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

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Old Testament Study: Exodus 14:1-12

Crossing the Red Sea, pt. 1

by Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

¹And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. ³For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, ‘They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.’ ⁴And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

⁵And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, “Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” ⁶And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: ⁷And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. ⁸And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. ⁹But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.

¹⁰And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. ¹¹And they said unto Moses, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? ¹²Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.”

In this lesson we are to have for our consideration one of the most remarkable miracles recorded in the O.T., certainly the most remarkable in connection with the history of Israel. From this point onwards, whenever the servants of God would remind the people of the Lord’s power and greatness, reference is almost always made to what He wrought for them at the Red Sea. Eight hundred years afterwards the Lord says through Isaiah,

"I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared; the Lord of hosts in His name" (Isaiah 51:15). Nahum announced, **"The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry"** (Nahum 1:3, 4). When the Lord renewed His promise to Israel, He takes them back to this time and says, **"According to the days of thy coming out of the Land of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things"** (Micah 7:15 and cf. Joshua 24:6, 7; Nehemiah 9:9; Psalm 106:7, 8; Jeremiah 31:35, etc.). It was *this* notable event which made such a great impression upon the enemies of the Lord: **"For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed, and as soon as we have heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath"** (Joshua 2:10, 11).

The miracle of the Red Sea occupies a similar place in the O.T. scriptures as the *resurrection* of the Lord Jesus does in the New; it is appealed to as a standard of measurement, as the supreme demonstration of God's power (cf. Ephesians 1:19, etc.). Little wonder, then, that each generation of infidels has directed special attacks against *this* miracle. But to the Christian, miracles occasion no difficulty. The great difference between faith and unbelief is that one brings in God, the other shuts Him out. With *God* all things are possible. Bring in God and supernatural displays of power are to be expected.

Before we consider the miracle of the parting of the Red Sea, we must first give a brief notice to what preceded it. Exodus 14 opens by telling us, **"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon; before it shall ye encamp by the sea'"** (vv. 1, 2). In this word God commanded Israel to turn off from the route they were following, and encamp before the Red Sea. Many attempts have been made to ascertain the precise location, but after such a lapse of time and the changes incident upon the passing of the centuries it seems a futile effort. The third verse tells us all that it is necessary for us to know, and the information it supplies is far more accurate and reliable than any human geographies Israel were **"shut in by the wilderness,"** and the Red Sea stretched before them. Thus Israel were so placed that there was no human way of escape. In the mountain fastnesses they might have had a chance; but surrounded by the wilderness, it was useless to flee before the cavalry and chariots of Egypt.

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon; before it shall ye encamp by the sea" (14:2). Here, as everywhere in Scripture, these names are full of meaning. They are in striking accord with what follows. **"Pi-hahiroth"** is rendered by Ritchie "Place of Liberty." Such indeed it proved to be, for it was here that Israel were finally delivered from those who had long held them in cruel bondage. **"Migdol"** signifies "a tower" or "fortress." Such did Jehovah demonstrate Himself to be unto His helpless and attacked people. Newberry gives "Lord of the North" as the meaning of **"Baal-zephon,"** and in scripture the "north" is frequently associated with *judgment* (cf. Joshua 8:11, 13; Isaiah 14:31; Jeremiah 1:14, 4:6; 6:1 Ezekiel 1:4, etc.). It was as the Lord of Judgment that Jehovah was here seen at the Red Sea.

“For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, ‘They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in’” (14:3). How this brings out the inveteracy of unbelief! How it demonstrates the folly of human reasoning! Granting that Israel *were* **“entangled in the land,”** that they *were* **“shut in”** by the wilderness, that they *were* trapped before the Red Sea, did Pharaoh suppose that they would fall easy victims before his onslaught? What of Israel’s God? Had He not already shown Himself strong on their behalf? Had He not already shown Egypt that those who persecuted His covenant people **“touched the apple of His eye”** (Zechariah 2:8)! What a fool man is? How he disregards every warning? How determined he is to destroy himself? So it was here with Pharaoh and his army. Notwithstanding the ten plagues which had swept his land, he now marches out against Jehovah’s redeemed to consume them in the wilderness.

“And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh, and upon all his hosts; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so” (14:4). Here was God’s reason for commanding Israel to **“encamp by the sea.”** “Terrible as Egypt’s chastisements had been, something more was still needed to humble her proud king and his arrogant subjects under the felt hand of God, and to remove from Israel all further fear of molestation. There was one part of Egypt’s strength, their chief glory, which had so far escaped. Their triumphant army had not been touched. Moses is told that, when Pharaoh’s spies carried the tidings to him that the Israelites had gone down by the Egyptian shore, it would seem to the king that his hour for vengeance had come. A force advancing rapidly upon the rear of the Israelites would block their only way of escape, and so the helpless multitude would be at his mercy” (Urquhart).

“And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled; and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and then said, ‘Why have we done this, that we have left Israel go from serving us?’ And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him; and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-Zephon” (vv. 5-9). All happened as God had foretold. Pharaoh and his courtiers became suddenly alive to their folly in having permitted Israel to go, and now a splendid opportunity seems to be afforded them to retrieve their error. The army is summoned in hot haste, Pharaoh and his nobles arm and mount their chariots. The famous cavalry of Egypt sally forth with all their glory. Not only the king, but his servants also, the very ones who had entreated him to let Israel go (10:7), are urgent that Israel should be pursued and captured. The judgments of God being no more upon their land, and recollecting the great service the Hebrews had rendered them, the advantages of having them for slaves, and the loss sustained by parting with them, they are now anxious to recover them as speedily as possible.

“And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes and behold the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid; and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord. And they said unto Moses, ‘Because there were no graves in Egypt

hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?" For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness" (vv. 10-12). This was a sore trial of faith, and sadly did Israel fail in the hour of testing. Alas! that this should so often be the case with us. After all God had done on their behalf in Egypt, they surely had good reason to trust in Him now. After such wondrous displays of Divine power, and after their own gracious deliverance from the Angel of Death, their present fear and despair were inexcusable. But how like ourselves! Our memories are so short. No matter how many times the Lord has delivered us in the past, no matter how signally His power has been exerted on our behalf, when some new trial comes upon us we forget God's previous interventions, and are swallowed up by the greatness of our present emergency.

"And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them" (v. 10). Their eyes were upon the Egyptians, and in consequence they were **"sore afraid."** It is always thus. The only cure for fear is for the eye to remain steadfastly fixed on the Lord. To be occupied with our circumstances and surroundings is fatal to our peace. It was so in the case of Peter as he started to walk on the waters to Christ. While he kept his gaze upon the Lord he was safe; but as soon as he became occupied with the winds and the waves, he began to sink.

"And they were sore afraid; and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord" (v. 10). Had they prayed unto God in this their distress for help and assistance, protection and preservation, with a holy yet humble confidence in Him, their crying had been right and laudable; but it is clear from the next two verses that theirs was the cry of complaint and despair, rather than of faith and hope. It closely resembles the attitude and action of the disciples in the storm-tossed ship as they awoke the Master and said, "Carest Thou not that we perish?" How solemn it is to see that such unbelief, such despair, such murmuring, can proceed from the people of God! How the realization that *we* have the same evil hearts within us should humble us before Him.

"And they said unto Moses, 'Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us to carry us out of Egypt?'" (v. 11). How absurd are the reasonings of unbelief! If death at the hands of the Egyptians was to be their lot, why had Jehovah delivered them from the land of bondage? The fact that He had led them out of Egypt was evidence enough that He was not going to allow them to fall before their enemies. Besides, the Lord had promised they should worship Him in Mount Horeb (3:12). How, then, could they now perish in the wilderness? But where faith is not in exercise, the promises of God bring no comfort and afford no stay to the heart.

Israel had been brought into their present predicament by God Himself. It was the Pillar of Cloud which had led them to where they were now encamped. Important truth for *us* to lay hold of. We must not expect the path of faith to be an easy and smooth one. Faith must be tested, tested severely. But, why? That we may learn the *sufficiency* of our God! That we may prove from experience that He *is* able to supply our every need (Philippians 4:19), make a way of escape from every temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13), and do for us exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.



A Classic Study: The Danger of Prosperity

A Classic Study by William Bates (1635–1699)

[Here we continue a study by the eminent English Puritan William Bates, concerning the danger of prosperity. Mr. Bates is setting forth reasons that prosperity is dangerous to the believer.]—*Ed.*

The Danger of Prosperity, pt. 7

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (Prov. 1:32, AV).

3. Prosperity renders men averse from suffering for the sake of Christ, when they are called to testimony to His truth, and support His cause. Self-denial, with respect to the present life, and all the ornaments, comforts, and endearments of it, is absolutely necessary by the law of Christianity, when the preserving of it is contrary to the glory of Christ. **“Then said Jesus to his disciples, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me’”** (Matt. 16:24). The cross implies all kinds and degrees of suffering, from the least afflicting evil, to death with ignominy and torment. And how just is it, if we expect to be glorified by His sufferings that we should willingly suffer for His Glory. At the first preaching of the gospel, many were **“offended at the cross of Christ”**: they esteemed it folly to expect eternal life from one that was put to death, and that He should bring them to the highest glory, who suffered in the lowest weakness. Our Savior was concealed from their carnal eyes by the overshadowing train of His afflictions. And the cross of Christ, which is to be voluntarily and obediently taken up by His disciples, is a greater *offence* to the World, than that to which He was nailed. It is a harder lesson that we must obtain glory by our own sufferings, that of ours: In the first, it only encounters with false prejudices, and vain shadows that darken that mighty mystery; but in the second, it must overcome the natural love of this life, and the pleasures of it, which is so predominant in men. The alliance to the body, and the allurements of the world, are the causes of forsaking religion, when the owning of it will cost us dear. And those who enjoy prosperity, are most easily terrified from their duty to Christ; the account of which is open to reason, both from some general considerations, and from special, that respect sufferings for religion. The general considerations are two:

a. The living in pleasures and soft delicacy, enervates the masculine vigor of the Spirit, and damps resolution, that it presently faints when assaulted with difficulties. The spirit of a man, encouraged by just and wise and generous reasons, will stand firmly under heavy troubles: But fear

breaks the native strength of mind, and like a sudden secret palsy, that slackens the nerves, and loosens the joints, causes a trembling and incapacity of bearing evils. The least glimpse of danger, makes the fearful retire: like some, who are apprehensive of the rising winds, will not venture any further in a boat than that one oar may be on the shore, while the other strikes in the water. The timorous, when afflictions attend the faithful profession of the gospel, usually are treacherous to God, to their souls, and to the truth. They are treacherous to God (whose servants they are by the dearest titles) by contradicting their duty, which is to suffer cheerfully for His Gospel and His glory when called forth. They are treacherous to their souls, by preferring the interest of the perishing flesh, before the happiness of the immortal part. They betray the truth, by exposing it to a suspicion of falsehood: for as the confirming religion by sufferings does most effectually recommend it to the belief and affections of others; so the denial of it, or the withdrawing our testimony in times of danger, will incline others to judge that it is not the truth, or at least of no great moment, since the professors of it do not think it worth their suffering. How many faint-hearted persons have thus betrayed the son of God again, and their consciences, and their religion? Their faith that sparkled in prosperous times, when troubles come is a quenched coal, raked up in the pale ashes of distrustful fears, without any divine light or heat.

b. Prosperity makes men unthoughtful and careless of evils that may happen. **“I said in my prosperity, ‘I shall never be moved’”** (Ps. 30:6). Carnal joy (the affliction of prosperity) and folly are nearly allied, and flatter men as if their ease and calm would never be disturbed: and by supine negligence, they are unprovided for the encountering with evils. According to our circumspection in prosperity, such is our courage in adversity; and by how much the less affliction is expected, so much the more are we perplexed when it seizes upon us. The last day that shall strangely surprise the world in its deep security, is compared to lightning for its suddenness and terror. Our Savior therefore plainly has foretold, that the cross is the appendix of the gospel, that it is the property of error to persecute, and the lot of truth to be persecuted: He counsels His disciples to imitate a wise builder, that computes the expense before he begins the fabric, lest having laid the foundation, and not being able to finish it, he be exposed to the just censure of folly. So Christians are to forecast the injuries and troubles they are likely to suffer for religion, lest when the tempest threatens, they shamefully desert it. And how heavy will their doom be? **“The fearful”,** that are not storm-proof and the liars, that openly renounce what they believe, and profess what they do not believe **“shall be with infidels, idolaters, and murderers, cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone”** (Rev. 21:8).

The special reasons why prosperity makes men so disposed to quit the truth in times of danger are because it weakens the principles from whence Christian magnanimity springs; and those are unfeigned faith and divine love. As in natural things, the formative virtue determines the matter to such a being and disposes to such operations in proportion to the principles from which it results: So in moral things, the soul is disposed and regulated in its actings correspondingly to its principles, and is either carnal or spiritual. The universal principle of carnal persons is to be

happy here: their eyes are ever engaged upon, and their desires ever thirsting after sensual satisfaction: **“Who will show us any good?”** (Ps. 4:6). And by consequence their main care is to obtain and secure temporal things, the materials of their happiness. The supernatural principle of a saint is to please God, and enjoy His favor. As men believe they love, and as they love they live.

Unfeigned faith of the rewards of the gospel, is necessary to keep a Christian steady in his course, through all the storms and tides of this mutable world. **“It is a faithful saying, ‘If we die with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him’”** (II Tim. 2:12). The apostle usually prefaces with that strong assurance, **“It is a faithful saying”**, when the truth is of eminent importance, and contrary to the sentiments of carnal nature, **“If we die with Him, we shall also live with Him”**. Our Savior dedicated martyrdom in His own person: His death was a ransom for us to God, and a sealing testimony of the gospel to men: **“He witnessed before Pontius Pilate a good confession”** (I Tim. 6:13). The terror of the Roman tribunal, nor the rage of the Jews, could not make Him retract the divine truth which He had so often declared, that He was the Son of God, come from heaven to save the world: and when the cross with its infamy and horror was in His view, He avowed His heavenly kingdom. And all those **“who suffer with Him”**, for His truth, and in conformity to His pattern, with His meekness and patience, His charity and constancy, shall reign with Him. And what is more powerful for the consolation and establishment of Christians, than that their sufferings for Christ shall end in glory. **“This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith”** (I John 5:4).

The heathens despised the hopes of Christians as wretched illusions, and with impious scorn upbraided them for their constancy under persecutions. Unbelief is blind and cannot see beyond this world to the eternal state. But faith is the blessed redeemer, opens a prospect into the world to come, so full of glory, that no person that has an understanding and will to discourse and choose, if he steadfastly believes it, but must despise all the evils that the wit and strength of persecutors can inflict in comparison of it. **“I reckon”**, says the Apostle, **“that the sufferings of the present life”**, in all their kinds and degrees, **“are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed”** (Rom. 8:18). Enlightened Christians esteemed their sufferings for the cause of God, not arguments of His weakness, but His wisdom, to exercise and try their loyalty and cordial obedience before He rewarded them; and had reason to admire His providence, not to suspect His power and love. They knew that the power of tyrants could only reach the body, the vile, frail, and mortal part of man; but the precious soul was entirely exempted from their rage; and faith assured them of a glorious resurrection after death. The body of a martyr shall be revived as a phoenix out of its ashes; when the body of a persecutor shall be quickened, as a serpent out of a dunghill, the one to be glorified, the other tormented forever. The belief of this made them extremely valiant in the face of all their threatening cruel enemies. But **“the evil heart of unbelief, causes a departure from the living God”** (Heb. 3:12). He that suspects God’s fidelity in His promises, will suspend his own: nature will shrink at the first sight of imminent dangers. An infidel, that lives as

if he were all body, and no immortal soul, judges the loss of the present life, and the comforts of it, as his utter undoing and total perishing. He has an appearance of reason to secure his present possessions, whatever becomes of religion; for he expects no future good that will infinitely more than countervail his present loss: and that prosperity inclines men to atheism and infidelity, has been proved before.

The love of God inspires believers with a heavenly fortitude, to endure the worse evils that may befall them for His sake. **“Perfect love casts out fear”** (I John 4:18), keeps its supremacy inviolate in the midst of the greatest dangers. Love is an active invincible affection, **“as strong as death”** (Song of Solomon 8:6), that none can vanquish. The love of God is a never-dying flame in the hearts of the saints, because it depends upon the unchangeable love of God to them. **“We love Him, because He first loved us”** (I John 4:19). Love esteems God as the greatest reward. A saint does not so much love God for heaven (though a place of inconceivable glory) as heaven for God, because He there reveals His perfections to His people. This holy love makes the Christians faithful and obsequious to Christ, and to prefer His honor incomparably before the present world. The martyrs of the divine courage were animated by this holy affection: they **“loved not their lives unto the death”** (Rev. 12:11), but cheerfully offered them as a sacrifice to His praise. Love kindled in them a sacred vehemence, in despising all the glittering temptations of the world. Love inspired them with a victorious patience, to blunt the edge of cruelty. They never repented the choice of His religion, but rejoiced when His glory was set forth by their ignominy, and when their love to Christ appeared in its radiancy and vigor through their sufferings. Live is the principle of constancy, by which religion reigns on earth, and is crowned in heaven.

On the contrary, when riches, honors, and pleasures, are the idols of men's heads and hearts, the chief objects of their esteem and affections, they will sacrifice their souls rather than lose the world, their dear felicity. Therefore, John earnestly dehorts Christians, **“Love not the World, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him”** (I John 2:15): they are utterly inconsistent; partly because the heart cannot be entirely set upon contrary objects, and partly because love to the one requires what is directly contrary to love to the other. From hence James vehemently upbraids carnal professors, **“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”** (James 4:4). The Lord is the powerful star, whose aspect he regards, and though with the dishonor and displeasure of God, he will by irreligious compliance secure his temporal interests. The pure refined truth of the Gospel that has passed the fiery trial, he will corrupt and debase by carnal temperaments. The precious truth so dearly bought by the blood of martyrs, he will vilely sell for the things of this world. He will by degrees turn persecutor of those who steadfastly own the truth. The love of the world so strangely enchants and infects the mind, that a false religion which a man did abhor from, yet when recommended by secular advantages, will appear tolerable, then eligible, then necessary; and consequently the divine truth must be

suppressed that contradicts it.

There are such frequent examples of this in every age, that to insist upon many particular instances, were to tell great numbers of the dead to prove that men are mortal. The young man that so earnestly addressed himself to Christ for his direction how to obtain eternal life, when commanded to **“give all his estate to the poor, and to follow Christ”** (see Matt. 19:21): He would not gain at so dear a rate celestial treasures, but went away sorrowful. Whereupon our Savior declared with solemnity to His disciples, **“Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven”** (see Matt. 19:23). We read of two tribes of the Israelites, that chose their inheritance of this side of Jordan, and would not have a share in the land of Canaan: thus the earthly-minded prefer the present world, the object of their choice and love, before the heavenly Canaan. The ecclesiastical historian relates, that in the time of persecution by Decius, the rich men among the Christians, were most easily and miserably soiled: the love of the world was a dangerous earnest in their hearts, of their revolting back to pagan idolatry, and the bondage of Satan. And in the time of the Aryan persecution, how many who by their titles of office were specially obliged to be *valiant for the truth and to contend earnestly for the faith*; yet did accommodate their profession to their aspiring ambition and greedy avarice? The standard of their religion was the pitch of the state: they had a political faith, and appeared either orthodox or Aryan, as the public favor shined upon truth or heresy. They robbed our Savior of the honor of His deity rather than part with their believed dignities and riches.

So powerful are worldly ties in those who mind earthly things. Great force is requisite to pluck up a tree that has its roots spread and deeply fastened in the earth; and it cannot be so entirely separated, but that part of the roots will be broken: thus when the affections are deeply set in the world, and by pleasures and riches fastened to it, how hardy is it rent from it! Every fiber of the heart is broken with sorrow, like Lot's wife, when by an angel forced out of Sodom, yet cast a lingering affectionate look after it, and was turned into a pillar of salt. The separation is as bitter as the possession is sweet: and none are more unwillingly divorced from the world than those who enjoy the confluence of earthly happiness. Not when secular interest outweighs duty, when apparent danger induces to deny the truth of Christ; how terrible and unavoidable will be the punishment of that disloyalty? Our Savior's threatening is universal: **“Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven”** (Matt. 10:33). A most righteous and dreadful retribution: they denied Him as their Lord, and He denies them as His servants. They usurped the title of Christians, the relation of His disciples, and in the last day He will publicly disown them. When that sad sentence shall come from their judge, *“Depart you cursed, I know you not,”* what confusion, what anguish will seize upon them! They shall be banished from His glorious kingdom, excommunicated from His blessed society, and tormented with the rebellious angels forever. It is true, this universal and peremptory threatening, must be understood with an exception of those who after their falling away are restored by repentance. Sometimes a Christian that has deliberately and entirely devoted himself to

Christ, that has sincerely resolved rather to part with his life, than that for which life is worth the enjoying; yet by strong temptations has been faint-hearted and denied the truth: Like one that disannuls in the height of a fever, the will be made in his composed mind: But afterwards such have resumed new courage, and have, by enduring the sharpest sufferings, confirmed the truth, and ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot.

Lastly, the prosperity of sinners is the great temptation to delay repentance till their state is desperate. Nothing fills hell with so many lost souls, as the putting off repentance till hereafter. How many diseases would be cured in time, if they threatened present death? But their malignity being of a slow operation, they are despised as not worth the trouble of a cure until they are desperate. It is in spiritual diseases, as it is in those of the body: For sin that is a sickness unto death, might be prevented by speedy repentance; but many, not apprehending present danger, neglect the present remedy until they are ruined. **“Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”** (Heb. 3:15). The command respects the season as well as the duty. As our obedience must be entire without reserve, so it must be present without delay, even in our early age, and continued in the whole tenor of our life. The worm of conscience sometimes nips security, and there is a strange union of contrarieties in the breast of a sinner, that makes him inexcusable and incurable. He complains of the bondage to his lusts, yet he takes pleasure of it; he is convinced it will be destructive, yet voluntarily continues in that sweet captivity. If conscience be troublesome, he pacifies it with an intention to reform hereafter, and thinks that a future repentance will be sufficient to prepare for a future judgment. And none are so easily and willingly deceived to their everlasting ruin by this pretense, as those who enjoy the present world. Prosperity makes them forgetful of the grave, and human vicissitudes, and hardens them in deep security. It was the divine prayer of Moses, **“So teach us to number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom”** (Ps. 90:12), implying that the great cause of men’s destructive folly, is from not reflecting upon the shortness and uncertainty of their time here. Death is certain to the old, and life uncertain to the young. There are many back doors to the grave, and men are led surprisingly thither. The time of their residence here is fixed by the divine determination, and concealed from their eyes. How many in their youth and prosperity have presumed upon a long life, yet unexpectedly have *returned to their Earth*; as a wall covered with ivy, that falls on a sudden with its green ornaments, by its weight and weakness. The hour of death, is the hour of men’s destiny forever. There is no space of repentance in the interval between death and judgment; but the soul immediately after its departure, receives a decisive irrevocable doom, that is in part executed, and shall be public and entirely executed at the last day. Yet men boldly venture to continue in their pleasant sins, upon the forlorn hope of a season to repent hereafter. Astonishing enormous folly! As if they were assured of time, and the divine grace. And thus it is full proved how fatal and destructive prosperity is to the wicked.



New Testament Study: Matthew 22:34-46

The Greatest Commandment

³⁴Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵One of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with this question: ³⁶“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

⁴¹While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴²“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

⁴³He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls Him ‘Lord’? For he says, ⁴⁴“The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet.” ⁴⁵If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can He be his son?” ⁴⁶No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Jesus has had a busy day, answering questions meant to trap Him. This continues: “Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with this question: ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’” This question, again, seems to have been one that the Pharisees disputed among each other. Undoubtedly, there were some who preferred one law, and others who preferred others. So again, the asker was certain that Jesus would offend someone with His answer. “The design was to try Him, or tempt Him; to try, not so much His knowledge as His judgment. It was a question disputed among the critics in the law. Some would have the law of circumcision to be the great commandment, others the law of the Sabbath, others the law of sacrifices, according as

they severally stood affected, and spent their zeal; now they would try what Christ said to this question, hoping to incense the people against Him" [Henry].

Now, the Pharisees were correct in one thing: there are greater and lesser commandments. However, their discernment as to which are which was faulty. In the next chapter of Matthew, Jesus chides them for this: **"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the *more important matters of the law*—justice, mercy and faithfulness"** (Matt. 23:23). It is good for us that they asked this question, no matter how wrong their motives, for now we have the answer. "It drew from our Lord an answer full of precious instruction. Thus we see how good may come out of evil" [Ryle, 292].

Jesus answers the question: **"Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments"** (vss. 37–40). What better answer could there be to this question? "Love is the grand secret of true obedience to God" [Ryle, 293]. Jesus not only answers the question, He gives us a guideline for interpreting the whole law: **"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."** Do you have a question about the law of God? Test it using these two commandments. They will point you toward the correct interpretation of the law. You can't go too far wrong when love for God and your neighbor guides your steps. "Anyone who loves God and people wholeheartedly is not going to come short in religious observances, nor in doing what is proper to other people. In short, when anyone loves in the way Jesus says, there is no need for a host of hair-splitting definitions of when an obligation has been discharged and when it has not" [Morris, 564].

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?'" (vs. 41–42). After fielding questions from His opposition, Jesus took His turn to ask questions. Jesus' purpose, though, in asking His questions was different than theirs. He had no desire to trick them, or humiliate them, or show them up. Rather, He asked in order to instruct. "His purpose is not to win a debate but to elicit from them what the Scriptures themselves teach about the Messiah, thus helping people to recognize who He really is" [Carson, 466].

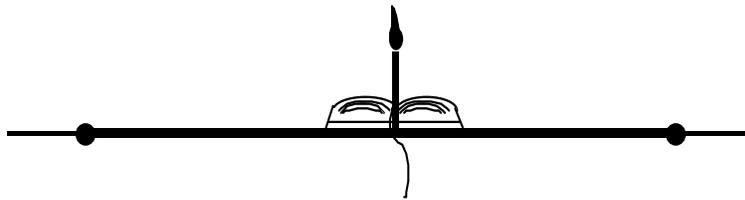
The questions Jesus asked are crucially important for all of us to ponder. The first question, **"What do you think about the Christ?"**, is so important, that the eternal destiny of each person on earth depends upon his answer to it. Do you consider Christ your Savior and Lord? If so, then you will dwell in heaven forever in the presence of the Lord of the

Universe. It is quite an important question, and one that we all must reflect on.

The second question, **“Whose son is He?”**, is intimately related to the first, and its full and correct answer will steer one to the correct answer to the first. The Pharisees give a partially correct answer: **“‘The son of David,’ they replied.”** To steer the Pharisees to a fully correct answer to this question, Jesus cites Psalm 110: **“He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls Him “Lord”? For he says, “The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet.’” If then David calls Him “Lord”, how can He be his son?’”** Jesus wanted to make clear to the Pharisees (and to us) that He is more than just the son of David. He is the son of God. If the Messiah was merely the son of David, David himself (especially in that culture) would not have called Him **“Lord”**. “It could only be explained by conceding the pre-existence and divinity of the Messiah” [Ryle, 295]. “Jesus’ question is not a denial of the Messiah’s Davidic sonship but a demand for recognizing how Scripture itself teaches that the Messiah is more than David’s son” [Carson, 468].

Notice also, that in the verse that Jesus cited, the exaltation of the Messiah is noted: **“The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I put Your enemies under Your feet.’”** The Pharisees were looking to have Jesus the Messiah arrested, and put to death. In the prophecy by David, God will exalt the Messiah to sit at His right hand and put **“His enemies under His feet.”** By citing this verse, Jesus, it seems, was warning the Pharisees against what they were about to do, letting them know that they, as His enemies, will be put **“under His feet.”**

Finally note, Jesus affirmed that David was **“speaking by the Spirit”**. The Bible is more than just human authors spouting opinions. The Bible writers **“spoke”** by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God directed the writings in the Bible. As Paul told us: **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”** (II Tim. 3:16, AV).



A Topical Study: On Prayer



[As we continue our series on prayer, here we begin a study in which Richard Baxter gives us general directions concerning prayer.]

Directions for Prayer in General, pt. 1 **by Richard Baxter (1615-1691)**

He that handleth this duty of prayer as it deserves, must make it the second part in the body of divinity, and allow it a larger and exacter tractate than I here intend: for we have three natural faculties, an understanding, will, and executive power, so these are qualified in the godly, with faith, love, and obedience; and have three particular rules: the creed, to show us what we must believe, and in what order; the Lord's prayer, to show us what, and in what order, we must desire and love; and the decalogue, to tell us what, and in what order, we must do (though yet these are so near kin to one another, that the same actions in several respects belong to each of the rules). As the commandments must be believed and loved, as well as obeyed; and the matter of the Lord's prayer must be believed to be good and necessary, as well as loved and desired; and belief, and love, and desire, are commanded, and are part of our obedience; yet for all this, they are not formally the same, but divers. And as we say, that the heart or will is the man, as being the commanding faculty; so morally the will, the love or desire, is the Christian; and therefore the rule of desire or prayer, is a principal part of true religion.

Direction 1. See that you understand what prayer is. True Christian prayer is, the believing and serious expressing or acting of our lawful desires before God, through Jesus our mediator, by the help of the Holy Spirit, as a means to procure of Him the grant of these desires. Here note, 1. That inward desire is the soul of prayer; 2. The expressions or inward actings of them, is as the body of prayer; 3. To men it must be desire so expressed, as they may understand it; but to God the inward acting of desires is a prayer, because He understands it; 4. But it is not the acting of desire, simply in itself, that is prayer; for he may have desires, that are not offered up to God with heart or voice; but it is desires, as some way offered

up to God, or represented, or acted towards Him, as a means to procure His blessing, that is prayer indeed.

Direction 2. See that you understand the ends and use of prayer. Some think that it is of no use, but only to move God to be willing of that which He was before unwilling of; and therefore because God is immutable, they think that prayer is a useless thing. But prayer is useful, 1. As an act of obedience to God's command; 2. As the performance of a condition, without which He hath not promised us His mercy, and to which He hath promised it; 3. As a means to actuate, and express, and increase our own humility, dependence, desire, trust, and hope in God, and so to make us capable and fit for mercy, who otherwise should be incapable and unfit; 4. And so, though God be not changed by it in Himself, yet the real change that is made by it on ourselves, doth infer a change in God by mere relation or extrinsical denomination; He being one that is, according to the tenor of His own established law and covenant, engaged to disown or punish the unbelieving, prayerless, and disobedient, and after engaged to own or pardon them that are faithfully desirous and obedient. So that in prayer, faith and fervency are so far from being useless, that they as much prevail for the thing desired by qualifying ourselves for it, as if indeed they moved the mind of God to a real change: even as he that is in a boat, and by his hook lays hold of the bank, doth as truly by his labor get nearer the bank, as if he drew the bank to him.

Direction 3. Labor above all to know that God to whom you pray: To know Him as your maker, your redeemer, and your regenerator; as your owner, your ruler, and your Father, felicity and end; as all-sufficient for your relief, in the infiniteness of His power, His wisdom, and His goodness; and to know your own dependence on Him; and to understand His covenant or promises, upon what terms He is engaged and resolved either to give His mercies, or to deny them. **“He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”** (Heb. 11:6). **“He that calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved: but how shall they call on Him, on whom they have not believed”** (Rom. 10:13-14).

Direction 4. Labor when you are about to pray, to stir up in your souls the most lively and serious belief of those unseen things that our prayers have respect to; and to pray as if you saw them all the while, even as if you saw God in His glory, and saw heaven and hell, the glorified and the damned, and Jesus Christ your Mediator interceding for you in the heavens. As you would pray if your eyes beheld all these, so strive to pray while you believe them: and say to yourselves, “Are they not as sure as if I saw them? Are they not made known by the Son and Spirit of God?”

Direction 5. Labor for a constant acquaintance with yourselves, your

sins and manifold wants and necessities; and also to take an actual, special notice of your case, when you go to prayer. If you get not a former constant acquaintance with your own case, you cannot expect to know it aright upon a sudden as you go to pray: and yet if you do not actually survey your hearts and lives when you go to prayer, your souls will be unhumbled, and want that lively sense of your necessities, which must put life into your prayers. Know well what sin is, and what God's wrath, and hell, and judgment are, and what sin you have committed, and what duty you have omitted, and failed in, and what wants and corruptions are yet within you, and what mercy and grace you stand in need of, and then all this will make you pray, and pray to purpose with all your hearts. But when men are willful strangers to themselves, and never seriously look backwards or inwards, to see what is amiss and wanting, nor look forwards, to see the danger that is before them, no wonder if their hearts be dead and dull, and if they are as unfit to pray, as a sleeping man to work.

Direction 6. See that you hate hypocrisy, and let not your lips go against or without your hearts; but that your hearts be the spring of all your words: that you love not sin, and be not loathe to leave it, when you seem to pray against it; and that you truly desire the grace which you ask, and ask not for that which you would not have: and that you be ready to use the lawful means to get the mercies which you ask; and be not like those lazy wishers, that will pray God to give them increase at harvest, when they lie in bed, and will neither plough or sow; or that pray Him to save them from fire, or water, or danger, while they run into it, or will not be at the pains to go out of the way. Oh what abundance of wretches do offer up hypocritical, mock prayers to God! Blaspheming Him thereby, as if He were an idol, and knew not their hypocrisy, and searched not the hearts! Alas, how commonly do men pray in public, "that the rest of their lives hereafter may be pure and holy," that hate purity and holiness at the heart, and deride and oppose that which they seem to pray for! As Augustine confessed of himself before he was converted, that he prayed against his filthy sin, and yet was afraid lest God should grant his prayers. So, many pray against the sins which they would not be delivered from, or would not use the means that is necessary to their conquest and deliverance. **"Let him that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity"** (II Tim. 2:19). **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"** (Ps. 66:18; see Ezek. 14:3,4,14). Alas, how easy is it for an ungodly person to learn to say a few words by rote, and to run them over, without any sense of what he speaks, while the tongue is a stranger to the heart, and speaks not according to its desires!



A Study in Wisdom: Job 1:1 (pt. 3)

[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 1:1 - A Perfect and Upright Man, by Joseph Caryl

¹...and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.

Perfect. Not that he had a legal perfection: “**For what is a man that he should be clean?**” (Job 15:14). And Job himself professed, “**If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse**” (Job 9:20); he acknowledges, “**I have sinned**” (Job 7:20). The perfect therefore here spoken of is not an absolute, legal perfection.

For the clearing of the word, we may consider there is a twofold perfection ascribed to the saints in this life. A perfection of justification, a perfection of sanctification.

The first of these, in a strict sense, is a complete perfection: The saints are complete in Christ, they are perfectly justified, there is not any sin left uncovered, not any guilt left unwashed in the blood of Christ, not the least spot but is taken away; His garment is large enough to cover all our nakedness, and deformities. In this respect they may be called perfect, they are perfectly justified, “**By one offering Christ has perfected for ever them that are sanctified**” (Hebrews 10:14).

Then there is a perfection of holiness or of sanctification; and that is called so, either in regard of the beginnings of, or in regard of desires after and aims at perfection. The saints even in this life have a perfect beginning of holiness, because they are begun to be sanctified in every part; they are sanctified “**throughout, in soul and body and spirit**”, as the apostle distinguishes (1 Thess. 5:23), though every part be not throughout; and this is a perfection. When the work of sanctification is begun in all parts, it is a perfect work beginning.

They are likewise perfect in regard of their desires and intendments. Perfect holiness is the aim of the saints on earth, it is the reward of saints in heaven. The thing which they drive at here is perfection, therefore they themselves are called perfect; as God accepts of the will for the deed, so He expresses the deed by the will; He interprets him to be a perfect man

who would be perfect, and calls that person perfect, who desires to have all his imperfections cured. That is a second understanding how Job was perfect.

A third way is this: he was perfect comparatively, comparing him with those who were either openly wicked, or but openly holy, he was a perfect man; he was a man without spot, compared with those that were either all over spotted with filthiness, or only painted with godliness.

Or thus, we may say the perfect here spoken of, is the perfection of sincerity. Job was sincere, he was sound at the heart. He did not act a part or personate religion, but was a religious person. *He was not gilded, but gold.* So the word is interpreted. Some render it, *Job was a simple man*, not as simple is put for weak and foolish, but as simple is put for *plain-hearted*; one that is not (as the apostle James phrased it) *a double-minded man*. Job was a *simple minded man*, or a *single minded man*, one that had not a heart and a heart, he was not a compound; speaking one thing and meaning another, he meant what he said, and he would speak his mind. It is the same word that is used of Jacob's character (see Gen. 25:27), Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field, and Jacob was a plain man. So that to be a perfect man, is to be a plain man, one whose heart you may know by his tongue, and read the man's spirit in his actions. Some are such *jugglers*, that you can see little of their spirits in their lives, you can learn but little of their minds by their words; Jason was a plain man, and so was Job; some translate it a sound man. It is the same expression that is given of Noah: He was in his generation, or he was sound, upright hearted or perfect with God (see Gen. 6:9). And it is that which God speaks to Abraham (Gen. 17:1): "**Walk before me and be thou perfect,**" or sound, or upright or plain in thy walking before me.

Upright. The former word which was translated perfect, in other texts is rendered upright; but when we have both the expressions together as here, we must distinguish the sense. It is not a tautology. Then the former being taken for inward soundness, plainness and sincerity. This latter (to be upright) may be taken for outward justice, righteousness and equity, respecting all his dealings in the world. He was a perfect man, that is he was plain hearted, and he was plain dealing too, which is the meaning of, "**He was upright.**" So the one refers to the integrity of his spirit, the other to the honesty of his ways, "**His heart was plain, and his dealings were square.**" This he expressed fully in the 29th and 31st chapters of this book, which are as it were a comment upon this upright man. There you may read what is meant by uprightness: his fairness in all parts, both of commutative and distributive justice. In those things that concerned commutative justice, when Job bought or sold, traded or bargained, promised or covenanted, he stood to all uprightly. Take him as he was magistrate, when Job sat in judgment and had business brought before him. He gave every one his due; he did not spare or smite upon ends; he did neither at any time justify the wicked or condemn the godly, but was upright in judgment. He was not biased by affection or interests, he was not carried away by hopes or fears, but kept the path of justice in all his dispensations towards that people among whom he lived. This is to be an upright

man, and so the prophet tells us, "**The way of the just is uprightness**" (Isa. 26:7), that is, they are upright in their ways, and more, uprightness in the abstract. We have a like expression, "**Those that are upright in the way are an abomination to the wicked**" (Proverbs 29:27). Uprightness does refer to the way wherein a man goes in his outward dealings and dispensations towards men. There is a two-fold uprightness of our ways. 1. Uprightness of words. 2. Uprightness of works; so upright walking is expounded and branched forth "**He that walks uprightly and works righteousness and speaks the truth in his hear. He that backbiters not with his tongue**" (Psalms 15:2-3). This is the second part of Job's description: *He was perfect and upright.*

Thirdly, *He was one that feared God.*

Fearing God. The fear of God is taken two ways. Either for that natural and inward worship of God: and so the fear of God is a holy filial affection, awing the whole man to *obey the whole will of God*: That is fear as it is an affection. Or the fear of God is put for the external or instituted worship of God. So that a man fearing God is as much as this: A man worshipping God according to his own will, or according to his mind and direction. Now when as Job is said to be a man fearing God, you must take it both these ways: He had that holy affection of fear with which we must worship God, as we are taught "**Let us have grace whereby we may serve God with reverence and godly fear**" (Hebrews 12:28); "**And serve the Lord with fear and rejoiced before Him with trembling**" (Psalms 2). Fear is that affection with which we must worship and serve God. And Job likewise did perform that worship to God which He required, this is called fear, and the exercise of it fearing God. Fearing God is worshipping God, as you may see clearly by two texts of Scripture compared together. In Matthew 4:10, Christ said to the devil, "**It is written you shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.**" Compare this with Deut. 6:13, and there you shall have it thus expressed, "**Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God.**" That which in the one place is worship, in the other is fear. Again, Matthew 15:9, "**In vain**" (says Christ) "**do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.**" Now the Prophet Isaiah expresses it thus. "**For as much as their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men**" (Isa. 29:14). They worship me according to the precepts of men, says Christ. "**Their fear is taught by the precepts of men**" says the prophets: So that fear and worship are the same: Fearing God does include both the affection of a worshipper and the duty or act of worshipping.

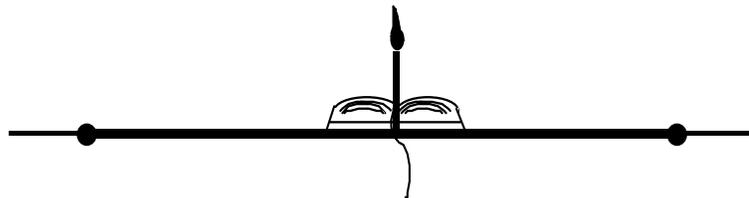
The fourth part or line of Job's character is his *eschewing evil.*

Evil is here taken for the evil of sin, before sin came into the world there was no evil in the world, "**God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good**" (Gen. 1:31). But when sin came which was the first and is the chiefest evil, it brought in with it all other evils: sin has in it the whole nature of evil, and all the degrees of evil, and from it proceed all evil effects. Hence sin is eminently called evil. Sickness, and death, and hell are called evil; how much rather that, but for which these evils had never been? How much rather that with which these compared may be called good? Further, the word "evil" is put here indefi-

nately: he was one that eschewed evil, not this or that evil, but evil, that is all evil, this indefinite is universal. And then further we are to take evil here, as Job himself afterward expounds it in his practice, not only for the acts of evil, but all the occasions, the appearances, the provocations and incentives or unto evil, for whatsoever might lead him into evil; for thus he instanced in one particular, **“I made a covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a maid?”** (Job 31:1).

Eschewed. In this word, the prudence of Job shines as bright as his holiness, who having received a great stock, and *treasure of grace*, now watches to preserve it, and opposes whatsoever was destructive to the life or growth of the inner man. That man shows he has both money and his wits about him, who suspects and provides against thieves.

Job eschewed evil. There is much in that expression. It is more to say a man does *eschew evil*, than to say a man does *not* commit evil. It had been too bare an expression to say, Job did not commit evil, but when it is said Job *eschewed evil*, this shows that not only the hand and tongue of Job did not meddle with evil, but that his heart was turned from evil. For eschewing is a turning aside with reluctancy and abhorrency, so the Hebrew imports; Job did abhor evil as well as not commit evil. There is a great deal of difference between these two, the doing of good, and a delight in doing good, between being at peace and following of peace. A man may do good and not be a lover of good, a lover of the commandments of God, a delight in them: he may be at peace and not be a lover and follower of peace. So a man may be one that commits not such and such sins, he may not hurt, and yet in the meantime he may be one that loves those sins he commits not. Such an one is not presently a man that eschews those sins, for to eschew evil notes the activity of the spirit against those evils. That is the spiritualness and strength of holiness. Job's heart did, (as it were) rise against evil. Some expound it by war, as if under this expression were meant the enmity that Job bare against evil, that it was such an eschewing, as when a man hates his enemy and makes war against him, and does by all means oppose him; so there was as it were a deadly feud, an irreconcilable enmity between Job and evil. He *was a man that feared God and eschewed evil*. So much for the opening of that first verse: wherein you have the first part of the description of Job's prosperous estate, and that is what he was in his person.



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**Unexpected Answers to
Prayer**

“God’s memorial is that He hears prayer, and His glory is that He answers it in a manner fitted to inspire awe in the hearts of His people... We do not always know what we are asking for when we pray; when the answer comes, the veritable answer, it is possible that we may be terrified by it. We seek sanctification, and trial will be the reply; we ask for more faith, and more affliction is the result; we pray for the spread of the gospel, and persecution scatters us. Nevertheless, it is good to ask on, for nothing which the Lord grants in His love can do us any harm. Terrible things will turn out to be blessed things after all, where they come in answer to prayer.”

-- C. H. Spurgeon (1854 - 1892)

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