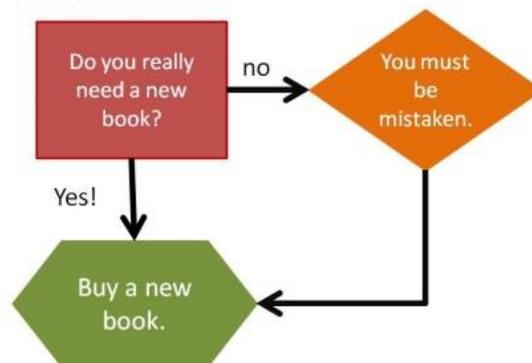
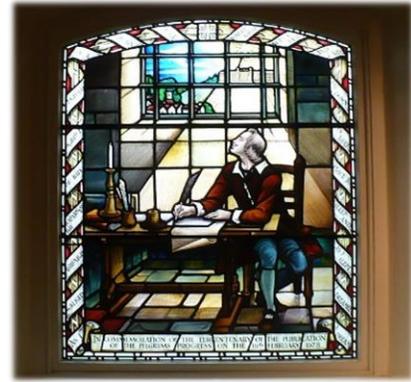


April 8, 2020

Good morning, Everybody.

It's a delight to hear of the good books that some of you are reading right now. Linda and I were talking on Monday of the truly incalculable spiritual effects of the books we've read over the years. You come to the place in life where you chuckle but really identify with the little question/answer diagram below that someone sent me awhile back.



My mother has always been a great reader; even as a child. I just now walked out to the kitchen (where she sits much of the morning reading her Bible and good books) to see what she's working through these days. Turns out she's enjoying Charles Bridges', *Psalm 119*, John Flavel's, *The Mystery of Divine Providence*, and Mrs. Howard Taylor's life of James Fraser, *Beyond the Ranges*. All three are there on the table, and she was copying something out of *Beyond the Ranges* to include in a card she's writing to one of you! (I don't know who). Not bad at 87 (smile).

Beside the chair where I sit for devotional times are several short stacks of books that I'm reading off and on as spiritual stimulants to supplement my Bible reading in the mornings. This morning I picked up John Scott's life of his father, Rev. Thomas Scott. Thomas Scott followed John Newton in the ministry at Olney after Newton went to London.

What I read this morning was such a great example of the benefit of reading biographies that I decided to send it to you. It's a portion of a letter Thomas sent to his son, John, at the time that John's little girl was near death. Several applications to our present crisis readily suggests themselves. But it's **the overall spiritual-mindedness of the "tone"** that is, to me, the most instructional. I'd be very glad for

you to read this and to think, not primarily of the specific *kind* of trial Scott is addressing (the threat of losing a child), but of the *whole issue* of submitting ourselves humbly and trustingly to God's always-wise dispensations. See what you think.

March 15, 1805

We were all much affected at the unexpected account of poor Fanny's very dangerous disorder, for we had hoped that by proper means her cold would soon have been removed. We very sincerely sympathize with you. Whatever they may suppose who never experienced it, few things at the time more pain the heart than the loss of a child, even when young. This I know by experience. Yet after a time the very events which filled my heart with anguish for a season were looked back upon with a kind of melancholy pleasure. And when I consider what a dangerous world we live in I can almost rejoice to think that three of my children arrived, as I fully trust, at the place of rest without encountering the perils and tempests of the passage. My prayer used to be that if the Lord had anything for my children to do they might be spared, but that they might not live to be the servants of sin and to treasure up wrath. And I trust this prayer has been or will be fully answered.

You remember to have heard me tell of the time when you were the only survivor of three children, and you were dangerously ill of the same fever of which your sister had died, and how my heart was almost broken. But I am persuaded this time of distress was peculiarly useful to me, and I often look back to it with admiring gratitude when I reflect on the answer to my many prayers which, with many tears, I then offered for you. And I doubt not that you will hereafter look back on your present trial, sharp as it is, in the same manner.

A variety of circumstances are often permitted to increase the anguish of our feelings on such an occasion; especially the reflection on something that even we or others have done wrong. But though we may have reason to blame the misconduct of others or to regret any mistake we may suppose that we have made, yet the hand of God should be viewed even in those events which take place by the folly and faults of men. He has wise, righteous, faithful and gracious reasons for what He did and for what He permitted.

It is not to be expected that parents should not feel and grieve much on these occasions. Indeed, the very end of the providential dispensation would fail of being answered if they did not. But I would remind your wife, especially, that grief ought

no more to be *indulged* than any other of our passions. There are many who think that being inconsolable at the loss of beloved relatives is amiable, yet would be shocked at the idea of indulging many other passions. Everything in our nature needs regulating, moderating, and subordinating to the will of God; natural affection as well as the rest. Several particulars in which faith and submission to God greatly consist on earth will have no place in Heaven. For instance, patience under sharp afflictions. This is very honorable to God, edifying to our brethren, and profitable to ourselves. But without sharp affliction we would have no opportunity of exercising it. This is, then, an opportunity given you of experiencing and manifesting the power and excellency of your principles; which may eventually be of great importance in various ways.

In reading of our Lord's miracles the reflection often occurs to me; "Would not those who endured the sharpest sorrow (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, for instance), in view of the all the honor to Christ and good to mankind which arose and still arises and shall forever arise from their exquisite anguish of heart, have been willing to go through the whole again if again such vast advantages might result from it?" They would not on any account desire to escape suffering what they did, now that they can see all the reasons for it. Yet at the time they had no idea of the ends to be answered by their distresses. The same wisdom and love order our troubles, both as to their nature and to their results, which ordered theirs. *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*

All this, however, you know, and I trust, remember. I would also hint that you should be careful not too much to indulge the fond remembrance of endearing circumstances. This feeds a kind and degree of grief not consistent with submission to the will of God. If I may judge by myself, you will find this dispensation greatly subservient to helping you to realize an unseen world and an exciting earnestness in prayer. We are apt to say of this or other creatures, *This same shall comfort us.* Thus the gifts from our God insensibly draw our hearts from Him, and then it becomes necessary, almost, for Him to *wither our gourds.* He does so in love, and we shall know at length that we have cause to be thankful.

I shall only add that if Frances should give way to grief so as not to take proper care of her health, she would show love where it must be useless, but fail in it where it may be essentially beneficial, as well as in submission to God. I write on the supposition that the dear child either is gone or will not recover. But perhaps the Lord may have heard prayer for her recovery.

Sorry not to be able to tell you whether the little girl recovered. Scott doesn't say. Perhaps it makes for a better application to ourselves not to know (smile).

Praying for You Today,

Pastor Minnick