



DEFYING DEPRESSION:
SORROW AND SONG FROM
THE PEN OF A PSALMIST

Psalm 42-43

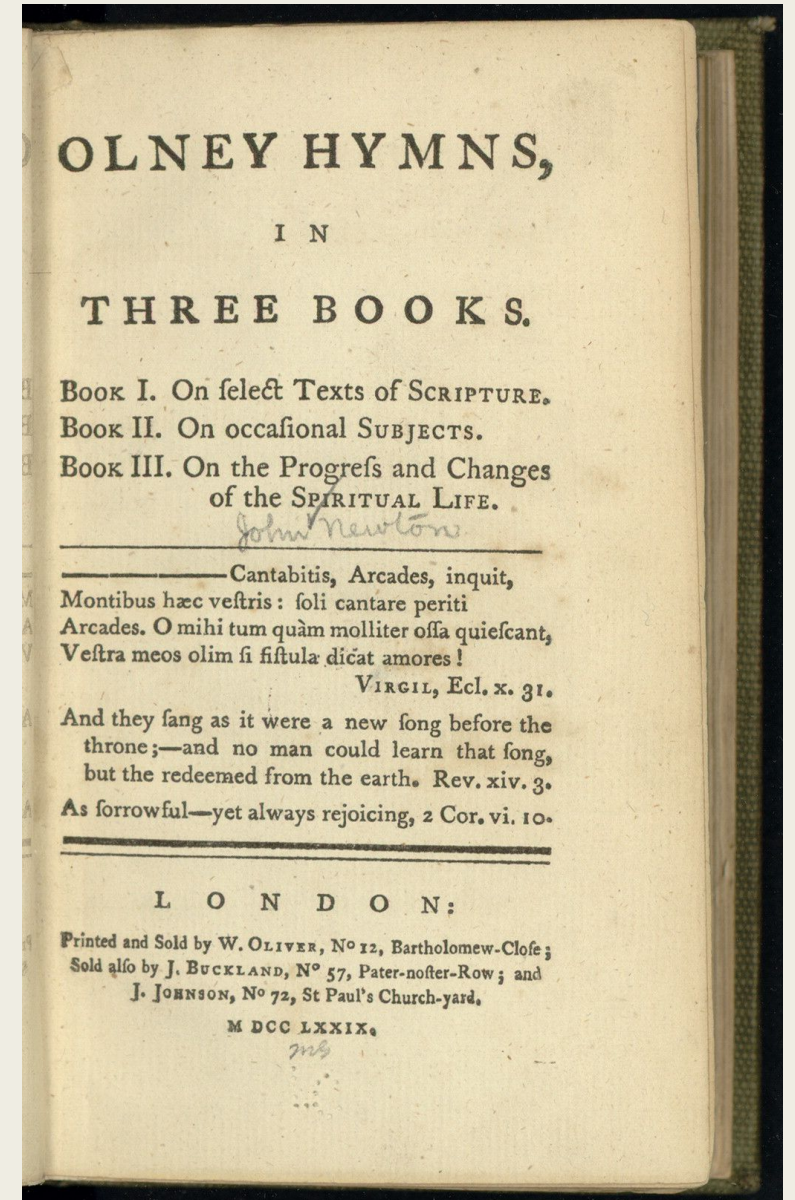
The Life of William Cowper

- Born November 15, 1731 near London, England
- In 1752 he sank into his first paralyzing depression
- The second depression he tried to commit suicide three times
- In December 1763, he was admitted to St. Albans Insane Asylum
- He was treated by Dr. Nathaniel Cotton



The Life of William Cowper

- Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."
- "In a moment I believed, and received the gospel."
- In 1769 Newton collaborated with Cowper on the Olney Hymns, published in 1779



The Life of William Cowper

- God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.
- Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.
- Judge not the lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

-- "God Moves in a Mysterious Way" by William Cowper

Hymns of Dawn.

63. HE WILL MAKE IT PLAIN.

Arlington. C. M.

(G. H. 115; E. H. 214; J. H. 142.)

GOD moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

- 2 Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.
- 3 Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.
- 4 Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.
- 5 His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.
- 6 Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

Psalm 42-43: Four Features

- The Context
- The Condition
- The Cause
- The Cure

THE CONTEXT

■ Observations about its Place in the Psalter

- Psalms consists of 5 books
- Psalm 42-43 begin Book 2 of the Psalms
- Lament and Distress is the major theme of both Book 1 and Book 2
- Book 1: 37/41 Psalms written by David
- Book 2 is written by a community of authors

Book 1	Book 2
Theme: Lament and Distress	Theme: Lament and Distress
Author: David	Author: Various
The voice of the individual	The voice of the community

THE CONTEXT

- Observations about the relationship between Psalm 42 and 43
- One Psalm in the original Hebrew
 - 1. *In Hebrew they are one unit*
 - 2. *Psalm 43 has no heading/introductory title (every other Psalm in book 2, except for Psalm 71, does)*
 - 3. *The repeated refrain in 42:5, 42:11, and 43:5.*
 - 4. *Both deal with the same topic: depression.*
- One song with three Stanzas:
 - *42:1-5, 42:6-11, and 43:1-5.*

THE CONTEXT

- Observations about the superscription/heading (the first verse in the Hebrew text): “*To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the sons of Korah.*”
- Maskil: *to make someone wise, or to instruct.*
- “For the Choir Director”
- *So: a song that instructs*

THE CONTEXT

- Observations about the author
- He's a believer
- Christians can and do struggle with depression

THE CONDITION

- The metaphor for the condition:
 - *Verse 1: “as the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God.”*
- The explanation of the condition:
 - *Verse 2: “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God?”*
- The extent of the condition:
 - *Verse 3: “my tears have been my food day and night.”*
- The intensity of the condition:
 - *Verse 5, Verse 11, 43:5: “Why are you in despair, O my soul?”*

THE CAUSE

■ Physical Causes:

- *Dr. Lloyd Jones says, “There are many, I find, who come to talk to me about these matters, in whose case it seems quite clear to me that the cause of the trouble is mainly physical. You cannot separate the spiritual from the physical for we are body, mind and spirit.”*
- *Biblical Anthropology: Man is a Complex Unity: Body affects soul and soul affects body*

■ A disruption of community:

- *verse 6: “Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan. and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.”*

■ The Trials of Life:

- *Verse 7: “Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me.”*



THE CAUSE

- **Attacks from wicked persons:**
 - *43:1: “Where is your God?”*
- **Memories of better days:**
 - **Verse 4:** “These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, With the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.”
- **A feeling of uselessness**
 - He was once a great musician in the temple

THE CURE

■ Search out and Deal with Sin

- Not all depression is due to sin and guilt
 - **Psalm 43:1:** “Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation.”
- But sin may be the cause of depression
 - **Psalms 32 and 51**

THE CURE

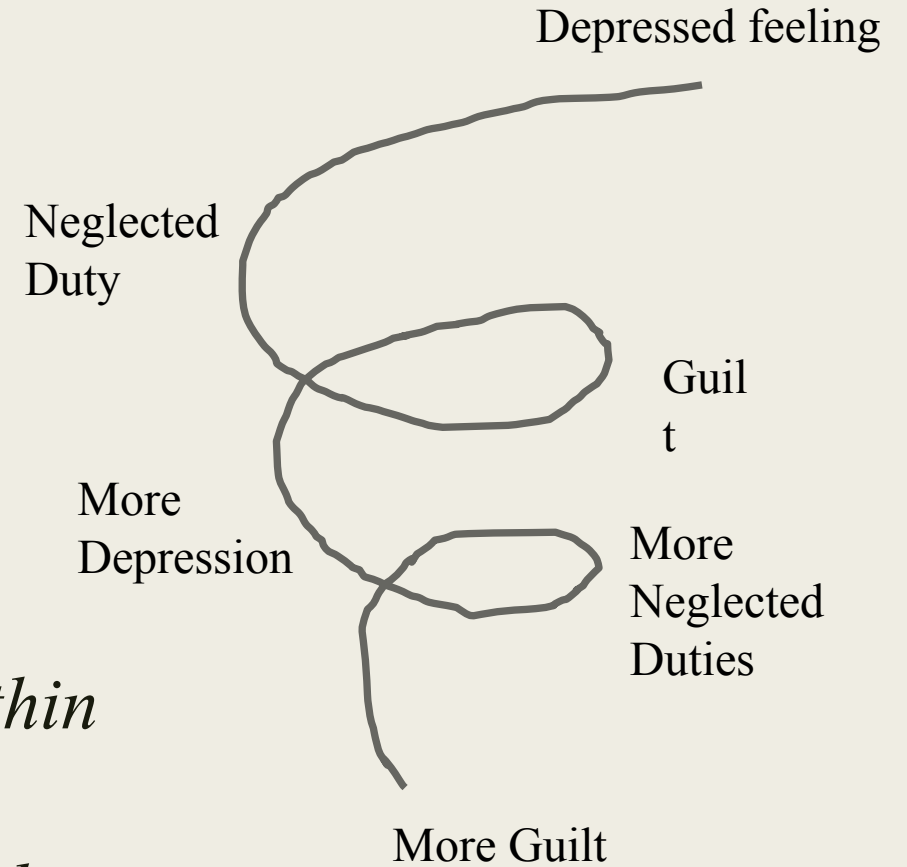
- *Search out and Deal with Sin*
- **Ed Welch:** “Compassion cannot ignore unbelief or sin. Too often family and friends think the depressed person is very fragile and cannot handle any frank discussion about sin or hard-heartedness. But to ignore these issues when they are obvious in someone’s life is to treat that person without love and compassion...The Bible always portrays our sin problem as deeper than any pain that we experience. To ignore sin especially when it is obvious is to offer only a very superficial kind of love and compassion and to withhold help that is needed at the deepest level.”

THE CURE

- **Remember Past Experiences of God's Faithfulness**
- **Verse 6:** "O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan."
- The Hymn, *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, the second verse: "Here I raise my Ebenezer, hither by thy help I've come."
- **1 Samuel 7:12:** "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, 'till now the LORD has helped us.'"
- Ebenezer is "Stone of Help."

THE CURE

- **Continue your Disciplines and Responsibilities**
- The Psalmist Continues his Spiritual Disciplines:
 - He prays *Verse 4*: “*These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me.*”
 - He talks to God: *Verse 6*: “*O my God, my soul is in despair within me.*”
- Chain Sinning
 - a spiraling downward of sin □ a sinful response to a sinful response



THE CURE

- How do you break chain sinning? Do what is right
- The Biblical Pattern: Do right and you will feel right
 - *Genesis 4:5-6: So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. ⁶ Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?”*
 - *Isaiah 58:10 And if you give yourself to the hungry
And satisfy the desire of the afflicted,
Then your light will rise in darkness
And your gloom will become like midday.*

THE CURE

- **Sing to the Lord:** “To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the sons of Korah.”
- The sons of Korah were professional musicians.
 - *2 Chronicles 20:19:* “*The Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.*”
- **Verse 8:** “By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and *at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.*”

THE CURE

- **Sing to the Lord**
- Spurgeon: “Any man can sing when his cup is full of delights; the believer alone has songs when waters of a bitter cup are wrung out to him. Any sparrow can chirp in the daylight; it is only the nightingale that can sing in the dark. Children of God, whenever the enemies seem to prevail over you, whenever the serried ranks of the foe appear sure of victory, then begin to sing. Your victory will come with your song. It is a very puzzling thing to the devil to hear saints sing when he sets his foot on them. He cannot make it out: the more he oppresses them, the more they rejoice. Let us resolve to be all the merrier when the enemy dreams that we are utterly routed. The more opposition, the more we will rejoice in the Lord; the more discouragement, the more confidence.”

THE CURE

- **Hope in God Alone**

- *Psalm 43:5: “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.”*

THE CURE

- **Preach to Yourself**

- *Psalm 43:5: “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.*

- In the refrain, the Psalmist is not talking to God, he’s talking to Himself

THE CURE

- **Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones:** “Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them but they are talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you. Now this man’s treatment was this: instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul?’ he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: ‘Self, listen for a moment, I will speak to you...Why art thou cast down?—what business have you to be disquieted? ...And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who he is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: ‘I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.’”

THE CURE

- **Remember Your Forgiveness in Christ**
- **John 12:27**, Jesus said: “My soul has become troubled.”
- **John 14:1**, Jesus says, “Let not your hearts be troubled.” the face of Christ.”
- **Zechariah 13:1**: “In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.”

Remember Christ

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.

--William Cowper