

Devotional Refreshment

With Spurgeon and the Puritans

“At their best, Christians have saturated themselves in the Bible. They say with Job, ‘I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread’ (Job 23:12).” – D.A. Carson

I. The Prince of Preachers: Charles H. Spurgeon’s (1834-1892) *Morning and Evening*

June 13 – Morning Reading

“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev 22:17)

JESUS says, “Take freely.” He wants no payment or preparation. He seeks no recommendation from our virtuous emotions. If you have no good feelings, if you be but willing, you are invited; therefore come! You have no belief and no repentance,—come to Him, and He will give them to you. Come just as you are, and take “freely,” without money and without price. He gives Himself to needy ones. The drinking fountains at the corners of our streets are valuable institutions; and we can hardly imagine any one so foolish as to feel for his purse when he stands before one of them, and to cry, “I cannot drink because I have not five pounds in my pocket.” However poor the man is, there is the fountain, and just as he is he may drink of it. Thirsty passengers, as they go by, whether they are dressed in fustian or in broadcloth, do not look for any warrant for drinking; its being there is their warrant for taking its water freely. The liberality of some good friends has put the refreshing crystal there, and we take it, and ask no questions. Perhaps the only persons who need go thirsty through the street where there is a drinking fountain are the fine ladies and gentlemen who are in their carriages. They are very thirsty, but cannot think of being so vulgar as to get out to drink. It would demean them, they think, to drink at a common drinking fountain: so they ride by with parched lips. Oh, how many there are who are rich in their own good works, and cannot therefore come to Christ! “I will not be saved,” they say, “in the same way as the harlot or the swearer.” What! go to heaven in the same way as a chimneysweep. Is there no pathway to glory but the path which led the thief there? I will not be saved that way. Such proud boasters must remain without the living water; but, “WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.”

1. How does Spurgeon’s free offer of the gospel comfort you? What are some obstacles that hinder people from embracing this free offer?
2. Who does Spurgeon say are the ones who reject the free offer? Why do they do this?
3. According to the following texts, what are the characteristics of those who run after idols?

Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! (Is 46:6)

All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit...¹² The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint... He takes a part of [a cedar] and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread...¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god!”¹⁸ They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand.¹⁹ No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, “Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?”²⁰ He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?” (Isa 44:9,12,15,17-20)

4. According to Isaiah, how are the ashes of false religion replaced with “the richest of fare” (Is 55:2)?

Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. (Is 55:1-3)

The Danger of “Hyper-Calvinism”

“Hyper-Calvinism only arises whenever and wherever the truth of the sovereignty of God in salvation is firmly believed.”

- Iain Murray, *Spurgeon vs. Hyper-Calvinism*, 40.

Hyper-Calvinism = A distorted view of the sovereignty of God’s work in salvation that excludes notions of human responsibility.

5. THE KEY QUESTION: Does God actually desire the redemption of people whom He knows (and has ordained) that they will never believe? (Because if He does, then we are justified in extending the gospel invitation to all people!)

Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? (Ezek 18:23)

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezek 33:11)

Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever! (Deut 5:29)

Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea; (Is 48:18)

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! (Matt 23:37)

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matt 11:28)

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. (Is 45:22)

CONCLUSION: “The full and free offer of the gospel is a grace bestowed upon all. Such grace is necessarily a manifestation of love or lovingkindness in the heart of God.” - John Murray, “The Free Offer of the Gospel”, 132.

- Q. How can God offer a gospel to people who He knows (and has ordained) will never believe?

“Now consider the narrowness of your mind, whether I can grasp what God has decreed with himself. . . Thou seekest reason? I tremble at the depth. Reason, thou; I will marvel. Dispute, thou; I will believe. I see the depth; I do not reach the bottom.” – John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.23.5

6. What are some ways in which a strong belief in the sovereignty of God can end up distorting our Christian witness? Are you prone to this in your witness?