

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*

September 15 – Morning Reading

“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.” (Ps 112:17)

Christian, you ought not to dread the arrival of evil tidings; because if you are distressed by them, what do you more than other men? Other men have not your God to fly to; they have never proved his faithfulness as you have done, and it is no wonder if they are bowed down with alarm and cowed with fear: but you profess to be of another spirit; you have been begotten again unto a lively hope, and your heart lives in heaven and not on earthly things; now, if you are seen to be distracted as other men, what is the value of that grace which you profess to have received? Where is the dignity of that new nature which you claim to possess?

Again, if you should be filled with alarm, as others are, you would, doubtless, be led into the sins so common to others under trying circumstances. The ungodly, when they are overtaken by evil tidings, rebel against God; they murmur, and think that God deals hardly with them. Will you fall into that same sin? Will you provoke the Lord as they do?

Moreover, unconverted men often run to wrong means in order to escape from difficulties, and you will be sure to do the same if your mind yields to the present pressure. Trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. Your wisest course is to do as Moses did at the Red Sea, "Stand still and see the salvation of God." For if you give way to fear when you hear of evil tidings, you will be unable to meet the trouble with that calm composure which nerves for duty, and sustains under adversity. How can you glorify God if you play the coward? Saints have often sung God's high praises in the fires, but will your doubting and desponding, as if you had none to help you, magnify the Most High? Then take courage, and relying in sure confidence upon the faithfulness of your covenant God, "let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

I. What is the “living hope” to which we have been born, according to Spurgeon? Is this an escapist mentality?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, + to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you...” (1 Pet 1:3-4)

Q. What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them, and who still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence, is, for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father. In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul, and will also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this life of sorrow. He is able to do so as almighty God, and willing also as a faithful Father. (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 26)

2. What are the “sins so common to others under trying circumstances”?

3. What are the “wrong means” used by “unconverted men...in order to escape from difficulties”?

“Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.”
(Is 50:10-11)

4. How does the Fatherhood of God guard us from erroneous views of God when tragedy strikes?

5. To what does the “righteous man” turn in times of adversity, according to Psalm 112? Where are his eyes fixed (v. 8)?

Praise the LORD! Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments! ...⁴ Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous. ⁵ It is well with the man who deals generously and lends; who conducts his affairs with justice. ⁶ For the righteous will never be moved; he will be remembered forever. ⁷ He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD. ⁸ His heart is steady; he will not be afraid, in the end he will look in triumph on his adversaries. ⁹ He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever; his horn is exalted in honor. ¹⁰ The wicked man sees it and is angry; he gnashes his teeth and melts away; the desire of the wicked will perish! (Ps 112)

“The author moves back and forth between the ideal and the real. At the heart of his concern is not so much the getting of God’s blessings as much as encouraging conformity to God in righteous acts, in cultivating qualities (gracious and compassionate, loyal and steady), and in developing a strong faith in the Lord. The wise person is one of faith, hope, and love!”

- W. VanGemeren, Psalms, 707.

6. How can Scripture say “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison...” (2 Cor 4:17)??

“Pelagianism [Esp. its view that God is not in control] scatters flowers over graves, turns death into an angel, regards sin as mere weakness, lectures on the uses of adversity, and considers this the best possible world. Calvinism has no use for such drivel. It refuses to be hookwinked. It tolerates no such delusion, takes full account of the seriousness of life, champions the rights of the Lord of lords, and humbly bows in adoration before the inexplicable sovereign will of God Almighty.”

- Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 394.

**Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.**

**Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.**

**Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.**