

Scripture Studies

VOL. XVI, No. 7

DECEMBER
2017

“Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord...” *Isaiah 1:18*

Old Testament Study:

- Exodus 33-34**.....3
A Stiffnecked People, by C. H. Mackintosh (1858)

A Classic Study:

- Job 1:13-15 (part 2)**.....12
Satan’s Attacking Soldiers, by Joseph Caryl (1644)

New Testament Study:

- Romans 1:21-32**.....22
The Wrath of God, the Sin of Man, pt. 2, by Scott Sperling

A Topical Study:

- Communion with God**.....35
How to Spend Every Day with God, pt. 4, by M. Henry (1710)

A Study in Wisdom:

- Psalms 78 (pt. 2)**.....45
Lessons from History, pt. 2, by Scott Sperling

A Sermon:

- Spurgeon Sermon, No. 551**62
Do You Know Him? — Phil. 3:10; by C. H. Spurgeon (1855)

A Meditation:

- The Spiritual Chemist**.....81
A Meditation Upon Spiritual Warfare, by W. Spurstowe (1666)

Postscript:

- All We Have is from God**86

Scripture Studies (ISSN: 1520-4308) is edited and published by Scott Sperling. It is distributed via the internet free of charge.

If you would like to be added to the email list, send your request to:

ssper@scripturestudies.com

Back issues are available, free of charge, on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.ScriptureStudies.com>

Most of the bibliographic resources can be found on the World Wide Web, free of charge, at:

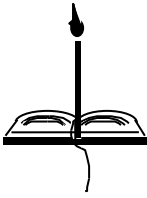
<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>

For readability's sake, some of the classic articles have been lightly edited, so that they follow modern English usage for certain words. Very occasionally, they are edited in other ways, also. Every attempt is made to maintain the author's original meaning and wording. If such editing irks you, I apologize.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™

May God bless you as you study His Word.

Copyright © 2017, Scott Sperling



Old Testament Study: Exodus 33-34

A Study by C. H. Mackintosh (1820-1896)

Exodus 33-34 – A Stiffnecked People

CHAPTER 33

^{33:1} And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: ² And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: ³ Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.

⁴ And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. ⁵ For the Lord had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. ⁶ And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb. ⁷ And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. ⁸ And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up,

and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. ⁹ And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. ¹⁰ And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. ¹¹ And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

¹² And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. ¹³ Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. ¹⁴ And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. ¹⁵ And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. ¹⁶ For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. ¹⁷ And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. ¹⁸ And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. ¹⁹ And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. ²⁰ And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. ²¹ And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: ²² And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: ²³ And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

CHAPTER 34

^{34:1} And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest. ² And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. ³ And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

⁴ And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. ⁵ And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. ⁶ And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. ⁸ And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. ⁹ And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

¹⁰ And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. ¹¹ Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. ¹² Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a

covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: ¹³ But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: ¹⁴ For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: ¹⁵ Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; ¹⁶ And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. ¹⁷ Thou shalt make thee no molten gods. ¹⁸ The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. ¹⁹ All that openeth the matrix is mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, whether ox or sheep, that is male. ²⁰ But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.

²¹ Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest.

²² And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

²³ Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. ²⁴ For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year. ²⁵ Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning. ²⁶ The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. ²⁷ And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have

made a covenant with thee and with Israel. ²⁸ And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

²⁹ And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. ³⁰ And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. ³¹ And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. ³² And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai. ³³ And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. ³⁴ But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. ³⁵ And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him. (KJV)

Jehovah refuses to accompany Israel to the land of promise. **“I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people; lest I consume thee in the way”** (vs. 33:3). At the opening of this book, when the people were in the furnace of Egypt, the Lord could say, **“I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task masters; for I know their sorrows”** (Ex. 3:7). But now He has to say, **“I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people”** (Ex. 32:9). An afflicted people is an object of grace; but a stiffnecked people must be humbled. The cry of oppressed Israel had been answered by the exhibition of

grace; but the song of idolatrous Israel must be answered by the voice of stern rebuke.

“Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment and consume thee : therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee that I may know what to do unto thee” (vs. 33:4). It is only when we are really stripped of all nature’s ornaments that God can deal with us. A naked sinner can be clothed; but a sinner decked in ornaments must be stripped. This is always true. We must be stripped of all that pertains to self, ere we can be clothed with that which pertains to God.

“And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb” (vs. 33:6). There they stood beneath that memorable mount, their feasting and singing changed into bitter lamentations, their ornaments gone, the tables of testimony in fragments. Such was their condition, and Moses at once proceeds to act according to it. He could no longer own the people in their corporate character. The assembly had become entirely defiled, having set up an idol of their own making, in the place of God—a calf instead of Jehovah. **“And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it *without the camp*, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation”** (vs. 33:7). Thus the camp was disowned as the place of the divine presence. God was not—could not—be there. He had been displaced by a human invention. A new gathering point was, therefore, set up. **“And it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp”** (vs. 33:7).

There is here a fine principle of truth, which the spiritual mind will readily apprehend. The place which Christ now occupies is **“without the camp,”** and we are called upon to **“go forth unto him.”** It demands much subjection to the word to be able, with accuracy, to know what **“the camp”** really is, and much spiritual power to be able to go forth from

it; and still more to be able, while **“far off from it,”** to act towards those in it, in the combined power of holiness and grace—holiness, which separates from the defilement of the camp; grace, which enables us to act toward those who are involved therein.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle” (vs. 33:7). Moses exhibits a higher degree of spiritual energy than his servant Joshua. It is much easier to assume a position of separation from the camp, than to act aright towards those within.

“And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me: yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight” (vs. 33:12). Moses entreats the accompanying presence of Jehovah as a proof of their having found *grace* in His sight. Were it a question of mere *justice*, He could only consume them by coming in their midst, because they were **“a stiffnecked people.”** But directly He speaks of grace, in connection with the mediator, the very stiffneckedness of the people is made a plea for demanding His presence. **“If now I have found grace in thy sight, Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance”** (vs. 34:9). This is touchingly beautiful. A **“stiffnecked people”** demanded the boundless grace and exhaustless patience of God. None but He could bear with them.

“And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (vs. 33:14). Precious portion! Precious hope! The presence of God with us, all the desert through, and everlasting rest at the end! Grace to meet our present need, and glory as our future portion! Well may our satisfied

hearts exclaim, "It is enough, my precious Lord."

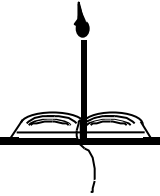
In chapter 34, the second set of tables is given, not to be broken, like the first, but to be hidden in the ark, above which, as already noticed, Jehovah was to take His place, as the Lord of all the earth, in moral government. **"And he hewed two tables of stone, like unto the first: and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with them there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation"** (vs. 34:4-7). This, be it remembered, is God, as seen in His moral government of the world, and not as He is seen in the cross—not as He shines in the face of Jesus Christ—not as He is proclaimed in the gospel of His grace. The following is an exhibition of God in the gospel: **"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, NOT IMPUTING their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation"** (II Cor. 5:18-19). **"Not clearing"** and **"not imputing"** present two totally different ideas of God. **"Visiting iniquities"** and cancelling them are not the same thing. The former is God in government, the latter is God in the gospel. In II Cor. 3, the apostle contrasts **"the ministration"** recorded in Exodus 34 with **"the ministration"** of the gospel. My reader would do well to study that chapter with care. From it he will learn that anyone who regards the view of God's character given to

Moses, on mount Horeb, as unfolding the gospel, must have a very defective apprehension, indeed, of what the gospel is. Neither in creation, nor yet in moral government, do I, or can I, read the deep secrets of the Father's bosom. Could the prodigal have found his place in the arms of the One revealed on mount Sinai? Could John have leaned his head on the bosom of that One? Surely not. But God has revealed Himself in the face of Jesus Christ. He has told out, in divine harmony, all His attributes in the work of the cross. There **"mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other"** (Ps. 85:10). Sin is perfectly put away, and the believing sinner perfectly justified **"BY THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS."** When we get a view of God, as thus unfolded, we have only, like Moses, to **"bow our head toward the earth and worship,"**—suited attitude for a pardoned and accepted sinner in the presence of God!



This article is taken from: Mackintosh, C. H. *Notes on the Book of Exodus*. London: George Morrish, 1858. A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at <http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>.

A Classic Study: Job 1:13-15 (part 2)



[Here we continue a reprint of a small portion of Joseph Caryl's study in Job. Mr. Caryl wrote twelve volumes on the book of Job. His study is a great example of how deep one can dig into the truths of the Bible.]

A Study by Joseph Caryl (1644)

Job 1:13-15 (part 2) - Satan's Attacking Soldiers

¹³And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: ¹⁴And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them. ¹⁵And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain thy servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.
(KJV)

“And the Sabeans fell upon them...” – The Hebrew is, *Saba fell upon them*, the country put for the people: *Saba* for the *Sabeans*. As we use to say, *Spain* made war, and *France* made war, that is, the *Spaniards* made war, or the *French* made war, so it is such an expression; *Saba* fell upon them, that is, the people inhabiting *Saba*.

“...fell upon them...” – The word denotes a mighty violence; they came upon them as from above; they came powering down upon them like a storm. There is such a phrase in war, when they go violently upon a place, they are said to storm the place, to storm the gates of a castle or of a city; so here, they fell upon them, that is, they came violently

upon them like a storm. In Prov. 1:27, destruction is described to come upon wicked men *like a whirlwind*.

The *Sabeans* were a people (as it is concluded by most interpreters) inhabiting *Arabia felix*, near the country where Job dwelt. And for the manners of this people, it is observed by historians, that they were a people famous only for robberies, a people that lived by pillage and by plundering of their neighbors. Such a people they were; these *Sabeans* fell upon them, *they took away thy cattle, and have slain thy servants with the edge of the sword*.

Here it may be questioned: how or why these Sabeans at such a time should fall upon the estate of Job? What hurt had Job done them? Job lived in a fair way with all his neighbors, and kept good quarter and correspondence with them; he was not a man of war or contention. How then comes it to pass that these fell upon Job's estate and took it away, and upon that day too, in this nick of time?

As when the widow of Tekoah had told a fair tale to David about the bringing back of Absalom, the king asked her, *Is not the hand of Job with thee in all this?* So when you see such men, Sabeans and Chaldeans falling upon the estate of Job, you may demand, *Is not the hand of Satan in all this?* Yes, no doubt. These Sabeans fell upon Job's estate, but Satan first fell upon the Sabeans, and by strong temptations provoked them to do this service.

But how could he prevail upon the Sabeans, that they should come and do his business, now at this time?

The Apostle tells us, that *wicked men are led captive by Satan at his will* (see II Tim. 2:26). Satan leads men captive at his will, while they are, as they conceive, conquerors, riding in triumph, doing their own will. These Sabeans came to execute their own designs, but Satan had a design upon them: he brought them thus to spoil the estate of Job.

But what could Satan do? How could Satan prevail with these? Can he force men to be his instruments, to execute his designs upon the people of God? Or has he Sabeans and

Chaldeans, nations and people at his beck, or under his command?

No, Satan cannot force or compel them against their wills, but as that scripture says, *he leads them captive at his will*; and, as it says in another scripture, *he is a prince of the power of the air*, and he *works in the children of disobedience*; yea, *he works like a prince, mightily and powerfully in the children of disobedience* (see Eph. 2). Though he cannot constrain them, yet he can work mightily in them to effect what he has to do.

But how does he bring them about thus readily and suddenly to act what he projects.

Thus: First, he finds out the temper and disposition of the persons. That Satan can do. He is a great *naturalist*, and has a great deal of help to his skill, *long experience*, by both he can go very far in discovering the dispositions of men, which way their spirits tend; and he found out that these Sabeans were a people given to robbery and spoil, and so fit ministers for him to work by in his design of spoiling the estate of Job.

Secondly, when he found out the natural temper or state of a man's heart, he can lay a bait of temptation suitable to that inclination and desire. Finding out a people given to spoil, he presently sets before them rich spoils, ripe for the taking. See, yonder is a brave prize for you; yonder is a rich man; his estate will be good plunder; yonder are oxen and asses; there's good booty to be had. Thus finding out their disposition, he presents or holds up an object to them which hits it fully.

Thirdly, Satan deals with man to draw him to his purpose a degree further, by injecting and casting into the mind the motion to do this. He not only presents such-and-such a thing, such-and-such an opportunity, but he casts in and injects the motion. As it is said of Judas, that the devil *put it into his heart betray Christ* (John 13:2). The devil being a spirit has access to our spirits, and can convey himself into them and instill his suggestions. As the Lord Christ did breathe upon his disciples, and so they received the Holy Ghost and were filled with the Spirit, so Satan breathes filthy suggestions

into the spirits of men, and fills them with all manner of wickedness, malice, unrighteousness. He fills them with the spirit of hell. **“Why hath Satan filled thine heart?”** said Peter to Ananias (Acts 5:3). Satan had filled his heart to *lie to the Holy Ghost*. Thus, he instilled these thoughts of gain by robbery and murder into the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, and filled their hearts brim full. Then, they resolve to act it out with the hand, and so they become Satan’s instruments.

Lastly, Satan can do somewhat more than inject and suggest such thoughts: he can mightily irritate and provoke, and stir up the heart to be willing to give entertainment to such a motion. He not only barely presents his temptation, but vehemently backs it, and will give no rest to a man until he yields it. So it is said of his tempting David, *that Satan stood up and provoked David to number the people* (I Chron. 21:1); he did not only inject such a thought to David, but he *provoked* him; he never let him alone, but followed him and solicited him to it. This Satan can do, and yet he cannot *press* men to take up arms for his designs. All those that fight under Satan’s colors are *volunteers*. He never constrains any, neither can he; the will is never forced by him, neither can it be. Satan uses no compulsion beyond a moral persuasion well set on; he can but vex us (as the Midianites did Israel) with his wiles. He is an *Ahitophel*, not an *Alexander*; a *Machiavel*, not a *Caesar*.

This is the manner of Satan’s working in the children of disobedience. All these things he does; yet I believe he is not always put to do all these upon everyone over whom he prevails. Some come to this work on easier terms than others. He needs not provoke and solicit them; a suggestion wins them. The very sight of an object overcomes them: Yea some stand ready offering their service to Satan, and selling themselves to work any wickedness he will employ them in.

I have shown you the most that Satan can do; I conceive he had not much to do with these Sabeans to enlist them to this war: *That which is in motion is easily moved*. And as we say, *he*

must needs run whom the devil drives; so the devil needs not drive them who are running of themselves.

It being opened, what these Sabeans were, and how they came into the service of Satan, what made them take up arms, as it were, in his cause, we may observe hence:

First, *that wicked and ungodly men, while they satisfy their own lusts, are but doing the work of Satan and executing his designs*. These Sabeans, though they did not think it, yet they came upon Satan's errand. So God, when he justly uses wicked men to punish or correct his people, they do their own will, and they have their own way; but God has his way too; he overrules them to effect his business at that time. So it is said of the King of Assyria, **“O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him charge. How be it, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so”** (Isa. 10:5-7); he has purposes of his own. So they that are agitated by Satan and provoked by him, *they think not so*; they think not they are doing the will and work, the dirty drudgery of Satan, but the truth is, they do nothing else all the while. **“You are of your father the devil, and his lusts you will do,”** said Christ to the Jews (John 8:44); while they do their own, they fulfill the lusts and designs of Satan. As it is said in Revelation: **“The devil shall cast some of you into prison”** (Rev. 2:10); it was not the devil in person, it was the devil in his seconds or servants; and these men little thought that they did the devil's service at that time. If one should have come and told them, you are now doing the devil's work, and undertaking a piece of service for him, you are as so many instruments and agents for hell, they would not have believed it. But the truth is, it was the devil's work, and they did it so devilishly, that from both, it is said, the devil did it; he cast some of them into prison. It is a fearful thing to persecute or oppress the people of God; such in serving their own lusts, are indeed the *right hand of Satan; the devil's hirelings*.

(Note: Satan could have destroyed all himself if he pleased. Good angels have mighty power, and so do wicked angels too, if God will let them alone to put out their powers. Therefore, they are called *principalities and powers*. Satan had leave; he might have taken what course he would with the estate of Job).

Secondly, forasmuch as Satan will have Sabeans and Chaldeans to afflict Job's estate, note from hence, *that Satan loves to draw others to be partakers with him in his designs*. Though he can do his work alone, yet he will have man join with him in it if he can. And in this, he imitates God himself, who has an almighty power, and is able to do all things alone if he please; yet, he usually calls in instruments. He is able to convert alone by the motion of his Spirit, but he will have preachers to convert by the ministry of the Word. He is able to protect his people from their enemies by his own strength, yet he will have armies mustered to do it by. And why does God choose to work thus? There is a double good in it. He does it that he may do good two ways at once. First, his creature is saved and relieved; that's one good. Secondly, men who are employed as instruments are honored and respected, they having given help to God in such a cause: God gives them honor in the eyes of all his servants; that is another good. So Satan, while he sets men a-work—Sabeans, Chaldeans and other to do mischief to Job or others whom he afflicts—he does mischief to his instruments; he makes these sin as he makes other suffer. If he carry on the work alone, they suffer, but others do not partake in the guilt of the sin; but now, when he uses instruments to effect his wicked designs, he makes one miserable and the other wicked. This is one of Satan's methods, he will work by means, and do his business by the hands of men, that he may at once do a double mischief.

Thirdly, in that these Sabeans and Chaldeans are observed in histories to be a people given much to robberies and spoil, and these are the men whom Satan picks out for this business,

observe, *that Satan suits his temptations to man's natural temper and inclination.* Whenssoever he tempts, he takes this advantage, if he can discover or obtain it. He is wiser then, to set sail against wind and tide, to row against the stream. Therefore, he labors all he can, to find which way the stream of every man's affections runs, and to what sins his relations, his calling or his opportunities, lay him most open and obnoxious, accordingly he lays his snares and spreads his net. When he meets with a proud man, him he tempts with high thoughts; when he meets with a covetous man, him he tempts to the love of the world, he lays a golden bait of profit before his eyes. The adulterous, he leads to the harlot's house. For howsoever it be true, that every man has in him a principle suiting to every sin, yet it is a truth too, that every man is not equally active for or disposed to every sin, and every man has not every particular sin predominant in him. Now Satan, when he sees what is predominant in any man, then he fashions and frames a temptation suitable: he perceived these Sabeans were given to rob and spoil, and he shows them a desirable booty.

“...yea, they have slain thy servants with the edge of the sword...” – This is a further aggravation of the affliction, they did not only fall upon Job's cattle and took them away, but they slew his servants. A man's servants are nearer to him than his cattle, than his oxen and his asses; servants are next unto our children. So that this was a heightening of Job's sorrow, not only are your cattle gone, but your servants are slain, and they are *slain* (said he) *with the edge of the sword*; the word in the Hebrew is, *they are slain with the mouth of the sword.*

We read in Scripture sometimes of the *face of the sword*, and sometimes of the *mouth of the sword*; the Hebrew is, *they shall flee from the face of the sword*, similar to Jer. 25:27. Now, when the Scripture speaks of the *face of the sword*, it is meant of war coming, or war preparing and approaching. But the *mouth of the sword* is war inflicted, war acted. This phrase, the mouth of the sword is used to show that the sword is a great devourer:

“I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh” (Deut. 32:42). War has a terrible face; it has a wide mouth and sharp teeth; *they have slain thy servants with the edge of the sword*; the mouth of the sword has devoured them.

At this day, we have great cause to have our hearts deeply affected with this thing. There has been (as it were) the face of the sword a great while looking towards us, but now there is the very mouth of the sword gaping at us; yea, tearing, gnawing, and devouring the flesh and bones of thousands amongst us. Where the sword comes, it will devour; war is a great judgement, one of God’s sore judgements, the sorest of all God’s outward judgements. David chooses the pestilence rather than the sword; the pestilence is a devourer, but the sword is a greater devourer. And though the prophet Jeremiah in his Lamentations makes famine a sorer judgement than the sword, **“They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger”** (Lam. 4:9); yet, the sword is in this worse than famine, because usually it is the cause of famine. The sword cuts off food, the support of man’s life, as well as the life of man. While the sword is making itself fat, it hath famine in the belly of it.

We need not go to Jeremiah or Josephus for the proof of this in Jerusalem, Babylonian or Roman desolations, and Germany, bleeding Ireland are near woeful witnesses and spectacles of it at this day. The sword has opened a way for famine to enter also, and which of the two has eaten most flesh, is hard to determine. Let us cry earnestly to God that the mouth of the sword may be stopped, or continued open only to devour those who would devour the man that is more righteous than they. Let us pray that blood may be spared, or none but corrupt blood spilt. *Spare thy people, O Lord*. It is (I confess) one of the saddest prognostics in my observation against this nation: that God hitherto has made little difference. Our sword has not yet been taught from heaven to distinguish of men. Precious blood has been drawn, and

men whose very hairs were all numbered (that is highly prized) by God, have been numbered among the slain. It must satisfy us that the will of God is so. The answer which David gave Job's messenger is good settling council now: *Let not this displease thee* (he speaks this after the fall of noble Uriah) *for the sword* (not by accident but decree, not casually but providentially) *devoureth so and such* (as the Hebrew language has it) *one as well as another*, so we translate. It is mercy we are not all consumed by this devourer, as in the text; you may read all the servants of Job were, excepting one, only one got out of the mouth of the sword, eating up all saving one; and he was saved, that by the report of this destructive sword, he might destroy Job himself.

“...and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.” – The word in the original is double: only I, *I alone am escaped*, as if the man should have said between horror and amazement, much ado I had to get away without losing somewhat of myself; I only singly, singly I got away and escaped. The sword was very hungry, when but one man of all Job's servants escaped the teeth of it.

But how came it to pass that this one man escaped?

Certainly, as I said before, the hand of Satan was in this also. For however he ordered and disposed all these things, yet he let Satan work in his circle, in his compass to contrive things, as he pleased himself the most aptly he could imagine, to afflict and trouble Job; therefore, there is somewhat in it, no good will (I believe) to Job, that this one man had the favor of quarter, or the mercy of an escape.

It was not out of any compassionate respect to Job that one of his servants came home alive. It was rather to increase the affliction of Job, and for the perfecting of his sorrows, this man was not slain, in order that Job might be more deeply wounded. There are two reasons which may be assigned why one man escaped out of every one of these calamities.

First, that the report of this affliction might come suddenly to him. A man that escapes out of such a danger needs no driving; his fear will add wings to his feet; he will run home apace.

Secondly, for the certainty of it. Reports fly abroad; they may be false; fame is a liar. Job might have had such reports from his neighbors in the country; *all your cattle are seized upon, and all your servants are slain*. Job may sleight it and say, *this might be but a rumor; I give no credit to it*. Therefore, Satan lets one of his own servants come frightened home with the news; one that was there; one that was an eyewitness; one that Job knew; one that had no reason, much less boldness, to bring false tales to him. In this way, the report comes speedily, so that Job's heart might be smitten presently. *It is some abatement of an evil to have but a color of doubt of it*. If we can but lay hold of any circumstance which renders an evil report improbable, and may for a while strengthen our unbelief of it; we may in that interim get more strength of faith to bear it, when we see it is certain and unquestionable. There was no mercy in such a sparing.

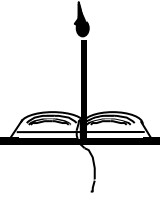
And we may observe out of it, that which Solomon speaks of the mercies of the wicked is most true of Satan's: *The very tender mercies of Satan are cruel*; the best of his mercies, his sparings are woundings; he never spares but with an intent to do further hurt. Job's afflictions had not gone so deep, if this man had not been left to bring the message.



This article is taken from: Caryl, Joseph. *An Exposition with Practical Observations upon the Book of Job*. London: G. Miller, 1644. A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at

<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>

New Testament Study: *Romans 1:21-32*



A Study by Scott Sperling

Romans 1:21-32 – The Wrath of God, the Sin of Man, pt. 2

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen. ²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

²⁸ Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil,

greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Having established in verse 20 that everyone is given a knowledge of God, Paul goes on to describe man's failure to properly respond to this knowledge of God, and the resulting punishment upon man for having rejected God. Paul gives us three parallel examples of this deadly cycle—the cycle in which man rejects God, and then receives the just punishment for doing so—in verses 21-24, then 25-27, then 28-32.

Paul begins: **“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened”** (vs. 21). The proper response to knowing the greatness and majesty of God is to **“glorify”** Him, and to **“give thanks”** to Him. These two obligations “embrace the whole cycle of the soul's duty towards God” [Liddon]. “Man is a religious being, and if he refuses to let God have the place of preeminence that is rightfully his, then he will put something or someone else in God's place” [Harrison]. “Men often justify their neglect of God by alleging that He has no need of their service, and that it cannot be profitable to Him; but we here see that He is to be glorified for His perfections, and thanked for His blessings... We should constantly remember that God is the source of all that we are, and of all that we possess.” [Haldane, 61].

First, to **“glorify”** him: The Psalmist teaches, **“The heavens declare the glory of God”**, and so we must also glorify Him. To **“glorify”** means to praise God for what He

is [Schaff, 27]. To fail to **“glorify”** God, as stated before, is to fail to properly respond to the knowledge of God given to us. Our awe and adoration of God must keep pace with our knowledge of the goodness and greatness of God. “Reason suggests that the creature should honor the Creator. Scripture asserts in the clearest manner that we are bound to glorify God” [Plumer, 76]. The Psalmist admonishes: **“You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!”** (Ps. 22:23).

In addition to glorifying God, we must also **“give thanks to him”** (vs. 21). “Well-bred people thank even another man’s servant for a small favor, such as a cup of cold water. How vile must be the heart that warms not with gratitude to God, who lavishes on us innumerable blessings, all wholly unmerited” [Plumer, 65]. “Does not a child even say thanks to its benefactor?” [Godet, 173].

The act of **“giving thanks to God”** keeps the blessings of God upon our lives in fresh focus before our eyes, which aids in our obedience of Him. “Insensibleness of God’s mercies is at the bottom of our sinful departures from him” [Henry, 218].

The result of man’s ingratitude to God is that **“their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened”** (vs. 21). Those who refuse to respond to the knowledge of God given them, find themselves meandering into all sorts of mazes of **“futile”** thought. And so we find that many scientists and intellectuals have the stated goal of explaining the workings of the Creation, without acknowledging the possibility of any activity by God. This leads them to all sorts of **“futile”** speculations about how life spontaneously sprang out of nothing, and about how consciousness and the soul are mere mirages. They spend their whole life’s work striving to convince us against things we clearly understand. They wrongly tell us that there is no God, and that our existence is meaningless. They prove this

by vain speculations which are supported by the flimsiest of evidences. This is the height of **“futile”** thinking.

Such **“futile”** thinking leads to **“darkened”** hearts. When one shields himself from the clear light of God, what else can the result be but a **“darkened”** heart? And then those who are in the dark, whose **“foolish hearts were darkened”**, become accustomed to the darkness, and even learn to love the darkness. In the end, they hate all light. As John teaches: **“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil”** (John 3:19).

The rejection of the knowledge of God leads to self-deception, and then idolatry: **“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles”** (vss. 22-23). “The more they boasted of their wisdom, the more conspicuous became their folly” [Hodge, 39]. “This is the greatest unhappiness of man, not only not to feel his malady, but to extract a matter of pride from what ought to be his shame. What they esteemed their wisdom was truly their folly. All their knowledge, for which they valued themselves, was of no avail in promoting virtue or happiness. Their superstitions were in themselves absurd; and instead of worshipping God, they actually insulted Him in their professed religious observances” [Haldane, 62].

Rejection of the true God, invariably leads to worship of false Gods. As Paul teaches: **“They became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles”** (vss. 22-23). The worship of man-made gods represented by carved wooden or stone figures is not as prevalent as it once was, but false idolatry is still prevalent. When the children of Israel were displeased with God in the wilderness, they made a god of their own devising when they crafted the golden calf (see Ex. 32). Nowadays,

when people are displeased with the True and Living God as revealed in the Bible, they devise a god of their own, an image of god that suits them. They may not carve wooden or stone figures of this god, but their worship of the false god, which they have devised in their mind, is still idolatry. They reject the True and Living God because they despise His law, and want a law that they themselves devise; or they despise His Son who died for them, and they do not want to worship the Son as Lord, so they devise their own means of salvation which is acceptable to the god of their own creation. This is idolatry, every bit as much as the idolatry of wooden and stone figures.

People worship gods of their own creation, many times, in order to justify actions that they wish to carry out. In one corner of the world, a god of extreme liberality and universal inclusiveness is created in order to get approval for any and every activity (no matter how reprehensible to the True and Living God). In another corner of the world, a god of hatred and vindictiveness is created, in order to get approval for actions spawned by the hatred and bloodthirstiness of men. All such worship of gods, whose will and character deviates from the will and character of the True and Living God as revealed in the Bible, is idolatry. “Paul describes the terrible proclivity of all people to corrupt the knowledge of God they possess by making gods of their own. This tragic process of human ‘god-making’ continues apace in our own day, and Paul’s words have as much relevance for people who have made money or sex or fame their gods as for those who carved idols out of wood and stone... It is this putting some aspect of God’s creation — whether it be an animal, a human, or a material object — in place of God that is the essence of idolatry” [Moo, 110, 113].

Creating a god of one’s own conception is actually a form of self-deification. They reject the wisdom of the True and Living God, thinking that they are wiser than God, and so they create what they think is a better god—a god that

conforms to their own wisdom and desires. “In modern times the western world has outgrown crass idolatry, but humanism has subtly injected the worship of man without the trappings. God is quietly ruled out and man is placed on the throne” [Harrison]. As Paul says, **“they become fools”**, by **“exchanging the glory of the immortal God”** for something that is worthless, and non-existent. This is the height of rebellion against God, and the height of foolishness of man.

Such a rejection of the True and Living God deserves punishment by God, especially since the revelation of the True God has been given to everyone. God’s means of punishment (in general) was not to hurl fire and brimstone down, but to just let man be man: **“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another”** (vs. 24). The **“sinful desires”** of the hearts of men themselves provided the punishment for the idolatry. “God is not represented in these expressions as infusing any evil principles; but simply as leaving them to the unbridled indulgence of the lusts of their own hearts—the unrestrained operation of the principles of evil already in them” [Wardlaw, 121]. “Given up by God, men come under the power of Satan and their own corruption... As the Spirit withdraws, the power of sin advances” [Robinson, 104]. “It is beyond question that, according to the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments, sin is the punishment of sin” [Tholuck]. “Sin inevitably creates its own penalty... Divine judgment is God permitting people to go their own way” [Mounce, 56].

Given the revelation of God to them, men are **“without excuse”** (vs. 20), and so deserve the *giving over* to the *desires of their hearts*, which without God’s grace and restraining influence, tend to sin. People blame God for the evil in the world, but rather should credit God for any good that is in the world. Without God’s restraining influence, the world would be a hell, full of only darkness, which would be the result if

man was completely left to his sinful inclinations. “It is a horrible thing to be given up or given over by God. From his throne never proceeds a more dismal sentence than this: ‘Let him alone’” [Plumer, 78].

Paul here, when he speaks of the **“sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another”**, may be referring particularly to the sexual immorality that often accompanied idol-worship in ancient times. Those pagan rites **“degraded”** man, turning him from a being created in the image of God, to a brute driven by animal passions. God desires and expects more from us. When men are given over totally to their animal passions, when the animal passions drive the behavior of men, their bodies are **“degraded”**, and society is **“degraded”**. As beautiful as sex is within the confines of committed love within a marriage, so is it debasing, disgraceful, and animalistic outside such. It is a **“dishonor”** to one’s body. The prohibitions concerning sex in the Bible are laws made for *our* good, so that we would avoid *dishonor* to our bodies. We are humans, not animals. God desires that we maintain our human dignity, the dignity of being made in God’s image. One need only read the headlines to see the destruction that unbridled animal passions wreaks on society. This is the punishment of idolatry, of rejecting the truths of God, and word of God, and the worship of God.

Paul continues in verses 25 to 27, with a parallel passage to verses 21 to 24. He describes again the rejection of God by man, resulting in God’s punishment by merely letting men be men, as He gives them over to sinful passions: **“They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and**

received in themselves the due penalty for their error” (vss. 25-27). Again, Paul may here be referring to **“the shameful acts”** which took place as part of pagan worship rituals. The unbridled acts of **“sexual impurity”** in verse 24 escalates to the abandonment of **“natural relations”** in the form of homosexual sex acts in verse 27.

The Greek words in verses 26 and 27 translated as *women* and *men* might be better translated *female* and *male*, for they are the same terms that describe the sexes of animals. Paul presumably selected these words “to give prominence to the animal idea of sex, instead of the higher human idea of man and woman.” Likewise, the term in the Greek translated here as *natural relations* “is meant the use of the sexual organs appointed by God in nature” [Liddon, 31]. So Paul is pointing out that men should not be indiscriminant in sexual activity, as animals are, but must have self-control. We are created in God’s image, and should not live like animals, driven solely by passions. We are higher beings. The result of God **“giving over”** those who worship created things rather than the Creator is that they become more animal-like, and less like what they were created to be, that is, *in God’s image*. It is God’s desire that we be more like Him, be **“partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”** (II Peter 1:4, KJV).

Let me digress here, a bit, from the verse-by-verse analysis of Paul’s writing, to address the prohibitions of homosexual acts in the Bible, as they relate to modern society, where homosexual activity is, more and more, becoming an acceptable norm. If we say that the homosexual sexual act, whether between men or between women, is not a sin, we are, in effect, dangerously **“exchanging the truth of God for a lie”** (vs.. 25), for there are clear prohibitions against it in both the Old and New Testaments (see Lev 18:22; Lev. 20:13; I Cor 6:9; I Tim 1:10; as well as here in Rom. 1:26-27). It is communicated to be, in the Bible, an act of licentiousness that is not originally part of God’s created ideal.

And yet, we must not over-emphasize, and over-react to this sin. It is not an unforgivable sin. Those who practice homosexuality need the salvation that is available through Christ, just as much as any sinner. It would be a sin on our part to, say, bar homosexuals from hearing the gospel at a church service. It would be wrong for us to expect homosexuals to rid themselves of sin, before accepting the salvation of Jesus. This is not expected of any other sinner. Salvation comes before sanctification, not the other way around. Jesus Himself said, **“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners”** (Matt. 9:13). As Christians, we should love homosexuals in a Christ-like manner, communicate to them the glorious grace of the Gospel, not in an off-putting manner that demonstratively, condemningly calls out their sins, but as we would to any lost soul searching for God: with grace, patience, and sincerity. As for all of us, the sanctification of their lives will come later, after they have received Christ, as the Holy Spirit works in them.

We accept and welcome **“gossips”, “slanderers”, the “insolent, arrogant, boastful”** (see vs. 29, 30) into our Church services. We accept and welcome the divorced into our Church services, even though there are many more prohibitions concerning divorce than there are concerning homosexuality. So also should we accept with open arms homosexuals into our Church services. As sinners, they need Christ just as each of us do. God is a God of grace. Christ personified grace. Let us, if anything, err on the side of grace in this matter. Let saved homosexuals be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Give them time for this process to happen. It is quite possible that this sanctification may happen in ways we don’t see or understand. Let the Holy Spirit be in charge of that process.

Paul continues with the third of his parallel passages, in which he describes the rejection of God by man, and the

resulting punishment by God as He gives them over to their sinful behavior: **“Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done”** (vs. 28). Here, man has moved on from *idolatry* (in vs. 23 and 25), to outright *atheism*, as **“they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God.”** And then, as they purged their minds of **“the knowledge of God”**, for their punishment, God allowed their minds to be filled instead with knowledge of sin, as He **“gave them over to a depraved mind.”** “It denotes a mind judicially blinded, so as not to discern the difference between things distinguished even by the light of nature” [Haldane, 66]. “Truth rejected leaves its mark. One’s ability to think clearly about moral issues is undermined” [Mounce, 59] “People who have refused to acknowledge God end up with minds that are *disqualified* from being able to understand and acknowledge the will of God... This tragic incapacity is the explanation for the apparently inexplicable failure of people to comprehend, let alone practice, biblical ethical principles. Only the work of the Spirit in **‘renewing the mind’** (see Rom. 12:2) can overcome this deep-seated blindness and perversity” [Moo, 118]. “The next stage is general moral degradation, regarded as the judicial consequence of the dishonour done to God. It is, indeed, a necessary consequence; for low and unworthy conceptions of Deity bring with them moral deterioration; when man’s Divine ideal becomes degraded, with it he becomes degraded too” [*Pulpit Comm.*, 11].

Whereas in the previous sections, where God, it seems, *gave men over* to sins related to ritual worship of false gods (see verses 24, 26-27), here man is given over to a **“depraved mind”**, and the resulting sin seeps into all aspects of society. Paul gives a catalogue (of sorts) of the sins that pervade a godless society: **“They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of**

envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them" (vss. 29-32). This is a depiction of a society without God's restraining hand keeping men from sin, a society without the good that only God provides.

Sadly each of us, as fallen human beings, practice many of these sins, even those of us who are saved by God's grace. "Here is enough to humble us all in the sense of our original corruption; for every heart by nature has in it the seed and spawn of all these sins" [Henry, 219]. "Such a catalogue of sins, if duly considered, would overwhelm any unconverted person with shame and self-condemnation" [Plumer, 80]. I cannot see how anyone reading this entire passage can be unaffected with the need to seek God's salvation, and this is the purpose of Paul's writing here: to demonstrate that there is not one person, who has ever existed, who does not need the salvation that is available by accepting Christ's sacrifice for our sins. "From the whole, we see how terrible to his posterity have been the consequences of the sin of the first man; and, on the other hand, how glorious in the plan of redemption is the grace of God by His Son" [Haldane, 72]. Given the variety and prevalence of sin, a Gospel of great power is required for atonement.



Bibliography and Suggested Reading

- Alford, Henry. *The Greek New Testament*, Vol. II. London: Rivington's, 1865.
- Bengel, John Albert. *Gnomon of the New Testament*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1873.
- Bonar, Horatius. *Light and Truth: The Acts and the Larger Epistles*. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1870.
- Calvin, John. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. London: Seeley and Sons, 1834. (Originally published in 1540).
- Chalmers, Thomas. *Lectures on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*. New York: Carter and Brothers, 1863. (Originally published in 1842).
- Exell, Joseph S. and Henry Donald Spence-Jones, eds. *The Pulpit Commentary*. Vols. 43. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1884.
- Godet, Frederic. *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883.
- Haldane, Robert. *Exposition on the Epistle to the Romans*. Edinburgh: Oliphant and Co, 1874. (Originally published in 1835).
- Harrison, Everett F. "Romans" from *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. X, ed. by Frank Gaebelein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Henry, Matthew. *An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament*. Vol. V. London: W. Baynes, 1806. (Originally published in 1710).
- Hodge, Charles. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Philadelphia: Garner, 1883. (Originally published in 1864).
- Lange, John Peter, ed. and Philip Schaff, trans. *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical*. New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1865.
- Liddon, Henry P. *Explanatory Analysis of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1893.
- Lloyd-Jones, D. M. *Romans*. 14 Volumes. Edinburgh, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985.
- Meyer, Heinrich. *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans*. In Two Volumes. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1881.
- Moo, Douglas J. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996.
- Morris, Leon. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988.

- Moule, Handley. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903.
- Mounce, Robert H., *The New American Commentary: Romans*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995.
- Newell, William R. *Romans Verse-By-Verse*. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Originally published 1938.
- Olshausen, Hermann. *Biblical Commentary on the New Testament*. Volume III. New York: Sheldon and Company, 1866.
- Osbourne, Grant. *Romans* (from “The IVP New Testament Commentary Series”, Vol. 6). Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Plumer, William S. *Commentary on Paul’s Epistle to the Roman*. New York: Randolph & Co, 1870.
- Robinson, Thomas. *A Suggestive Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*. London: R. D. Dickinson, 1878.
- Sanday, William, and Arthur Headlam. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895.
- Schaff, Philip. *The Epistles of St. Paul* (from “A Popular Commentary on the New Testament”, Vol. III). Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1882.
- Shedd, William G. T. *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*. New York: Scribner and Sons, 1879.
- Stifler, James. *The Epistle to the Romans – A Commentary: Logical and Historical*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897.
- Stuart, Moses. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1854.
- Trapp, John. *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*. Vol. V (Matthew to Revelation). Edmonton, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books (www.PuritanDownloads.com). (Originally published c. 1660).
- Wardlaw, Ralph. *Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans*. Edinburgh: Fullarton & Co., 1869.

Many of these books (those in the public domain) can be downloaded free of charge from:
<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>



A Topical Study: Communion with God

[Matthew Henry is greatly known for his magnificent commentary on the whole Bible. He also wrote a book proposing A Method for Prayer, in between writing volumes of that commentary. This series of articles is from that book.]

A Study by Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

How to Spend the Day with God, pt. 4

“...On Thee do I wait all the day.”

(Psalm 25:5)

For Application.

First. Let me further urge upon you this duty of waiting upon God all the day, in some more particular instances, according to what you have to do all the day in the ordinary business of it. We are weak and forgetful, and need to be put in mind of our duty in general, upon every occasion for the doing of it; and therefore I choose to be thus particular, that I may be your remembrancer.

1. When you meet with your families in the morning, wait upon God for a blessing upon them, and attend him with your thanksgivings for the mercies you and yours have jointly received from God the night past: you and yours houses must serve the Lord, must wait on him. See it owing to his goodness, who is the founder and father of the families of the righteous, that you are together, that the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in your tabernacles, and therefore wait upon him to continue you together, to make you comforts to one

another, to enable you to do the duty of every relation, and to lengthen out the days of your tranquility. In all the conversation we have with our families, the provision we make for them, and the orders we give concerning them, we must wait upon God, as the God of all the families of Israel, (see Jer. 21:1); and have an eye to Christ, as he in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

Every member of the family, sharing in family mercies, must wait on God for grace to contribute to family duties. Whatever disagreeableness there may be in any family relation, instead of having the spirit either burdened with it, or provoked by it, let it be an inducement to wait on God, who is able either to redress the grievance, or to balance it, and give grace to bear it.

2. When you are pursuing the education of your children, or the young ones under your charge, wait upon God for his grace to make the means of their education successful. When you are yourselves giving them instruction in things pertaining either to life or godliness, their general or particular calling, when you are sending them to school in the morning, or ordering them the business of the day, wait upon God to give them an understanding, and a good capacity for their business: Especially their main business, for it is God that giveth wisdom. If they are but slow, and do not come on as you could wish, yet wait on God to bring them forward, and to give them his grace in his own time; and while you are patiently waiting on him, that will encourage you to take pains with them, and will likewise make you patient and gentle towards them.

And let children and young people wait on God in all their daily endeavours, to fit themselves for the service of God and their generation. You desire to be comforts to your relations, to be good for something in this world, do you not?—Beg of God then a wise and understanding heart, as Solomon did, and wait upon him all the day for it, that you may be still increasing in wisdom, as you do in stature, and in favour with

God and man.

3. When you go to your shops, or apply yourselves to the business of your particular calling, wait upon God for his presence with you. Your business calls for your constant attendance every day, and all the day; keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee; but let your attendance on God in your callings be as constant as your attendance on your callings. Eye God's providence in all the occurrences of them. Open shop with this thought, *I am now in the way of my duty, and I depend upon God to bless me in it.* When you are waiting for customers, wait on God to find you something to do in that calling to which he hath called you. Those you call chance customers, you should rather call Providence customers, and should say of the advantage you make by them, *the Lord my God brought it to me.*

When you are buying and selling, see God's eye upon you, to observe whether you are honest and just in your dealings, and do no wrong to those you deal with; and let your eye then be up to him, for that discretion to which God doth instruct, not only the husbandman, but the tradesman (see Isa. 28:26); that prudence which directs the way, and with which it is promised, the good man shall order his affairs; for that blessing which makes rich, and adds no sorrow with it, for that honest profit which may be expected in the way of honest diligence.

4. When you take a book in your hands, God's book, or any other useful good book, wait upon God for his grace to enable you to make a good use of it. Some of you spend a deal of time every day in reading, and I hope none of you let a day pass without reading some portion of scripture, either alone or with your families. Take heed that the time you spend in reading be not lost time. It is so, if you read that which is idle, and vain, and unprofitable; it is so, if you read that which is good, even the word of God itself, and do not mind it, or observe it, or aim to make it of any advantage to you. Wait upon God, who gives you those helps for your souls, to make

them helpful indeed to you. The Eunuch did so when he was reading the book of the prophet Isaiah in his chariot; and God presently sent him one, who made him understand what he read.

You read perhaps now and then the histories of former times. In acquainting yourselves with them, you must have an eye to God, and to that wise and gracious Providence which governed the world before we were born, and preserved the church in it, and therefore may be still depended upon to do all for the best; for he is Israel's king of old.

5. When you sit down to your tables, wait on God. See his hand spreading and preparing a table before you in spite of your enemies, and in the society of your friends; often review the grant which God made to our first father Adam, and in him to us, of the products of the earth in Gen. 1:29: *Behold I have given you every herb-bearing seed, bread corn especially, to you it shall be for meat.* And the grant he afterwards made to Noah, our second father, and in him to us, in Gen. 9:3: *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb.* See in those things what a bountiful benefactor he is to mankind, and wait upon him accordingly.

6. Desire of God a blessing upon what you give in charity, that it may be comfortable to whom it is given, and that, though what you are able to give is but a little, like the widow's two mites, yet that, by God's blessing, may be doubled, and made to go a great way, like the widow's meal in the barrel, and oil in the cruise.

Depend upon God to make up to you what you lay out in good works, and to recompense it abundantly in the resurrection of the just: nay, and you are encouraged to wait upon him for a return of it even in this life; it is bread cast upon the waters, which you shall find again after many days; and you shall carefully observe the providence of God, whether it do not make you rich amends for your good works, according to the promise, that you may understand the lovingkindness of the Lord, and his faithfulness to the word

which he hath spoken.

7. When you inquire after public news, in that wait upon God, do it with an eye to him, for this reason: because you are truly concerned for the interests of his kingdom in the world, and lay them near your hearts; because you have a compassion for mankind, for the lives and souls of men, and especially of God's people. Ask what news, not as the Athenians, only to satisfy a vain curiosity, and to pass away an idle hour or two, but that you may know how to direct your prayers and praises, and how to balance your hopes and fears; and may gain such an understanding of the times, as to learn what you and others ought to do.

8. When we retire into solitude, to be alone walking in the fields, or alone reposing ourselves in our closets, still we must be waiting on God, still we must keep up our communion with him when we are communing with our hearts. When we are alone, we must not be alone, but the Father must be with us, and we with him. We shall find temptations even in solitude, which we have need to guard against. Satan set upon our Saviour when he was alone in the wilderness, but there also we have an opportunity, if we but know how to improve it, for that devout, that divine contemplation, which is the best conversation, so that we may never be less alone than when alone. If when we sit alone, and keep silent, withdrawn from business and conversation, we have but the art, I should say the heart, to fill up those vacant minutes with pious meditations of God and divine things, we then gather up the fragments of time which remain, that nothing may be lost, and so are we found waiting on God all the day.

Secondly. Let me use some motives to persuade you thus to live a life of communion with God, by waiting on him all the day.

1. Consider the eye of God is always upon you. When we are with our superiors, and observe them to look upon us, that causes us to look upon them; and shall we not then look up to God, whose eyes always behold, and whose eye-lids try

the children of men. He sees all the motions of our hearts, and sees with pleasure the motions of our hearts towards him, which should engage us to set him always before us.

The servant, though he be careless at other times, yet when he is under his master's eye, will wait in his place, and keep close to his business. We need no more to engage us to diligence, than to do our work with eye-service while our master looks on; and because he ever doth so, then we shall never look off.

2. The God you are to wait on is one with whom you have to do. All things, even the thoughts and intents of the heart, are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do (see Heb. 4:13); *with whom we have business or word*, who hath something to say to us, and to whom we have something to say; or, as some read it, to whom for us there is an account; there is a reckoning, a running account between us and him. And we must, every one of us, shortly give account of ourselves to him, and of everything done in the body, and therefore are concerned to wait on him, that all may be made even daily between us and him in the blood of Christ, which balanceth the account. If we consider how much we have to do with God every day, we would be more diligent and constant in our attendance on him.

3. The God we are to wait upon continually waits to be gracious to us; he is always doing us good, presents us with the blessings of his goodness, daily loads us with his benefits, and slips no opportunity of showing his care for us when we are in danger: his bounty to us when we are in want, and his tenderness for us when we are in sorrow. His good providence awaits on us all the day, to preserve our going out and coming in (see Isa. 30:18), to give us relief and succour in due season, to be seen in the mount of the Lord. Nay, his good grace waits on us all the day, to help us in every time of need, to be strength to us according as the day is, and all the occurrences of the day. Is God thus forward to do us good, and shall we be backward and remiss in doing him service?

4. If we attend upon God, his holy angels shall have a charge to attend upon us. They are all appointed to be ministering spirits, to minister for the good of them that shall be heirs of salvation, and more good offices they do us every day than we are aware of. What an honour, what a privilege is it to be waited on by holy angels, to be borne up in their arms, to be surrounded by their tents! What a security is the ministration of those good spirits against the malice of evil spirits! This honour have all they that wait on God all the day.

5. This life of communion with God, and constant attendance upon him, is a heaven upon earth. It is doing the work of heaven, and the will of God, as they do it that are in heaven, whose business it is always to behold the face of our Father. It is an earnest of the blessedness of heaven; it is a preparative for it, and a prelude to it; it is having our conversation in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour. Looking for him as our Saviour, we look to him as our director, and by this we make it appear that our hearts are there, which will give us good ground to expect that we shall be there shortly.

Thirdly, let me close with some directions, what you must do that you may thus wait on God all the day.

1. *See much of God in every creature*: of his wisdom and power in the making and placing of it, and of his goodness and serviceableness to us. Look about you, and see what a variety of wonders, what an abundance of comforts you are surrounded with, and let them all lead you to him, who is the fountain of being, and the giver of all good; all our springs are in him, and from him are all our streams. This will engage us to wait on him, since every creature is that to us which he makes it to be. Thus the same things which draw a carnal heart from God, will lead a gracious soul to him; and since all his works praise him, his saints will from hence take continual occasion to bless him.

It was (they say) the custom of the pious Jews of old, whatever delight they took in any creature, to give to God the

glory of it. When they smelled a flower, they said, "Blessed be he that made this flower sweet." If they ate a morsel of bread, they said, "Blessed be he that appointed bread to strengthen man's heart." If thus we taste in everything that the Lord is gracious, and suck all satisfaction from the breasts of his bounty, we shall thereby be engaged constantly to depend on him, as the child is said to hang on the mother's breast.

2. *See every creature to be nothing without God.* The more we discern of the vanity and emptiness of the world, and all our enjoyments in it, and their utter insufficiency to make us happy, the closer we shall cleave to God, and the more intimately we shall converse with him, that we may find that satisfaction in the Father of spirits, which we have in vain sought for in the things of sense. What folly is it to make our court to the creatures, and to dance attendance at their door, whence we are sure to be sent away empty, when we have the Creator himself to go to, who is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, is full, and free, and faithful. What can we expect from lying vanities? Why then should we observe them, and neglect our own mercies? Why should we trust to broken reeds, when we have a rock of ages to be the foundation of our hopes? And why should we draw from broken cisterns, when we have the God of all consolation to be the foundation of our joys?

3. *Live by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.* We cannot with any confidence wait upon God but in and through a Mediator, for it is by his Son that God speaks to us, and hears from us. All that passeth between a just God and poor sinners, must pass through the hands of that blessed daysman, who has laid his hand upon them both; every prayer passeth from us to God, and every mercy from God to us by that hand. It is in the face of the Anointed that God looks upon us; and in the face of Jesus Christ that we behold the glory and grace of God shining; it is by Christ that we have access to God, and success with him in prayer, and therefore we must make mention of his righteousness, even of his only. And in that habitual

attendance we must be all the day living upon God; we must have a constant dependence on him, who always appears in the presence of God for us, always gives attendance to be ready to introduce us.

4. *Look upon every day as those who know not but it may be your last day.* At such an hour as we think not the Son of man comes, and therefore we cannot any morning be sure that we shall live until night. We hear of many lately that have been snatched away very suddenly. What manner of persons therefore ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Though we cannot say, we ought to live as if we were sure this day would be our last; yet it is certain, we ought to live as those who do not know but that it may be so; and the rather, because we know the day of the Lord will come first or last; and therefore we are concerned to wait on him. For on whom should poor dying creatures wait, but on a living God.

Death will bring us all to God, to be judged by him; it will bring all the saints to him to the vision and fruition of him; and one we are hastening to, and hope to be forever with, we are concerned to wait upon, and to cultivate an acquaintance with. If we thought more of death, we would converse more with God. Our dying daily, is a good reason for our worshipping daily; and therefore wherever we are, we are concerned to keep near to God, because we know not where death will meet us; this will alter the property of death. Enoch, that walked with God, was translated that he should not see death; and this will furnish us with that which will stand us instead on the other side of death and the grave. If we continue waiting on God every day, and all the day long, we shall grow more experienced, and consequently more expert in the great mystery of communion with God; and thus our last days will become our best days, our last works our best works, and our last comforts our sweetest comforts. In consideration of which take the prophet's advice, **“Turn thou to thy God; keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy**

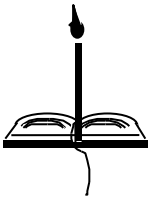
God continually” (Hos. 12:6).

[This concludes this study by Matthew Henry.]



This article is taken from: Henry, Matthew. *A Method for Prayer*. Glasgow: D. Mackenzie, 1834. (Originally published in 1710). A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at:

<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>



A Study in Wisdom: Psalm 78 (pt. 2)

A Study by Scott Sperling
Psalm 78:9-72 –
Lessons from History, pt. 2

Vss. 9-32 - Forgetting God, and His Works

- ⁹ The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows,
turned back on the day of battle;
- ¹⁰ they did not keep God's covenant
and refused to live by his law.
- ¹¹ They forgot what he had done,
the wonders he had shown them.
- ¹² He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors
in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.
- ¹³ He divided the sea and led them through;
he made the water stand up like a wall.
- ¹⁴ He guided them with the cloud by day
and with light from the fire all night.
- ¹⁵ He split the rocks in the wilderness
and gave them water as abundant as the seas;
- ¹⁶ he brought streams out of a rocky crag
and made water flow down like rivers.
- ¹⁷ But they continued to sin against him,
rebellious in the wilderness against the Most High.
- ¹⁸ They willfully put God to the test
by demanding the food they craved.
- ¹⁹ They spoke against God;
they said, "Can God really
spread a table in the wilderness?"

- 20 True, he struck the rock, and water gushed out,
streams flowed abundantly,
but can he also give us bread?
Can he supply meat for his people?"
- 21 When the Lord heard them, he was furious;
his fire broke out against Jacob,
and his wrath rose against Israel,
- 22 for they did not believe in God
or trust in his deliverance.
- 23 Yet he gave a command to the skies above
and opened the doors of the heavens;
24 he rained down manna for the people to eat,
he gave them the grain of heaven.
- 25 Human beings ate the bread of angels;
he sent them all the food they could eat.
- 26 He let loose the east wind from the heavens
and by his power made the south wind blow.
- 27 He rained meat down on them like dust,
birds like sand on the seashore.
- 28 He made them come down inside their camp,
all around their tents.
- 29 They ate till they were gorged –
he had given them what they craved.
- 30 But before they turned from what they craved,
even while the food was still in their mouths,
- 31 God's anger rose against them;
he put to death the sturdiest among them,
cutting down the young men of Israel.

In the first eight verses of this psalm, Asaph (the author) introduced it as a **“parable”**: **“I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old”** (vs. 2). The **“parable”** that Asaph is to relate, is the parable of the history of the children of Israel. By calling this history a **“parable”**, we learn that we should meditate on this history, and consider what we can learn from the actions, words and behavior of the children of Israel. We should apply to our own lives, the lessons taught by this history, just as we seek to apply to our lives the lessons that Jesus taught through parables.

Starting in verse 9, the parable of the history of Israel begins: **“The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows, turned back on the day of battle; they did not keep God’s covenant and refused to live by his law. They forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them”** (vss. 9-11). Ephraim, during the time of the judges, before there was a king in Israel, was considered to be the leading tribe. For this reason, the tabernacle was set up inside the territory of Ephraim, in Shiloh (see Josh. 18:1).

In these verses, we learn that the Ephraimites ultimately were defeated, because of their disobedience, and lack of faith. They **“did not keep God’s covenant”**, and they **“forgot what he had done, the wonders he had shown them”** (vs. 10, 11). This led to them **“turning back on the day of battle”**, even though they were well-equipped, even though they were **“armed with bows”** (vs. 9). And so, this being a parable, we can learn about the effects of disobedience, and a lack of faith due to not remembering the goodness and power of God. *“Forgetfulness of God is a sin of all nations and ages. It is the source of innumerable iniquities. It attends all depravity. It is a universal sin.”* [Plumer, 758]. We must not forget God’s work in the past, both in the history of his people, and in our own lives. Such forgetfulness leads to disobedience, and weakens our faith. And then, disobedience and lack of faith directly lead to defeat in spiritual battles. We are overcome by the enemy, and fall into sin, even though we are well-equipped to resist, for we are promised: **“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it”** (I Cor. 10:13).

Presumably, the battle referred to in verse 9, is the battle in which Ephraim lost the Ark of the Covenant to invading forces. Asaph speaks more on this later in the psalm, in verses 56 through 64.

Here, starting in verse 12, Asaph goes on to speak in detail about the **“wonders”** God had shown his people, those wonders that had been forgotten by them: **“He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors”** (vs. 12). He parted the Red Sea to deliver them from the Egyptians (vs. 13). He miraculously guided them through the wilderness (vs. 14). He miraculously provided for them in the wilderness (vs. 15-16). “God did great things for his people Israel, when he first incorporated them and formed them into a people;... not only in their sight, but in their cause, and for their benefit; so strange, so kind, that one would think they should never be forgotten” [Henry, 822]. “The great work of bodily redemption of God’s people out of Egypt, and the spiritual redemption of his people from the bondage of sin and misery, by Christ represented thereby, should be as inducements unto, and props of faith in God, to all who seek life in him, and an efficient motive unto love and obedience unto him, to the world’s end” [Dickson, 203]. “They neglected what they had covenanted to do, because they forgot in their self-will and perverseness the things which had been done for them” [*Plain*, 41].

Despite the work of God in their lives, despite his miraculous protection and providence, the children of Israel not only **“continued to sin”** and **“rebelled”** (vs. 17), but they went further, and **“willfully put God to the test”** (vs. 18). They weren’t content with the manna that God provided for food, and demanded what they considered to be better food: **“They spoke against God; they said, ‘Can God really spread a table in the wilderness? True, he struck the rock, and water gushed out, streams flowed abundantly, but can he also give us bread? Can he supply meat for his people?’”** (vss. 19-20). “Evidently the more God gives, the less we appreciate it. This grudging response to a string of miracles is not unlike the sequel to the feeding of the five thousand: a demand for a further and better sign (John 6:26ff)” [Kidner, 312]. “The very means which should

have made them more obedient made them more rebellious” [Alexander, 329]. “Unrenewed nature is strongly inclined to meet the Lord’s goodness with more and more ingratitude, and to sin over and over again the same sins, when new benefits and old faults being well considered, might teach more wisdom and thankfulness” [Dickson, 205].

To **“put God to the test”** is always represented as sinful in the Bible. A common method of *putting God to the test*, is to pray a prayer of the form: “God, if you do *such-and-such* for me, then I will do *so-and-so* for you.” For example, “God if you get me that new job, then I will consistently tithe to the church.” Or, “God, if you give me that girlfriend, then I will worship you forever.” Such prayers are unequivocally sinful. They make God out to be a mercenary, as if he needs our tithes, or our service, or our worship. Prayers such as these attempt to turn man into God (giving man the control), and God into man (making God subservient to our needs). In verses 19 and 20, the children of Israel were, in effect, doing this. They, in effect said, “God, you are not powerful enough to deserve our obedience and worship, unless you provide the food that we want.”

God was understandably angry at their attempts to *test* him: **“When the Lord heard them, he was furious; his fire broke out against Jacob, and his wrath rose against Israel, for they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance”** (vss. 21-22). Ironically, God punished them by giving them the very thing that they asked for, in great abundance: **“He rained meat down on them like dust, birds like sand on the seashore. He made them come down inside their camp, all around their tents. They ate till they were gorged—he had given them what they craved”** (vss. 27-29). — “As the Lord doth grant lawful desires in mercy, so also doth he grant sinful desires in wrath” [Dickson, 208]. “The blessings chosen for us by God are blessings indeed, and, like the manna, bring no sorrow with them: but when we choose for ourselves, and are so unhappy

as to be gratified in that choice, our portion too often proves a curse; and, while the much-loved morsel is yet between our teeth, **‘the wrath of God comes upon us,’** for making a wrong choice. This will always be the case in the end, whenever earth is preferred to heaven, and sense to faith” [Horne, 280]. “The judgment of God subsequent to the gratification of their insatiable lust presents a warning example. God in his anger will sometimes hear the foolish prayers of men, while the real and merciful granting of our petitions often consists in this, that Providence supplies something different from what we had prayed for” [Tholuck, 332-333].

God gave them enough meat, so that they **“gorged”** on it; they ate enough, that it **“came out of their nostrils and they loathed it”** (see Num. 11:20). In the end, the very meat they craved, became a **“severe plague”** to them (see Num. 11:34). In this way, God **“put to death the sturdiest among them, cutting down the young men of Israel”** (vs. 31). “He showed them that when lust wins its desire, it is disappointed, and by the way of satiety arrives at distate. First the food satiates, then it nauseates... O my God, deny me my most urgent prayers sooner than answer them in displeasure. Better hunger and thirst after righteousness than to be well-filled with sin’s dainties” [Spurgeon, 337]. “Satiated they were, but not satisfied. It is as easy to quench the fire of Etna, as the thoughts set on fire by lust... Many eat that on earth which they must digest in hell; these here were murdering morsels” [Trapp]. “My soul, see here the danger of gratified passions; they are the janitors of hell” [Spurgeon, 337].

Vss. 32-39 – God’s Mercy

- 32 In spite of all this, they kept on sinning;
in spite of his wonders, they did not believe.**
- 33 So he ended their days in futility
and their years in terror.**
- 34 Whenever God slew them, they would seek him;
they eagerly turned to him again.**
- 35 They remembered that God was their Rock,
that God Most High was their Redeemer.**
- 36 But then they would flatter him with their mouths,
lying to him with their tongues;**
- 37 their hearts were not loyal to him,
they were not faithful to his covenant.**
- 38 Yet he was merciful;
he forgave their iniquities
and did not destroy them.**
- Time after time he restrained his anger
and did not stir up his full wrath.**
- 39 He remembered that they were but flesh,
a passing breeze that does not return.**

Asaph continues: **“In spite of all this, they kept on sinning; in spite of his wonders, they did not believe”** (vs. 32). God did wonders of grace, which led them out of Egypt, protected them from their enemies, and miraculously provided for them, yet **“in spite of all this, they kept on sinning.”** God did wonders which led to their punishment, sending them quails so that they could eat the meat they so desired, until they gorged on them and died, yet **“in spite of all this, they kept on sinning.”** “Those hearts are hard indeed, which will neither be melted by the mercies of God, nor broken by His judgments” [Henry, in *Lange’s*, 442]. The cycle continues, over and over. “Mercies are followed by provocations; provocations are punished with judgments; to

judgments succeed repeated provocations, which call down fresh judgments” [Horne, in Plumer, 758]. Man is hopelessly a sinner. And as Asaph wrote these things as a parable, then yes, this is us. Reflect and learn about your own tendency to return to sin, and to forsake the True and Living God. **“They did not believe.”** “Notwithstanding all these favours and extraordinary interpositions, the generation that came out of Egypt still persisted in their evil courses. The phrase, **‘they did not believe,’** does not charge them with denying the reality of the wonders which they witnessed, but with refusing to trust God on the strength of them” [Alexander, 331]. “They did believe the history of his works, namely, that such things as are there recorded were done; they could not but believe that God had wrought wonders for them in Egypt, that he had drowned Pharaoh in, and brought them safe through, the Red Sea: they saw these things, their senses were witnesses, but yet **‘they did not believe’** the prophecy or promise which was virtually in those works, namely, that God would do more wonders for them till he had finished and accomplished their deliverance” [Caryl, in Spurgeon, 358]. “Their persistent unbelief despite of the presence of perpetual miracles, and the somewhat frequent recurrence of those which were new and fresh, are the strong points made in this Psalm. Similar depravity is a fearful fact in the human life of every age. It stands here a suggestive rebuke to the men of all time that in the very presence of most impressive testimonies of God’s love and power they are still so slow of heart to believe in his love and to trust his power to save” [Cowles, 326].

Their punishment for their unbelief was that they were not able to enter the promised land: **“So he ended their days in futility and their years in terror”** (vs. 33). They continued, **“in futility”**, their seemingly endless wanderings in the wilderness. “Sin—rebellion against God—leads to a course of life, and a death, of which these gloomy, sad, and cheerless wanderings in the desert were a striking emblem”

[Barnes, 299]. “The Hebrew nation doomed to wander forty years up and down, back and forth, in that waste, dreary wilderness, consuming their days in vanity and their years in trouble, are God’s witnesses to the guilt of such sin, suggesting how the unbelief of professed Christians dooms them to barrenness and desolation during the many years of their earthly pilgrimage; while in their Father’s house is bread enough and to spare and their earthly life might just as well be spent in the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey.” [Cowles, 326].

God’s punishments on them, for their sins, produced a positive effect, at times: **“Whenever God slew them, they would seek him; they eagerly turned to him again.”** It seemed that the repentance was real: **“They remembered that God was their Rock, that God Most High was their Redeemer”** (vs. 34-35). “Sharp strokes awoke their sleepy memories. Reflection followed infliction. They were led to see that all their dependence must be placed upon their God; for he alone had been their shelter, their foundation, their fountain of supply, and their unchangeable friend. What could have made them forget this?” [Spurgeon, 338].

But the effect was temporary, and they fell back into sin: **“But then they would flatter him with their mouths, lying to him with their tongues; their hearts were not loyal to him, they were not faithful to his covenant”** (vs. 36-37). “Their calamities had the effect of producing temporary reformation. They became professedly penitent; they manifested a wish to know God, and expressed a purpose to serve him. It was, however, a temporary and hollow, not a deep and real, reformation. This often occurs. In times of affliction, in sickness, in bereavement, in the loss of property, men become serious, and express a purpose to repent and turn to God. A deep impression seems to be produced on their minds, to last, alas! only as long as the hand of God rests upon them... Resolutions of repentance are formed only to be forgotten when the affliction is removed, and when the

days of prosperity again return” [Barnes, 299]. “There was no depth in their repentance, it was not heart work. They were fickle as a weathercock, every wind turned them, their mind was not settled upon God... Variable as the hues of the dolphin, they changed from reverence to rebellion, from thankfulness to murmuring. One day they gave their gold to build a tabernacle for Jehovah, and the next they plucked off their ear-rings to make a golden calf” [Spurgeon, 339].

The next statement in the psalm is among the most precious in all of the Scriptures. Dear reader, take it in, and meditate on how it demonstrates God’s undying love, even for his rebellious creatures: **“Yet he was merciful”** (vs. 38).

Selah. Pause and reflect.

“Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return” (vss. 38-39). “From the midst of this sad narrative of faithlessness, springs up, like a fountain in a weary land, or a flower among half-cooled lava blocks, the lovely description of God’s forbearance” [Maclaren, 392]. “The passage from verse 32, to the end of verse 39, is a most striking and affecting picture of man’s heart, and God’s gracious forbearance, in all ages:—man’s sin calling for chastisement, the chastisement producing only temporary amendment, God’s goodness forgotten, and yet God’s great love never wearied, and God’s infinite compassion ever moved afresh by man’s weakness and misery” [Perowne, 373].

In the original Hebrew, the start of verse 38, **“Yet he was merciful”**, does not actually contain a verb. It is a clause leading to the next statement. It would better be translated: **“Yet, being merciful, he forgave their iniquities...”** Or, as the King James Version renders it: **“But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not...”** I point this out to emphasize that there actually is no *past tense* in the original statement, **“Yet he *was* merciful.”**

The original Hebrew says, “**But he, *being merciful*,...**”, or in the KJV, “**But he, *being full of compassion*...**” In other words, it was not a one-time act of mercy. But instead, the passage is saying that it is part of God’s character to *be merciful*, to be *full of compassion*. “The psalmist does not say ‘He *was* full of compassion,’ though that would be much, in the circumstances; but he is declaring God’s eternal character. His compassions are unailing. It is always His wont to cover sin and to spare the sinner” [Maclaren, 392]. This is God’s great love for us.

God in his great mercy understands and forgives us for our weaknesses: “**He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return**” (vs. 39). “The frailty of man’s life moves the merciful God to abate some of the strict severity which our sins deserve” [JFB, 269]. “It is for an unspeakable joy that God employs his infinite knowledge in tenderly considering our frailty, our liability to err, our natural weakness, and the shortness and uncertainty of our lives. He pities us, not because we deserve pity, but because he loves to show mercy to such as need and seek it” [Plumer, 760].

Vss. 40-55 - Out of Egypt

- ⁴⁰ **How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness
and grieved him in the wasteland!**
- ⁴¹ **Again and again they put God to the test;
they vexed the Holy One of Israel.**
- ⁴² **They did not remember his power –
the day he redeemed them from the oppressor,**
- ⁴³ **the day he displayed his signs in Egypt,
his wonders in the region of Zoan.**
- ⁴⁴ **He turned their river into blood;
they could not drink from their streams.**
- ⁴⁵ **He sent swarms of flies that devoured them,
and frogs that devastated them.**

- 46 He gave their crops to the grasshopper,
their produce to the locust.
- 47 He destroyed their vines with hail
and their sycamore-figs with sleet.
- 48 He gave over their cattle to the hail,
their livestock to bolts of lightning.
- 49 He unleashed against them his hot anger,
his wrath, indignation and hostility –
a band of destroying angels.
- 50 He prepared a path for his anger;
he did not spare them from death
but gave them over to the plague.
- 51 He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt,
the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.
- 52 But he brought his people out like a flock;
he led them like sheep through the wilderness.
- 53 He guided them safely, so they were unafraid;
but the sea engulfed their enemies.
- 54 And so he brought them to the border of his holy land,
to the hill country his right hand had taken.
- 55 He drove out nations before them
and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance;
he settled the tribes of Israel in their homes.

Having recited the greatness of God's mercy, Asaph reminds them of the great wonders God performed in freeing them from the bonds of the Egyptians, how he **“redeemed them from the oppressor”** (vs. 42). In reciting this history, Asaph is following his own exhortation to the people: **“We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done”** (Psalms 78:4).

Asaph speaks of the miraculous signs performed before Pharaoh, to soften his heart and let them go (vss. 43-51). Asaph speaks of God's guidance, and miraculous works in leading them out of Egypt, even through the Red Sea (vss. 52-53). And he speaks of God's providence and protection as they took possession of the land promised to them (vss. 54-

55). Asaph recites this history to remind the people of God's past works, of God's unwavering love, of God's perfect guidance, of God's unfailing protection, of God's infinite mercy.

Vss. 56-72 - On to Zion

- 56 But they put God to the test
and rebelled against the Most High;
they did not keep his statutes.
- 57 Like their ancestors they were disloyal and faithless,
as unreliable as a faulty bow.
- 58 They angered him with their high places;
they aroused his jealousy with their idols.
- 59 When God heard them, he was furious;
he rejected Israel completely.
- 60 He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh,
the tent he had set up among humans.
- 61 He sent the ark of his might into captivity,
his splendor into the hands of the enemy.
- 62 He gave his people over to the sword;
he was furious with his inheritance.
- 63 Fire consumed their young men,
and their young women had no wedding songs;
- 64 their priests were put to the sword,
and their widows could not weep.
- 65 Then the Lord awoke as from sleep,
as a warrior wakes from the stupor of wine.
- 66 He beat back his enemies;
he put them to everlasting shame.
- 67 Then he rejected the tents of Joseph,
he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;
- 68 but he chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion, which he loved.
- 69 He built his sanctuary like the heights,
like the earth that he established forever.

- 70 He chose David his servant
and took him from the sheep pens;**
**71 from tending the sheep he brought him
to be the shepherd of his people Jacob,
of Israel his inheritance.**
**72 And David shepherded them with integrity of heart;
with skillful hands he led them.**

Despite the unending goodness of God, the people **“rebelled”** and **“did not keep his statutes”** (vs. 56); they were **“disloyal and faithless”** (vs. 57); and worse still, **“they aroused his jealousy with their idols”** (vs. 58). God responded to this severely: **“When God heard them, he was furious; he rejected Israel completely”** (vs. 59). “The characteristic sin is no longer discontent, but idolatry” [Kidner, 315]. “These verses cover the period from the entrance on Canaan to the fall of the sanctuary of Shiloh, during which there was a continual tendency to relapse into idolatry” [Maclaren, 394].

After the wanderings in the wilderness, during the time of Judges, the tabernacle was set up in Shiloh, which was in Ephraim (see Josh. 18:1). In the absence of a temple, this was the dwelling place of God among the people. It was the place about which the people could say, “The True and Living God dwells among us.” But despite having the True and Living God dwell among them, the people turned to idolatry. God’s response was to allow Shiloh to be attacked, and the tabernacle to be dismantled (see I Sam. 4). Asaph relates that event here: **“He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent he had set up among humans. He sent the ark of his might into captivity, his splendor into the hands of the enemy. He gave his people over to the sword; he was furious with his inheritance. Fire consumed their young men, and their young women had no wedding songs; their priests were put to the sword, and their widows could not weep”** (vss. 60-64). “The mournful chapter of punishment comes ever after the mournful chapter of sin”

[*Plain*, 53]. “He forsook the only place which He had selected on earth as peculiarly His dwelling place. The tabernacle was at Shiloh during the whole period of the Judges. The removal of the ark by the Philistines was a demonstration in act that God had forsaken the place. The ark was never restored to Shiloh” [JFB, 271].

But God, in his grace, did not abandon his chosen people: **“Then the Lord awoke as from sleep”** (vs. 65). But Ephraim was no longer to be the place where God dwelled. He chose Judah: **“Then he rejected the tents of Joseph, he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim; but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loved. He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that he established forever”** (vss. 67-69). “The punishment of Ephraim, not as the sole offender, but as the unfaithful leader of the chosen people, consisted in the transfer of the sanctuary, and the manifested presence of God in it, to the tribe which was intended from the first to have that honour (see Gen. 49:10), but whose rights had been held in abeyance during the experimental chieftainship of Ephraim” [Alexander, 336]. “Thus may the candlestick be removed, though the candle is not quenched. Erring churches become apostate, but a true church still remains; if Shiloh be profaned Zion is consecrated. Yet is it ever a solemn caution to all the assemblies of the saints, admonishing them to walk humbly with their God” [Spurgeon, 345].

God chose the tribe of Judah, and God chose a leader from the tribe of Judah, to lead the people into godliness, to shepherd them back into God’s grace: **“He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them”** (vss. 70-72). “A shepherd of sheep he had been, and this was a fit school for a shepherd of men. Lowliness of occupation will debar no man from such

honours as the Lord's election confers; the Lord seeth not as man seeth. He delights to bless those who are of low estate... Exercising the care and art of those who watch for the young lambs, David followed the ewes in their wanderings; the tenderness and patience thus acquired would tend to the development of characteristics most becoming in a king. To the man thus prepared, the office and dignity which God had appointed for him, came in due season, and he was enabled worthily to wear them. It is wonderful how often divine wisdom so arranges the early and obscure portion of a choice life, so as to make it a preparatory school for a more active and noble future" [Spurgeon, 347].

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

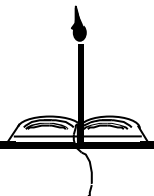
- Alexander, Joseph Addison. *The Psalms Translated and Explained*. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1864.
- Anonymous. *A Plain Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. Philadelphia: Henry Hooker and Co., 1857.
- Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the Book of Psalms*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishing, 1871.
- Bonar, Andrew. *Christ and His Church in the Book of Psalms*. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1860.
- Calvin, John. *A Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. 3 Vols. Oxford: D. A. Talboys, 1840. (Originally published in Latin in 1557).
- Clarke, Adam. *The Holy Bible with a Commentary and Critical Notes*. Vol. III. London: William Tegg & Co., 1854. (Originally published in 1831).
- Cowles, Henry. *The Psalms with Notes, Critical, Explanatory and Practical*. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1872.
- Darby, John Nelson. *Practical Reflections on the Psalms*. London: Robert L. Allan, 1870.
- Delitzsch, Franz. *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1892. (Originally published in 1860).
- Dickson, David. *An Explication of the Other Fifty Psalms, from Ps. 50 to Ps. 100*. Cornhill, U.K.: Ralph Smith, 1653.
- Exell, Joseph S. and Henry Donald Spence-Jones, eds. *The Pulpit Commentary*. Vols. 17, 18, & 19. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1884.

- Hengstenberg, F. W. *Commentary on the Psalms*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1864.
- Henry, Matthew. *An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament*. Vol. II. London: W. Baynes, 1806. (Originally published in 1710).
- Horne, George. *A Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1854.
- Jamieson, Robert; Fausset, A. R.; Brown, David. *A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments*. Glasgow: William Collins, Queen's Printer, 1863.
- Kidner, Derek. *Psalms* (in 2 Vols.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008 (first published in 1975).
- Kirkpatrick, A. F. *The Book of Psalms with Introduction and Notes – Books II and III* (from The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges). Cambridge, UK: University Press, 1895.
- Lange, John Peter, ed. and Philip Schaff, trans. *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Critical, Doctrinal, and Homiletical*. New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1865.
- Maclaren, Alexander. *The Psalms* (in 3 Vols., from The Expositor's Bible, ed. by W. R. Nicoll). New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1901.
- Perowne, J. J. Stewart. *The Book of Psalms: A New Translation with Explanatory Notes*. London: George Bell & Sons, 1880.
- Plumer, William S. *Studies in the Book of Psalms*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1872.
- Scott, Thomas. *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, Vol. III. London: James Nisbet, 1866.
- Spurgeon, Charles. *The Treasury of David*. 6 Vols. London: Marshall Brothers, Ltd., 1885.
- Tholuck, Augustus. *A Translation and Commentary of the Book of Psalms*. Philadelphia: Martien, 1858.
- Trapp, John. *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*. Vol. II (Ezra to Psalms). Edmonton, Canada: Still Waters Revival Books (www.PuritanDownloads.com). (Originally published c. 1660).
- VanGemenen, Willem A., (Gaebelein, Frank E., ed). *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5 – Psalms to Song of Songs. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991.

Most of these books, those in the Public Domain, can be downloaded free of charge from:

<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>

*A Sermon:
Do You Know Him?*



A Sermon by the Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon

Do You Know Him? –
Phil. 3:10

(Preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle,
London, January 31st, 1864)

“That I may know him” (Phil. 3:10, KJV)

THE OBJECTIVE of the apostle’s life—that for which he sacrificed everything—country, kindred, honor, comfort, liberty, and life itself, was that he might know Christ! Observe that this is not Paul’s prayer as an unconverted man—that he may know Christ, and so be saved—for it follows upon the previous supplication that he might win Christ, and be found in Him. This is the desire of one who has been saved, who enjoys the full conviction that his sins are pardoned, and that he is in Christ. It is only the regenerated and saved man who can feel the desire, “That I may know Him.” Are you astonished that a saved man should have such a desire as this? A moment’s reflection will remove your astonishment. Imagine for a moment that you are living in the age of the Roman emperors. You have been captured by Roman soldiers, and dragged from your native country; you have been sold for a slave, stripped, whipped, branded, imprisoned, and treated with shameful cruelty. At last you are appointed to die in the amphitheatre, to make holiday for a tyrant. The populace assembles with delight; there they are, tens of thousands of them, gazing down from the living sides of the spacious Coliseum. You stand alone and naked, armed only

with a single dagger—a poor defense against gigantic beasts. A ponderous door is drawn up by machinery, and there rushes forth the monarch of the forest—a huge lion! You must slay him or be torn to pieces; you are absolutely certain that the conflict is too stern for you, and that the sure result must and will be that those terrible teeth will grind your bones and drip with your blood. You tremble; your joints are loosed; you are paralyzed with fear, like the timid deer when the lion has dashed it to the ground. But what is this? O wonder of mercy!—a deliverer appears! A great unknown leaps from among the gazing multitude, and confronts the savage monster! He quails not at the roaring of the devourer, but dashes upon him with terrible fury, till, like a whipped cur, the lion slinks towards his den, dragging himself along in pain and fear. The hero lifts you up, smiles into your bloodless face, whispers comfort in your ear, and bids you be of good courage, for you are free!

Do you not think that there would arise at once in your heart a desire to know your deliverer? As the guards conducted you into the open street, and you breathed the cool, fresh air, would not the first question be, “Who was my deliverer, that I may fall at his feet and bless him?” You are not, however, informed, but instead of it, you are gently led away to a noble mansion, where your many wounds are washed and healed with salve of rarest power. You are clothed in sumptuous apparel; you are made to sit down at a feast; you eat and are satisfied; you rest upon the softest down. The next morning you are attended by servants who guard you from evil and minister to your good. Day after day, week after week, your needs are supplied. You live like a courtier. There is nothing that you can ask which you do not receive. I am sure that your curiosity would grow more and more intense till it would ripen into an insatiable craving! You would scarcely neglect an opportunity of asking the servants, “Tell me, who does all this; who is my noble benefactor, for *I must know him?*” “Well, but,” they would say, “is it not enough for you that you

are delivered from the lion?" "No," you say, "it is for that very reason that I long to know him." "Your needs are richly supplied—why are you vexed by curiosity as to the hand which gave you the gift? If your garment is worn out, there is another; long before hunger oppresses you, the table is well loaded. What more do you need?" But your reply is, "It is because I have no needs, that, therefore, my soul longs and yearns, even to hungering and to thirsting, that I may know my generous loving friend."

Suppose that as you wake up one morning, you find lying on your pillow a precious love-token from your unknown friend, a ring sparkling with jewels, and engraved with a tender inscription, a bouquet of flowers bound about with a love-motto? Your curiosity now knows no bounds! But, you are informed that this wondrous being has not only done for you what you have seen, but a thousand deeds of love which you did *not* see, which were still higher and greater proofs of his affection. You are told that he was wounded, and imprisoned, and scourged for your sake, for he had a love to you so great that death itself could not overcome it—you are informed that he is every moment occupied in your interests, because he has sworn by himself that where he is, there you shall be; his honors you shall share, and of his happiness you shall be the crown. Why, I think you would say, "Tell me, men and women, any of you who know him, tell me who he is, and what he is." And if they said, "But isn't it enough for you to know that he loves you, and to have daily proofs of his goodness," you would say, "No, these love-tokens increase my thirst! If you see him, tell him I am sick with love. The flagons which he sends me, and the love-tokens which he gives me, they stay me for a while, with the assurance of his affection, but they only impel me onward with the more unconquerable desire that I may know him. I must know him! I cannot live without knowing him; his goodness makes me thirst and pant, and faint, and even die, that I may know him."

Have I imagined emotions which would not be natural? I

think not. The most cool and calculating would be warmed with desires like these. I think what I have now pictured before you, will wake the echoes in your breasts, and you will say, "Ah, it is even so! It is because Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me that I want to know Him; it is because He has shed His blood for me, and has chosen me that I may be one with Him forever, that my soul desires a fuller acquaintance with Him.

Now may God, the Holy Spirit, very graciously lead me onward that I may also quicken in you the desire to know HIM.

I. Beloved, let us **PASS BY THAT CROWD OF OUTER-COURT WORSHIPPERS WHO ARE CONTENT TO LIVE WITHOUT KNOWING CHRIST.** I do not mean the ungodly and profane; we will not consider them just now—they are altogether strangers and foreigners to Him—I mean children of God—the visible saints. How many there are of these whom I must call outer-court worshippers, for they are strangers to this panting to know Him. They can say with Paul, "That I may *win* Him and be *found* in Him"—that they do want; but this higher wish, "That I may *know* Him," has not stirred their hearts! How many brethren we know who are content to know *Christ's historic life!* They read the Evangelists, and they are charmed with the perfect beauty of the Savior's history. "Never man spoke like this Man," they say, and they confess that never man acted with such love as He did. They know all the incidents of His life, from His manger to His cross, but they do not know *HIM*. They are as men who have read "Caesar's Commentaries," but who have never seen Caesar. They know the battles which Caesar fought; they can even recognize the mantle which Caesar wore "that day he overcame the Nervii," but they do not know Caesar himself. The person of the Lord Jesus is as much hidden from their eyes, as the golden pot of manna when concealed in the Ark. They know the life of Christ, but not Christ the Life; they admire His way among men, but they see Him not as the way.

Others there are who know Christ's doctrine and prize it, too, but they know not HIM. All which He taught is dear to them; orthodoxy—for this they would burn at Smithfield, or lay down their necks at Tower Hill! Many of them are well-instructed and divinely-illuminated in the doctrine of Christ, and the wonder is that they should stop there, because, beloved, it seems to me when I begin to know a man's teaching, that the next thing is the desire to know his person. Addison, in one of the "Spectators," tells us that the reason why so many books are printed with the portraits of the authors is just this—that as a man reads a book, he feels a desire to know what sort of appearance the author had. This, indeed, is very natural. If you have ever been refreshed under a minister's printed sermons; if you have at any time received any benefit from his words, I know you have said, "I would like to see that man; I would like to hear the truth of God flow hot and fresh from his living lips; I would like to know just how he said that sentence, and how that passage sounded as it came from his earnest heart." My beloved, surely if you know the doctrine of Jesus, if you have so been with Christ as to sit at His feet, and hear what He has to say, you must, I hope, have had some longings to *know* Him—to know His person; and if you have, you will have had to pass by multitudes of followers of Jesus who rest satisfied with His words, but forget that He is, Himself, "THE WORD."

Beloved, there are others—and against them I bring no complaint; they go as far as they can—who are delighted with *Christ's example*. Christ's character is in their esteem the mirror of all perfection. They desire to walk in His footsteps; they listen to His sermon upon the mount; they are enchanted with it—as well they may be; they pray to be obedient in all things to Christ, as their Master and their Lord. They do well. Mark, I am finding no fault with any of these who prize the history, or who value the doctrine, or who admire the precept; but I want more. I do want, beloved, that you and I should "know HIM." I love His precepts, but I love HIM better! Sweet is

the water from Bethlehem's well, and well worth the struggle of the armed men to win but a bucket from it; but the well *itself* is better, and deserves all Israel's valor to defend it. As the source is always more valuable than the stream, so is Christ always better than the best words of His lips, or the best deeds of His hands. I want to *know Him*. I do care for His actions—my soul would sit down and admire those masterly works of holy art—His miracles of humiliation, of suffering, of patience, and of holy charity—but better far, I love the hands which worked these master-works, the lips which spoke these goodly words, and the heart which heaved with that matchless love which was the cause of all! Yes, beloved, we must get farther than Immanuel's achievements, however glorious—we must come to “KNOW HIM.”

Most believers rest perfectly at ease with knowing *Christ's Sacrifice*. They see Jesus as the great High Priest, laying a great sacrifice upon the altar for their sins, and with their whole heart they accept His atonement. By faith they know that all their sins are taken away by precious blood. This is a most blessed and hallowed attainment, I will grant you, but it is not every Christian who perceives that Christ was not only the offerer of a sacrifice, but was *Himself* the sacrifice, and, therefore, loves Him as such. Priest, altar, victim—Christ was everything! He gathers up all in Himself, and when I see that He loved me, and gave *Himself* for me, it is not enough to know this fact—I want to know *Him*, the glorious person who does and is all this. I want to know the Man who thus gave Himself for me; I want to behold the Lamb once slain for me; I want to rest upon the bosom which covers the heart, which was pierced with the spear; I pray Him to kiss me with the kisses of that mouth which cried, “*Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?*” I love Calvary, the scene of woe, but I love Christ better, the great object of that agony; and even His cross and all His sufferings, dear though these must always be to the Christian mind, only occupy a second place—the first seat is for Himself—His person, His deity, and humanity!

Thus, you see, we have to leave a great many believers behind; nor have we enumerated all, for I believe that even some of those saints who have received grace to look for the coming of Christ, yet in their vision of His coming too much forget Him! Is it not possible, for men to pant for the second advent as to lose sight of Him who is to make that advent? So to long for a millennium, that I may forget Him, who is to reign King of kings? So to pant after that glory of Israel, that I may forget Him who is Israel's glory? Anywhere short of *knowing Him*, I would not have you stop, beloved; and even when you know Him, I would urge you to still be impelled with the same desire, and to press forward, crying with the apostle, "That I may know Him."

Beloved, how many there are who have heard of Christ and read about Christ, and that is enough for them! But it is not enough for me, and it should not be enough for you. The apostle Paul did not say, "I have heard of Him, on whom I have believed," but, "I *know* whom I have believed." To hear about Christ may damn you—it may be a savor of death unto death to you. You have heard of Him with the ear—but it is essential that you *know* Him in order that you may be partakers of eternal life! My dear hearers, be not content unless you have this as your soul's present portion.

Others there are who have been persuaded by the judgment and encouragement of others, that they know something about the Great Redeemer. They do not know Him, but still they are persuaded by others that they have an interest in Him. Let me warn you of second-hand spirituality! It is a rotten, soul-deceiving deception! Beware of all esteeming of yourself according to the thoughts of others, or you will be ruined. Another man's opinion of me may have great influence over me—I have heard of a man in perfectly good health killed by the opinion of others. Several of his friends had foolishly agreed to play a practical trick on him, whereupon one of them met him and said, "How ill you look this morning." He did not feel so; he was very much surprised

at the remark. When he met the next, who said to him, "Oh, dear, how bad you look," he began to think there might be something in it. And as he turned round the corner, a third person said to him, "What a sight you are! How altered from what you used to be!" He went home ill; he took to his bed and died. So goes the story and I should not marvel if it really did occur. Now, if such might be the effect of persuasion and supposed belief in the *sickness* of a man, how much more readily may men be persuaded into the idea of spiritual health! A believer meets you, and by his treatment seems to say, "I welcome you as a dear brother"—and he means it, too. You are baptized, and received into church fellowship, and so everybody thinks that you must be a follower of Christ; and yet you may not *know Him*. Oh, I pray you do not be satisfied with being persuaded into something like an assurance that you are in Him, but do not *know Him*—*know Him for yourself*.

There are many who I hope will be saved before long; but I am in great doubt of them, because they can only say they half think they know Christ; they do not quite believe in Him, but they do not disbelieve in Him; they halt between two opinions. Ah, dear hearer, that is a very dangerous place to stand! The borderland is the devil's hunting ground. Undecided souls are fair game for the great fowler. God give you, once and for all, the true decision by which, through grace, you shall know Him! Do not be satisfied with *thinking* you know Him; *hoping* you know Him, but *know* Him! Oh, it is nothing to have *heard* about Him, to have *talked* about Him, to have eaten, and to have drank with Him, to have *preached* Him, or even to have *worked miracles* in His name, to have been charmed by His eloquence, to have been stirred with the story of His love, to have been moved to imitate Him—this shall gain you nothing unless you win Him, and are found in Him! Seek with the apostle, to give up everything of your own righteousness, and all other objectives and aims in life and say, "This I seek after, that I may know Him." Thus much, then, on the first point. Leaving those behind who do not know

Him, let us make an advance.

II. Secondly, let us DRAW CURTAIN AFTER CURTAIN WHICH SHALL ADMIT US TO KNOW MORE OF CHRIST.

Did you ever visit the manufactory of splendid porcelain at Sevres? I have done so. If anybody should say to me, "Do you know the manufactory at Sevres?" I would say, "Yes, I do and no, I do not. I know it, for I have seen the building; I have seen the rooms in which the articles are exhibited for sale, and I have seen the museum, and model room; but I do not know the factory as I would like to know it, for I have not seen the process of manufacture, and have not been admitted into the workshops, as some are." Suppose I had seen, however, the process of the molding of the clay, and the laying on of the rich designs? If anybody should still say to me, "Do you know how they manufacture those wonderful articles?" I would very likely still be compelled to say, "No, I do not, because there are certain secrets, certain private rooms into which neither friend nor foe can be admitted, lest the process should be open to the world." So, you see, I might say I knew, and yet might not half know! And when I half knew, still there would be so much left, that I might be compelled to say, "I do not know." How many different ways there are of knowing a person—and even so there are all these different ways of knowing Christ, so that you may keep on all your lifetime, still wishing to get into another room, and another room, nearer and nearer to the great secret, still panting to "know Him." Good Rutherford says, "I urge upon you a nearer communion with Christ, and a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn by, in Christ, that we never shut, and new foldings in love with Him. I despair that I shall ever win to the far end of that love; there are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep, and set by as much time in the day for Him as you can—He will be won by labor."

To begin with, we know a person when *we recognize him*. You know the Queen. Well, I do. I recollect seeing her, and if I were to see any quantity of ladies, I think I would know

which was the Queen, and which was not. You may say honestly that you know her to that extent. Beloved, every Christian must in this sense know Christ! You must know Him by a divine illumination so as to know who He is, and what He is. When Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Whom do you say that I am,” he said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And the Lord replied, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you.” It is an early step in this knowledge of Christ, to know and to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord; to know that Christ is God, divine to me; that Christ is Man, brother to me—bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh—and that as such He is a sin-subduing Savior; that He is for me an intercessor, pleading before the throne; that He is my prophet, priest and King—in this sense I trust that most of you know Him. If you do not, breathe the silent prayer now, “Lord, help me that I may know Him.” But this knowledge of recognition is comparatively a low attainment, one of the lowest rungs on the ladder of light.

In the second place, a believer knows Christ to a higher degree, when he knows Him by *practical experiential acquaintance with what He does*. For instance, I know Christ as a cleanser. They tell me He is a refiner, that He cleanses from spots; He has washed me in His precious blood, and to that extent I know Him. They tell me that He clothes the naked—He has covered me with a garment of righteousness, and to that extent I know Him. They tell me that He is a breaker, and that He breaks chains—He has set my soul at liberty, and, therefore, I know Him. They tell me that He is a King, and that He reigns over sin—He has subdued my enemies beneath His feet, and I know Him in that character. They tell me He is a shepherd—I know Him, for I am His sheep. They say He is a door—I have entered in through Him, and I know Him as a door. They say He is food—my spirit feeds on Him as on the bread of heaven and, therefore, I know Him as such. You know if anyone says, “Do you know Doctor So-and-So?” it is

a very satisfactory answer if you can reply, "Oh, yes, I know him, for he attended me the last time that I was ill." There is more knowledge in that, than if one could only say, "Oh, yes, I know him—he wears such-and-such a hat," or "He is a man of such-and-such an appearance." So, Christian, there is a second and higher step to know Christ—when you have experienced in your own soul that He is just what God has revealed Him to be!

But, we know a man in a better sense than this, when we are *on speaking terms* with him. "Do you know So-and-So?" "Yes," you say, "I not only know him by name, so as to recognize him; I not only know him as a tradesman having dealt with him, but I know him because when we pass each other in the morning, we exchange a word or two; and if I had anything to say upon matters—any request to make— I would feel no difficulty about asking him." Well now, the Christian knows his Lord in this sense, too. He has, every day, official communication with Christ; he is on speaking terms with Him. There may be persons here, perhaps, who know the Queen in a sense in which I do not know her—perhaps they speak to her. They have so done; I have never done that; they go beyond me there. But you see, dear friends, this is not a very great thing because you may be on speaking terms with a man—you may not know much of him for all that! So you may be in the habit of daily prayer, and you may talk with Christ every morning and every evening—but you may know exceedingly little of Him. You are on speaking terms with Him; but there is something beyond this, very far beyond this! I might say that I know a man merely because I meet him every day, and ask him for what I need, and understand that he is kind and generous. But how shallow is such an acquaintance, for I do not know his private character, nor his inward heart. Even so a believer may have constant dealings with Christ in his prayers and in his praises and yet, for all that, he may have only gone a certain distance, and may still have need to pray, "That I may know Him."

But, you are said to know a person better still, when *he invites you to his house*. At Christmas time there is a family party and a romp—and he asks you there, and you are like one of his children, and enter into all their sports around the fireside. And you indulge, as they do, in the genialities of social life. You are asked again; you go there pretty often. In fact, if there is a happy evening in that house, they generally expect to see friend So-and-So there. Well, now, that is better. We are getting now into something like knowing a man, and I trust there are many of you, beloved, who have got as far as this with regard to your divine Lord! Christ has entertained you with some rare visits from His gracious presence. He brought you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you was love. When He manifested Himself, He did it unto you as He did not unto the world; He was pleased in the majesty of His condescension, to take you aside and show you His hands, and His side. He called you, “Friend.” He treated you as such, and permitted you to enjoy your sweets of being one of the family.

Ah, but you may go into a man’s house as a constant visitor and yet you may not know him—that is to say, not in the highest sense. You speak to the man’s wife and say, “Your husband is a marvelously charming man; what a cheerful, joyful, spirited man he is! He never seems to have any depressions of spirit, and experiences no changes whatever.” She shakes her head, and she says, “Ah, you do not know him, you do not know him as I do.” Because she sees him at all times, and at all hours, she can read the very heart of the man. That Christian has grown much in grace, who has advanced not only to be the friend of Christ, having occasional fellowship with Him, but who comes to recognize his marriage union with the person of his Lord, and of whom it can be said, “The secret of the Lord is with them who fear Him; and He will show them His covenant.” Now we have the intimacy of love with its perfect frankness, nearness, sweetness, joyousness, delight! The rending away of every

separating veil makes the communion to be as near as it well can be this side of the black river; but a Christian may get farther than this!

Even the spouse may not know her husband. The most loving wife, who ever entered into the cares of her husband, must have discovered that there is a something which separates his experience from her powers of comprehension. Luther's wife, Katharina, was, of all women, the wife for Luther. But, there were times in Luther's gigantic tribulations, when he must leave Kate behind; there were extraordinary times within him—times both of ecstatic joy—when, like a great angel, he stretched his mighty wings and flew right up to heaven! And, there were times of awful misery, when he seemed to sink down to the very depths of hell; and in either case, no other heart could keep pace with him. Then it was himself alone who had communion with himself. And a Christian may so grow in grace, as to become *identified* with Christ, a member of His body—not so much married to Him as a *part* of Him, a member of the great body of Christ, so that he suffers with Christ, sympathizes with Jesus, his heart beating to the same sorrowful tune, his veins swollen with the same floods of grief—or else his eyes sparkle with that same gleam of joy, according to the Master's Word—“That My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

Well, have you not waded out of your depth, some of you? I have certainly got out of my own! I feel as if the Master might come on this platform, look round on many of us, and say, “Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip?” For truly, even in the minor sense, though I trust we are saved; though we have believed in Jesus, yet we have not reached the height of this great text—“That I may know Him.”

III. Having taken you so far, let us **SIT DOWN A FEW MINUTES AND CONSIDER WHAT SORT OF KNOWLEDGE THIS KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS**—“That I may know Him.”

Then it is clear, if I know Him I shall have a very vivid

sense of *His personality*. "That I may know Him." He will not be to me a myth, a vision, a spirit, but a person, a real, solid person, as much real as I am myself, or as my dearest friend can be to me. My soul, never be satisfied with a shadowy Christ! My heart, never be content until He has embraced your soul, and proved to you that *He is* the Lover of His people. This knowledge, then, must be a knowledge of Him in His personality. Then, beloved, it must be a *personal* knowledge on our part. I cannot know Christ through another person's brains. I cannot love Him with another man's heart, and I cannot see Him with another man's eyes. Heaven's delight is, "*My eyes shall see Him and not another.*" *These* eyes shall behold the King in His beauty. Well, beloved, if this is heaven, we certainly cannot do without a personal sight of Christ here. I am so afraid of living in a second-hand religion. God forbid that I should get a biographical experience. Lord, save us from having borrowed communion. No, *I* must know Him *myself!* O God, let me not be deceived in this! *I* must know *Him* without fancy or proxy; I must know Him on my own account.

Then these few thoughts upon what sort of knowledge we must have. It must be an intelligent knowledge—I must know *Him*. I must know His natures, divine and human. I must know His offices—I must know His attributes—I must know His works—I must know His shame—I must know His glory; for I do not know Him if He is merely a subject of passion and not of intellect. I must let my head consciously meditate upon Him until I have something like an idea of Him, that I may, "Comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge."

Then I must have an *affectionate* knowledge of Him; and, indeed, if I know Him at all, I must love Him. As it is said of some men, that there is such a charm about them, that if you once get into their company you cannot criticize any longer, but must admire—so you feel with Christ. It is said of

Garibaldi, that if you are in his society he charms all, so that even malice and slander must be silent in his presence. Infinitely, supremely, so is it with Christ! Being near Him, His love warms our hearts till we glow with intense love to Him!

Then I shall find, if I know Christ, that this is a *satisfying* knowledge. When I know Christ, my mind will be full to the brim—I shall feel that I have found that which my spirit panted after. “This is that bread whereof if a man eats he shall never hunger.”

At the same time it is an *exciting* knowledge. The more I know of Christ, the more I shall want to know. The deeper I plunge, the greater the deeps which will be revealed. The higher I climb, the loftier will be the summits which invite my eager footsteps. I shall want more as I get more. My spiritual thirst will increase, though in another sense it will be entirely quenched.

And this knowledge of Christ will be a most *happy* one! In fact, so happy that sometimes it will completely bear me up above all trials, doubts, and sorrows; And it will, while I enjoy it, make me something more than, “Man who is born of a woman who is of few days, and full of trouble,” for it will fling about me the immortality of the ever-living Savior, and gird me with the golden belt of His eternal happiness. To be near to Christ is to be near to the pearly gates of the golden-streeted city. Say not, “Jerusalem, my happy home, my labors have an end in you,” but say, “Jesus, You are my rest, and when I have You, my spirit is at peace.” I might thus keep on speaking in praise of this knowledge, but I will not.

Only permit me to say what a *refreshing*, what a *sanctifying* knowledge is this, to know *Him!* When the Laodicean Church was neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, how did Christ seek her revival? Did He send her precious doctrines? Did He send her excellent precepts? Mark you, He came *Himself*, for thus it is said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” That is a cure for it all,

you see. No matter how lukewarm, though God may say, "I will spew you out of My mouth," yet, if Christ comes, that is the cure! The presence of Christ with His Church puts away all her sicknesses. When the disciples of Christ were at sea in a storm, do you remember how He comforted them? Did He send them an angel? No. *"It is I, do not be afraid."* And when they knew Him, they had no more fears. They were assembled one night, "the doors being shut for fear of the Jews." How did He comfort them? Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you." There was Thomas, full of doubts and fears. How did Jesus Christ take away his doubts? "Reach here your finger, and behold My hands; and reach here your hand and thrust it into My side." Oh, it is Christ, it is Christ who cures all! The company of Christ is the only thing which a Christian needs. I will undertake that if his heart is like an iceberg, as soon as Jesus comes, it shall flame like Vesuvius. His spirit shall be dead and like a rotten corpse; but if Jesus comes, he shall leap like a hart, and become strong as a young unicorn! Your presence makes me like the chariots of Amminadib!

Now, do not think I am talking what I do not know. Do not imagine that I am talking mere fanatical slip-slop which I cannot prove. I do assert (and God who searches all hearts knows how true this is)—I do assert that from the depths of doubt, of dullness, of worldliness, I have leaped in one moment into love, and life, and holy enthusiasm when Jesus Christ has manifested Himself to me. I cannot describe the difference between my spirit, water-logged, worm-eaten, ready to sink to the bottom without Christ—and that same spirit like a strong staunch ship, with sails full, with favorable wind, speeding into harbor with a golden freight. Like yon poor little bird which some cruel boy has torn from the nest and almost killed—it is not fledged yet, and cannot fly, and it lies down to die, trampled in the mire in the streets—that is my heart without Christ. But see that other bird! The cage door is opened, its wings vibrate, it sings with all its might,

and flies up to talk with the sun—that is my heart when I have the conscious presence of my Lord Jesus Christ! I only bring in my own consciousness because I do not know yours; but I think I will now venture to say that every believer here will admit it is the same with him—

“Midst darkest shades, if He appears
My dawning is begun!
He is my soul’s bright morning star,
And He my rising sun!”

IV. I shall close by *urging* you, dearly beloved, who know the Lord, to take this desire of the apostle, and by exhorting you, make it your own, “That I may know Him.” I wish I had time this morning—time will fly—I wish I had time to urge and press you believers onward to seek to know Him. Paul, you see, gave up everything for this—you will be seeking what is worth having. There can be no mistake about this. If Paul will renounce all, there must be a reward which is worthy of the sacrifice. If you have any fears—if you seek Christ and find Him—they will be removed. You complain that you do not feel the guilt of sin, that you cannot humble yourself enough. The sight of Christ is the very best means of setting sin in its true colors. There is no repenting like that which comes from a look from Christ’s eyes—the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly. So it is not a sight of the law—it is the sight of Christ looking upon us which will break our hearts!

There is nothing like this to fill you with courage. When Dr. Andrew Reed found some difficulties in the founding of one of his orphan asylums, he sat down and drew upon a little piece of paper the cross, and then he said to himself, “What? Despair in the face of the cross?” And then, he drew a ring round the cross, and wrote in it, “*Nil desperandum!*” and took it for his coat of arms. Oh, there cannot be any despair in the presence of the cross! Dying Lamb, did You endure the cross,

despising the shame—and shall I talk of difficulties when Your glory is in the way? God forbid! O holy face bedewed with bloody sweat, I pledge myself in Your solemn and awful presence, that though this face of mine should be bedewed with sweat of the like sort to accomplish any labor upon which You shall put me; by Your will and in Your strength, I will not shrink from the task! A sight of Christ, brethren, will keep you from despondency, and doubts, and despair. A sight of Christ! How shall I stir you to it? It will fire you to duty; it will deliver you from temptation; it will, in fact, make you like He. A man is known by his company; and if you have become acquainted with Christ, and know Him, you will be sure to reflect His light! It is because the moon has converse with the sun, that she has any light for this dark world's night; and if you talk with Christ, the Sun, He will shine on you so gloriously, that you, like the moon, shall reflect His light, and the dark night of this world shall be enlightened by your radiance. The Lord help us to know Him!

But I do seem, this morning, to have been talking to you about Him, and not to have brought Him forward. O that I knew how to introduce you to Him! You who do not love Him—O, that I could make you seek after Him! But you who do love Him, and have trusted in Him—O that I could make you hunger and thirst until you were filled with Him! There He is, nailed to His cross—suffering—oh how much He suffers for you! There He is, risen, ascended, pleading before the throne of God for you. Here He is—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Here He is, waiting to be comforted with *your* company, desiring communion with *you*, panting that His sister, His spouse, would be no longer a stranger to Him! Here He is, waiting to be gracious, saying, “Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Come, Christian, come! Let this be your desire, “That I may know Him.”

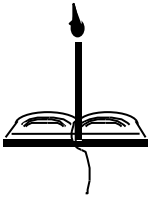
And you who do not know Him, and have not loved Him, I pray you will breathe this prayer with me, “Lord, be merciful

to me a sinner.” O sinner, He is a gentle Christ! He is a loving Savior, and they who seek Him early shall find Him! May you seek and find Him, for His name’s sake. Amen.



This article is taken from: Spurgeon, Charles H. *Spurgeon’s Sermons: The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. X. A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at:

<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>



A Meditation: The Spiritual Chemist

A Meditation Upon Spiritual Warfare, by William Spurstowe (1666)

Who can either think or read what a slaughter was made by one angel in the numerous army of Sennacherib, who in a night destroyed a hundred fourscore and five thousand men, without reflecting upon the vast disparity that is between the strength and power which is in angelic versus human beings? Great things are recorded in sacred history to be done by some of Israel's judges, and David's worthies, which would be looked upon as impossibilities, if the Spirit of God were not the voucher of the truth of them. Shamgar slew six hundred Philistines with an ox goad (see Judges 3:31); Samson with the jawbone of an ass laid heaps upon heaps (see Judges 15:15); and Adino the Tachmonite lifted up his spear against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time (see II Samuel 23:8). But if these, and the like remarkable conquests which others also are famed for and have their names enrolled in the list of worthies, were as several parcels brought into one total, how far short would the foot of the account be, in comparison to the number which fell by the sword of one angel!

Well then, may the scripture give to them the names of mighty ones, of *principalities and powers*, such as excel in strength. How quickly would a *legion* of such *Elobims* turn the whole world into a charnel-house, filled with the skulls and bones of its inhabitants, when a single angel can in a small space of time change so many living persons into dead carcasses! How soon could they cloy and surfeit the grave

itself, which is as insatiable as any of those four things, that say, *It is not enough!*

Does not all this therefore greatly heighten the wonder of the spiritual warfare, in which a frail Christian, who has not put off the infirmities of the flesh, does yet go forth to fight and war with the combined hosts and powers of darkness? If young David was looked upon as an unequal match by Saul, and all Israel, to combat with Goliath, the vastness of whose stature, and warlike arms had struck a terror into the whole camp, how strange must it be deemed that one, who to the outward view, is as any other man, should conflict not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickednesses, which are for number many, and for power great? What is one weak lamb to resist the lions of the forest, or one harmless dove to encounter with the birds of prey? As impotent as either of these, may the strongest of men seem to deliver themselves, or to offend any of their spiritual enemies when they assault them.

But yet the resolved Christian, who is called to a holy warfare by God, he does such noble exploits against sin and Satan, as cause both a shout and wonder in heaven. Angels are affected to behold what a great fight of afflictions he endures; what repulses he gives to the reiterated assaults of enraged fiends; and when at any time worsted, how he rallies again, recovers his ground, and comes off both with *victory* and *triumph*, putting to flight whole armies of those *infernal Anakims*. It is worth our inquiry and knowledge then, to understand wherein this great strength of a Christian lies, which is not a *natural*, but a *mystical* and *sacramental* strength, like *Samson's*. But it lies not in his *hair*, but in his *head* and in his *armor*, which for the *efficiency* of it, as well as for the *excellency* of it, is called the *armor of God*.

First, the *head* of every believer is Christ, who derives an influence of life and power worthy of himself. **“I can do all things”** (said Paul) **“through Christ that strengtheneth me”** (Phil. 4:13). There is a continued flux of virtue that goes

from him, which to every Christian communicates a kind of omnipotence. He, who without Christ can do nothing, can in him do everything. What a catalog of forces does the apostle muster up in the eighth chapter of Romans, from which he supposes an opposition may come! *Life, death, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth!* And that he may leave out none, adds, *nor any creature:* and yet pronounces of them, that in all these, **“We are more than conquerors,”** which, as Chrysostom interprets it, is to overcome them with ease, without pains, and without sweat. O then that Christians did but understand their own strength, that they war in the power of his might, who spoiled principalities, and powers, and made a show of them openly, leading them as so many pinioned captives after the chariot of his cross, whereon he showed many signal testimonies of a glorious victory, in saving a thief without means; in rending the vail of the Temple from the top to the bottom; in shaking the earth, cleaving the rocks asunder, opening the graves, and causing many bodies of saints to arise. How greatly would these thoughts keep us from being weary and faint in our spiritual war, and make our hands steady like the hands of Moses, until the going down of the sun of our life.

Secondly, a Christian’s strength lies in his *armor*, which when rightly put on, is able to preserve him, that the evil one touch him not: There is no standing in the battle without it, and there is no fear of perishing in it. When did ever Satan bruise or wound the head of him, that had the *helmet of salvation* for his covering? Or endanger the vitals of him, who had put on the *breast-plate of righteousness*, and had *his loins girt about with truth*? Or what way of sufferings could not he walk in, *whose feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*? Methinks when I consider that God, who best knows the utmost both of Satan’s power and policies, is the maker of the armor. It is a voice becoming every soldier of Christ, to say, “Of whom should I be afraid?” If he calls us to fight, and furnishes us with arms that are unable to defend us, or to offend our

enemies, he would suffer in his glory, as well as we in our comfort; he would then have his *champions* to be Satan's *captives*, and the *banner* which they spread in this name, to become hell's *trophy*. And can he, do you think, endure at once to see the destruction of his people, and the dishonor of his name?

Whosoever therefore you are, who is clad in this armor of proof, let me say to you as the Lord to Gideon, **“Go in this thy might,”** and fight the battles of Jehovah. Take unto you that *sword of the Spirit*, that will kill lusts, and make the devils to flee: It has wrought wonders in all ages, and its edge is still as sharp as ever it was. **“By the word of thy lips”** (said David) **“I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer”** (Ps. 17:4). **“It is written,”** said our Savior, when he foiled his and our adversary, and put him to flight after his repeated assaults (see Matt. 4). And in that great battle that we read was fought between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, he and his host were overcome by **“the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony”** (Rev. 12:11). Let every man then have his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night: put not off your *armor* till you put on your *robes*. It is made to be worn, not to be laid up, nor yet to be laid down, because our warfare and our lives are both finished together. Till then there is not a *truce*, much less a *peace* to be expected? Sooner may we contract a league with poisons, that when taken down they shall not kill; or with fiery serpents and cockatrices, that they bite not, than obtain the least respite in this war, in which the malice of cursed devils is as unquenchable as the fire of hell, to which they are doomed.

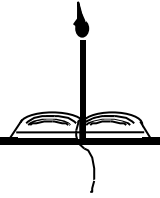
Lord, therefore do thou, who are the *prince* of life, the *captain of salvation* to all thy people, who has finished thine own warfare, and beholds theirs, enable me to wrestle, that I may neither *faint* nor *fall*, but prevail unto victory; show forth thy wonders in me, whose strength is perfected in weakness, that I may overcome the wicked one. And though the conflict should be long and bitter, yet make me to know, that the

sweetness of the reward will abundantly recompense the trouble of the *resistance*; and the *joy* of the *triumph*, the *bloodiness* of the *war*.



This article is taken from: Spurstowe, William. *The Spiritual Chymist: or, Six Decads of Divine Meditations on Several Subjects*. London: Philip Chetwind, 1666. A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at <http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>

Postscript



All We Have is from God

“We have our all from the hand of God, and are entrusted with it as stewards, and consequently are accountable. We should have this thought as a golden thread running through all the comforts of every day, ‘These are God’s gifts’: every bit we eat, and every drop we drink, is his mercy; every breath we draw, and every step we take, is his mercy: this will keep us continually waiting upon him, and will put a double sweetness into all our enjoyments. God will have his mercies taken fresh from his compassions, which for this reason are said to be new every morning; and therefore it is not once a-week that we are to wait upon him, as people go to market to buy provisions for the whole week, but we must wait on him every day, and all the day, as those that live from hand to mouth, and yet live very easy.”

-- *Matthew Henry (1662-1714)*

Related Bible Verse:

“He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts” (Ps. 104:14-15)

Note: The work from which the above quote was taken, *A Method of Prayer*, by Matthew Henry, is available as a PDF eBook at the [Classic Christian Library](http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com), free of charge at:

<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>