this deep down in your conscience. Sometimes any kind of business can prevent an earthly-minded person from coming to the Word, and when they do come, there is earth in their hearts and ears that keep them from listening to the Word. When your thoughts are focused on earthly things during a sermon, it's possible that a truth will pass by your soul that could have saved you eternally, and you have lost that opportunity that may never come again.

Chapter Four:

Eight Additional Evils of Earthly-Mindedness

In the seventh place, being focused on worldly matters leads to foolish desires in the heart, and this is a great evil. Let me explain further by giving six examples. The same Scripture that was previously cited for the temptation and snare, 1 Timothy 6:9, states, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction." These desires are foolish and unwise.

First, earthly-mindedness causes people to pursue things that are vile and base. It causes them to expend the strength of their immortal souls on things that have no value whatsoever. This is a foolish desire – to waste the strength of an immortal soul on trivialities. If you were to see people of great talent spending their time on pointless and frivolous activities, such as catching flies or chasing feathers, you would say that they had become foolish and thoughtless. Similarly, it is foolish for the soul of man, capable of such greatness as communing with God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – to waste its strength on such worthless and trivial things that cannot help in times of trouble. Oh, this is indeed a foolish desire!

Second, foolish desires, or an earthly mindset, cause people to become servants to their own servants. You would think that a person is foolish if they become a servant to their own servants. God has made the things of the earth to be servants to us, and yet we place our necks under the yoke of our own servants and become servants to them! Is it not a great folly for a person to expect all their honors and respect to come from a servant, rather than from any excellence within themselves?

Suppose a man is traveling and is shown some respect, but it is for the sake of his servant rather than for his own sake. Once he realizes this, he would feel dishonored. However, an earthly heart puts itself

in such a position since it considers it a great honor to receive recognition and respect solely due to its wealth and possessions. Earthly people do not respect others for any inherent worth or excellence within them, but only for their riches. This means that a person is not respected for who they are, but rather for their servant – which is a great shame.

Consider some men who used to have wealth, but now have lost everything and are as poor as beggars. Who values them now? However, if a man has grace and holiness, and loses everything and becomes as poor as Job, the angels of heaven would honor him and glory in serving him. This is the difference between the carnal, worldly heart and the spiritual heart. It's a foolish desire to make yourself a servant to your servants.

3. Earthly-mindedness leads a person to foolish desires because they could have more of the world if they did not focus so much on it. It is foolish to endanger oneself for the sake of the world when one could have it better without doing so. It is also foolish to exert a great deal of effort on something when it could be obtained with less effort. If you belong to God, and keep your heart more spiritual, you can expect God to bless you with more of the good things in this world. Your earthly-mindedness causes God to limit your access to these things. I believe that many have experienced bad outcomes in their worldly affairs due to God's displeasure with their worldly focus. If you continue to work in obedience to God and entrust your success to Him, you may experience greater success than you have had. How foolish it is to do otherwise!

4. Furthermore, it is a great folly to purchase something at a price greater than its worth. Suppose you sent a servant to buy something and he returned saying that he paid ten times more than its value. You would think he was foolish. In the same way, an earthly-minded person appears to God, His angels, and all the saints, to be a fool. Why? Because you give this world something a thousand times more

valuable than the things of this world. You give the world something that can bring you to heaven.

I may say to someone who is focused on worldly things, "The thoughts, cares, affections, and efforts that you devote to the things of the world could have saved your soul for eternity if you had directed them towards God. You could have gained Christ, heaven, and eternal life. The Lord would have been with you, and on the day when all things are revealed before everyone, you could have said, 'If I had spent my thoughts, cares, and efforts understanding the ways and things of God and eternal life, my soul would have been saved forever.' Not that our works can save us, but because God would have been with you on that path."

It is a sad thing to spend your thoughts and cares on things that you may never have (for many people spend their lives pursuing worldly things but never attain them). Will this not be folly? Will you not regret your choices later? "Oh, why did I spend my life pursuing something that I did not get, and now I am damned for it? If only I had spent time on things that concern my soul and eternal life, I might have had a better chance of attaining them."

God does not fail people in spiritual matters as He does in earthly matters. A person may work as hard as possible in their worldly affairs and still fail. But show me someone who was diligent in seeking the things of God and eternal life, and I will show you someone who did not fail. I truly believe that on Judgment Day, no one will be able to say, "Lord, I did my best to save my soul with the talents You gave me, but You denied me Your grace, and now I must be damned." I don't think anyone will be able to say this. But people do say this about worldly matters. They say they have done everything they could, worked hard, and toiled, but still failed. It is a foolish thing to expend all your energy on something so uncertain. It is like spending all your money on rocks or something that does not benefit you at all. This folly resides in the heart of humankind.

Imagine two people travelling to the Indies, where they can find precious stones. One of them spends their money on valuable commodities, including precious stones, while the other spends the same amount on worthless trinkets. Both of them set out with the same amount of money and return with their respective treasures. However, one returns with precious stones that bring him and his descendants great prosperity, while the other returns with nothing but stones that make his neighbours ridicule and mock him. How he would regret his foolishness!

This is how it will be for people on the day of judgement. This world is like a sea voyage, and we are sailing through it with either a cargo of pearls or worthless rocks. During the times of the gospel, there is a market for pearls, that is, things that will enrich us for all eternity. Some people focus all their strength, thoughts and heart on things that will cause them to bless God in the highest heavens forever. Others concentrate on earthly things, loading themselves down with thick clay. One person will be blessed for all eternity, joining with angels and saints to praise God's free grace in Christ. Another person could have been blessed forever as well if they had directed their thoughts and heart towards the same things, but instead, they become a cursed fool, the scorn and contempt of both men and angels for all eternity.

Earthly-mindedness leads people into foolish lusts. Those who have an earthly mindset think that they are the only ones who are blessed and praise themselves for it. Regardless of what they think, the Holy Ghost said that the lusts that come from earthly-mindedness are foolish.

5. It is foolish for a person to do something that they will have to undo in order to gain. This is especially true for those who are so focused on earthly things that they resort to deceitful means to obtain them. Such people will have to undo all that they have done. You may have obtained something of value through a cunning and dishonest way, and you may congratulate yourself on your

cleverness, but this is a foolish desire. Why? Because you will have to do it all over again. Either you will be damned forever, or you must restore what you have taken, even if it means impoverishing yourself, as Zaccheus did. All the sorrow and repentance in the world will not be enough. You cannot be forgiven, even if you are deeply sorry and repentant, if you do not restore what you have taken, if you are able to do so.

I don't think there has ever been a gospel minister who did not believe that it is absolutely necessary for salvation to make restitution. And this one reason should satisfy any person's conscience: **YOU CANNOT TRULY REPENT OF A SIN AND STILL WILLFULLY CONTINUE IN IT!** If you do not restore what you have taken, you are willfully continuing in that sin. Why? Because you are not only harming the person you wronged in the first place, but you are also continuing to harm them as long as you keep what you have taken. If you are able to make restitution but refuse to do so, simply because you are reluctant to part with your money or possessions, you are willfully continuing in the sin. No man or woman can truly repent of a sin and yet willfully persist in that sin. What a foolish desire it is to obtain the things of this world in a way that you will have to undo, and that will bring you shame.

Oh, consider how foolish it is! You deceitful servants who waste what you have stolen on your lusts, and then when you come to your senses, you must restore what you have taken, and it may require giving back a significant portion of your estate as restitution. It must be done, there's no way around it. Therefore, what a foolish desire it is to be so fixated on earthly things that you obtain them through deceitful means.

When people are too focused on earthly things, they may lose the enjoyment of those things before they even possess them. For instance, if someone is overly concerned and attached to something on earth, they may become burdened with guilt. Then, even if God grants them that earthly thing, their conscience may trouble them,

thinking, "I have this thing now, but did I receive it with God's blessing? I possess it, but I obtained it through my troubling thoughts, cares, and affections. I cannot say that it comes from God's love, but rather I fear that I received it in His anger, because of how I acquired it."

Thus, all the joy and comfort that could have been experienced is lost because of the wrong attitude towards it. If that comfort had come from God's providence, and if they had submitted themselves to God, they could have experienced much joy and praised Him for it, saying, "The Lord has blessed me in my business. I have received it through God's love." However, because their hearts were attached to earthly things, when they receive them, they find no comfort in it. The pleasure of that thing is lost before they even possess it because they have spent so much effort on acquiring it. When a person finally acquires something, and after getting it, they realize that it has cost them more than it's worth, the comfort of it has already vanished.

THE EIGHTH EVIL. Earthly-mindedness is the root of apostasy. Let me give you one Scripture and compare it with another. II Timothy 4:10 is a notable text that shows how earthly-mindedness leads to apostasy. It's the example of Demas. The Apostle said that Demas had forsaken him. What was the matter? Demas loved this present world, which made him an apostate. But what was Demas before this? Compare this Scripture with the Epistle to the Colossians, and you will see what he was before. He was an ardent disciple of Paul's, and the Apostle held him in high esteem. Read Colossians 4:14, where Paul was directed by the Holy Ghost to say, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you." Here, Paul ranks Demas among the famous professors of religion. When we write to our friends and say, "So-and-so commends themselves to you," we usually do not name them unless they are good friends.

Interpreters think it was the same Demas, and the word gives some ground for this. In Timothy, you find that he names Luke there, too. It seems that Demas and Luke were two great associates. Paul

mentions them together. When Demas had forsaken him, Luke still rode with him, and when Paul sends the greetings of Luke, the beloved physician, he also sends the greetings of Demas. But one was truly godly and, whatever sufferings Paul met with, one cleaved to him and would not forsake him. But when Paul began to suffer, Demas thought, "There's no thriving for me if I follow this persecuted Apostle." Demas would have no more of Paul; he thanked him for his company and departed from him. He has forsaken me. Why? He has embraced this present world. Another note: though he was an ardent professor, Paul's heart was not very affectionate towards him, for he said, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you." He did not say "the beloved Demas." It's true, Demas was an ardent professor, and he seemed to wear a cloak of religion, yet Paul was directed by the Holy Ghost only to speak of him as a professor.

The Holy Spirit directs Paul to speak of two companions, giving one the epithet "beloved" while only naming the other. Both men are very enthusiastic and companions together, but those who are godly, old disciples can favour one more than the other. They are both professors, and both have excellent parts and gifts, yet there is more spirituality and greater experiences in one than in the other, for it appears that there was more in Luke than in Demas. Your earthly-minded men afterwards prove to be apostates. Usually, before their grand apostasy, they manifest some deadness and waywardness of spirit towards that which is good. Yes, their spirits reveal them to be earthly spirits. They are fixated on the world.

Before a person dies, their breath will smell very earthy. You might say, "Oh, such a person cannot live, their breath is so earthy!" So it is with those who are great professors of religion. Those who have an intimate acquaintance with them before they apostatize smell their breath to be earthly in their duties, in their conversations. Oh, be careful of being earthly-minded, lest it be the root of apostasy. This may be written on an apostate's grave, "THIS WAS AN EARTHLY-MINDED MAN OR WOMAN IN SPITE OF THEIR PROFESSION."

And hence it is that they fell from the truth in times of danger. When they were put to the test, they were base backsliders from God and His truth.

THE NINTH EVIL. Earthly-mindedness wonderfully dulls the heart in prayer. It sinks the spirits of people and limits them in spiritual duties. Indeed, it defiles every duty of religion. In Psalm 119:37, David prays to God that He would turn away his eyes from beholding vanity and that He would quicken him in His Law. Certainly, the vanity of which he speaks means the things of the world, and by his eyes, he means the eyes of the mind, chiefly working on the thoughts of his heart after worldly things.

In verse 36, the Psalmist asks God to incline his heart towards His testimonies and away from covetousness. He prays, "Lord, do not let my heart be inclined to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from vanity so that my heart does not incline towards covetousness. Lord, do not let my thoughts be occupied with such worthless things, but revive me in Your Law." He is saying that when his mind is focused on earthly things, he feels dull and heavy in his spirit and cannot perform holy duties with ease. He has experienced that his heart becomes heavy and impure due to his thoughts and mind being consumed with vain earthly things. Therefore, he prays to God to not let his heart incline towards covetousness, but to turn his eyes away from vanity and revive him in God's Law.

If you want to be revived in God's Law and perform duties with ease, be cautious of looking at vanity and following after covetousness. An earthly spirit is a lifeless spirit. Just as dust is the most sluggish and lifeless element, similarly, an earthly spirit makes the heart sluggish, lifeless, and dead to any holy or spiritual duty. I ask your conscience to bear witness to this. Whenever you have set your heart and mind on earthly things and have been busy with worldly activities, you have found your heart dead when you come to have communion with God. A heart full of impurities will be lifeless in spiritual exercises. You often complain about vain thoughts and dead spirits during holy

duties, but the reason lies in your indulgence in worldly things. Your earthly-mindedness is the root cause of your deadness in spirit. How many prayers have been ruined by an earthly heart! On the other hand, those with spiritual hearts have enjoyed blessed communion with God and have been refreshed, while you have gone with a dead heart and returned with a dead heart. This restraint in duties comes from your earthly-mindedness.

THE TENTH EVIL. Earthly-mindedness is such a great evil that wherever it exists, it would be just for God to write your name in the earth. Those who have an earthly mindset and are not aware of it, should fear God because He may have already written their names in the dust. In Jeremiah 17:13, the writer speaks of such people, saying, "Oh, Lord, the hope of Israel, all who abandon You will be put to shame. Those who turn away from You will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters." It is evident that he is referring to those who have an earthly spirit because in the 11th verse he says, "Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay are those who gain riches by unjust means. At midlife they will lose their riches; in the end, they will become fools."

Then he describes the excellence of God and His sanctuary, saying, "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary." It is as if he is saying that there are foolish, vain people who seek nothing but to become richer in the things of the earth, but a glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of Your sanctuary. Lord, we see the excellence in You, Your ordinances, and Your sanctuary. Lord, the hope of Israel, in whom there is so much excellence, is there anyone who abandons You, who has so much excellence in Yourself, who are the hope of Israel? Lord, it would be just for their names to be written in the earth, for them to never partake in the good things that are in You, the excellent things that are in Your ordinances and in Your Gospel. But, Lord, let their names be written in the earth, let God write about such a man or woman, "EARTH SHALL BE THEIR PORTION." One day their mouths will be filled with earth, and that's all the good they will

receive from the Almighty. Those who have known God and the things of eternal life cannot but recognize this as a sad and grievous evil, to have their name written in the earth!

THE ELEVENTH EVIL. Earthly-mindedness is a great evil and those who are consumed by it are cursed, just like the serpent. This curse means that you grovel on the earth and your soul is trapped in sin, feeding on dust. While the saints feed on Jesus Christ, on His flesh and blood, on the hidden manna, on the bread of angels and on the corn from heaven, you satisfy yourself with earthly things. This is a sign of being a part of the serpentine brood and of the old serpent. It is a curse to be groveling on the earth and feeding on it.

THE TWELFTH EVIL. Earthly-mindedness is a dishonor to God and a scandal to religion. How can you profess to have an interest in Christ and not seek higher things in God? Is it possible that you hold the everlasting gospel in your hand, profess to be closer to God than others, and yet have the same desires for worldly things as those who are outside of the faith? This diminishes the excellence of grace, and it is like mixing impure metals with pure metals which takes away the splendor of the pure metal. In the same way, mixing earthliness with the profession of religion tarnishes its beauty and splendor.

Your way of living will never convince anyone or draw them to godliness because there is so much darkness and earthliness in it. People will say, "Yes, they talk a lot about religion, ordinances and such things, but they are as worldly as anyone else." Your conversation is so full of earthliness that bystanders will think that your profession of faith is just a verbal thing or a pretence. This brings a bad report on the things of God, like the spies who brought a bad report about the land of Canaan.

Every person who professes religion should strive to make it shine and display the beauty, loveliness, and glory of God's ways to all who see them. But if you live an earthly life and lie about your profession, it brings a great scandal to the name of Christ and His gospel that

you claim to uphold. This is a great evil, and it tarnishes the reputation of religion. Even those who have little religion have some sense of generosity and despise sordidness, which is what some religious people are known for. Don't let those who only have natural talents or education surpass you in this respect. Get rid of that greedy, miserly, and worldly disposition; it is only fitting for Judas, who betrayed his Lord for money. If you know someone who you fear doesn't have a genuine faith in God, but is generous, thoughtful, and concerned for others, be careful not to scandalize them. If these people were to come to love and embrace the power and strictness of religion, and if they were humbled by the Holy Spirit for their sins and saw the excellence of Jesus Christ, they would be great instruments for the Church and the Commonwealth. Therefore, it's a great evil to bring scandal upon such people. Instead, strive to live in such a way that they can see the beauty and excellence of religion through your actions. It would be better for you to give up everything in this world than to bring shame to the ways of God and the profession of the name and gospel of Jesus Christ.

THE THIRTEENTH EVIL. Earthly-mindedness greatly hinders preparation for death, and it can make death very painful and terrifying. "Be careful," Christ warned His disciples, "that your hearts are not weighed down with indulgence, drunkenness, and the worries of life." Note how He combines them all. It's odd, you might say, that Christ would warn them about this. We don't think they were drunkards, going to taverns or stumbling in the streets. But by drunkenness, He means any excessive consumption of food or drink, and religious people can fall into that trap by indulging too much in earthly pleasures.

However, even those who despise gluttony and drunkenness can become consumed by the worries of life. That's why Christ said, "Be careful that your hearts are not weighed down by the worries of life." Why? What harm would come from worrying about earthly things? The text says, "And so that day will come upon you unawares, like a trap that catches everyone on earth. Therefore, always be on the

watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen."

Although the Scripture speaks of Christ's coming, I can apply this to death. At the time of death, Christ comes specifically. There is a particular day of judgment when you die. This also applies to times of affliction. In such cases, the evil of earthly-mindedness becomes apparent because it hinders the preparation of the soul for affliction. Oh, earthly-mindedness will make your affliction painful and heavy. Affliction is very painful for an earthly spirit. If God takes away any of your worldly comforts because your heart clings too closely to them, they must be torn away from you, and that will cause you pain.

A person wearing loose clothing can easily take it off when going to bed at night, but if a person has a sore on their body, and their inner clothes stick to the sore, when they remove them, it causes great pain. Then they cry out in their pain! Truly, this earthly-mindedness comes from a disordered spirit, and earthly things cling to the hearts of men and women who are earthly, like inner clothes sticking to a sore on a person's body.

Now, when afflictions or death come to take away the earthly things they've been attached to, it's painful and distressing. For those with an earthly spirit, it's unlikely that they'll have any sense of peace or a clear conscience in times of sickness. It will only remind them how they've spent their time and energy on earthly things instead of focusing on what truly matters.

As death approaches, their spirit becomes increasingly troubled, and they may ask themselves, "What good is it that I have gained so much material wealth? What good is it to me now that I am on my death bed? What comfort can I have in all the things I have enjoyed on earth? I have troubled thoughts, but what is left now that death is upon me? It is likely that death will only reveal the impurities and leave behind the dirt and filth of my earthly pursuits. All the worldly

things I've been attached to are gone, but the guilt of my excessive care and affections is still upon my spirit."

I once knew a man who lived near my previous dwelling who had a covetous and earthly spirit. When he was on his deathbed, he called for his money and started swearing. He spoke to his bags of money and hugged them, saying, "Must I leave you now?" This man had spent his life pursuing these things, and his heart was set on them as his sole possession. But then he realized that he had to be stripped of all his material possessions, houses, lands, and money. For such a man, death is truly a terrible and distressing experience.

Now, what should the life of a Christian be but a continual preparation for death? Many of the heathens said that philosophy was only a preparation for death. Christianity, however, is uniquely a preparation for death. Therefore, do not let your heart be attached to the things of this world, but constantly think of death so that when God calls you to part from these things, you may do so with as much ease as a man who is going to bed and sheds his loose clothes. For the saints, the grave is like a bed where they fall asleep when they die. They can lay down all things and go to their sleep with ease and peace.

A person can have their conscience tell them, "I have been diligent in my calling, but I have been faithful to God rather than to the world. I can bid the world farewell now. I have done with it what it has done with me. My time was spent working for God, and He continued to provide me with what I needed. Now my work is done; farewell to the comforts of this world. I expect other comforts where I am going." Such a person can die with comfort, but those whose hearts are filled with the cares of this life will have the day of Christ come upon them unawares.

THE FOURTEENTH EVIL. Earthly-mindedness will eventually lead to destruction and drown your soul in perdition. There are two texts that speak to this. The first is here in this text. The Apostle says that

men who focus on earthly things will end in destruction. He joins both together: earthly-mindedness will lead to destruction in the end.

And the other place, for our purposes, is 1 Timothy 6:9, where the Apostle speaks of bringing them into snares and foolish lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. Some who are washing themselves in the Thames River go a little way at first, and then venture a little further and further, and at length, they are over their heads and ears. There they are drowned and cannot recover themselves. So it will be with your hearts if you don't pay attention.

You think you may venture so far into the things of this world. Why? Are they not good and in themselves lawful? "I did not get my estate by wrongdoing or cheating." And so, gradually, your hearts are stolen away from God and become enamoured with these earthly things. You get deeper and deeper into the world until, eventually, you are plunged in over your head and ears before you are aware, and then you cannot recover yourselves. That person who gives their heart to the things of this world and thinks that they will go no further, I bet a hundred to one that once these things have captured their heart, they will gain more and more power until this person is drowned in destruction and perdition.

A man or woman can be undone as much by earthliness and be damned and perish eternally as by adultery, drunkenness, murder, or any notorious sin. Many who are great professors of religion are likely to perish to all eternity due to the earthliness of their minds. Do not deceive yourselves into thinking that because you keep from those gross and notorious sins that others engage in, therefore you hope to be saved. Your earthliness may damn you as well as anything else. Upon dung-hills, you cast not only carrion and such nasty stuff, but the dust that you sweep from your houses. I may compare hell, which is the place where God casts those damned out of His presence, to the common dunghill upon which filthy creatures are cast. Now upon that dunghill, there are not only carrions and filthy

blasphemers, whoremasters and thieves, but there will also be dust upon that dunghill, and scrapings from your houses cast upon the dunghill of hell from the presence of God. Therefore, do not satisfy yourselves that you do not engage in such filthy, abominable lusts as others do.

If you have impure, materialistic hearts, you may be cast upon the dunghill as well as those who have lived most wickedly. Therefore, be cautious of earthly-mindedness.

There is a great deal of evil and danger in earthly-mindedness; may the Lord keep us from it. To further convince people that there is a great deal of earthly-mindedness in them, I shall expand my thoughts on this subject by providing some evidence. As preparation, I will begin by stating that a person can be earthly-minded, yet they may not realise it themselves. Moreover, they may perish eternally due to their earthly-mindedness, without even knowing it themselves.

Chapter 5:

Five Things May Be Wrought In A Man, and Yet Earthly-Minded

1. A person may recognize the vanity of worldly things, yet still have an earthly mind. Many believe they are not earthly-minded simply because they acknowledge that all these things are fleeting and meaningless.
2. A person may be content with their possessions but still be focused on earthly things, like Esau in Genesis 9:33. How many of us have gone as far as Esau and claimed we have enough? It's a shame for

religious people, who claim to be of Jacob's seed, to not be content with having enough while a man like Esau can.

3. People may talk about the vanity of worldly things, yet still have an earthly spirit when you speak to them.

4. A person may not use deceit or injustice to acquire wealth, yet still have an earthly mindset.

5. A person may appear to despise worldly things because of their dominant desire for something else. For example, some people who crave power may seem to disdain money. Those who desire to appear generous and those with sensual desires may seem to disregard the things of the world. However, a person may hate one thing only because it conflicts with another lust, not because they see it as a sin against God. Spendthrifts may condemn greed, but they don't truly hate it as a sin.

In Isaiah 13:17, the passage says, "I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver, and as for gold they shall not delight in it." The Medes were heathen, wicked people who had no grace in them at all, and yet the passage says that they shall not regard silver nor delight in gold. Some people think that because they find themselves above the base covetousness they see in others, they must have the work of grace in them. They do not care about silver and gold, or getting everything for themselves, and they look down on those who are of such a base, covetous way. They think their condition is good because they believe they are above that lust. But this is no different from a Mede. A heathen may disregard silver and gold, but how? It is because his spirit is upon another lust, that is the reason.

Can you say this, you who seem to scorn covetousness and hate such base sordidness as you see in some people, "The Lord has made me understand what communion with Himself in Jesus Christ means, and since that time, I thank God that my heart has been above all

these earthly things. And that's the reason that I look upon all these earthly things as vanity because the Lord has revealed to me those excellent and glorious things that are infinitely above these earthly things."

That's something, indeed. If you can be above earthliness on this ground, that's a good argument! Therefore, examine on what ground it is that your spirit is against such things, whether it is on the sight and experience of better things. If so, then it is right. But certainly, people can go far in appearing to be above earthly things in respect to the sin of covetousness and still have earthly minds. Now, I will proceed to give you arguments, besides those things to which I have hinted.

How do you value yourself and others? Is it not because others, or even yourself, have much of the things of this world? Can you truly value a poor but godly man over the richest and wicked man? Can you value yourself for having even the slightest work of grace in your heart that makes you more excellent than the greatest accumulation of your wealth? But as I have said, we have already discussed these things.

And then, where does the main source of joy and sorrow lie in people's hearts? Is it the loss of the presence of God or the loss of an estate? Is it the failure of a business venture or the commission of a sin? What brings you more joy? The profit gained from the Word of God or the gain from a financial transaction? Have you ever left a sermon, having received some truth from God and rejoiced more in that than from some bargain? These are two further proofs that we have not discussed before.

NINE PROOFS OF EARTHLY-MINDEDNESS

1. Consider this: when a person relies on earthly supports, on worldly help for the good they expect, if they can have those things, their heart seems to be uplifted and joyful. But there is

nothing else that can revive their heart, nothing else that can keep their spirit. Now, that which a person most trusts in, they have made their god. It properly belongs to God to put our trust in Him. We make God our God when we rely on Him. You may say, "I cannot trust in earthly things to bring me to God." No, but to rely on them for the comforts of this life while you are here on Earth is an indication of an earthly mindset. The truth is, the comfort of a person's life does not depend on any earthly thing that they might enjoy.

OBJECTION: You may argue, "Don't these things make our lives more comfortable?"

ANSWER: Yes, as far as God is pleased to use them for our good. But if your heart relies on them for comfort and does not look higher than them for comfort, even for outward support, then you certainly have an earthly mindset. Therefore, when you are about any business, you may use some earthly means to help you.

OBJECTION: You may argue, "God would have us to take all outward means to help us."

ANSWER: Indeed, God allows us to use all outward means to help us. But we should not put our trust in anything. If our riches increase, we should not set our hearts on them. If our friends increase, we should not set our hearts on them. We should trust in the living God. We should rely on the living God for all outward things in this world.

2. A second proof of earthly-mindedness is when people make the most provision for earthly things, both for themselves and their children. Do you think like this? "I don't know what I might need in the future and I have seen many people who lived well in their youth but later lived miserably. Therefore, I must make provision for the future." But do you reason like this for heavenly things? Don't you see many people who have made a great show of religion and then

come to nothing, dying in horror of conscience? So, let me lay up provision now against an evil time, that I may not fail in my soul matters as others have done. This is a sign that your minds are not focused on heavenly things.

God has given you children and, oh, how you toil and labor! You worry at night and as soon as you wake up in the morning, you think about what you can provide for their future and their inheritance. Now I ask you, before God, the searcher of all hearts, have you been more concerned about providing for their souls, for their spiritual and eternal wellbeing, than providing for their earthly possessions? Of course, it is lawful for parents to provide for their children, and those who do not are worse than unbelievers. But what is your primary concern? Are you more concerned about leaving them with a suitable inheritance than leaving them with instructions in the fear of God, an interest in Christ, and grace in their hearts? Are you reluctant to die before you can bring your estate to its fullness so that you can leave it to your children? Are you not more reluctant to die before you can see some work of grace in the heart of your children? These would be your thoughts if you were spiritually-minded.

"Oh, if I could just see some seeds of grace sown before I die, I would rejoice abundantly," repeated Austin's mother. The great thing she desired was to live long enough to see her son converted. God granted her desire, and then she found herself willing to die. There is nothing that will make the spiritual heart of a father or mother more willing to depart from this world than to find grace in the hearts of their children. "Oh, that I may see my child left under the promise in covenant with God before I die." But those whose cares and thoughts are mostly for earthly things in providing for themselves and their children give proof that their hearts are focused on earthly things.

3. The third proof of earthly-mindedness, which is quite significant, is that it is a secret and insidious sin. Therefore, I will take my time in explaining this point.

The proof is this: a man who is content with only a slight assurance of his heavenly matters, but seeks complete certainty in his earthly matters, is a sign of an earthly mind. When you talk to men who are earthly about the matters of their souls, you might ask them, "What evidence do you have that you are beyond just a formal profession, that you are better than the stony ground we read about in Scripture? What evidence do you have that the saving work of grace is accomplished in you? That you have crossed the gulf? That you have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of Jesus Christ? That your sins are forgiven, and your soul is justified? That you are at peace with God? What evidence do you have that peace has been made between God and your soul?"

Their response will likely be, "I hope I am converted. I trust in God's mercy. I am sure I have grace. I will be saved because God is merciful." But what evidence can they provide? They hardly know any. Many are like that because they don't understand what assurance means, and so they believe no one can be sure. We may have hope, but we can't achieve complete certainty.

A heart that is truly gracious and godly would hate for that to be true. They would not give up their share in the blessings of assurance for a thousand worlds, even if God made them kings or queens of the earth. But you have an earthly heart, and you don't focus much on assurance for matters of your soul and eternal estate. You are willing to take chances and gamble with those matters. But when it comes to the matters of the earth, you make sure you have complete certainty. You consult with one lawyer after another for advice. If there's anything you can do to be more certain, you will do it. If you hear that your neighbours have done something to be more certain than you, you won't rest until you have done the same. Is it the same with matters of your eternal estate?

Do you not hear of many God-fearing individuals who walk comfortably in the midst of afflictions because of their assurance of God's love? Some will be able to say, "Yes, and it's this Scripture I

rely on, and through God's mercy, He has worked upon my soul in revealing Himself to me, and such a promise I have gained much comfort from." But now, visit those on their deathbeds, and generally, all they say is that they hope in God's mercy. They cannot show the ground of their hope or the real effects upon their spirits by the Word. You have not obtained the assurance for your soul and eternal estate as others have, and yet you can go on quietly.

It concerns you, who are so busy making sure of your outward estate, to spend more thoughts and care in the matters of your soul and eternal estate than you have done before. Here's an earthly-minded person that can be content with a slight degree of sanctification and is satisfied with no assurance in the matters of the world but wants to make those things more and more certain continually.

4. Further, an earthly-minded person may be convinced of their earthliness because they are content with a little degree of sanctification, but they want more and more when it comes to worldly matters. They look at those who are the most successful in their field and want to attain the same heights. But in matters of religion, they look at the lowest Christians and are content to remain at the same level.

Take an earthly-minded person of a particular trade. If someone in their profession or calling started with as little as they did and is thriving more, they would desire to reach that level themselves, and they are troubled by their lack of wealth. That's how it is in the world.

But now, consider them in matters of God. There are people who started when you did, with as little means for their spiritual growth as you have, and yet they have thrived and excelled in the matters of God. Does this trouble you? Are you concerned about this?

Do you say, "I wish I could have the same degree of grace as that person who has a spiritual mind, is full of the joy of the Holy Spirit, and is able to depend on God in the absence of all outward comforts.

They surely enjoy much communion with God, but I am far below them." Do these thoughts bother you? It is typical for earthly-minded people to look at the lowest Christian and be satisfied that they are like them, but for worldly matters, they look at the highest and are not content until they reach that level. That's the fourth evidence.

5. A fifth proof is that earthly-minded people are very wise in worldly matters, but in spiritual matters, they are weak and simple. There are many people who are very ignorant when it comes to religion. If they do talk about saving knowledge, they speak like children, and one might wonder where their understanding lies. Now take such people to the matters of the world. Oh, how wise they are in their generation. How subtle and crafty they can be! They can see an objection and know how to respond to it. They can perceive anything that will enable them to see a profit far away. However, they cannot see things that hinder their souls. They are wise in their generation and have memories for worldly matters. They can understand and remember things, and they can meditate on them. But when it comes to meditating on a point of religion, they come to a halt. Let me ask you, does your conscience tell you the same? In worldly matters, when you walk from here to London, you can run your thoughts on business all the way. You can plan this and devise that. You can foresee this objection and that one, and you can answer each one in your mind. But let me ask you this, when you walk through the fields, try to settle on one meditation about Christ and see if you can sustain that meditation for the entire walk, whereas you can extend an earthly meditation no matter how far you travel. When you wake up in the middle of the night, your thoughts are on worldly things, and you can think and work with understanding, but how about the things of God? Oh, how barren and simple are your thoughts on them! You are hardly outdone by anyone in the things of the world, but in the matters of religion, you are surpassed, and every slight temptation overcomes you there.

6. Furthermore, you can identify earthly-mindedness by the conversation and words of people. According to 1 John 4:5, "They are

of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them." Their words are earthy. It's a bad sign when you visit a friend and fear that they might die because their breath smells so earthy. This indicates the decay of their bodies. Similarly, your hearts smell earthy, and it would be somewhat tolerable if you only talked about business during the days when your work requires it. However, even during the time that God has set apart for Himself, you often discuss the affairs of the world in your thoughts. You do it when you pray, and you do it when you hear the Word. The communication and discussions of people should reflect what they have learned from the Word, not go and talk about some earthly events.

This has caused the loss of many valuable truths. Perhaps, when you were hearing the Word, God had shed some beam of gospel light into your souls, and you lost it before you reached home, losing the impression of the truth you have heard. It's unsightly that those who come to hear the Word depart without any discourse about what they have heard. It is rare for you to be in the company of others and leave anything to refresh one another's spirits or further one another in the way of eternal life. Although God permits you to talk about your business, He would still have you to have something of eternal life before you depart.

7. Another indication of earthly-mindedness is when spiritual matters must give way to earthliness for every little business. You might sacrifice prayer time or converse in the Word less or hear the Word less if you have any business to do. When earthly things are as important as spiritual things, heaven must wait until the earth is satisfied. This is a bad sign of an earthly spirit. On the other hand, if your spirit is heavenly, the very first thing you would do when you wake up in the morning is to prepare your heart with something spiritual.

In Psalm 139:17-18, it is said, "How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am

still with Thee." That is proof of a spiritual mind, to be with God upon awakening. But now, I ask you, who are you with when you wake up? Can you say, "Lord, when I wake up, I am still with Thee. I feel inclined in my spirit to be on the matters of heaven, and when I am up, I would rather my worldly business give way than my spiritual duties."

8. When a person does not care how the church or the kingdom of Jesus Christ is doing, as long as their personal worldly matters are well, this is evidence of an earthly mind. During world events, they do not inquire about the state of the saints' privileges or the church's ark, as long as their own house is safe. It only takes the examination of your own heart to know how it has been during these trying times. In the time of war, Eli sat trembling because of the Ark of God. He did not sit trembling because the Philistines might prevail and take his home. No, it was because of the Ark of God. That was evidence of the spirituality of Eli's mind.

Similarly, it can be a great source of comfort in these dangerous times if your conscience tells you that the great thing your heart was concerned about in these evil days was "What shall become of Thy great name?" Lord, what shall become of religion? What shall become of the gospel? Lord, these were the things that took up my heart, not so much what should become of my estate and outward accommodations and relations in this world.

Examine your heart to see whether your concern is more for the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ or for the advancement of your estate. But for those who are most concerned about their outward estate and do not care much about the state of religion or the way of the kingdom of Christ, God speaks to their soul.

You are an earthly-minded person, so be careful not to fall into the great evil of earthly-mindedness, especially these words: "Whose end is destruction, who art drowned in perdition." Otherwise, in the future, this could be the thing you will cry out and curse yourself for.

"Oh, I had a base and earthly heart, and sought the things of the earth. I made my portion there, and in the meantime, the blessed God has been forsaken. I have lost my portion in the Holy Land, for I had my portion in Egypt among the Egyptians, according to my own choice."

9. The more spiritual a truth that is revealed, the less it affects his heart. Some religious truths move him, perhaps, but they are like mere bywords to him, and he doesn't pay them much attention. The more spiritual an ordinance is, the less his spirit is moved by it. If he comes to the Word and there is some earthly, natural excellence mingled there - like natural abilities, wisdom, wit, eloquence, and learning - that will move him. It may be that some interesting story is more pleasing to him than the profound truths that are revealed in the Word, such as the joy of communion with God, the longing for Jesus Christ's coming, living by faith upon a promise, the excellence in suffering for Jesus Christ, and the mortifying of inward lusts through self-denial. These spiritual truths are given little value by an earthly-minded man.

When you tell him about the privileges of the saints, the mysteries of the gospel, or anything spiritual, it is but a notion to him. As it is with men who are on the earth, they look up to heaven and see the things of heaven only slightly. Why do the stars appear so small to us here? It is because we are on earth. The earth seems vast to us, but the stars seem small, even though they are far bigger than the earth. If we were in heaven, the heavenly bodies would appear vast to us, and the earthly bodies would scarcely be discerned. If men's hearts were heavenly, all the things of the earth would seem small to them, but because they are earthly, the things of heaven and spiritual mysteries are very insignificant in their eyes.

Chapter Six:

Seven Reasons of Men's Earthly-Mindedness

I will now explain the reasons why people are so focused on earthly matters, instead of spiritual and heavenly things. In short, I will give you these reasons for it.

Firstly, people believe that earthly things are real, while spiritual and heavenly things are just abstract ideas. They are deceived in this belief, as the Scripture speaks of spiritual things as the only real things, while earthly things have no real value at all. In Proverbs 23:5, it says, "Will you set your eyes on that which is not?," speaking of the riches of the world, which have no true value. But in Proverbs 8:20-21, it says, "I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasuries full." The honors and wealth of the earth are merely an illusion and a worthless show. Even though Bernice and Agrippa came with great pomp and showiness, they were mere illusions. However, to a person who is focused on earthly things, these material possessions are considered to be real things, and that is why they value them. Foolish people consider wisdom to be a lie.

Secondly, people view earthly things as necessary, even though the Scripture tells us of only one thing that is truly necessary. They think that heavenly things are only relevant for the future, while they need earthly things now. They may need to be reconciled with God, receive forgiveness of their sins, or find peace in their conscience. They may only see the need for these things when they depart from this life. The majority of people foolishly believe that spiritual and heavenly things are not necessary for life in the present, even though this is eternal life. In fact, we can enjoy eternal life here in this world. However, people often consider all spiritual things to be relevant

only in the future, when they have passed from this world and are no longer seen.

Thirdly, earthly things are more appealing and more suitable to people's hearts. It is not surprising that people are more focused on earthly things, since they are made from the earth and have nothing but the traits of the first Adam. The first man was from the earth and was earthly. Even in the morning of the day of his creation, when man's estate was innocent, the happiness that he had was merely earthly in comparison to the things that have now been revealed through the gospel.

Let us consider man when he was in paradise. That paradise was only an earthly place. However, let us now look at man in his fallen and corrupted state. He cannot help but be earthly, and everything he desires is in line with that. Comfort does not come so much from the goodness of a thing, but from the suitability of the object with the faculty. The things of the earth are suitable to people who are of the earth, and that is why they desire them. The heart will overwhelmingly pursue that which is suitable to it.

Fourthly, the things of the earth have a very attractive appearance in the flesh. They have a kind of lovely look to the senses, and to the corrupt reason that is now influenced by sin. We have a very elegant expression of these earthly things and the earthly-minded people who have their hearts set upon them. It can be found in Galatians 6:12, which states, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh." The words are to indicate when a person looks neat and tidy. Some people dress themselves meticulously and, having good-looking bodies, they look so clean, fine, handsome, and very splendid to the eyes of all who behold them. In the same way, those who are false teachers desire to make a fair show in the flesh. That is, they regard the things of the flesh as those that are attractive to the eyes and want to have everything about them so perfect that they may look neat and present themselves beautifully before the world.

Oh, this is their happiness, and they take satisfaction in it! They appear to have fine properties, appealing clothing, and all sorts of fancy items. This looks so good in the eyes of the world, and that is why their hearts are set upon them. They are the enemies of the cross of Christ. They believe that suffering for Christ, poverty, or disgrace looks terrible. However, those who desire to make a fair show in the flesh, who would have their countenances well washed, fair, and beautiful wherever they go, and want to be somebody in this world, forsake the truths of God and seek to provide for themselves in the things of the flesh.

Fifthly, it's natural for people to be more interested in earthly things since they have never known anything better. It's no wonder they focus more on earthly things. Children who are born and grow up in a dungeon, for instance, would be happy playing up and down in the dungeon since they have never known any better place. Similarly, people who have never known the reality, excellence, and glory of spiritual things can mind earthly things better. But when the Lord opens their understanding to see the beauty of spiritual things, they wonder at their former blindness in desiring the poor, low, mean, and foolish things of the earth.

Sixthly, earthly principles are continuously imprinted on people through their conversations with other earthly-minded people. In Psalm 49:11, it says, "They think that their houses will continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. They set their hearts on earthly things." Verse 13 adds, "Their way is folly," yet their descendants approve of what they say. They are praised by people. They see that everyone applauds them for their ways, and when they talk with each other, they talk about earthly things. They notice that everyone is following the things of the earth, and they want these toys too. That also influences their minds to think more about earthly things.

Lastly, people's experiences of the pleasures of the earth distract them from spiritual things and make them focus on earthly things.

Even though these are the reasons why people focus on earthly things, someday it will be revealed to be foolishness.

Even if earthly-minded people consider themselves wise and believe that they have good reasons for what they do, and think that anyone who does not grovel in the ground like a mole with them and consider religious matters mere words and talk is foolish, I will find contentment in focusing on heavenly things. Their way will be proven to be folly. As the Holy Spirit said in Psalm 49, "Their way is folly."

In the end, the wise people of the earth who have sought after earthly things and pride themselves in their ways, will prove to be the greatest fools. This is how the Holy Ghost sees them. In Jeremiah 17:11, it says, "Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay is the man who makes a fortune unjustly. In the middle of his days his riches will desert him, and in the end, he will be a fool." Such a person praises themselves for what they presently possess, but in the end, they will be revealed as foolish.

Chapter Seven:

Eleven Considerations to Take the Mind Off of Earthly-Mindedness

The main objective thus far has been to shift the focus of men and women away from the things of the earth. This preparation is essential for what follows, which is of utmost importance, our conversations in heaven. However, a person's conversation cannot be in heaven until their mind is taken off the earth, until the disease of earthly-mindedness is cured. Therefore, we must now put forward some ideas that may help redirect men's minds from the earth.

Firstly, consider this: even if you could possess all the things of the earth that your heart desires, there is still not enough good in them to undo the evil of the least sin, not even the least sinful thought. Your mind is fixed on the earth, and you believe that you will be blessed if you have what others have. However, let me tell you that if you had but one sinful thought, there is more evil in that than there is good in all that you could acquire during your lifetime. Therefore, it would be more beneficial for you to focus on avoiding sin, getting the evil of sin removed, and mortifying your sins. This should concern you more than concentrating on the things of the earth. That's one consideration.

A second consideration that may divert the hearts of men from the things of the earth is this: the main things that are valued in the earth have been the portion of reprobates in the past and continue to be so. They shall be the portion of multitudes whom God hates and has designated to glorify His infinite justice eternally. Should your heart and mind be fixed upon things that are the portion of reprobates? Will the portion of a reprobate satisfy you? Will it serve you? Are you satisfied with dog meat? If it will not satisfy you, then why is it that your mind is so focused on the things of the earth?

Perhaps you are poor and insignificant in the world. Your mind is focused on something small. You do not expect to have great things in the world, yet you are focused on these little things as if that were your portion and happiness, such as a small amount to furnish your house or to provide for yourself and your family. Oh, friend! Even if it were possible for you to gain control of the entire world, you would still not have any more than what has been the portion of those whom God has hated. If kingdoms and empires have been the portions of reprobates, why do you focus excessively on things that are lower and allow the strength of your heart to flow out upon such things?

The third consideration we present is that God has made man for higher things than the things of this earth. We should ask ourselves,

"For what purpose did God create human beings? Why did He send them into this world?" Among all the creatures on this earth, only humans can know God, the infinite First Being of all things. God has given them a nature capable of conversing with Him. Surely, there must be other things that God created humans for besides just having food, drink, and clothing, and living for a while to enjoy earthly creations.

Don't we often read that Jesus Christ was both God and man, took on human nature, and died for humankind? Surely, there must be some other kind of things that are the fruit of the redemption purchased by the blood of Christ, which are higher than the things of the earth. My brothers and sisters, if only you would realize that God has great, glorious, high, and wonderful thoughts about mankind. This would be a powerful way to take your hearts off the things of this earth when your hearts are focused on them. Are these the things God created humans for? Did God not have higher thoughts in creating humankind? In the Word of God, don't I find that when man was created, there was a kind of divine consultation with the Trinity, "Let us make man in our image?" God had higher thoughts of humans than of other things. If humans were created only to dig in the earth, then the thoughts of God concerning humans would be very low and mean.

Fourthly, just as God has higher thoughts concerning humans, the dignity of human nature, the rational soul of humans, is of too high a birth to have the strength of it spent on earthly things. God breathed His soul into man. It is a kind of divine spark. The human soul is of the same nature as angels, a spirit like angels have. The thoughts of the mind, the faculties, and powers of the soul are too precious to be poured out as water upon the ground.

If a man had a machine that could turn dirt, straw, and sticks into gold, he would not use it, for the human mind is too precious to be spent on the things of this earth. The human mind is of an excellent and wide-ranging nature, capable not only of conversing with angels,

but also with the eternal God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is a great evil to invest the strength of such a faculty into such low, dirty, and base things as the earthly-minded do. Recognize the dignity of your nature, the excellence of your mind, and the soul of man, which is of transcendent worth. When weighed against the world, it is nothing. As Christ said, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?"

The soul of the lowest galley-slave is worth more than heaven, earth, the sun, moon, stars, and all their hosts, as well as all the silver and golden mines, and the unsearchable riches of the great and wide sea. In fact, the soul of the most humble beggar who begs for bread at your doorstep is worth more than all of these combined. If God has placed such a heavenly spark into man's bosom and he is to use it for nothing but to be an earthworm that creeps on the ground, it is a great evil.

The fifth consideration is the uncertainty of all earthly riches. Any calamity could take away everything that one's mind is set on in the world. A little too much heat could put you into a fever, and where is your joy then? Your body will be too hot or too cold, and all your comfort in this life is gone. If you go out and are wounded by an enemy, what comfort will you get from all these things? You are in the midst of countless hazards every moment that could take away all the comforts of this world. Usually, when most people's minds are fixed on earthly things, that is when God strikes them in those very things. That's when they are closest to losing their worldly comforts, when their minds are most focused on them.

As you know, in the parable of the rich man in the Gospel, he was praising himself and said, "Soul, soul, take your ease. You have goods laid up for many years." But that very night a message came to him, saying, "You fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be?" Similarly, when Nebuchadnezzar was admiring the palace he had built for his glory, a message from

heaven came to him, and he was cast out of his royal court to live among the beasts of the field.

You may have experienced God crossing you in earthly things when your mind and heart have been most attached to them, and it may have been a mercy. It is a greater mercy to be crossed in those things than to prosper in them, for it may indicate that God intends good for your soul. Many who have been truly godly but have been preoccupied with earthly things have seen God come and cross them in a timely manner to show them the vanity of their hearts and minds. It was a happy cross for them, and it led them to see the things of Christ in a new light.

Sixthly, consider what happened to those who were preoccupied with earthly things in previous generations and had all the worldly accommodations they desired. What happened to Agrippa and Bernice, for example, with all their pomp and greatness? They have acted out their parts and have departed from this world, and all their vanity is buried with them. There is no difference between the poor and the rich when they die; they all go the same way. They lived for a little time and flourished in the things of the earth, and now they are gone, leaving a great deal of guilt behind them. Look to their example and see what became of them. Realize that your own fate will be the same before long. The wheel of life is turning, and soon you will be as low as they. Therefore, it is a powerful means to turn your heart away from the things of this earth.

Seventh, consider how short the time is that you have in this world. That's the argument of the Apostle, because the time is short. Therefore, let us use the world as if we used it not. Therefore, let our hearts be taken off these things. We have only a little time and a great deal of work. We have in this short winter's day of life to provide for eternity. Considering the great weight of the work that depends on us here in this world, it may be a mighty reason for us to bid adieu to all the things of this world. If we had enough time for

our work, and were sure of our time, then we might spend it on trifles.

If a man comes into the city to do some business of great weight and consequence, and has only a little time to spend on it, he does not mind anything he sees in the city, he does not mind anybody that comes by him, but goes up and down the streets minding his own business. Oh, it should be so with us, brethren. Consider the great work we have to do, and the little time we have to effect that work in. Upon our little, short, uncertain inch of time, depends matters of more consequence than ten thousand, thousand worlds are worth, and if we miscarry in this little time of our lives, we are lost and undone forever. Better we had never been born, or had been made toads or serpents, or the vilest beasts, than unreasonable creatures.

Oh, have you so much time for spending the very spirits of your souls upon the things of this earth, can you spare so many hours? Certainly, if God made known to you what eternity means, if the Lord caused the fear of eternity to fall upon you, you would not misspend as much time as you do. Many times, though, you complain of a lack of time for spiritual things. Oh, how much time do you spend in letting out your thoughts and affections upon the things of the earth? More than you need!

In the eighth place, consider that a little will carry us through this world. We are here but as on a pilgrimage or a voyage. A little will serve to carry us through this world. Men will not take more on a journey than may help them. If a man who is going on a journey should get a whole bundle of sticks and lay them on his shoulder, and you ask him the reason why he is carrying that bundle, he might say that he is going on a great journey, and he does not know how many sticks he will need to help him. Now, it's true, to carry a staff in a man's hand will help him, thus Jacob was helped by his staff over Jordan, but to carry a bundle upon his shoulder will hinder him.

Let us consider that a little is enough to serve our purpose. If we have food and drink, and clothing, we should be content, as the Apostle said. In the past, many of God's servants passed through this world with very little. In fact, some found that the less they had, the more peace and comfort they found in God, making them more fit to die. Ecolampadius, for example, was very poor when he was on his deathbed. He professed that he would not have been richer than he was because he saw how it hindered him. Having less made it easier for him to pass out of the world with more ease and quiet. Therefore, we should not set our minds on the things of this world, as we do not have as much need for them as we think.

Ninthly, consider that there is no comfort or good to be found in the things of this world any further than God will be pleased to use them. They are merely channels to convey the blessings and goodness of God to us. Remember, man does not live on bread or meat alone. You are mistaken to think that if you had such and such things, you would have a comfortable life. The truth is, it is God who comforts the heart, even through these things.

A notable scripture that supports this idea can be found in Psalm 62. The Holy Ghost says, "Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them." Do not focus on them. Why? Because God has spoken twice, and it bears repeating. In verse 11, the scripture says, "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God." If riches increase, do not set your heart on them, because all power to do any good belongs to God. It is not in riches where you will find the power to make you happy, but in God alone.

I admit that this is a spiritual meditation that may be difficult for those who are earthly-minded to understand. However, where earthly-mindedness prevails in the saints, this meditation may be of benefit. The truth is, the power to provide true comfort is not in creature comforts or in the things of this world. Even if I had a thousand times more than what I have now, I might still be

miserable and have as little comfort as those who have very little. Therefore, let us set our affections on things above and not on the things of this earth.

Tenthly, let us understand this deeply. If we are godly, God promises to provide the things we need in this life. We should cast our cares upon God, for He cares for us. We should not worry about the things of this world, for our Heavenly Father knows what we need. He takes care of the lilies, and we are much more valuable to Him than they are. Children do not worry about providing for themselves because they know that their fathers will provide for them. A child who has a father and friends to make provision for him is much relieved by this. However, those who are fatherless and friendless may have an excuse to worry, "I have to take care of myself because I have no one to provide for me." But the saints cannot say this, for we have a Father who will provide for us. All the earth belongs to the Lord, including our earthly father. So, why should we care so much about the things of this earth? Our care should be to do our duty to our Father and to walk as His children. We should not focus on the things of this earth. To do so is to disavow the care of our Father for us. Can we believe that God gave His Son for us and not give us all things? Does not godliness have the promises of this life as well as of the life to come? Oh, you unworthy child who professes an interest in such promises and hopes that God has done such things for you, and yet has your heart set on the things of this earth, as if the Lord had settled you here only and left you to shift for yourself from door to door. No, certainly, the care of God is over His people in the things of this earth as truly as it is over them in regard to spiritual and eternal things.

Some men think, or at least believe, that they trust God for their souls but cannot trust Him for their bodies. However, faith teaches us to trust God for both our bodies and our souls, for God cares for both, and both were redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. I have already told you that those who fear the Lord shall never lack anything that is good for them. These considerations can help to turn our hearts away from the things of this earth.

The final point I want to make is that all who profess religion should be dead to the world, or at least aim to be. If you are truly religious, you are dead to the world. As the Scriptures say in Colossians 3:2-3, "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." The Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians, telling them they were dead and yet alive. The Bible speaks a lot about the death of the saints. For example, in 1 Timothy, it says that women who live for pleasure are dead even while they live. Similarly, Christians are dead to the world while they live, dead in a spiritual sense. "I have been crucified with Christ," says the Apostle, "and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." We are dead with Christ, and so we should be dead to the world.

In 1 Corinthians 15:29, the phrase "baptized for the dead" is often misinterpreted to mean that converts were baptized on behalf of dead people. However, the word *fur* in the original text is better translated as "for dead men." The baptism of converts was a sign of their profession to live as if they were dead to the world. This is the profession of Christians - to be as dead to the world. Do not dishonour your religious profession. It is a greater evil for religious people to be earthly-minded than for anyone else. Yet, how many people are guilty of this? Martin Luther observed that when God revealed Himself to Abraham and promised to multiply his descendants, He used two similes. He said He would make Abraham's seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand upon the seashore. Luther believed these two expressions represented two kinds of Abraham's seed. Some would be like the stars in heaven, which symbolized those who are heavenly-minded, while others would be like the sand of the sea, which referred to those who claim to be of Abraham's seed but have earthly spirits.

My beloved brethren, we must strive to cultivate hearts and minds that show us to be the true seed of Abraham, as the stars in the sky, through our heavenly-mindedness. We will come to that when we discuss how Christians should conduct themselves in heaven.

Now, someone might ask, "Can't we focus on both earthly and heavenly things?" This is a common misconception. You cannot serve two masters, God and wealth. The scripture in Colossians 3:2 makes this clear: "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." These two things are opposed to each other. If you focus on earthly things, you cannot focus on heavenly things at the same time.

But you may argue, "We need these things while we are on earth. How can we not focus on them? When we go to heaven, then we will have the right disposition." To that, I respond that although Christians live on earth, they are not of the earth. There is a significant difference between someone who is of the earth and someone who lives on the earth. Christ said that He was not of the earth, even though He lived on it for a time. In John 3:31, He said, "He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way." Christians are on earth, but they are not of the earth. They are a people redeemed from the earth! Yes, we need things while we are on earth, but we must not focus on them. In Matthew 6, when Christ spoke against being anxious about what we will eat, drink, or wear, He said, "Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all." We do have needs, but we have greater needs for other things. We are on earth to provide for eternity and to live to honor Christ and spread His gospel. We need nothing on earth except in relation to higher things. Thus, do not let the argument for focusing on earthly things be an excuse for an earthly spirit.

In closing, I urge you to reflect on this matter of earthly-mindedness and provide some guidance on how to avoid it.

EXHORTATIONS

Considering what has been said, I urge you to take it seriously to heart, especially if you are a young beginner in the way of religion, lest it ends up like many who are digging veins of gold and silver

underground. While they dig in those mines for riches, the earth often falls upon them and buries them so that they never come up out of the mine again. Similarly, it can happen to many who are beginning in the way of religion and are digging in the mines of salvation for unsearchable riches that are far better than gold and silver.

So, while seeking grace and godliness, be careful not to be covered with the earth while you dig in the world. Keep a place open to heaven. Otherwise, if you dig too deep, noxious gas vapours will come up from the earth, if it doesn't fall on you first. There will be noxious gas vapours to choke you if there is no opening to let in the fresh air that comes from heaven. Those who are digging in mines are very careful to leave a place open for fresh air to come in. So, even though you may follow your calling and do the work that God has set you here for like others, be as diligent in your calling as any, but still keep a passage open to heaven that fresh gales of grace may come into your soul. If, at any time, you are in the world for just one day and have no spiritual air from heaven, take heed that a vapor is coming up that will choke you. Oh, that Christians would consider this while they are here below.

I recall reading Austin's comments on Psalm 72:19, "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, and his enemies shall lick the dust." In a witty way, he applied it to earthly-minded people by saying, "If you lick the dust, by this, you will come to be counted as one of the enemies of God." It's true that the context of the verse is different, but take heed that in this metaphorical sense, you do not lick the dust and come to be counted as an enemy of God. You who would be counted as friends and seek a reconciliation with God, do not lick the dust and always be here as moles upon the earth. Moles, though blind, are said to have their eyes open if they are on top of the ground, and then they shake and tremble. So, though the earth may close the eyes of men here for a while, certainly, there will be a day when their eyes will be opened to see how they have deceived themselves. It's worse in the time of the gospel to be an earthly-

mindful person than at other times. It was not such an evil thing to be an earthly-minded person in the time of the Law, when all the promises of God were carried in a kind of earthly way.

This is not to say that all promises made under the Law were merely earthly, but they were expressed in earthly terms. Therefore, you will find that when God promised great mercies to His people in the time of the Law, it was conveyed in earthly expressions such as gold, silver, and other material possessions. Promises for heaven were expressed as living in the land of Canaan, as it was a type of heaven. They were attracted to earthly things when God revealed Himself to them in an earthly way.

Now, in the time of the gospel, lift up your hearts, for your calling is from above. Heavenly things are now revealed, and He who is from above has come among us. The heavens are open, and the glory of it shines upon the churches in a far brighter manner than before. Therefore, gospel light magnifies the sin of earthly-mindedness, and above all times, the hearts of men and women should be disentangled from the things of the earth.

Chapter Eight:

Five Directions How to Get our Hearts Free from Earthly-Mindedness

The First Direction

Firstly, in order to be disengaged from earthly things, be watchful over your thoughts. Do not allow your mind to wander too far into worldly matters. Spend as much time as you can in meditation on spiritual things. Many people think it is okay to let their thoughts

roam free, as the things they think about are not necessarily sinful. However, thoughts can easily lead to a wandering heart, so it is important to keep a close eye on your thoughts and make sure they align with what is written in Scripture.

The Second Direction

Another way to become disengaged from earthly-mindedness is to be humble and deeply repentant for sin. Those who have a heart that is set on the world have not truly understood the weight and burden of sin. But when God lays the weight and burden of sin upon the soul, it quickly takes the focus off earthly things. People who have experienced the crushing weight of sin know what it means to have to deal with an infinite God. When they are burdened by the wrath of a just God, they realize that there are more important things to focus on than the things of this life. If God would humble your heart, the humility of your spirit would awaken you, remove the dullness and deadness of your spirit, and stir you up to look beyond the things of this life.

The Third Direction

Furthermore, let us look at the examples of the saints who were the most precious servants of God in the past. Notice how they regarded themselves as pilgrims and strangers in this world. Take your time to read Hebrews 11:13, which says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

So, let us take note of the following verse, which says, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented." Who were these people? They were those whom the world did not deserve. They wandered in deserts, mountains, dens, and caves of the earth. Nevertheless, they were

such valuable saints of God that the world did not deserve them. As we reflect on how joyfully these servants of the Almighty went through all their wilderness experiences, this should make us feel ashamed of our earthly-mindedness, and would be a significant help to us.

The Fourth Direction

Moreover, if we consider the great account we must give for all earthly things, we will realise that we only focus on the comfort of these things. But we must also think about the account we must give for them. This should help to take our hearts off earthly-mindedness. Additionally, we should ask ourselves, what good it would be to remember the contentments and pleasures we had in this world if we were to die and go the way of all flesh?

The Fifth Direction

Above all, keep your focus on Jesus Christ and meditate on His death. That is the greatest thing that will take your heart away from earthly things. Contemplate Christ crucified, how He, who was the Lord of heaven and earth, put Himself in a lowly condition solely to redeem us. Contemplating the death of Jesus Christ will cause your heart to become deadened to the world. In Philippians 3, we find a notable text for this, in the example of Paul. He counted everything as dung and rubbish for the sake of Jesus Christ. In the 8th verse, he says, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ." Then, in the 10th verse, he adds, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death."

Paul desired to be so conformed to the death of Christ that he counted all things in the world as rubbish in comparison to that. Paul kept the death of Christ in his thoughts and meditated on it often,

and that meditation had a great impact on his spirit. It made him consider all these things as rubbish, as dog food by comparison, in order to have fellowship with the death of Christ.

Some of you may be thinking about the glory of Christ in heaven, and that may, for the time being, make you less worldly. But let me encourage you to meditate on the death of Christ and understand that there is an excellence in conforming even to the death of Christ, such an excellence that may take your heart away from the things of the world. It is said of the King of France that he once asked about an eclipse, saying, "I have so much business on earth that I take little notice of the things of heaven."

My dear brothers and sisters, in conclusion, I urge you not to be counted among those who are so preoccupied with worldly pleasures that they have no time for Jesus Christ. Do not argue that you have so many earthly responsibilities that you cannot pay attention to heavenly things. Surely, the saints of God have their focus on things above, and we will see this in the future. Their business, trading, and goals are all focused on higher things than the things of this world. There are things that a person can devote their thoughts and affections to as much as they want. This shows the emptiness of the things of this world, that a person must be very careful how much they care about them. They cannot enjoy the comforts of this world without some fear. But when they converse with heaven, they can give themselves over completely. This demonstrates the excellence of these heavenly things.

Those of you who are poor and lowly in the things of this world, do not be discouraged because God commands us not to set our minds on them. Surely, these things are not very important since God tells us not to focus on them. Oh, the true value lies in things that are heavenly and spiritual, where the saints have their conversation! But there is more on this topic in the following TREATISE OF GOSPEL CONVERSATION.

MONERGISM BOOKS

A Treatise on Earthly-Mindedness by Jeremiah Burroughs,
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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions February 2-23. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn Or 97068