

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

THE OLD, OLD STORY

By Pastor Brian De Jong

*“Tell me the same old story, when you
have cause to fear
That this world’s empty glory is costing
me too dear:
Yes, and when that world’s glory is
dawning on my soul
Tell me the old, old story, “Christ Jesus
makes thee whole.”
Tell me the old, old story, tell me
the old, old story
Tell me the old,
old story of Jesus
and his love.”*

Katherine Hankey’s hymn may appear somewhat shallow at first glance. Granted, it is somewhat repetitive and deals with some of the most elementary truths of the Christian faith. Yet I think there is something subtly profound in this hymn – something we can benefit from, if we let it sink in.

Specifically, I would argue that there is real value in revisiting stories we’ve heard before, and that we know quite well. There is a certain comfort and encouragement to be gained from the familiar.

Years ago I heard an interview on the Mars Hill Audio Journal that discussed the benefits of repetition. The author being interviewed suggested that when we’ve heard a story before, and know the basic story-line, then we can discover deeper truths that weren’t obvious on our first acquaintance with that tale. Since we already understand the characters or chronology of the story, we can listen for

deeper aspects of the story – themes that run deeper than the surface.

For myself, I’ve experienced this in my annual “listen” to the Lord of the Rings trilogy. I’ve done this for at least four years, and so I know the books quite well. I’ve also read the books and seen all the movies, so I’m not a novice. Each time I

listen, I gain some new perspective or deeper insight than I’ve seen before. There is also a sense of delight in spending time with these old friends. I feel like I “know” Frodo and Sam, Strider and Faramir and the rest. I like to listen to them talk, and

understand their thoughts – it brings me intellectual enjoyment and I always am thrilled when the ring is finally destroyed, and Aragorn is crowned king of Gondor.

The same thing is true in an even more profound sense regarding the Scriptures. The older I grow, the more I am familiar with the content of the Bible. Those stories are “old, old stories” to me. Yet as I visit and re-visit them, I gain new insights, see deeper veins of truth, and relish the fact that Jesus loves even me.

Our contemporary age values something new, something unknown, some surprise. Old stories are disdained by those who have “been-there-done-that.” But this clamor for only new things misses the great value of old truths – the old, old story of Jesus and his love.



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Mnemonics...

- *Taco Supper, 10th*
- *Joint Service, 12th*
- *Men’s Retreat,, 24th-25th*

THE RESOLUTIONS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS

By Jonathan Edwards

Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help, I do humbly entreat him by his grace to enable me to keep these Resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to his will, for Christ's sake.

Remember to read over these Resolutions once a week.

Overall Life Mission*

1. Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriad's of ages hence. Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great soever.
2. Resolved, to be continually endeavoring to find out some new invention and contrivance to promote the aforementioned things.
3. Resolved, if ever I shall fall and grow dull, so as to neglect to keep any part of these Resolutions, to repent of all I can remember, when I come to myself again.
4. Resolved, never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God; nor be, nor suffer it, if I can avoid it.
6. Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.
22. Resolved, to endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can, with all the power; might, vigor, and vehemence, yea violence, I am capable of, or can bring myself to exert, in any way that can be thought of.
62. Resolved, never to do anything but duty; and then according to [Eph. 6:6-8](#), do it willingly and cheerfully as unto the Lord, and not to man; "knowing that whatever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord." *June 25 and July 13, 1723.*

Good Works

11. Resolved, when I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can towards solving it, if circumstances don't hinder.

13. Resolved, to be endeavoring to find out fit objects of charity and liberality.

69. Resolved, always to do that, which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it. *Aug. 11, 1723.*

Time Management

5. Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.
7. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.
17. Resolved, that I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.
18. Resolved, to live so at all times, as I think is best in my devout frames, and when I have clearest notions of things of the gospel, and another world.
19. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour, before I should hear the last trump.
37. Resolved, to inquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent, what sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied myself: also at the end of every week, month and year. *Dec. 22 and 26, 1722.*
40. Resolved, to inquire every night, before I go to bed, whether I have acted in the best way I possibly could, with respect to eating and drinking. *Jan. 7, 1723.*
41. Resolved, to ask myself at the end of every day, week, month and year, wherein I could possibly in any respect have done better. *Jan. 11, 1723.*
50. Resolved, I will act so as I think I shall judge would have been best, and most prudent, when I come into the future world. *July 5, 1723.*
51. Resolved, that I will act so, in every respect, as I think I shall wish I had done, if I should at last be damned. *July 8, 1723.*
52. I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: Resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age. *July 8, 1723.*
55. Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to act as I can think I should do, if I had already seen the happiness of heaven, and hell torments. *July 8, 1723.*
61. Resolved, that I will not give way to that listless-

ness which I find unbends and relaxes my mind from being fully and fixedly set on religion, whatever excuse I may have for it—that what my listlessness inclines me to do, is best to be done, etc. *May 21, and July 13, 1723.*

Relationships

14. Resolved, never to do anything out of revenge.
15. Resolved, never to suffer the least motions of anger to irrational beings.
16. Resolved, never to speak evil of anyone, so that it shall tend to his dishonor, more or less, upon no account except for some real good.
31. Resolved, never to say anything at all against anybody, but when it is perfectly agreeable to the highest degree of Christian honor, and of love to mankind, agreeable to the lowest humility, and sense of my own faults and failings, and agreeable to the golden rule; often, when I have said anything against anyone, to bring it to, and try it strictly by the test of this Resolution.
33. Resolved, always to do what I can towards making, maintaining, establishing and preserving peace, when it can be without over-balancing detriment in other respects. *Dec. 26, 1722.*
34. Resolved, in narration's never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity.
36. Resolved, never to speak evil of any, except I have some particular good call for it. *Dec. 19, 1722.*
46. Resolved, never to allow the least measure of any fretting uneasiness at my father or mother. Resolved to suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of speech, or motion of my eye: and to be especially careful of it, with respect to any of our family.
58. Resolved, not only to refrain from an air of dislike, fretfulness, and anger in conversation, but to exhibit an air of love, cheerfulness and benignity. *May 27, and July 13, 1723.*
59. Resolved, when I am most conscious of provocations to ill nature and anger, that I will strive most to feel and act good-naturedly; yea, at such times, to manifest good nature, though I think that in other respects it would be disadvantageous, and so as would be imprudent at other times. *May 12, July 2, and July 13.*
66. Resolved, that I will endeavor always to keep a benign aspect, and air of acting and speaking in all places, and in all companies, except it should so happen that duty requires otherwise.
70. Let there be something of benevolence, in all that

I speak.

Suffering

9. Resolved, to think much on all occasions of my own dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death.
10. Resolved, when I feel pain, to think of the pains of martyrdom, and of hell.
67. Resolved, after afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them, what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.
57. Resolved, when I fear misfortunes and adversities, to examine whether ~ have done my duty, and resolve to do it; and let it be just as providence orders it, I will as far as I can, be concerned about nothing but my duty and my sin. *June 9, and July 13, 1723.*

Character

8. Resolved, to act, in all respects, both speaking and doing, as if nobody had been so vile as I, and as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings as others; and that I will let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion of my confessing my own sins and misery to God.
12. Resolved, if I take delight in it as a gratification of pride, or vanity, or on any such account, immediately to throw it by.
21. Resolved, never to do anything, which if I should see in another, I should count a just occasion to despise him for, or to think any way the more meanly of him.
32. Resolved, to be strictly and firmly faithful to my trust, that that in [Prov. 20:6](#), "A faithful man who can find?" may not be partly fulfilled in me.
47. Resolved, to endeavor to my utmost to deny whatever is not most agreeable to a good, and universally sweet and benevolent, quiet, peaceable, contented, easy, compassionate, generous, humble, meek, modest, submissive, obliging, diligent and industrious, charitable, even, patient, moderate, forgiving, sincere temper; and to do at all times what such a temper would lead me to. Examine strictly every week, whether I have done so. *Sabbath morning. May 5, 1723.*
54. Whenever I hear anything spoken in conversation of any person, if I think it would be praiseworthy in me, Resolved to endeavor to imitate it. *July 8, 1723.*
63. On the supposition, that there never was to be

but one individual in the world, at any one time, who was properly a complete Christian, in all respects of a right stamp, having Christianity always shining in its true luster, and appearing excellent and lovely, from whatever part and under whatever character viewed: Resolved, to act just as I would do, if I strove with all my might to be that one, who should live in my time. *Jan. 14 and July 3, 1723.*

27. Resolved, never willfully to omit anything, except the omission be for the glory of God; and frequently to examine my omissions.

39. Resolved, never to do anything that I so much question the lawfulness of, as that I intend, at the same time, to consider and examine afterwards, whether it be lawful or no; except I as much question the lawfulness of the omission.

20. Resolved, to maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.

Spiritual Life

Assurance

25. Resolved, to examine carefully, and constantly, what that one thing in me is, which causes me in the least to doubt of the love of God; and to direct all my forces against it.

26. Resolved, to cast away such things, as I find do abate my assurance.

48. Resolved, constantly, with the utmost niceness and diligence, and the strictest scrutiny, to be looking into the state of my soul, that I may know whether I have truly an interest in Christ or no; that when I come to die, I may not have any negligence respecting this to repent of. *May 26, 1723.*

49. Resolved, that this never shall be, if I can help it.

The Scriptures

28. Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.

Prayer

29. Resolved, never to count that a prayer, nor to let that pass as a prayer, nor that as a petition of a prayer, which is so made, that I cannot hope that God will answer it; nor that as a confession, which I cannot hope God will accept.

64. Resolved, when I find those "groanings which cannot be uttered" ([Rom. 8:26](#)), of which the Apostle speaks, and those "breakings of soul for the longing it hath," of which the Psalmist speaks, [Psalm 119:20](#), that I will promote them to the utmost of my power,

and that I will not be wear', of earnestly endeavoring to vent my desires, nor of the repetitions of such earnestness. *July 23, and August 10, 1723.*

The Lord's Day

38. Resolved, never to speak anything that is ridiculous, sportive, or matter of laughter on the Lord's day. *Sabbath evening, Dec. 23, 1722.*

Vivification of Righteousness

30. Resolved, to strive to my utmost every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before.

42. Resolved, frequently to renew the dedication of myself to God, which was made at my baptism; which I solemnly renewed, when I was received into the communion of the church; and which I have solemnly re-made this twelfth day of January, 1722-23.

43. Resolved, never henceforward, till I die, to act as if I were any way my own, but entirely and altogether God's, agreeable to what is to be found in *Saturday, January 12, 1723.*

44- Resolved, that no other end but religion, shall have any influence at all on any of my actions; and that no action shall be, in the least circumstance, any otherwise than the religious end will carry it. *Jan. 12, 1723.*

45. Resolved, never to allow any pleasure or grief, joy or sorrow, nor any affection at all, nor any degree of affection, nor any circumstance relating to it, but what helps religion. *Jan. 12-13, 1723.*

Mortification of Sin and Self Examination

23. Resolved, frequently to take some deliberate action, which seems most unlikely to be done, for the glory of God, and trace it back to the original intention, designs and ends of it; and if I find it not to be for God's glory, to repute it as a breach of the 4th Resolution.

24. Resolved, whenever I do any conspicuously evil action, to trace it back, till I come to the original cause; and then both carefully endeavor to do so no more, and to fight and pray with all my might against the original of it.

35. Resolved, whenever I so much question whether I have done my duty, as that my quiet and calm is thereby disturbed, to set it down, and also how the question was resolved. *Dec. 18, 1722.*

60. Resolved, whenever my feelings begin to appear in the least out of order, when I am conscious of the least uneasiness within, or the least irregularity without, I will then subject myself to the strict-

est examination. *July 4 and 13, 1723.*

68. Resolved, to confess frankly to myself all that which I find in myself, either infirmity or sin; and, if it be what concerns religion, also to confess the whole case to God, and implore needed help. *July 23 and August 10, 1723.*

56. Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.

Communion with God

53. Resolved, to improve every opportunity, when I am in the best and happiest frame of mind, to cast and venture my soul on the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust and confide in him, and consecrate myself wholly to him; that from this I may have assurance of my safety, knowing that I confide in my Redeemer. *July 8, 1723.*

65. Resolved, very much to exercise myself in this all my life long, viz. with the greatest openness I am capable of, to declare my ways to God, and lay open my soul to him: all my sins, temptations, difficulties, sorrows, fears, hopes, desires, and every thing, and every circumstance; according to Dr. Manton's 27th Sermon on Psalm 119. *July 26 and Aug. 10, 1723.*

*The subheadings and categorization are suggested by [Matt Perman](#) to increase the readability.

Edwards, Jonathan. "The Resolutions of Jonathan Edwards." *Desiring God*. 30 December 2006. <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-resolutions-of-jonathan-edwards>

Taco Supper and Game Night

The taco supper and game night will be held on February 10th at 6:30 p.m. Please see the sign up sheet on the bulletin board to sign up for a taco ingredient and a dessert. Bring your favorite board games to play!

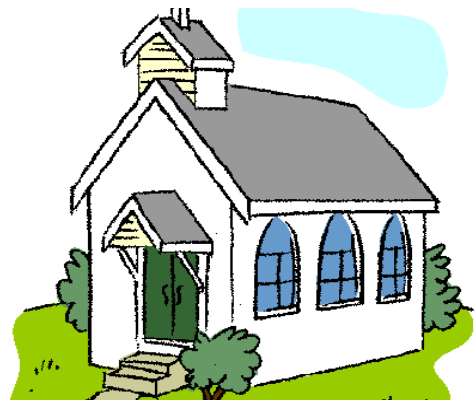


February Birthdays



Joint Service

The annual joint service will be held Sunday evening, February 12th at Calvary in Cedar Grove. If you would like to be part of the combined choir, they will rehearse on January 29th at 2:00 p.m.



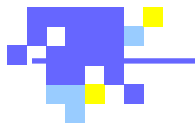
Men's Retreat

Come join us in Green Lake, WI on February 24-25, 2017, for a challenging time in God's Word, along with opportunities for fellowship with other brothers in Christ from around the Presbytery of the Midwest. Our speaker this year is the Rev. Dale Van Dyke, who is pastor of [Harvest OPC](#) in Wyoming, MI. He will lead us in a study from the Scriptures dealing with the topic of secularization in our society, its impact on the church and our children, and the power that exists in living an "ordinary" Christian life.

Along with the main messages there will also be small group discussion times involving questions derived from the messages. Open time in the afternoon will allow for quiet reflection, fellowship, and recreational activities such as basketball, broomball, and ping pong.

The retreat is open to all men 16 years and older. For consideration of boys younger than 16 years old or if you have questions about the retreat please contact Rick Laczny at 920-470-8382 or rclaczny@gmail.com.





Grace OPC

February 2017

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.	2	3	4
5 Joint Choir Rehearsal 2:00 p.m.	6	7	8 Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.	9	10 Taco Supper 6:30 p.m.	11
12 Joint Service 6:00 p.m.	13	14 Session Meeting	15 Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.	23	24 Men's Retreat	25 Men's Retreat
26 Lord's Supper P.M.	27	28				

Sunday School Offering Update

2017 is now here and the first month is almost gone already. God has blessed us in the past year and He continues in 2017.

I wanted to take a few minutes to update the congregation on our Sunday School offerings for the new year.

The last several months we have been designating our offerings to the Milwaukee Rescue Mission, and the congregation has given very generously. In addition to the monetary gifts you gave nice warm jackets, baby blankets of different sizes, personal hygiene items, and gift cards which the mission will use to purchase other needed items. I want to say thank you for your support of the Milwaukee Rescue Mission, they were very thankful for the items received.

This new year brings another opportunity to support a missionary. The next few months Grace Church will designate our offerings to Bob and Martha Wright, our missionaries to the Karamojo people in Uganda. Bobs work involved many things including well drilling so the people can get fresh drinking water. Martha is involved with education outreach, working with many teachers including two American teachers who help her oversee the project. (One of them is a Voskuil, can't be all bad!!). Currently I am waiting for an email response from them asking for a more detailed list of things the monies could go for and things they need. I will publish that when I receive an answer from them. Continue to pray for the work of Bob and Martha Wright as they serve the Lord in Uganda.

Women's Mission Meeting

Rebekah Society of Bethel Church Oostburg would like to invite the women of Grace Church to our Mission Meeting on Tuesday afternoon, February 7th at 1:30 pm. We will be showing a power point of the Hopp family and the work that Don DeTroye and Jim Smies did on their trips to Haiti. Come and visit Haiti and enjoy fellowship with us!



Book Review

by Carla DeMaster

Come Back, Barbara

by C. John Miller and Barbara Miller Juliani

“Mom, Dad, I don’t want your rules and morals. I don’t want to act like a Christian anymore! And I’m not going to.” Have you heard that? That is what Barbara, coauthor of this book, said to her parents when she was 18. She grew more resentful, choosing a path of immorality that only deepened her parents’ pain. Can you identify with any of this? This book is for you.

In London, visiting Pat VanderWaal, we went to church with her, a very international church, and met Rose Marie Miller there. After our conversation, Pat gave us books by her and her husband to read on the 10 hour trip to Johannesburg. This book is a treasure because of our experiences with our son, and our empathy with other parents who experience some of the same things.

The book covers 8 years of parenting a rebellious child and the things learned by the parents and child along the way. Each chapter has a father’s perspective and a daughter’s response (to that particular setting or event.) Much is learned by both.

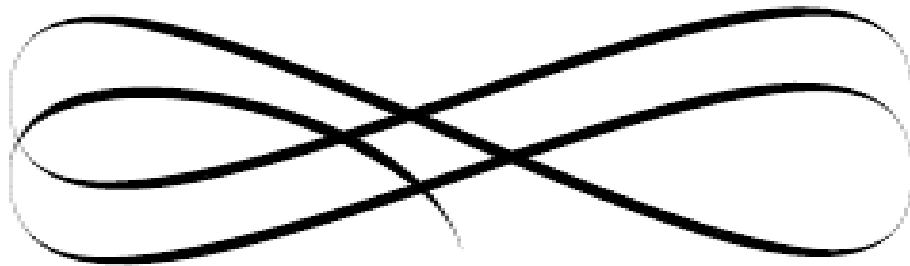
Some chapter titles are: The Devastating Blow, Endurance Through Prayer, The Marriage Game, Forgiveness as a Lifestyle, and others.

I was especially moved by the chapter on forgiveness and the realization of the father of his need to ask for forgiveness of his daughter. He asked her what she had against him. She had no difficulty telling him. In asking forgiveness for that, a door was opened that restored communication. Barbara knew that she was loved unconditionally.

Discussion questions at the end of the book help to clarify anything that is needed for reconciliation. We are still learning ourselves as to what we can do to restore communication and hope to see steps along the way for ourselves. This book helps.

Daughters and sons would benefit from reading this book too. But don’t just send it to her/him without first prayerfully reading it yourself.

This book has a happy ending with the daughter helping others along their life journey through seminars, etc. but mostly she is content to be a wife to her pastor husband and a mother to her three children.



Dark Chocolate Cherry Cheesecake

- ★ 8 oz. unsweetened dark chocolate, chopped
- ★ 1/3 cup butter
- ★ 1 & 1/2 cups Oreo cookie crumbs
- ★ 1 and 1/4 cup dried cherries, snipped
- ★ 3 8-oz. pkgs cream cheese, softened (I use Philadelphia– it makes a difference.)
- ★ 1 & 1/2 cups sugar
- ★ 1/4 cup strong coffee
- ★ 3 eggs

Pre-heat oven to 325... cover bottom of 9-in. springform pan with parchment paper. Press side part down over the parchment paper with the spring mechanism open, then close spring mechanism so that the parchment paper is locked in place. Trim extra paper.

Melt butter... combine with cookie crumbs. Pour into pan, and press firmly to form crust. Place pan on a rimmed baking sheet... bake for 10 min. Sprinkle snipped cherries over crust.

Meanwhile...

Melt Chocolate in microwave or double boiler... Set aside. Start beating softened cream cheese in the large bowl of an electric mixer. Gradually add sugar. Beat on medium-low speed until completely smooth... scraping bowl frequently. Add coffee and chocolate, and beat until fully combined. Add eggs one at a time, making sure each is fully incorporated before adding the next, scraping bowl frequently. As soon as the last egg is incorporated, dollop the batter into the crust. it will be pretty thick, and will kind of "set up" if you let it sit... because of all the chocolate in there. Bake for 45 min. - 1 hr.... until the edges are set, but the center is still a little jiggly... like jello, not like liquid.

Remove from oven. Let cool 10 min, then run a frosting spatula around the edge of the pan to loosen the cheesecake. Let the cheesecake cool almost to room temperature. cover tightly with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight. The next day, take the sides of the pan off the bottom. Warm a metal frosting spatula by running it under hot water. Use the warm spatula to smooth the sides of the cheesecake, by running the spatula around the edge as you would to smooth frosting on the side of a round cake. Continue to rinse the spatula with hot water every few "swipes" so it stays warm and clean. Use the parchment paper to lift the cheesecake off the pan bottom. supporting the cheesecake with one hand over your serving platter, use the other hand to peel away the parchment paper as you slide/place the cheesecake on the plate.

This cheesecake usually does not crack, so you can serve it as is, or... I like to cover the top with ganache... melt about a cup of semi-sweet chocolate chips with about 1/4 C. heavy whipping cream, and about 2 T. of light corn syrup. (The corn syrup makes it stay shiny after it cools...) Add cream until desired consistency is achieved. Spread or drizzle over cheesecake. Store in fridge until ready to serve!

Samantha Nyhof



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

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Spurgeon

Corner

*“All they that heard it wondered at those things.”
(Luke 2:18)*

We must not cease to wonder at the great marvels of our God. It would be very difficult to draw a line between holy wonder and *real worship*; for when the soul is overwhelmed with the majesty of God’s glory, though it may not express itself in song, or even utter its voice with bowed head in humble prayer, yet it silently adores. Our incarnate God is to be worshipped as “the Wonderful.” That God should consider his fallen creature, man, and instead of sweeping him away with the besom of destruction, should himself undertake to be man’s Redeemer, and to pay his ransom price, is, indeed marvellous! But to each believer redemption is most marvellous as he views it in relation to himself. It is a miracle of grace indeed, that Jesus should forsake the thrones and royalties above, to suffer ignominiously below *for you*. Let your soul lose itself in wonder, for wonder is in this way a very practical emotion. Holy wonder will lead you to *grateful worship* and *heartfelt thanksgiving*. It will cause within you *godly watchfulness*; you will be afraid to sin against such a love as this. Feeling the presence of the mighty God in the gift of his dear Son, you will put off your shoes from off your feet, because the place whereon you stand is holy ground. You will be moved at the same time to *glorious hope*. If Jesus has done such marvellous things on your behalf, you will feel that heaven itself is not too great for your expectation. Who can be astonished at anything, when he has once been astonished at the manger and the cross? What is there wonderful left after one has seen the Saviour? Dear reader, it may be that from the quietness and solitariness of your life, you are scarcely able to imitate the shepherds of Bethlehem, who told what they had seen and heard, but you can, at least, fill up the circle of the worshippers before the throne, by wondering at what God has done.

Evening, January 26th by C. H. Spurgeon

