



*A Treatise of  
Earthly-Mindedness*

Showing the Great Sin of  
Thinking as the World Thinks Rather Than  
Thinking God's Thoughts After Him

plus

*Conversing in Heaven  
and Walking with God*

by **JEREMIAH BURROUGHS**

Edited by Don Kistler



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616-977-0889

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FOREWORD TO THE 20TH CENTURY  
EDITION OF

*A Treatise of Earthly-  
Mindedness*

*M*y guess is that few people will ever pick up this book and read it. Its theme and content are too alien to modern Christianity to evoke much interest.

Twentieth-century Christians have been seduced by a worldview that makes the thrust of this book seem archaic. It simply doesn't fit our times. It's not so much that the contemporary Christian has consciously embraced worldliness, it's more that we have been so influenced by a manner of viewing the world that anything *beyond* this world seems obscured by eclipse.

Gone is a vital sense of Providence. The world is seen as operating according to its internal mechanistic laws. The hand of Providence is not so much regarded as being invisible; it has been erased altogether.

Gone is the blessed hope of heaven. Though interest abounds in the return of Jesus, the contemplation of heaven itself has been banished from our thinking. Our thinking is earth-bound, trapped within the confines of the terrestrial horizon.

Gone is the Biblical doctrine of the soul. There is much concern about self-image, self-esteem, and self-gratification. Yet, in all this, the “self” itself has become a philosophical conundrum. Since Immanuel Kant assigned the “self” to the unknowable noumenal realm, along with God and metaphysical essences, the soul as the core of human selfhood has drifted into intellectual limbo.

Yet it is the human soul that stands to be nourished and fed by this book. Our gaze is lifted beyond the earth, our hearts are set aflame by the fire of heaven, and our minds are awakened to a spiritual perspective.

This volume may be the most comprehensive treatment of the nature and enticements of worldliness. It is a prose version of Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, reflecting the keen insight of Puritan Christianity. It is far too valuable to be ignored.

R.C. Sproul  
Orlando, FL

## *To the Reader*

*I*t was the saying of a servant of Christ, “Every day a Christian spends on earth is a day lost in heaven.” He meant it of the place, not the company—for what makes heaven to be heaven but union and communion with God in Jesus Christ? This being attainable in this life, what keeps a Christian from living in heaven while he lives upon earth? Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3). Our conversation is in heaven, said another apostle in Philippians 3:20. “And 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 were men on the earth, subject to infirmities as we are, yet living in heaven. And there are yet in this declining, wanton, Christ-denying age, a generation upon earth thus living whose lives and graces, though hidden under a mean outside, under many reproaches and infirmities, yet shine inwardly with the glory of Christ upon them; who, though they are in the world, yet follow the Lord with a different spirit than the spirit of the world. And among these hidden ones of the Lord, this blessed man (the preacher of these sermons, of whom the world was not worthy) was such a one who, while he was upon earth, lived in heaven. And as you may easily perceive, the end and scope of these sermons is to wind up your heart to a like frame and posture, that is, to take it off of perishing vanities

and to set it on that which is the real and durable substance.

We see upon what weak shoulders the fair neck of all worldly pomp and glory now stands, and how the Lord is winding up and putting an end to the glories of the kingdoms of men who have not contributed their strength and power to the advancing, but rather to the pulling down and eclipsing of the glory of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Besides what the world tells us, never has an age had more examples laid before them of the world's vanity than in our days. Therefore, our hearts should sit loose to all things that cannot stretch themselves to eternity. The apostle's reason is full of weight:

It remains that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoiced as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use the world as not abusing it.

And this exhortation he puts on by this argument: "The time is short," or, as the word is, "the remainder of our season is now folding up, as a veil or curtain into a narrow room."

Time is short and life is shorter, and the end of all things is at hand. We have greater things to mind and to set our hearts upon. The divinity of this holy man's spirit much appeared in this, that having much of the comfort that earth could afford him, he still looked upon all creature contentments with the eyes of a stranger, and in order to the raising of his soul to a more holy, humble, serviceable, self-denying walking with God. For a man who enjoys little or nothing in this world to speak much of the world's vanity and emptiness, and of taking the heart off that, is not as much as when a man is surrounded with

the confluence of creature comforts then, by a Divine spirit, to tread upon the neck of these things, and to be caught up into the third Heaven, bathing, solacing, and satisfying itself with sweet and higher enjoyments, with the more savory and cordial apprehensions it has of Jesus Christ. This is comparable to the one who is made a partaker of the Divine nature, and who lives above the world in the enjoyment of the world.

So now, reader, you have these sermons twice printed: once in the practice of this holy man and once again in these papers which we present to you in this preaching style (though we confess things might have been more contracted) because we find this more desired, more acceptable to his hearers and, if we mistake not, more working upon the affections and more profitable to the greatest number of Christians.

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*



# A Treatise of Earthly-Mindedness

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*“ . . . who mind earthly things. . . ”*

PHILIPPIANS 3:19



## CHAPTER ONE

# *The Text Opened*

*“ . . . who mind earthly things. . . “*

PHILIPPIANS 3:19

*T*his precious Scripture clearly holds forth the different dispositions of wicked and of godly men, especially of such wicked men as set themselves against the gospel, for it relates to such as were professed enemies to the cross of Christ, that labored as best they could to hinder the success of the ministry of Paul. You will find, if you look back a few verses, that this is meant of that kind of men especially, for he tells us that many walked so, as they were enemies to the cross of Christ. They were those that opposed the preaching of Paul and his ministry. He describes those men by divers characteristics; but I'll treat none of them but this one: “who mind earthly things,” who savor or relish earthly things (you may translate either as well). It is a general word comprehending the actions and operations of both the understanding and the will. It is, in Scripture, applied to both, but most com-

monly to the actions of the will and affections. We will deal particularly with actions of the will.

Earthly things are those that are on the earth, whatever they are, the beauty, the glory, and pageantry of the earth; the profits that are earthly, the pleasures and honors of the world; who mind any things inordinately that are sublunary accommodations. But we carry and behave ourselves as free denizens of the city of heaven, for so the words in the original are, if we should thus read them, "Our city, where we are citizens and where we have rights, is heaven."

But our conversation, our city converse, is of things that are above the earth. When the apostle would have men to follow his example and not the example of others, in the 17th verse, he uses this as an argument that such and such men are enemies to the cross of Christ, and they make their belly their god, and they mind earthly things. Do not follow them; do not hearken what they say to you; they come up and down from house to house and whisper this and that to you, and would take you off from the ways of God. God has begun to enlighten you and to stir your consciences; do not let the precious affections of your souls run toward them, but be followers of us as we are of Christ, for our conversation is in heaven with our Lord and Master, this argument coming in the 20th verse. That being the only scope and meaning of the words, take this doctrinal truth:

**DOCTRINE: The great difference between a wicked man and a godly man is that one minds earthly things and the other has his conversation in heaven. I intend to handle both these in order.**

One of these minds earthly things. It is a parallel Scripture to Romans 8:5, for they that are after the flesh do mind the

things of the flesh. “Do mind,” there is the same word, only here it is the participle and there it is the verb, but the meaning is the same. They that are after the earth mind earthly things; they that are after the flesh favor fleshly things. The first part of this point is the description of wicked men, they that are enemies to the cross of Christ and to the ways of godliness. They are men that mind earthly things, and the more gross of them are described before this as having their bellies as their gods. Some of them are very sensual, drunken, unclean, and altogether given to satisfy the flesh in fleshly lusts. But there are others that do not appear to be so brutish, yet they are men of earthly minds who savor only earthly things, and these are the men that are secret enemies to the cross of Christ, yea, and will many times appear so to be; it will break out at length. Such a man whose spirit has been earthly for a long time will appear at length to be an enemy to Christ’s cross. Now in the handling of this point, I will propound these five things:

First, what it is to mind earthly things in a sinful way, or thus: When a man may be said to be an earthly-minded man, that we may know when a man is an earthly-minded man, what it is to mind earthly things that the apostle describes here a wicked man by. Without the opening of this, all that I shall say afterwards will be to little purpose.

Second, the great evil that there is in minding earthly things, and I shall help you discover a greater evil in it than you are aware of.

Third, lay down some proofs whereby those men and women that think they are clear of this sin may have it revealed to their consciences that they are the men and women that do mind earthly things.

Fourth, I shall search into the reason why the hearts of men and women are so much after earthly things.

Fifth, I shall labor to take your hearts off of earthly things. These are the five things that are to be done in the first part of the point, namely, the character of wicked men here laid down, who mind earthly things.

First, who they are who mind earthly things. Certainly they are not all those that enjoy earthly things. All men who make use of earthly things must not be condemned for minding them. Paul himself, in this very epistle (Philippians 4:12), wrote that though he knew how to want, yet he knew how to abound. He could tell how to make use of earthly things, and he gives charge that all those that are instructed should make such as had instructed them partakers of all their goods. Paul charges this! Yea, Christ Himself, in that Scripture where He labors most to take the thoughts of men off the earth, and not to take any thought for what they should eat or drink, still says, "Your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of these things" (Matthew 6:32). Galatians 6:6: "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth all good things." And if there is any pretence against it, yet he says, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Therefore, it is not here charged, as a mark of an evil man, to have earthly things, and to justly require what is due unto him, as Paul does here. And the Galatians could not charge him with breaking his own rule that he wrote to the Philippians. Therefore, we must inquire what is meant by "minding earthly things." When does a man or woman mind earthly things in a sinful way? For that there are several particulars.