

Religious Parentage and Education

by Anne Dutton

A true believer is marked by a new principle of spiritual life, a changed will and affections, and an assurance of eternal salvation, all of which are made possible by God's free grace.

Scripture: Psalm 138:8, Isaiah 41:10, John 10:28, Romans 6:6, Romans 8:16, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:4, Philippians 1:6

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Sanctification"

Description

Anne Dutton preaches about the transformative work of God's Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, bringing them from spiritual death to life, revealing their lost and sinful state, and drawing them to Christ for salvation. She assures that those who have experienced this work are secure in Christ, protected from the powers of darkness, and can find refuge in the eternal God. Dutton addresses the ongoing battle with sin in the believer's heart, emphasizing that despite its persistence, God's grace will ultimately triumph and lead to eternal victory over sin and the full destruction of the old sinful nature.

Transcript

Dear Madam,

It is indeed a very great privilege to be favored with a religious parentage and education, but if this were our greatest felicity, we would sink, nevertheless, into eternal misery. But the vessels of mercy--of God's free, rich, sovereign mercy--in order to their preparation for eternal glory, are blessed by Him, with His Holy Spirit sent down into their hearts, as the spirit of regeneration, conviction, and conversion.

And this blessed Spirit, in His saving work on the heart, when He first begins it, finds the sinner dead in sin, under total darkness, as to spiritual things, in his understanding; in an entire alienation from them, and aversion to them, in his will and affections; and so, afar off from God in Christ, without any apparent right to the covenant of promise, and without any good hope through grace.

And at such a time as this, He is pleased, by His almighty and all-gracious energy, to produce a new and holy principle of spiritual life in that soul which lay entirely under the power of spiritual death. This principle, which is instantaneously given, and as to the exact moment of it to us unknown, contains in it all graces, which are afterwards drawn out into their various exercises, under the Spirit's influence, unto the regenerate soul's various privileges. And this gracious work of the Holy Spirit of the heart discovers itself to the soul that is the subject of it, and to others, by a supernatural light set up in the understanding,

whence the soul sees itself to be utterly lost and undone by sin, by heart and life-sin, under the curse of God's law, and in danger of the wrath which is to come, that it neither has, nor can, by self-power, attain a perfect righteousness of its own for justification.

And also, in the soul's discerning, upon the Spirit's revealing, the infinite glory and transcendent excellency of Christ as the great Savior, in His Person and offices, blood and righteousness, and in all His grace-fullness, as God's great provision for the chief of sinners' salvation, and as in the gospel held forth to be received of them by faith.

And further, the Spirit's saving work on the will and affections discovers itself by that soul's approbation of the Savior beheld, its desires after Him, its approaches to Him, its laying hold of Him, and casting itself, under the Spirit's sweet and strong attraction, with the whole weight of its everlasting salvation upon Christ alone for all holiness and all happiness, to the present and eternal praise of the God of all grace, and to the soul's present and eternal bliss; upon which, that soul becomes declaratively and apparently a child of God, an heir of God, through Christ, as the God of grace and glory, and is more or less sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

And now, dear Madam, if you are blessed with a precious experience of this happy work on your heart, you are most certainly a new creature in Christ, and a true believer in Him, and "shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation," notwithstanding the greatest inward or outward opposition. You are forever safe in the hands of Jesus, and none of the powers of darkness, with all their subtlety and force, shall ever be able to pluck you thence. "Your refuge is the eternal God, and underneath, for your support, are the everlasting arms!" And as an inhabitant of the Rock--the Rock of Ages, who is your strong defense--you may sing and shout salvation from the top of the mountains.

You tell me, Madam, "that your heart grows worse and worse." To this I reply--The unregenerate part of your heart, in which resides the principle of sin, has in it such a fullness of evil, such heights and depths of wickedness, such putrefaction and rottenness, that it cannot admit of greater degree. "It is deceitful above all things, and so desperately wicked" that none but the Lord Himself can find it out, or search the amazing depths of this bottomless gulf.

But though sin as a principle, in the unregenerate part of your heart, cannot grow worse, the ebullitions, or boilings up of corruptions, may be more or less, as they have more or less advantage to show their rage against the God of grace and holiness, and against us as bearing His image. The workings of corruptions have less advantage when we are under present divine influence; but when this is in measure withdrawn from us, they instantly boil over with rage against the principle of grace, and by their subtlety and force, under Satan's influence, entice or hurry us away with rapidity into sinful acts, to God's dishonor and our soul's distress.

But all the rage of hell and sin within and without us, with all those hellish waters which they cast forth as a flood to swallow us up, shall never quench that spark of heavenly fire, that little grace which is wrought in our hearts by the hand of Omnipotence. No! this, by the same almighty power which enkindled it, shall be maintained and increased amid and by the greatest opposition, until it is raised into a full and eternal flame. The triumphant Captain of our salvation has vanquished all the powers of hell and sin; He has led captivity captive, and dragged all the legions of devils at His chariot wheels, when God, the Redeemer, went up to glory with a shout, the Lord, with the sound of a trumpet, amid thousands and tens of thousands of His holy angels, who saw His triumphs and sung His victories.

And as for sin, our worst enemy--the old man, the whole body of sin--it was crucified with Him, and thence, by omnipotent grace--by sin-pardoning and sin-subduing grace--it shall be shortly, totally, and finally destroyed in us. And meanwhile, as our begun holiness increases, we shall see corruptions in their horrid ebullitions, under advancing displays of reigning grace, which gives them greater aggravations, to be worse and worse, and our new hearts shall be to all sin more and more averse, until a complete victory is won, and we are blessed with an immortal crown.

As to our heart-idolatry, it is a very great iniquity of which the Lord's own people are deeply guilty. But since this is the promise of His rich, free grace, "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" let us plead it before His throne, and bring our every idol unto Him to be entirely slain, so shall our hearts be separated from them, and our admiration of, and sinful affection to, all glittering glow-worm glories sink and die before the rising attracting display of His all-transcendent and infinite excellences.

Be assured, dear Madam, that that work of God upon the heart which brings the soul to an entire dependence on Christ, a whole Christ, is no illusion, but shall end in a full and eternal salvation. And as to the 'hope of the hypocrite', which shall perish, that is always founded upon self-worthiness; but that hope which has for its foundation God's free grace, in and through what Christ has done and suffered for us, and is made of God unto us, is good hope that shall not make ashamed, but shall be, in its glorious fruits, to the righteous, gladness unto endless ages.

As to those precious promises which you so earnestly desire to experience, they are fulfilled in you already, partially and initially, and shall be, shortly, completely and eternally.

I wish you a rich increase of all grace unto all joy, peace, and holiness, and a massive crown of immortal bliss.

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