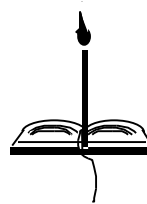


"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord... Isaiah 1:18

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Old Testament Study: Exodus 17:8-16 (cont.)

Amalek, pt. 2,
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)

"Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim" (17:8). In the light of Genesis 21:25; 26:19, 20; Exodus 2:17; Numbers 20:19; Judges 5:11, where we learn that the possession of water (wells, etc.) was frequently a bone of contention among the ancients, it is evident that the spread of the news that a river of water was now gushing from the rock in Rephidim, caused the Amalekites to attempt to gain possession. To do this meant they must first dispossess Israel; hence their attack. The first thing to note here is the identity of Is-

rael's enemy. It was Amalek. **"Amalek"** signifies "Warlike," apt name for that whose lusts ever war against the soul (see 1 Peter 2:11). "Amalek was the grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12): 'Who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, and when he would have inherited the blessing was rejected,' is thus surely a representative of the 'old man'" (F.W.G.). Very striking in this connection is the prophetic word of Balaam: **"And when he looked for Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations that warred against Israel: but his latter end shall be that he perish forever"** (Numbers 24:20). The character of Amalek comes out plainly in the words of Moses concerning him at a later date – **"He feared not God"** (Deuteronomy 25:17, 18) - such is "the flesh."

The second thing to be noted is the time when Amalek made his assault upon Israel: **"then came Amalek and fought with Israel."** The Holy Spirit has called our attention to the time when this occurred. It was when Moses smote the rock and the waters were given. Then, for the first time, Israel was called upon to do some fighting - contrast 13:17. They had done no fighting in the house of bondage, nor had the Lord called upon them to fight the Egyptians at the Red Sea, but now that that which typified the Holy Spirit had been given, their warfare commenced. Yea, it was that which typified the Holy Spirit that caused the Amalekites to attack Israel! Wonderfully accurate is the type.

It is not until the Christian has been made partaker of the Divine nature (see 2 Peter 1:4) that the inward conflict begins. Previous to the new birth, he was dead in trespass and sins, and therefore quite insensible to the claims of God's holiness. Until the Holy Spirit begins to shed abroad His light upon our wicked hearts, we do not realize the depths and power of the evil within us. Oft times the believer is astounded by the discovery of the tendencies and desires within him, which he never knew before were there. The religious professor knows nothing of the conflict between the two natures nor of the abiding sense of inward corruption which this experience conveys. The unregenerate man is entirely under the dominion of the flesh, he serves its lusts, he does its will. The "flesh" does not fight its

subjects; it rules over them. But as soon as we receive the new nature the conflict begins. It is striking to note that it was not Israel who attacked Amalek, but Amalek that attacked Israel. The new nature in the believer delights to feed upon the Word, to commune with God, and be engaged with spiritual things. But the flesh will not let him live in peace. The Devil delights to rob the believer of his joy, and works upon the flesh to accomplish his fiendish designs. The anti-type is in perfect accord. Note how that in Galatians 5:17 it is first said that **"The flesh lusteth against the spirit,"** and not vice versa.

Next, let us note carefully the record of how Israel engaged Amalek in fight: **"And 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. So 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 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But 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 one side and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of his sword"** (vv. 9-13).

There is considerable difference of opinion among the commentators concerning the typical application of the above scripture. Some regard Moses at the top of the hill with hands uplifted toward heaven as the figure of Christ interceding for us on High. But that cannot be. And this for two reasons: Moses was accompanied by Aaron and Hur; furthermore, his hands grew heavy. It is grossly dishonoring to the perfect Word of God to say that the type is imperfect at this point - far better to confess our ignorance than to cast such reflections upon the Scriptures. Others regard Joshua as the type of Christ in this incident, but that cannot be, because Israel did not gain a complete victory over Amalek. Rather is it evident

that the respective actions of Moses and Joshua point out the provisions which God has made for us to combat the flesh.

The first thing to note here is that Israel's success against Amalek was determined by the uplifted hand of Moses: **“And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand Amalek prevailed”** (v. 11). The significance of Moses' attitude is clearly defined in several scriptures. The uplifted hand was emblematic of prayer, the supplicating of God: **“Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto Thee, when I lift up my hands toward Thy holy oracle”** (Psalm 28:2); **“I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting”** (1 Timothy 2:8).

Second, observe that **“Moses' hands grew heavy.”** Here is where the real and beautiful accuracy of our type is to be seen. How soon we grow weary of supplicating God! **“Men ought always to pray and not to faint”** (Luke 18:1), said our Lord. But how sadly we fail. How quickly our hearts get “heavy”! And as soon as we lose the spirit of dependency upon God the flesh prevails.

Third, but Moses was not left to himself. Blessed it is to mark this. Aaron and Hur were with him, and “Stayed up his hands, the one on one side and the other on the other side.” Here again we discover the beautiful accuracy of our type. Surely, there is no difficulty in interpreting this detail. Aaron was the head of Israel's priesthood, and so speaks plainly of our great High Priest. “Hur” means “light” - the emblem of Divine holiness, and so points to the Holy Spirit of God. Thus God in His grace has fully provided for us. Supported on either side, both the earthly and the heavenly. **“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”** (Romans 8:26); this is on the earthly side. **“And another angel”** (Christ as “the Messenger of the Covenant”) **“came and stood at the altar hav-**

ing a golden censer; and there was given unto Him much incense, that He should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (Revelation 8:3): this is on the heavenly side — Christ receiving our supplications and offering them to God, as accompanied by the sweet fragrance of His own perfections.

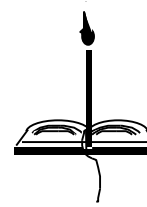
Fourth, the typical picture is completed for us by what is said in 5:13; **“And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”** The “sword” here points to the Holy Scriptures (see Hebrews 4:12). It is not by prayer alone that we can fight the flesh. The Word, too, is needed. Said the Psalmist, **“Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee”** (Psalm 119:11). Some may object to what we have just said above about the Christian fighting the flesh. We are not unmindful of Romans 6:11 and 2 Timothy 2:22 and much that has been written thereon. But there are scriptures which present other phases of our responsibility. There is a fight to be fought (see 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7 etc.). And this fight has to do with the flesh. Said the Apostle, **“So fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection”** (1 Corinthians 9:26; 27).

Another thing which is important to note here is the fact that Amalek was not destroyed or completely vanquished on this occasion. We only read that **“Joshua discomfited Amalek.”** Here too, the type is in perfect accord with the antitype. There is no way of destroying or eradicating the evil nature within us. Though discomfited it still survives. Why, it may be asked, does God permit the evil nature to remain in us? Many answers may be given, among them these: that we may obtain a deeper and personal realization of the awful havoc which sin has wrought in man. the total depravity of our beings, and thereby appreciate the more the marvelous grace which has saved such Hell-deserving wretches; that we may be humbled before God and made more dependent upon Him; that we may appropriate to ourselves His all-sufficient grace and learn that His strength is made perfect in our weakness;

that we may appreciate the more His keeping-power, for left to ourselves, with such a sink of iniquity within, we should surely perish.

A very helpful word and one which we do well to take to heart, is found in Deuteronomy 25:17, 18: **“Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God.”** How this should stir us up to watchfulness! It was the **“hindmost”** — those farthest away from their leader — that were smitten. The flesh cannot smite us while we are walking in close communion with God! And note that it was when Israel were **“faint and weary”** that Amalek came down upon them. This too is a warning word. What is the remedy against faintness? This: **“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail; But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint”** (Isaiah 40:30, 31).

Very blessed are the closing words of Exodus 17: **“And 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.’ And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nissi; For he said, ‘Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation”** (vv. 14-16). God here promised that in the end He would utterly annihilate Amalek. In the confident assurance of faith Moses anticipated God's final victory by erecting an altar and calling it **“The Lord, our Banner.”** How blessed to know that at the end the Savior shall **“change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself”** (Philippians 3:21).



A Classic Study: Providence

A Treatise on Providence, pt 4,
by William Plumer (1802–1880)

God's Sovereignty Over the Enemies of God

“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 could not surely defend and protect His people, if their enemies were not within His grasp. It does not impair free agency for God to present an irresistible motive either to a good man or to a bad man. With the former the fear of God has power sufficient to restrain him from sin. With the wicked, regard to health, honor, or wealth, have restraining power. In neither case is there a suspension of free agency. If God does not sway the hearts of the wicked so as to secure their doing that which on the whole view of the case He has determined to effect or permit, are they not independent beings? But the Scripture leaves no room for doubt on this point (see Acts 2:23; 4:28; 2 Sam. 17:14). If any man were independent of God, then the promise of Satan to our first parents would be fulfilled, and men would become as gods. But the Scriptures are explicit: **“The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord”** (Prov. 21:1); **“A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps”** (Prov. 16:9); **“Man's goings are of the Lord, how then can a man understand his way?”** (Prov. 20:24). It was the Lord that **“turned the heart of the Egyptians to deal subtly with his servants”** (Ps. 105:25). It is also said of the Jews that the Lord **“made them to be pitied of all those, that carried them captives”** (Ps. 106:46). Because God controls the free acts of wicked men, it came to pass that the vacillating Pilate, who pronounced Jesus Christ in-

nocent, was yet prevailed on to deliver Him to death, but was as firm as a rock in refusing to alter the inscription on his cross, saying, **“What I have written, I have written”** (John 19:22). When Shimei cursed David, that holy man said, **“Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him”** (2 Sam. 14:11). God took away restraint from the evil heart of that vile dog, and let him loose to bark at the royal fugitive. So the pious Jeremiah devoutly said: **“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man, that walketh, to direct his steps”** (Jer. 10:23). Therefore, if men hate and vex us, it is because the Lord removes restraints and lets them loose upon us.

When God planted the Jews in Canaan, He told them that all, who were able, must go up to the holy city three times every year to worship Him. They had wicked enemies all around them, who cordially hated them, and desired their extermination. But God said: **“Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year”** (Ex. 34:24). This promise was well kept in all their generations. But this could only be by Jehovah putting His almighty hand on the hearts of the nations, and softening for the time their animosities against His people. God can make even the worst of men not to wish us any harm, and yet they may all the time be perfectly conscious of free agency. God led Absalom and his co-conspirators to choose foolish rather than wise counsel, whereby their wicked plot was utterly defeated (see 2 Sam. 17:14). Whenever the Lord will, **“He turneth wise men backward”** (Isa. 44:25). He causes bad men to punish themselves. Thus sang David: **“The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands”** (Ps. 9:15, 16).

The punishment of the wicked is thus terribly portrayed: **“His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray”** (Prov. 5:22, 23). **“They that sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption”** (Gal. 4:8).

So also God uses the wicked to punish each other, and then for their own wickedness He punishes them. Thus when the Jews apostatized and became sadly degenerate,

decreasing unrighteousness and writing grievousness, to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor, that widows might be their prey, and that they might rob the fatherless, God sent a mighty heathen prince to punish them. This is his prophetic address to that haughty and terrible monarch: **“O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against, the people of my wrath [who have incurred my wrath] will I give him a charge, [or commission] to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. . . . Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. . . . Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood”** (Isa. 10:5, 6, 7, 12, 15). Thus God **“makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain”** (Ps. 76:10). He permitted men and devils to combine for the death of Jesus Christ, yet out of that event He has brought eternal redemption to countless millions, and eternal glory to the Godhead. But when they combined to keep Him in the tomb, it was not possible that He should be held captive by death. Their malice and machinations were impotent. He burst the bars of the grave, arose by His own power and ascended up on high, leading captivity captive.

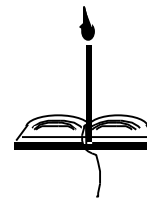
Nor should this doctrine offend any one. When Pilate said to Jesus, **“Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?”** Jesus answered, **“Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above”** (John 19:10, 11). Nor does this doctrine destroy a just accountability, but rather establishes it. The very next words of Jesus are: **“Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin”**; thus clearly declaring that though the sin might seem to him small, yet it was sin.

Indeed, if God does not hold the hearts of the wicked in His hands, and entirely control them, how can the pious pray for deliverance from wicked men with any hope that they will be heard and answered? But believing this doctrine, they may well ask God to save them, knowing that if He choose, He can make their enemies to be their friends, and their persecutors to be their deliverers. This He has often done. This He still does, sending His people's foes bowing unto them. He who made the raven feed Elijah, can never be at a loss for instruments of good to His chosen, or of wrath to His enemies. If it was not beneath Him to make an insect or a world, it is not beneath Him to govern them to wise and holy ends.

If He should resign His control over anything even for an hour, no mortal can trace the consequences. And if He were utterly to forsake any work of His hands, no creature can calculate the mischief that would ensue; for in Him we live and move and have our being, so that He alone is **"Lord of all"**. Devils, as tempters, have mighty influence; but the feeblest child of God, clad in innocence, upheld by grace, and guided by Providence, need not fear a million of devils. Satan is bound with a chain. He is the proprietor of nothing. Though he is called the god of this world and the spirit that works in the children of disobedience; yet the meaning of such language is that the desires and motives and aims and hearts of the men of this world are pleasing to Satan, who is at the head of the kingdom of darkness, and who sways a sceptre of malignant power over the ungodly. Blessed be God. He has not abandoned the world, bad as it is, to the reign of devils.

Nor has God resigned any part of His government to fate or chance, both of which are blind, and have no intelligence, and of course no wisdom. He governs by a plan, which is never altered simply because it is His plan, and therefore can never be improved. Both fate and chance as agents are nothing, and know nothing, and can do nothing. Over all the earth presides one who has all and infinite perfections. Just such a supreme ruler as the pious mind would desire for all the world, just such a ruler it now has and ever shall have.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be evermore. Amen.



New Testament Study: Matthew 26:26-30

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you. ²⁸This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

³⁰When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (Mt 26:26-30 NIV)

¹⁹And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁰In the same way, after the supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:19-20 NIV)

²³For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

²⁷So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of

the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. (1 Cor. 11:23-29 NIV)

Towards the end of their Passover supper, Jesus, as He was supping with His Apostles, instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion (known also among Christians as the Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper). Though not explicitly expressed in the passage in Matthew, we know from the writings of Paul that the Sacrament of Holy Communion was intended to be observed by believers in the entire Christian Church (implied in the passage above, 1 Cor. 11:27-29).

It was appropriate that Holy Communion be instituted during the Passover supper, for in a way, Holy Communion has replaced the Passover for the people of God, as the primary, recurring religious observance that commemorates God's work on behalf of His people. "At the latter end of the Passover-supper, before the table was drawn, because, as a feast upon a sacrifice, it was to come in the room of that ordinance. Christ is to us the Passover-sacrifice by which atonement is made (see 1 Cor. 5:7); Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. This ordinance is to us the Passover-supper, by which application is made, and commemoration celebrated, of a much greater deliverance than that of Israel out of Egypt" (M. Henry). "We observe that the celebration of the first Sacramental Supper of the Lord was joined in one continued supperly action with the Sacrament of the Passover; our Lord herein declaring the old church and new to be one in Him, and the Sacraments of both, to have Himself for their signification" (D. Dickson).

As a whole, this Sacrament is not complicated, or elaborate: consume the bread and wine, in remembrance of Christ and His atoning sacrifice. As such, the Sacrament can be performed by any group of Christians, virtually anywhere, and

at any time. But we should not let the simplicity of the execution of the Sacrament hide the importance for us as Christians, and the solemn seriousness with which we should observe it. "We must never forget that this central ordinance of our Christian worship was instituted by our Lord Himself. It is an indication of His foresight and forbearance; for it shows first that He saw we should need to be repeatedly reminded of what He is to us, and then that He condescended to help the infirmity of our wandering natures by providing the most impressive means for continually presenting the great central facts of His work before our minds and hearts. He enlists the services of the three senses of sight, taste, and touch, to aid the sense of hearing in bringing before us the vital truths of His gospel" (Adeney, in Pulpit Commentary).

Paul, writing to the Corinthians about the Sacrament, expresses the seriousness and solemnity of it, when he tells us that harm can come to those who participate in the Sacrament without proper meditation on the central meaning of it: **"So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep"** (1 Cor. 11:28-29, italics mine). To me, this passage in Corinthians, tells us that it's crucial that those who lead people in this Sacrament, instruct them of its significance, seriousness and importance. Moreover, prospective partakers in the Sacrament should be lovingly told that they should abstain from it if they are not in the proper frame of mind to **"discern the body of Christ"** (either as non-believers, or distracted believers). The church must be careful that the Sacrament of Holy Communion not be performed in a rote manner. As Paul tells us, the seriousness and significance of the Sacrament must always be observed.

The Sacrament, in its proper execution, reminds us to put Jesus, not complex theological issues, at the center of the Christian religion. The Sacrament depicts the importance of Jesus, not just as an abstract religious personage, but as someone whom we must allow to enter our lives. “We eat the bread and drink the wine. Christ is the Bread of life. We must personally participate in Christ, and receive Him into our lives, in order to profit by His grace” (Adeney, *ibid.*).

As we said, the Sacrament was instituted towards the end of the Last Supper: **“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body’”** (vs. 26). Note the sequence of the Sacrament, as instituted: Take the bread; give thanks; break the bread; take and eat, taking note of Jesus’ words, **“This is My body”**. We would do well to follow the Sacrament, as instituted. Each step has significance.

First, we take the bread: this is Christ, the Bread of Life. “The body of Christ is signified and represented by bread; He had said formerly (see John 6:35), I am the bread of life, upon which metaphor this sacrament is built; as the life of the body is supported by bread, which is therefore put for all bodily nourishment (see Matthew 4:4; 6:11), so the life of the soul is supported and maintained by Christ’s mediation” (M. Henry).

Second, give thanks. The thanks vis-à-vis the bread is two-fold, in our case: for Christ as the Bread of Life; and for Christ’s sacrifice of His body.

Third, break the bread. Breaking the bread is symbolic of the breaking of Christ’s body on our behalf (while it is true that, to fulfill prophecy, no bones were broken in Jesus’ body, certainly His body was broken in other ways, by the crown of thorns, the thirty-nine lashes, the crucifixion, etc.). “The breaking of the bread I consider essential to the proper performance of this solemn and significant ceremony: because this act was designed by our Lord to shadow forth the wounding, piercing, and breaking of His body upon the cross; and, as all this was essentially necessary to the making a full atonement for

the sin of the world, so it is of vast importance that this apparently little circumstance, the breaking of the bread, should be carefully attended to, that the godly communicant may have every necessary assistance to enable him to discern the Lord’s body, while engaged in this most important and Divine of all God’s ordinances.” (A. Clarke). I dare say, in many (possibly most) cases during Protestant enactments of the Sacrament, the breaking of the bread is not performed. This should be changed, based on our Lord’s institution of the Sacrament. It can easily be added to the Sacrament by giving congregants a decent-sized wafer, and instructing them to break it, before consuming it. Instruction concerning the reason they are breaking the bread, that Christ’s body was broken on our behalf (**“given for you”**, as Luke quotes in Luke 22:19), will aid in the congregants **“discerning”** of the body of Christ in the Sacrament.

Fourth, take and eat, with an awareness of Jesus’ words: **“This is My body.”** Let us note here how shocking this statement must surely have been to the Apostles at the time. Jesus did not say: “This is a symbol of my body”, or “This represents my body”; He said, **“This is My body.”** I believe the statement was worded this way to encourage us to dig deeper into its meaning. Fortunately, Jesus spoke in depth about this earlier.

Not long after Jesus miraculously fed the crowd of about five thousand (see John 6:5-13), He crossed the Sea of Galilee and was met by some Jews who were some of five thousand that He fed (see John 6:26). These Jews seemed to be sincere in their questioning (i.e., they were not Pharisees who were trying to trip Jesus up). They asked: **“What must we do to do the works God requires?”** (John 6:28). Jesus answered: **“The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent”** (John 6:29). The Jews replied by asking for a sign, similar to the sign of manna that their forefathers were given (John 6:30-31). Jesus replied that it is God who sends bread from heaven that **“gives life to the world.”** Then Jesus

continued: **“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty”** (John 6:35). Jesus contrasts the **“manna”**, which was given for sustenance, with Himself, as **“the bread of life”**. To consume this **“bread of life”**, is to **“come to Him”**, and **“believe in Him”**. To do so is to *never* be hungry (that is, spiritually hungry), and *never* be thirsty (that is, spiritually thirsty). To eat the **“bread of life”** (by coming to Him, and believing in Him), is to have complete spiritual fulfillment, forever.

Jesus elaborates: **“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world”** (John 6:48-51). So then, for the Sacrament, when Jesus says: **“Take and eat; this is My body”**, we are to eat of the bread as an outward sign that we have **“come to Him”**, and that we **“believe in Him.”** This is, as Paul says, to **“discern the body of Christ.”** It is the full understanding of the sacrifice that Jesus made by giving His broken body for us, and faith that by consuming Jesus as the bread of life, we will **“never go hungry”**, and **“never be thirsty”**.

Matthew leaves out of his narrative two important clauses that Luke supplies in his: **“This is My body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me”** (Luke 22:19). The phrase **“do this in remembrance of Me”** is important because it provides the reason the members of the church carry out the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The other clause, **“given for you”**, underscores that Jesus knew ahead of time that very soon He would be sacrificing Himself for us. **“Thus the Lord, before He actually suffered, offered Himself as a victim voluntarily undergoing death, and showed it forth by the broken bread and the poured wine”** (Pulpit Commentary). **“Which is ‘given for you’:** [Matthew and Mark] leave out this clause,

which, however, is far from being superfluous; for the reason why the flesh of Christ becomes bread to us is, that by it, salvation was once procured for us... So then, in order that we may feed aright on the flesh of Christ, we must contemplate the sacrifice of it, because it was necessary that it should have been once given for our salvation, that it might every day be given to us” (J. Calvin). **“After, ‘this is my body,** [Luke] adds, **‘which is given for you’;** ...the sense of which is: ‘As God has in His bountiful providence given you bread for the sustenance of your lives, so in His infinite grace He has given you My body to save your souls unto life eternal. But as this bread must be broken and masticated, in order to its becoming proper nourishment, so My body must be broken, i.e. crucified, for you, before it can be the bread of life to your souls. As, therefore, your life depends on the bread which God’s bounty has provided for your bodies, so your eternal life depends on the sacrifice of My body on the cross for your souls”’ (A. Clarke).

As we take the bread, which is Christ’s body, and eat of it, **“in remembrance”** of that moment in time at the Last Supper, there is a sense that we become one with Christ at the time of the institution of the Sacrament, at the Last Supper itself: Christ’s body, in our body, at the Last Supper. Then just as Christ goes on soon-after from the Last Supper to His death, it follows then that, in a sense, we are crucified with Christ, just as Paul says: **“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me”** (Galatians 2:20). Paul also tells us elsewhere: **“For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin”** (Romans 6:6). We would do well to ponder our crucifixion with Christ, as we observe the Sacrament.

Matthew’s account continues, the institution of the Sacrament continues: **“Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of**

sins” (vss. 27-28). In one sense, addition of the wine to the Sacrament makes it complete, harking back to the passage in John’s Gospel, when Jesus said: **“Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty”** (John 6:35). “To assure us of full satisfaction and complete furniture for eternal life, Christ our Lord has not only taken bread in the Sacrament, but also has instituted a cup; that is, both food and drink, for certifying us, that we shall have complete nourishment in Him” (D. Dickson). “As it was the design of Christ to keep our faith wholly fixed on Himself, that we may not seek anything apart from Him, He employed two symbols to show that our life is shut up in Him. This body needs to be nourished and supported by meat and drink. Christ, in order to show that He alone is able to discharge perfectly all that is necessary for salvation, says that He supplies the place of meat and drink” (J. Calvin).

But there is more to the wine than its mere sustenance. As the bread points to Jesus’ sacrifice, so does the wine: **“This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”** (vs. 28). Note the verb tense that is used: **“...which *is* poured out...”**; Jesus does not say **“...*will be* poured out...”** This expresses that, as we carry out the Sacrament, we should have an awareness that Jesus’ blood *is* poured out, as if it is occurring in the present. Such an awareness strikes home the fact that Jesus’ sacrifice applies directly to each of us, for each of our sins. If, as we partake, we can say, “This *is* Jesus’ blood. It *should be* my blood which is poured out,” then we are truly **“discerning”** Christ’s sacrifice for us, which is one of the purposes of the Sacrament.

Jesus tells us: **“This is My blood of the covenant”** (vs. 28). Jesus’ words directly harken back to the words of Moses, when the first covenant (or pact) was established between God and His people: **“Moses then took the blood,”** (that is, the blood of the sacrificed animals), **“sprinkled it on the people and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all**

these words” (Ex. 24:8). By directly referencing the passage in Exodus, Jesus was establishing a new covenant, in which His sacrifice, the pouring out of His blood, takes the place of the atoning sacrifices of the original covenant. “When Jesus spoke of His blood as blood **‘of the covenant’**, He was surely claiming that, at the cost of His death, He was about to inaugurate the new covenant of which the prophet [Jeremiah] had spoken (see Jer. 31:31). This was a big claim. Jesus was saying that His death would be central to the relationship between God and the people of God. It would be the means of cleansing from past sins and consecrating to a new life of service to God. It would be the establishment of the covenant that was based not on people’s keeping it (see Ex. 24:3,7), but on God’s forgiveness (see Jer. 31:34)” (L. Morris).

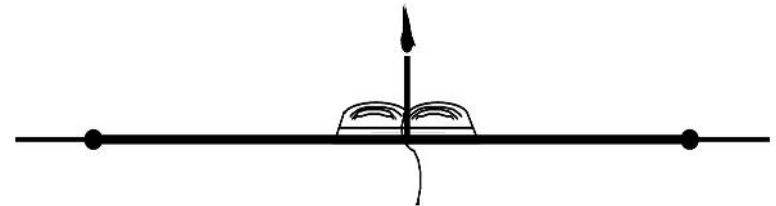
Though just hinted at here, the writer of the book of Hebrews explicitly teaches us that Jesus’ sacrifice, indeed, establishes a New Covenant, which replaces the Old Covenant of atonement via the sacrifices of goats and bulls. Moreover, the New Covenant is more perfect than the Old one, because it is the perfect fulfillment to which the sacrifices in the Old Covenant were prophetically pointing. The writer of Hebrews teaches: **“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You prepared for Me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings You were not pleased. Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about Me in the scroll— I have come to do Your will, My God.’”**

First He said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings You did not desire, nor were You pleased with them’—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then He said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’ *He sets aside the first to establish the second.*” (Hebrews 10:1-9, italics mine). “There was a two-fold manner of making a Covenant of Grace between God and the Church, in her head Christ; one called, ‘An Old Covenant’, before He came, of typical promises, painful and chargeable rites, and harder conditions to the external beholder; another Covenant after His incarnation, called ‘A New Covenant’ of better promises, and more [clearly understood], because now the dimness of the shadow is removed, the yoke of the ceremonies is broken, and the substance of the covenant is more clearly seen... He made His [Covenant] after His incarnation in plain and clear terms, after which He fulfilled the types of His death, and actually laid down His life for His redeemed people” (D. Dickson).

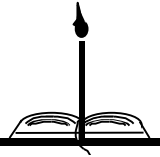
To conclude, Jesus added: **“I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom”** (vs. 29). This again is evidence that Jesus knew that His death was imminent. Jesus says this so as to “put upon His disciples the impression of His death shortly to follow, and so both engraft the doctrine of the Sacrament more deeply in them, and prepare them the better for His death” (D. Dickson). Though the reference to His soon death is solemn, there is the good news that Jesus would be with them to **“drink it new”**. This statement was to be multiply fulfilled. First, after the resurrection, in the infancy of the kingdom of God, Jesus was with the Apostles multiple times (see Luke 29:30; Luke 29:43; John 21:12; Acts 1:4; Acts 10:41). The ultimate fulfillment, though, is when all believers commune with Jesus at the great marriage supper of the Lamb, prophesied in the book of Revelation: **“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing**

waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.’ (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.) Then the angel said to me, ‘Write this: **Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!**’” (Revelation 19:6-9).

Matthew adds: **“When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives”** (vs. 30). It was traditional for participants, at various times during the Passover supper, to sing and/or chant Psalm 113 through Psalm 118, which are psalms of praise and thanksgiving to God for His marvelous works in the lives of His people. That the Apostles and our Lord still did so, even on this solemn occasion, is an example for us. “How sad hours soever the Lord send to us, it is our part always to sing His praises” (D. Dickson). “[To sing God’s praises is never] unseasonable, no, not even in times of sorrow and suffering. The disciples were in sorrow, and Christ was entering upon His sufferings, and yet they could sing a hymn together. Our spiritual joy should not be interrupted by outward afflictions” (M. Henry). Moreover, “was it not truly brave of our dear Lord to sing under such circumstances? He was going forth to His last dread conflict, to Gethsemane, and Gabbatha, and Golgotha; yet He went with a song on his lips” (C. H. Spurgeon). May we always praise the Lord, no matter the circumstance.



A Topical Study: Spiritual Knowledge



The Growth of Spiritual Knowledge

¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things (1 Peter 1:10-12).

In total darkness, perfect eyesight has no value. Likewise, to a completely blind man, the brightest light serves no purpose. Sight needs light; light has no value without sight.

Let us imagine that there is a blind man who, through some medical procedure or mechanism, is about receive the gift of sight. He has never experienced sight before; his brain is not accustomed to processing the signals generated by light hitting the retina. We can probably all agree that it would be foolish to introduce light with bright and vivid splashes of color to this newly-seeing man. No, we would naturally introduce light gradually, beginning possibly with a very plain dimly lit room. As the faculties of the eye and brain of the man improve, we would brighten the room, introduce colors, show the man various objects while explaining what they are, etc. In this way, the man's ability to see would improve, and he would gradually become accustomed to interpreting the visual information presented to him.

In his Introductory Lecture of the "Lectures on Romans", Thomas Chalmers – a noted Scottish minister, theologian, mathematician and economist – presents the above process (the blind receiving sight) as an analogy to the way that God has chosen to reveal Himself to man. The fall of Adam brought a complete spiritual darkness to mankind.

"Whatever discernment Adam had of the things of God in Paradise, the fall which he experienced was a fall into the very depths of the obscurity of midnight" [Chalmers, 9]. To bring mankind out of this darkness, God has chosen to act in two ways: one external, one internal. God gradually, over history, has increased the amount of spiritual light that He has shone. And at the same time, God gradually has improved the spiritual discernment within man, improved his spiritual eyesight, one might say. As we are given more light, we are also given more discernment to understand the light we are given. And so by two ways, one external and one internal, we grow spiritually. The external light slowly gets brighter; our internal discernment, which interprets the signals that the light is triggering on our spiritual retinas (so to speak), improves so that we can properly see what the light reveals.

Now I suppose God, in His power, could have chosen to re-enlighten Adam and Eve in one grand act of spiritual enlightenment. "[B]y one fiat of Omnipotence, such a perfection of spiritual discernment may have been conferred on our first parents, ...[and] a single moment would have ushered them into all the splendors of a full and finished revelation. But this has not been God's method in His dealings with a sinful world. Spiritual light and spiritual discernment, were not called forth to meet each other in all the plenitude of an unclouded brilliancy, at the bidding of His immediate voice. The outward truth has been dealt out by a gradual process of revelation – and the inward perception of it has been made to maintain a corresponding pace through a process equally gradual. A greater number of spiritual objects has been introduced, from one time to another, into the field of visibility – and the power of spiritual vision has from one age to another been made to vary and to increase along with them" [Chalmers, 11-12]. In this God was wise and just. For if God had re-enlightened Adam immediately, mankind would not have appreciated the seriousness and consequences of disobedience to God. It was just, and educational, to plunge Adam, and mankind, into a prolonged darkness, as a consequence of his sin.

Fascinatingly, this method of gradual spiritual enlightenment and slowly increasing spiritual discernment has worked on a macro level, and a micro level. On a macro level, mankind as a whole has been slowly enlightened spiritually, as God, over the course of history, has chosen to reveal more

about His ways and His plan; while at the same time, God has chosen prophets, on which He confers spiritual discernment to understand the spiritual revelations, and communicate them to His people. On a micro level, each of us individually grows spiritually in this same way: by responding to the spiritual light that God, in His grace, shines on us, and by being open to the increasing spiritual discernment that the Holy Spirit imparts to us.

Let's first look at the macro level, how mankind has been spiritually enlightened in this way. Chalmers gives a nice outline of this process over the course of history: "The dawn of this eternal revelation was marked by the solitary announcement, given to our outcast progenitors [Adam and Eve], that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15)... The promise given to Adam, brightened into a more cheering and intelligible hope, when renewed to Abraham, in the shape of an assurance, that, through one of his descendants, all the families of the earth were to be blessed (Gen. 12:2, 15:5); and to Jacob that Shiloh was to be born, and that to Him the gathering of the people should be (Gen. 49:10); and to Moses, that a great Prophet was to arise like unto himself (Deut. 18:15); and to David, that one of his house was to sit upon his throne forever (II Sam. 7:15); and to Isaiah, that one was to appear, who should be a light unto the Gentiles, and the salvation of all the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6); and to Daniel, that the Messiah was to be cut off, but not for Himself and that through Him reconciliation was to be made for iniquity, and an everlasting righteousness was to be brought in (Dan. 9:24-27); and to John the Baptist, that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and the Prince of that kingdom was immediately to follow in the train of his own ministrations (Mark 1:4-7); and to the apostles in the days of our Savior upon earth, that He with whom they companied was soon to be lifted up for the healing of the nations, and that all who looked to Him should live (John 6:40); and finally, to the apostles after the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when, fraught with the full and explicit tidings of a world's atonement and a world's regeneration, they went forth with the doctrine of Christianity in its entire copiousness, and have transmitted it to future ages in a book, of which it has been said, that no man shall add thereto, and that no man shall take away from it" [Chalmers, 12-13].

Chalmers continues: "This forms but a faint and a feeble outline of that march, by which God's external revelation has passed magnificently onwards, from the first days of our world, through the twilight of the patriarchal ages – and the brightening of the Jewish dispensation, aided as it was by the secondary luster of types and of ceremonies – and the constant accumulation of Prophecy, with its visions every century becoming more distinct, and its veil becoming more transparent – and the personal communications of God manifest in the flesh, who opened His mouth amongst us, but still opened it in parables – insomuch that when He ascended from His disciples, He still left them in wonder and dimness and mystery – Till, by the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit from the place which He had gone to occupy, the evidence of inspiration received its last and its mightiest enlargement, which is now open to all for the purpose of augmentation" [Chalmers, 13-14].

One might ask, wasn't there an exception made to this rule of gradual revelation with respect to the prophets? Weren't they given full spiritual enlightenment in order to write their prophecies? Surprisingly, the answer to this question is, "No": the prophets were not given full spiritual enlightenment. In fact, we are told that, at times, they did not even understand the full ramifications of things that they themselves were prophesying about. Peter teaches us: **"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things"** (I Pet. 1:10-12). Chalmers expounds on the meaning of this passage in Peter's epistle: "This passage sets the old prophets before us in a very striking attitude. They positively did not know the meaning of their own prophecies. They were like men of dim and imperfect sight, whose hand was guided by some foreign power to the execution of a picture – and who, after it was finished, vainly attempted, by straining their eyes, to explain and to

ascertain the subject of it. They were transmitters of a light, which, at the same time, did not illuminate themselves. They uttered the word, or they put down in writing, as it was given to them – and then they searched by their own power, but searched in vain for the signification of it. They enquired diligently what the meaning of the Spirit could be, when it testified of the sufferings of Christ and the glory of Christ. But until that Spirit gave the power of discernment, as well as set before them the objects of discernment – their attempts were nugatory. And indeed they were sensible of this, and acquiesced in it. It was told them by revelation, that the subject matter of their prophecy was not for themselves, but for others – even for those to whom the gospel should be preached in future days, and who, along with the ministration of the external word, were to receive the ministration of the Holy Spirit – whose office it is to put into the mouths of prophets the things which are to be looked to and believed, and whose office also it is to put into the hearts of others the power of seeing and believing these things” [Chalmers, 15-16].

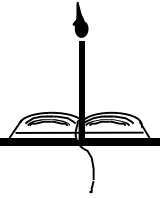
And so, while the prophets were advancing spiritual knowledge to all mankind at a macro level, on the micro level, their personal knowledge of spiritual things was advancing at the rate determined by the grace of the Holy Spirit, within the confines of the restrictions of God’s ultimate plan. The prophets did not have complete spiritual enlightenment and discernment. They did not have all the answers. Likewise, we ourselves should not feel that we need to have all the answers concerning Biblical and spiritual matters. There is much that we do not understand. There are plenty of passages in the Bible that are difficult, and puzzling. We ask, “What is this saying?” or “Why would God do this?” Many times, we come across a spiritual issue, or Biblical passage, that we have not yet been given the spiritual discernment to figure out, or to understand.

For we ourselves, on a micro level, are advancing in our spiritual knowledge gradually, in a similar manner that mankind as a whole advanced in spiritual knowledge. We began in spiritual darkness, not understanding anything about the Christian religion, and the way of salvation, perhaps even mocking it. Then at some point, we were introduced to the Gospel message – through a sermon, or the words of a friend, etc. – and it resonated in a way which before it had not resonated. The Holy Spirit opened our mind and heart to the

Gospel message, and we responded to it. Notice that, just as was the case for the increasing of spiritual knowledge at the macro level, there was an external stimulus (a sermon, the words of a friend, a passage in a book or in the Bible, etc.), accompanied by an internal response, in the form of increased spiritual discernment, as given to us by the Holy Spirit. In this same way, our spiritual growth continues. There are many passages in the Bible that we did not understand at all when we first read them, or heard them spoken about. But then at some point, “Boom!” something clicked, and now we do understand them. And as we read the Bible more, and open ourselves to spiritual instruction, we understand more and more about what God is doing, and how He is doing it. Peter, in a different passage, alludes to this method of spiritual enlightenment: **“We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts”** (2 Peter 1:19-20). Pay attention to the words in the Bible, and at some point (the Holy Spirit willing), **“the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts”**.

By way of application, we must realize, again, that we do not have all the answers, and we are continually on the road to spiritual growth. Complete spiritual enlightenment, complete knowledge of the ways and workings of God, will not happen in this life. We must also realize that each of us are at different points in our spiritual growth; we each are at different milestones on the path to spiritual enlightenment. Knowing this should influence us to have a bit of tolerance for those who might disagree with us on the less critical aspects of Christian faith. It seems to me that there is a lot of energy spent on trying to convince fellow Christians on issues for which there are not established answers. We cannot “argue” someone into understanding some fine point of Christian Theology. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to impart spiritual discernment, as He sees fit. Though we may have the privilege of providing external stimuli to the gradually improving spiritual eyesight of others – by preaching the Gospel, by teaching the Word of God – it is the office of the Holy Spirit to improve the hearer’s spiritual eyesight so that the ways and workings of God can be more fully understood.

A Study in Wisdom: Job 1:6-12 Introduction



[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 1:6-12 Introduction - The Cause of Job's Affliction, by Joseph Caryl (1666)

⁶Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. ⁷And the LORD said unto Satan, "Whence comest thou?" Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." ⁸And the LORD said unto Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" ⁹Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, "Doth Job fear God for nought? ¹⁰Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. ¹¹But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." ¹²And the LORD said unto Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand." So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

Usually where God gives much grace, He tries grace much. To whom God has given strong shoulders, on him for the most part He lays heavy burdens. As soon as Job is spoken of thus prepared (as in the previous verses), the next thing

that follows is an affliction.

And so we are come to the second main division of the chapter, which is the *affliction of Job*, and that is set forth from this 6th verse to the end of the 19th. And lest we should conceive it to have come upon him by chance, it is punctually described four ways.

1. *By the causes of it*, ver. 6-12.
2. *By the instruments of it*, ver. 15-19.
3. *By the manner of it*, ver. 14-19.
4. *By the time of it*, ver. 13.

First, his afflictions are set forth in their *causes*, and that is done from the sixth verse to the end of the twelfth. And the *causes* are three-fold.

First, the *efficient causes*, and they were two.

1. *The supreme and principal efficient cause*, and that was God, ordering and disposing the affliction of Job.
2. *The subordinate efficient cause*, and that was Satan; he was an efficient but under God. Satan found out other instruments and tools to do it by, but he was an efficient subordinate unto God. And the text discovers him three ways:

- *By his diligence in tempting*, ver. 7.
- *By his malice in slandering*, ver. 9-11.
- *By his cruelty in soliciting the overthrow and affliction of Job*, ver. 11.

Secondly, we have the material cause of Job's affliction, or in what matter he was afflicted; and that is laid down, first *positively* in those words, *All that he has is in thy power*; that is, his outward estate, that was the matter wherein he was afflicted. Then it is laid down *negatively*, in those words, *Only upon himself put not forth thy hand*. God does set him out how far the affliction shall go: *In the things that he has you shalt afflict him, but you shall not meddle with his person, with his body or with his soul*.

Thirdly, the *final cause of Job's affliction*, and that is, the practical and experimental determination, decision or stating of a great question that was between God and Satan concerning Job's sincerity. God tells Satan that Job was a good and just

man; Satan denies it, and says that Job was an hypocrite. Now the determination of this question was the general final cause of Job's affliction. When on the one side God affirms it, and on the other side Satan denies it: how shall it be tried? Who shall be the moderator and umpire between them? Satan will not believe God, and God had no reason to believe Satan: How then should this be made out? It is as if Satan had said, "Here is your yea and my nay, this question will never be ended or decided between us, unless you will admit some course to have Job soundly afflicted. This will quickly discover what metal the man is made of; therefore let him come to the trial," says Satan. "Let him," says God, "behold all that he has is in your power, do your worst to him, only upon his person put not forth your hand." So, the general final cause of Job's affliction is the determination of the question, the decision of the dispute between God and Satan, whether Job was a sincere and holy man or not.

And all this (to give you the sum of those 6 verses a little further), is here set forth and described to us after the manner of men, by an *anthropopathic*, which is, when God expresses Himself in His actions and dispensations with and toward the world, as if He were a man. So God does here; He presents Himself in this business after the manner of some great King sitting upon his throne, having his servants attending him, and taking an account of them, what they had done, or giving instructions and commissions to them what they shall do. This, I say, God does here after the manner of men, for otherwise we are not to conceive that God makes certain days of sessions with His creatures, wherein He calls the good and bad angels together about the affairs of the world. We must not have such gross conceits of God, for He needs receive no information from them, neither does He give them or Satan any formal commission; neither is Satan admitted into the presence of God, to come so near God at any time; neither is God moved at all by the slanders of Satan, or by his accusations to deliver up His servants and children into his hands for a moment. But only the Scripture speaks thus, to teach us how God carries Himself in the affairs of the world, even as if

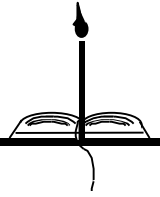
He sat upon His throne, and called every creature before Him, and gave each a direction, what and when and where to work, how far and which way to move in every action.

So that these six verses following, which contain the causes of Job's affliction are (as we may so speak) the *scheme or draught of providence*; (that may be the title of them). If a man would *delineate providence*, he might do it thus; suppose God upon His throne, with Angels good and bad, yea all creatures about Him and He directing, sending, ordering every one, as a Prince does his subjects, or as a Master his servants, do you this and do you that, etc., so all is ordered according to His dictate. Thus all things in Heaven and Earth are disposed of by the unerring wisdom, and limited by the Almighty power of God.

Such a representation as this we read in I Kings 22:19, where Micaiah said to Ahab, "**Hear thou the word of the Lord, I saw the Lord sitting upon His throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by Him.**" And so he goes on to show how a spirit came and offered himself to be a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets. This is only a shadow of providence; there was no such thing really acted. God did not convene or call together a Synod of spirits to advise with about hard or doubtful cases; nor are wicked spirits admitted into His presence. Only by this we are instructed and assured that God does as exactly order all things in Heaven and earth, as if He stood questioning or interrogating good Angels, men and devils concerning those matters.



A Meditation: The Spiritual Chemist



A Meditation Upon the Putting Out of a Candle by William Spurstowe (1666)

Light and darkness are in Scripture the two most usual expressions by which happiness and misery are set forth unto us. Hell and Heaven, which will one day divide the whole World between them, and become the sole mansions of endless woe, and blessedness, are described, the one to be a place of outward darkness, and the other an inheritance in light. But it is observable also, that as the happiness of worldly men, and believers is wholly differing; so the light to which the one and other is resembled, is greatly discrepant.

The happiness of the wicked worldling is compared to a *candle*, which is a feeble and dim light, and consumes itself by burning, or is put out by every small puff of wind; but the prosperity and happiness of the righteous is not *lucerna in domo*, a candle in a house; but *sol in cielo*, as the sun in the sky, which though it may be clouded or eclipsed, yet can never be extinguished, or interrupted in its course, but that it will shine more and more unto the perfect day, till it come to the fullness of bliss and glory in Heaven.

May we not, then, rather bemoan, than envy, the best conditioned of worldly men, who comes out of a dark womb into a dark world, and has no healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness arising upon him to enlighten his paths, or to direct his steps. What if he have some few strictures of light, which the creatures, that are no better than a *rush candle* do seem to refresh him with, and in the confidence of which he walks for a time. Yet alas! How suddenly do the damps of affliction make such a light to burn low, and to expire, and to leave him as lost in the pitchy shades of anguish and despair? How do the terrors of darkness multiply upon him

every moment all those evils that a restless fancy can suggest? He sees nothing, and yet he speaks of ghastly shapes that stand before him. He cannot tell who hurts him, and yet he complains of the stinging of serpents, of the torments of fiery flames, of the wracking of his limbs. If he have cordials put into his mouth, he spits them out again, as if they were the gall of asps, or if he have food ministered to him he wholly rejects it, as that which will help to lengthen out a miserable life; and yet death to him would be the worst thing to befall him. If death approach, he then cries out, as *Crisorius* in *Gregory*, “*Inducias vel usque ad mane, inducias vel usque ad mane*”, or, “A truce, a respite Lord, until the morning!” So great are his straits, as that he knows not what to choose.

O that I could then affect some fond worldlings with the vanity and fickleness of their condition, who have nothing to secure them from an endless night of darkness, but the wan and pale light of a few earthly comforts, which are oftentimes far shorter than their lives, but never can be one moment longer. Have you no wisdom to consider, that your life is but a span, and that all your delights are not so much? Have you never read of a state of blessedness, in which it is said, that there shall be no night, and they need no candle, “*neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth thine light, and they shall reign forever and ever*” (Rev. 22:5). Or are you so regardless of the future, as that you will resolvedly hazard whatever can fall out, for the present satisfaction of some inordinate desires? Do you not fear the threatening of Him who has said, “*The candle of the wicked shall be put out*” (Prov. 24:20)? Oh then, while it is called today, make David’s prayer from your heart. Say: “*Lord lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us, Thou shalt put gladness in my heart more than in the time my corn and wine increased*” (Ps. 4:7).



Bibliography and Suggested Reading

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There is Forgiveness with God

"There is forgiveness with God. Poor souls are apt to think that all those whom they read or hear of to be gone to heaven, went thither because they were so good and so holy. It is true many of them were eminently and exemplarily so in their generations; all of them were so according to their degrees and measures, for 'without holiness no man can see God'; and it is our duty to labor to be like unto them in holiness, if ever we intend to be so in happiness and glory. But yet not one of them, not any one that is now in heaven, Jesus Christ alone excepted, did ever come thither any other way but by forgiveness of sins; and that will also bring us thither, though we come short of many of them in holiness and grace."

— *John Owen (1616-1683)*