

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

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Old Testament Study: Exodus 17:8-16

Amalek, pt. 1,
by Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

⁸Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. ⁹And Moses said unto Joshua, "Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand." ¹⁰So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹²But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴And the LORD said unto Moses, "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." ¹⁵And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: ¹⁶For he said, "Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (Ex 17:8-16 AV)

One thing that impresses the writer more and more in his studies in and meditations upon the contents of this book of Exodus is the wonderful variety and the comprehensive range of truth covered by its typical teachings. Not only do its leading events and prominent characters foreshadow that which is spiritual and Divine, but even the smallest details have a profound significance. Moses is a type of Christ, Pharaoh of Satan, Egypt of the world. Israel groaning in bondage pictures the sinner in his native misery. Israel delivered from their cruel task-masters speaks of our redemption. Their journey across the wilderness points to the path of faith and trial which we are called on to walk. And now we are to see that the history of Israel also adumbrated the conflict between the two natures in the believer.

Our previous studies have already shown us that the experiences of Israel in the wilderness were a series of trials, real testings of faith. Now we are to see another aspect of the Christian's life strikingly set forth: the Israelites were called upon to do some fighting. It is very striking indeed to

note the occasion of this, the stage at which it occurred in Israel's history. Not only is there a wondrous variety and comprehensiveness about the typical teachings of this second book of scripture, but the order in which they are given equally displays the Divine hand of their Author. God is the God of order; Satan of confusion. The thoughtless reader of the Scriptures loses much by failing to observe the perfect arrangement of everything in them.

In our last article we contemplated the smiting of the rock, from which flowed the stream of water and of which all the people drank. This, as we saw, typified the smiting of our blessed Savior by the hand of Divine justice, and the consequent gift of the Holy Spirit to those who are His. But after the Holy Spirit comes to take up His abode within the believer, after a new and holy nature of His creating has been implanted, a strange conflict is experienced, something hitherto unknown. As we read in Galatians 5:17, **"The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other."** It is this which the scripture to be before us so accurately depicts.

The typical scene which we are about to study is of great practical importance. Ignorance of what it sets forth, the truth which it illustrates, has resulted in great loss and has been responsible for untold distress in many souls, How many a one has thought, and how many have been taught, that when a sinner really receives Christ as his Savior, that God will change his heart, and that henceforth he will be complete victor over sin. But "a change of heart" is nowhere spoken of in Scripture. God never changes anything. The old is set aside or destroyed, and something altogether new is created or introduced by Him. It is thus with the Christian. The Christian is one who has been "born again," and the new birth is neither the removal of anything from a man, nor the changing of anything within; but the impartation of something new to him. The new birth is the reception of a new nature: **"that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit"** (John 3:6).

At the new birth a spiritual, Divine nature is communicated to us, This new nature is created by the Holy Spirit; the **"seed"** (1 John 3:9) used is the Word of God (see 1 Peter 1:23). This explains John 3:5: **"Born of water and of the Spirit."** The **"water"** is the emblem of the pure and refreshing Word of God (cf. Ephesians 5:26). This is what is in view, typically, in the first half of Exodus 17. But when the new nature is communicated by God to the one born again, the old sinful nature remains, and remains unchanged till death or the coming of Christ, when it will be destroyed, for then **"this corruptible shall put on incorruption"** (1 Corinthians 15:53). In the Christian, then, in every Christian, there are two natures: one sinful, the other sinless; one born of the flesh, the other born of God. These two natures differ from each other in origin, in character, in disposition and in the activities, they produce. They have nothing in common. They are opposed to each other. This is what is in view, typically in the second half of Exodus 17. The two natures in the Christian are illustrated in the life of Abraham. He had two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. The former represents that which is

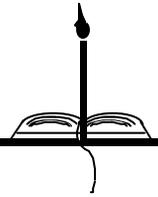
"born of the flesh;" the latter, that which is **"born of the Spirit."** Ishmael was born according to the common order of nature. Isaac was not. Isaac was born as the result of a miracle. God supernaturally quickened both Abraham and Sarah, when the one had passed the age of begetting and the other was too old to bear children. Ishmael, born first, was of **"the bondwoman"**; Isaac of the **"free-woman"** (Galatians 4:22). But after Isaac entered the household of Abraham, there was a conflict: **"And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian which she had born unto Abraham, mocking"** (Genesis 21:9). That what we have just heard said about the two sons of Abraham is no fanciful or strained interpretation of ours, will be seen by a reference to Galatians 4:29, where the Spirit of God has told us, **"But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit even so it is now."**

The two natures in the Christian are also illustrated in the life of Isaac's son, Jacob. Jacob had two names: one which he received from his earthly parents, and one which he received from God. The Lord called him **"Israel"** (Genesis 32:28). From that point onwards the history of Jacob-Israel presents a series of strange paradoxes. His life exhibited a dual personality. At one moment we see him trusting God with implicit confidence, at another we behold him giving way to an evil heart of unbelief. If the student will read carefully through chapters 33 to 49 of Genesis, he will notice how that sometimes the Holy Spirit refers to the patriarch as **"Jacob,"** at other times as **"Israel."** When **"Jacob"** is referred to it is the activities of the old nature which are in view; when **"Israel"** is mentioned it is the fruits of the new nature which are evidenced. For example; when Joseph's brethren returned to their father from Egypt and told him that his favorite son was yet alive and was now governor over all the land of Egypt, we are told, **"And Jacob's heart fainted for he believed them not"** (45:26). But, **"They told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them; and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: And Israel said, 'It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive'"** (45:48).

It is blessed to note the closing words concerning him: **"When Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the spirit... and the physicians embalmed Israel"** (49:33; 50:2). **"Jacob"** died; **"Israel"** was embalmed. At death only the new nature will be preserved! But that which we particularly emphasize here is that, during the Christian's life on earth, there is a conflict between the two natures. Just as Ishmael **"persecuted"** Isaac, and just as the Jacob-nature frequently set aside the Isaac-nature, so it is in the Christian: **"the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would"** (Galatians 5:17).

What, then, is the remedy? Is there no way by which the flesh may be subdued? Has God made no provision for the believer to walk in the spirit so that he may not fulfill the lusts of the flesh? Certainly He has; and absence of victory is due entirely to our failure to use the means of grace which God has put in our hands. What these are, and how the victory should be gained are clearly set forth in our type.

A Classic Study: Providence



A Treatise on Providence, pt 3, by William Plumer (1802–1880)

Providence Vast

“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said to this day, ‘In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen’” (Genesis 22:14, AV)

God’s providence is over all creatures; over fixed and planetary stars; over angels and devils; over saints and sinners; over beasts, and birds, and fishes; over globes and atoms; over heat and cold; over war, famine and pestilence; over heaven, earth, and hell. Having enumerated the living creatures that God has made, the prophet says, **“These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather; Thou open Thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust”** (Ps. 104:27-29). **“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights”** (James 1:17). What hast thou that thou hast not received? (see I Cor. 4:7). It is because of this universal providence of God that His people cry, **“Be not Thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste Thee to help me”** (Ps. 22:19). And every pious man cries, **“My cup runneth over”** (Ps. 23:5), and **“He loadeth me daily with benefits”** (Ps. 68:19). Where is the man that can number up either his sins, or what are still more numerous, God’s mercies to him? (see Dan 4:35).

God’s providence is also over all the actions of all creatures. If anyone could act independently, he would be a God. If Jehovah governs not a man for a day, that day he is a God. Independence is one of the essential attributes of Jehovah. Whoever has it is God. To put a single act of any creature beyond divine control would be an admission that besides the Most High there is some other God. Satan could do nothing against the holy man of Uz until the Almighty granted him permission (see Job 1:12).

The Bible adopts two methods of teaching the universality of God’s providence. In one it asserts it as a great truth. **“He is a great King over all the earth”** (Ps. 47:2). **“His kingdom ruleth over all”** (Ps. 103:19). **“By Him all things consist”** (Col. 1:17). **“He upholdeth all**

things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3). **“He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords”** (Rev. 19:16). To Him death and hell have no covering (see Job 26:6).

Again the Scripture descends to particulars, and declares that over each being and event God exercises sovereign control. **“He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not He correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not He know?”** (Ps. 94:9-10). He never slumbers, nor sleeps, nor goes on a journey. He is ever awake. His ear is ever open to the cry of His people. He is never sick, never weary. He fainteth not. His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. He numbers the very hairs of our heads. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice. He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weighs the waters by measure. He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder (see Job 28:24-27). He directs journeys and makes them prosperous (I Thess. 3:11; Rom. 1:10). He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man (Ps. 104:14). He suffers not cattle to decrease (see Ps. 107:38). He gives to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry (Ps. 147:9).

He calls the stars by their names. He marshalls all the host of heaven. He spreads the clouds in the heaven. He is the father of the rain. He clothes the grass. He gives snow like wool. He scatters the hoarfrost like ashes. Who can stand before His cold? He hunts the prey for the lion. He sends out the wild ass free. He gives the goodly feathers to the peacock and plumes every fowl of heaven. He gives the horse his strength, and clothes his neck with thunder. He shuts up the sea with doors that it breaks not forth. He enters into the springs of the sea. He knows the place and the bounds of light and of darkness. Angels, men, sun, moon, stars, fiery meteors, the heavens, the waters beneath us, dragons, trees, beasts, cattle, creeping things, flying fowl, kings, counselors, senators, all people, young men and maidens, old men and children, lightning and earthquakes, all, all obey His voice and do His will. Nothing ever goes beyond His grasp. Under His control the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the prudent, nor favor to men of skill. Promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is judge of all. Whom He will, He exalts; whom He will, He abases; whom He will, He kills; whom He will, He makes alive. As a partridge sits upon eggs and hatches them not, so is man in all His cares and toils without God’s blessing. Under His government a horse is a vain thing for safety, nor shall He deliver any by His great strength. He delights not in the legs of a man. Without Him nothing is holy, without Him nothing is wise, without Him nothing is strong. He is a rock.

To us many things happen by chance. We neither foresee nor design them. We neither expect nor desire them. To us much is accident; the Scriptures so admit (see Deut. 22:6; I Sam. 6:9; II Sam. 1:6; Luke

10:31). Indeed, the Bible says in so many words that time and chance happens to all (see Eccl. 9:11). But to God, everything is part of a universal plan. **“The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord”** (Prov. 16:33). When the cup of Ahab’s iniquity was full, and God determined to call him to judgment, a man **“drew a bow at a venture, and smote him between the joints of the harness”** (I Kings 22:34), and he died. God can kill without instruments, or with instruments which seem to us despicable. So also He can save by many, by few, or by none. Under the shadow of His wings the darkest conspiracies can do us no harm. The belief of this made David say: **“The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise up against me, in this will I be confident”** (Ps. 27:1-3). And when he was old he said: **“Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle”** (Ps. 140:7). **“By Thee have I run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall”** (II Sam. 22:30). David always ascribed his victory over the bear and the lion to the wonderful providence of God; and well he might, for he was but a lad when he slew them.

Man is immortal till his work is done.

Cyrus was king of Persia and captor of Babylon. He and his countrymen held to two principles having the power of two gods, one the author of good, the other of evil. Yet two centuries before his birth God thus spoke to him: **“I am Jehovah, there is no God beside me: I girded thee though thou hast not known me. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I Jehovah, do all these things”** (Isa. 45:5-7). Again, God says by Amos: **“Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?”** (Amos 3:6). Death is His servant. The pestilence is His rod. The wicked are His sword. Famine is His scourge. If the earth becomes iron and the heavens brass, and glow like a furnace, it is at the bidding of God. If blasting and mildew, the caterpillar and the palmer-worm cut off the hope of the husbandman, they are the messengers of the Lord of hosts. Death and hell have no power but from Him. He carries the keys of them both. He opens and none can shut. He shuts and none can open. His wisdom is unsearchable. There is none like Him. His providence is felt everywhere. He rules all men good and bad, great and small. **“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will”** (Prov. 21:1). The reference in this text is to the custom of irrigating gardens by conducting the water in little canals, which can easily be closed, so that the gardener makes the water run in any direction He pleases. In like manner God controls the heart of the king and of every man, as the gardener checks and controls these little rivers of water (see Phil. 2:13).



New Testament Study: Matthew 26:14-25

Preparation for Jesus’ Death, Pt 2, by Scott Sperling

¹⁴Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. ¹⁶From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand Him over.

¹⁷On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

¹⁸He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” ¹⁹So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

²⁰When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹And while they were eating, He said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.”

²²They were very sad and began to say to Him one after the other, “Surely not I, Lord?”

²³Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.” ²⁵Then Judas, the one who would betray Him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?”

Jesus answered, “Yes, it is you.” (Mt 26:14-25 NIV)

Matthew here documents Judas’s treachery: **“Then one of the Twelve – the one called Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests and asked, ‘What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?’ So they counted out for him thirty silver coins. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand Him over”** (vss. 14-16). This passage begins **“Then...”**, which implies a connection to the previous episode. Recall that in the previous episode, the disciples, led by Judas (see John 12:4), chastised Mary for anointing Jesus with perfume, on the grounds that it was a waste of money. The chastising of Mary was driven by Judas’s greed (see John 12:6), as is Judas’s betrayal of

Jesus. Judas makes clear his motive in betraying Jesus, because right off, he asks the chief priests: **“What are you willing to give me if I hand Him over to you?”** (vs. 15). “There is no disguise in this vile question. Judas unblushingly reveals his base motive in offering such a bargain” (Pulpit Commentary). “No small part of the sins of the world can be traced to avarice, and many, and many a time since the days of Judas, has the Lord Jesus been betrayed among His professed friends by the same base propensity” (Barnes).

The price that the chief priests were **“willing to give”** was **“thirty silver coins”**. This price, ironically, was the price of a slave (see Exod. 21:32). No doubt, the chief priests chose this amount purposely, for they knew their Torah. “And it is not unlikely that this sum was fixed on by them to show their contempt of Jesus, and that they regarded Him as of little value” (Barnes).

Recall that previously, the chief priests were unwilling to arrest Jesus during the feast days, because of the crowds (see Matt. 26:5). Here, however, Judas was to provide them with an **“opportunity”** to arrest him during the feast days, but away from the crowds. Judas unknowingly cleared the way for Jesus’ death to be on the Passover, so as to be our Passover, as was God’s plan.

As the feast days came, there was much to do, for Jesus desired to celebrate the Passover with His disciples: **“On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?’ He replied, ‘Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover”** (vss. 17–19). Jesus, of course, had no residence in Jerusalem, so had to borrow a room for the Passover feast. This was not unusual, for many travelers went to Jerusalem during the Passover, all needing rooms to celebrate the Passover. Jesus sent the disciples to ask for a room from **“a certain man”**, no doubt another follower of His. The **“certain man”** must have considered it a great privilege that His Master would **“celebrate the Passover with His disciples at his house.”** And this Passover, for Jesus, was greatly significant, for His **“appointed time was near.”**

“When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, He said, ‘I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me’” (vs. 20-21). Jesus grabs the attention of the disciples for an astonishing announcement, by saying, **“I tell you the truth...”** The sad declaration was: **“One of you will betray me”** (vs. 21). “The usual subject of discourse at that ordinance, was the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt (see Exod. 12:26-27), but the great Passover is now

ready to be offered, and the discourse of that swallows up all talk of the other” [Henry]. “This was a most unpleasant thought to bring to a feast, yet it was most appropriate to the Passover, for God’s commandment to Moses concerning the first paschal lamb was, **‘with bitter herbs they shall eat it’** (Exod. 12:8)” [Spurgeon].

Jesus’ statement troubled the disciples: **“They were very sad”** (vs. 22); or as the KJV translates: **“And they were exceeding sorrowful”**. Part of the reason for their sorrow was a fear by each of them that he himself would betray Jesus: **“They were very sad and began to say to Him one after the other, ‘Surely not I, Lord?’”** (vs. 22). It is commendable that they looked to themselves first for fault, rather than to others. “Though they were not conscious to themselves of any inclination that way (no such thought had ever entered into their mind), yet they feared the worst, and asked Him who knows us better than we know ourselves” [Henry]. “Sincerity and charity will make men search and suspect themselves rather than another, as here the Apostles say not, ‘Is it Judas?’, but ‘Is it I?’... The sincere man dares not trust the deceitfulness of his own heart, but brings it to the Searcher thereof, and relies upon His testimony” [Dickson]. “We know not how strongly we may be tempted, nor how far God may leave us to ourselves, and therefore have reason, not to be high-minded, but fear. It is observable that our Lord Jesus, just before He instituted the Lord’s supper, put His disciples upon this trial and suspicion of themselves, to teach us to examine and judge ourselves, and so to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup” [Henry]. Apparently, Judas’s thievery (see John 12:6) was undetected by the disciples. “Note, it is possible for a hypocrite to go through the world, not only undiscovered, but unsuspected; like bad money so ingeniously counterfeited that nobody questions it” [Henry].

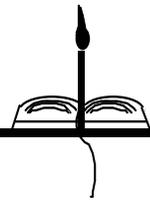
Jesus had spoken a number of times about the coming events (see Matt. 17:22; 20:18; 26:2), even of being **“betrayed”**, but He had never (to our knowledge) disclosed that the betrayal would come from one of the Twelve. Next, He emphasizes that the betrayal will come from someone close to Him: **“Jesus replied, ‘The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me’”** (vs. 23). “This language means that one of those who had eaten bread with him had violated the rights of hospitality by betraying Him... [In that culture,] eating one’s bread ties your hands and compels friendship” [Robertson]. “The fact of eating together made in the Easterns’ view, the treachery more monstrous” [Pulpit Commentary]. “External communion with Christ in holy ordinances is a great aggravation of our falseness to Him. It is base ingratitude to dip with Christ in the dish, and yet betray Him” [Henry].

Jesus continues: **“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It**

would be better for him if he had not been born” (vs. 24). Here, Jesus is saying that His death by crucifixion will come whether Judas himself betrays Him or not: **“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him.”** Jesus here is encouraging Judas to change his mind and heart. Jesus graciously desires Judas’s repentance. Jesus even tells Judas that, whether Judas betrays Him or not, God’s will shall be done: **“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him.”** Judas can choose not to be a part of the betrayal. Jesus warns Judas of the dire consequences of the betrayal: **“But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born”** (vs. 24). “This He said, not only to awaken the conscience of Judas, and bring him to repent, and revoke his bargain, but for warning to all others to take heed of sinning like Judas; though God can serve His own purposes by the sins of men, that does not make the sinner’s condition less woeful” [Henry].

But Judas does not heed Christ’s warning, nor accept the opportunity to repent of his actions. Instead, he adds hypocrisy to his list of failings: **“Then Judas, the one who would betray Him, said ‘Surely not I, Rabbi?’”** (vs. 25). “Judas appears to have been the last of the twelve to ask the question, **‘Is it I?’** Those who are the last to suspect themselves are usually those who ought to be the first to exercise self-suspicion” [Spurgeon]. Note that, significantly, Judas did not call Jesus **“Lord”**, as the others did, but **“Rabbi”** (or “Teacher”). Jesus was no longer Judas’s Lord.

Judas must have been quite surprised when Jesus answered: **“Yes, it is you”** (vs. 25). The Lord sees; He knows our hearts, and future plans. He always gives us opportunity to change our sinful plans, and encourages us to walk in His way. And when we do stumble, He freely offers forgiveness for our sins, made possible by the gift of His death, the sacrifice of His own body in our place, for our sins against God, the Creator.



A Topical Study: Contentment

The Art of Divine Contentment, pt. 8 by Thomas Watson (1620-1686)

[Here we continue Mr Watson’s study on contentment. In this article, he continues to answer some excuses for not being content. In the original text of Mr Watson’s book, these were called “Apologies”. We have changed the word to “Excuses”, for readability’s sake, to be in line with the modern meaning of the words.]

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

Excuses (cont.)

*The fifth excuse that discontent makes is **disrespect in the world. I have not that esteem from men as is suitable to my quality and grace.***

And is this trouble? Consider, 1. The world is an unequal judge; as it is full of change so of partiality. The world gives her respects, as she doth her places of preferment; more by favour often, than desert. Hast thou the ground of real worth in thee; that is best worth that is in him that hath it; honour is in him that gives it; better deserve respect, and not have it, than have it and not deserve it. 2. Hast thou grace? God respects thee, and His judgment is best worth prizing. A believer is a person of honour, being born of God: since thou wast precious in mine eyes, **“thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee”** (Is. 43:4). Let the world think what they will of you; perhaps in their eyes you are a cast-away, in God’s eyes, a dove (Song of Sol. 2:14), a spouse (Song of Sol. 5:1), a jewel (Mal. 3:17). Others account you the dregs of offscouring of the world, (1 Cor. 4:14), but God will give whole kingdoms for your ransom (see Is. 43:3). Let this make you content: no matter with what oblique eyes I am looked upon in the world, if God thinks well of me. It is better that God approve, than man applaud. The world may put us in their rubric and God put us in His black book. Is a man the better when his fellow-prisoners commend him, if his judge condemn him? O labour to keep in with God; prize His love! Let my fellow-subjects frown, I am contented,

being a favourite of the king of heaven. 3. If you are a child of God, you must look for disrespect. A believer is in the world, but not of the world; we are here in a pilgrim condition, out of our own country, therefore must not look for the respects and acclamations of the world; it is sufficient that we shall have honour in our own country (see Heb. 13. 14). It is dangerous to be the world's favourite. 4. Discontent arising from disrespect, savours too much of pride; a humble Christian hath a lower opinion of himself than others can have of him. He that is taken up about the thoughts of his sins, and how he hath provoked God, cries out, as Agur, **"I am more brutish than any man"** (Pr. 30. 2), and therefore is contented, though he be set among **"the dogs of my flock."** (Job 30. 1) Though he be low in the thoughts of others, yet he is thankful that he is not laid in **"the lowest hell"** (Ps. 86. 13). A proud man sets a high value upon himself; and is angry with others, because they will not come up to his price: take heed of pride! O had others a window to look into their breast, as Crates once expressed it, or did thy heart stand where thy face doth, thou wouldst wonder to have so much respect.

The next excuse is, I meet with very great sufferings for the truth.

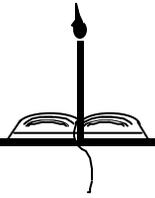
Consider, 1. Your sufferings are not so great as your sins: put these two in the balance, and see which weighs heaviest; where sin lies heavy, sufferings lie light. A carnal spirit makes more of his sufferings, and less of his sins; he looks upon one at the great end of the perspective, but upon the other at the little end of the perspective. The carnal heart cries out, take away the frogs: but a gracious heart cries out, **"take away the iniquity"** (2 Sa. 24. 10). The one saith, never any one suffered as I have done; but the other saith, never one sinned as I have done (Mi. 7. 7). 2. Are thou under sufferings? Thou hast an opportunity to show the valour and constancy of thy mind. Some of God's saints would have accounted it a great favour to have been honoured with martyrdom. One said, **"I am in prison till I be in prison"** (Laurence Saunders). Thou countest that a trouble, which others would have worn as an ensign of their glory. 3. Even those who have gone only upon moral principles, have shown much constancy and contentment in their sufferings. Curtius, being bravely mounted and in armour, threw himself into a great gulf, that the city of Rome might, according to the oracle, be delivered from the pestilence; and we, having a divine oracle, **"that they who kill the body cannot hurt the soul,"** shall we not with much constancy and patience devote ourselves to injuries for religion, and rather suffer for the truth than the truth suffer for us? The Decii, among the Romans, vowed themselves to death, that their legions and soldiers might be crowned with the honour of the victory. O what should we be content to suffer, to make the truth victorious! Regulus having sworn that he would return to Carthage, though he knew there was a furnace heating for him there, yet not daring to infringe his oath, he did adventure to go; we then who

are Christians, having made a vow to Christ in baptism, and so often renewed in the blessed sacrament, should with much contentment rather choose to suffer, than violate our sacred oath. Thus the blessed martyrs, with what courage and cheerfulness did they yield up their souls to God? And when the fire was set to their bodies, yet their spirits were not at all fired with passion or discontent. Though others hurt the body, let them not the mind through discontent; show by your heroic courage, that you are above those troubles which you cannot be without.

The next excuse is, the prosperity of the wicked. I confess it is so often, that the evil enjoy all the good, and the good endure all the evil, that David, though a good man, stumbled at this, and had like to have fallen (see Ps. 73. 2).

Well, be contented; for remember, 1. These are not the only things, nor the best things; they are mercies without the pale; these are but acorns with which God feeds swine; ye who are believers have more choice fruit, the olive, the pomegranate, the fruit which grows on the true vine Jesus Christ; others have the fat of the earth, you have the dew of heaven; they have a south-land, you have those springs of living water which are clarified with Christ's blood, and indulcerated with His love. 2. To see the wicked flourish is matter rather of pity than envy; it is all the heaven they must have; **"woe to you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation"** (Lu. 6. 24). Hence it was that David made it his solemn prayer, **"deliver me from the wicked, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure"** (Ps. 17. 15). The words (methinks) are David's litany; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, "good Lord, deliver me." When the wicked have eaten of their dainty dishes, there comes in a sad reckoning which will spoil all. The world is first musical and then tragical; if you would have a man fry and blaze in hell, let him have enough of the fat of the earth. O remember, forever, sand of mercy that runs out of the wicked, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial! Therefore as that soldier said to his fellow, "Do you envy my grapes? they cost me dear, I must die for them;" so I say, "Do you envy the wicked? Alas their prosperity is like Haman's banquet before execution." If a man were to be hanged, would one envy to see him walk to the gallows through pleasant fields and fine galleries, or to see him go up the ladder in clothes of gold? The wicked may flourish in their bravery a while; but, when they flourish as the grass, **"it is, that they shall be destroyed for ever"** (Ps. 92. 7), the proud grass shall be mown down. Whatever a sinner enjoys, he hath a curse with it (Mal. 2. 2), and shall we envy? What if poisoned bread be given the dogs? The long furrows in the backs of the godly have a seed of blessing in them, when the table of the wicked becomes a snare, and their honour their halter.

A Study in Wisdom: Job 1:5-6 (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 1:5-6 (part 3) - Job's Offering, by Joseph Caryl

⁵And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings, according to the number of them all. ⁶For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did continually.

Lastly, where had Job's sons been that he is thus suspicious? Had they been in any suspected place? No, it was only in their own houses. Had they been about any unlawful thing? No, it was only at a friendly meeting, feasting of brothers and sisters together. Yet Job is afraid lest his sons had sinned. Hence observe that,

We may quickly offend and break the Law while we are about things in their own nature lawful, especially in feasting.

It is an easy matter to sin while the thing you are about is not sinful, nay while the thing you are about is holy. We may suspect ourselves that we have sinned when we have been praying much more than when we have been feasting; we may suspect ourselves that we have sinned when we have been hearing the word, speaking the word; for these reasons, and more, we have to suspect ourselves when we have been trading, buying or selling, and working abroad in the world. Lawful things are oftentimes the occasion of the unlawful. All the sins of the old world are described thus, **"they eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted"** etc. (see Luke 17:17-18). There is not one of these an act evil in itself; yet they sinned away their peace, and sinned away their souls, in dealing about these things. Therefore as you must be afraid of all things in their own nature unlawful, so be jealous of yourselves in things that are

lawful.

Next, **"...and cursed God in their hearts"** (vs. 6).

Now, it may be wondered, how Job could suspect his sons of this, that they should curse God?

I answer to that. Here we are not to take cursing either for that abominable act (at which heathens blush), the casting of open reproach upon the Name of God; or for a malicious and virulent, though secret blaspheming of God, and sending defiance to Heaven in their hearts. But to **"curse God in their hearts"**, does signify any irreverent, undue, unfit, unholy thought of God, any thought unbecoming the Glory and Majesty of so great a God. And how quickly may the heart send out such, especially at a feast who feels not, who finds not? God is said to be cursed when He has not that reverence and honor which belongs to him, whose Name is Holy and Reverent. In that sense only we are to understand the word cursing here. And Mr. Broughton gives a translation which lets in some light to this: "It may be my sons have sinned, and little blessed God in their hearts," that is, they have not had such high, such holy thoughts of God as became them, "they have little blessed God"; careless thoughts of God are "little blessing" of God, and does amount to a cursing of God.

So that the sense which results is this, as if Job should have said, "I am well enough satisfied concerning my sons, that they have not broadly blasphemed God, that they have not been such as have torn His Name with oaths, cursings and execrations; yet notwithstanding I know the heart is a deceitful thing, there are many starting holes in it, it quickly conceives a sin; and therefore I am very doubtful, though my sons have carried it fairly and well in their actions and words while they feasted, that yet their hearts have been loose, and their affections vain, I am afraid they have cursed, lightly regarded, or little blessed God in their hearts."

Observe, first,

That we ought to keep our hearts with all manner of keeping in everything we go about.

If your hearts are disorderly, it is kind of cursing God. Remember not only to keep your hearts when you are praying and when you are hearing, and when you are in holy duties; but remember to keep your hearts when you are feasting and refreshing yourselves, when you are in your callings, when you are buying and selling, etc.

Secondly, note,

That sins of the heart, sinful thoughts are very dangerous sins.

Job could not accuse his sons of loud blasphemies, he only suspected the silent sins of the heart, yet he offers sacrifice for them.

Again, when Job had nothing to charge his sons with, but only sins

of the heart, you see it is with an, **“It may be my sons have cursed god in their hearts”**, he does speak directly or positively, that they have done so. Whence note,

That no man can positively conclude what is wrought in the heart of another.

The heart is God’s, as He only has the lock and key of the heart, to shut or open it, so He only has a window to look into it; we may guess at the heart, we may say, “it may be”, but further we cannot go. The hearts of men often come forth at their mouths, and appear in their actions, and then indeed we may conclude their hearts are naught, **“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and the hand worketh”** (Matt. 12:34); but unless we have that testimony, unless the heart give that witness against itself, we can only suspect it. It may be thus or thus, God alone can tell when we curse Him in our hearts, and (if we go on impenitently in them), irreverent thoughts will be interpreted a cursing of God.

“Thus did Job continually” (vs. 6) – This is the third thing to be opened in this verse, to wit the constancy of Job. We have seen the acts of His spiritual care, and the ground of it, his fear lest His sons had sinned. Now we have the constancy of this duty: **“Thus did Job continually.”**

“Continually” – The original is, “all the days”, thus did Job. All days, that is all the days that this occasion did offer itself. When his sons went to feasting, then ever Job went to praying and to sacrificing. Continually, or all the days, does not import that Job did offer sacrifice every day. This **“continually”** is to be understood in the renewed seasons. All the days are those days wherein occasion was given. We are then said to do a thing continually when we do it seasonably, so those places of Scripture are to be understood: **“Pray without ceasing”** (I Thess. 5:17); not that a man should do nothing else but pray, but that he should labor to have his heart in a praying frame always, and should actually pray as often as duty requires; such an one prays always. So here, Job’s offering sacrifice continually, notes only the constancy and perseverance of Job in the duty, that so often as there was an occasion renewed, Job renewed this service and holy care concerning his sons, for reconciling them to God. Job had many other things to do in the world, he had a calling, yet he offered sacrifice continually.

It is an excellent point of spiritual wisdom, to drive the two trades for Heaven and Earth so, as that one shall not entrench upon another; for a man to pray so as that it may be said he prays continually; and for a man to follow his calling so, as that it may be said, he follows his calling continually. In that he offered sacrifice as oft as his sons did feast. Observe this,

That the heart of man is continually evil.

Do not think that one sacrifice will serve the heart of man, when it has failed once in a duty, and you have humbled your soul for that. Think not thus: now my heart will forbear, when I come to such a duty or to such a

business again, now I have taken order with my heart, I need not fear any more; no, the heart will sin over the same sin a thousand times. It will sin continually. You see here Job sacrificing every time his sons feasted, he knew their hearts were apt to conceive those sins at any time, therefore he seeks God for them at all times.

Further observe,

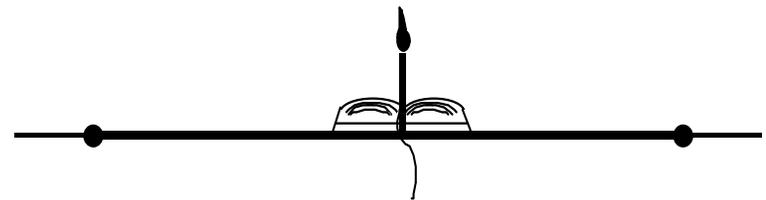
That renewed sins must have renewed repentance. Thus did Job continually. Till you have done sinning you must never give over repenting. If there be a leak in the ship that lets in the water continually, the pump must work continually to carry it out: We are leaking vessels all of us, sin comes in, sin is renewed, there must be the pump of repentance to carry it out again.

Lastly, we may note this: Job did it continually, *Job was not good by fits.*

That which a man does out of conscience, he will do with perseverance.

Nature will have good moods, but grace is steady. Thus did Job continually, whatsoever his affairs or businesses were, whatsoever was laid by, he would not lay by this duty of sacrificing.

Let this suffice for the 5th verse, containing the care of Job over the souls of his children. And so in these five verses already opened, we have: First, seen the dignity and sincerity of Job’s person. Secondly, the fullness and prosperity of his condition. Thirdly, the holiness and piety of his life. Certainly a man thus raised, thus glorious, set up thus in temporal, and in spirituals, thus furnished with substantials and adorned with circumstantial, abounding in whatsoever could make a man great and happy both in the eye of God and man; surely such a man as this, a man thus complete, wanted nothing but some want, to try his sincerity in this fullness. And now behold this hastening upon him: God having thus fitted and qualified him, will now try him, try him like gold in the furnace of affliction.



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