

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

THE SLAUGHTER HOUSE

By Pastor Brian De Jong

In his book Human Nature in its Four-fold State, Thomas Boston says this:

Since Cain shed the blood of Abel, the earth has been turned into a slaughter-house; and the chase has been continued, since Nimrod began his hunting; on the earth, as in the sea, the greater still devouring the lesser. When we see the world in such a ferment, everyone attacking another with words or swords, we may conclude there is an evil spirit among them. These violent heats among Adam's sons, show the whole body to be distempered, the whole head to be sick, and the whole heart to be faint.

How well these words describe our day. Whether it is Nice, France, or Orlando, Florida, Dallas, Texas or Baton Rouge, Louisiana, it seems the world has gone mad with murder. Man takes up arms against his fellow man, and the television images of body bags become numbingly familiar to us.

It would be easy to point the finger of blame at certain groups. Radical Islamists, like ISIS, are particularly bloody and brutal. The Black Lives Matter movement has become a hotbed of hatred against whites, against the police, and even against other blacks. Homegrown terrorists who have become quietly radicalized are convenient targets for outrage – like the Tsarnaev brothers, who carried out the Boston Marathon bombing.

But Boston is right in laying the blame for this on the entire human race – the whole of Adam's twisted posterity. Even morally good and outwardly respectable members of society have the capacity to commit such outrages. This

is not a disease that is restricted to only certain branches of the human family, but it infects the entire family tree.

One of the attractions in “blaming the terrorists” is that we can retain a sense of human pride. “Those people” do such things, but we would never commit such an outrageous act. They are monsters, capable of horrific crimes, but we are basically good people who would never do such a thing. This is a problem limited to a subset of humanity, and we can solve it by dealing with that subset. The fallen nature of many is so bent and so crooked



that each and every one of us is fully capable of such heinous actions, and even worse atrocities. Fallen man hates God, and therefore he loves death. He hates life, and he serves Satan. The fall left men dead in their trespasses and sins, and it turned the world into a constant slaughter house.

Only when we admit the total depravity of the human race can we see the bright glow of the gospel of God's grace. Knowing how warped man is, we can see now why we need Christ to come to earth to seek and to save what was lost. Jesus is the answer to man's murderous madness. Only the Prince of Peace can bring calm and quiet to the tumult of the human heart, and the bloody chaos of a culture gone awry.

Making new government policies, deporting the bad people, building long and high walls, or abandoning our borders altogether will not solve the problem that is rooted in the sinful heart of man. Neither

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Mnemonics...

- *Bridal Shower, 11th*
- *Church Picnic, 18th*
- *Corn Roast 27th*

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Believe Christ, Not Satan

By Richard Sibbes

Since Christ is thus comfortably set out to us, let us not believe Satan's representations of him. When we are troubled in conscience for our sins, Satan's manner is then to present Christ to the afflicted soul as a most severe judge armed with justice against us. But then let us present him to our souls as offered to our view by God himself, holding out a scepter of mercy, and spreading his arms to receive us.

HOW WE SHOULD THINK OF CHRIST

When we think of Joseph, Daniel, John the Evangelist, we frame conceptions of them with delight, as of mild and sweet persons. Much more when we think of Christ, we should conceive of him as a mirror of all meekness. If the sweetness of all flowers were in one, how sweet must that flower be? In Christ all perfections of mercy and love meet. How great then must that mercy be that lodges in so gracious a heart? Whatever tenderness is scattered in husband, father, brother, head, all is but a beam from him; it is in him in the most eminent manner. We are weak, but we are his; we are deformed, but yet carry his image upon us. A father looks not so much at the blemishes of his child as at his own nature in him; so Christ finds matter of love from that which is his own in us. He sees his own nature in us: we are diseased, but yet his members. Who ever neglected his own members because they were sick or weak? None ever hated his own flesh. Can the head forget the members? Can Christ forget himself? We are his fullness, as he is ours. He was love itself clothed with man's nature, which he united so near to himself, that he might communicate his goodness the more freely to us. And he took not our nature when it was at its best, but when it was abased, with all the natural and common infirmities it was subject to.

Let us therefore abhor all suspicious thoughts, as either cast in or cherished by that damned spirit who, as he labored to divide between the Father and the Son by jealousies, by saying, 'If thou be the Son of God' (Matt. 4:6), so his daily study is to divide between the Son and us by breeding false opinions in us of Christ, as if there were not such tender love in him to such as we are. It was Satan's art from the beginning to discredit God with man, by calling

God's love into question with our first father Adam. His success then makes him ready at that weapon still.

WHEN CHRIST SEEMS TO BE AN ENEMY

'But for all this, I feel not Christ so to me,' says the smoking flax, 'but rather the clean contrary. He seems to be an enemy to me. I see and feel evidences of his just displeasure:

Christ may act the part of an enemy a little while, as Joseph did, but it is to make way for acting his own part of mercy in a more seasonable time. He cannot restrain his bowels of mercy long. He seems to wrestle with us, as with Jacob, but he supplies us with hidden

**“In Christ,
all perfec-
tions of
mercy and
love meet.”**

strength to prevail at length. Faith pulls off the mask from his face and sees a loving heart under contrary appearances. Fides Christo larvam detrahit (Faith pulls away the mask from Christ). At first he answered the woman of Canaan, who was crying after him, not a word. Then he gave her a denial. After that he gave an answer tending to her reproach, calling her a dog, as being outside the covenant. Yet she would not be so beaten off, for she considered the end of his coming. As his Father was never nearer him

in strength to support him than when he was furthest off in sense of favor to comfort him, so Christ is never nearer us in power to uphold us than when he seems most to hide his presence from us. The influence of the Son of righteousness pierces deeper than his light. In such cases, whatever Christ's present bearing is towards us, let us oppose his nature and office against it. He cannot deny himself, he cannot but discharge the office his Father has laid upon him. We see here the Father has undertaken that he shall not 'quench the smoking flax', and Christ has also undertaken to represent us to the Father, appearing before him for us until he presents us blameless before him (John 17:6,11). The Father has given us to Christ, and Christ gives us back again to the Father.

WHEN DOUBT ASSAILS US

'This would be good comfort,' says one, 'if I were but as smoking flax.'

It is well that this objection pinches on yourself, and not on Christ. It is well that you give him the honor of his mercy towards others, though not to yourself. Yet do not wrong the work of his Spirit in your heart. Sa-

tan, as he slanders Christ to us, so he slanders us to ourselves. If you are not so much as smoking flax, then why do you not renounce your interest in Christ, and disclaim the covenant of grace? This you dare not do. Why do you not give yourself up wholly to other pleasures? This your spirit will not allow you to do. Where do these restless groanings and complaints come from? Lay your present state alongside the office of Christ to such, and do not despise the consolation of the Almighty nor refuse your own mercy. Cast yourself into the arms of Christ, and if you perish, perish there. If you do not, you are sure to perish. If mercy is to be found anywhere, it is there.

In this appears Christ's care to you, that he has given you a heart in some degree sensitive. He might have given you up to hardness, security and profaneness of heart, of all spiritual judgments the greatest. He who died for his enemies, will he refuse those, the desire of whose soul is towards him? He who, by his messengers, desires us to be reconciled, will he put us off when we earnestly seek it at his hand? No, doubtless, when he goes before us by kindling holy desires in us, he is ready to meet us in his own ways. When the prodigal set himself to return to his father, his father did not wait for him, but met him in the way. When he prepares the heart to seek, he causes his ear to hear (Psa. 10:17). He cannot find in his heart to hide himself long from us. If God should bring us into such a dark condition as that we should see no light from himself or the creature, then let us remember what he says by the prophet Isaiah, 'Who is among you . . . that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?' no light of comfort, no light of God's countenance 'let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God' (Isa. 50:10). We can never be in such a condition that there will be just cause of utter despair. Therefore let us do as mariners do, cast anchor in the dark. Christ knows how to pity us in this case. Look what comfort he felt from his Father when he was broken (Isa. 53:5). This is what we shall feel from himself in our bruising.

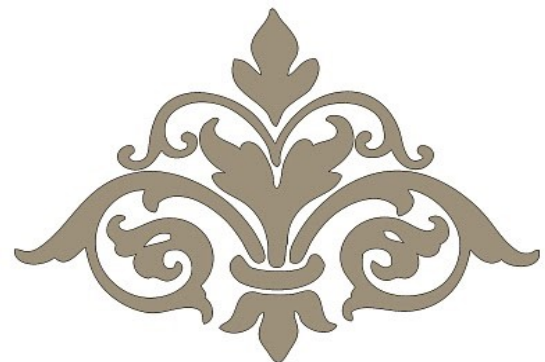
The sighs of a bruised heart carry in them a report, both of our affection to Christ, and of his care to us. The eyes of our souls cannot be towards him unless he has cast a gracious look upon us first. The least love we have to him is but a reflection of his love first shining upon us. As Christ did, in his example to us,

whatever he charges us to do, so he suffered in his own person whatever he calls us to suffer, so that he might the better learn to relieve and pity us in our sufferings. In his desertion in the garden and on the cross he was content to be without that unspeakable solace which the presence of his Father gave, both to bear the wrath of the Lord for a time for us, and likewise to know the better how to comfort us in our greatest extremities. God sees fit that we should taste of that cup of which his Son drank so deep, that we might feel a little what sin is, and what his Son's love was. But our comfort is that Christ drank the dregs of the cup for us, and will succor us, so that our spirits may not utterly fail under that little taste of his displeasure which we may feel. He became not only a man but a curse, a man of sorrows, for us. He was broken that we should not be broken; he was troubled, that we should not be desperately troubled; he became a curse, that we should not be accursed. Whatever may be wished for in an all sufficient comforter is all to be found in Christ:

“He who
died for
His ene-
mies, will
He refuse
those, the
desire of
whose
soul is to-
wards
Him?”

1. Authority from the Father. All power was given to him (Matt. 28:18).
2. Strength in himself. His name is 'The mighty God' (Isa. 9:6).
3. Wisdom, and that from his own experience, how and when to help (Heb. 2:18).
4. Willingness, as being bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh (Gen. 2:23; Eph. 5:30).

Sibbes, Richard, The Bruised Reed, Chapter 9, Believe Christ, Not Satan





SAVE THE DATE

WOMEN'S PRESBYTERIAL (of the MIDWEST)

Saturday, October 1, 2016 New Covenant Church Joliet, IL

Please put this date on your calendar and plan to join us for a day of encouragement with our sisters in Christ! We are planning on seeing ladies from several churches in the Midwest Presbytery, as well as other Presbyteries!

Our speaker will be **Tin Ling Lee**, a tentmaker missionary, currently serving in China. She has recently returned to the states and is looking forward to sharing with us.

We are excited to explore how we can encourage our missionary ladies/wives, so please come ready to be challenged to be an ENCOURAGER!

August Birthdays



Wedding Anniversaries



Bridal Shower

Alyssa Mork's bridal shower is Thursday, August 11th at 6:30 p.m. She is registered at Bed, Bath & Beyond, and Target. All ladies in the church are invited to join!



Church Picnic

Mark your calendars for the annual church picnic, which will take place on August 18! More details will be given later.



Corn Roast

Everyone is invited to Rodney & Samantha's home for their annual corn roast! The event will be held the evening of Saturday, August 27th, with dinner beginning at 6 pm.

Remember to bring lawn chairs, yard games, and a healthy appetite! RSVP to Samantha if you're planning to come. See you there!



CHURCH CAMPOUT

The annual church camp-out will be Sept 8-10 at Kohler Andrae State Park. All are invited to come. More details will be given later.





Grace OPC

August 2016

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	4	9	10	11 Bridal Shower 6:30 p.m.	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 Church Picnic	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Corn Roast 6:00 p.m.
28 Lord's Supper, p.m.	29	30	31			

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Peanut Butter Chocolate Dessert

- ★ 20 chocolate cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies, divided (or generic oreos)
- ★ 2 tbsps. butter, melted
- ★ 1 - 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- ★ 1/2 cup peanut butter
- ★ 1 1/2 cups confectioners sugar, divided
- ★ 2 - 8 oz. whipped topping, thawed
- ★ 15 miniature peanut butter cups, chopped (or most of a bag of minis, each cut in half)
- ★ 1 cup cold milk
- ★ 1 pkg. (3.9 oz.) instant chocolate fudge pudding mix

Crush 16 (-18) cookies; toss with butter. Press onto bottom of 9 inch square dish (or 8 x 11). In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, peanut butter, and 1 cup confectioners sugar until smooth. Fold in 8 oz. whipped topping. Spread over crust. Sprinkle with peanut butter cups. In another mixing bowl, beat the milk, pudding mix and remaining confectioners sugar on low speed for 2 minutes. Fold in 8 oz. whipped topping. Spread over peanut butter cups. Crush remaining cookies (4-5); sprinkle over top. Cover and refrigerate at least 3 hours. **Yield:** 12-16 servings.

Debbie Boss



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

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Spurgeon Corner

*“Who went about doing good.”
(Acts 10:38)*

Few words, but yet an exquisite miniature of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are not many touches, but they are the strokes of a master’s pencil. Of the Saviour and only of the Saviour is it true in the fullest, broadest, and most unqualified sense. “He went about doing good.”

From this description it is evident that he did good *personally*. The evangelists constantly tell us that he touched the leper with his own finger, that he anointed the eyes of the blind, and that in cases where he was asked to speak the word only at a distance, he did not usually comply, but went himself to the sick bed, and there personally wrought the cure. A lesson to us, if we would do good, to do it ourselves. Give alms with your own hand; a kind look, or word, will enhance the value of the gift. Speak to a friend about his soul; your loving appeal will have more influence than a whole library of tracts. Our Lord’s mode of doing good sets forth his *incessant activity*! He did not only the good which came close to hand, but he “went about” on his errands of mercy. Throughout the whole land of Judea there was scarcely a village or a hamlet which was not gladdened by the sight of him. How this reproves the creeping, loitering manner, in which many professors serve the Lord. Let us gird up the loins of our mind, and be not weary in well doing. Does not the text imply that Jesus Christ *went out of his way to do good*? “He went *about* doing good.” He was never deterred by danger or difficulty. He sought out the objects of his gracious intentions. So must we. If old plans will not answer, we must try new ones, for fresh experiments sometimes achieve more than regular methods. Christ’s *perseverance*, and the *unity* of his purpose, are also hinted at, and the practical application of the subject may be summed up in the words, “He hath left us an example that we should follow in his steps.”

Evening, July 28th by C. H. Spurgeon

Front Page Concluded

political party can solve this horrible situation. Only God’s sovereign grace transforming the heart can cause a violent sinner to begin to love his neighbor as himself. The gospel is the only solution that can or will work.

