

Overcoming Fearfulness in the Fear of God

“But the fearful, and unbelieving,... and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Rev. 21:8.

“**Fear God**, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”
“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, **If any man worship the beast and his image**, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God...”
Rev. 14:7, 9, 10.

Here it can be observed that the fear of God is the opposite of unbelief and idolatry, the opposite of the fear and worship of the beast and its image.

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and **they that dwell on the earth shall wonder**, whose names were *not* written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” Rev. 17:8.

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall **worship** him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Rev. 13:8.

“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and **they worshipped the beast, saying**, Who is like unto the beast? **who is able to make war with him?**” Rev. 13:4.

“For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should *not* walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; **neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.** And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Isa. 8:11-14.

Fear: Strong's #4172—to be fearful, terrible, terrifying

Dread: #6206—to be affrighted, afraid, fear, shake terribly.

The Purpose of Fear

“There is no fear in love; but **perfect love casteth out fear**: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” 1Jn. 4:18.

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore **love is the fulfilling of the law.**” Rom. 13:10.

Here we see that if we are made perfect in love, if we perfectly fulfil the law of God, we will not fear. Therefore, fear is given to cause us to act.

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved with fear**, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Heb. 11:7.

The Cause of Fear

“The curse causeless shall not come.” Job 26:2. “Fear hath torment.” 1Jn 4:18.

In everyday life, we experience little fears constantly. If we are using a hammer, we fear placing our fingers where they may get smashed. If we are using a knife or axe or saw, we fear doing something that will cause an injury. When driving a vehicle, we have another set of worries. When dealing with people, we fear doing or saying things that would injure them. Why?

These fears are given by God to help us be watchful and caretaking. They can be largely removed if we will pay attention. If we are in tune with God, trust in His love and protecting power, and do all we can to avoid evil, we will not be tormented by them.

Is avoiding pain, injury, loss of property, friendships, liberty, or life, the end purpose of our fears? If so, then we need to learn the fear of the Lord. If we turn out of the way, our best efforts to avoid danger are totally vain.

“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” Ps. 127:1.

“If God's blessing rests upon you because you surrender all to Him, you will prosper. If you turn from God, He will turn from you. His hand can scatter faster than you can gather.” 2T 496.1

We are in the beginning of the time when **all** who stand for the truth of God will do so at the sacrifice of life, liberty, friends, property, comfort, and visible security.

“The adherents of truth are now called upon to choose between disregarding a plain requirement of God's word or forfeiting their liberty. If we yield the word of God, and accept human customs and traditions, we may still be permitted to live among men, to buy and sell, and have our rights respected. But if we maintain our loyalty to God, **it must be at the sacrifice of our rights among men.**” HM, November 1, 1893.

“The time is fast approaching when we shall be made to feel the hand of oppression, because we **demand our religious rights.**” {HM, August 1, 1889 par. 1}

“When brought before courts, we are to give up our rights, unless by so doing we are brought into collision

with God. **We are not pleading for our right, but for God's right to our service.** Instead of resisting the penalties imposed unjustly upon us, it would be better to take heed to the Saviour's word, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." SpM, 26.

So **why** should we flee when persecuted? Is it to save ourselves suffering? No. It is so that we can be of greater use. At times, we must necessarily walk **into** the lion's mouth in doing service for Christ. Either way, we must know and do the will of God.

"We have a work to do to go into all the world with the light God has given, asserting with pen and voice the rights of God and vindicating the claims of God. Jesus is to be our only trust and confidence. His righteousness is to be our assurance forever." 1888 934.1

Now let's look at some of our little fears. Should we be afraid of smashing our thumb with a hammer? How do you answer that question? Do you cringe at the thought of the pain? Of course. But the real question to be answered is, "Will smashing my thumb with a hammer be a benefit to the cause of God?" If so, how? If not, why?

We are told that "The **fear of man bringeth a snare:** but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." Prov. 29:25. When dealing with people, we must be careful. Why? Is it so that they will like us? Is it so that they do not suffer as a result of our actions? Is it so that we will avoid making enemies? Is it so that they will not be offended, and betray us to our enemies? These are all good questions. But what is the most basic question these others depend on? It is, "**How can I best honor God, and obey His law; and what will draw others to Christ, and work for their highest good?**" If we ask this question, we *may* be compelled to hurt everyone's feelings, including our own. Even physical injury may result. We will make enemies at times. We may be betrayed. Nevertheless, "whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." If we are walking in the light, **knowing and doing** the will of God, good will result at every step. We will not hurt others unnecessarily, and will seek to help them wherever possible.

Is there any reason we should fear death? "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And **deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**" Heb. 2:14, 15. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3:17.

"Courage, fortitude, faith, and implicit trust in God's power to save, do not come in a moment. These

heavenly graces are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right, the children of God were sealing their destiny. Beset with temptations without number, they knew they must resist firmly or be conquered. **They felt that they had a great work to do, and at any hour they might be called to lay off their armor; and should they come to the close of life with their work undone, it would be an eternal loss.** They eagerly accepted the light from Heaven, as did the first disciples from the lips of Jesus. When those early Christians were exiled to mountains and deserts, when left in dungeons to die with hunger, cold, and torture, when martyrdom seemed the only way out of their distress, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ, who was crucified for them. Their worthy example will be a comfort and encouragement to the people of God who will be brought into the time of trouble such as never was." CET 188.2.

Notice what these early Christians feared. They did not fear exile, imprisonment, hunger, cold, torture, or martyrdom, but rather rejoiced in these things. What they feared is that they should come to the close of their lives with their work undone.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but **rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.** 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 10:31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. 10:32 **Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.**"

"A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession. Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by shunning life's burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behavior, by the love of their own opinions, by justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them. And "whosoever shall deny Me before men," He says, "him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." {DA 357.2}"

"Satan is constantly at work, but few have any idea of his activity and subtlety. The people of God must be prepared to withstand the wily foe. It is this resistance that Satan dreads. **He knows better than we do the limit of his power and how easily he can be overcome** if we resist and face him. Through divine strength the weakest saint is more than a match for him and all his angels, and if brought to the test he would be able to **prove his superior power.** Therefore Satan's

step is noiseless, his movements stealthy, and his batteries masked. He does not venture to show himself openly, lest he arouse the Christian's dormant energies and send him to God in prayer. {5T 293.4}"

"The weakest saint, if he believes in Christ, is a member of Christ's body; and if he lives in humble dependence upon God, he will become strong; for he has a right to all the privileges of a child of God. {HP 283.4}"

Animals

"The **lion, we should much dread and fear here**, will then lie down with the lamb, and everything in the New Earth will be peace and harmony." {YI, October 1, 1852 par. 7}

"And **if ye walk contrary unto me**, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. **I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children**, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate." Lev. 26:21, 22. (Compare 2 Kings 2:24.)

"**If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them**; Then... ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land **safely**. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and **I will rid evil beasts out of the land**, neither shall the sword go through your land." Lev. 26:3-6.

"As Noah looked upon the powerful beasts of prey that came forth with him from the ark, he feared that his family, numbering only eight persons, would be destroyed by them. But the Lord sent an angel to His servant with the assuring message: "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered." {PP 107.3}

"Behold, **happy** is the man whom God correcteth: therefore **despise not thou the chastening** of the Almighty:

[“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” Heb. 12:6-9.]

For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: **neither shalt thou be afraid of the**

beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.” Job 5:17-23.

“In league with the stones of the field”. God wishes that we maintain our position of dominion, not fall into subservience to the animal creation. Then the promise is, “the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.”

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and **have dominion over** the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Gen. 1:28. “into your hand are they delivered.” Gen. 9:2.

Psalm 91

91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

In the Hebrew, it is very explicit that the “abide” is transitory, dependent on “dwelleth”. We are only safe as we **dwell** in God’s secret place. But when we do, what a protection is ours! The Almighty, El Shaddai,—the One overwhelming in destructive, devastating power—takes us under the shadow of His wings, and protects us with His very life.

91:2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; **in him will I trust.**

91:3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. [two conditions]

91:5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

To those who are fearful and do not trust in God’s protection, He says, “Ye have feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord GOD.” Eze. 11:8.

91:6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness;

“And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.” Deut. 7:15.

nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

91:7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

91:8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

91:9 **Because** thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

91:10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

91:11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

91:12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

91:13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

91:14 **Because** he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, **because** he hath known my name.

91:15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

91:16 With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.