



REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

Flexibility in a Pandemic

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Not many of us will know the name of Miss Anna Waring. Born in South Wales, she spent her whole life there, and never married. She was a diligent student, and mastered Hebrew in order to study Old Testament poetry in its original language.

She was also known for visiting prisoners, and became involved in the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society. She once spoke of the difficulty of such work by saying, "It is like watching by a filthy gutter to pick out a jewel here and there, as the foul stream flows by."

She wrote poems and hymns, and had several volumes of her work publish. It was said that she was exceedingly shy, partially because, according to one writer, she wrote her very heart into her hymns.

Her best known, and most beloved hymn is in our Trinity Hymnal - #559 Father, I know that All My Life. This hymn was sung at her funeral in 1910. The first verse of that hymn has been on my mind throughout our current crisis. It reads as follows:

*Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
The changes that are sure to come,
I do not fear to see:
I ask thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing thee.*

Anna was true – all of our lives are portioned out for us. Our loving Heavenly Father has determined all of

our days, before one of them came to be. He has ordained whatsoever comes to pass, including COVID-19 and safer@home restrictions, etc. etc. None of this is by chance or happenstance, but it is all God's good plan, portioned out for us.



Likewise, the changes that are sure to come, have come. Who ever had any idea that we could not have the Lord's Supper for two months in a row (maybe more???) due to government lockdowns? Changes

are part of life, yet we convince ourselves that things will always stay the same.

Anna Waring did not fear to see those changes, in large measure because of her prayer- I ask thee for a present mind, intent on pleasing thee. When our minds are intent on pleasing God, we are not so wedded to our circumstances. We expect changes, and we don't fear them when they come. We maintain the type of flexibility that arises from a humble heart, dependent upon the Lord our God.

The rest of that hymn is equally excellent, and I'll provide that for your further reflection:

*I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go.*

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Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting,
May 12th*

Chapter 1: To the Idle

It is of no more use to give advice to the idle than to pour water into a sieve; and as to improving them, one might as well try to fatten a greyhound. Yet, as The Old Book tells us to cast our bread upon the waters," we will cast a hard crust or two upon these stagnant ponds; for there will be this comfort about it: if lazy fellows grow no better, we shall be none the worse for having warned them, for when we sow good sense, the basket gets none the emptier. We have a stiff bit of soil to plow when we chide with sluggards, and the crop will be of the smallest. But if none but good land were farmed, plowmen would be out of work, so we'll put the plow into the furrow. Idle men are common enough and grow without planting, but the quantity of wit among seven acres of them would never pay for raking: nothing is needed to prove this but their name and character; if they were not fools they would be idlers; and though Solomon says, "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason," yet in the eyes of every one else, his folly is as plain as the sun in the sky. If I hit hard while speaking to them, it is because I know they can bear it; for if I had them down on the floor of the old barn, I might thresh many a day before I could get them out of the straw, and even the steam thresher could not do it. It would kill them first; for laziness is in some people's bones and will show itself in their idle flesh, do what you will with them.

Well, then, first and foremost, it strikes me that lazy people ought to have a large looking glass hung up, where they are bound to see themselves in it; for sure, if their eyes are at all like mine, they would never bear to look at themselves long or often. The ugliest sight in the world is one of those thoroughbred loafers, who would hardly hold up his basin if it were to rain with porridge; and for certain would never hold up a bigger pot than he wanted filled for himself. Perhaps, if the shower should turn to beer, he might wake himself up a bit; but he would make up for it afterwards. This is the slothful man in the Proverbs, who "hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth." I say that men the like of this ought to be served like the drones which the bees drive out of the hives. Every man ought to have patience and pity for poverty; but for laziness, a long whip or a turn at the treadmill might be better. This would be a healthy purgative for all sluggards; but there is no chance of some of them getting their full dose of this medicine, for they were born with silver spoons in their mouths, and like spoons will scarce stir their own tea unless somebody lends them a hand. They are, as the old proverb says, as lazy as Ludham's dog, that leaned his head against the wall to bark"; and like lazy sheep, it is too much trouble for them to carry their own wool. If they could see themselves, it might by chance do them a world of good; but perhaps it would be too much trouble for them to open their eyes even if the glass were hung for them.

Everything in the world is of some use; but it would puzzle a doctor of divinity, or a philosopher, or the wisest owl in our steeple to tell the good of idleness: that seems to me to be an ill wind which blows nobody any good—a sort of mud which breeds no eels, a dirty ditch which would not feed a frog. Sift a sluggard grain by grain, and you'll find him all chaff. I have heard men say, better do nothing than do mischief but I am not even sure of that: that saying glitters well, but I don't believe it's gold. I grudge laziness even that pinch of praise; I say it is bad and bad altogether. For look ye, a man doing mischief is a sparrow picking the corn—but a lazy man is a sparrow sitting on a nest full of eggs, which will all turn to sparrows before long and do a world of hurt.

Don't tell me—I'm sure of it—that the rankest weeds on earth don't grow in the minds of those who are busy at wickedness but in foul concerns of idle men's imaginations, where the devil can hide away unseen like an old serpent as he is. I don't like our boys to be in mischief, but I would sooner see them up to their necks in the mud in their larks than sauntering about with nothing to do. If the evil of doing nothing seems to be less today, you will find it out to be greater tomorrow; the devil is putting coals on the fire, and so the fire does not blaze; but depend upon it, it will be a bigger fire in the end. Idle people, you had need be your own trumpeters, for no one else can find any good in you to praise. I'd sooner see you through a telescope than anything else, for I suppose you would then be a long way off; but the biggest pair of spectacles in the parish could not see anything in you worth talking about. Moles, and rats, and weasels, there is something to be said for, though there's a pretty sight of them nailed up on our old barn; but as for you, you'll be of use in the grave and help to

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make a fat churchyard, but no better song can I sing in your favor than this verse, as the parish clerk said, gall of my own composing"

A good-for-nothing lazy lout, Who can bear to have him about?
Turn him out! Turn him out!

"*As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,*" so is the sluggard to every man who is spending his sweat to earn an honest living, while these fellows let the grass grow up to their ankles, and stand cluttering the ground, as the Bible says.

A man who wastes his time and his strength in sloth offers himself to be a target for the devil, who is a wonderfully good rifleman and will riddle the idler with his shots: in other words, idle men tempt the devil to tempt them. He who plays when he should work has an evil spirit to be his playmate; and he who neither works nor plays is a workshop for Satan. If the devil catches a man idling, he will set him to work, find him tools, and before long pay him wages. Is not this where the drunkenness comes from which fills our towns and villages with misery? Idleness is the key of beggary and the root of all evil. Fellows have two stomachs for eating and drinking when they have no stomach for work. That little hole just under the nose swallows up in idle hours that money which should put clothes on the children's backs and bread on the cottage table. We have God's word for it, that "*the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty*"; and to show the connection between them, it is said in the same verse, "*and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.*" I know it as well as I know that moss grows on old thatch, that drunken, loose habits grow out of lazy hours. I like leisure when I can get it, but that's quite another thing; that's cheese, and the other is chalk. Idle folks never know what leisure means; they are always in a hurry and a mess, and by neglecting to work in the proper time, they always have a lot to do. Lolling about hour after hour, with nothing to do, is just making holes in the hedge to let the pigs through; and they will come through—make no mistake and the rooting they will do nobody knows except those who have to look after the garden. The Lord Jesus tells us himself that while men slept the enemy sowed the tares; that hits the nail on the head, for it is by the door of sluggishness that evil enters the heart more often, it seems to me, than by any other. Our old minister used to say, 'A sluggard is fine raw material for the devil; he can make anything he likes out of him, from a thief right up to a murderer.' I'm not the only one that condemns the idle, for once when I was going to give our minister a pretty long list of the sins of one of our people that he was asking after, I began with She's dreadfully lazy." That's enough," said the old gentleman; all sorts of sins are in that one, that's the sign by which to know a full-fledged sinner."

My advice to my boys has been, "Get out of the sluggard's way, or you may catch his disease and never get rid of it." I am always afraid of their learning the ways of the idle and am very watchful to nip anything of the sort in the bud; for you know it is best to kill the lion while it is a cub. Sure enough our children have all our evil nature about them, for you can see it growing of itself like weeds in a garden. Who can bring a clean thing out of the unclean? A wild goose never lays a tame egg. Our boys will be off to the green with the ne'er-do-wells unless we make it greener still at home for them and train them up to hate the company of the slothful. Never let them go to the "Rose and Crown"; let them learn to earn a crown while they are young and grow the roses in their father's garden at home. Bring them up bees and they will not be drones.

There is much talk about bad masters and mistresses nowadays. I dare say that there is a good deal in it, for there's bad of all sorts now as there always was. Another time, if I am allowed, I will have a say about that matter; but I am sure there is plenty of room for complaint against some among the working people too, especially upon this matter of slothfulness. You know we are obliged to plow with such cattle as we have found for us; but when I am set to work with some men, I'd as soon drive a team of snails or go out rabbit hunting with a dead ferret. Why, you might sooner get blood out of a gatepost or juice out of a cork than work out of some of them; and yet they are always talking about their rights. I wish they would give an eye to their own wrongs, and not lean on the plow handles. Lazy lie-a-beds are not working men at all, any more than pigs are bullocks or thistles apple trees. All are not hunters that wear red coats, and all are not working men who call themselves so. I wonder sometimes that some of our employers keep so many cats who catch no mice. I would as soon drop my halfpence down a well as pay some people for pretending to work. It only

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Ploughman Continued....

irritates you and makes your flesh crawl to see them all day creeping over a cabbage leaf. Live and let live, say I, but I don't include sluggards in that license. "They who will not work, neither let them eat."

Here, perhaps, is the proper place to say that some of the higher classes, as they are called, set a shamefully bad example in this respect: our great folks are some of them quite as lazy as they are rich, and often more so; the big dormice sleep as long and as sound as the little ones. Many a parson buys or hires a sermon so that he may save himself the trouble of thinking. Is not this abominable laziness? They sneer at the ranters; but there is not a ranter in the kingdom that would not be ashamed to stand up and read somebody else's sermon as if it were his own. Many of our squires have nothing to do but to part their hair in the middle; and many of the London grandees, ladies and gentlemen both alike, as I am told, have no better work than killing time. Now, they say the higher a monkey climbs, the more his tail is seen; and so, the greater these people are, the more their idleness is noticed, and the more they ought to be ashamed of it. I don't say they ought to plow, but I do say that they ought to do something for the state besides being like the caterpillars on the cabbage, eating up the good things; or like the butterflies, showing themselves off but making no honey. I cannot be angry with these people somehow, for I pity them when I think of the stupid rules of fashion which they are forced to mind, and the vanity in which they drag out their days. I'd sooner by half bend my back double with hard work than be a jack-a-dandy, with nothing to do but to look in the mirror and see in it a fellow who never put a single potato into the nation's pot but took a good many out. Let me drop on these Surrey hills, worn out like my master's old brown mare, sooner than eat bread and cheese and never earn it; better to die an honorable death than live a good-for-nothing life. It would be better to get into my coffin than be dead but alive, a man whose life is a blank.

However, it is not much ease that lazy people get by all their scheming, for they always take the most pains in the end. They will not mend the thatch, and so they have to build a new cottage; they will not put the horse in the cart, and so they have to drag it themselves. If they were wise, they would do their work well, so as to save doing it twice, and tug hard while they are in harness, so as to get the work out of the way. My advice is, if you don't like hard work, just pitch into it, settle it off, and have your turn at rest.

I wish all religious people would take this matter under their consideration, for some professors are amazingly lazy and make sad work for the tongues of the wicked. I think a godly plowman ought to be the best man in the field and let no team beat him. When we are at work, we ought to be at it, and not stop the plow to talk, even though the talk may be about religion. For then we not only rob our employers of our own time, but of the time of the horses, too. I used to hear people say, "Never stop the plow to catch a mouse," and it's quite as silly to stop for idle chat; besides, the man who loiters when the master is away is an eye-server, which, I take it, is the very opposite of a Christian. If some of the members at our meeting were a little more spry with their arms and legs when they are at labor and a little quieter with their tongues, they would say more for religion than they now do. The world says the greatest rogue is the pious rogue, and I'm Sorry to say one of the greatest sluggards I know of is a professing man of the "Mr. Talkative" kind. His garden is so overgrown with weeds that I feel often half a mind to weed it for him, to save our meeting the shame which he brings upon it: if he were a young lad, I'd talk to him about it and try to teach him better, but who can be a school-master to a child of sixty years old? He is a regular thorn to our good minister, who is quite grieved about it and sometimes says he will go somewhere else because he cannot bear such conduct; but I tell him that wherever a man lives, he is sure to have one thorn bush near his door, and it is a mercy if there are not two. However, I do wish that all Christians would be industrious, for religion never was designed to make us idle. Jesus was a great worker, and his disciples must not be afraid of hard work.

As to serving the Lord with cold hearts and drowsy souls, there has been too much of it, and it causes religion to wither. Men ride stallions when they hunt for gain, but snails when they are on the road to heaven. Preachers go on see-sawing, droning, and prosing; and the people fall to yawning and folding their arms, and then say that God is withholding the blessing. Every sluggard, when he finds himself enlisted in the ragged regiment, blames his luck; and some churches have learned the same wicked trick. I believe that when Paul plants and Apollos waters, God gives the increase, and I have no patience with those who throw the blame on God when it belongs to themselves.

Now I have come to the end of my tether. I am afraid I have been beating a dead horse, but I have done my best, and a king can do no more. An ant can never make honey if it works its heart out, and I shall never put my thoughts so prettily together as some do, book-fashion; but truth is truth, even when dressed in homespun, and so there is an end of my rigmarole.

May Birthdays

Gracie Froh	6th
Jean Wilke	6th
Steve Boss	9th
Ivan De Master	16th
Linda Damkot	17th
Stuart Ver Velde	17th
Scott Onnink	20th
Deborah Arndt	27th



May Anniversaries

Warren & Mary Gillmer
May 31st





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

May 2020



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Session Meeting 6:30pm	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Instant Pot Salmon with Garlic Potatoes and Greens

Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 pounds small red-skinned potatoes, halved or quartered
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- Four 5- to 6-ounce skin-on center-cut salmon fillets (3/4 to 1 inch thick)
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest, plus lemon wedges for serving
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups packed mixed baby spinach and arugula (about 3 1/2 ounces)

Directions:

1. Put the potatoes in the bottom of an Instant Pot. Add 1 cup water, 2 tablespoons of the butter, 1/2 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper. Place the pot's steam rack over the potatoes.
2. Rub the top and sides of the salmon fillets with the paprika and lemon zest and season generously with salt and pepper. Place skin-side down on the rack. Put on the lid, making sure the steam valve is in the sealing position, and set the cooker to high pressure for 3 minutes. When finished, carefully turn the steam valve to the venting position to release the pressure.
3. Remove the salmon and rack and set the cooker to saute at normal heat. When the potatoes start sizzling, add the garlic and cook, stirring, until softened, 1 to 2 minutes; stir in the remaining 2 tablespoons butter and season generously with salt and pepper. Smash the potatoes with a fork or wooden spoon until chunky.
4. Turn off the cooker. Add the mixed greens to the potatoes and stir until wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Divide the salmon and potato mixture among plates. Serve with lemon wedges.



*“For He
has satisfied
the thirsty
soul,
and the
hungry soul
He has filled
with what
is good.”*



Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
Christ

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Spurgeon Corner

"I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

2 Corinthians 6:16

What a sweet title: "My people!" What a cheering revelation: "Their God!" How much of meaning is couched in those two words, "My people!" Here is *speciality*. The whole world is God's; the heaven, even the heaven of heavens is the Lord's, and he reigneth among the children of

men; but of those whom he hath chosen, whom he hath purchased to himself, he saith what he saith not of others—"My people." In this word there is the idea of *proprietorship*. In a special manner the "Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." All the nations upon earth are his; the whole world is in his power; yet are his people, his chosen, more especially his possession; for he has done more for them than others; he has bought them with his blood; he has brought them nigh to himself; he has set his great heart upon them; he has loved them with an everlasting love, a love which many waters cannot quench, and which the revolutions of time shall never suffice in the least degree to diminish. Dear friends, can you, by faith, see yourselves in that number? Can you look up to heaven and say, "My Lord and my God: mine by that sweet *relationship* which entitles me to call thee Father; mine by that hallowed *fellowship* which I delight to hold with thee when thou art pleased to manifest thyself unto me as thou dost not unto the world?" Canst thou read the Book of Inspiration, and find there the indentures of thy salvation? Canst thou read thy title writ in precious blood? Canst thou, by humble faith, lay hold of Jesus' garments, and say, "My Christ"? If thou canst, then God saith of thee, and of others like thee, "My people;" for, if God be your God, and Christ your Christ, the Lord has a special, peculiar favour to you; you are the object of his choice, accepted in his beloved Son.

Morning, May 5th, C.H. Spurgeon

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Front Page Concluded...

*I ask thee for the daily strength,
To none that ask denied,
A mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at thy side,
Content to fill a little space,
If thou be glorified.*

*In service which thy will appoints
There are no bonds for me;
My secret heart is taught the truth
That makes thy children free;
A life of self-renouncing love
Is one of liberty.*