Richard Baxter (1615-1691), minister, religious writer, and autobiographer. A man for whom religious and political concerns were at the centre of his life, Richard Baxter served as a chaplain for Oliver Cromwell’s New Model Army, but his experiences of the more radical sects that comprised it (such as the Levellers) made him modify his earlier religious stances. Although he was a firm supporter of Cromwell and the Protectorate, after the Restoration he became Charles II’s chaplain, but he soon resigned his post. A supporter of ecumenism, Baxter rejected the state’s increasing insistence on conformity in all aspects of ceremony and liturgy in the Church of England.

The selections below offer an interesting Puritan comment on the widely accepted and disseminated definition of impassioned male friendship found in classical texts, particularly in Cicero’s Laelius: On Friendship (for excerpts, see ‘Cicero,’ Online Companion).

Editions:

From A Christian Directory (1673)¹

VOLUME 4: CHRISTIAN POLITICS: CHAPTER 28: SPECIAL CASES AND DIRECTIONS FOR LOVE TO GODLY PERSONS AS SUCH

[…] 

TITLE 6: CASES AND DIRECTIONS FOR INTIMATE SPECIAL FRIENDS

[…] 

Question 2. Is it lawful, meet,² or desirable to entertain that extraordinary affection to any one, which is called special friendship, or to have an endeared, intimate friend, whom we love far above all others?

Answer. An intimate special friendship is a thing that hath been so much pleaded for by all sorts of men, and so much of the felicity of man’s life hath been placed in it that it beseemeth not me³ to speak against it. But yet I think it meet to tell you with what cautions and limits it must be received, and how far it is good, and how far sinful: (For there are perils here to be avoided, which neither Cicero, nor his Scipio and Laelius were acquainted with).⁴

¹The complete title page reads: “A Christian Directory: Or, A Sum of Practical Theology, And Cases of Conscience. Directing Christians, how to use their knowledge and faith; How to improve all helps and means, and to perform all duties; How to Over-come temptations, and to escape or mortify every sin. In Four Parts, I. Christian Ethics (or private duties), II. Christian Economics (or family duties), III. Christian Ecclesiastics (or church duties), IV. Christian Politics (or duties to our ruler and neighbours).” The title page concludes with quotations from Mal. 2.7-8; Mt. 13.52; Heb. 5.13-14; 2 Tim. 2.14-16; and 2 Pet. 3.16.
²meet appropriate, fitting.
³beseemeth not me i.e., it seems not fitting for me.
⁴Cicero, nor his Scipio and Laelius See the introduction to the selections from Cicero’s ‘Laelius,’ Online
I. 1. It is lawful to choose some one well-qualified person, who is fittest for that use, and to make him the chief companion of our lives, our chiefest counsellor and comforter, and to confine our intimacy and converse to him in a special manner above all others.

2. And it is lawful to love him not only according to his personal worth, but according to his special suitableness to us, and to desire his felicity accordingly, and to exercise our love to him more frequently and sensibly (because of his nearness and presence) than towards some better men that are further off.

The reasons of such an intimate friendship are these:

1. No man is sufficient for himself, and therefore Nature teacheth him to desire a helper. And there is so wonderful a diversity of temperaments and conditions, and so great a disparity and incongruity among good and wise men towards each other that one that is more suitably congruous to us than all the rest may on that account be much preferred.

2. It is not many that can be so near us as to be ordinary helpers to us, and a wiser man at a distance or out of reach may be less useful to us than one of inferior worth at hand.

3. The very exercise of friendly love and kindness to another is pleasant, and so it is to have one to whom we may confidently reveal our secrets, to bear part of our burden, and to confirm us in our right apprehensions, and to cure us of our wrong ones.

4. And it is no small benefit of a present bosom friend to be instead of all the world to us, that is, of common unprofitable company, for man is a sociable creature and abhorreth utter solitude. And among the common sort we shall meet with so much evil, and so little that is truly wise or good, as will tempt a man to think that he is best when he is least conversant with mankind. But a selected friend is to us for usefulness instead of many, without these common encumbrances and snares.

5. And it is a great part of the commodity of a faithful friend to be assisted in the true knowledge of ourselves, to have one that will watch over us, and faithfully tell us of the sin, and danger, and duty which we cannot easily see without help, and which other men will not faithfully acquaint us with.

II. But yet it is rare to choose and use this friendship rightly, and there are many evils here to be carefully avoided. The instances shall be mentioned anon in the directions, and therefore now be passed by.

Question 3. Is it meet to have more such bosom friends than one?

Answer. Usually one only is meetest:

I. 1. Because love diffused is oft weak, and contracted is more strong.

2. Because secrets are seldom safe in the hands of many.

3. Because suitable persons are rare.

4. And though two or three may be suitable to you, yet perhaps they may be unsuitable among themselves. And the calamity of their own disparities will redound to you; and their fallings out may turn to the bewraying of your secrets, or to some other greater wrong.

*Companion, pp. 4-5.*

5 *bosom friend* a specially intimate friend; a best friend.

6 *anon* soon, in a little while.

7 *bewraying* revealing, betraying.
II. But yet sometimes two or three such friends may be better than one alone:

1. In case they be all near and of an approved suitableness and fidelity.
2. In case they be all suitable and endearèd to one another.
3. If a man live *per vices*\(^8\) in several places, and his friends cannot remove with him, he may have one friend in one place, and another in another, and so many will be but as one that is constant.
4. And in case that many may add to our help, our counsel and comfort, more than to our danger, hurt, or trouble. In all these cases many are better than one.

*Question 4.* Is it fit for him to take another bosom friend who hath a pious wife? And is any other so fit to be a friend as he and she that are as one flesh?\(^9\)

*Answer.* When a wife hath the understanding, virtue, and fidelity fit for this sort of friendship, then no one else is so fit, because of nearness and united interests. The same I say of a husband to a wife. But because that it seldom falls out that there is such a fitness for this office, especially in the wife, in that case it is lawful and meet to choose a friend that is fit indeed, and to commit those secrets to him which we commit not to a wife; for secrets are not to be committed to the untrustye, nor wise counsel to be expected from the unwise, how near soever. And the great writers about this special friendship, do think no woman is fit for it, but men only;\(^10\) but that conclusion is too injurious to that sex.

*Question 5.* Is it agreeable to the nature of true friendship to love our friend not only for himself but for our own commodity? And whether must he or I be the chief end of my love and friendship?\(^11\)

*Answer.*

1. Indeed in our love to God, he that is the object is also our chief and ultimate end, and we must love him more for Himself than for ourselves. And yet here it is lawful subordinately to intend ourselves.
2. And our love to the commonwealth should be greater than our love to ourselves, and therefore we may not love it chiefly for ourselves.
3. And if our bosom friend be notoriously better than we are, and more serviceable to God and to the common good, we should love him also above ourselves, and therefore not chiefly for ourselves.
4. But in case of an equality of goodness and usefulness, we are not bound to love our most intimate friend more than ourselves; and therefore may at least equally love him for ourselves as for himself. And if we are really and notoriously better and more useful, we may love him chiefly for ourselves, and ourselves above him. But still we must love God and the

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\(^8\) *Latin,* 'by turns.'

\(^9\) *as he and she that are as one flesh*  Gen. 2.23-24.

\(^10\) *the great writers ... but men only*  i.e., the classical writers on friendship, especially Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero. Cf. the preface to one 17\(^{th}\) century translation of Cicero's 'Laelius,' *Online Companion,* pp. 5-6.

\(^11\) For Cicero's treatment of this issue, see 'Laelius,' *Online Companion,* pp. 8-10, 12.
public good above both ourselves and him, and must love both ourselves and him in order to
God, who is the beginning and end of all.

Question 6. Is it contrary to the nature of true friendship to keep any secret from
such a bosom friend, or to retain any suspicion of him, or to suppose
that he may possibly prove unfaithful to us and forsake us?

Answer. Cicero and the old doctors of friendship say that all this is inconsistent with
true friendship, and it is true that it is contrary to perfect friendship. But it is
as true that perfect friendship cannot be, nor must not be, among imperfect
men; and that the nature of mankind is so much depraved that the best are
unmeet for perfect friendship. And certainly few men, if any in the world, are
fit for every secret of our hearts. Besides that, we are so bad that if all our
secret thoughts were known to one another, it might do much to abate our
friendship and love to each other. And it is certain that man is so corrupt a
creature, and good men so imperfectly cured of their corruption, that there is
selfishness, uncertainty, and mutability in the best. And therefore it is not a
duty to judge falsely of men, but contrarily to judge of them as they are. And
therefore to suppose that it is possible the closest friend may reveal our
secrets, one time or another, and that the steadfastest friend may possibly
become our enemy: to think that possible which is possible (and more) is
injurious to none.

Question 7. Is it lawful to change a bosom friend, and to prefer a new one whom we
perceive to be more worthy before an old one?

Answer. An old friend caeteris paribus is to be preferred before a new one, and is not
to be cast off without desert and necessity. But for all that:

I. 1. If an old friend prove false, or notably unfit;
    2. Or if we meet with another that is far more able, fit, and worthy, no doubt but we
may prefer the later; and may value, love, and use men as they are for goodness, worth, and
usefulness.

[...]

Question 9. Why should we restrain our love to a bosom friend (contrary to Cicero’s
doctrine) and what sin or danger is in loving him too much?

Answer. All these following:

I. 1. It is an error of judgement and will to suppose any one better than he is (yea,
perhaps than any creature on earth is), and so to love him.
    2. It is an irrational act, and therefore not fit for a rational creature, to love any one

12 For Cicero’s treatment of this issue, see ‘Laelius,’ Online Companion, pp. 6-8, 10.
13 For Cicero’s treatment of this issue, see ‘Laelius,’ Online Companion, pp. 11-12.
14 caeteris paribus Latin, ‘with other things being the same’ or ‘all things being equal.’
15 For Cicero’s treatment of this issue, see ‘Laelius,’ Online Companion, pp. 10-12, 15.
further than reason will allow, and beyond the true causes of regular love.

3. It is usually a fruit of sinful selfishness, for this excess of love doth come from a selfish cause: either some strong conceit that the person greatly loveth us, or for some great kindness which he hath showed us, or for some need we have of him and fitness appearing in him to be useful to us, etc. Otherwise it would be purely for amiable worth, and then it would be proportioned to the nature and measure of that worth.

4. It very often taketh up men’s minds, so as to hinder their love to God, and their desires and delights in holy things. While Satan (perhaps upon religious pretences) turneth our affections too violently to some person, it diverteth them from higher and better things. For the weak mind of man can hardly think earnestly of one thing without being alienated in his thoughts from others; nor can hardly love two things or persons fervently at once that stand not in pure subordination one to the other; and we seldom love any fervently in a pure subordination to God, for then we should love God still more fervently.

5. It oft maketh men ill members of the Church and the commonwealth, for it contracteth that love to one over-valued person which should be diffused abroad among many; and the common good which should be loved above any single person is by this means neglected (as God himself); which maketh wives and children and bosom friends become those gulfs that swallow up the estates of most rich men, so that they do little good with them to the public state, which should be preferred.

6. Overmuch friendship engageth us in more duty than we are well able to perform without neglecting our duty to God, the commonwealth, and our own souls. There is some special duty followeth all special acquaintance, but a bosom friend will expect a great deal. You must allow him much of your time in conference, upon all occasions; and he looketh that you should be many ways friendly and useful to him, as he is or would be to you, when, alas, frail man can do but little; our time is short, our strength is small, our estates and faculties are narrow and low. And that time which you must spend with your bosom friend, where friendship is not moderated and wisely managed, is perhaps taken from God and the public good, to which you first owed it, especially if you are magistrates, ministers, physicians, schoolmasters, or such others as are of public usefulness. Indeed, if you have a sober prudent friend that will look but for your vacant hours, and rather help you in your public service, you are happy in such a friend. But that is not the excess of love that I am reprehending.

7. This inordinate friendship prepareth for disappointments, yea and for excess of sorrows. Usually experience will tell you that your best friends are but uncertain and imperfect men, and will not answer your expectation, and perhaps some of them may so grossly fail you as to set light by you or prove your adversaries. I have seen the bonds of extraordinary dearness many ways dissolved: one hath been overcome by the flesh, and turned drunken and sensual, and so proved unfit for intimate friendship (who yet sometimes seemed of extraordinary uprightness and zeal). Another hath taken up some singular conceits in religion and joined to some sect where his bosom friend could not follow him, and so it hath seemed his duty to look with strangeness, contempt, or pity on his ancient friend as one that is dark and low, if not supposed an adversary to the truth, because he espouseth not all his mis-conceits. Another is suddenly lifted up with some preferment, dignity, and success, and so is taken with higher things and higher converse, and thinks it is very fair to give and embrace his ancient friend for what he once was to him, instead of continuing such endearedness. Another hath changed his place and company, and so by degrees grown very indifferent to his ancient friend when he is out of sight, and converse ceaseth. Another hath himself chosen his friend amiss in his inexperienced youth, or in a penury of wise and good men, supposing him much better than he was, and afterward hath had experience of many

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16 to set light by you — to treat you [and your concerns] as trivial or unimportant.
persons of far greater wisdom, piety, and fidelity, whom therefore reason commandeth him to prefer. All these are ordinary dissolvers of these bonds of intimate and special friendship.

And if your love continue as hot as ever, its excess is like to be your excessive sorrow. For:

II. 1. You will be the more grieved at every suffering of your friend, as sickness, losses, crosses, etc., whereof so many attend mankind as is like to make your burden great.
  2. Upon every removal, his absence will be the more troublesome to you.
  3. All incongruities and fallings-out will be the more painful to you, especially his jealousies, discontents, and passions, which you cannot command.
  4. His death, if he die before you, will be the more grievous, and your own the more unwelcome, because you must part with him.

These and abundance of sore afflictions are the ordinary fruits of too strong affections, and it is no rare thing for the best of God’s servants to profess that their sufferings from their friends who have over-loved them have been ten times greater than from all the enemies that ever they had in the world.

And to those that are wavering about this case, whether only a common friendship with all men according to their various worth or a bosom intimacy with some one man be more desirable, I shall premise a free confession of my own case, whatever censures for it I incur. When I was first awakened to the regard of things spiritual and eternal, I was exceedingly inclined to a vehement love to those that I thought the most serious saints, and especially to that intimacy with some one, which is called friendship, by which I found extraordinary benefit, and it became a special mercy to my soul. But it was by more than one or two of the fore-mentioned ways that the strict bond of extraordinary friendship hath been relaxed, and my own excessive esteem of my most intimate friend confuted. And since then I have learned to love all men according to their real worth, and to let out my love more extensively and without respect of persons, acknowledging all that is good in all, but with a double love and honour to the excellently wise and good; and to value men for their public usefulness than for their private suitableness to me; and yet to value the ordinary converse of one or a few suitable friends before a more public and tumultuary life, except when God is publicly worshipped or when public service inviteth me to deny the private of a quiet life. And though I more difference between man and man than ever, I do it not upon so slight and insufficient grounds as in the time of my inexperienced credulity, nor do I expect to find any without the defects and blots and failings of infirm, imperfect, mutable man.

**Question 10.** What qualifications should direct us in the choice of a special bosom friend?

**Answer.**

I. 1. He must be one that is sincere and single-hearted, and not given to affectation or anything that is much forced in his deportment: plain and open-hearted to you, and not addicted to a hiding, fraudulent, or reserved carriage.

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17 *sore* serious, weighty.
18 In contrast, Cicero argues that friendship should not be shunned out of fear that one may experience grief or trouble for one’s friend (‘Laelius,’ *Online Companion*, pp. 13-14, 15-16).
19 *difference* used here as a verb: ‘distinguish.’
2. He must be one that is of a suitable temper and disposition. I mean not guilty of all
your own infirmities, but not guilty of a crossness or contrariety of disposition—as if one be
in love with plainness of apparel, and frugality in diet and course of life, and the other be
guilty of curiosity, and ostentation and prodigality; if one be for few words and the other for
many; if one be for labour and the other for idleness and frequent interruptions; if one be for
serving the humours of men, and the other for a contempt of human censure, in the way of
certain duty. These disparities make them unfit for this sort of bosom friendship.
3. He must not be a slave to any vice, for that which maketh him false to God and to
betray his own soul may make him false to man and to betray his friend.
4. He must not be a selfish person; that is, corruptly and partially for himself and for
his own carnal ends and interests. For such a one hath no true love to others, but when you
seem cross to his own interest, his pleasure, wealth or honour, he will forsake you, for so he
doeth by God himself.
5. He must be humble and not notably proud, for pride will make him quarrelsome,
disdainful, impatient, and quite unsuitable to a humble person.
6. He must be one that’s thoroughly and resolvedly godly, for you will hardly well
centre anywhere but in God, nor will he be useful to all the ends of friendship if he be not one
that loveth God and holy things and is of a pious conversation. Nor can you expect that he
that is false to God, and will sell his part in him for the pleasure or gain of sin, should long
prove truly faithful unto you.
7. He must be one that is judicious in religion: that is, not of an erroneous, heretical
wit, not ignorant of those great and excellent truths which you should oft confer about, but
rather one that excelleth you in solid understanding and true judgement, and a discerning
head, that can teach you somewhat which you know not, and is not addicted to corrupt you
with false opinions of his own.
8. He must be one that is not schismatical and embodied in any dividing sect, for
else he will be no longer true to you than the interest of his party will allow him. And if you
will not follow him in his conceits and singularities, he will withdraw his love and despise
you. And if he do not, yet he may endanger your steadfastness by the temptation of his love.
9. He must be one that hath no other very intimate friend, unless his friend be also as
intimate with you as with him, because else he will be no further secret and trusty to you than
the interest or will of his other friend will allow him.
10. He must be one that is prudent in the management of business, and especially
those which your converse is concerned in, else his indiscretion in words or practice will not
suffer your friendship to be long entire.
11. He must be one that is not addicted to loquacity but can keep your secrets;
otherwise he will be so untrustye as to be incapable of doing the true office of a friend.
12. He must have a zeal and activity in religion and in all well-doing. Otherwise he
will be unfit to warm your affections and to provoke you to love and good works, and to do
the principal works of friendship, but will rather cool and hinder you in your way.
13. He must be one that is not addicted to levity, inconstancy, and change, or else you
can expect no stability in his friendship.
14. He must not much differ from you in riches or in poverty, or in quality in the

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20 curiosity excessive care or attention bestowed on trivial matters [usually relating to clothing, food, and matters of style or taste].
21 carnal material, secular, worldly.
22 cross in opposition.
23 schismatical given to having opinions contrary to those of the Established [Anglican] Church. embodied incorporated into.
For if he be much richer, he will be carried away with higher company and converse than yours, and will think you fitter to be his servant than his friend; and if he be much poorer than you, he will be apt to value your friendship for his own commodity, and you will be still in doubt whether he be sincere.

15. He must be one that is like to live with you or near you, that you may have the frequent benefit of his converse, counsel, example, and other acts of friendship.

16. He must be one that is not very covetous, or a lover of riches or preferment, for such a one will no longer be true to you than his Mammon will allow him.

17. He must be one that is not peevish, passionate, or impatient, but that can both bear with your infirmities, and also bear much from others for your sake in the exercise of his friendship.

18. He must be one that hath so good an esteem of your person, and so true and strong a love to you, as will suffice to move him, and hold him to all this.

19. He must be yet of a public spirit, and a lover of good works, that he may put you on to well-doing, and not countenance you in an idle, self-pleasing, and unprofitable life. And he ought to be one that is skilful in the business of your calling, that may be fit to censure your work, and amend it, and direct you in it, and confer about it. And it is best for you if he be one that excelleth you herein, that he may add something to you (but then you will not be such to him, and so the friendship will be unequal).

20. Lastly, there must be some suitableness in age and sex. The young want experience to make them meet for the bosom friendship of the aged (though yet they may take delight in instructing them, and doing them good), and the young are hardly reconcilable to all the gravity of the aged. And it must not be a person of a different sex, unless in case of marriage. Not but that they may be helpful to each other as Christians, and in a state of distant friendship, but this bosom intimacy they are utterly unfit for, because of unsuitableness, temptation, and scandal.

 [...]
Direction 2. When you do choose a friend, though he must be one that you have no cause to be suspicious of, yet reckon that it is possible that he may be estranged from you, yes, and turn your enemy. Causeless jealousies are contrary to friendship on your part, and [...] inconsistent with friendship on his part. But yet no friendship should make you blind, and not to know that man is a corrupt and mutable creature, especially in such an age as this, where we have seen how personal changes, state changes, and changes in religion have alienated many seeming friends. Therefore, love them, and use them, and trust them but as men that may possibly fail all your expectations, and open all your secrets, and betray you, yea, and turn your enemies. Suspect it not, but judge it possible.

Direction 3. Be open with your approved friend, and commit all your secrets to him, still excepting those the knowledges of which may be hurtful to himself, or the revealing of them hereafter may be intolerably injurious to yourself, to honour of religion, to the public good, or to any other. If you be needlessly close, you are neither friendly nor can you improve your friend enough to your own advantage. But yet if you open all without exception, you may many ways be injurious to your friend and to yourself; and the day may come which you did not look for, in which his weakness, passion, interest, or alienation may trouble you by making all public to the world.

Direction 5. Be ever faithful to your friend for the cure of all his faults, and never turn friendship into flattery: yet still let all be done in love, though in a friendly freedom and closeness of admonition. It is not the least benefit of intimate friendship that what an enemy speaketh behind our backs, a friend will open plainly to our faces. To watch over one another daily and be as a glass to show our faces or faults to one another is the very great benefit of true friendship, Eccles. 4.9, 10, 11: “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.” It is a flatterer, and not a friend, that will please you by concealing or extenuating your sin.

Direction 6. Abhor selfishness as most contrary to true friendship. Let your friend be as yourself, and his interest as your own. If we must love our neighbour as ourselves, much more our dearest bosom friends.

Direction 7. Understand what is most excellent and useful in your friend, and that improve. Much good is lost by a dead-hearted companion that will neither broach the vessel and draw out that which is ready for their use, nor yet feed any good discourse by due questions or answers, but stifle all by barren silence. And a dull, silent listener will weary and silence the speaker at last.

Direction 8. Resolve to bear with each other’s infirmities. Be not too high in your

30 approved friend  i.e., one who has been tested and has proven to be worthy of this status.
31 close  reserved, uncommunicative, given to secrecy.
32 closeness  privacy or secrecy.
33 glass  mirror.
34 love our neighbour as ourselves  Christ’s admonition in Mt. 22.39.
35 broach  tap into, open up.
expectations from each other. Look not for exactness and innocency, but for human infirmities, that when they fall out, you may not find yourselves disappointed. Patience is necessary in all human converse.

**Direction 9.** Yet do not suffer friendship to blind you to own or extenuate the faults of your dearest friend, for that will be sinful partiality, and will be greatly injurious to God, and treachery against the soul and safety of your friend.

**Direction 10.** And watch lest the love, estimation, or reverence of your friend should draw you to entertain his errors or to imitate him in any sinful way. It is not part of true friendship to prefer men before the truth of Christ, nor to take any heretical, dividing, or sensual infection from our friend, and so to die and perish with him. Nor is it friendly to desire it.

[…]

**Direction 13.** Let not the love of your friend draw you to love all or any others the less and below their worth. Let not friendship make you narrow-hearted, and confine your charity to one. But give all their due in your valuation and your conversation, and exercise as large a charity and benignity as possibly you can, especially to societies, churches, and commonwealth, and to all the world. It is a sinful friendship which robbeth others of your charity, especially those to whom much more is due than to your friend.

**Direction 14.** Exercise your friendship in holiness and well-doing. Kindle in each other the love of God and goodness, and provoke each other to a heavenly conversation. The more of God and heaven in your friendship, the more holy, safe, and sweet and durable it will prove. It will not wither when an everlasting subject is the fuel that maintaineth it. If it will not help you the better to holiness and to heaven, it is worth nothing, Eccles. 4.11: “If two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone?” See that your friendship degenerate not into common carnal love, and evaporate not in a barren converse, instead of prayer and heavenly discourse, and faithful watchfulness and reproof.

**Direction 15.** Prepare each other for suffering and death, and dwell together in the house of mourning, where you ma...
Council there, called Mr. Richard Wickstead; whose place having allowance from the king (who maintaineth the house) for one to attend him, he told my master that he was purposed to have a scholar fit for the university; and having but one, would be better to him than any tutor in the university could be. Whereupon my master persuaded me to accept the offer, and told me it would be better than the university to me. I believed him as knowing no better myself; and it suited well with my parents’ minds, who were willing to have me as near them as possible (having no children but myself). And so I left my schoolmaster for a supposed tutor. But when I had tried him I found myself deceived; his business was to please the great ones, and seek preferment in the world; and to that end found it necessary sometimes to give the Puritans a flirt, and call them ‘unlearned,’ and speak much for learning, being but a superficial scholar himself. He never read to me, nor used any savoury discourse of godliness; only he loved me, and allowed me books and time enough, so that as I had no considerable helps from him in my studies, so had I no considerable hindrance.

And though the house was great (there being four judges, the king’s attorney, the secretary, the clerk of the fines, with all their servants, and all the lord president’s servants, and many more) and though the town was full of temptations through the multitude of persons (counsellors, attorneys, officers, and clerks) and much given to tippling and excess, it pleased God not only to keep me from them, but also to give me one intimate companion. He was a well-grown youth, and often did profess to me many religious resolutions. But when I had tried him I found myself deceived; his business was to please the great ones, and to that end found it necessary sometimes to give the Puritans a flirt, and call them ‘unlearned,’ and speak much for learning, being but a superficial scholar himself. He never read to me, nor used any savoury discourse of godliness; only he loved me, and allowed me books and time enough, so that as I had no considerable helps from him in my studies, so had I no considerable hindrance.

Yet before we had been two years acquainted, he fell once and a second time by the power of temptation into a degree of drunkenness which so terrified him upon the review (especially after the second time) that he was near to despair and wonder that I could sleep so, that the thoughts of God’s mercy did not make me also to do as he did! He was unwaried in reading all serious practical books of divinity, especially Perkins, Bolton, Dr. Preston, Elton, Dr. Taylor, Whately, Harris, etc. He was the first that ever I heard pray ex tempore (out of the pulpit) and that taught me so to pray. And his charity and liberality was equal to his zeal, so that God made him a great means of my good, who had more knowledge than he, but a colder heart.

Yet before we had been two years acquainted, he fell once and a second time by the power of temptation into a degree of drunkenness which so terrified him upon the review (especially after the second time) that he was near to despair, and went to good ministers with sad confessions. And when I had left the house and his company, he fell into it again and again so oft that at last his conscience could have no relief or ease but in changing his judgement, and disowning the teachers and doctrines which had restrained him. And he did it on this manner: one of his superiors, on whom he had dependence, was a man of great sobriety and temperance, and of much devotion in his way, but very zealous against the

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40 the council i.e., the Council of the marches of Wales.
41 flirt jibe, jeer, scoff.
42 clerk of the fines a clerk or secretary who was responsible for collecting fines levied by the Council.
43 William Perkins (1558-1602), English theologian, Church of England clergyman and writer, author of works on moral theology. Samuel Bolton (1605/6-1654), Church of England clergyman and writer; a well-respected preacher, his works included sermons and religious treatises. John Preston (1587-1628), Church of England clergyman and writer; his collected sermons were popular and frequently reprinted. Edward Elton (c. 1569-1624), Church of England clergyman and author, most famous for his collections of sermons, many of which went into multiple editions. Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), bishop and religious writer, most famous for his works of religious controversy and his popular devotional manuals, Holy Living (1650) and Holy Dying (1651). William Whately (1583-1639), Church of England clergyman, Puritan preacher, and author of several volumes of collected sermons. Richard Harris (1557/8-1621), Church of England clergyman, author of works of religious controversy.
44 ex tempore spontaneously, without preparation or forethought; without the use of a set text (as in a prayer book). Praying in this way was a hallmark of Puritan and nonconformist devotion.
Nonconformists, ordinarily talking most bitterly against them, and reading almost only such books as encouraged him in this way. By converse\textsuperscript{45} with this man, my friend was first drawn to abate his charity to Nonconformists, and then to think and speak reproachfully of them, and next that to dislike all those that came near them, and to say that such as Bolton were too severe, and enough to make men mad. And the last I heard of him was that he was grown a fuddler and railer\textsuperscript{46} at strict men. But whether God recovered him, or what became of him, I cannot tell.

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