

Here a little, and there a little (Isaiah 28:10)

In this church we have had occasion to read some writings of Thomas Brooks. Brooks was a 17th Century preacher in old England, and in 1648 he was chosen as a preacher before the House of Commons, which in those days was not quite the cesspool it is today. Spurgeon said: “Brooks scatters stars with both hands, with an eagle eye of faith as well as the eagle eye of imagination.”

I recently ran across some short sermons or writings of Brooks which I thought would be good for us. Here a little, and there a little, they are paraphrased, cobbled, modified, reduced and supplemented below:

A great nothing:

And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus’ commandment Paul was brought forth. (Acts 25:23) That is, with great fantasy or vain show. All the honor, pomp and accolade of this world is but a fantasy. Worldly honor is but a great nothing – a glorious illusion, a shadow, a dream.

If you look up that word “fantasy”, you find some interesting synonyms, such as “hallucination”, “illusion” and – my favorite – “a supposition based on no solid foundation.” These are words to keep in your minds when you see the kings and leaders of this world in action.

Great swelling titles are but as so many rattles, or as so many feathers in men's caps. Worldly honor is but a wind, which will blow a man the sooner to hell.

Adonibezek, a mighty prince, is quickly made to eat scraps from under the table with the dogs. Here's the precise text: **But Adonibezek fled; and they (Judah and Simeon) pursued after him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adonibezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.** (Judges 1:6, 7)

Nebuchadnezzar, a mighty conqueror, turned a-grazing among the oxen. Specifically, **(t)he same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.** (Daniel 4:33)

Herod is reduced from a conceited god to be the most loathsome of men, a living carrion attacked by worms, the vilest of creatures. (Acts 12:23)

Great Haman feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next day. (Esther 7:10)

A drop in a bucket:

The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. (Lamentations 3:24)

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a

very little thing. (Isaiah 40:15). [Anytime you have two “beholds” in one verse, you want to pay particular and close attention.]

All nations are but as a drop in a bucket, that may in a moment be wiped off with a finger. In comparison to God, they are all nothing; but that word “nothing” is too high, for they are less than nothing. Had a man as many worlds at his command as there are men on earth, or angels in heaven, yet they would be but as so many drops, or as so many atoms, compared to a saint’s portion!

Oh, sirs! If you had the understanding of all the angels in heaven, and the tongues of all the men on earth, yet you would not be able to conceive, express, or set forth the greatness and largeness of a saint’s portion. Trump’s “Space Force” is small potatoes.

Can you count the stars of heaven, or number the sands of the sea, or stop the sun in his course, or make a new world? Then – and not until then – will you be able to declare what a great, what an immense portion God is. If no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9), oh how much less, then, are they able to declare the great things that God has laid up for His people in the eternal world?!

A flower which does not grow in nature’s garden:

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. (2 Timothy 2:25). Repentance is a turning from the most darling sin to God. It is a mighty work, a difficult work – a work which is above our power. There is no power below that power which raised Christ from the dead, and which made the worlds, which can break the heart of a sinner, or turn the heart of a sinner!

Repentance is a flower which does not grow in nature's garden. **Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.** (Jeremiah 13:23).

Repentance is a gift that comes down from above. Men are not born with repentance in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths. It is not in the power of any mortal to repent at pleasure.

But repentance is a great gift when you have it. **Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.** (Ezekiel 18:30).

A house without light:

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25:30).

When earthly fire burns, it shines and casts a light. It has light as well as heat in it. But when the fire of hell burns, it does not shine – it gives no light at all. It retains the property of burning, but it has lost the property of shining. Christ calls it **outer darkness** or utter darkness; that is, darkness beyond a darkness.

Light is a blessing that shall never shine into that infernal prison. Jude 6 speaks of **everlasting chains under darkness**. It would be a little ease, a little comfort, to the damned in hell, if they might have but light and liberty to walk up and down. But this is too high a favor for them to enjoy. Therefore, and instead, they shall be shackled and fettered down in chains of darkness and in **blackness of darkness forever**. (Jude 13). That last phrase from Jude 13 signifies exceeding great darkness. Hell is a very dark and dismal region, and extreme are the miseries, horrors and torments which are there. Those there shall never more see light. Hell is a house without light.

But here's the good news: **Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.** (Colossians 1:12, 13).

A never-fading glory:

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Peter 5:4).

The glory which Christ gives his people is a never-fading glory.

When a man has been in heaven as many million years as there are stars, his glory shall be as fresh and as green as it was at his first entrance into heaven. A worldly glory is like the flowers of the field; but the glory which Christ bestows is lasting and durable, like Himself.

A strong tower:

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. (Proverbs 18:10).

Think on the **runneth** part. Draw to your mind a picture of a town being invaded and the inhabitants seeking refuge. There is no dawdling under such circumstances. Every muscle is strained to find a stronghold for protection. Everyone is focused on getting themselves and their loved ones into some fortified place. Washington D.C.'s sack.

That metaphor is frequently used to express the resolved and swift act by which we shelter ourselves in our Shepherd. We run into a sure hiding

place and strong fortress of the **name of the Lord** when we betake ourselves to Jesus and put our trust in him as our defense.

God is . . .

- So strong a tower that no cannon can pierce it;
- So high a tower that no ladder can scale it; and,
- So deep a tower that no subverter can undermine it.

Therefore they must needs be safe and secure who lodge within a tower so impregnable, so indomitable.

A transforming knowledge:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Another rendition of this text reads: “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory.”

Saving knowledge is a transforming knowledge, which metamorphoses the soul. Divine light beating on the heart, warms it and betters it; transforms and changes it; moulds and fashions it into the very likeness of Christ! (Topeka Capital-Journal calls it WBC’s “curious evolution”).

The naturalists observe that the pearl, by the often beating of the sunbeams upon it, becomes radiant. Just so, the often beating and shining of the Sun of righteousness, with his divine beams, upon the saints, causes them to glisten and shine in holiness, righteousness, heavenly-mindedness, humbleness and so on. Divine light casts a general beauty and glory upon the soul; it transforms a man more and more into the glorious image of Christ.

Consider! As the child receives his features from his parents; just so, the beams of divine light and knowledge shining into the soul, stamp the living image of Christ upon the soul.

When a beam of divine light shined from heaven upon Paul, ah how did it change and metamorphose him! Indeed, it altered and transformed him. It made his rebellious soul, obedient. **And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?** (Acts 9:6). Divine light lays upon a man a happy necessity of obeying God.

A tumor and swelling in the mind:

The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth. (Isaiah 23:9).

Another version says it this way: “The Lord Almighty has done it to destroy your pride and show his contempt for all human greatness.”

Pride is the original and root of most of those notorious vices that are to be found among men. Of all sins, pride is most dangerous to the souls of men.

Pride is –

- A gilded misery;
- A secret poison; and,
- A hidden plague.

Pride is –

- The engineer of deceit;
- The mother of hypocrisy;
- The parent of envy;

- The moth of holiness;
- The blinder of hearts; and,
- The turner of medicines into maladies.

Spiritual pride is the lifting up of the mind against God; it is a tumor and swelling in the mind, and lies in despising and slighting of God, and in the lifting up of a man's self by reason of such things as birth, breeding, wealth, honor, place in society, relations, gifts or graces.

Pride is a sure forerunner of a fall. **Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.** (Proverbs 16:18). Herod fell from a throne of gold to a bed of dust. (Acts 12:21-23). Nebuchadnezzar fell from a mighty king to be a beast. (Daniel 4:33).

The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: (Isaiah 2:11, 12).

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. (Proverbs 16:5). Another version says it this way: "The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished."

A worm, a gnat, a fly, a hair, a seed of a raisin, a skin of a grape:

Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. (Proverbs 27:1).

Who can sum up the many possible deaths which are still lurking in his own body; or the innumerable hosts of external dangers which beleaguer him on every side; or the invisible arrows which fly upon his ears

continually! How soon he may have his mortal wound given him by one or another of them, who can tell?

The life of a man is but a shadow, a runner, a span, a vapor, a flower, etc. Though there is but one way to come into the world, there are many thousand ways to be sent out of the world.

We carry about in our bodies, the material for a thousand deaths, and may die a thousand different ways in several hours. As many senses, as many members, nay, as many pores as there are in the body, so many windows there are for death to enter in at.

Death needs not spend all his arrows upon us. A worm, a gnat, a fly, a hair, a seed of a raisin, a skin of a grape, the stumbling of a horse, the trip of a foot, the prick of a pin, the cutting of a fingernail, the cutting out of a corn – all these have been to others, and any of them may be to us, the means of our death within the space of a few days, nay of a few hours, nay of a few moments. (Calvin Coolidge's teenaged son of the same name died within a few short days after suffering a blister on a foot from playing tennis. Hundreds died during the great flu epidemic of 1918 within hours; they woke up feeling fine and by nightfall they were dead. President Zachary Taylor died on July 9, 1850 after getting too hot from a July 4th dedication of the Washington Monument and then eating raw fruit and drinking ice milk).

The good news, you ask? The worst of deaths shall but translate true believers from earth to heaven, from a wilderness to a paradise, from misery to glory and from mixed and mutable enjoyments to the pure and everlasting enjoyments of God.

Birds' nests:

Faith looks with an eye of scorn and disdain upon the things of this world. “What,” says faith, “are earthly treasures, compared to the treasures of heaven? What are stones compared to silver; dross compared to gold; darkness compared to light; hell compared to heaven?”

Faith deadens a man’s heart to the things of this world. **But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.** (Galatians 6:14). **Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.** (Philippians 3:8).

The view of Lucian (a popular lecturer and writer in the Roman Empire) is very interesting, who, going to the top of a high mountain, saw all the affairs of men, and looked on their greatest, richest and most glorious cities, as little birds’ nests! Faith sets the soul upon the hill of God, the mountain of God, which is a high mountain; and from that vantage point, faith gives the soul a sight, a prospect of all things here below. And, ah! How like birds’ nests do all the riches, honor and glories of this world look and appear to those whom faith has set upon God’s high hill. Faith set Moses high; and that made him look upon all the treasures, pleasures, riches and glories of Egypt, as little birds’ nests, as molehills, as dross and dirt, as things that were too little and too low for him to set his heart upon. **Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.** (Hebrews 11:26). Surely, when once faith has given a man a sight, a view, a prospect of heaven, all things on earth will be looked upon as little and despised.

I love you. Amen.