

Wait, O My Soul, Thy Maker's Will

Benjamin Beddome (1717–1795)

Wait, O my soul, thy Maker's will,
Tumultuous passions all be still,
Nor let a murmuring thought arise;
His ways are just, his counsels wise.

In realms of cloudless light he dwells,
Performs his work, the cause conceals;
And though his footsteps are unknown,
Judgment and truth support his throne.

In heaven and earth and air and seas
He executes his firm decrees;
And by his saints it stands confessed
That what he does is ever best.

Wait, then, my soul, submissive wait,
With reverence bow before his seat,
And 'mid the terrors of his rod
Trust in a wise and gracious God.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

In the Nick of Time

Unexpected Interruptions

Kevin T. Bauder

The summer has not gone as I intended. Of course, many folk can say the same, what with the restrictions imposed in the wake of COVID-19. That's not what I mean, though. I saw those restrictions as an opportunity. Suddenly my entire summer schedule opened up. I didn't have a single speaking engagement or a single meeting to attend. This reprieve promised time to complete a major editing job and perhaps a minor writing project or two. I also hoped to tackle a couple of small household tasks.

One of these was to replace the door and its frame on the shed in my back yard. Perhaps I should describe the shed. I built it nearly twenty years ago. While I planned to use it for storage, I also wanted it to be useful as a shop or even an office if the occasion arose. My city allows construction of an out-building of up to 120 square feet without a building permit, so I built it ten feet by twelve. The shed rests on a post and beam foundation and is a complete frame structure: joists, sill plates, rafters, studs on sixteen-inch centers. It has an eight-foot ceiling, a gambrel roof, and an attic that I can sit up in.

Last fall I noticed that the door frame had water damage and rot was beginning to set in. I intended to make a weekend project of replacing it. When I tore out the frame, however, I discovered that the jack studs, sill plate, and flooring had been infested with carpenter ants. That's when I knew I had a real problem.

I tore off the skirting and trim from the bottom of the shed, revealing that the ants had attacked the rim joists and sill plates all the way around the shed. The foundation was intact—I had used pressure treated lumber for the beams—but I was confronted with the problem of repairing the lowest part of the superstructure. Everything else rests on the joists and sill plates. Would I have to demolish the shed and rebuild? Or could I find a way to replace the damaged wood without sacrificing the superstructure?

I could and did. I had to work wall by wall. For each wall, I first cut away the flooring to reveal the joists. I also cut away the bottom several inches of siding to gain access to the structure from outside. I built a framework on the inside, attached to the studs. Then I jacked up each wall, cut out the



In the Nick of Time is published by Central Baptist Theological Seminary.
Permission is granted to duplicate for personal and church use.

www.centalseminary.edu | info@centralseminary.edu
900 Forestview Lane N, Plymouth, MN 55441 | 800.827.1043

damaged lumber, and replaced the joists and plates with pressure treated wood. Then I lowered the wall and toe-nailed the old studs to the new plate. While I was at it I sistered the joists wherever they needed extra support to ensure a solid structure.

Because I was working alone, and because I am old and slow, each side took about a week to complete. Then the floor had to be replaced, the whole shed resided, a new door built and fitted, and new trim installed. I still have to install new drip edge, seal the cut edges of the siding, install a bit of trim, and paint the whole thing. It's almost done.

The foregoing may leave the impression that I enjoy construction or what is often called "working with my hands." Some people do. I am not one of them. On the contrary, I loathe this work, though I have had to learn to do it. My bent is toward books and ideas. I begrudge every moment I have to spend on household maintenance. Repairing the door and frame was going to make for a dark weekend. Then, as the project grew, it began to seem like a long, black tunnel.

This one project has consumed my summer. I would get up in the mornings and start working on the shed while the temperatures were cooler. During the afternoons and evenings I would try to keep up with seminary work. Days slipped into weeks and then into months. Now the summer is gone. Manual labor has crowded out most of the goals that I had hoped to accomplish before the school year began.

Nevertheless, the experience has not been without lessons, and these have reinforced certain truths that I already knew. Two have been particularly important for me. Let me share them.

The first is that God exercises providential control over our lives. We make our plans, but they are always subject to God's plan. He is free to interrupt us and redirect our efforts at any moment (Jas 4:13-15). Consequently, our response to those inconveniences reveals our confidence in Him. As Medieval mystic Walter Hilton suggested, we should embrace interruptions as service to God, even if we are disturbed in the middle of our devotions. He intends to gain glory for Himself through those disruptions. Why should we begrudge it? Should we not respond with joy? This summer has provided an opportunity to accept God's providential dealings in my life and to trust that He knows what He is doing.

The second lesson is that every possession brings with it a stewardship. Jesus observed that earthly treasures are subject to corruption by moth and rust (Matt 6:19). I can testify that they can also be corrupted by carpenter ants. The point is that our possessions make a claim upon us: whatever we own, owns us. Taking possession of a thing makes us responsible for its

wellbeing (its maintenance) and its proper use. Greater possessions engender greater responsibility. Consequently, there is a case to be made for simplicity, for keeping possessions to a minimum. I'm not suggesting that possessions are wrong—not for a moment! Still, Jesus cautions against allowing our hearts to become preoccupied with the "cares of this life" (Luke 21:34). One way of avoiding those cares is to commit ourselves to owning fewer possessions. At minimum we ought to realize that the cost of any possession is always greater than its purchase price.

My summer is now at an end. The rest of this week will be occupied with faculty in-service, and classes will begin next week. I'll put the finishing touches on the shed while returning to a life of students, lectures, and grading. Perhaps I can even get back to those projects that I had hoped to accomplish at the beginning of the summer.



This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.
