

Scripture Studies

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“Come now, let us reason together,’ says the Lord...” *Isaiah 1:18*

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For readability's sake, some of the classic articles have been lightly edited, so that they follow modern English usage for certain words. Very occasionally, they are edited in other ways, also. Every attempt is made to maintain the author's original meaning and wording. If such editing irks you, I apologize.

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Old Testament Study: Exodus 35-40

A Study by C. H. Mackintosh (1820-1896)

Exodus 35-40 – The Obedience in Building the Tabernacle

²⁰ And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. ²¹ And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD'S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. ²² And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. ²³ And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. ²⁴ Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the LORD'S offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it. ²⁵ And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. ²⁶ And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. ²⁷ And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; ²⁸ And spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. ²⁹ The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work,

which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses. (Ex. 35:20-29, KJV)

⁴ And all the wise men, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; ⁵ And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. ⁶ And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. ⁷ For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much. (Ex. 36:4-7, KJV)

⁴² According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. ⁴³ And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them. (Ex. 39:42-43, KJV)

³⁴ Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (Ex. 40:34-35, KJV)

These chapters contain a recapitulation of the various parts of the tabernacle and its furniture; and inasmuch as I have already given what I believe to be the import of the more prominent parts, it were needless to add more. There are, however, two things in this section from which we may deduce most profitable instruction, and these are, first, *the voluntary devotedness*; and, secondly, *the implicit obedience* of the people, with respect to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

And first, as to their *voluntary devotedness*, we read, **“And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose**

heart stirred him up, and every one whom *his spirit made willing*, and they brought *the LORD's offering* to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, *as many as were willing hearted*, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass, brought the LORD's offering: and every man with whom was found shittim wood, for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women *whose heart stirred them up* in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate: and spice and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. The children of Israel brought *a willing offering* unto *the LORD*, every man and woman, *whose heart made them willing* to bring, for all manner of work which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses" (Ex. 35:20-29, KJV).

And, again, we read, "And all the wise men that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; and they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring *much more than enough* for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make... for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much" (Ex. 36:4-7, KJV).

A lovely picture this of devotedness to the work of the sanctuary! It needed no effort to move the hearts of the people to give, no earnest appeals, no impressive arguments.

Oh! no; their **“hearts stirred them up.”** This was the true way. The streams of voluntary devotedness flowed from within. **“Rulers,” “men,” “women”**—all felt it to be their sweet privilege to give to the Lord not with a narrow heart or niggard hand, but after such a princely fashion that they had *“enough and too much.”*

Then, as to *their implicit obedience*, we read, **“According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them”** (Ex. 39:42-43, KJV). The Lord had given the most minute instructions concerning the entire work of the tabernacle. Every pin, every socket, every loop, every tack was accurately set forth. There was no room left for man’s expediency, his reason, or his common sense. Jehovah did not give a great outline and leave man to fill it up. He left no margin whatever in which man might enter his regulations. By no means. **“See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount”** (Ex. 25:40; 26:30; Heb. 8:5). This left no room for human device. If man had been allowed to make a single pin, that pin would, most assuredly, have been out of place in the judgment of God. We can see what man’s **“graving tool”** produces, in chapter 32. Thank God, it had no place in the tabernacle. They did, in this matter, just what they were told—nothing more—nothing less. Salutory lesson this for the professing church! There are many things in the history of Israel which we should earnestly seek to avoid—their impatient murmurings, their legal vows, and their idolatry; but in those two things may we imitate them. May our devotedness be more wholehearted and our obedience more implicit. We may safely assert that, if all had not been done **“according to the pattern shewed in the mount,”** we should not have to read, **“then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to**

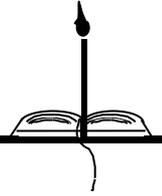
enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Ex. 40:34-35, KJV). The tabernacle was, in all respects, according to *the divine pattern*, and, therefore, it could be filled with *the divine glory*.

There is a volume of instruction in this. We are too prone to regard the Word of God as insufficient for the most minute details connected with His worship and service. This is a great mistake, a mistake which has proved the fruitful source of evils and errors, in the professing Church. The Word of God is amply sufficient for everything, whether as regards personal salvation and walk, or the order and rule of the assembly. **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*”** (2 Tim. 3:16-17, KJV). This settles the question. If the Word of God furnishes a man *thoroughly* unto **“all good works,”** it follows, as a necessary consequence, that whatever I find not in its pages, cannot possibly be a good work. And, further, be it remembered, that the divine glory cannot connect itself with aught that is not according to the divine pattern.



This article is taken from: Mackintosh, C. H. *Notes on the Book of Exodus*. London: George Morrish, 1858. A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at <http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>.

A Classic Study: Job 1:16-17



[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.]

A Study by Joseph Caryl (1644)

Job 1:16-17 - The Fire and the Chaldeans

¹⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. ¹⁷ While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. (KJV)

In verse 16, we have the second charge which this great enemy gives Job, **“While he was yet speaking there came also another.”** *Afflictions seldom go alone*, and therefore, when one affliction is ended, look!, another should begin and one should labor to prepare for it. Job having received this message of the loss of his cattle and death of his servants, while the messenger was yet speaking, a second comes with a sadder story than that. Satan *was yet speaking*; one evil treads upon the heel of another; as wave overtakes wave in the sea, so it was here; here was wave after wave to overwhelm his

spirit. And as it is said in the *Revelation*, concerning him that sat on the white horse, that he rode out *conquering and to conquer*, there was no intermission of his victories; so Satan goes forth afflicting and to afflict, vexing and to vex, tempting and to tempt; he will never give over. **“While he was yet speaking there come also another, and said the fire of God is fallen upon the sheep.”**

“The fire of God” – Why is it here called the *fire of God*? Some conceive it is called the *fire of God*, because sent from God: that is ascribed to God, which comes from God, as that in Gen. 19:24, where it is said that *the LORD did rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom out of heaven from the LORD*, or *Jehovah* did rain from *Jehovah* fire upon Sodom to consume it. And in Lev. 10:2, it is said that *a fire went out from the LORD and consumed Nadab and Abihu*. Elijah procures fire from Heaven to consume the captains that came from the King to take him (see II Kings 1:10, 12). The Psalmist speaking of the plagues of Egypt (in Ps. 105:32) said that *the LORD sent flames of fire in the land*. So some expound in Ps. 104:3: *He maketh his Angel’s spirits and his ministers a flame of fire*, that is, he uses flames of fire for his ministers, for his messengers. God sometimes sends a fire on his errands, though we know that place is applied to the angels by the Apostle (see Heb. 1:7).

But here rather it is called the *fire of God* in another regard; for howsoever this fire was sent of God, as all afflictions are, yet because the immediate kindler of it was Satan, he had the power put into his hand. Therefore, this was not a fire (in that sense as those other fires are said to be) sent from God. But it may be called (as usually in Scripture) because of the strangeness of the fire; it was a wonderful, an extraordinary fire; and so it is very ordinary in the Hebrew to use the name of God—*El*, *Elohim* or *Jehovah*—as an Epithite, as an additional word to heighten the excellence or rareness of things.

We find that phrase often, *A man of God*, the Hebrews say, to call one a man of God, is as much as to say, he is an

extraordinary man, a man of an excellent spirit, a Prophet, a holy man. In that Psalm where the church is shadowed under the similitude of a *vine*, it is said, **“She did send forth her branches like the goodly cedars”** (Ps. 8:10), so we translate it. The original word is, *She sent forth her branches as the cedars of God*, that is, *excellent cedars, tall and extraordinary cedars*. In Psalm 36:6, comparing the love of God to great mountains: **“Thy loving kindness is as the great mountains,”** the word is, *like the mountains of God*. In Psalm 65:9, **“Thou refreshest it with the river of God,”** that is, *with an excellent river*. In Song of Solomon 8:6, speaking of love and of jealousy: **“Love is strong as death, jealous is cruel as the grave, the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame,”** the word in the original is, *a flame of God, the coals thereof are coals of fire, the flame of God*, that is, *a strange fire, an unheard of, an unusual fire, a vehement fire*, such a fire as had not been seen nor observed before. Therefore, the Hebrews call extraordinary things the things of God; because indeed all the wonders and excellencies, all the glory and goodness that is in creatures, is but a footstep, a print or drop of that excellency and glory and power that is in God; therefore everything that is most excellent, is ascribed unto God. It is most equal that his name should be stamped upon all excellent things in the creature, who is the cause of all creature excellency. This fire being a strange and extraordinary fire is said to be the fire of God.

This fire of God is conceived to have been some terrible flash of lightning, which in a moment destroyed and consumed the sheep and shepherds. And this is more probable, because it is said, to fall down from heaven, that is, out of the air; for so often in Scripture, heaven is put for the air, the middle region of the air, where Satan has great power, therefore he is called, *the prince of the air*. And he can do mighty things, command much in that magazine of heaven, where that dreadful artillery, which makes men tremble, those fiery meteors, thunder and lightning, are lodged up and stored up.

Satan let loose by God can do wonders in the air. He can raise storms; he can discharge the ordinance of heaven, thunder and lightning, and by his art, he can make them more terrible and dreadful than they are in nature. If the skill and art of man can heighten natural things, then much more the skill of Satan. I doubt not but many fearful impressions are made in the air by devils, carrying nature (by God's permission) far above its own course, and these are properly *marvels* or *wonders* (such as the magicians wrought in Egypt by the help of Satan), for miracles are quite out of the devil's sphere. But he can do wonders, and such was this fire falling from heaven, etc. *A marvel or wonder is nature mightily improved; a miracle is nature totally crossed, if not contradicted.* Observe this for the nature of that fire; the effect of it follows in the next words.

“It hath burnt up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them”: The word in the original is, *It did burn them and eat them up.* Fire is a devouring element. Devouring fire, as before a devouring sword, these were devouring judgments upon Job. Yet it does not necessarily infer that the sheep were all burnt to ashes; but that the sheep were all killed by that flame of lightning that came from heaven, for it is said of Nadab and Abihu (of which we spoke before) that a fire went out from God, and did consume them. It is the same original word that is here in the text, *a fire went out from God, and did eat them up,* yet we know their bodies were not consumed, for they were carried out to their burial and their garments were upon them. So that this consuming does not note the burning of things to ashes, but a striking of them to death; it is a devouring fire, because it is a destroying fire; it takes away life; and thus lightnings kill rather by piercing and penetrating than by consuming and devouring.

But now here it will be questioned for the further opening of this, why Satan chooses thus to consume the sheep with fire? Why does he not rather use spoilers to take them away? He could doubtless have got the Sabeans to have fetched away

the flocks of sheep, as well as the droves of greater cattle; he could have procured them easily; why then does he cause fire from heaven to come down, the fire of God to consume them.

I answer, his reason for this was to put the greater sting into the affliction. He would not have the sheep taken away after the same manner that the oxen and camels were, that he might aggravate Job's trouble, and provoke him if he could to be passionate against God, yea and (for that was his great design) to blaspheme God; therefore he procures fire from heaven to fall upon the sheep, thereby to beget an opinion in Job that God had now become his enemy, as well as man. When we suffer from man, then the afflicted soul flies to God, makes his complaint and moans to him, as doubtless Job did when he heard of those cruel Sabeans, and what they had done; but lest Job should resort in his thoughts to heaven, and comfort himself in God again, the next messenger tells him that God is his enemy too, that the *fire of God* is fallen upon the sheep, an extraordinary fire; as if he should say, God fights against thee as well as the Sabeans. Alas now to whom should Job make his moan! That speech of Eli concerning sin may well be applied to suffering, **"If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him, but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?"** (I Sam. 2:25). So if a man suffer from men, he may go to God, but if God himself appears to be an enemy and to fight against us, to whom shall we go? Indeed, Job knew how to go to God, though he did appear as an enemy; but that is the greatest strait, and to do thus denotes great spiritual skill and strength. Hence observe,

That Satan's great design against the people of God or any servant of God is to provoke them to ill thoughts of God, to persuade them that God is their enemy, to bring the love and good will of God into suspicion; therefore he causes this great fire, and formed the servants language in that cutting phrase, "The fire of God is fallen upon the sheep." You cannot put this off,

as you might do the other, and say, this is but the malice or the covetousness of the Sabeans that robbed me of my goods and slew my servants. No, you shall see now that God himself is angry, heaven frowns upon you, the fire of God from heaven consumes you. Turn over the records of all antiquity, and see whether God ever dealt thus with any, but those cursed Sodomites upon *whom God rained fire from heaven*. You who come so near them in the punishment, has reason to judge yourself not far behind them in sin.

Secondly observe,

Those afflictions are most grievous wherein God appears to be against us. The malice of devils and the rage of men may be endured, but who can stand before God, when he is angry. If God but withdraws his comforts, the soul sinks under smallest trials, how then can it stand if God should reveal his wrath against us, when we are in great trials.

It may here be questioned, why the sheep were consumed with fire, rather than any other of his cattle, rather than any other of his substance?

There are two things in that. First, the sheep were used in sacrifice. *When the days of their feasting were ended, Job offered sacrifice,* and the sheep chiefly were offered in sacrifice. Now Satan, by consuming the sheep, hoped to fasten this upon Job, if possibly he could, that God was angry with his very sacrifices, that God was angry with his services. As if he should say, *Doest thou think that the offering up of thy sheep in sacrifice hath been pleasing to God? Certainly if the fire of those sacrifices had delighted God, if he had smelt a savor of rest in them* (as he is said to have done, when Noah offered sacrifice after the flood, see Gen. 8:21) *he would never have sent a fire from heaven to consume them.* That is conceived by expositors to be a special reason why the sheep were consumed, namely to cast Job upon this apprehension, that his very sacrifices were rejected of God: that he might conclude of himself (as Solomon said of the wicked) *that his sacrifices were an abomination to the Lord,* and to show that God would now have no more of his sacrifices,

God himself made one sacrifice of them all. But Origen brings in Job excellently retorting this suggestion upon Satan. I sacrificed now one and then another of my sheep to God, but now blessed be God, who has accepted all my flock as one burnt-offering.

Again, the sheep were consumed by fire, as to make Job conceive that his former services were rejected, so to take him off and discourage him from offering any more such services; to make him despair of ever thriving in the way of those duties: and conclude surely God is so angry now, that all my services, all my sacrifices will never appease him nor profit me. Therefore, I were as good lay by these duties as perform them, when I get no good. This is a dangerous temptation; if Satan by such prejudices against holy duties, can cause us to lay them by, the day is won: for then the soul is left naked and unarmed. We have not then so much as a bulrush in our hands to smite him, or a paper breastplate to secure ourselves. If we give over praying and seeking, we have no ground to expect Christ either assisting or protecting us. That for the second affliction.

“While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee” (vs. 18)

This is the third affliction, the taking away of the camels, and the destroying of the servants that waited upon them. There is not much to stay upon in this, having before opened most of the passages of it in the 15th verse.

“While he was yet speaking, there came also another and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands.” *Chaldeans* sometimes note a condition or a rank of men, such as were diviners, soothsayers and astrologers. These are in Scripture called *Chaldeans*. As the *Indians* called such skillful persons *Gymnosophistes*, and the *Persians* called them their *Magi*,

and the *Romans* called them *Augurs*, so the *Assyrians* called them *Chaldeans*. When Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a dream, it is said, that he sent for the *diviners and the astrologers, and the Chaldeans*; and afterward the *Chaldeans* take up all. The term *Chaldeans* was used for all those that undertook the art of divining and interpreting dreams. But here by the *Chaldeans*, are to be understood, not a condition of men, but a nation of men, or the people inhabiting Chaldea, which was a land frequently spoken of by the Prophets, and described to the life by the Prophet Habakkuk (in Hab. 1), where the Lord threatened to send the *Chaldeans* against his people, and then describes them, **“That hasty and bitter nation, their horses are swifter than the leopard, and more ravening than the evening wolves”** (Hab. 1:6-8, KJV). Such a kind of people they were who were stirred up by Satan to take away the camels of Job.

These are said to make out three bands to spoil. They were a people like the *Sabeans*, delighting in war and robbery; so much the etymology of their name *Chasdim* (which is the word in the original) implies, being derived from *Sadad*, which signifies to rob and spoil. These were a wicked generation, yet these prevail over the estate of Job; victory does not always attend a just cause. The way of the wicked often prospers, and the way of these wicked *Chaldeans* prospered so often, that the Prophet Habakkuk complains to God as one scandalized at it: **“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity, wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he”** (vs. 13). If ever we should be brought upon a like case, to argue it thus with God, or (as Jeremiah did, in Jer. 12:1) to plead with God about his judgments, let us remember to establish our hearts (before we open our mouths) with the Prophet Jeremiah’s conclusion in that place, *righteous art thou O Lord*, though the wicked devour the man that is more righteous than he. It is very rare that God makes

one good man his rod to scourge his sword, to inflict either trials or judgments upon his people. The dirty scullion scours the silver vessel, and makes it both clean and bright for his master's use.



This article is taken from: Caryl, Joseph. *An Exposition with Practical Observations upon the Book of Job*. London: G. Miller, 1644. A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at

<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>



New Testament Study: Romans 2:1-5

A Study by Scott Sperling

Romans 2:1-5 – The Condemnation on Those Who Judge Others

¹ You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. ² Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³ So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴ Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

⁵ But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

In this section of the epistle, beginning from Romans 1:18 and continuing here, Paul is exposing to the reader the universality of sin, and thus also, the universality of the need of *all* people to accept Christ's sacrifice for their sins, in order to survive the judgment day. In the previous section, Paul wrote of those who are not involved in the worship of the True and Living God, who do not have the revelation of God

and his law through the Bible (the so-called heathens). Paul showed that they are **“without excuse”** (Rom. 1:20) because, even though they are not exposed to the revelation of God in the Bible, they are exposed to the revelation of God through the Creation. They, in fact, **“suppress the truth”** about God (1:18), and follow their own path of a life of sin and rebellion against God. Paul ended chapter 1 with a catalog of sins that heathens practice, as proof of their rebellion against God.

Starting here in chapter 2, Paul turns to those who have the revelation of God’s law, and who know objectively right from wrong through it. He begins: **“You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things”** (vs. 1). “Paul now moves on to show that those who sit in judgment on their fellows are as guilty as those they judge. There is a natural tendency to justify ourselves for the wrong we do by condemning people who do other evils that we think are worse... Paul’s point is that we are all involved in a solidarity of sin that embraces the whole human race” [Morris, 138]. “Paul enables his readers in Rome to share in the *discovery* process that he probably used when he preached his gospel to mixed audiences. We can imagine many self-professed *moral* people adding their ‘Amen’ to the kind of denunciation of ‘heathen’ sins that we find in 1:18-32. Suddenly, however, Paul turns on these people and accuses them of doing **‘the very same things’**” [Moo, 129].

Note Paul’s change of style here. He directly addresses his reader, saying **“You...”**, and then Paul imagines the objections and responses of the reader to what he is writing. Paul is using here, and in many places in this epistle, the literary style called *diatribe*. This was a common style used by Greek philosophers, especially those writing about ethics. It is effective because it personalizes what Paul is writing to the reader’s experience. It shines the light directly on the reader’s

thoughts and actions. This rhetorical style “allows for spirited argument between the writer and his readers” [Morris, 140].

The **“you”** to which Paul is speaking is presumably a Jew (see vs. 17), though these words could apply to anyone who is self-righteous and quick to condemn others for their sins, while ignoring their own. Paul’s ultimate goal, as stated, is to show that all, Gentile and Jew, need the salvation of Jesus. The case of the Jews is handled specifically here, because the Jews felt that their salvation was assured just by being Jewish. Their natural attitude when presented with the gospel message was that they did not need salvation through Jesus. “Yes (the Jew might say), all that you have just now said concerning the moral condition and consequent misery of the Heathen is true. But what is that to us? We are God’s elect. We are His privileged people. We have His Law. We have the Holy Scriptures” [Wordsworth, 212]. “In order to appreciate the force of the apostle’s reasoning in this and the following verses, it should be remembered that the principal ground on which the Jews expected acceptance with God, was the covenant which he had made with their father Abraham, in which God promised to be a God to him and to his seed after him. They understood this promise to secure salvation for all who retained their connection with Abraham, by the observance of the law and the rite of circumcision. They expected, therefore, to be regarded and treated not so much as individuals, each being dealt with according to his personal character, but as a community to whom salvation was secured by the promise made to Abraham” [Hodge, 47]. “The Jews would at once assent to the truthfulness of the previous description [of the sins of the heathens]; but while condemning the Gentiles, they would mentally excuse themselves” [Schaff, 30].

Paul goes on to tell his reader, the **“you”** of vs. 1, exactly why, by judging others, he is condemning himself: **“Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human**

being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?" (vss. 2-3).

Even the Jew, who is familiar with the perfect righteousness of God, would have to agree that God's judgment is **"based on truth."** "Paul thus introduces what he regards, and what his readers regard, as an undoubted truth" [Schaff, 31]. "In claiming that God's judgment is **'according to truth'**, Paul is affirming that God's judgment against sin is fully in accord with the facts, that it is just. This tenet was one on which both Paul and his dialogue partner could agree, it being a standard Jewish teaching" [Moo, 131]. "If God decides any matter, rule, right, character or destiny, he does it *according to truth*, and truth is eternal and unvarying" [Plumer, 89]. "If God should sentence Gentiles to condemnation for transgression of the work of the law written in the heart, and pass a different sentence on Jews transgressing the law of Moses, His judgment or sentence would not be according to truth. If some transgressors escaped, while others were punished, the truth of the threat or penalty was destroyed" [Haldane, 76]. "God's judgment is *according to truth*, i.e., it is righteous and proceeds from the exalted nature of God. It is not capricious. The Lord does not condemn in one man that which he commends in another. He does not look upon appearances, professions and plausibilities. What he loathes in a Greek, he abhors in a Jew" [Plumer, 84].

And so, given that God's judgment is **"based on truth"**, then any sinner, whether heathen, Christian, or Jew, needs to be in fear of God's judgment, for they will not **"escape"** judgment based on what they have done. We all, I am confident to say, have **"done the same things"** that Paul accused the heathens of doing in chapter one. Let us look again at the catalog of sins that Paul leveled against the heathens (see 1:18-32). Have we been sinless in regards to **"sexual impurity"** (vs. 1:24), and **"shameful lusts"** (vs. 1:26)? If we can say we are sinless in that regard, well then,

have we ever displayed signs of **“wickedness”** or **“evil”** or **“greed”** or **“depravity”** (vs. 1:29)? Or have we ever practiced **“envy”** or **“murder”** or **“strife”** or **“deceit”** or **“malice”** (vs. 1:29)? Or have we been **“gossips”** or **“slanderers”** or **“God-haters”** or **“insolent”** or **“arrogant”** or **“boastful”** (vs. 1:30)? Have we ever **“invented ways of doing evil”** (vs. 1:30)? Have we ever **“disobeyed our parents”** (vs. 1:30)? Have we ever been **“unfaithful”** or **“love-less”** or **“merciless”** (vs. 1:32)? Certainly, none of us can travel this gauntlet of sins and remained unstained. Undoubtedly, Paul is speaking truth, when he states, that we all **“do the same things.”**

Given this, it is absurd to think that we who **“do the same things”** will **“escape God’s judgment.”** On the contrary, we who have the revelation of God’s law are more blameworthy, more deserving of judgment, because we **“do the same things”** with the full knowledge that they are abhorrent to God, and deserving of His righteous judgment. “Every judgment pronounced on another becomes the self-condemnation of the one judging; for he is in the same condemnation with the one who is judged by him” [Lange’s, 94]. “The Gentile sinner is without excuse; and his critic—whoever he may be—is equally without excuse, even though [like the Jew] he imagines himself to be on a platform of lofty superiority. No such platform really exists. In fact, the critic only passes sentence upon himself, for by the fact of his criticism he shows that he can distinguish accurately between right and wrong, and his own conduct is identical with that which he condemns” [Sanday-Headlam, 53]. “The truth that God’s judgment is just, and will fall on those who themselves commit the sins which they condemn in others, is so plain, that the apostle exclaims at the folly of those who seem to deny it” [Hodge, 48].

The self-righteous people who judge others, yet **“do the same things”**, and who well know God’s requirements under the law, multiply their sin even more, because they show

contempt for God by flagrantly defying him: **“Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?”** (vs. 4). “Every sin against God has in it more or less contempt of his glorious excellency” [Plumer, 89].

Many see God’s delay of punishment for sin as either proof that God does not exist, or as proof that God does not care if we sin. Rather, we should view God’s delay of punishment as **“riches of his kindness”**, and these riches are **“intended to lead us to repentance.”** “The goodness of God has both the design and tendency to lead men to repentance. If it fails, the fault must be their own... It is a great abuse of the divine goodness and forbearance to derive encouragement from them to continue in sin. Such conduct will certainly aggravate our condemnation” [Hodge, 58]. “By every year which rolls over our heads—by every morning in which we find that we have awoke to the light of a new day instead of awakening in torment—by every hour and every minute through which the stroke of death is suspended, and you still continue a breathing man in the land of gospel calls and gospel invitations—is God now justifying His goodness towards you... It were offence enough to sin against the authority of a superior; but to sin against his forbearance forms a sore and a fatal aggravation” [Chalmers, 40].

When we ignore the **“kindness, forbearance and patience”** of God, by continuing in sin and not seeking His forgiveness, there is a penalty to be paid: **“But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed”** (vs. 5). By continuing in sin, and by taking advantage of God’s patient forbearance, we are **“storing up wrath”** against ourselves. So, in effect, by ignoring the **“riches”** of God’s kindness (see vs. 4), we are storing up **“riches”** of **“wrath”**. “The treasure of wrath is substituted by the impenitent for the

wealth of the Divine goodness” [Liddon, 42]. “Sins will be punished according to their accumulation. A man is rich according to his treasures. The wicked will be punished according to the number and aggravation of their sins” [Haldane, 80]. “God’s patience with sin must not be taken as a sign that he is weak or that he will withhold his judgment forever” [Moo, 134]. “Ironically, the delay in divine retribution gives one even more time to accumulate a store of wrath” [Mounce, 64]. It is a “fearful delusion of the man who expects advantage from sin” [Robinson, 133]. “This spiritual hardness accompanied by impenitence causes one to store up wrath, a metaphor drawn from commerce for accumulating wealth, literally ‘**storing treasure.**’ The picture here is the progressive accumulation of sin throughout one’s lifetime that will end with the final judgment before God’s judgment seat, called *the day of God’s wrath*” [Osbourne].

Make no mistake, there will come a time when God’s patience with sin will come to an end, and He will judge every single person, according to what he has done. This will be **“the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed”** (vs. 5). “We should not miss Paul’s point that sin will inevitably reap its due reward, and that God will be active in the process” [Morris, 146]. We are told elsewhere by Paul: **“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad”** (II Cor. 5:10). “It will be a day when His righteousness shall be universally manifested and magnified; when all His attributes shall be glorified; His wonderful clemency sweetly displayed; His exact justice terribly demonstrated; His perfect wisdom clearly unfolded; all the knotty plans of Providence wisely resolved; all the mysterious depths of His counsels fully discovered; and His injured honor and glory clearly repaired, to the joyful satisfaction of all good men, and to the dreadful consternation and confusion of the wicked and impenitent world” [Burkitt, in Lange’s, 106].

On that day, God's judgment will be a **"righteous judgment"**, in accordance with the perfectly righteous character of God. "There is no judgment of God which is not according to strict justice; there is none that is a judgment of mercy. Mercy and justice are irreconcilable except in Christ, in whom mercy is exercised consistently with justice. There is no judgment that admits repentance and amendment of life as satisfactory to justice. Repentance and amendment are not admitted to stand in the room of righteousness. It is a truth to which there is no exception, either with respect to God or man, that righteous judgment admits no mercy. The acquittal of the believer in that day will be as just as the condemnation of the sinner. It will be the day in which God, by Jesus Christ, will judge the world in *righteousness*, according to the strict rules of justice (see Acts 17:31), in which none will be acquitted except those whom the Lord, in His representation of the judgment, calls the **'righteous'** (see Matt 25:31-46); and He calls them righteous because they are really so in Christ Jesus" [Haldane, 80-81].



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A Study in History: The Reformation

[In October/November of 1517, a little more than 500 years ago, Martin Luther published and distributed his “95 Theses”, enumerating his objections to certain practices, at that time, of the Roman Catholic Church. The publication of the “95 Theses” is commonly considered to be the event that sparked the Protestant Reformation. To commemorate its 500th anniversary, we reprint here Philip Schaff’s introduction to the history of the Reformation, from volume six of his excellent work, HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.]

Introduction to the Protestant Reformation, pt. 1, by Philip Schaff

**“Now the Lord is the Spirit:
and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”**
(Psalm 4:8, KJV)

SECTION 1.

The Turning Point of Modern History

The Reformation of the sixteenth century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, the greatest event in history. It marks the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times. Starting from religion, it gave, directly or indirectly, a mighty impulse to every forward movement, and made Protestantism the chief propelling force in the history of modern civilization.

The age of the Reformation bears a strong resemblance to the first century. Both are rich beyond any other period in

great and good men, important facts, and permanent results. Both contain the ripe fruits of preceding, and the fruitful germs of succeeding ages. They are turning points in the history of mankind. They are felt in their effects to this day, and will be felt to the end of time. They refashioned the world from the innermost depths of the human soul in its contact with the infinite Being. They were ushered in by a providential concurrence of events and tendencies of thought. The way for Christianity was prepared by Moses and the Prophets, the dispersion of the Jews, the conquests of Alexander the Great, the language and literature of Greece, the arms and laws of Rome, the decay of idolatry, the spread of skepticism, the aspirations after a new revelation, the hopes of a coming Messiah. The Reformation was preceded and necessitated by the corruptions of the papacy, the decline of monasticism and scholastic theology, the growth of mysticism, the revival of letters, the resurrection of the Greek and Roman classics, the invention of the printing press, the discovery of a new world, the publication of the Greek Testament, the general spirit of enquiry, the striving after national independence and personal freedom. In both centuries we hear the creative voice of the Almighty calling light out of darkness.

The sixteenth century is the age of the renaissance in religion, literature, and art. The air was stirred by the spirit of progress and freedom. The snows of a long winter were fast melting before the rays of the vernal sun. The world seemed to be renewing its youth; old things were passing away, all things were becoming new. Pessimists and timid conservatives took alarm at the threatened overthrow of cherished notions and institutions, and were complaining, fault-finding and desponding. A very useless business. Intelligent observers of the signs of the times looked hopefully and cheerfully to the future. "O century!" exclaimed Ulrich von Hutten, "the studies flourish, the spirits are awake, it is a luxury to live." And Luther wrote in 1522: "If you read all the annals of the past, you will find no century like this

since the birth of Christ. Such building and planting, such good living and dressing, such enterprise in commerce, such a stir in all the arts, has not been since Christ came into the world. And how numerous are the sharp and intelligent people who leave nothing hidden and unturned: even a boy of twenty years knows more nowadays than was known formerly by twenty doctors of divinity.”

The Protestant Reformation assumed the helm of the liberal tendencies and movements of the renaissance, directed them into the channel of Christian life, and saved the world from a disastrous revolution. For the Reformation was neither a revolution nor a restoration, though including elements of both. It was negative and destructive towards error, positive and constructive towards truth; it was conservative as well as progressive; it built up new institutions in the place of those which it pulled down; and for this reason and to this extent it has succeeded.

Under the motherly care of the Latin Church, Europe had been Christianized and civilized, and united into a family of nations under the spiritual government of the Pope and the secular government of the Emperor, with one creed, one ritual, one discipline, and one sacred language. The state of heathenism and barbarism at the beginning of the sixth century contrasts with the state of Christian Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century as midnight darkness compared with the dawn of the morning. But the sun of the day had not yet arisen.

All honor to the Catholic Church and her inestimable services to humanity. But Christianity is far broader and deeper than any ecclesiastical organization. It burst the shell of mediaeval forms, struck out new paths, and elevated Europe to a higher plane of intellectual, moral and spiritual culture than it had ever attained before.

SECTION 2.

Protestantism and Romanism

Protestantism represents the most enlightened and active part of modern church history, but not the whole of it.

Since the sixteenth century Western Christendom is divided and runs in two distinct channels. The separation may be compared to the Eastern schism of the ninth century, which is not healed to this day; both parties being as firm and unyielding as ever on the doctrinal question of the *Filioque*, and the more important practical question of Popery. But Protestantism differs much more widely from the Roman church than the Roman church differs from the Greek, and the Protestant schism has become the fruitful mother of minor divisions, which exist in separate ecclesiastical organizations.

We must distinguish between Catholicism and Romanism. The former embraces the ancient Oriental church, the medieval church, and we may say, in a wider sense, all the modern evangelical churches. Romanism is the Latin church turned against the Reformation, consolidated by the Council of Trent and completed by the Vatican Council of 1870 with its dogma of papal absolutism and papal infallibility. Medieval Catholicism is pre-evangelical, looking to the Reformation; modern Romanism is anti-evangelical, condemning the Reformation, yet holding with unyielding tenacity the ecumenical doctrines once sanctioned, and doing this all the more by virtue of its claim to infallibility.

The distinction between pre-Reformation Catholicism and post-Reformation Romanism, in their attitude towards Protestantism, has its historical antecedent and parallel in the distinction between pre-Christian Israel which prepared the way for Christianity, and post-Christian Judaism which opposed it as an apostasy.

Catholicism and Protestantism represent two distinct types

of Christianity which sprang from the same root, but differ in the branches.

Catholicism is legal Christianity which served to the barbarian nations of the Middle Ages as a necessary school of discipline; Protestantism is evangelical Christianity which answers the age of independent manhood. Catholicism is traditional, hierarchical, ritualistic, conservative; Protestantism is biblical, democratic, spiritual, progressive. The former is ruled by the principle of authority, the latter by the principle of freedom. But the law, by awakening a sense of sin and exciting a desire for redemption, leads to the gospel; parental authority is a school of freedom; filial obedience looks to manly self-government.

The characteristic features of medieval Catholicism are intensified by Romanism, yet without destroying the underlying unity.

Romanism and orthodox Protestantism believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in one divine-human Lord and Saviour of the race. They accept in common the Holy Scriptures and the ecumenical faith. They agree in every article of the Apostles' Creed. What unites them is far deeper, stronger and more important than what divides them.

But Romanism holds also a large number of "traditions of the elders" which Protestantism rejects as extra-scriptural or anti-scriptural; such are the papacy, the worship of saints and relics, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, prayers and masses for the dead, works of supererogation, purgatory, indulgences, the system of monasticism with its perpetual vows and ascetic practices, besides many superstitious rites and ceremonies.

Protestantism, on the other hand, revived and developed the Augustinian doctrines of sin and grace; it proclaimed the sovereignty of divine mercy in man's salvation, the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, and the sufficiency of Christ's merit as a source of justification; it asserted the right of direct access to the Word of God and the throne of grace,

without human mediators it secured Christian freedom from bondage; it substituted social morality for monkish asceticism, and a simple, spiritual worship for an imposing ceremonialism that addresses the senses and imagination rather than the intellect and the heart.

The difference between the Catholic and Protestant churches was typically foreshadowed by the difference between Jewish and Gentile Christianity in the apostolic age, which anticipated, as it were, the whole future course of church history. The question of circumcision or the keeping of the Mosaic law, as a condition of church membership, threatened a split at the Council of Jerusalem, but was solved by the wisdom and charity of the apostles, who agreed that Jews and Gentiles alike are **“saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus”** (Acts 15: 11). Yet even after the settlement of the controversy by the Jerusalem compromise Paul got into a sharp conflict with Peter at Antioch on the same question, and protested against his older colleague for denying by his timid conduct his better conviction, and disowning the Gentile brethren. It is not accidental that the Roman Church professes to be built on Peter and regards him as the first pope; while the Reformers appealed chiefly to Paul and found in his epistles to the Galatians and Romans the bulwark of their anthropology and soteriology, and their doctrine of Christian freedom. The collision between Paul and Peter was only temporary; and so the war between Protestantism and Romanism will ultimately pass away in God’s own good time.

The Reformation began simultaneously in Germany and Switzerland, and swept with astonishing rapidity over France, Holland, Scandinavia, Bohemia, Hungary, England and Scotland; since the seventeenth century it has spread by emigration to North America, and by commercial and missionary enterprises to every Dutch and English colony, and every heathen land. It carried away the majority of the Teutonic and a part of the Latin nations, and for a while threatened to overthrow the papal church.

But towards the close of the sixteenth century the triumphant march of the Reformation was suddenly arrested. Romanism rose like a wounded giant, and made the most vigorous efforts to reconquer the lost territory in Europe, and to extend its dominion in Asia and South America. Since that time the numerical relation of the two churches has undergone little change. But the progress of secular and ecclesiastical history has run chiefly in Protestant channels.

In many respects the Roman Church of today is a great improvement upon the Medieval Church. She has been much benefited by the Protestant Reformation, and is far less corrupt and far more prosperous in Protestant than in Papal countries. She was driven to a counter-reform which abolished some of the most crying abuses and infused new life and zeal into her clergy and laity. No papal schism has disgraced her history since the sixteenth century. No pope of the character of Alexander VI or even Leo X could be elected any more. She lives chiefly of the past, but uses for her defence all the weapons of modern warfare. She has a much larger membership than either the Greek or the Protestant communion; she still holds under her sway the Latin races of both hemispheres; she satisfies the religious wants of millions of human beings in all countries and climes; she extends her educational, benevolent and missionary operations all over the globe; she advances in proportion as Protestantism degenerates and neglects its duty; and by her venerable antiquity, historical continuity, visible unity, centralized organization, imposing ritual, sacred art, and ascetic piety she attracts intelligent and cultured minds; while the common people are kept in ignorance and in superstitious awe of her mysterious authority with its claim to open the gates of heaven and hell and to shorten the purgatorial sufferings of the departed. For good and evil, she is the strongest conservative force in modern society, and there is every reason to believe that she will last to the end of time.

Thus the two branches of Western Christendom seem to

hold each other in check, and ought to stimulate each other to a noble rivalry in good works.

The unhappy divisions of Christendom, while they are the source of many evils, have also the good effect of multiplying the agencies for the conversion of the world and facilitating the free growth of every phase of religious life. The evil lies not so much in the multiplicity of denominations, which have a mission to fulfill, as in the spirit of sectarianism and exclusivism, which denies the rights and virtues of others. The Reformation of the sixteenth century is not a finale, but a movement still in progress. We may look hopefully forward to a higher, deeper and broader Reformation, when God in His overruling wisdom and mercy, by a pentecostal effusion of His Holy Spirit upon all the churches, will reunite what the sin and folly of men have divided. There must and will be, in the fullest sense of Christ's prophecy, **“one flock, one Shepherd”** (John 10:16).

[This study will continue, D.V., in the next issue.]



This study is taken from: Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. VI. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904. A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at:

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A Study in Wisdom: Proverbs 5

A Study by Scott Sperling

Proverbs 5:1-5 – The Snare of Sexual Sin

- ¹ My son, pay attention to my wisdom,
turn your ear to my words of insight,
- ² that you may maintain discretion
and your lips may preserve knowledge.
- ³ For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil;
- ⁴ but in the end, she is bitter as gall,
sharp as a double-edged sword.
- ⁵ Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the grave.
- ⁶ She gives no thought to the way of life
her paths wander aimlessly,
but she does not know it.

In this chapter, Solomon warns his student in wisdom, his “son”, of the temptations and dangers of sexual sin. “The primary scope of this chapter is plainly to warn us against seventh-commandment sins, which youth is so prone to, the temptations to which are so violent, the examples of which are so many, and which, where admitted, are so destructive to all the seeds of virtue in the soul” [Henry, 816]. Similar teachings are found elsewhere in the book of Proverbs. “The teacher, in this discourse, recurs to a subject which he has glanced at before in Prov. 2:15-19, and which he again treats of in the latter part of the sixth and in the whole of the seventh chapters. This constant recurrence to the same subject, repulsive on account of its associations, shows, however, the

importance which it had in the teacher's estimation as a ground of warning, and that he ranked it among the foremost of the temptations and sins which called the young off from the pursuit of Wisdom, and so led them astray from **"the fear of the Lord"** [*Pulpit*, 106]. "The father addresses this concern with all the rhetorical power that he can muster because the temptation is great. An intimate relationship with a woman outside the bounds of marriage promises great pleasure and satisfaction. The truth behind the appearance, however, is that such liaisons result in tremendous pain" [Longman, 140].

Solomon begins with an exhortation to pay attention to these teachings: **"My son, pay attention to my wisdom, turn your ear to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge"** (vss. 1-2).

Solomon addresses his words of wisdom to **"my son"**, as a "robust man-to-man warning against adultery" [McKane, in Waltke, 410]. Such frank teaching, as Solomon gives here, is appropriate, even necessary, for parents, both fathers and mothers, to give their children. Though this chapter is addressed to a young man, and depicts temptation proffered by a licentious woman, we could very well extrapolate Solomon's advice to warn daughters against lecherous men. "Although the teaching seeks to discipline the awakening sexual awareness of young males, it is a concern for all, young and old, male and female, just as it has been since ancient days" [Koptak, 160]. "While it would be hard to deny that such women did or do exist, most people's experience today would suggest that males are more often predatory than females. In response, we do well to remember that the book was written to males, and not just to all males but to males who were on the path leading to wisdom. It was not addressed to fools... We suggest that women readers transform the language to suit their context. In other words, instead of a honey-lipped female seducing a male reader, they should read

in terms of a sweet-talking male trying to entice them into bed” [Longman, 147].

Note, Solomon says, **“Pay attention to my wisdom... to my words of insight”** (vs. 1). Solomon personalizes the wisdom to himself by saying **“my”** wisdom. “It is noteworthy that never elsewhere is the personal possessive pronoun used with **‘wisdom’** and **‘understanding’**” [Martin, 47]. Solomon himself, as we learn in I Kings 11:1-13, was susceptible to sexual temptation, and his words of advice in this chapter, may very well have been inspired by personal experience. “The wisdom which Solomon teaches in this chapter cost him dear; but if we attend to his instructions, we shall have them at an easy rate” [Lawson, 96]. In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon sums up what he had learned: **“I find more bitter than death the woman who is a snare, whose heart is a trap and whose hands are chains. The man who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner she will ensnare”** (Eccl. 7:26).

Solomon’s goal for his son is that he would **“maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge”** (vs. 2). Solomon refers to his son’s **“lips”**, as *preserving knowledge* here, in contrast to the licentious woman’s **“lips”** in the next verse, *dripping honey*. All sexual sin (with the exception of violent rape) begins with a sin of the lips, as they enter into salacious and injudicious dialogue with the other party. Sexual sin requires that there be an intimate connection between the two parties which, at some point, is solidified by intimate conversation. Certainly, all sexual intercourse is preceded by intimate verbal intercourse. “Sexuality is by its nature dialogical, as the term ‘intercourse’ well suggests. Culturally, it is closely associated with speech: courting speech, seductive speech, love songs, whispered sweet nothings” [Newsom, in Waltke, 414]. And so, Solomon’s first words of advice to his son in avoiding sexual sin pertain to the words of his son’s **“lips”**, that they would **“preserve knowledge”**, that they would speak only in a wise manner. “Lips which preserve

knowledge are such as permit nothing to escape from them which proceeds not from the knowledge of God, and in Him of that which is good and right” [Delitzsch, 119]. If the son heeds this advice, he can avoid sexual sin.

Solomon lays out the temptation: **“For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end, she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword”** (vss. 3-4). What is translated here as **“the adulterous woman”** is literally **“the strange woman”** in Hebrew, as per the KJV, implying that she could be any woman other than one’s wife [Garrett, 91]. She could be a prostitute, or another man’s wife, or a woman at your workplace.

Solomon characterizes her as a seductive temptress, whose **“lips drip honey”** and whose **“speech is smoother than oil”** (vs. 3). Solomon tells it like it is: the temptress is enticing. “The Bible does not hide from or obscure the power of the temptation to illicit sex” [Garrett, 93]. “*Honeyed* words, and words *smoother than oil*, are figurative expressions, highly descriptive of the insinuating, enticing, persuasive language of a lewd woman, who artfully employs every blandishment to seduce unsuspecting youth into the vortex of ruin” [Muenscher, 53]. “Her tongue is taught by him who betrayed Eve to paint the vilest sin with the most beautiful colours, and to conceal all its deformity and danger; but it is the part of a reasonable creature to look beyond the present moment, and to consider the end of things, as well as their beginning” [Lawson, 97].

Though the beginning is seductive and enticing, to fall into the temptress’s trap leads to ruin: **“But in the end, she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword”** (vs. 4). There is no denial of the immediate pleasure of sexual sin, but the cost is not worth the pleasure. The *sweet honey* turns to *bitter gall*. “The flesh promises every delight, but it leaves bitter dregs” [Mercer, in JFB, 426]. “There is no sin which affords so vivid an example of seductive attraction at the beginning,

and of hopeless misery at the end, as that of unlawful love” [Horton, 68].

The possible repercussions of sexual sin go beyond merely the bitterness of gall: **“Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it”** (vss. 5-6). Sexual sin harms both the body and the soul, and can lead to the death of both. “She gives no heed to the course of her life, or to that course of conduct which leads to life, but plunges reckless and headlong into a whirlpool of dissipation and crime, the inevitable result of which is destruction” [Muenscher, 53].

Proverbs 5:7-14 – Avoiding Sexual Sin

- ⁷ Now then, my sons, listen to me;
do not turn aside from what I say.**
- ⁸ Keep to a path far from her,
do not go near the door of her house,**
- ⁹ lest you lose your honor to others
and your dignity to one who is cruel,**
- ¹⁰ lest strangers feast on your wealth
and your toil enrich the house of another.**
- ¹¹ At the end of your life you will groan,
when your flesh and body are spent.**
- ¹² You will say, “How I hated discipline!
How my heart spurned correction!**
- ¹³ I would not obey my teachers
or turn my ear to my instructors.**
- ¹⁴ And I was soon in serious trouble
in the assembly of God’s people.”**

Solomon repeats his exhortation to **“listen”**, in order to give important advice: **“Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say. Keep to a path far from**

her, do not go near the door of her house” (vss. 7-8). The best way to avoid sexual sin is to steer clear of the tempter/temptress. Sexual sin is impossible if one heeds this simple advice. Sexual sin is not one that someone just stumbles into. It takes forethought and planning. There are many offramps from that path. And so, do not even “approach the borders of this sin” [Henry, 817]. “The nearer we approach temptation, the more alluring it becomes, and the weaker becomes our spiritual strength” [JFB, 427]. “She and her house are to be avoided as if they were infected with some mortal disease” [*Pulpit*, 109].

To strengthen his student’s resolve, Solomon lists possible consequences of falling into sexual sin: **“...lest you lose your honor to others and your dignity to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich the house of another”** (vss. 9-10). Sexual sin leads to loss of **“honor”**, loss of **“dignity”**, loss of **“wealth”**, even to the extent that **“your toil enriches the house of another.”** It is a sin that goes far beyond the immediate act. “The passage uses general language to make the point that adultery leads to personal degeneration and financial depletion. The man who indulges himself will pay the price a hundred times over” [Garrett, 94]. “This sin is a purgatory to the purse, though a paradise to the desires” [Trapp, 17]. Though Solomon speaks here of the loss of *material* riches, the more important consequence is the loss of *spiritual* riches. “Every sin is preparing for us a loss of wealth, of the only wealth which is really durable, the treasure in the heavens; every sin is capable of filching from him all the food on which the spirit lives” [Horton, 75].

Invariably, sexual sin leads to bitter regret: **“At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent.”** (vs. 11). Sexual sin can never be undone. Its effects last a lifetime, even to the point of bringing endless regret, **“groaning”** at the **“end of your life”**. Make no mistake, regret will most certainly come. And aging serves to bring on

the regret, as the youthful passions wane. One then can see more clearly the tragic consequences of the sexual sin, and that, all-in-all, the dire consequences far outweigh the fleeting benefits. “The sinner shall at last marvel at his own amazing folly in times past; but his remorse shall then be too late... After-wisdom will only add to the bitterness of perdition” [JFB, 427].

The fallen sinner will regret that he did not listen to the wise words of advice: **“You will say, ‘How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors. And I was soon in serious trouble in the assembly of God’s people”**” (vss. 12-14). We all have plenty of warnings against this sin: the law of God, examples in Scripture, pastor’s sermons, parental advice, warnings by colleagues, social stigmas, etc. The sinner knows well that he had been warned. “He cannot but own that those who had the charge of him, parents, ministers, had done their part; they had been his teachers; they had instructed him, had given him good counsel and fair warning; but to his own shame... he had not taken their counsel” [Henry, 818].

In times past, sexual sin was a violation punishable by law: **“And I was soon in serious trouble in the assembly of God’s people”** (vs. 14). The adulterer could face serious consequences (see Deut. 22:22-24). This is not the case, by-and-large, these days. Though even in days when sexual sin was not punished by law, there was a social stigma and adverse social consequences to it. But now, even the social stigma of sexual sin has, by-and-large, disappeared. It was a powerful deterrent, but that deterrent is now largely removed. And so, we must all-the-more-so lean on the deterrent found in seeking to always please God, and treating our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, as Paul exhorted: **“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are**

temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies” (1 Cor. 6:18-20).

Proverbs 5:15-20 – The Blessings of Marriage

- 15 **Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.**
- 16 **Should your springs overflow in the streets,
your streams of water in the public squares?**
- 17 **Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.**
- 18 **May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.**
- 19 **A loving doe, a graceful deer –
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be intoxicated with her love.**
- 20 **Why, my son, be intoxicated
with another man’s wife?
Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?**

Having provided prohibitions on improper channels for sexual passions, Solomon provides exhortations on approved ways of channeling sexual passions: **“Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth”** (vss. 15-18). “Against the unholy passion to be shunned is set the holy love to be cherished” [Perowne, 61]. “Enjoy with satisfaction the comforts of lawful marriage, which was ordained for the prevention of uncleanness... Let none complain that God has dealt unkindly with them in forbidding

them those pleasures which they have a natural desire of, for he has graciously provided for the regular gratification of them... Solomon here enlarges much upon this, not only prescribing it as an antidote, but urging it as an argument against fornication, that the allowed pleasures of marriage... far transcend all the false forbidden pleasures of unlawful sexual sin" [Henry, 818].

Given that marriage is the only God-sanctioned outlet for sexual passions, there is an implied duty upon marriage partners to satisfy each other in this way. "It is not only allowed us, but commanded us, to be pleasant with our relations; and it particularly becomes yoke-fellows to rejoice together and in each other. Mutual delight is the bond of mutual fidelity" [Henry, 819].

Earlier in the chapter, liquid imagery of "honey" and "oil" were used as an enticement to sexual sin. Here, the liquid imagery of pure spring water is used for the allowable quenching of sexual desire. "The pure, innocent, and chaste nature of such pleasures is appropriately compared with the pure and wholesome waters of the wellspring" [*Pulpit*, 111]. "In connection with this we must call to mind, in order to feel the full power of the figure, how in antiquity and especially in the East, the possession of a spring was regarded a great and even sacred thing" [Zockler, 79].

Quenching of the sexual desire at home is a blessing to be treasured: **"May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer — may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love. Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife? Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?"** (vss. 18-20). There are many people who erroneously think that the Bible does not approve of the physical enjoyment that the sexual act brings, even within marriage. This passage refutes that. Here, sex within marriage is described as an *intoxicating blessing*. **"May here breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her**

love” (vs. 19). “It is highly important to see sexual delight in marriage as God-given” [Kidner, 67]. “In the permitted paths of connubial intimacy and tenderness are to be found raptures more sweet and abiding than those which are vainly promised by the ways of sin” [Horton, 69]. “This cordial love in the married state, will produce pleasures far sweeter than were ever found in unlawful love; and what chiefly recommends them is, that they have no sting attending them, and give no offence to God, our Witness and our Judge” [Lawson, 106]. In contrast to the aftermath of forbidden love, which turns *bitter*, the result of sex within marriage is God-approved *intoxication* and *satisfaction*.

Proverbs 5:21-23 – Ultimate Consequences

- 21 For your ways are in full view of the LORD,
and he examines all your paths.**
- 22 The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them;
the cords of their sins hold them fast.**
- 23 For lack of discipline they will die,
led astray by their own great folly.**

Solomon concludes this chapter with the ultimate reason for avoiding sexual sin: **“For your ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all your paths”** (vs. 21). “The arguments of common sense are undergirded by appeal to Yahweh’s judgment” [Kidner, 68]. Sex outside of marriage is a sin before God, and it is a sin that cannot be hidden from God, no matter the human machinations. God sees all, and more than that, **“examines all your paths.”** Some imagine God to be a far-distant deity who is unconcerned with the minutiae of our actions. But this is an unbiblical view of God. According to the Bible, God does see, and He does care what each of us do. “God is no epicurean Divinity, retreating far above mundane affairs in celestial seclusion. He is not

indifferent to what goes on in this little world. He is watchful and observant... He looks at each of us, at the smallest of our concerns. It is the property of an infinite mind thus to reach down to the infinitely small, as well as to rise to the infinitely great" [*Pulpit*, 116]. "The evil-doer can neither elude the all-seeing eye, nor escape from the Almighty hand. Secrecy is the study and the hope of the wicked... A sinner's chief labour is to hide his sin: and his labour is all lost. Darkness hideth not from God. The Maker of the night is not blinded by its covering" [Arnot, 134].

Given God's displeasure with sexual sin, it can be a sin unto death: **"The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast. For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly"** (vss. 22-23). It is a sin that **"ensnares"**, its *cords* **"hold them fast."** "It is a sin which men with great difficulty shake off the power of" [Henry, 819].

The ultimate result of being **"ensnared"** is death: **"For lack of discipline they will die"** (vs. 23). "Uncleanness is a sin from which, when once men have plunged themselves into it, they very hardly and very rarely recover themselves" [Henry, 820]. Once fallen, the only way to escape death, is through the liberation and forgiveness of Christ. Only through Christ, can we be forgiven, justified and restored, enabling us to lead a life in service to our Lord. "In view of all our guilt, let us seek his mercy in Christ Jesus. For it is a truth consistent with the foregoing, that, if there be repentance and faith, all our sins shall **'be cast into the depths of the sea'** (Amos 7:19)" [*Pulpit*, 121].



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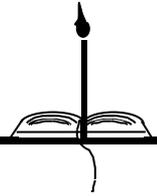
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A Sermon: Grace Exalted



A Sermon by the Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon
Grace Exalted, Boasting Excluded –
Romans 3:27

(Preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle,
London, January 19th, 1862)

**“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law?
Of works? No, but by the law of faith” (Rom. 3:27, NKJV)**

PRIDE IS most obnoxious to God. As a sin, His holiness hates it; as a treason, His sovereignty detests it; as a rebellion, the whole of His attributes stand leagued to put it down. God has touched other sins with His finger, but against this vice He has made bare His arm! There have been, I know, terrible judgments against lust, but there have been 10 times as many against that swelling lust of the deceitful heart! Remember, the first transgression had in its essence, pride. The ambitious heart of Eve desired to be as God, knowing good and evil, and Adam imagined that he would be lifted up to divine rank if he dared to pluck and eat. The blasting of Paradise, the sterility of the world, the travail of human birth, the sweat of the brow, and the certainty of death may all be traced to this fruitful mother of mischief, *pride*. Remember Babel, and how God has scattered us and confounded our tongues. It was man's pride which led him to seek for an undivided monarchy, that so he might be great. The tower was to be the rallying point of all the tribes, and would have been the central throne of all human grandeur, but God has scattered us, that pride might not climb to so high a pitch. Pride, you have indeed suffered severe strokes from God! Against you has He furbished His sword, and prepared His

weapons of war. The Lord, even the Lord of hosts has sworn it, and He will surely stain the pride of all human glory, and tread all boasting as straw is trod for the dunghill! Talk no more so exceedingly proud; let no arrogance come out of your mouth, for the bows of the mighty have been broken, and the haughtiness of man has been bowed down! Remember Pharaoh and the plagues which God brought on Egypt, and the wonders which He worked in the field of Zoan. Remember the Red Sea, and Rahab cut, and the dragon broken. Think of Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty architect of Babylon, driven out to eat grass like the oxen till his nails grew like birds' claws, and his hair like eagles' feathers. Remember Herod, eaten of worms, because he gave not God the glory; and Sennacherib, with the Lord's hook in his jaws, turned by the way, he came to the place where his sons became his slayers!

Time would fail to tell of the innumerable conquerors, and emperors, and mighty men of earth who have all perished beneath the blast of Your rebuke, O God, because they lifted up themselves, and said, "I am, and there is none beside me." You have turned wise men backward, and made their knowledge foolishness, and no flesh may glory in Your presence. Yes, when pride has sought to shelter itself in the hearts of God's chosen people, still, the arrows of God have sought it out, and have drunk its blood! God still loves His servants, but pride even in *them*, He abhors. David may be a man after God's own heart, but if his pride shall lift him up to number the people, then he shall have a choice between three chastisements, and he shall be happy to choose the pestilence as being the least of the plagues. Or if Hezekiah shall show to the ambassadors of Babylon his riches, and his treasures, there shall come to him the rebuke—"What have they seen in your house?" And the threat—"Behold they shall take your sons to make them eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." Oh, brothers and sisters, forget not that God has uttered the most solemn words, as well as issued the most awful judgments, against pride! "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." "Him who has a high look and a proud heart will I not suffer." "Pride and arrogance do I hate." "The Lord will destroy the house of the

proud.” “The day of the Lord shall be upon everyone who is proud and lofty, and upon everyone who is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.” “I am against you, O you most proud, says the Lord God of hosts.” There are hundreds of terrible texts like these, but we cannot now recount them all. Now mark, to put an everlasting stigma upon human vanity, and to hurl once and for all, mire and filth upon all human glorying, God has ordained that the only way in which He will save men, shall be a way which utterly excludes the possibility of man’s having a single word to say by way of vaunting! He has declared that the only foundation which He will ever lay shall be one by which man’s strength shall be broken in pieces, and by which man’s pride shall be humbled in the dust! To this subject, I ask your attention this morning. It is to enlarge and amplify the sentiment of the text that I seek. “Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.”

We shall notice first of all, *the rejected plan of law*; then we shall note *the excluded vice*. Having so done, we shall notice in the third place, *that the very fact that boasting is excluded, permits of the reception of the worst of sinners*; and we shall close by observing, *that the same system which excludes boasting includes humble and devout gratitude to God for His grace and mercy*.

I. First, then, **THE REJECTED PLAN.**

There are two ways by which man might have been forever blessed. The one was by works—“This do and you shall live; be obedient and receive the reward; keep the commandment and the blessing shall be yours, well earned and surely paid.” The only other plan was—“Receive grace and blessedness as the free gift of God; stand as a guilty sinner having no merit, and as a rebellious sinner deserving the very reverse of goodness, but stand there, and receive all your good things, simply, wholly, and alone of the free love and sovereign mercy of God.” Now, the Lord has not chosen the system of works. The word *law*, as used twice in the text, is employed, it is believed by many commentators, out of compliment to the Jews, who were so fond of the word, that their antagonism might not be awakened. But it means here, as elsewhere in

Scripture, plan, system, method. There were two plans, two systems, two methods, two spirits—the plan of works and the plan of divine grace. God has once and for all utterly refused the plan of merit and of works, and has chosen to bless men only and entirely through the plan, or method, or *law of faith*. Now, brothers and sisters, we have put the two before you, and we beg you to mark, that there is a distinction between the two, which must never be forgotten. Martin Luther says—“If you can rightly distinguish between works and grace, thank God for your skill, and consider yourself to be an able divine.” This, indeed, is the bottom of theology, and he, who can understand this clearly, it seems to me, can never be very heretical! Orthodoxy must surely follow, and the right teaching of God must be understood, when we once and for all, are able to discriminate with accuracy between that which is of man—works, and that which is of God—faith, and divine grace received by faith.

Now, the plan of salvation by works is impossible for us. Even if God had ordained it to be the way by which men should labor to be saved, it is certain that none would have been saved by it, and therefore, all would have perished. For if you would be saved by works, remember O man, that the law requires of you *perfection*. One single flaw, *one* offense, and the law condemns you without mercy! It requires that you should keep it in every point and in every sense, and to its uttermost degree, for its demands are rigorous in the extreme. It knows nothing of freely forgiving because you cannot pay, but like a severe creditor, it takes you by your throat, and says, “Pay me all.” And if you cannot pay even to the uttermost farthing, it shuts you up in the prison of condemnation, out of which you cannot escape! But, if it were possible for you to keep the law in its perfection outwardly, yet, remember, that you would be required to keep it in your *heart* as well as in your external life! One single motion of the heart from the right, one reception of even the shadow of a passing temptation, so as to become a partaker of sin, would ruin you! “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with your entire mind, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself.” Fail here, and oh,

who among us can be such a hypocrite as to think he has not failed 10,000 times? Fail here—and though your life were virtuous, though your exterior were such as even criticism itself must commend, yet you still perish because you have not kept the law, and yielded its full demands!

Remember, too, that it is clear you can never be saved by the law, because if up to this moment, your heart and life have been altogether without offense, yet it is required that it should be so even to your dying day! And, do you hope that as temptations come upon you thick as your moments, as your trials invade you numerous as the swarms which once thronged from the gates of Thebes, you will be able to stand against all these? Will there not be found some weak spot in your harness; will there not be some moment in which you may be tripped up—some instant when either the eyes may wander after lust, or the heart set on vanity? Can you say you would *never* stretch out your hand to touch that which is not good? Oh, man, remember, we are not sure that even this life would end that probation, for as long as you should live, and be God's creature, duty would still be due, and the law still your insatiable creditor! Forever would your happiness tremble in the scales! Even in heaven itself, the law would follow you; even there, as your righteousness would be your *own*, it would never be finished! And even from yonder shining battlements you might fall, and amid those harps, wearing that white robe, *if you were to be saved by your own works*, there might be a possibility of perishing! The obedience of a creature can never be finished! The duty of a servant of the law is never over! As long as you were the creature of God, your Creator would have demands upon you! How much better to be accepted in the beloved, and to wear His finished righteousness as our glory and security! Now, in the face of all this, will any of you prefer to be saved by your works? Or, rather, will you prefer to be *damned* by your works? For that will certainly be the issue, let you hope what you may!

Now, I suppose, that in this congregation, we have but very few—there may be some—who would indulge a hope of being saved by the law in itself; but there is a delusion abroad that perhaps

God will modify the law, or that at least, He will accept a sincere obedience, even if it is imperfect; that He will say, "Well, this man has done what he could, and, therefore, I will take what he has given as though it were perfect." Now, remember, against this the Apostle Paul declares peremptorily, "By the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified," so that, that is answered at once! But, more than this, God's law cannot change; it can never be content to take less from you than it demands. What said Christ? "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." And again, He expressly said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." The law's demands were met and fulfilled for believers by Christ; but, as far as those demands are concerned to those who are under it, they are as great, as heavy, and as rigorous, as ever they were! Unless His law could be changed, and that is impossible, God cannot accept anything but a *perfect obedience!* And, if you are hoping to be saved by your sincere endeavors to do your best, your hopes are rotten things, and delusions, falsehoods, and you will perish wrapped up in the shrouds of your pride! "Yes," some say, "but could it not be partly by grace and partly by works?" No! The apostle says that boasting is excluded, and excluded by the law of faith; but if we let in the law of works in any degree, we cannot shut out boasting, for to that degree, you give man an opportunity to congratulate himself as having saved himself! Let me say broadly—to hope to be saved by works is a delusion! To hope to be saved by a method in which divine grace and works are co-acting, is not merely a delusion, but an *absurd* delusion! It is contrary to the very nature of things that divine grace and merit should ever mingle and cwork. Our apostle has declared times without number, that if it is of grace, it is not of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; and if it *is* of works, then it is *not* of grace, otherwise work is no more work. It must be either one or the other! These two cannot be married, for God forbids it! He will have it all grace or all works, all of Christ or all of man; but for Christ to be a make-weight, for Christ to supplement your narrow robes by patching on a piece of His own, for Christ to tread a part of the winepress, and for you to tread the rest; oh, this can

never be! God will never be yoked with the creature! You might link an angel with a worm, and bid them fly together, but God with the creature—the precious blood of Jesus with the foul ditch-water of our human merits? Never! Never! Our paste gems, our varnished falsehoods, our righteousnesses which are but filthy rags, put with the real, true, precious, everlasting, divine things of Christ? Never! Unless heaven should blend in alliance with hell, and holiness hold dalliance with impurity, it must be one or the other, either man's merit, absolutely and alone, or unmixed, unmerited favor from the Lord!

Now, I suppose, if I were to labor ever so arduously to hunt out this evil spirit from the sons of men, I should miss it still, for it hides in so many shapes, and therefore let me say, that in no shape, in no sense, in no single case, and in no degree whatever, are we saved by our works or by the law! I say in no sense, because men make such shifts to save alive their own righteousness. I will show you one man who says, "Well, I don't expect to be saved by my honesty. I don't expect to be saved by my generosity, nor by my morality. But then, I have been baptized; I receive the Lord's Supper; I have been confirmed; I go to church, or I have a sitting in a meeting house; I am, as touching the ceremonies, blameless." Well, friend, in that sense you cannot be saved by works, for all these things have no use whatever upon the matter of salvation, if you have not *faith!* If you are saved, God's ordinances will be blessed things to you. But if you are not a believer, you have no right to them! And with regard to Baptism and the Supper, every time you touch them, you increase your guilt! Whether it is Baptism or the Lord's Supper, you have no right to either, unless you are already saved! They are both ordinances for believers, and for believers, only. These ordinances are blessed means of divine grace to living, quickened, *saved souls;* but to unsaved souls, to souls dead in trespasses and sins, these outward ordinances can have no use for good, but may increase their sin, because they touch unworthily the holy things of God! Oh, repose not in these! Oh, dream not that a priestly hand, and sacred drops, or a God-ordained baptism in the pool, can in any way redeem you from sin, or land you in

heaven—for by this way salvation is impossible! But if I drive the lover of self-righteousness out of this haunt, he runs to another. You will find others who suppose that at least *their feelings*, which are only their works in another shape, may help to save them! There are thousands who think, “If I could weep so much, and groan so deeply, and experience so much humiliation, and a certain quantity of repentance, and so much of the terrors of the law, and of the thunders of conscience, *then* I might come before God.” souls, souls, this is work-mongering in its most damnable shape, for it has deluded far more than that bolder sort of work-trusting, which says, “I will rely upon what I *do*.” If you rely upon what you *feel*, you shall as certainly perish as if you trust to what you *do*! Repentance is a work of the Holy Spirit, and to be convicted of sin by God the Holy Spirit is a holy privilege, but, to think that these other things, in any way, win salvation, is to run clean counter to all the teachings of the Word, for salvation is of the free grace of God, alone! There are some, moreover, who believe that if their feelings cannot do it, still *their knowledge can!* They have a very sound creed; they have struck out this doctrine and that; they believe in justification by faith, and their sound creed is to them a confidence; they think that because they hold the theory of justification by faith, therefore they shall be saved. And oh, how they plume their feathers! How they set up their peacock tail because they happen to be orthodox! With what awful pride do they exult over their fellow professors, because they hold *the truth* and all the rest of the church, they think, is deluded with a lie!

Now this is nothing but salvation by works, only they are works performed by the *head* instead of by the hands. Oh, sirs, I will tell you—if you rest in creeds, if you hope to be saved because you can put your hand to the thirty-nine articles of an Episcopalian prayer book, or to the solemn league and covenant of the Presbyterian, or to the confession of faith of the Calvinist—if you fancy that because you happen to receive the truth of God in the head you shall be saved, you know not the truth of God but still cling to Satan’s lie—that salvation is of *man*, and not of God! I know that self-righteousness was born in our bones and that it will come out

in our flesh, and even that man in whom its reigning power is kept down, will still feel it sometimes rising up. When he has preached a sermon and has got on pretty well, the devil will come up the pulpit stairs and say, "Well done!" When he has prayed in public, and has had unusual fluency, he will have to be careful lest there should be a whisper behind—"What a good and gifted man you are!" Yes, and even in his hallowed moments, when he is on the top of the mountain with his Lord, he will have to watch, even there, lest self-congratulation should suggest—"Oh, man, greatly-beloved, there must surely be something in you, or else God would not have done thus unto you!" brethren, when you are thinking of your sanctification, if you are tempted to look away from Christ—away with it! And, if when you are repenting of sin, you cannot still have one eye on Christ, remember it will be a repentance that will need to be repented of, for there is nothing in ourselves that can be offered to God! There is a stench and putridity in everything that is done of the creature, and we can never come before God except through Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. I have thus tried to denounce the plan which God has rejected.

II. I shall now, in the second head, **SHOW THAT BOASTING IS EXCLUDED**, for in a blessed sense God has accepted the second plan, namely, the way of salvation by *faith* through divine grace.

The first man that entered heaven entered heaven by faith. "By faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain." Over the tombs of all the goodly who were accepted of God, you may read the epitaph—"These all died in faith." By faith they received the promise; and among all yonder bright and shining throng, there is not one who does not confess, "We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The plan, then, which God has chosen, is one of divine grace, alone. I will try and picture that plan before our mind's eye. We will imagine Boasting to be exceedingly desirous to enter into the kingdom of heaven. He marches to the door and knocks. The porter looks out and demands, "Who stands there?" "I am Boasting," he says, "and I claim to have the highest seat! I claim that I should cry aloud and

say, glory be unto man, for though he has fallen, he has lifted himself up, and worked out his own redemption.” And the angel says, “But have you not heard that the salvation of souls is not of man, nor by man, but that God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion? Get out of here, Boasting, for the highest seat can never be yours, when God, in direct opposition to human merit, has rejected the Pharisee, and chosen the publican and the harlot, that they may enter into the kingdom of heaven.” So Boasting says, “Let me take my place, then, if not in the highest seat, yet somewhere amid the glittering throng; for instance, let me take my place in the seat of *election*. Let it be said and taught, that albeit God did choose His people, yet it was because of their works which He foresaw, and their faith which He foreknew, and that, therefore, foreseeing and foreknowing, He did choose them because of an excellence which His prescient eyes discovered in them. Let me take my seat here.” But the porter says, “No, you cannot take your place there, for election is according to the eternal purpose of God, which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world was. This election is not of works, but of grace, and the reason for God’s choice of man is in Himself, and not in man. And as for those virtues which you say God did foreknow, God is the Author of all of them if they exist, and that which is an effect cannot be a first cause! God foreordained these men to faith and to good works, and their faith and good works could not have been the cause of their foreordination!” Then straight from heaven’s gate the trumpet sounded—(“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him who calls—it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.”)

Then Boasting found that as works had no place in election, so there was no room for him to take his seat there, and he thought about where next he could be. So after a while, Boasting says to the porter, “If I cannot mount the chair of election, I will be content to sit in the place of conversion, for surely, it is man who repents and believes.” The porter did not deny the truth of that, and then this

evil Boasting said, "If one man believes and not another, surely, that must be the act of the man's will, and his will being free and unbiased, it must be very much to that man's credit that he believes and repents, and is therefore saved, for others, having like opportunities with himself, and no doubt having the same grace, reject the preferred mercy and perish, while this man accepts it, and therefore let me at least take my seat there." But the angel said in anger, "Take your seat there? Why, that would be to take the highest place of all, for this is the hinge and turning-point, and if you leave that with man, then you give him the brightest jewel in the crown! Does the Ethiopian change his skin and the leopard his spots? Is it not God who works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure? Of His own will He begat us with the Word of truth, and it is not of the will of man, nor of blood, nor of birth. Oh, Boasting, your free will is a lie! It is not man that chooses God, but God that chooses man. What did Christ say—"You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." And what did He say to the ungodly multitude, "You will not come unto Me that you might have life." In which He gave the death-blow to all ideas of free will, when He declared that man *will not* come to Him that he might have life! And then, He said again, in another place, as if that were not enough, "No man can come unto Me except the Father which has sent Me draw him." So Boasting, though he was glad not to admit it, was shut out, and could not take his place in heaven upon the stool of conversion! And while he stood there but little abashed, for bashfulness he knows not, he heard a song floating over the battlements of heaven from all the multitude who were there, in accents like these, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name, O Lord, be the praise"—

"It was the same love that spread the feast
That gently forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin!"

"But then," said Boasting, "if I may not have so high a place, let me at least sit on the lowly stool of perseverance, and let it at

least be said that while God saved the man, and is therefore to have the glory, still the man was faithful to grace received; he did not turn back unto perdition, but watched and was very careful, and kept himself in the love of God, and therefore there is considerable credit due to him; for while many drew back and perished, and he might have done the same, he struggled against sin, and thus, by his using his grace, he safely kept himself. Let me sit, then, on the chair of perseverance.” But the angel replied, “No, no, what have you to do with it? I know it is written, ‘keep yourselves in the love of God,’ but the same apostle forbids all fleshly trust in human effort by that blessed doxology—‘Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.’ That which is a command in one Scripture is a covenant promise in another, where it is written, ‘I will put My fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Me.’” Oh, brothers and sisters, well do you and I know, that our standing does not depend upon ourselves! If that Arminian doctrine, that our perseverance rests somewhere in our own hands, were true, then damnation must be the lot of us all! I cannot keep myself a minute, much less year after year—

“If ever it should come to pass,
That sheep of Christ should fall away;
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day.”

But what says the Scripture?—“I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand; My Father who gave them Me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” And what says the apostle—“I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” I have not time to quote all the innumerable passages, but it

is absolutely certain that if there is one doctrine in Scripture more clearly revealed than another, it is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints by the power of the Holy Spirit! The man who doubts that precious truth of God, has quite as much reason to doubt the Trinity, to doubt the divinity of Christ, or the fact of the atonement, for nothing can be more clear in the plain, common sense meaning of the words than this, that they who are in Christ have, even today, eternal life and shall never perish! Now, since this perseverance is not dependent upon our works, but like all the rest of salvation, is a flowing outward from the bottomless love of God, boasting is manifestly excluded! But once again, and lastly, Boasting sometimes asks to be admitted a little into glorification. I fear sometimes that a doctrine which is popular in the church, about degrees of glory, is not altogether unassociated with that old self-righteousness of ours which is very loath to die. "One star differs from another star in glory" is a great truth—but this the stars may do without differing in degrees. One star may shine with one radiance, and another with another; indeed, astronomers tell us that there are many varieties of color among stars of the same magnitude! One man may differ from another, without supposing a difference in rank, honor, or degree. For my part, I do not see anything about *degrees* in glory in Scripture, and I do not believe in the doctrine; at least if there are degrees; mark this, they cannot be according to *works*, but must be of divine grace alone! I cannot consider that because one Christian has been more devoted to Christ than another, therefore, there will be an eternal difference, for this is to introduce works. This is to bring in again the old Hagar marriage, and to bring back the child of the bondwoman, whereof God has said, "The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with My son, even with Isaac." Oh, brothers and sisters, I think we can serve God from some other motive than that base one of trying to be greater than our brethren in heaven! If I should get to heaven at all, I do not care who is greater than I am, for if anyone shall have more happiness in heaven than I shall, then I shall have more happiness, too; for the sympathy between one soul and another will there be so intense and so great, that all the heavens of the righteous will be my heaven, and

therefore, what you have, I shall have, because we shall all be one in fellowship far more perfectly than on earth. The private member will there be swallowed up in the common body.

Surely, brothers and sisters, if any of you can have brighter places in heaven, and more happiness and more joy than I, I will be glad to know it. The prospect does not excite any envy in my soul now, or if it did *now*, it certainly would not *then*, for I should feel, that the more *you* had, the more *I* should have! Perfect communion in all good things is not compatible with the private enrichment of one above another. Even on earth, the saints had all things common when they were in a heavenly state, and I am persuaded they will have all things common in glory. I do not believe in gentlemen in heaven, and the poor Christians behind the door; I believe that our union with each other will be so great, that distinctions will be utterly lost, and that we shall all have such a joint communion, and interest, and fellowship, that there will be no such thing as private possessions, private ranks, and private honors—for we shall there, to the fullest extent, be one in Christ! I do believe that Boasting is shut out there, but I think that if there were these degrees in glory, I mean if they are dependent on works done on earth, Boasting would at least get his tail in; if it did not insinuate its whole body, it would at least get some of its unhallowed members over the wall, whereas, the text says it is excluded. Let me enlarge this one word, and then proceed. It does not say, “Boasting, you are to be allowed to come in and sit down on the floor.” No, shut the door and do not let him in at all. “But let me in,” he says, “and I will be quiet.” No, shut him out altogether! “But at least let me put my foot in.” No, exclude him; shut him out altogether. “But at least let me sometimes go in and out.” No, shut him out altogether. Exclude him; bolt the door; put double padlocks on it. Say once and for all, “Boasting, get you gone; you are hurled down and broken in pieces, and if you can refit yourself, and come once more to the gate to ask admittance, you shall be driven away with shame.” It is *excluded*; it cannot be let in, in any sense, in any term, nor in any degree! As Calvin says, “Not a particle of boasting can be admitted, because not a particle of work is admitted into the covenant of grace.” It is

of divine grace from top to bottom, from Alpha to Omega; it is not of man, nor by man, not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy, and therefore, boasting is excluded by the law of faith.

III. And now, thirdly and very briefly. Beloved in Christ Jesus, what a precious truth of God I have now to hold up to the eyes of poor lost sinners, who today are aware that they have no merits of their own! Soul, **THE VERY GATE WHICH SHUTS OUT BOASTING, SHUTS IN HOPE AND JOY FOR YOU!**

Let me state this truth of God broadly, that the ignorant may catch it. You say today, "Sir, I never attend the house of God, and up to this time I have been a thief and a drunkard." Well, you stand today on the same level as the most moral sinner, and the most honest unbeliever, in the matter of salvation! They are lost, since they believe not, and so are you. If the most honest is saved, it will not be by their *honesty*, but by the free grace of God! And if the most evil would be saved, it must be by the same plan. There is one gate to heaven for the most chaste, and the most debauched. When we come to God, the best of us can bring nothing, and the worst of us can bring no less. I know when I state it thus, some will say, "Then what is the good of morality?" I will tell you. Two men have fallen overboard. One man has a dirty face, and the other a clean one. There is a rope thrown over from the stern of the vessel, and only that rope will save the sinking men—whether their faces are fair or foul! Is not this the truth? Do I therefore underrate cleanliness? Certainly not; but it will not save a drowning man; nor will morality save a dying man. The clean man may sink with all his cleanliness and the dirty man may be drawn up with all his filth, if the rope does but get its hold of him! Or take this case. Here we have two persons, each with a deadly cancer. One of them is rich and clothed in purple, the other is poor and wrapped about with a few rags. And I say to them—"You are both on a par now, here comes the Physician Himself—Jesus, the King of disease; His touch can heal you both; there is no difference between you whatever!" Do I therefore say that the one man's robes are not better than the other's rags? Of course they are better in some respects, but they

have nothing to do with the matter of curing disease! So morality is a neat cover for foul venom, but it does not alter the fact that the heart is vile and the man, himself, under condemnation. Suppose I were an army surgeon, and there had been a battle. There is one man there—he is a captain and a brave man; he led his rank into the thick of the battle, and he is bleeding out his life from a terrible gash. By his side there lies a man of the rank and file, and a great coward too, wounded in the same way. I come up to both of them, and I say, “You are both in the same condition; you have both the same sort of wound, and I can heal you both.” But if either of you should say, “Get away from me; I’ll have nothing to do with you,” your wound will be your death! If the captain should say, “I do not need you; I am a captain, go and see to that poor dog yonder,” would his courage and rank save his life? No, they are good things, but not saving things! So is it with good works, men can be damned with them as well as without them if they make them their trust! Oh, what a gospel is this to preach in our theatres; to tell those hedge-birds, those who are full of all manner of loathsomeness, that there is the same way of salvation open to them as to a peer of the realm, or a bishop on the bench! That there is no difference between us in the way of mercy, that we are all condemned! That there may be degrees as to our guilt, but that the fact of our condemnation is quite as certain to the best as to the worst! “Oh” you say, “this is a leveling doctrine!” Ah, bless God if you are leveled! “Oh,” you say, “but this cuts at everything that is good in man!” Ah, thank God if it kills everything in which man glories, for that which man thinks to be good is often an abomination in the sight of God! And oh, if all of us together, moral or immoral, chaste or debauched, honest or unholy, can come with the rope about our neck and with the weeds of penitence upon our loins, and say, “Great God, forgive us; we are all guilty, give us grace; we do not deserve it; bestow upon us Your favor; we have no right to it, but give it to us because Jesus died.” Oh, He will never cast out one that way, for that is the way of salvation!

And if we can put our hand this morning—no matter though it were black last night with lust, or red up to the elbow with

murder—yet, if we can put our hand on Jesus’ head, and believe on Him—the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanses us from all sin! Where is boasting now? You who have done so much for humanity—you cannot boast, for you have nothing to boast of! You fine gentlemen and noble ladies, what do you say of this? O be wise, and join in the prayer, “But You, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!” And may the Lord then pronounce over us His sentence, “You are clean; go and sin no more. Your iniquities are all forgiven you.”

IV. I close by just observing, that THE SAME PLAN WHICH SHUTS OUT BOASTING LEADS US TO A GRACIOUS GRATITUDE TO CHRIST.

We are sometimes asked by people, “Do you think that such a thing is necessary to salvation?” Or, perhaps the question is put in another way, “How long do you think a man must be godly in order to be saved?” I reply, dear friend, you do not understand us, for we hold that these things do not save in any sense. “Why, then,” they say, “are you baptized?” Or, “Why do you walk in holiness?” Well, not *to save* myself but *because I am saved!* When I know that every sin of mine is forgiven, that I cannot be lost, that Christ has sworn to bring me to the place where He is; then I say, Lord what is there that I can do for You? Tell me. Can I burn for You? Blessed would be the stake if I might kiss it! If You have done so much for me, what can I do for You? Is there an ordinance that involves self-denial? Is there a duty which will compel me to self-sacrifice? So much the better—

“Now for the love I bear His name,
 What was my gain I count my lost!
 By former pride I call my shame,
 And nail my glory to His cross!”

This is the way to do good works; and good works are impossible until we come here. Anything that you do by which *to save yourself* is a selfish act, and therefore cannot be good. Only that which is done for God’s glory is good in a Scriptural sense. *A man*

must be saved before he can do a good work. But when saved, having nothing to get and nothing to lose; standing now in Christ, blessed and accepted— he begins to serve God out of pure gratitude and love! Then virtue is possible, and he may climb to its highest steep, and stand safely there without fear of the boasting which would cast him down! He will feel, even then, that his standing is not in what *he has done*, nor in what *he is*, nor in what *he hopes to be*, but in what *Christ did*, and in the, “It is finished,” which made his eternal salvation secure!

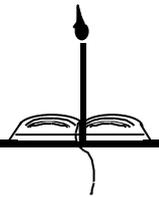
O for divine grace that we may live to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God! Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things; to Him be glory forever! Amen.



This sermon can be found in the book *Spurgeon's Sermons*, Vol. VIII (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit). A PDF eBook of this volume is available free of charge at:

<http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>

A Meditation: The Spiritual Chemist



A Meditation Upon Going to Bed, by William Spurstowe (1666)

How like is the frail *life* of man to *day*, as well for the *inequality* of its length, as the *mixture* that it has both of clouds and sunshine? What kind of exact *parallel* are *sleep* and *death*, the one being *ligation* of the senses, and the other the *privation* of them? And of how near akin is the *grave* to the *bed*, when the Scripture calls it by the same name, when the *clothes* that cover us do the like office with the *mould*, that must be cast and spread over us? When therefore the *day*, and the *labors* which man goes forth unto are ended, and the darkness of the night disposes unto rest, what thoughts can any better take into his bosom to lie down with, than to think that death, like the beasts of the forest may creep forth to seek its prey, and that when it comes there is no resistance to be made, or delay to be obtained? It spares no rank of men, but slays the *rich* as well as the *poor*, the *prince* as well as the *peasant*. The glass that has the king's face painted on it, is not the less brittle, neither are kings, that have God's image represented in them the less mortal. And whether it comes in at the *window* or at the *door*, whether in some *common* or in some *unwonted* manner, who can tell? Many oft times fall asleep in this world, and awake in the other, and have no summons at all to acquaint them whither they are going. And yet though every man's condition be thus uncertain, and that his breath is in his nostrils, where there is as much room for it to go out, as to come in, how few do make their nights repose to serve as a *memorial* of their last rest, or their bed to stand for a *model* of their coffin.

Some pervert the night, which was ordained to be a cessation of the evils of labor, to make it a season for their greater activity in the evils of sin. **“They devise”** (as the prophet said) **“iniquity upon their beds, and when the morning is light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand”** (Micah 2:1). Others are easily brought asleep by the riot and intemperance of the day, owning their unhappy rest not to the dew of nature, but to the gross and foul vapors of sin, which more darken and eclipse their reason than their sleep, their *dreams* having more of it in them than their *discourse*.

Others again, by their youth and health, seem to be seated in such an elevation above death, as that they cannot look down from their *bed* into the *grave* without growing dizzy, such a steep precipice they apprehend between life and death. Though this distemper does not arise from the distance between the two terms, but from the imbecility of their sense, which cannot bear the least thoughts of a separation from those delights and pleasures to which their souls are firmly wedded. When therefore the most of men are such unthrifths of time, and like careless navigators keep no *journal* or *diary* of their motions, and other occurrences that fall out.

What need have others to make the prayer of *Moses*, the *man of God*, their prayer: **“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom”** (Ps. 90:12). He who was learned in all the sciences of the Egyptians desires to be taught this point of *arithmetic* of God: *so to number*, as not to mistake, or make any error in the account of life, in setting down *days* for *minutes*, and *years* for *days*. A man would think that a little *arithmetic* would serve to cast up so small a number, as the days of him, whose days are as the days of a hireling, few and evil. And yet it is such a mystery, that Moses begs of God to be instructed in it, as that which is the chief and only knowledge.

Yea, God himself earnestly wishes this wisdom to *Israel*, his people: **“O that they were wise; that they understood**

this, that they would consider their latter end!” (Deut. 32:29). Can we then render the night more senseless, or keep the bed unspotted from those impurities that are neither few nor small, than by practicing duly this divine art, of numbering our days? This is not done by any speculation, or prying into the time or manner of our death, but by meditating and thinking with ourselves what our days are, and for what end our life is given to us; by reckoning our day by our work, and not by our time; by what we do, and not by what we are; by remembering that we are in a continual progress to the chambers of death, no man’s life being so long at the evening as it was in the morning. Night and day are as two axes at the root of our life, when one is lifted up, the other is down, without rest: every day a chip flies off, and every night a chip, and so at length we are hewn down, and fall at the grave’s mouth.

O what a wide difference is there between those that lie down with these considerations in their bosoms, and others, who pass their time in pleasures, and allow not the least portion of it, to think what the issues are that a day or night may bring forth! How free are their conversations from those sensualities and lusts, which others commit in the day, and lie down with the guilt of them in the night! How profitably do they improve their time who count only the *present* to be theirs, and the *future* to be God’s, above those that fancy youth and strength to be a security of the succeeding proportions of their life! Yea, how comfortable is death to those who are in daily preparation for it, as well as in expectation of it, above what it is to others, who are surprised by it in the midst of those delights, in which they promised themselves a continuance for many years!

In what a differing frame and figure does it appear to the one and to the other? The one beholds it as a bridge, lying under their feet to pass them over the *Jordan* of this life in the *Canaan* of eternal blessedness; and the other as a torrent roaring and frightening them with its hasty downfall. Gladly

therefore would I counsel Christians, who enter in to the *church militant* by a *mystical* death, being buried with Christ by baptism, and cannot pass into the triumphant, but by a *natural* death, to bear daily in their minds the cogitations of their inevitable end, as the best means to allay the fear of death, in what dress soever it comes, and to make it an inlet into happiness whensoever it comes.

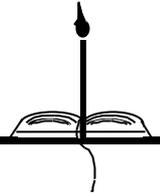
As Joseph of Arimathea made his sepulcher in his *garden*, that in the midst of his delights he might think of death, so let us in our *chambers* make such schemes and representations of death to ourselves, as may make it familiar to us in the emblems of it, and then it will be less ghastly when we behold its true visage. When we strip ourselves of our garments, think that *shortly* (as Peter said) *we must put off this our tabernacle*. Aye, and think again, what a likeness there is between our *night-clothes*, and our *grave-clothes*, between the *bed* and the *tomb*. What a little distance there is between *life* and *death*, the one being as an *eye open*, and the other as an *eye shut*: in the twinkling of an eye we may be living and dead men. O what ardors of lusts would such thoughts chill and damp! What sorrows for sins past! What diligence for time to come to watch against the first stirrings of sin would such thoughts beget! It being the property of sin to divert us rather from looking upon our end, then embolden us to defy it.

Lord then make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, that I may in my own generation serve the will of God, and then fall asleep as *David* did, and not as others, who fall asleep before they have done their work, and put off their bodies before they have put off their sins.



This article is taken from: Spurstowe, William. *The Spiritual Chymist: or, Six Decads of Divine Meditations on Several Subjects*. London: Philip Chetwind, 1666. A PDF file of this book can be downloaded, free of charge, at <http://www.ClassicChristianLibrary.com>

Postscript



The Breadth and Depth of the Bible

“As the parcels of the Bible were published and delivered by divers notaries, the instruments of God’s own lips, in divers ages, divers places, upon divers occasions, so neither the argument nor the style, nor the end and purpose is the same in them all: some recounting things past, some foreseeing things to come; some singing of mercy, some of judgment; some shallow for the lamb to wade in, some deep enough to bear and drown the elephant; some meat that must be broken and chewed with painful exposition, some drink that at the first sight may be supped and swallowed down; somewhat in some or other part that may please all humors, as the Jews imagine of their manna, that it relished not to all alike, but to every man seemed to taste accordingly as his heart lusted; yet, they were all written for our learning and comfort.”

-- *John King (c. 1559-1621)*

Related Bible Verse:

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Note: The work from which the above quote was taken, *Lectures Upon Jonah*, by John King, is available as a PDF eBook at the [Classic Christian Library](http://classicchristianlibrary.com), free of charge at:

http://classicchristianlibrary.com/library/king_john/King-Jonah.pdf

