

The Grace and Duty of Being Spiritually Minded: Chapter Five — *The objects of spiritual thoughts, or what they are conversant about, evidencing them in whom they are, to be spiritually minded. Rules directing unto steadiness in the contemplation of heavenly things. Motives to fix our thoughts with steadiness in them.*

- I. **INTERPRETING PROVIDENCE** “Observe the especial calls of Providence, and apply your minds to thoughts of the duties required in them, and by them. There is a voice in all signal dispensations of Providence. ‘The voice of the Lord crieth unto the city, the men of wisdom shall see thy name; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it’ (Mic. 6:9). There is a call, a cry in every rod of God, in every chastening providence; and therein makes a declaration of his name, his holiness, his power, his greatness. This every wise, substantial man will labor to discern, and so comply with the call. God is greatly provoked when it is otherwise... If therefore we would apply ourselves to our present duty, we are wisely to consider what is the voice of God, in his present providential dispensations in the world. — Hearken not unto any who would give another interpretation of them, but that they are plain declarations of his displeasure and indignation against the sins of men. (80)
- A. **SELF-EXAMINATION & REPENTANCE** “That present providences are indications of God’s anger and displeasure, we take for granted. But when this is done, the most are apt to cast the causes of them on others, and to excuse themselves so long as they see others more wicked and profligate than themselves, openly guilty of such crimes, as they abhor the thoughts of; they cast all the wrath on them, and fear nothing, but that they shall suffer with them. But alas! when the storm came on the ship at sea, wherein there was but one person who feared God; upon an inquiry for whose sake it came, the lot fell on him (Jon. 1:7).” (81) Cf. 83-84.
1. **SPECIFIC HEART-PLAGUES** “Yet in the exercise of due watchfulness, diligence, and prudence, men may know both the plague of their own hearts [1 Kings 8:38], in their prevailing corruptions, and the ways whereby it is excited through temptation, with the occasions it makes use of, and the advantages it takes.” (91)
 2. **MEANS OF DELIVERANCE** “(1) To know what are the especial temptations from whence you suffer, and whereby the life of God is obstructed in you... (2) Know your remedy, your relief, wherein alone it doth consist... Wherefore, (3) herein lies your great duty with respect to your temptations, namely, in a constant exercise of your thoughts on the love, care, compassion, and tenderness of Christ, with his ability to help, succour, and save them that do believe; so to strengthen your faith and trust in him, which will prove assuredly successful and victorious.” (94)
- B. **HOLY RESIGNATION TO GOD’S WILL & WISDOM** “[We must cultivate] a diligent endeavor to ‘live in an holy resignation of our persons, our lives, our families, all our enjoyments, unto the sovereign will and wisdom of God;’ so as that we may be in a readiness to part with all things upon his call without repining. This also is plainly declared in the voice of present providences. God is making wings for men’s riches; he is shaking their habitations, taking away the visible defences of their lives; proclaiming the instability and uncertainty of all things here below.” (82)
- II. **CULTIVATING HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS** “It is our duty greatly to mind the things that are above, eternal things, both as to their reality, their present state, and our future enjoyment of them; herein consists the life of this grace and duty.” (94)
- A. **FAILURE** “Without doubt, the generality of Christians are greatly defective in this duty, partly for want of light in them, partly for want of delight in them; they think little of an eternal country... with many it is only a reserve, when they can be here no more; but as to daily contemplation as to the nature and causes of it, or as unto any entrance into it by faith and hope, the most are strangers there to.” (96)
- B. **SUCCESS** “Whosoever shall sincerely engage in this duty, according to what he hath, and shall abide constant therein, will make such a refreshing progress in his apprehension of heavenly things, as he will be greatly satisfied with.” (97)
1. **REALITY** “But where things are real and substantial, the more they are inquired into, the more they evidence their being and subsistence.” (98)
 2. **HOPE** Hope is a glorious grace, whereunto blessed effects are ascribed in the Scripture, and an effectual operation to the support and consolation of believers; by it are we purified, sanctified, saved; and, to sum up the whole of its excellency and efficacy, it is a principal way of the working of Christ as inhabiting in us (Col. 1:27): ‘Christ in you the hope of glory’. Where Christ evidenceth his presence with us, he gives us an infallible hope of glory; he gives us an assured pledge of it, and worketh our souls to an expectation of it.” (100-101)
 3. **PREPARATION** “There is nothing more necessary to believers at this season, than to have their minds furnished with provision of such things as may prepare them for the cross and sufferings... Nothing is more useful to this end, than constant thoughts and contemplations of eternal things and future glory.” (103)