

# SCRIPTURE STUDIES

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

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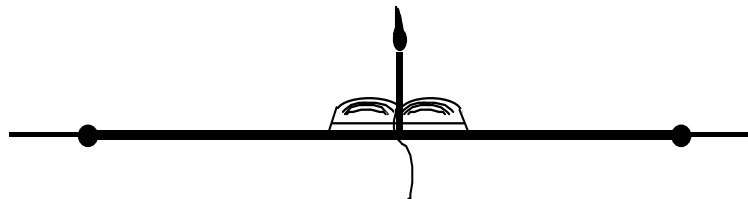
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## Old Testament Study: Exodus 16

Manna, pt. 3,  
by Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

<sup>1</sup>And 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. <sup>2</sup>And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: <sup>3</sup>And 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. <sup>4</sup>Then 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. <sup>5</sup>And 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)

<sup>13</sup>And 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. <sup>14</sup>And 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. <sup>15</sup>And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. <sup>16</sup>This 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. <sup>17</sup>And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. <sup>18</sup>And 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.

<sup>19</sup>And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. <sup>20</sup>Notwithstanding 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. <sup>21</sup>And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. <sup>22</sup>And 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. <sup>23</sup>And 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. <sup>24</sup>And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. <sup>25</sup>And 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. <sup>26</sup>Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. <sup>27</sup>And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. <sup>28</sup>And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? <sup>29</sup>See, 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. <sup>30</sup>So the people rested on the seventh day. <sup>31</sup>And 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. 13-31 AV)

*[Mr. Pink continues to enumerate ways in which manna is typical (or symbolic) of God's Word]*

6. *The manna was gathered daily.* Then 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”** (v. 4). The manna which Israel gathered today would not suffice them for tomorrow. A new supply must be secured each day. The spiritual application of this is very evident. The soul requires the same systematic attention as does the body, and if this be neglected and our spiritual meals are taken irregularly, the results will be equally disastrous. But how many fail at this very point! What would you think of a man who sat down to his Sunday dinner and tried to eat sufficient then, at one meal, to last him for the whole week? And yet that is precisely the method followed by multitudes of people with their spiritual food. The only time they get an adequate spiritual meal is on Sunday, and they make *that* last them for the remainder of the week. Is

there any wonder that so many Christians are (spiritually) weak and sickly! O let us face the fact that our souls are in urgent need of a *daily* supply of the Bread of Life. Whatever else be left undone, let us see to it that we *regularly* feed on the spiritual manna. Remember, it is not the amount of time spent, but the amount of *heart* which is put into the time which counts.

7. *The manna was gathered in the morning.* “**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 is a lesson which all of us need to seriously take to heart. It was in the early morning, *before other things had time to occupy their attention*, that God’s people of old gathered their daily supply of the manna. And this is recorded “**for our learning**” (see Rom. 15:4). The Divine Word must not be given a secondary place if we would have *God’s* blessing upon us. What a difference it would make in many a Christian life if *each* day was begun in *God’s* presence! How many, now weak and sickly, would become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might if they formed the *habit* of feeding each *morning* on the Bread of Life! If the soul was fed at the time of “**the dew,**” strength would be obtained and we should be equipped for the duties that lay before us and girded for the temptations which confronted us throughout the day!

Let no reader complain that he has not the time. You may not have time for the careful study of a *whole* chapter each morning, though even that is to be seriously questioned, but certain it is that you *have* time to prayerfully select one verse of Scripture and write it out on a piece of paper and attempt to commit it to memory, consulting it during your spare minutes through the day, on the train, or the streetcar, if needs be — the writer memorized the whole epistle of Ephesians on the streetcar, a verse at a time. Certain it is that you *do* have time to meditate on this one verse throughout the day, and to ponder each word separately. And after the labors of the day are over you may sit down (if only for five minutes) and look up the parallel passages, given in the marginal references. If you will do this daily you will be surprised and delighted at the incalculable blessing it will bring to your soul. “**Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness**” (Matthew 6:33).

8. *The manna was obtained by labor.* “We are reminded, by the gathering of it, of the Lord’s words, ‘**Labor for the meat.**’ They did not indeed labor to bring it from Heaven: their labor was to gather it when rained down to them from thence. And here we find that they had to use diligence. It would not keep; they could not lay up a stock for the future: every day they had afresh to be employed with it. If they were not out early and the sun rose upon it, it melted. And here is where *diligence* on our part is so much needed. Would that we understood this, beloved brethren, better! Manna *did not fall into their mouths*, but around their tent. They had to use diligence to gather it. Do we understand the necessity of diligence in the apprehension of Divine things? Do we understand that the character of the Word of God is such, as that however plain in a sense it may be, yet it ministers in fact its fullness only to those who have *earnestness* of heart to seek it? Only ‘**if thou criest after knowledge**’ says the

wise man, **'and lifted up thy voice for understanding; if thou *seekest* her as silver, and *searchest* for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.'** And yet He adds **'for the Lord giveth wisdom.'** But He gives it according to the rules of His own holy government.

*"Labor* is here, therefore, very specially needed; not that the labor simply by itself is anything; not that man's efforts only can ever here procure for himself what God alone supplies, but still God seeks from us that *diligence* which shows our apprehension of the treasure that His Word is. He does not give to carelessness or indolence of soul, nor is faith simply a receiver here, but a *worker with God*." (Mark Grant). Before **"an omer"** could be gathered *much* labor was entailed, for manna was **"a *small round thing*."**

9. *The manna was gathered by stooping.* It grew not upon the trees, but fell upon the ground. In order to obtain it the Israelites had to go down on their knees. How significant, and how accurate the type! Diligence on our part is required if we are to appropriate from the Word that which our souls need. But something more than diligence is necessary. There must be *dependence* upon God, the Author of the Word. There must be a *seeking from Him*. We must get down on our knees and cry, **"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law"** (Ps. 119:18).

10. *Some gathered more, some less.* **"And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some *more*, some *less*"** (v. 17). How like what we find around us today! Some Christians confine themselves to the Psalms and the Gospels, rarely referring to any other section of the Bible. Others study the Church Epistles, but neglect the prophetic portions. A few study the Old Testament, as well as the New, and derive immeasurable delight in the wonderful types to be found there on almost every page. It is also true with the spiritual manna that some **"gather more, some less."**

11. *What was gathered must be used.* **"Let no man leave of it till the morning"** (v. 19). Divine truth is not to be hoarded up, but turned to present profit. We are to use what God has given us. We are first to walk in the truth ourselves, and then to recommend it to others.

As the Lord gives us opportunities it is our happy privilege to pass on to others what He has given to us. It is in this way that Christian fellowship becomes most helpful — when we spend an hour, or even a few minutes, with a fellow-believer and discuss together the things of God, instead of the things of the world.

12. *The manna was incomprehensible to the natural man.* **"And when the children of Israel saw it they said one to another it is manna: *for they knew not what it was*"** (v. 15). There was something about this manna which the Israelites could not understand. It was different from anything else they had ever seen. They possessed no knowledge of it. The very word **"manna"** means "What is it"? **"They knew not what it was."** Thus it is also with that which the manna prefigured. The unregenerate are unable to comprehend the Scriptures: **"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him;**

neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

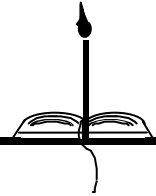
13. *The manna was despised by the mixed multitude.* "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, 'Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely: the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, besides this manna before our eyes'" (Numbers 11:4-6). Israel was not alone as they came forth from Egypt. They were accompanied by "A mixed multitude" which had, doubtless, been deeply impressed by Jehovah's plagues and interventions on Israel's behalf, but who had no knowledge of God for themselves. Just so it is today; side by side with the wheat grows the tares. There is a "mixed multitude" in the Christian profession, and these like their ancient forefathers, despise the manna. They have no relish for spiritual things. They may own a Bible, perhaps one with all expensive binding and beautifully gilded; but its contents are dry and insipid to them.

14. *The manna was preserved in the ark.* "And Moses said unto Aaron, 'Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations.'" (v. 33). Hebrews 9:4 tells us that it was a 'golden pot.' This is very striking. The manna was not to be stored up in the tents of the Israelites for a single day; yet here we see it preserved for almost forty years in the Tabernacle. It was to be kept for the land of Canaan. And so with the antitype: while we cannot feed on yesterday's experience and make that satisfy the need of today, nevertheless, our experiences from day to day in the wilderness will be found again with rich and blessed fruitage. The 'golden pot' in which the manna was stored tells of what a *high value* God sets upon that which it typified. The fact that the manna was kept in the ark till Canaan was reached, tells of how God has *preserved* the Scriptures all through the ages.

14. *The manna lasted until Canaan was reached.* "And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan" (v. 35). This tells of what an *inexhaustible supply* God has for His people. To the end of the wilderness journey the manna continued. And thank God this is true of the spiritual manna. "The grass withereth and the flower fadeth, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever" (Isa. 40:8). We may be in the "last days" of this age; the "perilous times" may be upon us; but we still have God's blessed word. May we prize it more highly, read it more carefully, study it more diligently.

Here is the grand secret of a healthy and vigorous spiritual life. It is by earnestly desiring the sincere (pure) milk of the Word, that we grow thereby. It is by daily feeding on the Bread of Life that we obtain the strength which we need. It is through having God's Word in our hearts that we are kept from sinning against Him. And it is in this way that we should be able to say with Jeremiah, "Thy words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (15:16).

# A Classic Study: The Love of Money



## A Classic Study by Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847)

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

### Discourse on the Love of Money, pt. 1

**“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)**

A sum of money is, in all its functions, equivalent to a reservoir stocked by God. Take one year with another, and the annual consumption of the world cannot exceed the annual produce which issues from the storehouse of Him who is the great and the bountiful provider of all its families. The money that is in any man’s possession represents the share which he can appropriate to himself of this produce. If it be a large sum, it is like a capacious reservoir on the bank of the river of abundance. If it be laid out on firm and stable securities, still it is like a firmly embanked reservoir. The man who toils to increase his money is like a man who toils to enlarge the capacity of his reservoir. The man who suspects a flaw in his securities, or who apprehends, in the report of failures and fluctuations, that his money is all to flow away from him, is like a man who apprehends a flaw in the embankments of his reservoir.

Meanwhile, in all the care that is thus expended, either on the money or on the magazine, the originating source, out of which there is imparted to the one all its real worth, or there is imparted to the other all its realfulness, is scarcely ever thought of. Let God turn the earth into a barren desert, and the money ceases to be convertible to any purpose of enjoyment; or let Him lock up that magazine of great and general supply, out of which He showers abundance among our habitations, and all the subordinate magazines formed beside the wonted stream of liberality, would remain empty. But all this is forgotten by the vast majority of our



unthoughtful and unreflecting species. The patience of God is still unexhausted; and the seasons still roll in kindly succession over the heads of an ungrateful generation; and that period, when the machinery of our present system shall stop and be taken to pieces has not yet arrived; and that Spirit, who will not always strive with the children of men, is still prolonging His experiment on the powers and the perversities of our moral nature; and still suspending the edict of dissolution, by which this earth and these heavens are at length to pass away.

So, the sun still shines upon us; and the clouds still drop upon us; and the earth still puts forth the bloom and the beauty of its luxuriance; and all the ministers of heaven's liberality, still walk their annual round, and scatter plenty over the face of an alienated world; and the whole of nature continues as smiling in promise, and as sure in fulfillment, as in the days of our forefathers; and out of her large and universal granary is there, in every returning year, as rich a conveyance of aliment as before, to the populous family in whose behalf it is opened. But it is the business of many among that population, each to erect his own separate granary, and to replenish it out of the general store, and to feed himself and his dependents out of it. And he is right in so doing.

But he is not right in looking to his own peculiar receptacle, as if it were the first and emanating fountain of all his enjoyments. He is not right in thus idolizing the word of his own hands – awarding no glory and confidence to Him in whose hands is the key of that great storehouse, out of which every lesser storehouse of man derives its fullness. He is not right, in laboring after the money which purchases all things to avert the earnestness of his regards from the being who provides all things. He is not right, in thus building his security on that which is subordinate, unheeding and unmindful of Him who is supreme. It is not right, that silver and gold, though unshaped into statuary, should still be doing, in this enlightened land, what the images of paganism once did. It is not right that they should thus supplant the deference which is owing to the God and the governor of all things – or that each man among us should, in the secret homage of trust and satisfaction which he renders to his bills, and his deposits, and his deeds of property and possession, endow these various articles with the same moral ascendancy over his heart, as the household gods of antiquity had over the idolaters of antiquity – making them effectually usurp the place of divinity, and dethrone the one monarch of heaven and earth from that preeminence of trust and of affection that belongs to Him.

He who makes a god of his pleasure, renders to this idol the homage of his senses. He who makes a god of his wealth, renders to this idol the homage of his mind; and he, therefore, of the two, is the more hopeless and determined idolater. The former is goaded on to his idolatry, by the power of appetite. The latter cultivates his with willful and deliberate perseverance; consecrates his very highest powers to its service; embarks in it, not with the heat of passion, but with the coolness of steady and calculating principle; fully gives up his reason and his time, and all the faculties of his understanding, as well as all the desires of his heart, to the great object of a fortune in this world; makes the acquirement of gain the settled

aim, and the prosecution of that aim the settled habit of his existence; sits the whole day long at the post of his ardent and unremitting devotions; and, as he labors at the desk of his counting-house, has his soul just as effectually seduced from the living God to an object distinct from Him, and contrary to Him, as if the ledger over which he was bending was a book of mystical characters, written in the honor of some golden idol placed before him, and with a view to render this idol propitious to himself and to his family.

Baal and Molech were not more substantially the gods of rebellious Israel, than mammon is the god of all his affections. To the fortune he has reared, or is rearing, for himself and his descendants, he ascribes all the power and all the independence of a divinity. With the wealth he has gotten by his own hands, does he feel himself as independent of God, as the pagan does, who happy in the fancied protection of an image made with his own hand, suffers no disturbance to his quiet, from any thought of the real but the unknown deity? His confidence is in his treasure, and not in God. It is there that he places all his safety and all his sufficiency. It is not on the supreme being, conceived in the light of a real and a personal agent, that he places his dependence. It is on a mute and material statue of his own erection. It is wealth which stands to him in the place of God – to which he awards the credit of all his enjoyments – which he looks to as the emanating fountain of all his present sufficiency – from which he gathers his fondest expectations of all the bright and fancied blessedness that is yet before him – on which he rests as the firmest and stablest foundation of all that the heart can wish, or the eye can long after, both for himself and for his children. It matters not to him, that all his enjoyment comes from a primary fountain, and that his wealth is only an intermediate reservoir. It matters not to him, that if God were to set a seal upon the door of the upper storehouse in heaven, or to blast and to burn up all the fruitfulness of earth, he would reduce, to the worthlessness of dross, all the silver and the gold that abound in it. Still the gold and the silver are his gods. His own fountain is between him and the fountain of original supply. His wealth is between him and God. Its various lodging places, whether in the hand, or in the place of registration, or in the depository or wills and title-deeds – these are the sanctuaries of his secret worship – these are the high-places of his adoration; and never did a devout Israelite look with more intentness towards Mount Zion, and with his face towards Jerusalem, than he does to his wealth, as to the mountain and stronghold of his security. Nor could the Supreme be more effectually deposed from the homage of trust and gratitude than He actually is, though this wealth were recalled from its carious investments; and turned into one mass of gold; and cast into a piece of molten statuary; and enshrined on a pedestal, around which all his household might assemble, and make it the object of their family devotions; and plied every hour of every day wit all the fooleries of a senseless and degrading paganism. It is thus, that God may keep up the charge of idolatry against us, even after all its images have been overthrown. It is thus that dissuasives from idolatry are still addressed, in the New Testament, to the pupils of a new and better dispensation; that little children are warned against idols; that all of us are warned to flee from covetousness.



## New Testament Study: Matthew 24:42-51

### The Olivet Discourse – pt. 5, by Scott Sperling

<sup>42</sup>“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. <sup>43</sup>But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup>So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.

<sup>45</sup>“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? <sup>46</sup>It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. <sup>47</sup>I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. <sup>48</sup>But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ <sup>49</sup>and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. <sup>50</sup>The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. <sup>51</sup>He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

One of the questions that the disciples asked of Jesus to prompt this discourse was: “**When will this**”, that is, the destruction of the Temple, and the end of the age, “**happen?**” (Matt. 24:3). Jesus did not answer this part of the question. Instead of telling them “**when**” these things would happen, He tells them: “**Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come**” (vs. 42). It is the wisdom of God that we should not know when the end will come, or when Jesus will return. And since we do not know “**when**” these things will happen, we must be ready at all times, as Jesus illustrates: “**But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his**

house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him" (vss. 43–44).

It is a test of our faith that we do not know when Jesus will return. Jesus tells a parable to illustrate this: **"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"** (vss. 45–51).

It is the **"faithful and wise servant"** that lives his life as if the Lord could return at any time. As Jesus says, **"It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns"** (vs. 46). The faithless ones assume, because of the long delay before His return, that He will never return. Their lack of faith leads to sin. "The delay of Christ's coming, though it is a gracious instance of His patience, is greatly abused by wicked people, whose hearts are thereby hardened in their wicked ways" [Henry]. The servant reasons, "Why should I obey the Master if He will not return to hold me accountable for disobedience?" The wicked servant **"says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards"** (vss. 48–49). However, mere disbelief in the Master's return will not keep Him away: **"The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of"** (vs. 50). At that time, the wicked servant will pay the price of his disobedience: **"[The Master] will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"** (vs. 51).

There are some in the church, even some pastors and leaders in the church, who do not believe in Jesus' literal return to earth. This is a dangerous and unbiblical position to take. It is dangerous because, as we see in Jesus' parable, such a view leads to sin. It is unbiblical because Jesus promised us many times that He would return. If Jesus' own promises are invalid, the entire Christian religion collapses to ruin. Jesus will return. He said He would. He will return at a time when we are not expecting Him. We must all be prepared for His return, and obey His command to, **"Therefore keep watch"** (vs. 42).



## A Topical Study: Contentment

### The Art of Divine Contentment, pt. 3 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).**

#### The Resolving of Some Questions

For the illustration of the doctrine of contentment, I shall propound these questions:

*Question 1.* Can a Christian be sensible of a miserable condition, and yet be contented?

*Answer.* Yes; for else he is not a saint, but a stoic. Rachel did well to weep for her children—there was nature; but her fault was, she refused to be comforted—there was discontent. Christ Himself was sensible when He sweat great drops of blood, and said, “**Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me**” (Matt. 26:39); yet He was contented, and sweetly submitted His will— “**nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.**” The apostle tells us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God (see I Pet. 5:6), which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it.

*Question 2* May a Christian lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented?

*Answer.* Yes: “**Unto Thee have I opened my cause**” (Jer. 20:12); and David poured out his complaint before the Lord (see Ps. 142:2). We may cry to God, and desire Him to write down all our injuries. Shall not the child complain to his father? When any burden is upon the spirit, prayer gives vent, it eases the heart. Hannah’s spirit was burdened; “**I am,**” says she, “**a woman of a sorrowful spirit,**” (I Sam. 1: 15). Now, having prayed and wept, she went away, and was no more sad. Only here is the difference between a holy complaint, and a discontented complaint; in the one we complain *to* God, in the other we complain *of* God.

*Question 3.* What is it properly that contentment does exclude?

*Answer.* There are three things which contentment banishes out of its

dioceses, and can by no means consist with it:

1. It excludes a vexatious repining; this is properly the daughter of discontent; **“I mourn in my complaint”** (Ps. 55:2), he does not say, I murmur in my complaint. Murmuring is no better than mutiny in the heart; it is a rising up against God. When the sea is rough and unquiet, it casts forth nothing but foam; when the heart is discontented, it casts forth the foam of anger, impatience, and sometimes little better than blasphemy. Murmuring is nothing else than the scum which boils off from a discontented heart.

2. It excludes an uneven discomposure; when a man says, “I am in such straits, that I know not how to move or get out; I shall be undone.” Head and heart are so taken up, that a man is not fit to pray, or meditate, etc., he is not himself: just as when an army is routed, one man runs this way, and another that, the army is put into disorder; so a man’s thoughts run up and down distracted. Discontent dislocates and unjoins the soul, it pulls off the wheels.

3. It excludes a childish despondency; and this is usually consequent upon the other. A man being in a hurry of mind, not knowing which way to extricate or wind himself out of the present trouble, begins to faint and sink under it. For care is to the mind as a burden to the back, it loads the spirits, and with overloading sinks them. A desponding spirit is a discontented spirit.

### The Nature of Contentment

Having answered these questions, I shall, in the next place, come to describe this contentment.

It is a sweet temper of spirit, whereby a Christian carries himself in an equal poise in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in these three aphorisms:

1. Contentment is a divine thing; it becomes ours not by acquisition, but infusion. It is a slip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the Spirit of God in the soul: it is a fruit that grows not in the garden of philosophy, but is of heavenly birth. It is therefore very observable, that contentment is joined with godliness, and goes along with it; **“But godliness with contentment is great gain”** (I Tim. 6:6). Contentment being a consequence of godliness, or concomitant, or both, I call it divine, to contradistinguish it from that contentment which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have seemed to have this contentment, but it was only the shadow and picture of it: theirs was but civil, this is sacred; theirs was only from principles of reason, this of religion; theirs was only lighted at nature’s torch, this at the lamp of scripture. Reason may a little teach contentment; as thus: Whatever my condition be, this is that I am born to,

and if I meet with crosses, it is but a universal misery; all have their share, why therefore should I be troubled? Reason may suggest this; and, indeed, this may be rather constraint, than content; but to live securely and cheerfully upon God in the abatement of creature supplies, religion only can bring this into the soul's exchequer.

2. Contentment lies within a man; not in the bark, but the root. Contentment has both its fountain and stream in the soul. The beam has not its light from the air: the beams of comfort which a contented man has, do not arise from foreign comforts, but from within. As sorrow is seated in the spirit, "**The heart knoweth his own bitterness**" (Prov. 14:10), so contentment lies within the soul, and does not depend upon externals. Hence I gather, that outward troubles cannot hinder this blessed contentment; it is a spiritual thing, and arises from spiritual grounds, namely, the apprehension of God's love. When there is a tempest without, there may be music within. A bee may sting through the skin, but it cannot sting to the heart: outward afflictions cannot sting to a Christian's heart, where contentment lies. Thieves may plunder us of our money and plate, but not of this pearl of contentment, unless we are willing to part with it; for it is locked up in the cabinet of the heart. The soul which is possessed of this rich treasure of contentment, is like Noah in the ark, who can sing in the midst of a deluge.

3. Contentment is a habitual thing, it shines with a fixed light in the firmament of the soul. Contentment does not appear only now and then, as some stars which are seen but seldom: it is a settled temper of the heart. One action does not denominate the character: he is not said to be a liberal man, who gives alms once in his life; a covetous man may do so; but he is said to be liberal, who is given to liberality (see Rom. 12:13); that is, who upon all occasion is willing to relieve the necessities of the poor: so he is said to be a contented man who is given to contentment. It is not casual, but constant. Aristotle, in his rhetoric, distinguishes between colors in the face that arise from passion, and those which arise from complexion; the pale face may look red when it blushes, but this is only a passion: he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine who is constantly so—it is his complexion. He is not a contented man who is so upon an occasion, and perhaps when he is pleased; but who is so constantly, when it is the habit and complexion of his soul.

### Reasons Pressing to Holy Contentment

Having opened the nature of contentment, I come next to lay down some reasons or arguments to contentment which may preponderate with us:

1. The first is, God's precept. It is charged upon us as a duty, "**Be content with such things**" (Heb. 13:5): the same God who has bade us believe, has bade us be content; if we obey not, we expose ourselves to a

spiritual penalty and punishment. God's word is a sufficient warrant; it has authority in it, and must be a sacred spell to remove discontent. "He has said it," was enough among Pythagoras's scholars. "Be it enacted," is the royal style. God's word must be the star that guides, and His will the weight that moves our obedience: His fiat is a law, and has majesty enough in it to captivate us into obedience: our hearts must not be more unquiet than the raging sea, which at His word is stilled (see Matt. 8:26).

2. The second reason enforcing contentment is, God's promise; **"For He has said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee'"** (Heb. 13:5). Thus God has engaged Himself under hand and seal, for our necessary provisions. If a king should say to one of his subjects, "I will take care of you; as long as I have any crown revenues, you shall be provided for; if you are in danger, I will secure you; if in want, I will supply you", would not that subject be content? Behold, God has here made a promise to the believer, and, as it were, entered into bond for his security; **"I will never leave thee"**; shall not this charm down the devil of discontent? **"Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive"** (Jer. 49:11). Methinks I see the godly man on his death-bed much discontented, and hear him complaining, "What will become of my wife and children when I am dead and gone? They may come to poverty." God says, "Trouble not thyself, be content; I will take care of thy children, and let thy widow trust in me." God has made a promise to us, that he will not leave us, and has entailed the promise upon our wives and children; and will not this satisfy? True faith will take God's single bond without calling for witnesses.

Be contented, by virtue of a decree. Whatever our condition be, God, the great umpire of the world, has from eternity decreed that condition for us, and by His providence ordered all appurtenances thereunto. Let a Christian often think with himself, "Who has placed me here, whether I am in a higher sphere, or in a lower?" Not chance or fortune, as the purblind heathens imagined: no, it is the wise God who has by His providence fixed me in this orb. We must act that scene which God will have us: say not, "Such a one has occasioned this to me; look not too much at the under wheel." We read in Ezekiel of a wheel within a wheel (see Ezek. 1:16). God's decree is the cause of the turning of the wheels, and His providence is the inner wheel that moves all the rest. God's providence is that helm, which turns about the whole ship of the universe. Say then, as holy David, **"I was dumb, because Thou, Lord, didst it"** (Ps. 39:9). God's providence, which is nothing else than the carrying on of His decree, should supersede and counterpoise; God has set us in our station, and He has done it in wisdom.

We fancy such a condition of life good for us, whereas if we were our own carvers, we should often cut the worst piece. Lot being put to his choice, chose Sodom (see Gen. 13:11), which soon after was burnt with fire. Rachel was very desirous of children, **"Give me children, or else I**



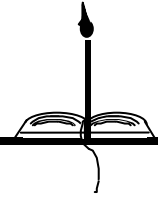
**die**" (Gen. 30:1); and it cost her her life in bringing forth a child. Abraham was earnest for Ishmael, "**O that Ishmael might live before thee!**" (Gen. 27:18), but he had little comfort either of him or his seed; he was born a son of strife; his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him. The disciples wept for Christ's leaving the world, they chose His bodily presence; whereas it was best for them that Christ should be gone, or else the Comforter would not come (see John 16:7). David chose the life of his child, he wept and fasted for it (see II Sam. 12:16); whereas if the child had lived, it would have been a perpetual monument of his shame. We stand often in our own light; if we should sort or parcel out our own comforts, we should hit upon the wrong. Is it not well for the child that the parent chooses for it? Were it left to itself, it would perhaps choose a knife to cut its own fingers. A man in a paroxysm calls for wine, which if he had, it were little better than poison: it is well for the patient, that he is at the physician's appointment.

The consideration of a decree determining, and a providence disposing all things that fall out, should work our hearts to holy contentment. The wise God has ordered our condition: if he sees it better for us to abound, we shall abound; if he sees it better for us to want, we shall want. Be content to be at God's disposal.

God sees in His infinite wisdom that the same condition is not convenient for all; that which is good for one, may be bad for another. One season of weather will not serve all men's occasions; one needs sunshine, another rain. One condition of life will not fit every man, any more than one suit of apparel will fit every body: prosperity is not fit for all, nor yet adversity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he has a greater stock of grace, more faith and patience; he can gather grapes of thorns, pick some comfort out of the cross: not every one can do this. Another man is seated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it: perhaps it is a place that requires more parts and judgment, which every one is not capable of; perhaps he can use his estate better; he has a public heart as well as a public place. The wise God sees that condition to be bad for one, which is good for another; hence it is He who places men in different spheres; some higher, some lower. One man desires health; God sees that sickness is better for him; God will work health out of sickness, by bringing the body of death into a consumption. Another man desires liberty; God sees restraint better for him: He will work his liberty by restraint; when his feet are bound, his heart shall be most enlarged. If we believed this, it would give check to the sinful disputes and cavils of our hearts. Shall I be discontented at that which is enacted by a decree, and ordered by a providence? Is this to be a child, or a rebel?

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## A Study in Wisdom: Job 1:5 (pt. 1)



*[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. 1) - Job Sanctifies His Children, by Joseph Caryl

**<sup>5</sup>And 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.**

This verse contains the holy practice of Job. You saw before that he had grace in his heart, now you may see grace in his life. Holy practice makes grace visible. There it lay in the habit, here it comes forth in the act. Concerning this holy practice of Job we may note these three things for the division of the verse.

1. The actions about which this holy care of Job was exercised: They are two. A. He sent and sanctified them. B. He offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all.

2. The ground of this holy practice of his, what moved Job after their feasting, thus to send and sanctified them. The ground was this, for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.

3. The constancy of Job in this his holy practice, he did not by fits, now and then, but this did Job continually.

**“And it was so, that when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them.”**

That is the first thing that we are to explain and open unto you, **“Job sent and sanctified them.”** How could Job sanctify his sons or his daughters? A parent indeed may provide notes for his children, but can he provide grace also? A parent may put money in their purses, but can he put holiness in their hearts too, such that it is said here, that **“Job sent and sanctified them”**? Is not sanctification the proper work of the Spirit of God? Does not the Holy Ghost alone sanctify?

For the clearing of this, whereas it is said that **“Job sent and sanctified them”**: First, some expound the meaning thus, that Job sent up prayers to God to sanctify them. And indeed prayer is a sanctifying ordinance. As prayer requires a holy heart, so prayer will make a holy heart; make the heart that prays holy, yea many times get holiness into another's

heart. Secondly, others say, he sent and sanctified them, that is, he sent them to the place that was appointed for sacrifice, they were to be sanctified: He sent and sanctified them, he sent them to the place where the sacrifice should be offered, that so they might be sanctified, that is, he sent a message to them, to command them to prepare and to fire themselves for the holy duty of offering the burnt offering or sacrificing. For, to sanctify, in Scripture, notes two things.

1. The infusion of a holy habit, the infusion of a new principle into the soul.

2. A preparation of the soul to holy duties.

Now when it is said that Job sent and sanctified them, it is not meant as if Job did infuse holy habits into his children, as if it were in his power to make them gracious. Indeed that is impossible, it is only the work of the Spirit of God. No man can come at the spirit of another but the Spirit of God. But this is it, he sent to them to prepare themselves, to advise and warn them to prepare themselves that they might be ready for that holy duty, for the duty of sacrificing. And this preparation to holy duties, is often called sanctifying, as Gen. 35. When Jacob was called to Bethel to offer sacrifice and to build an altar, he said to his household: **“Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean,”** (that is, sanctify you, or be you sanctified) **“and let us arise and give up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God”** (Gen. 35:2). The preparation to the sacrifice, was a cleansing or a sanctifying of them. So, when the people were to be prepared to receive the law, the Lord said unto Moses, **“Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow”** (Ex. 19:10), that is, prepare the people or warn the people that they prepare themselves for the receiving of the law. And likewise, in 1 Sam. 16:5, it is said that Samuel did that which the Lord spoke, and came to Bethlehem, and the elders of the town trembled at his coming and said, **“Come thou peaceably.”** And he said, **“Peaceably, I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord, sanctify yourselves and come with me to the Sacrifice”**, that is, prepare yourselves to come to the sacrifice. So, sanctification is preparation. The Jew’s Passover was nigh at hand, and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves, or to sanctify themselves, that they might be fit and ready for the sacrifice. So then this sanctifying of them, was a preparing of them for the sacrifice. There were solemn rules given afterward when the form of the church order and discipline was established by Moses; but even now before that, the Law and light of nature taught this, besides the teaching of God, that they must be sanctified before they came to sacrifice. Job sent and sanctified them, then they came to that holy service

This is the first act of Job. We may here observe, first, the time when Job sent to sanctify them: it was when the days of their feasting were gone about. Job did not take them off from their feasting, or deny them the liberty of their feasting; but when the days of their feasting were gone about, then he sent and sanctified them. The point we may note from hence is this.

*It does well become godly parents to give their children leave to take moderate refreshing and recreation one with another.*

Job did not severely and austere forbid them and say, “Why are you feasting and spending your time idly one with another?” Why do you

spend so many days in feasting? He never interrupted them until the days of their feasting were gone about. It becomes parents to loose the reins of government so far, as to give them leave for their refreshing, to let themselves out in honest ways of recreation by their mutual society. Job did not call them to this holy service from their feasting, but when the days of their feasting were gone about.

Secondly, Job sent to sanctify his children, though they were in their own houses, though they were at their own disposing, for it appears they had families and households of their own. Though they were men and women grown, yet Job sent to sanctify them. Observe hence:

*Parents must not cast off the care of their children, though they are grown up, though they are men and women.*

Some think, that if they look to their children at school, and breed them up a while, and have given them some instructions in their youth, they need not then trouble themselves any further. Whereas the care of parents ought to live as long as they and their children can live together. This care went after his children to their houses. He sent to them to bid them prepare themselves.

Thirdly, though these were (as we say) grown men and women, yet as soon as their Father sends the message to them, they all submit and obey. Observe:

*Children that are grown up, or have houses and families of their own, ought yet to yield all reverence and submission to the lawful commands, counsels, and directions of their parents.*

Do not think you have outgrown obedience and honor to parents, when you are grown in years. We see Job's children thought themselves under their father's command and counsel, there is not one of them replies, "What need my father trouble himself about us?" No, but all willingly prepared themselves and came, for he offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. Therefore certainly they came.

Fourthly, from the matter of this act, not what it was that Job did. The text says, "**He sent and sanctified them after their feasting**"; he did not send a messenger to them, to ask them how they were in health, whether they had not surfeited themselves, or had got any distemper; he did not send to know how the accounts went in their families, whether they had not spent too much; but the matter that he had his eye and his heart upon was, that they might be sanctified and fitted for holy duties. From hence observe:

*A parents main and special care should be for the souls of his children.*

The care of many parents is only to enrich their children, to make them great and honorable, to leave them full portions and estates, to provide matches for them, but for sanctifying their children, there is no thought of that. Nay many are afraid their children should be sanctified: some parents cannot abide their children, because they suspect them sanctified. Such parents are the Devil's children. Job's greatest care was that his children should be sanctified. And every parent ought to say of his natural children, as the apostle John does of his spiritual children, "**I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in the truth**" (Eph 3:4).



## A Meditation: The Spiritual Chemist

### **A Meditation Upon the Sight of a Lily and a Violet by William Spurstowe (ca. 1666)**

These two flowers brought to my mind a saying of Hierom to this effect, "That it is better and more honorable to be a lily than a violet", which, when stripped of its metaphorical clothing comes to this: that to be always pure is more commendable, than to bear the blush of a sin. Spotless innocency far exceeds the greatest penitency. A truth so questionless that it is beyond controversy, and in no way needs the aid of a school to determine: the innocent is more worthy than any penitent. Innocency being the only robe of glory with which man was covered when first created; and of which, had he not divested himself of it, he would have never experienced shame, or sorrow; they both being passions that had their entrance into the world with sin, and shall in the same moment with it die and expire. But yet next to this virgin purity from sin: The most desirable thing is true and unfeigned penitency for sin, which, though it cannot restore a man to his primitive state (time lost, and innocency being two irrecoverable things), yet it will (through God's ordination) abundantly capacitate him for mercy and pardon. When Ephraim smote upon the thigh, and was ashamed, because he bore the reproach

of his youth, how earnestly did God remember him: **“Is Ephraim my dear Son?”** When the prodigal returns a penitent, how affectionately did his father embrace him, and falling upon his neck kiss him? How did he cut off, and prevent a part of his confession, which he was purposed with himself to have made, by his speedy calling for the ring, the robe, the shoes, to adorn him, and the fatted calf to feast him? O blessed Lord! How willingly would I therefore (who have nothing of the unspotted purity of the lily) partake plentifully of the tincture of the violet? How fain would I, who have had a forehead to commit sin before Thee, have a face to blush for sin done against Thee? My sins are as the sand of the sea for number, O that my tears were as the water of the sea for abundance. But who, Lord, can make me of a proud and unhallowed sinner, a real and broken convert but Thyself? That grace, by which mine whole man must be molded to a penitential frame, is altogether Thine: heart, hand, eyes, tongue, cannot in the least move without Thee. They are lifeless members till Thou quicken them; yea rebellious till Thou subdue them: Therefore, Lord, by a powerful energy, fit every part for its proper duty; let my hand smite the breast, as the fountain and root from whence all mine iniquities do spring; let my tongue confess them, mine eye mourn for them, my face blush, and my heart bleed for them: then shall I unfeignedly say, and acknowledge, “My ruin is from myself, but in Thee is my help O Lord.”

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### God's Vast Load of Mercies

"Where shall we begin to survey God's vast load of mercies? Were it no more, but that He hath given us a world to live in, a life to enjoy, air to breathe in, earth to tread on, fire to warm us, water to cool and cleanse us, clothes to cover us, food to nourish us, sleep to refresh us, houses to shelter us, variety of creatures to serve and delight us; here were a just load. But now, if we yet add to these, civility of breeding, dearness of friends, competency of estate, degrees of honour, honesty or dignity of vocation, favour of princes, success in employments, domestic comforts, outward peace, good reputation, preservation from dangers rescue from evils; the load is well mended. If yet, ye shall come closer, and add due proportion of body, integrity of parts, perfection of senses, strength of nature, mediocrity of health, sufficiency of appetite vigour of digestion, wholesome temper of seasons, freedom from cares; this course must needs heighten it yet more. If still ye shall add to these, the order, and power, and exercise of our inward faculties, enriched with wisdom, art learning, experience, expressed by a handsome elocution, and shall now lay all these together that concern estate, body, mind; how can the axle tree of the soul but crack under the load of these favors? But, if from what God hath done for us as men, we look to what He hath done for us as Christians; that He enlivened us by His Spirit, fed us by His word and sacraments, clothed us with his merits, bought us with His blood, becoming vile to make us glorious, a curse, to invest us with blessedness; in a word, that He hath given Himself to us, His Son for us: Oh the height, and depth, and breadth of the rich mercies of our God!"

-- Joseph Hall (1574 - 1636)

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USA

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