

The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded: Chapter Two — *A particular account of the nature of this grace and duty of being spiritually minded: How it is stated in, and evidenced by, our thoughts.*

MAIN THESIS: “But ordinarily voluntary thoughts are the best measure and indication of the frame of our minds.” (26)

- “I mean such [thoughts] as are voluntary, such as the mind of its own accord is apt for, inclines and ordinarily betakes itself unto.” (27)
- “To be spiritually minded, in the first place, is to have the course and stream of those thoughts which we ordinarily retreat unto, which we approve of as suited unto our affections, to be about spiritual things.” (29)
- “If the thoughts that naturally arise and spring up in us are for the most part vain, foolish, sensual, earthly, selfish, such is the treasure that is in our hearts, and such are we; but where the thoughts that thus naturally proceed from the treasure that is in the heart are spiritual and holy, it is an argument that we are spiritually minded.” (33)
- “But because all men, unless horribly profligate, have thoughts about spiritual things, yet we know that all men are not spiritually minded, we must consider what is required unto such thoughts to render them a certain indication of the state of our minds. And there are these three things required hereunto: — FIRST, That they be natural, arising from ourselves, and not from outward occasions.” (29)

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

1. **The Preacher:** “Men may have a multitude of thoughts about the affairs of their callings and the occasions of life, which yet may give no due measure of the inward frame of their hearts. So men whose calling and work it is to study the Scripture, or the things revealed therein, and to preach them unto others, cannot but have many thoughts about spiritual things, and yet may be, and oftentimes are, most remote from being spiritually minded.” (27)
2. **The Bible-Reader:** “So is it with them who oblige themselves to read the Scriptures, it may be so many chapters every day. Notwithstanding the diligent performance of their task, they may be most remote from being spiritually minded. See Ezekiel 33:31. But there is a certain track and course of thoughts that men ordinarily betake themselves unto when not affected with present occasions. If these be vain, foolish, proud, ambitious, sensual, or filthy, such is the mind and its frame; if they be holy, spiritual, and heavenly, such may the frame of the mind be judged to be. But these things must be more fully explained.” (27-28)
3. **The Frightened Unbeliever:** “Convictions put a kind of force upon the mind... but so soon as the power of conviction decays or wears off, that the mind is no more sensible of its force and impression, the thoughts of it return again unto their old course and track... Men in troubles, dangers, sickness, fears of death, or under effectual conviction of sin from the preaching of the word, will endeavor to think and meditate on spiritual things; yea, they will be greatly troubled that they cannot think of them more than they do, and esteem it their folly that they think of any thing else: but as freedom and deliverance do approach, so these thoughts decay and disappear; the mind will not be compelled to give place unto them any more.” (33-34)

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. **Soil and Grass:** “As the nature of the soil is judged by the grass which it brings forth, so may the disposition of the heart by the predominancy of voluntary thoughts; they are the original actings of the soul, the way whereby the heart puts forth and empties the treasure that is in it, the waters that first rise and flow from that fountain.” (26)
2. **A Well of Water (contrast):** “Psalm 45:1, saith the psalmist, ‘My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.’ He was meditating on spiritual things, on the things of the person and kingdom of Christ. Hence his heart ‘bubbled up’ (as it is in the original) ‘a good matter.’... From hence doth our Savior give us the great description of spiritual life. It is ‘a well of living water springing up into everlasting life,’ John 4:10,12. The Spirit, with his graces residing in the heart of a believer, is a well of living water. Nor is it such a well as, content with its own fullness, doth not of its own accord, without any instrument or pains in drawing, send out its refreshing waters, as it is with most wells, though of living water; for this is spoken by our Savior in answer and opposition unto that objection of the woman, upon his mention of giving living water, verse 10: “Sir,” saith she, “thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; whence wilt thou have this water?” verse 11. “True,” saith he, “such is the nature of this well and water, dead, earthly things, — they are of no use, unless we have instruments, lines and buckets, to draw withal. But the living water which I shall give is

of another nature. It is not water to be kept in a pit or cistern without us, whence it must be drawn; but it is within us, and that not dead and useless, but continually springing up unto the use and refreshment of them that have it.” For so is it with the principle of the new creature, of the new nature, the Spirit and his graces, in the hearts of them that do believe, — it doth of itself and from itself, without any external influence on it, incline and dispose the whole soul unto spiritual actings that tend unto eternal life.” (31)

3. **Water-Flow:** “It is in the nature of water to descend; but apply an instrument unto it that shall make a compression of it and force it unto a vent, it will fly upwards vehemently, as if that were its natural motion. But so soon as the force of the impression ceaseth, it returns immediately unto its own proper tendency, descending towards its center.” (33-34)
4. **Stream vs. Thunderstorm:** “Water that riseth and floweth from a living spring runneth equally and constantly, unless it be obstructed or diverted by some violent opposition; but that which is from thunder-showers runs furiously for a season, but is quickly dried up.” (35)
5. **Fertilizer vs. Fertility:** “When you till and manure your land, if it brings forth plentiful crops of corn, it is an evidence that the soil itself is good and fertile; the dressing of it only gives occasion and advantage to put forth its own fruit-bearing virtue. But if in the tilling of land, you lay much dung upon it, and it brings forth here and there a handful where the dung lay, you will say, “The soil is barren; it brings forth nothing of itself.” (36)

Key Scripture Verses (in order of citation)

Romans 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Proverbs 23:7 *For as [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he.*

Matthew 12:35 *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.*

Ezekiel 33:31 *So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain.*

Genesis 6:5 *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Isaiah 57:20 *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*

Psalms 49:11 *Their inner thought is that their houses will last forever, their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.*

Isaiah 64:6 *But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

James 1:14 *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.*

Joshua 7:21 *“When I [Achan] saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, & a wedge of gold weighing 50 shekels, I coveted them & took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.”*

Isaiah 32:6-8 *For the foolish person will speak foolishness, and his heart will work iniquity: to practice ungodliness, to utter error against the LORD, to keep the hungry unsatisfied, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. Also the schemes of the schemer are evil; he devises wicked plans to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaks justice. But a generous man devises generous things, and by generosity he shall stand.*

Job 31:1 *I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?*

Matthew 5:28 *But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

2 Peter 2:14 *...having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.*

Proverbs 23:31 *Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly. [vv. 33-35](#)*

Psalms 45:1 *My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready write .*

John 4:10-14 *Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”*

Matthew 12:33 *Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.*

Psalms 78:34-37 *When He slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and sought earnestly for God. Then they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth, and they lied to Him with their tongue; for their heart was not steadfast with Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant.*

Jeremiah 13:23 *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*