

The Fear of the LORD

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INTRODUCTION

In this sermon, we shall be tackling a rather misinterpreted and disliked subject, even amongst those who profess the Christian faith; and we shall endeavour through the counsel of God's word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to re-establish this pivotal doctrine of the fear of the LORD.

I: Its definition

It is of great necessity that we first define what it means to fear the LORD; nothing can be adhered to except a standard be first set up. As a car cannot move except it be given the right fuel, the saint cannot properly begin his earthly sojourn without the knowledge of the fear of the LORD. A false understanding of the fear of the LORD has led to many formalists on one extreme and libertines on the other extreme. Thus, it is crucial that we establish the foundations before building upon the structure.

1. 'Fear' - The authors of Proverbs seem to assume that their readers know the meaning of fearing God; for they greatly focus on its cause and effect, but not on its definition. They speak about the tree's roots and fruits, but not about the tree itself. Thus, it is necessary that we begin by looking at other portions of Scripture, and from there to piece them all together, before we come to define 'the fear of the LORD' in its proper terms.
 - a. It is a heart action - Fearing God is first and foremost an action of the heart. The LORD Himself affirms this when He reprimands Israel's backsliding: 'Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men' (Isa 29:13). The Jews conformed themselves to the standards of man and not to the standards of God. Thus, they had a fear of God without knowledge, thinking that outward cleanliness was sufficient for divine

acceptance; when instead, the internal workings of the heart are as essential as external worship. A vessel fit for the master's use must first be purged within before it can be useful without (2 Tim 2:21). O how many of us come to church without preparing our hearts! How many of us arrive late for service but not for company meetings! How many of us sing with our voices while our mind thinks upon our next meal! O that we may all fear the LORD with our hearts!

- b. Reverence, not slavish fear - It is important to differentiate between a reverential fear of God and a slavish fear of God. We can find them both mentioned in the Old Testament when the Israelites disobeyed God in asking for a king (1 Sam 12:20-24): when God thundered in the heavens, they begged Samuel to plead with God to spare their lives. Here, they feared God out of a slavish fear, which Samuel rebuked them for, saying, 'Fear not' (v20); but instead of asking them not to fear at all, Samuel tells them, 'Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart' (v24). Thus we find that one type of fear is forbidden while another is encouraged; one is displeasing to God while the other is pleasing to Him; one withdraws from God, while the other draws near to God. O that we may possess a reverential fear and not a slavish fear! Are not there many Felixes' in this world, who due to slavish fear would bid the apostle Paul go away for a season, that their conscience might not be reprov'd for sin (Ac 24:22)? Where are the jail keepers who would with reverential fear come trembling before the apostle and Silas crying, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved' (Ac 16:30)? As long as the saints continue in servile fear, their works shall still be built with wood, hay and stubble, which shall be burned up on the last day. Those who serve God must offer up the sacrifices of godly fear as Abel or they shall be found to be rejected with the ungodly sacrifices of Cain (Heb 12:28). O that you would hear the cry of wisdom and turn at her reproof!
2. 'The LORD' - Further, let us observe, to whom we should show reverence from the bottom of our hearts. By nature, we discover that a particular reverence for the person of man must be displayed, seeing that all are created in the image of God. As an argument from the lesser to the greater: if the clay (man) is worthy of such honour (as those whom God has placed in authority e.g the government, kings, parents); how much more the potter who made the clay? If the creature is to be held in adoration, how much more the Creator? It is the greatest tragedy of our age that we show more respect to men (including ourselves) instead of God. 'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider' (Isa 1:2-3).

To stir us up to our rightful duty, behold the name of the LORD, 'Yahweh': He who was, and is, and is to come; He who is self-existent, self-sufficient and self-sustaining. He who is not dependent upon any cause, or any creature, or any thing; shall He not be all the more held in reverence? If men would behave with great sobriety and solemnity in the presence of an earthly king, shall they not do the same in the presence of the

heavenly King? Is not He who created us and upholds us by the word of His power deserving of all due respect? Consider that Jehovah is both omniscient and omnipresent, walk then in every circumstance with all carefulness and humility, knowing that His all-seeing eye and all-knowing mind examines what we think, do and say. Let us conduct ourselves upon this earth as becometh the children and heirs of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Thus we find that the Scriptural definition of 'the fear of the LORD' is a reverential, heartfelt fear of the all-sufficient and all-powerful Being.

II: Its Consequences

Now we come to examine the effects when this doctrine is applied in our lives. For this sermon would be of no value or use if the fear of the LORD does not take root to produce an inward and outward change in our hearts.

1. Internal effects - Every foundation of a building though it is left unseen from the surface, is vital for the solidifying and stabilising of its structure. Thus, according to the commandment of the LORD, Solomon built the foundation of the first temple with costly stones (1 Ki 5:17; 7:9-10). And if the physical temple must be thus built, how much more the spiritual temple of the Holy Spirit which is in every saint, be grounded upon the fear of the LORD? Hence, we now come to see, what kind of costly stones the fear of the LORD builds in our lives.
 - a. It builds knowledge & wisdom - From the introduction of the book of Proverbs, we have found that 'the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge' (Pr 1:7) and also 'the beginning of wisdom' (Pr 9:10). The Hebrew word for 'beginning' in both verses differ from one another. The former has the privilege to be the first word in Scripture (Gen 1:1), and describes the creation of space and time; while the latter describes the start of a process or battle (2 Sam 17:9). Thus, we observe from the former definition: that it is impossible for the flower of knowledge to bloom except the nutrients of fearing God first enters in at the roots. From the latter definition: that no child can be nourished and grow in wisdom except he is meticulously and continuously fed with the milk and meat of fearing the LORD. Hence, we find that knowledge leads the convoy and wisdom follows in the carriage; true knowledge is gained by experience, and true wisdom will display itself in one's actions. These 2 jewels (knowledge & wisdom) are linked together by one chain, and if the chain is broken, they both are lost. O then, that the fear of the LORD would produce knowledge and have its end in wisdom! Never rest till the root has its fruition in the fruit and is tasteful to all who eat of it. Beware of the snare of leaning on thine own understanding, neither be wise in thine own eyes (Pr 3:5,7), for these are the products and poisons of false wisdom. Do not say in thine heart, 'I attend a Bible-believing church, I teach in the Sunday-school class, I attend prayer meetings regularly, and because I do all of these, I am wise'. As a restraint from depending upon thine own intellect and wit, consider that 'pride goeth before

destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall' (Pr 16:18). Remember that self-wisdom is no wisdom, only God's wisdom is true wisdom. Come to church with a humble and submissive heart to receive instruction from the LORD, not to put up a defensive front and fire cannons at the pastor's incompetences. Come with a quiet and reverential spirit, and the LORD shall incorporate true wisdom into thine heart.

- b. It builds uprightness - The fear of the LORD produces a sober, spiritual conduct of life. 'He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD' (Pr 14:27). He who continues on the straight pathway of a godly conversation displays that he is governed by the inward principle of the fear of the LORD. He is ruled by the righteous and flawless standard of God's decrees and laws (Deu 6:2). It is better to shoot your arrows at a mark instead of not shooting at all. O then that all the saints may be eager to conform themselves to God's standard: 'What doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul' (Deu 10:12). Lest, people call walking soberly, formalism; let it be remembered that to excuse sin is the greatest of sins. To call partying, socialising; to call drunkenness, fellowship; to call immorality, a normality is that which God abhors. A people without laws have their end in destruction; and professing Christians who claim freedom from God's laws shall suffer damnation.
- c. It builds a hatred for evil - Surely, he who professes to keep and love God's commandments must inevitably hate that which is contrary to Him and His word. Thus wisdom affirms, 'The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride [haughtiness], and arrogance, and the evil way [way of life], and the froward [perverse] mouth, do I hate' (Pr 8:13). If the saint who fears the LORD naturally hates evil; then it is strange to find one claiming loyalty to King Jesus, who at the same time bows to the snares of the devil. Such wicked men say, 'Let us continue to sin, that grace may abound'. Brethren, one cannot serve God and mammon concurrently (Mt 6:24), he must either be a lover of one and the hater of the other, or vice versa. He that truly fears the LORD, departs from evil (Pr 16:6). As the apostle Paul saith, 'How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein' (Ro 6:2)? 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God' (2 Cor 7:1). Cleansing ourselves from filth is the Christian's duty, he is irresponsible who neglects it.
- d. It builds confidence in God - He that is hidden in the impregnable fortress of the city of God is kept secure. He that has God for his friend is not afraid to approach Him in time of need. 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty' (Ps 91:1). 'In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence; and his children shall have a place of refuge' (Pr 14:26). Those who have the LORD God for their Father not only trust in Him, but further have

a strong and fortified assurance in His deliverance. Let not your faith be as easily broken cobwebs when your Father in heaven is mighty and able to save! It is a great irregularity and embarrassment when saints are frightened by shadows, when their God is a sun and shield and has promised that their bruised reed will never break. Does not Scripture say, 'The fear of the LORD tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil' (Pr 19:23)? If even death, peril or sword work together for the good of the godly and cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ (Ro 8:28-39); then, there is no such thing as a truly detrimental affliction for the Christian. We are tried in the fire that we may come forth as gold (Job 23:10). O then put your utmost confidence in the LORD, for He loves thee to the uttermost. Set thine eyes upon Christ, who endured Satan's temptation, suffered the Jews' rejection, and bore the cross' affliction; let us follow in His footsteps, remembering that if nothing should separate us from His love, nothing should hinder us from putting our confidence in Him.

- e. It builds true happiness - "Most people think that those are happy who never fear; but there is a fear which is so far from having torment in it that it has the greatest of satisfaction. Happy is the man who always keeps up in his mind a holy awe and reverence for God, His glory, goodness, and government, who is always afraid of offending God and incurring His displeasure, who keeps conscience tender and has a dread of the appearance of evil, who is always jealous of himself, distrustful of his own sufficiency, and lives in expectation of troubles and changes, that, whenever they come, they are no surprise to him. He who keeps up such a fear as this will live a life of faith and watchfulness, and therefore happy is he, blessed and holy" (Matthew Henry on Pr 28:14). O, blessed is the man that feareth the LORD! All seeming happiness without the fear of the LORD is as the flower of the grass; here today, gone tomorrow; delightful to the eye, but fragile to the touch; abounding in quantity, but little in substance. So are all worldly pleasures if they are not established upon the bedrock foundation of the fear of the LORD. Remember this truth: genuine happiness and delight cannot be found except the fear of God be first carved deeply upon your heart. O let it never cross your mind that the fear of God and the love of God are mutually exclusive when they are actually mutually inclusive. For only in fearing who God truly is (holy, righteous, just, merciful, loving etc), may we begin to adore Him.
2. External effects - Having looked at the inward effects, let us now focus on the outward effects. Solomon's temple was not only built upon costly stones, but it was also overlaid with gold, and the holy of holies especially with pure gold (1 Ki 6:19-21); so must the temple of the Holy Spirit which dwells in every believer be decked with all external blessings in Christ.

- a. He obtains a fountain of life - 'The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life' (Pr 14:27). There is none that possesses life till he first possesses the fear of the LORD. For men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1), and they remain in that decaying and corrupting condition till they are made alive by the mighty electing sovereign LORD. Thus, life is that which the saint alone enjoys, not only life with God upon earth, but also life with God in heaven. He is 'blessed ...with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ' (Eph 1:3). The wicked do not experience such joy and peace of conscience, for they have no peace with God. Yea, all their riches cannot buy them eternal life. Thus it is said, 'Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble within' (Pr 15:16). Even if we live materially poor upon this earth, that is a far better condition than to own billions and have no inward stability. The LORD often does not give much earthly goods to His saints, that their hearts may be more greatly fixed upon heavenly goods. But the carnally rich are bothered constantly, afraid that they shall lose their fleeting, perishing money, though they may at most hold it till death. O, let us instead drink from the spring of living waters and life everlasting which are found in fearing God! Do not partake in foolish trading; gambling away eternal life for the temporary pleasures of this world. What is holding you from dedicating your all to Christ? Your games, your friends, your work? O count them but dung that you may win Christ!
- b. He shall be exalted - The promise of humility and fearing God is 'honour' (Pr 22:4). It is the same word used to describe Joseph's glory and majesty as the prime minister of Egypt (Gen 45:13). Also, the judges of Israel were required to possess the fear of the LORD before they may be commissioned to that office (Ex 18:21). We thus find the godly, who possess this trait often appointed at important positions due to their truthfulness and trustworthiness (Joshua, Daniel etc.), for they operate under a higher obligation to the King of heaven, and hence will do their duty to earthly kings aptly and joyfully. Not only shall the godly be exalted, but when righteousness prevails in a nation, the nation itself shall also be exalted (Pr 14:34). see the nation of Judah during the time of the godly kings, who followed after the example of David their father; see in modern times the constitution upon which the nation of America was founded, then recall the words of Samuel to Israel regarding King Saul, 'If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God; But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers' (1 Sam 12:13-15). Learn then, that kingdoms reign by the sovereign decree of God (Pr 8:15-16). Take heed, ye who rule in authority, that there is one who exercises sovereignty over

thee; thus, abide in His fear that thou mayest prosper in Him. No ruler is out of the clutches of God.

- c. He obtains favour with God - 'Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy' (Ps 33:18). Though the eye of the LORD is in every place, yet His eye is peculiarly upon them that fear Him. Yea, He looketh upon them with tender loving care, and shall preserve their going out and coming in from this time forth, even forevermore (Ps 121:8). He sends a multitude of angels to encamp round about to deliver them (Ps 34:7), He reveals the covenant which He has made with them (Ps 25:14), He answers them when they cry unto Him (Jer 26:19). Yea, and though we go astray and often sin against His goodness, yet 'as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us' (Ps 103:12). O praise and bless the LORD, O my soul, for 'the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him' (Ps 103:17). What a consideration! That the everlasting God should show everlasting mercy to desperate sinners through the righteousness of His Son! Yet, notice the contrary: that without the fear of the LORD, all our offerings to God despite it being perfumed with the sweetest of fragrance, and written poetically with the finest rhetoric, yet it shall be all for nought. The LORD has no pleasure in those who only offer their bodies and not their souls (which is the principal part in man) to Him (Mal 1:6-10). Without fearing God, our offerings are a mockery to Him, our sacrifices are full of blind and lame animals, and our altar is polluted with strange fire. O then to have the fear of God or we shall never have favour with God!
- d. He obtains the praises of God - Consider that favour and beauty are deceitful and vain, but he that feareth the LORD shall be praised (Pr 31:30). The favour and beauty of this world promise that which they can never give: they are as tinkling cymbals which make a loud noise but are hollow within; they are as leaking cisterns which are often empty; they are as flashes of lightning that appear magnificent for a moment, but are gone in the next instant. What profit is there in adorning the exterior if the interior is left desolate? What satisfaction is there in bodily beautification if it is followed by eternal damnation? O seek instead the praises of God and not the praises of man! Having the praises of the King of kings is of far greater importance than having the praises of any earthly king. Which is better to hear on the day of judgment: 'Well done, good and faithful servant' (Mt 25:23) or 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels' (Mt 25:41)? O that we may be wise!

III: Its Cultivation

How great are the effects of fearing the LORD! That we should not only grow internally in knowledge, wisdom, uprightness, eschewing evil, confidence in God, and true happiness; but further externally by being given eternal life, to be exalted in Christ, to

be granted the favour and praises of God! Surely, having known and witnessed these things, let us press on to cultivate the fear of the LORD; do not halt at mere head-knowledge but ensure the possession of heart-knowledge. We shall enquire into how we may fear God by observing what we must not do and what we must do; or to put it simply, what to avoid and what to embrace.

1. What to avoid - Listen ye saints, what purpose is there if we harvest the crops without tossing away the tares? What advantage is there if we feed the sheep but do not protect them from wolves? What benefit is there if we think to cultivate the fear of the LORD without first knowing what we must ward off? Thus pay close attention to what thou must avoid, write it in the tables of thine heart that thou mayest not slip.
 - a. Do not fear other gods - 'What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it' (Hab 2:18-19). He who puts his faith and trust in dumb idols is as dumb as his idol. Do not revere that which thine own hand has constructed. Shall a statue save thee from thine enemies? It is thus because the Israelites feared dead gods rather than the living God, that they were exiled (2 Ki 17:6-7). Are not there many presumptuous Israelites in our midst who say, 'Ah, I do not bow down to foreign gods, the only God I worship is Yahweh'. Is that so? Covetousness was the god of Ananias and Sapphira, and thus were they struck dead; pride was the god of Paul and thus must He be given a thorn in the flesh; lust was the god of David and thus must his child by Bathsheba die. Tell me, aren't we not the same today? When we skip church to study, do we not idolize our grades? When we neglect the dinner table for work, do we not idolize our job? When we hesitate to share the gospel due to fear of rejection, do we not idolise our reputation over God's? Think it not a light thing to sin against God in such a perverse and adulterous way. Let us never leave our loving husband Christ for the corpses of worldly gods.
 - b. Do not fear man - The fear of man is a plague that infests even the best of saints. See Peter; not only did he deny his master because of a weak maid, but having been restored, he still feared the Jews that came from James, and shunned the lawful eating with Gentiles, carrying even Barnabas away in the dissimulation (Ga 2:13). Thus doth Scripture say, 'The fear of the man bringeth a snare' (Pr 29:25a). The word 'snare' means a lure or bait placed by a hunter to trap foolish birds or beasts who blindly walk into it, leading to their ruin and destruction [CWSB]; so are all those who have been bound and enslaved by the fear of man. Saul's kingdom fell because he feared the people and obeyed their voice; instead of fearing God and obeying His voice (1 Sam 15:24). Such have lost all rational thinking: for what reason is there to have a frightful fear of man when our lives are under the supreme control of the sovereign God? 'The fear of man bringeth

a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe' (Pr 29:25). He that puts His trust in the LORD shall be kept secure in the impenetrable and indestructible city of God. Thus take to heart the words of Christ, 'fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [even God]. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows' (Mt 10:28-31). God's supremacy over the eternal state of our soul and body is a reason to not fear man's seeming prevalency though they may destroy our body. God's consistent care over the miniature, short-living sparrows is an argument to put our trust in His continual care over His blood-bought beloved children. 'If God be for us, who can be against us' (Ro 8:31)? And if none can be against us, there are no grounds and warrants upon which we should ever fear man.

- c. Do not misconstrue fearing God as inevitably taking away the Spirit's comfort - Many have come under the false notion that reverence for God extinguishes the enjoyment of God. But nothing could be further from the truth. For the Scriptures show plainly that the early church was multiplied and edified as they walked in the fear of the LORD and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost (Ac 9:31). The fear of God and the Spirit's comfort are not contrary, but complementary to one another. Additionally, they are interdependent, the peace that passeth all understanding has its resultant cause from the fear of the LORD. Thus it is said, 'Happy is the man that feareth always' (Pr 28:14). Counterfeit joy in Christ comes about when we have a superficial understanding of the love of God; loud music, dim lights, catchy lyrics, do not bring the true comfort of the Spirit; but a solemn, reverential knowledge of God brings about a lasting tranquillity of heart amidst the stormy and uncertain trials of life. O that we may have a right understanding of God; then and then only may we sing, 'We have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll; fastened to the Rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!'
2. What to embrace - Having seen what we must avoid, let us finally learn what we must cling to. It is not enough to run away from errors, but it is as essential to run towards the truth. It is good that we have left Egypt, however, it is not good enough if we continuously encircle the wilderness; let us find out a map and compass by which we may head to the promised land. Let us now go to the brook, where we shall find 5 smooth stones which shall aid us in our journey.
 - a. God's gift - It is of primary importance to have this truth ingrained in our being, that 'the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding' (Pr 2:6). He who in His nature and person is wisdom itself may give wisdom to others. He giveth His fear to whomsoever He pleaseth, thus doth Isaiah pray, 'O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy

fear' (Isa 63:17)? Many saints know that fearing God is a gift, but they doubt whether God has given it to them. To these I say, 'Fear not!', and know that the LORD particularly bestows His fear upon His own people for He Himself has said, 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me' (Jer 32:40). It is because God is sovereign upon whom He endows with His fear, that His saints depart not from Him. Learn then, that fearing the LORD, yea, having a reverence for God, is not a self-procured or self-willed incident, but is a gift dispensed by the King of kings into our hearts. If that be the case, we must endeavour to approach the throne of grace with a prayerful and humble spirit; and if this is not done, all the other means to be mentioned later shall be to no avail. O then, come boldly and enter within the veil of the holy of holies, knock vigorously upon the doors of heaven, and cling to wisdom's promise, 'My son, ...if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; ...then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God' (Pr 2:1,3,5). The persistent in prayer will the LORD surely answer according to His will, for He loves the melody of His children's requests, especially when they cry earnestly to Him.

- b. God's word - Incline thine ears to His word, for there is within, sound wisdom laid out for the righteous (Pr 2:7). Those who will receive the words of God; who conceal His commandments in their hearts, incline their ears to hear its truths, and apply it in their lives shall be blessed with the fear of the LORD (Pr 2:1-2). Do not blaspheme and object saying that 'God's word is difficult to understand or that it is outdated with many contradictions', nor give any excuse that you have no time to read it; for the LORD sayeth, 'all the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it' (Pr 8:8-11). The wisdom of God is far superior to the wisdom of man; yea, put all the gold and treasures of the world in one scale and the word of God in the other, and we shall find the former being severely outweighed by the latter. Further, the reading of the word of God is His instituted method in producing His fear. For Moses commanded in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles: 'When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates [none excluded], that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in

the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it' (Deu 31:11-13). If God has commanded that through the reading of His word, we may develop His fear; let us not fight against God, but follow His leading and direction.

- c. God's command - Fearing God is not an Old Testament doctrine which the New Testament saints can neglect; those have not read their Bibles who without evidence spit out such lies. For the New Testament does command also; besides honouring all men, loving the Christian brethren, and honouring the King, to also fear God (1 Pe 2:17). And these all being in the imperative mood, must be strictly adhered and submitted to. Thus, it is good to continually remind ourselves that God demands our fear. Heed His words, 'A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts' (Mal 1:6).
- d. God's works - The more the queen of Sheba beheld the wisdom, majesty and piety of Solomon with her very eyes, the more she was left speechless and in awe; so the more we observe of God's glory, dominion and power, the more we shall be filled with admiration and lost in wonder, love and praise. This is He whose glory fills the heavens, whom angels cry 'Holy, holy, holy' unto (Isa 6:1-5); this is He who but spoke and the world was created, who upholds all things with His hands, that the whole universe rotates in order (Ps 33:9); this is He who has placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it (Jer 5:22), who giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in its season, and has appointed the weeks of harvest (Jer 5:24); this is He who bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought, who maketh the devices of the people of none effort (Ps 33:10); this is He whose counsel standeth forever (Ps 33:11), who has the king's heart in His hand and turns it whithersoever He willeth (Pr 21:1); thus in redemption, the mockings of Herod, the scorings of Pilate, the schemings of the Jews were directed by God 'to do whatsoever his hand and his counsel determined before to be done' (Ac 4:27-28). 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out' (Ro 11:33)! Ponder then the person and works of God, especially in Christ, and rest not till you have caught a glimpse of His magnificence and splendour; that the fear of God comes to fruition in your heart.
- e. A daily practice - 'Let not thine heart envy sinners', envy not that their prosperity and success be long lasting, envy not that they enjoy great earthly pleasures and wealth; 'but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long' (Pr 23:17). Not only in adversity, not only in church, not only in your devotions, but in all conditions and circumstances. As Jonathan Edwards' said, 'Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence' [The resolutions of Jonathan

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Prayer Meeting
4 May 2022*

Edwards, 1]. There is no break in having a high, lofty and reverential view of the Almighty. Perform and establish in your heart a prayerful state, an ear inclined to wisdom, a knowledge of God's command to fear Him, the observing of His majesty in creation and salvation, all the days of your life; till grace be changed to glory, till thy corruptible body shall put on incorruption, till ye be made like Christ and see Him as He is.

CONCLUSION

Go labour on, dig into the depths of God's word, seek for wisdom as silver, search for her as for hidden treasure (Pr 2:4). Come and drink from this fountain of life; come, taste and see that the LORD is good; come and be filled with the fear of the LORD, that you may exclaim with joy unspeakable and full of glory, with the apostle Paul, 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen' (1 Tim 1:17; Jude 25).