C.H. Spurgeon - THE FEAR OF FINAL FALLING - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2006/7/2 15:06

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THE FEAR OF FINAL FALLING *by C.H. Spurgeon*

A DARK FEAR haunts the minds of many who are coming to Christ; they are afraid that they shall not persevere to the e nd. I have heard the seeker say: "If I were to cast my soul upon Jesus, yet peradventure I should after all draw back into perdition. I have had good feelings before now, and they have died away. My goodness has been as the morning cloud, and as the early dew. It has come on a sudden, lasted for a season, promised much, and then vanished away."

I believe that this fear is often the father of the fact; and that some who have been afraid to trust Christ for all time, and f or all eternity, have failed because they had a temporary faith, which never went far enough to save them. They set out t rusting to Jesus in a measure, but looking to themselves for continuance and perseverance in the heavenward way; and so they set out faultily, and, as a natural consequence, turned back before long. If we trust to ourselves for our holding o n we shall not hold on. Even though we rest in Jesus for a part of our salvation, we shall fail if we trust to self for anythin g. No chain is stronger than its weakest link: if Jesus be our hope for everything, except one thing, we shall utterly fail, b ecause in that one point we shall come to nought. I have no doubt whatever that a mistake about the perseverance of th e saints has prevented the perseverance of many who did run well. What did hinder them that they should not continue t o run? They trusted to themselves for that running, and so they stopped short. Beware of mixing even a little of self with the mortar with which you build, or you will make it untempered mortar, and the stones will not hold together. If you look t o Christ for your beginnings, beware of looking to yourself for your endings. He is Alpha. See to it that you make Him O mega also. If you begin in the Spirit you must not hope to be made perfect by the flesh. Begin as you mean to go on, an d go on as you began, and let the Lord be all in all to you. Oh, that God, the Holy Spirit, may give us a very clear idea of where the strength must come from by which we shall be preserved until the day of our Lord's appearing!

Here is what Paul once said upon this subject when he was writing to the Corinthians:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:8, 9).

This language silently admits a great need, by telling us how it is provided for. Wherever the Lord makes a provision, we are quite sure that there was a need for it, since no superfluities encumber the covenant of grace. Golden shields hung i n Solomon's courts which were never used, but there are none such in the armory of God. What God has provided we s hall surely need. Between this hour and the consummation of all things every promise of God and every provision of the covenant of grace will be brought into requisition. The urgent need of the believing soul is confirmation, continuance, fina l perseverance, preservation to the end. This is the great necessity of the most advanced believers, for Paul was writing to saints at Corinth, who were men of a high order, of whom he could say, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for th e grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." Such men are the very persons who most assuredly feel that they h ave daily need of new grace if they are to hold on, and hold out, and come off conquerors at the last. If you were not sai nts you would have no grace, and you would feel no need of more grace; but because you are men of God, therefore yo u feel the daily demands of the spiritual life. The marble statue requires no food; but the living man hungers and thirsts, and he rejoices that his bread and his water are made sure to him, for else he would certainly faint by the way. The belie ver's personal wants make it inevitable that he should daily draw from the great source of all supplies; for what could he do if he could not resort to his God?

This is true of the most gifted of the saints--of those men at Corinth who were enriched with all utterance and with all kno wledge. They needed to be confirmed to the end, or else their gifts and attainments would prove their ruin. If we had the tongues of men and of angels, if we did not receive fresh grace, where should we be? If we had all experience till we we

re fathers in the church--if we had been taught of God so as to understand all mysteries--yet we could not live a single d ay without the divine life flowing into us from our Covenant Head. How could we hope to hold on for a single hour, to say nothing of a lifetime, unless the Lord should hold us on? He who began the good work in us must perform it unto the day of Christ, or it will prove a painful failure.

This great necessity arises very much from our own selves. In some there is a painful fear that they shall not persevere i n grace because they know their own fickleness. Certain persons are constitutionally unstable. Some men are by nature conservative, not to say obstinate; but others are as naturally variable and volatile. Like butterflies they flit from flower to flower, till they visit all the beauties of the garden, and settle upon none of them. They are never long enough in one plac e to do any good; not even in their business nor in their intellectual pursuits. Such persons may well be afraid that ten, t wenty, thirty, forty, perhaps fifty years of continuous religious watchfulness will be a great deal too much for them. We se e men joining first one church and then another, till they box the compass. They are everything by turns and nothing lon g. Such have double need to pray that they may be divinely confirmed, and may be made not only steadfast but unmove able, or otherwise they will not be found "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

All of us, even if we have no constitutional temptation to fickleness, must feel our own weakness if we are really quicken ed of God. Dear reader, do you not find enough in any one single day to make you stumble? You that desire to walk in p erfect holiness, as I trust you do; you that have set before you a high standard of what a Christian should be--do you not find that before the breakfast things are cleared away from the table, you have displayed enough folly to make you asha med of yourselves? If we were to shut ourselves up in the lone cell of a hermit, temptation would follow us; for as long as we cannot escape from ourselves we cannot escape from incitements to sin. There is that within our hearts which shoul d make us watchful and humble before God. If he does not confirm us, we are so weak that we shall stumble and fall; no t overturned by an enemy, but by our own carelessness. Lord, be thou our strength. We are weakness itself.

Besides that, there is the weariness which comes of a long life. When we begin our Christian profession we mount up wi th wings as eagles, further on we run without weariness; but in our best and truest days we walk without fainting. Our pa ce seems slower, but it is more serviceable and better sustained. I pray God that the energy of our youth may continue with us so far as it is the energy of the Spirit and not the mere fermentation of proud flesh. He that has long been on the road to Heaven finds that there was good reason why it was promised that his shoes should be iron and brass, for the ro ad is rough. He has discovered that there are Hills of Difficulty and Valleys of Humiliation; that there is a Vale of Deathsh ade, and, worse still, a Vanity Fair--and all these are to be traversed. If there be Delectable Mountains (and, thank God, t here are,) there are also Castles of Despair, the inside of which pilgrims have too often seen. Considering all things, tho se who hold out to the end in the way of holiness will be "men wondered at."

"O world of wonders, I can say no less." The days of a Christian's life are like so many Koh-i-noors of mercy threaded up on the golden string of divine faithfulness. In Heaven we shall tell to angels, and principalities, and powers, the unsearch able riches of Christ which were spent upon us, and enjoyed by us while we were here below. We have been kept alive on the brink of death. Our spiritual life has been a flame burning on in the midst of the sea, a stone that has remained su spended in the air. It will amaze the universe to see us enter the pearly gate, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Chr ist. We ought to be full of grateful wonder if kept for an hour; and I trust we are.

If this were all, there would be enough cause for anxiety; but there is far more. We have to think of what a place we live i n. The world is a howling wilderness to many of God's people. Some of us are greatly indulged in the providence of God, but others have a stern fight of it. We begin our day with prayer, and we hear the voice of holy song full often in our hous es; but many good people have scarcely risen from their knees in the morning before they are saluted with blasphemy. T hey go out to work, and all day long they are vexed with filthy conversation like righteous Lot in Sodom. Can you even w alk the open streets without your ears being afflicted with foul language? The world is no friend to grace. The best we ca n do with this world is to get through it as quickly as we can, for we dwell in an enemy's country. A robber lurks in every bush. Everywhere we need to travel with a "drawn sword" in our hand, or at least with that weapon which is called all-pra yer ever at our side; for we have to contend for every inch of our way. Make no mistake about this, or you will be rudely shaken out of your fond delusion. O God, help us, and confirm us to the end, or where shall we be?

True religion is supernatural at its beginning, supernatural in its continuance, and supernatural in its close. It is the work of God from first to last. There is great need that the hand of the Lord should be stretched out still: that need my reader i s feeling now, and I am glad that he should feel it; for now he will look for his own preservation to the Lord who alone is able to keep us from failing, and glorify us with His Son.