

PARENTAL SOLICITUDE

by James Smith

Smith's address originally written for his own children emphasizing the importance of parents concerning themselves with their children's eternal welfare, calling for earnest prayer and every means for spiritual benefit.

3 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 00 Parental Solitude
2. 00p PREFACE
3. 01 A Father's Address

00 Parental Solitude

Parental Solitude A Father's Address to His Children on the Most Important Truths of the Gospel.
By James Smith, 1836

00p PREFACE

PREFACE

When I commenced writing the following pages, I only intended them for my own offspring. Deeply impressed with a sense of my own responsibility as a Parent, and with the value of the souls of my children — I began this address with earnest prayer to the God of all grace to make it useful to their souls. It was written with a hope to affect the children's hearts, not to meet a critic's eye; but I have since thought that the Lord in his infinite mercy may use it for the benefit of some besides my own family — therefore I have allowed it to be published just as it was written. I am conscious that many objections may be raised against it, but having stated my only design in writing it, and allowing it to be printed, I am not anxious to anticipate objections, which may be made by others, or reply to any that arises in my own mind. To the blessing of Almighty God I commend it, and pray that it may not only be the means of benefitting my own family and rejoicing my own heart; but that many families may be benefitted and that many a parent's heart may through it have occasion to sing for joy; nor do I stop here, but hope that the glory of Jehovah may be advanced by such a feeble instrument, and the Lord Jesus Christ be made known, endeared to the heart, and be honored by the praises of many who are now in darkness, ignorance, and sin.

Any parent who approves of the sentiments, may adopt it as his own, and put it into the hands of his children as expressing his own feelings, and containing his own admonitions. And to every such parent especially I would say, as you value the present and eternal welfare of your children, and of the children all around you; be earnest, frequent, and persevering in your prayers at a throne of grace, that the Lord would bless this, and every other attempt to benefit the rising race.

I cannot think, that parents in general, sufficiently realize the importance of using every means, and watering the same with earnest prayer, for the benefit of their dear children. We know they must be saved — or lost; but do we feel in reference to our children as the great Apostle Paul (who learned his divinity by express revelation from God, Galatians 1:11-12; who had been up in the third heaven, 2 Corinthians 12:1-5) did in reference to his brethren the Jews, Romans 9. Do we manifest the same anxiety for our own, as he did for others, 1 Corinthians 9:19-27? Alas! it is to be feared that many are lamentably deficient! Gracious God! stir up the minds of your people to a befitting concern for the eternal welfare of their children, and for your glory and praise!

If any are tempted to despise, to dispute, or to condemn this feeble piece; I would only say, God has generally chosen weak things, things that are despised, and things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are; that no flesh may glory in his presence; and he has ever proved that the work of a sinner's conversion from darkness to light, and his translation from the kingdom of Satan into that of his dear son; whatever may be the means employed, is not by might or by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord Almighty.

If any of my brethren in the Ministry should spend a few moments in perusing these pages, I would entreat them to read as Ministers of Christ — not as critics; and put up a prayer that the blessing of

the Lord may attend them. To all who in every place, call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, into whose hands this publication may fall, I would say: Brethren, pray, that so far as these pages contain the Word of the Lord, they may have free course and be glorified. That children yet unborn may praise,

The wonders of redeeming grace!

01 A Father's Address

My Dear Children,

As your parent, I feel deeply concerned for both your present and everlasting welfare. Great will be my happiness, if favored to see you rise up into life mingling with the wise and holy; and if at last privileged to meet you at the right hand of God! But great will be my sorrow and distress to see you associated with the worldly, the careless, or the profane — and to look forward with the fear of being everlastingly separated from you! O what an idea — to be separated forever! the parent enjoying unutterable blessedness — but the child enduring unspeakable, unending woe! I beseech you, as you regard my parental feelings, my knowledge, experience, and love; if you have any concern for your present comfort, or future welfare — read seriously, and frequently what I now write to you! My head may soon be laid low in the grave, my tongue may be shortly sealed in silence, and my heart cease to beat with concern for your good; therefore I seize the present moment, now while it is called today, and write expressly for you — out of love to your souls, from concern for your welfare, with a desire to do you good. O may God the Holy Spirit, dictate what I write, and transcribe the same upon the fleshy tables of your hearts. Remember it is your parent who writes to you — who can have no aim but to do you good, no design but to make you happy! And remember also, that what your parent now addresses to you, will be recognized, produced, and honored, at that great, solemn, and fearful day, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ! Then it will witness to my concern for your benefit, and will either appear to your comfort, or to augment your condemnation.

Often I have prayed for you, and hope still to do so — but though these prayers are permanent in heaven, they are transient on earth; they may be forgotten and pass away from your memories like the early dew when the sun arises; but this address to you will be with you, and I trust will often be perused by you, under the sanction and blessing of God. Let me once more my dear children entreat you, to view this address as . . .

the effusion of a parent's love,

the token of a parent's care, and

the proof of a parent's concern. With all the solemn realities of eternity before me I write, and with the deepest solicitude I bespeak your attention. I address you all — but I shall speak individually, that each may read as though I was speaking personally to the reader.

Allow me first, my dear child, to call your attention to the infinite value of your immortal SOUL. You have a soul which is immortal, destined to live forever. It is that which thinks, determines, and leads you to action; it is the seat of pleasure or pain; of peace, or agitation; of a blessing, or a curse; according to its moral state. It is impossible to be happy here, or joyful in the eternal world, unless your soul is conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Live it must, live it will, and live forever; but it is capable of enduring most dreadful, fearful, and never-ending torments!

Every other thing loses its value, if compared with the immortal soul! Hence our adorable Redeemer inquires, "What shall it profit a man — if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Think, my dear child, if your soul should be lost — what will the short-lived enjoyments of time, what will the empty honors of earth, what will the riches of this world — do for you? They may add to your misery,

they may aggravate your woe,

they may point the arrows of divine vengeance,

they may strengthen the worm of a guilty conscience,

they may mix the cup of damnation with bitterer dregs;

but they can yield no satisfaction, afford no comfort, or frame for you any excuse!

I tell you from the mouth of God —

that you have an immortal soul;

that there is a glorious heaven — and a dreadful hell;

that one or the other must be your eternal abode;

and I beseech you to consider seriously, reflect in time, and flee from the wrath to come! O if your father's testimony and entreaty, should aggravate your woe at last! it is possible — but may the Lord prevent it! Neglect anything rather than the soul! If the soul be safe, all is safe — but if that is in danger, nothing is secure!

Permit me now to direct your attention to the real state of your soul, as in the sight of God. You are blessed with the noble faculty of reason — you can think, compare, conclude, and determine. You have . . .

an understanding to take in knowledge,

a will to choose,

affections to love and hate,

and a memory to retain. But all these faculties are depraved, they are all hostile to the holy law and glorious gospel of God. They are polluted in every part, and influenced by principles which are enmity to God. You naturally choose what is wrong — and love what is forbidden. You understand earthly things — but are blind to things which are spiritual; you can remember what is carnal with ease and delight — but forget what is holy, or retain it without any pleasure. Your nature is entirely depraved, and always has been! You were conceived in sin, shaped in iniquity, and brought forth under the curse of God! (Be not startled at this awful fact, the curse of God rests wherever sin is found, — unless Christ's atonement is sincerely received.)

You have grown up hitherto in a sinful state:

every thought of your heart,

every word you have spoken,

every action you have performed,

is more or less sinful. Your heart is a fountain so corrupt, that nothing pure can possibly proceed there from. God, says of your heart, my child, that it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!" Every variety of sin and wickedness lurks there! It may be concealed from your view, but yet it is there; and if temptation should present itself, or the Lord takes off his restraints — it would soon make its dreadful appearance. There never was a sin committed by the vilest malefactor, or a crime perpetrated by the greatest monster of iniquity — but the seed of that sin or crime is to be found in your heart! "For from within, out of the heart," says Jesus, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, covetousness, wickedness; deceit, lust, an evil eye, pride, blasphemy, foolishness! All these evil things come from within and defile a man!" Well then may the Apostle say, "The carnal mind is enmity against God — for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be! So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God!" Do you think that it is possible, my dear child, for anything good to come from a heart like this? But just such a heart is yours — and the reason you do not know it, is because spiritual darkness and ignorance are spread over your soul; the eyes of your understanding are darkened, and you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin! But if God the Holy Spirit . . .

leads you into the truth,

enlightens your understanding,

and quickens your soul —

then you will then feel, know, and acknowledge that such is your real condition!

Doubtless you will be tempted to think, that your state is not so bad — that I have surely exaggerated the statement. My dear child, this is a fearful delusion, it is one of the plots of Satan to keep you in a state of carnal security and false peace. God Himself says you are so bad; yes, he says, "we are altogether become abominable!" Now think — "abominable in the sight of God" — how awful the state! how fearful the condition! how alarming the thought! And yet this is your condition by nature, and the condition of every person in the whole world.

Let me entreat you to consider this subject, for a mistake here is dangerous, it leads to self-righteousness, self-complacency, and to slighting the only remedy which God has provided. But we have not only the testimony of God in his Word to the truth of his doctrine — but the witness of every truly godly man, who has honored the church and benefitted the world by his conduct. Your parent now writing can testify that this is true of himself, and judging of you by himself, and by the Word of God — he concludes you are as depraved, polluted, and vile as himself by nature! Never then allow any person to persuade you to believe that your nature is otherwise than depraved — wholly depraved; or that it is possible to bring forth from such a heart — anything that can possibly be pleasing or acceptable to God, without reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.

All you can perform is defiled by sin, and is polluted in every part; and has only a tendency to provoke the eyes of his holiness, if presented to God to render you acceptable to him. There is but one way in which you can approach God — but one medium through which you can be accepted, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, which leads me to the next thing to which I desire to direct your

attention. The state of man being such as I have asserted above, God could not have fellowship with him, or bestow blessings upon him, or be reconciled to him — but through a MEDIATOR. A mediator must possess the nature of the parties between whom he mediates, and have ability to perform any conditions the offended may prescribe, before he can consistently undertake such an office. The Lord Jesus Christ was God by nature, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in the divine essence. He possessed all the glories, perfections, and majesty of the supreme Jehovah: being with the Father and Spirit — God over all, and blessed for evermore. He was infinite, eternal, and divine — existing of himself, and therefore the independent I AM. He condescended in infinite love to engage to save sinners; he undertook to assume their nature; expiate their sins; perform what the law required of them, in order to their justification; to honor the Father as the moral Governor of the Universe; and be the medium of all communication between God and them. In the fullness of time, he appeared; he took our nature as prepared for him, into union with his divine person — and God and man became one Christ. He was Immanuel, God with us. He possessed all the fullness of Godhead — and he wore the very nature of man. He was one with God in all his glorious attributes and blessedness; and one with man in all his weakness, natural peculiarities, and sinless infirmities. He was made under the law; he became obedient; he humbled himself; and as the Father's servant performed all his holy will. He . . .

revealed the mind of God;

unfolded the perfections of his character;

disclosed his purposes;

delivered his promises;

stated his precepts, and

pronounced his threatenings.

Having our nature — he stood in our place, and in all things sought our good. He fulfilled the preceptive requirements of the law in his life — and suffered its penalties in his death. He . . .

bore our sins;

endured our curse; and

reconciled us unto God by his death.

He judged, condemned, and conquered — the prince of this world, our determined foe who had led us captive at his will; and triumphed over him in his cross.

He destroyed death, or spoiled it of its sting, deprived it of its power, and stripped it of its terrors.

He made a way into the holiest by his blood — even into heaven itself. And he is now at the right hand of God, ever living to make intercession for us. His obedience is imputed to all who believe for their justification; and entitles them to eternal life, happiness, and honor. His blood is applied to all who repent, confess, and forsake sin; and gives them pardon, peace, and cleansing. His complete work being received by faith, is our salvation; and delivers us from . . .

the wrath of God,

the curse of a broken law, and the terrors of death and the grave.

He is now exalted to be a prince and a Savior, and in his exalted state he confers all spiritual blessings upon all who call upon him in humility, sincerity, and truth.

He gives his Spirit to sanctify, teach, strengthen, and direct — all who ask him.

He gives repentance unto life, full remission of sin, and joy and peace in believing — to all his redeemed people. In a word — there is no blessing which

a sinner can need,

a Savior could purchase, or

a God of love can bestow

— but Jesus is ready to impart to all who . . .

accept his invitations,

receive his doctrine,

trust his promises,

and plead his name.

Jesus, my child, is the only Savior! He saves fully, freely, and eternally! He provides all that the sinner needs — of His own free bounty; and supplies all his real needs — of His unmerited mercy, without money and without price, and never did, nor will cast out one who sincerely comes to him in his own prescribed way.

Here is the REMEDY which God sets before you! In him alone, is to be found wisdom, strength, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption! All believers are complete in him. He is . . .

their food — and feast;

their clothing — and beauty;

their peace — and joy;

their life — and comfort;

their way — and light;

their hope — and glorious end!

He is their all in all!

He who has Christ — has all things! He who has not Christ — has nothing of any lasting value. This is the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone who believes. And in order that you may be benefitted by the gospel — he has erected a throne of grace; to this he invites you, and bids you to freely come. On this throne he appears as the friend of sinners; the God of love — gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and in truth. He loves to see sinners approach him, and delights to show mercy unto them. He directs them to plead his

own promises, and his name — and assures them of success. He bids them reason with him, and gives them his Word, that though their sins be as scarlet — they shall be as white as snow; and though they are red like crimson — they shall be as wool!

You need nothing to recommend you to his mercy — but your own misery. You need nothing to ensure you success — but a sincere, desire to possess what you pray for; and faith in the promises he has made, and the revelation he has given of himself. Make no preparation — but come just as you are to the throne of grace — that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help you in every time of need. The Lord waits to be gracious, and is exalted to show mercy unto you. But never attempt to approach God without reference to the work of Christ; it is only in Christ, that he is reconciled to sinners! It is only through the perfect work of Jesus, that he accepts the ungodly. You must go to him as a sinner! You must plead for the blessings you need — with earnestness, humility, and perseverance; and expect to receive them only on the ground of what Jesus Christ has done and suffered. Be not discouraged by delays, the Lord may see fit to keep you waiting for the blessings you crave — but you are not to conclude that he will not bestow them; for they shall not be ashamed who wait for him.

You will perhaps feel much discouragement in seeking the Lord as on a throne of grace, from your own corrupt hearts — which will carry you away; and your mind will perhaps be found wandering after a thousand other objects. Satan will endeavor to persuade you that it is all in vain, that your prayers are an abomination to God, and will only increase your condemnation; this with a sense of your own utter unworthiness, and the lack of faith in prayer, will prove a great stumbling-block. But still pray always, and do not faint. Luke 18:1.

It is a matter of the greatest consequence to find the Lord, to receive mercy from him, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation; therefore let nothing deter you — but seek his saving mercy, as for your life. God will appear, you will prove his promise faithful. Every one who sincerely seeks — will surely find. Your parent has found this to be true. I sought the Lord — and he heard my cries, and delivered me from all my fears. Thousands beside have looked unto him and have been saved, and found all his promises confirmed. Therefore seek — and you shall find; knock — and it shall be opened unto you. All things are ready, come to the throne of Grace! Yet there is room, hasten to the gospel feast! The fountain is open, come and take of the fountain of life freely. The principal things you need are repentance and faith — and these are the gifts of God. Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and the remission of sins. Faith is also given by the Lord. So entreat the Lord to give you FAITH in his Word, that you may truly believe all its inspired statements. Faith will enable you to realize the value, discover the glory, and apprehend the importance of the Word of God: you will feel solemnity when perusing its contents, and certainty when pleading its promises. Without faith it is impossible to please God, enjoy salvation, or walk in true holiness and righteousness before God. Faith receives the Scriptures as the very Word of God, as though they were put into the hand by a messenger from heaven; and consequently attends to their contents with prayer, seriousness, and a desire to know what is the mind of the Spirit. The man who is under the influence of a living faith, heartily admits the truth of all that God says in reference to himself, sin, the world, Satan, the Lord Jesus, salvation, and condemnation. He is firmly persuaded that he is just what God says he is — abominable and filthy. Job 15:16.

He is firmly persuaded that sin has robbed him of his glory, his strength, and every claim upon his God; and that by nature he has neither title to, nor fitness for heaven.

He is firmly persuaded that the world is the enemy of God, and that all that is in it — is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. He believes that a friend of the world is an enemy of God, and that separation from it is necessary to friendship with God, holiness, and happiness.

He is firmly persuaded that Satan is the enemy both of God and man, that he is a powerful, active, malicious foe; going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He believes that Satan's service is sin, and his wages are damnation.

He is firmly persuaded that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only able, sufficient, and willing Savior the lost, ruined, and undone sinners. He believes that he is God over all; that he is man; God and man in one person; in office for us at the right hand of God; and that he will come to judge the world in righteousness, bringing to light every secret thing, and passing on each a judgment according to truth.

He is firmly persuaded that salvation is of grace, and of free grace alone; without our works or deservings being taken into the account. He believes that condemnation is of ourselves, for our sins — being the sentence of a just God against man's transgression.

These things faith embraces, and produces emotions in the mind according to the subject with which the attention is occupied. It makes the soul . . .

tremble at condemnation;

flee to Jesus;

submit to his righteousness;

plead his name; and

rest on his perfect atonement.

Faith leads the soul to receive Christ as set forth in the Word of God, as . . .

food,

strength,

wisdom,

righteousness,

sanctification,

and redemption.

Faith finds a home at the cross, at the throne of grace, and among the spiritual people of God.

Faith . . .

leads from self,

strips of pride and self righteousness,
gives victory over the world, and
combats Satan in the promised strength of the Lord.

Faith places the crown on the head of Jesus, and lays the sinner in the dust! If you my child obtain like precious faith with the Apostles, you will think very lowly of yourself, and very highly of the Lord Jesus! You will make him all your trust, confidence, and boast.

Faith in Christ leads to EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE:

we feel sin to be bitter,
know it to be evil, and
mourn over it before God.

We cannot but hate sin anywhere — but we hate it more especially in ourselves; we loathe ourselves in our own sight for all our abominations. We wonder at God's patience and forbearance with us, and when we believe God has pardoned us, we cannot forgive ourselves.

Repentance is not an occasional sorrow for sin, or a passionate vexation on account of it; but it is .
. .

a rooted opposition to it,
an abiding disgust at it, and
a loathing self on account of it.

Repentance is always connected with deep humiliation: it strips us of self-importance, brings us into the dust, and constrains us to mourn as one mourns for his only son, and be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Repentance does not fill us with gloom — though it always produces sorrow; it sets the soul against sin, and turns away the feet from the paths of transgression. It may be interrupted in its exercise — but if genuine, it cannot be uprooted from the mind; the feelings may not always be realized — but the grace ever abides. If you can trifle with sin, or look on sin with unconcern — you have some reason to question your repentance! But if you have an abiding sense of sin's loathsome, destructive, and God — dishonoring character; and daily pray for deliverance not only from its guilt but its power, and strive to forsake every false way — then you have reason to blessed God that you are favored with godly repentance unto life.

Without repentance — there is no pardon, no peace with God, no scriptural ground to hope for heavenly glory: for unless we repent — we still love, serve, and are in league with God's enemy; but from this we must be delivered in the present world, if we ever see God with pleasure in eternity.

Without repentance — the heart remains hardened, unbroken, uncleansed, and is totally unfit to be the habitation of God. God says, "To this man I will look, and with him I will dwell — to him who is humble and of a contrite spirit; and who trembles at my Word."

Never my child be satisfied with your religion, unless one of its features is abiding penitence; for repentance, conversion, remission of sins, and refreshing from the presence of the Lord are connected in the Lord's Word. Acts 3:19. And Jesus says, "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "If any man is in Christ — he is a new creation, old things are passed away, and behold all things become new!" 2 Corinthians 5:17. The NEW BIRTH is the work of God the Holy Spirit in the heart, implanting new principles, or imparting a new nature, or creating us anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10. Regeneration is the cause of all spiritual feelings, motions, and actions; faith and repentance are effects of it — but I noticed them first because they are first discovered by us, and through them we come to a knowledge of our being saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5. The principle imparted is, by our Lord, called spirit: "That which is born of the flesh — is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit — is spirit." John 3:6. It is directly and unchangeably opposed to everything unholy and profane, and it begins a warfare with every corruption in our natures, which continues until death. "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we desire." Galatians 5:17. The new birth is the commencement of our preparation for glory; a new nature is given suited to the prospects unfolded; and capable of embracing, trusting, and serving the Lord Jesus Christ. It makes us what we were not — and fits us for what we shall be. It is indispensably necessary in order to glorify God on earth, or enjoy him in heaven — for we can neither enter into the kingdom of grace, or the realms of glory without it! "For unless you are converted, and become as little children — you shall never enter into the kingdom of God!" Matthew 18:3. We cannot be new creatures without a new nature — and we cannot possess a new nature without being new creatures.

Regeneration makes spiritual things become natural to us; spiritual exercises flow from a vital principle and are pleasant, agreeable, and sweet. The corruptions of our nature being strong, the influence of Satan being great, and the temptations of the world being powerful — throw many obstacles and hindrances in our way; or we would as naturally and as easily engage in spiritual things as the fish swims, the bird flies, or the man in health walks. The will, under the influence of grace — runs out after everything that is holy, spiritual, and divine; but the power of depravity often makes us cry out. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me! To will is present with me — but how to perform that which is good — I find not: for I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members!" Romans 8:1-39. The new birth is not always attended with the same circumstances, in some it produces a sudden, unlooked for, thorough change — as in Paul. In others it operates more secretly, gently, and slowly. In all, the change is real — and will ultimately be manifest. It always leads the soul to God — its author. The person who is the subject of of it, feels the need to pray; retires for the purpose — but perhaps can only sigh, groan, or cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" It cannot rest until brought near to God, indulged with liberty at his throne of grace, and favored with tokens of his forgiving love.

It is much impeded by a sense of unworthiness — and often filled with gloomy doubts and fears that God will not be gracious, or give an answer of peace. The bible is read with more attention, concern, and feeling — the soul wants to understand its contents, enjoy its blessings, and escape its curses. It becomes the counselor, guide, and familiar friend; and the soul says of it, as David of

Goliath's sword, "there is none like it!" The godly become the objects of affection, and a desire is felt to enjoy their company, and be numbered among them. Their follies are much overlooked, and their virtues and excellencies are admired. If the person had been in the habit of despising them — he is now surprised at himself, for they appear totally different persons to what they used to be. The ordinances of God are prized, frequented, and improved: every opportunity is seized to attend upon them, and the soul never seems to have enough of them. The means of grace are precious in those days. Opposition is braved, persecution endured, and reproach despised; because the value of the soul is realized, the importance of salvation felt, and the solemnities of eternity are present with the mind. The language of the soul is, "Give me Christ — take what you will away; only let me be saved by him, sprinkled with his blood, numbered with his people, enjoy his presence, and be assured of eternal glory — and I desire nothing else!"

There is a solemnity, an earnestness, and a determination in the mind about spiritual things, to which a mere professor is an entire stranger. The thoughts are filled with divine things — and the soul pursues after them with unquenchable ardor. There is more felt in the heart, than is expressed by the lip; and a self-distrust, timidity, and godly fear characterizes the conduct.

It is not necessary that you should know exactly when, how, or by what means this change is effected; there are but few who can speak with much certainty on these points. The great question is, "Are you a new creature?" If you have experienced this change, God is the author of it, and his glory the end designed by it; therefore give him the praise for performing it, and never puzzle about when, where, or how it was produced. My child, you must be born again, I beseech you to examine your own heart, and see if Christ is truly in you! Are you washed, sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God? 1 Corinthians 6:11.

If you are regenerated — you are in a truly happy state, for GODLINESS is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Timothy 4:8. All that is needful for time, and all that can be enjoyed in eternity — is yours! Yes, "all things are yours, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come — all are yours; and you are Christ's!" 1 Corinthians 3:21-23.

You will find the advantage of being the Lord's, in seasons of trouble and distress:

his promises will afford you comfort and administer consolation;

his presence will cheer and animate your soul; and

at his throne of grace you will find relief and solid satisfaction.

Knowing God to be your father; that he is fully acquainted with your circumstances; that he rules and controls every creature and circumstance; and intends to do you good by all that he works or permits — you will find a sure support in the most trying seasons. The mere worldling may be driven to all sorts of extremes — but the Christian is driven to his God, and proves him to be his refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Psalms 46:1.

If indulged with prosperous gales, and everything seems to conspire to increase your substance, and your worldly joys — then Godliness will be as ballast to keep the vessel of your minds steady on this dangerous sea. It will teach you the unsatisfying and changeable character of all these things; and direct your attention to things which are imperishable, unfading, and eternal.

Godliness will teach you to seek principally the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to attend to the one thing needful, and to have your conversation in heaven, from whence also you will be looking for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Godliness will teach you to use this world as not abusing it, because the fashion of it, and the things of it are passing away.

If surrounded by temptation, Godliness will afford you a refuge and a shelter, a place of safety and defense! And while many are driven to heinous sins — you will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. You may feel them — but shall certainly overcome them; for he who trusts in the Lord shall come forth of them all. In poverty, Godliness will bless you with contentment;

in plenty — with gratitude;

in danger — with safety;

in sickness — with peace and comfort;

in death — with victory and triumph; and

through eternity — with inconceivable blessedness!

You can be placed in no circumstances, nor can you be called to fill any situation, in which you will not find godliness with contentment, to be great gain. Read the history of Joseph, of David and of Daniel — and see the fact beautifully illustrated. Godliness entitles you to every good, in every place, at every season; "for the Lord God is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly!" Psalms 84:11. "The young lion may lack and suffer hunger: But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing!" Psalms 34:10. "For my God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ." Php 4:19.

Both body and soul are in covenant with God, both shall be supplied and befriended on earth, and both shall be glorified in heaven forever.

Think not, my child, that you can be a loser by godliness, for Jesus assures you that you shall have an hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come — life everlasting. You may seem to lose for a time — but will not lose eventually. Only beware of imprudences which Scripture will not sanction, walk by faith, live in dependence upon God, come out from the world and be separated to God, and he will dwell in you, walk in you, and make all things work your good. He has promised you all temporal things needful — if you are seeking his face; and has blessed you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

He gives you not only the bounties of his hand — but having fixed on you the love of his heart — he gives you his HOLY SPIRIT to manage your affairs. This divine agent is the sole author of all heart religion, it is by his presence, power, and operation — that the good work is begun, carried on, and completed — to the glory of divine grace.

Wherever he takes up his abode in the heart — he makes and keeps the soul sensible of its guilty, polluted, and unworthy character; thus preserving it from pride and presumption.

He produces and nurtures true humility, by revealing to a man his follies and faults; and revealing the amazing, undeserved, and unchangeable love of God; especially as discovered . . .

in the gift, work, sufferings, death and intercession of his Son;

in the continued displays of his kindness notwithstanding our base provocations, rebellions, and ingratitude; and

in the acceptance of his person and services through the substitution of the Lord of glory. This often crumbles the soul, as it were before God, and causes it to exclaim, "O Lord God, your love to me is astonishing! Your mercy exceeds my expectations!"

He opens the Scriptures to the mind, sometimes by shining upon them when reading; at others by bringing them home, and opening them up to the understanding, or applying them to the heart. If we pray to the Spirit, sow to the Spirit, and expect the teaching of the Spirit — we shall be much favored in this respect; for those who honor him — he will honor. The teaching of the Spirit — allows us to see the glory, value, and divinity of the scriptures; which gives more satisfaction to the mind as to their being the book of God — than a thousand sound and well formed arguments could!

He leads us to have fellowship with God through his Word — and this endears the Word, and produces love, gratitude, and reverence toward God. He who is taught to understand his bible by the Holy Spirit, cannot trifle with it, or treat any part of it with levity or lightness — but he looks at it with seriousness, reads it with prayer, and meditates on it to his soul's advantage. The Holy Spirit is given also to help our infirmities in prayer: he shines upon our minds and reveals our needs, then he reveals the Savior's fullness and willingness to bestow, leads us to the throne of grace, and often furnishes us with words, desires, or groans which cannot be uttered. He frequently prompts us to prayer, reminds us of opportunities, and assists us to make our requests known unto our God. Indeed all real prayer springs from his work — is nurtured by his influences, and offered up under his help. If the Spirit was entirely to leave us, the throne of grace would be forsaken, nor would the exercise of prayer be ever engaged in by us: but he makes intercession in us according to the will of God.

He is also our Comforter, in which office he often leads out our souls in meditation on Jesus, his Word, and the glory that is to be revealed. And while we are musing — the fire of holy love and comfort begins to burn; and before we are aware — our souls are made like the chariots of Amminadib. He comforts us by leading us to . . .

review the state from which we are delivered,

the privileges to which we are introduced, and

the prospects which are opening before us.

He comforts us by reminding us of what we may have been, and of what we assuredly would forever have been — but for the grace of God.

He comforts us by revealing Jesus in his glory, suitability, amiableness, and gracious relations. He comforts us by opening up his word, applying his blood, unfolding his doctrines; by exhibiting his

offices, purposes, and precious promises.

He comforts us by leading us to view Jehovah as our Father reconciled in Jesus, loving us with an everlasting love, and rejoicing over us to do us good.

He comforts us by curbing our enemies, apportioning our trials, and sending us all necessary supplies.

He fortifies our minds by communications of grace, and by leading us to the history of God's champions as recorded in the scriptures. He establishes us in the truth while surrounded by error, and enables us to realize its veracity and value. He . . .

strengthens our faith,

increases our patience,

maintains our hope,

inflames our love,

adds to our knowledge, and

conducts us to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God! My child, nothing can be substituted for the indwelling, sanctifying work, and saving operations of the Spirit of God! Without these, there can be no holiness, no spiritual happiness, no fellowship with God, no true religion. Let nothing then satisfy you short of these!

God says to you, "If you respond to my warning — then I will pour out my Spirit on you and teach you my words." Proverbs 5:23. Jesus adds, If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children — then how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" Luke 11:13. Ask then and receive, even as God has promised; for you shall find him to be faithful and true. The next thing to which I would direct your attention is the love, mercy, and faithfulness of GOD, to all who truly believe. God is love. He loves all who come to him, call on him, and trust in him; and these very things are the effects of his love; for as Paul said to the Ephesian Christians, so may I say to every seeking soul, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2:1-5. And when you are brought to believe in Jesus, and walk after the commands of God; it is your privilege to look on God as loving you with an infinite, eternal, unchangeable love! As loving you — as he loves Jesus, with a love surpassing knowledge. And let your circumstances, trials, or troubles be as they may; still you are warranted to believe that God is your Father, that he loves you beyond conception; and will make all things work for your good!! To be an object of the love of Deity — is the highest honor that can be conferred on a sinner! To be a son of God, a joint heir with Christ — is the truest dignity that mortals can possibly enjoy — and this honor have all His saints. He says of each and of all, "Never again will you be called 'The Forsaken City' or 'The Desolate Land.' Your new name

will be 'The City of God's Delight' and 'The Bride of God,' for the Lord delights in you and will claim you as his bride!" Isaiah 62:4. His mercy is great unto the heavens; and is from everlasting to everlasting; it is fixed on those who fear him unto all generations. A saving interest in God's mercy is a sufficient guarantee that we shall never lack, or be left destitute and wretched; for his merciful kindness is ever great towards us. Mercy will befriend us through time, and rejoice over us through eternity. It takes our misery to heart and sympathizes with us under all our conflicts and trials. If God's mercy is fixed upon me, and shown to me — then all must be well with me. His faithfulness is like the great mountains, it stands unmoved and immovable; every prediction in his Word must be fulfilled, and every promise be made good, because they are the predictions and promises of a faithful God. Man may deceive — but God cannot. Man may not be trusted — but God can. We can never trust him too confidently, or for too much — if we have a plain promise in his Word to go upon. What a comfort is this under all the changing scenes and trying circumstances we are called to pass through — that though we believe not, yet the Lord abides faithful, he cannot deny himself. If all friends forsake us, if every enemy be enraged at us, if circumstances conspire to cast down and distress us; still, God is faithful, and will make a way for our escape, that we may be able to bear it.

What a blessing to be able to say, "God loves me; he has shown mercy to me; prayers have been accepted in heaven from me; the promises of his Word are trusted by me; and he will arise and have mercy upon me." Yet, every believer may say this — and rejoice that as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people for evermore. Millions have trusted in the mercy and faithfulness of God — but not one ever found him untrue; all must say, "O Lord, you have not forsaken those who seek you."

If God loves me — then it is of small consequence who dislikes me. If God has mercy in store for me — then it is no great matter of grief if man tries to keep good things from me. If God is faithful to me — then I need not despair though all creatures deal falsely with me. But if God is angry with me, as he is with the wicked every day; if he who made me, will not have mercy on me; if the faithfulness of God only regards his threatening to judge and punish me — then what will it avail though man loves me, endeavors to show mercy to me, or continues faithful to me? I shall still find that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. My dear child, I entreat you seriously to think over this part of my address; and remember that Jesus says, "I love those who love me, and those who seek me early shall find me." Those who seek his love are sure to find it, those who come to his throne for mercy are sure to obtain it, for he who promised is faithful. Think not that idle wishes, sleepy desires, or formal prayers are enough; these do but mock God on the account of his mercy, and insult his infinite majesty. Seek earnestly, seek importunately, seek until you obtain. But perhaps it may be necessary that I say a little more in addition to what has gone before, on the all important topic of a sinner's JUSTIFICATION. "How can man be just with God?" is one of the most solemn and important questions that can be proposed by man; but blessed be God — it is clearly and satisfactorily answered in his holy Word. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; all that he did and suffered — was in the character of a substitute; he fully obeyed the law's requirements, satisfied its claims, and suffered its penalty: he went to the end of the law for righteousness. The perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only ground of a sinner's justification before God; this is proclaimed and exhibited in the everlasting gospel, and the minister is commanded to declare that by him, all who believe are justified from all things. Nothing is

required of the sinner to entitle him to claim the blessing, it is a gift of free grace, it is held out for his reception, he may take it freely, he may claim it honestly; his past bad conduct, or his present sinful state are no barriers in the way, for God justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Faith is a receiving the perfect work of Christ for justification — which includes the renunciation of everything of mine totally and entirely; it is a putting on Christ; a taking him to be my redeemer, Savior, and King. The work of Christ is imputed to the believer, and is henceforward reckoned as his; he wears the name, is represented by the person, and is clothed with the robe of his righteousness. He is complete in Christ. He is accepted of God in the beloved, to the praise of his glorious grace. Everlasting life is his, he is passed from death to life and cannot come into condemnation. God is well pleased with him, and he is commanded to obey — not to procure life — but to glorify God, express his gratitude, honor Jesus, and benefit others.

Justification and sanctification are inseparably connected; he who is justified by faith in the Lord Jesus, is sanctified by the Spirit of our God. The faith that embraces Christ and his righteousness, invariably produces good works, and leads its possessor in the paths of holiness and righteousness. Faith in Christ makes and keeps . . .

the eye single;

the conscience tender;

the walk honorable;

and the end blessed.

Presumption, hardness, and the love of sin, cannot reign where true faith is found; consequently proud boasters, presumptuous sinners, and light triflers — are not justified persons, however sound their creed or correct their notions. And of all people, these are the most dangerous, and their state is the most fearful. Therefore I beseech you to avoid the company of bold, daring, or trifling professors; they are a blot on a church, a discredit to any cause, and a great injury to all young people.

Expect justification by simple faith in Jesus — but unless faith brings forth fruit, God tells you that it is dead faith, being alone. Avoid mixing anything with Christ's work in the point of justification — but avoid with equal care the idea that a truly justified person may indulge in sin, or walk licentiously. Faith always purifies the heart, and its possessor becomes consecrated to God; it works by love, and if it is strong, vigorous, and healthy — its possessor will be full of mercy and good fruits, without deception, and free from hypocrisy.

Peace with God and access to him with confidence, are the effects of free justification by faith in Jesus; honest conscience is satisfied, apprehensions of divine wrath are destroyed, and acceptance with God is enjoyed. Jehovah appears reconciled by the death of his Son, a holy satisfaction springs up in the soul, and joy and peace in believing are realized. Conscience lays by its accusations, heaven freely admits the sinner's prayers, and the soul can sing, "O Lord, I will praise you, though you were angry with me — your anger is turned away and you comfort me!" Isaiah 12:1.

Prayer now becomes a delightful privilege, and praise is the very element of the soul. Fellowship with God our Father and his Son Jesus Christ, is truly sweet and precious; and the soul is ready to

cry out to others, "Have fellowship with me, for truly my fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." He now walks in the light, casts his cares upon God, enjoys freedom from bondage, for the truth has made him free and he is free indeed. His life is now a life of fellowship with God; heaven and earth seem to be very near to each other; and God is about the path and the bed, spying out all the ways. This my child, is true godliness — to live as in the presence of the Most High, to walk with the Lord always before us, and be not only in union with Jesus — but in daily, yes hourly communion. This is preparation for heaven, which will be a different place — but we shall enjoy the same sweet company as that we have enjoyed below. This will make sin odious, distasteful, and disagreeable. This will render holiness lovely, sweet, and delightful. We shall by this grow up into Christ, be conformed to his image, and be changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Beware of erroneous opinions which are plentifully broached on every hand. Error is generally palatable to a carnal mind — because it will feed either its legal notions, or licentious principles. There is nothing in our corrupt nature that is ready to fall in with truth — until God has renewed us by his grace. The carnal mind is a hot-bed of error, and generally falls in with it. All error is injurious, many errors are fatal, and are therefore called damnable heresies. Cleave to the book of God, pray over it, search it with seriousness, solemnity, and, dependance on divine teaching; really desiring to know its meaning.

Beware of judging of religion by those who profess it. There are always many foolish virgins, and some who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, mixed up with the Lord's people. It is not what professors do — but what Christianity requires and produces in its real subjects, that you are to judge by. The best causes often suffer from the worst of men. If there were no godly people professing Christ you might doubt — but not because some bad ones are mixed up with his interests.

Often reflect on death, judgment, eternity; these are truly solemn subjects — but you are vitally interested in each of them. You must soon depart out of the world; you must be judged according to God's holy Word; you must enter on a boundless eternity, begin a changeless state of existence either in happiness beyond conception — OR in torments beyond expression. You cannot escape, you cannot plead ignorance, you will be left without excuse. The state in which you now are, has been set before you; the path of life has been cast up; the way of death has been pointed out; and your parent with all seriousness, affection, and concern — has warned you to flee from the wrath to come. You have been directed to Jesus, and assured of his gracious reception. You have been informed that the only way to be happy on earth or in heaven, is by faith in Christ, union to him, and fellowship with him. An empty profession, a form of godliness is vain; a death bed repentance — may be rejected; and of prayers then offered the Lord may say, "But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you — when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes." Proverbs 1:24-31

Think over this fearful scripture, it is the Word of God — it will all be fulfilled. But if it should be fulfilled in you, in you my child; in you after having been thus warned, admonished, and directed; and if your parents should be called up to witness against you at last, and acquiesce in your eternal condemnation, and see you driven away into blackness, darkness, and endless despair! How awful the thought! how dreadful the idea! Yet it may be realized — but may God in mercy prevent it! But if the warning is taken, if Jesus is sought, if salvation is obtained — then how blessed will be your end! You will meet your parent after death in the separate state, recognize him at the day of judgment, and share with him the full tide of blessedness which will flow from the Savior's gracious Word, "Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" And through a boundless, endless eternity — we shall enjoy in union pleasures passing thought, and joys beyond conception! May this my dear child be your happiness, and may this well-meant address be instrumental in bringing about such a glorious consummation. Amen.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net