

MORNING
&
EVENING

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CHARLES
SPURGEON


WHITAKER
HOUSE

Publisher's note:

In this completely new edition from Whitaker House, we have lightly edited the unabridged original text for the modern reader. Words, expressions, and sentence structure have been updated for clarity and readability, while retaining the entirety of Spurgeon's original writings.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

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Preface to Morning by Morning

Poets have delighted to sing of the morning as “Mother of the Dews, sowing the earth with orient pearl.” Many saints, rising from their beds at the first blush of dawn, have found the poetry of nature to be the reality of grace as they have felt the dews of heaven refreshing their spirits. Hence, morning devotions have always been dear to enlightened, heaven-loving souls, and it has been their practice never to see the face of dawn until they have first seen the face of God. The breath of morn redolent with the smell of flowers is incense offered by earth to her Creator, and people should never let the dead earth excel them in praising their God.

Those alive with the Spirit tune their hearts to sing just as birds salute the radiant mercy that reveals itself in the east. The first fresh hour of every morning should be dedicated to the Lord, whose mercy gladdens it with golden light. The eye of day opens its lids and, in so doing, opens the eyes of hosts of heaven-protected slumberers. It is fitting that those eyes should first look up to the great Father of Lights, the Fount and Source of all the good upon which the sunlight gleams. It promises for us a day of grace when we begin our day with God; the sanctifying influence of the season spent in heavenly places influences each succeeding hour.

Morning devotions anchor the soul, so that it will not very readily drift far away from God during the day. They perfume the heart so that it smells fragrant with piety until nightfall; they hold up the soul’s garments so that it is less apt to stumble; they feed all their power so that the soul is not permitted to faint.

The morning is the gate of the day and should be well-guarded with prayer. It is one end of the thread on which the day’s actions are strung and should be well-knit with devotion. If we felt the majesty of life more, we would be more careful of its mornings. He who rushes from his bed to his business and does not wait to worship is as foolish as if he had not put on his clothes or washed his face. He is as unwise as one who dashes into battle without being armed. Let us bathe in

the softly flowing river of communion with God before the heat of the wilderness and the burden of the way begin to oppress us.

In writing these short reflections on certain passages of Scripture, I wanted to assist the believer in his private meditations. A child may sometimes console a desolate heart that might not otherwise have been cheered. Even a flower smiling upward from the ground may turn our thoughts heavenward. It is my hope that, by the Holy Spirit's grace, as the reader turns, morning by morning, to read a simple page, he will hear in it a still small voice that will speak the Word of God to his soul.

The mind wearies of one thing; therefore, I have endeavored to use variety in presenting these devotionals. I have tried to change the style constantly—sometimes exhorting, then soliloquizing, then conversing. I have used the first, second, and third persons, and both the singular and the plural—all with the desire of avoiding sameness and dullness.

The subject matter, also, I hope, is wide in its range, and not altogether without a dash of freshness. Readers of my sermons may recognize thoughts and expressions that they have encountered before; but much is, to me at least, as far as anything can be when it deals with the common theme of salvation, new and original. I have written out of my own heart, and most of the portions are remembrances of words that were refreshing in my own experience; therefore, I hope that these daily meditations will be refreshing to the reader as well. In fact, I know they will be if the Spirit of God rests on them.

My ambition has led me to hope that this little volume may also enrich the worship of families where God's altar burns in the morning. We know that it has been the custom in some households to read Mason, Hawker, Bogatsky, Smith, or Jay, and without wishing to usurp the place of any of these, this devotional aspires to a position among them. My happiness will overflow if this book becomes a blessing to Christian households. Family worship is, beyond measure, important both for the present and succeeding generations, and I would consider it a great honor to be, in part, a chaplain in the houses of my friends.

I have written no prayers because I think that a prayer is good for nothing if it is not written on the heart by the Holy Spirit

and made to gush forth still warm from the soul. I would as soon think of printing a model for our children to use in addressing their parents as draw up a prayer to be offered to our Father who is in heaven. It has been said in defense of forms, "Better to go on crutches than not at all," but it is my firm conviction that those who truly go in the sense of worshipping aright might, with a little effort and an earnest cry to the Holy Spirit for assistance, go much better on their own legs than using some wearisome aid.

If there is not time to read both the morning devotional and a portion from Scripture, I earnestly request that this book would be set aside, for it would be a sore affliction to me to know that any family read the Word of God less on my account. I have had it in my heart to inspire my friends to search their Bibles more than ever; therefore, I have culled passages out of corners and nooks of Scripture, so that curiosity might lead the reader to search for their context. I would be disappointed indeed if, after all, I frustrated my own purpose by diverting one moment of time to the perusal of my remarks that should have been given to searching the Word of God itself.

I also hope that preachers may sometimes glean a text and suggestions for a sermon from one of these daily thoughts. Certainly they are free to do so if they can. The ideas are not ours but are common property. Tossed about by cares and worried by business, men's minds are not always in a condition on Saturday evening to leave their earthly concerns behind and begin a line of meditation. But once their thoughts take wing, the very events of the week can even help their flight. Perhaps we may lift some heart upward, and, if so, God be praised. Possibly a hint given here may serve as a match to set fire to a preacher's soul, and that heart ablaze may warm and gladden hundreds. Amen, and the Lord our God says so, too.

Hoping for a favorable reception for this present work, I have already written a volume of the same size and character for evening reading.* Meanwhile, with many prayers for heaven's blessing upon this labor of love, and with earnest requests for the prayers of the faithful, this work is humbly dedicated to the honor of the triune Jehovah, and respectfully presented to the Christian church.

—C. H. Spurgeon

Preface to Evening by Evening

When the noise and turmoil of the day are over, it is sweet to commune with God. The cool and calm of evening agree most delightfully with prayer and praise. The hours of the declining sun are like quiet alleys in the garden of time wherein man may find his Maker waiting to commune with him, even as of old the Lord God walked with Adam in Paradise in the cool of the day.

It is fitting that we should set apart a peaceful season before the day has quite ended, a season of thanksgiving for abounding grace, of repentance for multiplied follies, of self-examination for insinuating evils. To leap from day to day like a mad hunter beating the bushes is an omen of being delivered over to destruction. But the solemn pause, the deliberate consideration—these are means of grace and signs of an indwelling life. The ocean tide stays awhile at ebb before it resolves to flood again; the moon sometimes lingers at its fullest size. There are distinct hedges in nature set between the seasons—even the strike of the bell is a little warning that men should not remove landmarks; instead, they should frequently examine the boundaries in their lives and keep up with due interval and solemnity the remembrance of the passing of days and months and years. Each evening it would be well to traverse the boundaries of the day and take note of all that it has brought and all that it has seen.

The drops of the night come from the same Fount as the dew of the morning. He who met Abraham at the break of day communed with Isaac in the field at evening. He who opens the doors of the day with the hand of mercy draws the curtains of the night around His people. By His shining presence, He makes the *“outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice”* (Ps. 65:8). A promise at dawn and a sure word at sunset crown the brow of day with light and sandal its feet with love. To breakfast with Jesus and to dine with Him also is to enjoy the days of heaven on earth.

It is dangerous to fall asleep before the head is leaned on Jesus' bosom. When divine love puts its finger on weary eyelids, it is brave

sleeping; but so that the Lord's beloved may have such sleep given to him, it is necessary that he should make a near approach to the throne and unburden his soul before the great Preserver of men. To enter into the blaze of Jehovah's presence by way of the atoning blood is the sure method of refining ourselves of earthly dross and renewing the soul after exhausting service.

The reading of the Word and prayer are as gates of precious stones to admit us into the presence of the august Majesty. He is most blessed who most frequently swings those gates on their sapphire hinges. When the stars are revealed and all the hosts of heaven walk in golden glory, then surely that is the time when the solemn temple is lit up and the worshipper is invited to enter. If one hour can be endowed with a sacredness above the others, it must be the hour when the Lord looses the cords of Orion and leads forth the Bear and its cubs. (See Job 38:31–32.) Then voices from worlds afar call us to contemplation and adoration, and the stillness of the lower world prepares an oratory for the devout soul. He surely never prays at all who does not end the day as all men wish to end their lives—in prayer.

In many households the gathering of the family for evening prayer is easier than the morning opportunity, and in all the tents of our Israel, the evening sacrifice should be solemnly remembered. Before we take refuge underneath the wings of the Eternal, let us entreat Him to deliver us from the terror by night and give us safe dwelling in His secret place. It is blessed work to set the night watchmen in their posts by supplication, and then to commit ourselves without fear to the embraces of divine love.

Having had the seal of our Master's blessing set upon our former volume, entitled *Morning by Morning*, we have felt encouraged to give our best attention to the present series of brief meditations, and I send them forth with importunate prayer for a blessing to rest on every reader. May the Father's smile be their benediction. I have striven to keep out of the common track; hence, I have used unusual texts and have brought forward neglected subjects. The vice of many religious works is their dullness—from this I have tried to be free: my friends must judge how successful I have been. I have drawn much of my subject matter out of my own experience, and I have always felt assured that a truth that has been sanctified

to our own good will not be without an anointing for others. If I may lead one heart upward that otherwise would have drooped, or sow in a single mind a holy purpose that otherwise never would have been conceived, I will be grateful. May the Lord send us such results in thousands of instances, and His will be all the praise. The longer I live, the more deeply I am conscious that the Holy Spirit alone can make truth profitable to the heart; therefore, in earnest prayer, I commit this volume and its companion to His care.

—*C. H. Spurgeon*

⇨ January 1 ⇨
Morning

They did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

—Joshua 5:12

Israel's weary wanderings were over, and the promised rest was attained. No more moving tents, fiery serpents, fierce Amalekites, and howling wildernesses. The Israelites came to the land that flowed with milk and honey, and they ate the old corn of the land. Perhaps this year, beloved Christian reader, this may be your case or mine. The prospect is joyful, and, if faith is actively exercised, it will yield pure delight. To be with Jesus in the rest that remains for the people of God is a cheering hope indeed, and to expect this glory so soon is a double bliss. Unbelief shudders at the Jordan, which still rolls between us and the good land, but let us rest assured that we have already experienced more ills than death at its worst can cause us. Let us banish every fearful thought and rejoice with exceeding great joy in the prospect that this year we will begin to *"ever be with the Lord"* (1 Thess. 4:17). Many will this year remain on earth to do service for their Lord. If this is our lot, there is no reason that the New Year's text should not still be true. *"We which have believed do enter into rest"* (Heb. 4:3). The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance. He gives us "glory begun below." Those who are in heaven are secure; likewise, we on earth are kept safe in Christ Jesus. There, they triumph over their enemies; here, we have victories, too. Celestial spirits enjoy communion with their Lord; this privilege is not denied to us. They rest in His love; we have perfect peace in Him. They sing His praise; it is our privilege to bless Him, too. We will this year gather celestial fruits on earthly ground, where faith and hope have made the desert like the garden of the Lord. In the past, man ate angels' food; why not now? Oh, for grace to feed on Jesus and to eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan this year!

⇨ January 1 ⇨
Evening

We will be glad and rejoice in thee.

—Song of Solomon 1:4

We will be glad and rejoice in thee.” We will not open the gates of the year to the dolorous notes of the trombone, but to the sweet strains of the harp of joy and the grand sounds of the cymbals of gladness. “O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation” (Ps. 95:1). We, the called and faithful and chosen, will drive away our griefs and set up our banners of confidence in the name of God. Let others lament over their troubles; we who have the sweetening tree to cast into Marah’s bitter pool (see Exodus 15:23) will magnify the Lord with joy. Eternal Spirit, our precious Comforter, we, who are the temples in which You dwell, will never cease from adoring and blessing the name of Jesus. “We will”—we are resolved about it. Jesus must have the crown of our hearts’ delight. We will not dishonor our Bridegroom by mourning in His presence. We are ordained to be the minstrels of the skies; let us rehearse our everlasting anthem before we sing it in the halls of the New Jerusalem. “We will be glad and rejoice.” These words have one sense: double joy, blessing upon blessing. Does there need to be any limit to our rejoicing in the Lord? Do not men of grace find their Lord to be precious even now? What better fragrance do they have in heaven itself? “We will be glad and rejoice in thee.” That last word is the meat in the dish, the kernel of the nut, the soul of the text. What blessings are laid up in Jesus! What rivers of infinite bliss have their source, yes, and every drop of their fullness, in Him! Since, O sweet Lord Jesus, You are the present portion of Your people, favor us this year with such a sense of Your preciousness that, from its first to its last day, we may be glad and rejoice in You. Let January open with joy in the Lord, and December close with gladness in Jesus.