

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord... Isaiah 1:18

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Old Testament Study: Exodus 16

Manna - A Type of Christ, pt. 1, by Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

¹And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. ²And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: ³And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. ⁴Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. ⁵And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. (Ex 16:1-5 AV)

¹³And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. ¹⁴And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. ¹⁵And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. ¹⁶This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. ¹⁷And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. ¹⁸And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man

according to his eating.

¹⁹And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. ²⁰Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. ²¹And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. ²²And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. ²³And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. ²⁴And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. ²⁵And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. ²⁶Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. ²⁷And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. ²⁸And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? ²⁹See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. ³⁰So the people rested on the seventh day. ³¹And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. (Ex. 16:13-31 AV)

In our last paper we considered the “manna” with which Jehovah supplied the bodily need of Israel in the wilderness as a type of the Food which God had so graciously provided for the sustenance of our souls. That Food is His own blessed Word. But “**the Word**” is used both of the Scriptures and of the Lord Jesus Christ. The two are most intimately related. “**In the volume of the Book,**” said Christ, “**it is written of Me**” (Psalm 40:7); and again, “**Search the Scriptures... they are they which testify of Me**” (John 5:39). Almost everything that can be postulated of the one can be predicted of the other. But the chief value of the written Word is to set forth the perfections and bring us into communion with the incarnate Word. It is only as we feed upon *Christ Himself* that we truly feed upon the written Word. Therefore in this article we shall confine our attention to the manna typifying the person and perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beneath many a figure and behind innumerable shadows and symbols the anointed eye may discern the glories of our blessed Lord. It should be our chief delight as we read the Old Testament Scriptures to prayerfully search for that which foreshadows Him of whom “**Moses and the prophets**” did write. All doubt is removed as to whether or not the manna pointed to the incarnate Son by His own words in John 6:32, 33. There we find the Savior saying, “**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven; but My Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven. For the Bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life unto the world.**” May the Spirit of God now condescend to open our sin-blinded eyes as we earnestly desire to behold “**wondrous things**” out of His perfect Law.

1. *The Occasion of the giving of the Manna* is both striking and solemn. After being the recipients of wondrous mercies from the Lord, Israel arrived in the Wilderness of Sin. But no sooner had they come thither than we find that the whole congregation of the children of Israel *mur-mured* against Moses and Aaron, saying, “**Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger**” (v. 3). A more fearful exhibition of unbelief, ingratitude, and rebellion could scarcely be imagined. The marvel is that the fiery judgments of God did not consume them there and then. But instead of pouring upon them His wrath, He dealt with them in marvelous grace by raining bread from Heaven for them.

Strikingly does this picture the condition of that world into which the Lord of Glory descended. For four thousand years the temporal and governmental mercies of God had been showered upon the human race, making His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, sending His rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45). And what had been man’s response? “**When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and to fourfooted beasts, and creeping things**” (Romans 1:21-23). Little better was it with Israel, as a glance at their Old Testament history will show. What wonder, then, if God had abandoned the whole race! But no; in matchless, wondrous grace, He sent forth His own beloved Son to a world wherein every human creature had forfeited every possible claim upon His goodness and mercy.

2. *The Place where the Manna fell* is also deeply significant. It was in the “**Wilderness of Sin**” (16:1) that the “**bread from Heaven**” first fell. Surely it were impossible to select a more fitting title to accurately describe the character of that world into which the Son of God descended. Verily, a *wilderness of sin* was this world to the Holy One of God! *A wilderness!* What is a “**wilderness**”? It is a *homeless* place. No one would think of building a house there. And a homeless place was this world to the

Son of God. No room in the inn at His birth; nowhere to lay His head during the days of His public ministry; a borrowed grave for His crucified body, sums it all up. A wilderness of *sin!* Never was that more apparent than when the Sinless One was here. How the Light exposed the hidden things of darkness! How the murder of the Savior demonstrated the sinfulness of Jew and Gentile alike!

3. *The Glory of the Lord was linked with the giving of the Manna.* **“And it came to pass as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory, of the Lord appeared in the Cloud”** (v. 10). This is very striking indeed. It is the *first time* we read of the appearing of **“the glory of the Lord,”** not only in connection with Israel, but in Scripture. Marvelously accurate is this detail of our type. Not until the Son of God became incarnate was **“the glory of the Lord”** fully revealed. But when the eternal Word became flesh and tabernacled among men, then, as the beloved apostle declares, **“We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Onlybegotten of the Father”** (John 1:14). The **“glory of God”** is seen **“in the face of Jesus Christ”** (2 Corinthians 4:6).

4. *The Manna came down from Heaven.* **“Then said the Lord unto Moses, ‘Behold I will rain bread from Heaven for you’”** (vs. 4). The manna was not a product of this earth. It grew neither in the wilderness nor in Egypt. It was neither produced by human efforts, nor manufactured by human skill. It descended from God. It was a gift from Heaven come down to earth. So our Lord Jesus was no native product of this earth. As we read in Ephesians 4:10, **“He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens.”** The first man (Adam) was of the earth, earthy; but the second Man (Jesus Christ) was **“The Lord from Heaven”** (1 Corinthians 15:48).

5. *The Manna was a free gift from God.* **“And Moses said unto them. This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat”** (v. 15). No charge was made for this manna. It was neither a wage to be earned nor a prize to be won, but was a token of God’s grace and love. No payment was demanded for it. It was without money and without price. **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”** (John 3:16). Let us join with the apostle in saying. **“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift”** (2 Corinthians 9:15).

6. *The Manna was sent to the Israelites.* **“Behold I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day”** (v. 4). Two truths are here illustrated. First, the Manna was God’s provision for His elect people, and for none others. We do not read of God raining manna upon Egypt nor upon Canaan. It was given to Israel in the wilderness and to them alone, just as the Paschal lamb was for them and not for the Egyptians. So, too, Christ is God’s Provision for those whom He **“ordained unto eternal life”** (Acts 13:48). Listen to His own words in John 17:19: **“For their sakes I sanctify Myself”** — set Myself apart unto death. It was for **“the sheep,”** not the goats, that He gave His life (John 10:11).

But second, this manna was also sent to a needy and foodless people.

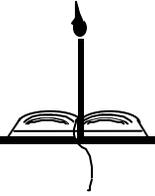
Whatever food Israel had brought with them out of Egypt was, by this time, all consumed. From the human side, they seemed in imminent danger of starving to death. Had not God met their need they *would* have perished in the wilderness. But from the Divine side everything was sure. God had purposed to bring Israel to Sinai (3:12), and His counsel cannot fail. A complete provision did He make for His needy people. It is the same now. By nature, the elect of God are **“children of wrath, even as others”** (Ephesians 2:3). Shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, their lot is indeed a desperate one. But praise be to God, full provision is made for them. The Bread of Life is their all-sufficient supply. Even before His birth it was announced, **“Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins”** (Matthew 1:21).

7. *The Manna came right down to where the Israelites were.* The Israelites were in immediate danger of starving to death, but as we have seen, God graciously made provision to supply their need and now we would notice that no long journey had to be taken in order to secure that which would satisfy their hunger — the manna fell all around the camp. **“And in the morning the dew lay round about the host; and when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing”** (vv. 13, 14). Here we have foreshadowed the blessed fact that, to the sinner conscious of his need and anxious to meet with the Savior, God says, **“Say not in thine heart, ‘Who shall ascend into Heaven?’ (that is to bring Christ down from above) or, ‘Who shall descend into the deep?’ (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? ‘The Word is nigh thee.’”** (Rom. 10:6-7). And out of this very nearness springs the sinner’s responsibility. All around each tent door lay the manna. Something had to be done with it. It must either be gathered or trodden under foot! Sinner, what are you doing with the Christ of God? Remember His searching words, **“He that is not with Me is against Me”** (Luke 11:23).

8. *The Manna must be gathered by each individual.* **“This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, ‘Gather of it every man according to his eating’”** (v. 16). This is so spiritually. Receiving Christ (John 1:12) is a personal matter. No one can believe for another. There is no salvation by proxy. The gospel of Christ is, **“the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”** (Romans 1:16), and **“he that believeth not shall be damned”** (Mark 16:16). Saving faith is that act whereby each awakened sinner appropriates Christ unto himself. It is true that Christ loved the Church as a whole, and gave Himself for *it* (Ephesians 5:25), but it is also the happy privilege of each member of that Church to say with the Apostle Paul, **“Who loved me and gave Himself for me”** (Galatians 2:20). Have *you*, dear reader, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ?

[This article will continue in the next issue (D.V.)]

A Classic Study: The Love of Money



A Classic Study by Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847)

[Here, we continue a study by Thomas Chalmers. It is a discourse on the love of money.]—*Ed.*

Discourse on the Love of Money, pt. 3

“If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, ‘Thou art my confidence’; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; if I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above” (Job 31:24–28)

To look no further than to fortune as the dispenser of all the enjoyments which money can purchase is to make that fortune stand in the place of God. It is to make sense shut out faith, and to rob the King eternal and invisible of that supremacy, to which all the blessings of human existence, and all the varieties of human condition, ought, in every instance, and in every particular, to be referred. But, as we have already remarked, the love of money is one affection, and the love of what is purchased by money is another. It was, at first, we have no doubt, loved for the sake of good things which it enabled its possessor to acquire. But whether, as the result of associations in the mind so rapid as to escape the notice of our own consciousness – or as the fruit of an infection running by the sympathy among all men busily engaged in the prosecution of wealth, as the supreme good of their being – certain it is, that money, originally pursued for the sake of other things, comes at length to be prized for its own sake. And perhaps, there is no one circumstance which serves more to liken the love of money to the most irrational of the heathen idolatries, than that it at length passes into the love of money for

itself; and acquires a most enduring power over the human affections, separately altogether from the power of purchase and of command which belongs to it, over the proper and original objects of human desire.

The first thing which set man agoing in the pursuit of wealth, was that, through it, as an intervening medium, he found his way to other enjoyments; and it proves him, as we have observed, capable of a higher reach of anticipation than the beasts of the field, or the fowls of the air, that he is thus able to calculate, and to foresee, and to build up a provision for the wants of futurity. But, mark how soon this boasted distinction of his faculties is overthrown, and how near to each other lie the dignity and the debasement of the human understanding. If it evinced a loftier mind in man than in the inferior animals, that he invented money, and by the acquisition of it can both secure abundance for himself, and transmit this abundance to the future generations of his family – what have we to offer, in vindication of this intellectual eminence, when we witness how soon it is, that the pursuit of wealth ceases to be rational? How instead of being prosecuted as an instrument, either for the purchase of ease, or the purchase of enjoyment, both the ease and enjoyment of a whole life are rendered up as sacrifices at its shrine? How, from being sought after as a minister of gratification to the appetites of nature, it at length brings nature into bondage, and robs her of all her simple delights, and pours the infusion of wormwood into the currency of her feelings, making that man sad who ought to be cheerful, and that man who ought to rejoice in his present abundance, filling him either with the cares of an ambition which never will be satisfied, or with the apprehensions of a distress which, in all its pictured and exaggerated evils, will never be realized?

And it is amazing that wealth, which derives all that is true and sterling in its worth from its subserviency to other advantages, should, apart from all thought about this subserviency, be made the object of such fervent and fatiguing devotion. Insomuch, that never did Indian devotee inflict upon himself a severer agony at the footstool of his paganism, than those devotees of wealth who, for its acquirement as their ultimate object, will forego all the uses for which alone it is valuable – will give up all that is genuine or tranquil in the pleasures of life; and will pierce themselves through with many sorrows; and will undergo all the fiercer tortures of the mind; and, instead of employing what they have to smooth their passage through the world, will, upon the hazardous sea of adventure, turn the whole of this passage into a storm – thus exalting wealth, from a servant unto a lord, who in return for the homage that he obtains from his worshippers, exercises them, like Rehoboam his subjects of old, not with whips but with scorpions – with consuming anxiety, with never-sated desire, with brooding apprehension, and its fre-

quent and everflitting specters, and the endless jealousies of competition with men as intently devoted, and as emulous of a high place in the temple of their common idolatry, as themselves. And without going to the higher exhibitions of this propensity, in all its rage and restlessness, we have only to mark its workings on the walk of even everyday citizenship; and there see, how in the hearts even of its most commonplace votaries, wealth is followed after, for its own sake; how unassociated with all for which reason pronounces it to be of estimation, but, in virtue of some mysterious and undefinable charm, operating not on any principle of the judgment, but on the utter perversity of judgment, money has come to be higher account than all that is purchased by money, and has attained a rank coordinate with that which our Savior assigns to the life and to the body of man, in being reckoned more than meat and more than raiment. Thus making that which is subordinate to be primary, and that which is primary subordinate; transferring, by a kind of fascination, the affections away from the wealth in use, to wealth in idle and unemployed possession, insomuch that the most welcome intelligence you could give to the proprietor of many a snug deposit, in some place of secure and progressive accumulation, would be, that he should never require any part either of it, or of its accumulation back again for the purpose of expenditure, and that, to the end of his life, every new year should witness another unimpaired addition to the bulk or the aggrandizement of his idol. And it would just heighten his enjoyment, could he be told, with prophetic certainty, that this process of undisturbed augmentation would go on with his children's children, to the last age of the world; that the economy of each succeeding race of descendants would leave the sum with its interest untouched, and the place of its sanctuary unviolated; and, that through a series of indefinite generations, would the magnitude ever grow, and the luster ever brighten, of that household god, which he had erected for his own senseless adoration, and bequeathed as an object of as senseless adoration to his family.

[This study will conclude in the next issue (D.V.)]



New Testament Study: Matthew 25:1-13

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

¹At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

⁷Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

⁹'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

¹¹Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!'

¹²But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

¹³Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."

In this section, Jesus tells another parable concerning His return. This is the third of a three parable set: "The first parable (24:42-44) warns of the unexpectedness of Messiah's coming. The second (24:45-51) shows that more than passive watchfulness is required: there must be behavior acceptable to the master, the discharge of allotted responsibilities. This third parable (25:1-13) stresses the need for preparedness in the face of an unexpectedly long delay" [Carson, 512]. "Jesus continues to teach His followers the necessity of continual readiness as they await

His coming again. From the emphasis He put on watchfulness He clearly regarded it as very important" [Morris, 619]. The expectant attitude of Christians (constantly expectant of Christ's return) is a theme throughout the New Testament. In Hebrews, we are called **"those who are waiting for Him"** (Heb. 9:28). In Timothy, Paul speaks of the rewards for **"all who have longed for His appearing"** (II Tim. 4:8). In Thessalonians, Paul commends the Thessalonians for how they **"wait for [God's] Son from heaven"** (I Thess. 1:10).

So here, Jesus tells a parable of how His disciples should be ever and always prepared for His return. He begins: **"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep"** (vs. 1–5). Though the exact customs concerning weddings at that time are somewhat sketchy to us (and certainly they evolved over time), we can glean enough from historical sources to set up the background for this parable. D. A. Carson summarizes: "Normally the bridegroom with some close friends left his home to go to the bride's home, where there were various ceremonies, followed by a procession through the streets—after nightfall—to his home... Everyone in the procession was expected to carry his or her own torch. Those without a torch would be assumed to be party crashers or even brigands. The festivities, which might last several days, would formally get under way at the groom's house" [Carson, 513]. Matthew Henry speaks of a particular custom that apparently is referred to in this parable: "It was a custom sometimes used among the Jews on that occasion, that the bridegroom came, attended with his friends, late in the night, to the house of the bride, where she expected him, attended with her bride-maids; who, upon notice given of the bridegroom's approach, were to go out with lamps in their hands, to light him into the house with ceremony and formality, in order to the celebrating of the nuptials with great mirth" [Henry].

We can see from this historical background that the lighted lamp of the participants in the wedding was an important, even indispensable, accessory. Without a lighted lamp, participation in the festivities would be impossible. All of the virgins brought lamps, but only the **"wise"** virgins brought **"oil in jars"** to resupply the lamp, should it go out. The **"wise"** virgins were labeled **"wise"** because they were prepared for the possibility that the bridegroom would tarry.

The metaphorical elements of this story can be fairly easily laid out. The bridegroom's coming represents the second coming of Christ, and the delay is the tarrying of Christ. The ten virgins are the expectant Christian community, and the burning lamps represent their state of

readiness for Christ's return. "Sincere Christians are the wise virgins, and hypocrites the foolish ones, as in another parable they are represented by wise and foolish builders" [Henry]. From the outside, all ten virgins look the same: All are waiting; all have lamps; all even **"became drowsy and fell asleep"**. The difference would only be seen when the lamp is needed for use. Mr. Spurgeon points out the similarities between the foolish virgins, and hypocritical Christians (Christians in name only): "They may have thought that, if they had lamps that were similar to those carried by others, it would be sufficient. Perhaps they judged that the secret store of oil, being unseen, was unnecessary. They were willing to carry a lamp in one hand; but to devote the other hand to the care of an oil flask was more than they were willing to do. It is the want of the oil of grace that is the fatal flaw in many a professor's lamp. Many have a name to live, but have not the life of God within their souls. They make a profession of attachment to Christ, but they have not the inward supply of the Spirit of grace to keep it up. There is glitter or a flash, but there is no permanent light, and there cannot be any, for although they have **'lamps'**, they have **'no oil with them'**" [Spurgeon, 360].

"The bridegroom was a long time in coming", just as, to us it seems, Christ is a long time in coming. "Christ, as to us, seems to tarry, and yet really does not (see Hab. 2:3). There is good reason for the Bridegroom's tarrying; there are many intermediate counsels and purposes to be accomplished, the elect must all be called in, God's patience must be manifested, and the saints' patience tried, the harvest of the earth must be ripened, and so must the harvest of heaven too. But though Christ tarry past *our* time, He will not tarry past the *due* time... Though Christ tarry long, He will come at last; though He seem slow, He is sure. In His first coming, He was thought long by those that waited for the consolation of Israel; yet in the fullness of time He came; so His second coming, though long deferred, is not forgotten; His enemies shall find, to their cost, that forbearance is no acquittance; and His friends shall find, to their comfort, that **'the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie'** (Hab. 2:3). The year of the redeemed is fixed, and it will come" [Henry].

In the parable, at last, the bridegroom did come: **"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'"** (vs. 6). "Christ's coming will be at our midnight, when we least look for him, and are most disposed to take our rest" [Henry]. Imagine the stir in that household when the **"cry rang out."** Even the soundest asleep would have been aroused and scurrying about, getting ready, for this is what they were all eagerly anticipating. So also, at the return of Christ, there will be quite a to-do, to put it mildly.

"Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' 'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for

both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves” (vss. 6–9). The “foolish” ones regretted that they were not better prepared. To them, the bridegroom’s coming was a time of great stress and anxiety, while it should have been a time of great joy and anticipation (as it was for the “wise” virgins). The “foolish” ones recognized their unpreparedness and folly, and turned to the “wise” virgins, “Give us some of your oil.” This mirrors the attitude of many “foolish” relatives of Christians, who somehow think that the faith of their “wise” relatives will account for something for them in the eyes of God. However, on judgment day, we will be on our own, if we do not have Christ. We will stand before God quite miserably alone. “Note, the day is coming, when carnal hypocrites would gladly be found in the condition of true Christians. Those who now hate the strictness of religion, will, at death and judgment, wish for the solid comforts of it. Those who care not to live the life, yet would die the death, of the righteous. The day is coming when those who now look with contempt upon humble contrite saints, would gladly get an interest in them, and would value those as their best friends and benefactors, whom now they set with the dogs of their flock” [Henry].

Much as the “wise” virgins would have liked to help the “foolish”, it was quite impossible: “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you.’” And this is quite true. “Those that have most grace, have none to spare; all we have, is little enough for ourselves to appear before God in. The best have need to borrow from Christ, but they have none to lend to any of their neighbors” [Henry].

The “foolish” virgins went off, belatedly, to get prepared, “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’” (vss. 10–12). The “foolish” virgins came, but too late. Before the coming of the bridegroom, they did not foresee (or believe) the serious consequences of their unpreparedness. “In that day, there will be two consequences only – entrance or exclusion” [Thomas, 359]. “When once the door is shut, it will never be opened” [Spurgeon, 362]. “The vain confidence of hypocrites will carry them very far in their expectations of happiness. They go to heaven-gate, and demand entrance, and yet are shut out; lifted up to heaven in a fond conceit of the goodness of their state, and yet thrust down to hell” [Henry]. The folly of the “foolish” virgins was especially pronounced by the fact that they expected to be admitted to the wedding banquet, despite their lack of preparedness. Likewise, there are many people who say, “Oh, I’m a good enough person...”, though they do not meet God’s requirements for entrance into heaven. God demands perfect holiness, which is only available through Jesus Christ.



A Topical Study: Contentment

The Art of Divine Contentment, pt. 4 by Thomas Watson (1620-1686)

[Here, we continue a study by Thomas Watson, concerning being content with the life that our loving God has made for us.]—Ed.

**I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith
to be content (Philippians 4:11, AV).**

Uses of the Doctrine

Use 1. It shows us how a Christian may come to lead a comfortable life, even a heaven upon earth, be the times what they will; namely, by Christian contentment (see Prov. 15:13). The comfort of life does not stand in having much; it is Christ’s maxim, “Man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,” (Luke 12:15); but it is in being contented. Is not the bee as well contented with sucking from a flower, as the ox that grazes on the mountains? Contentment lies within a man, in the heart: and the way to be comfortable, is not by having our barns filled, but our minds quiet. The contented man, said Seneca, is the happy man: discontent is a fretting humor which dries the brains, wastes the spirits, corrodes and eats out the comfort of life. Discontentment keeps a man from enjoying what he possesses. A drop or two of vinegar will sour a whole glass of wine. Let a man have the affluence and confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of discontent will embitter and poison all. Comfort depends upon contentment; Jacob went halting when the sinew upon the hollow of his thigh shrank; so when the sinew of contentment begins to shrink, we go halting in our comforts. Contentment is as necessary to keep the life comfortable, as oil is necessary to keep the lamp burning; the clouds of discontent do often drop the showers of tears. Would we have comfort in our lives? We may have it if we will. A Christian may carve out what condition he will to himself. Why do you complain of your troubles? It is not trouble that troubles, but discontentment; it is not the water without the ship, but the water that gets within the leak which sinks it: it is not outward

affliction that can make the life of a Christian sad; a contented mind would sail above these waters; but when there is a leak of discontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is disquieted and sinks. Do therefore as the mariners, pump the water out, and stop this spiritual leak in the soul; and no trouble can hurt you.

Use 2. Here is a just reproof to such as are discontented with their condition. This disease is almost epidemical. Some not content with their callings which God has set them in, must be a step higher, from the plough to the throne; who, like the spider in the Proverbs, will take hold with their hands, and be in kings' palaces (see Prov. 20:28); others from the shop to the pulpit; they would be in the temple of honor, before they are in the temple of virtue; who step into Moses' chair, without Aaron's bells and pomegranates; like apes, which do most show their deformity when they are climbing. Is it not enough that God has bestowed gifts upon men in private to edify, that He has enriched them with many mercies; but must they seek the priesthood also? (see Num. 16:9). What is this but discontentment arising from high-flown pride? These do secretly tax the wisdom of God, that He has not screwed them up in their condition a peg higher. Every man is complaining that his estate is no better, though he seldom complains that his heart is no better. One man commends this kind of life, another commends that; one man thinks a country life best, another a city life. The soldier thinks it best to be a merchant, and the merchant to be a soldier. Men can be content to be anything but what God will have them be. How is it that no man is contented? Very few Christians have learned Paul's lesson. Neither poor, nor rich know how to be content; they can learn anything but this.

1. If men are poor, they learn to be, (1.) Envious: they malign those that are above them. Another's prosperity is an eye-sore. When God's candle shines upon their neighbor's tabernacle, this light offends them. In the midst of wants, men can, in this sense, abound, namely, in envy and malice: an envious eye is an evil eye. (2.) They learn to be querulous, still complaining as if God had dealt hardly with them; they are ever telling of their wants: they want this and that comfort; whereas, their greatest want is a contented spirit. They are well enough content with their sins, yet are not content with their condition.

2. If men are rich, they learn to be covetous; thirsting insatiably after the world, and by any unjust means scraping it together; **"their right hand is full of bribes,"** as the psalmist expresses it (see Ps. 26:20). Put a good cause in one scale, and a piece of gold in the other and the gold weighs heaviest. There are, said Solomon, four things that never say, **"It is enough"** (see Prov. 30:15). I may add a fifth, namely, the heart of a covetous man. So that neither poor nor rich know how to be content.

Never certainly since the creation did this sin of discontent reign or

rather rage more than in our times; never was God more dishonored. You can hardly speak with any, but the passion of his tongue betrays the discontent of his heart: every one lips out his trouble, and here even the stammering tongue speaks too freely and fluently.

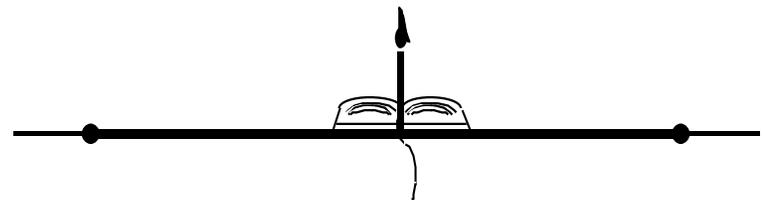
If we have not what we desire, we become sick with discontent, and are ready to die out of a humor. If God will not forgive the people of Israel for their lusts, they bid Him take their lives; they must have quails to their manna. Ahab, though a king, (and one would think his crown lands had been sufficient for him), yet is sullen and discontented for want of Naboth's vineyard. Jonah, though a good man and a prophet, yet is ready to die (see Jonah 4:8); and because God killed his gourd, **"Kill me too,"** said he. Rachel said, **"Give me children, or else I die";** she had many blessings, if she could have seen them, but wanted this to be content. God will supply our wants, but must He satisfy our lusts too? Many are discontented for a very trifle; another has a better dress, a richer jewel, a newer fashion. Nero, not content with his empire, was troubled that the musicians had more skill in playing than he: how fantastic are some, that pine away in discontent for the want of those things, which if they had would but render them more ridiculous!

Use 3. It exhorts us to labor for contentment; this is that which beautifies and bespangles a Christian, and as a spiritual embroidery, sets him off in the eyes of the world.

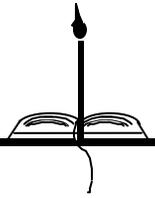
But methinks I hear some bitterly complaining, and saying to me, "Alas, how is it possible to be contented?"; the Lord **"hath made my chain heavy"** (Lam. 3:7); He has cast me into a very sad condition!

Answer. There is no sin, but labors either to hide itself under some mask; or, if it cannot be concealed, then to vindicate itself by some excuses. This sin of discontent I find very skillful in its excuses, which I shall first discover, and then make a reply. We must lay it down for a rule, that discontent is a sin, so that all the pretences and excuses where-with it labors to justify itself, are but the painting and dressing of a strumpet.

[In the next issue, Mr. Watson will begin enumerating, and giving answers to excuses for being discontented.]



A Study in Wisdom: Job 1:5 (pt. 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.]

Job 1:5 (pt. 2) - Job Sanctifies His Children, by Joseph Caryl

⁵And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings, according to the number of them all.

[Mr. Caryl is currently in the middle of making various observations about this verse.]

Fifthly, Job was a holy person, and you see which way his care lies, that his children may be holy, then take this note in the general: He that is a holy person himself, desires to make others holy too.

Holy Job would have all his children holy. As it is with the wicked, a wicked man would be willing to have all wicked with him, he would be willing to scatter his wickedness, and diffuse his poison unto others. The drunkard would be willing to have companions with him in his drunkenness. And so the man that is truly godly, would make others godly too. As Paul said to Agrippa, **"I would to God that not only you, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am"** (Acts 26:29). Grace is attractive. It desires to draw other into fellowship. A good man would not be happy alone.

Sixthly, sanctification, you see here, is ascribed unto Job, **"He sent and sanctified them"**, and all that he did was but to give them counsel and warning to sanctify themselves. It is as if he said, "Go to my children, and bid them prepare themselves; warn themselves for it." Yet the text says, that Job sanctified them. Then we may observe from this:

The good which others do by our advice and counsel is reckoned as done by ourselves.

When we provoke others to goodness, the good which they do is set upon our account, as if we had done it, just as the wickedness and the sin which another commits by the advice and counsel of any man, is set upon the score of that man. If another do ill by thy advice, the ill is reck-

oned to thee; if one should come and say as Absalom said to his servants, **"Mark you now when the Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, 'Smite Amnon, then kill him', fear not, have not I commanded you?"** (II Sam. 13:28). Not only did the servants kill Amnon, but Absalom killed Amnon because he commanded them to kill him. You know what is said of David, he did but send a letter concerning the death of Uriah, and the charge comes, **"Thou has slain Uriah with the Sword of the children of Amnon"** (II Sam. 12:9). All the evil others committed by thy counsel, direction, advice, command, or consent, is as done by thyself. So (on the other side) all the good others do by our counsel, advice, promotion, admonition, instruction, and the like, that good shall be reckoned to us. If another be holy by thy advice, it will be said that thou has made him holy, thou has sanctified them.

Lastly, observe that:

Holy duties call for holy preparation.

We must not touch holy things with unholy hands, or with unholy hearts: **"I will wash my hand in innocence, and so will I compass thine altar O Lord"**, was David's resolution in Psalm 26:6. Therefore Job, intending a solemn duty, a sacrifice, which did contain the sum of all religion concerning the external worship of God, sends solemnly to his children to prepare themselves: "O come not to the sacrifice except you be sanctified." It is a point so clear, that I shall need but only to name it to you. How and wherein they should sanctify themselves, and what course they took for the sanctifying and preparing of themselves for that duty, does not appear in this place: but afterwards when God gave the Law, He prescribed them a rule what they must do that they might be sanctified. The Jews had special directions for their preparations. Some things were outward, and some inward, both of which I will touch on:

For the outward, they were commanded to wash their clothes, **"Sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes"** (Ex. 19:10): Not that God regarded clothes, but aimed at somewhat further; if the clothes must be washed, certainly then the heart must be washed. He pointed at that in the washing of their clothes. In Leviticus and Numbers, other outward preparations are commanded, as they abstained from all things that were unclean, and they must not touch anything that was unclean; and then sometimes they were not only to wash their clothes, but to change their clothes. You have the expression in that place concerning Jacob, be clean and change your garments. It might be changing by washing, but I rather conceive, that it was a change by putting on of other clothes. There was also another external requisite to the preparing and sanctifying of themselves; and that was by abstaining for a time from the lawful use of the marriage bed. You have the command expressed in that Exodus 15:19: **"Be ready against the third day, come not at your wives"**; and there are other like places, I Samuel

21:4, **“The Priest said, ‘There is no common bread under my hand, but there is hallowed bread, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women’”**; if they have but that outward preparation; the meaning is, if they had kept themselves from their wives; David affirms it was so, in the words following. The Apostle gives the same rule in 1 Cor. 7:5 speaking of that point, **“Defraud not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer.”** So, the Holy Ghost therein intimates such an abstaining as was preparatory to solemn duties, that you may give yourselves to fast and prayer. Extraordinary duties call for extraordinary preparations. These outward preparations were so necessary that when the people failed in them, Hezekiah prayed for pardon, **“The good Lord pardon everyone that prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his Father’s though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary”** (2 Chron. 30:18-19). Though their hearts were upright, though they had hearts rightly prepared, yet he prayed that God would pardon the want of those outward preparations. The principal preparation is of the heart, and the washing of our ways. Therefore we find how the Lord contends with them in Isaiah 1:10-11: **“I hate your solemn feasts, bring no more vain oblations. Why? Your hands are full of blood, wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well.”** It is as if He should say, “What do you come to me in these holy duties, except you prepare and fit yourselves accordingly. I cannot abide that unholy persons should come about holy things.”

The very heathen had this notion, they would not admit any to come to their religious services unless they were prepared. That saying of Aeneas the Poet to his Father, when he came from the war, is a clear proof. “Father, do you meddle with the sacrifices, but as for me it is a sinful thing to touch them, till I have washed myself in the fountain.” This was an outward external rite among them for cleansing themselves. The very heathen saw they must not meddle with their holy things till they were cleansed, therefore they had one that cried out to the people when they came to sacrifice, “All you that are unclean and profane, go far away from these sacrifices.” Not only the word of God, but the very light of nature taught them, not to meddle with holy things till they were sanctified.

Therefore specially look to this, when you have any sacrifice, any duty to perform, be prepared and sanctified within and without before you come to the duty. It is true that the duty sanctifies, but it is seldom that the duty sanctifies us unless we be sanctified holy before we come to the duty. Take heed how you hear, not only hear, but take heed to prepare yourselves for hearing. So, look to thy feet (it has the same sense) when you come into the house of God. Prepare thyself, be not hasty, lest thine be counted by the sacrifice of fools.



A Meditation: The Spiritual Chemist

A Meditation Upon the Golden Calf, and the Brazen Serpent by William Spurstowe (ca. 1666)

The makers of these two images were Moses and Aaron, such a pair of brethren as history cannot parallel for eminency, and whose names outshine greatly all others of the like alliance that have an honorable mention in the Book of God. Where are there two brethren in that sacred chronicle, so renowned for sundry miracles done by them, or so highly dignified by titles given to them by the Spirit of God as they? Moses being styled signally the Servant of God; and Aaron, the Saint of the Lord: and yet how strangely differing are their two images? They are unlike in matter: the one being of Gold, and the other of Brass. They are unlike in figure: the one a calf, the other a serpent. But they are most unlike in their effects: the one killing and the other healing. The golden calf kills, and the brazen serpent saves. One would think that the same fountain should as soon send forth salt water and fresh, as either of these to do anything that should terminate in such contrary effects, by whose harmonious conduct Israel had been led as a flock of sheep through the wilderness. Who could readily conceive that Aaron’s calf should be as a destroying poison? Or that Moses’ serpent should be as an effectual antidote to save? Did he not flee from his rod when turned into a serpent, as fearing to be hurt by it? And was not this brazen serpent in shape and figure like to those fiery serpents, that had stung many Israelites to death? From whence then comes this strange difference between the one and the other. Aaron’s calf, though made of gold, was without, yea against a command of God; but Moses’ serpent, though of brass, was by His special appointment. Let the intimations of God be never so mean and despicable to the eye of

sense; yet they shall obtain their designed end: and let the inventions of men be never so rich and costly, yet they will be found to be no other than hurtful vanities. Who is of so small an insight in the mystery of idolatry and superstition, as not to observe how they affect a pomp and splendor in their religion? And how greatly they despise the simplicity of that worship which is not clothed and decked with an external grandeur? But will a clove in the mouth cure the unsavory breathings of corrupt lungs? Or will the lepers making of himself brave with the finest garments cause the priest to pronounce him clean, when he comes to behold his sore? Then may such arts and palliations of men, wedded to idolatrous practices, vindicate the evil of their doings, and justify them to be such as God will not condemn. But as religion is not a thing left to any man's choice to pick out what best pleases himself; so neither are the ways and mediums of the exercise of it at all in his power. As God is the object of worship, so the means by which He is honored, and His servants benefited that use them, must be appointed by Himself. His will and not man's must be the sole and adequate rule. For all ordinances do not work necessarily as the fire burns or as the sun enlightens the air; nor do they work physically, as having an inherent power to produce their effects; but they are operative by way of institution, and receive their virtue from God, who therefore appoints weak and insufficient things to the eye of reason, that He Himself may be the more acknowledged in all. What could be more unlikely to heal the bitings of a fiery serpent, as looking up only to a brazen serpent? Or to restore to the blind man his sight, than the anointing of his eyes with clay and spittle? And yet these things God and Christ are pleased to make use of; not from indigency, as if they could not work without means, but from wisdom and counsel, to show that they can work by any. Let no man then fondly make it his work, or count it his duty to honor God with His own inventions, though specious and beautiful in his own eyes; but let him value and prize God's institutions, though to outward appearance they be contemptible. The blue-bottles, and other weeds in the field are more gaudy and delightful to the eye than the corn amongst which they grow; but yet the one are worthless, and the other is full of strength and nourishment.

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May God bless you as you study His Word.

The Importance of Knowing Christ

"It is a growing conviction in my mind, that vital and influential Christianity consists, much more than is ordinarily apprehended, in an intimate personal acquaintance and friendship with our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the great revealer of God; he is the revealed Divinity. . . To be a Christian, it is not enough that we know and acknowledge a system of doctrine and of law, deduced from the sayings of our Lord and the writings of his apostles. It is necessary that we be acquainted with His person, His character, and His work; that we know the doctrines of Christianity as His mind, the laws of Christianity as His will. The very life of Christianity consists in loving, confiding in, obeying Him, and God in Him; and He plainly can be loved, confided in, and obeyed, only in the degree in which He is known.."

-- *John Brown*

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