
FOR HIS GLORY

Volume 10, Issue 10

October, 2007

An honest heart causes its possessor to take his place *before God in the dust*. How can it be otherwise if he accepts the Divine diagnosis and condemnation of his condition? As the penitent thief on the cross acknowledged, “we indeed, justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds” (Luke 23:41), so the one who truly bows to God’s verdict acknowledges that the everlasting burnings are his legitimate due. Thus pride receives its death-wound, all pretensions to goodness are repudiated and with the publican of old he smites upon his breast crying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Instead of seeking to extenuate his transgressions, he wonders at God’s long-sufferance toward him. Instead of asking, “What have I done to deserve eternal damnation?” he marvels that he is not already in Hell. He perceives clearly that if such a wretch as himself is to receive salvation, it must be by Grace alone!—AWP



HAS GOD FORGOTTEN TO BE GRACIOUS?

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

“Has God forgotten to be gracious?”

Psalm 77:9

Has God forgotten *anything*? If He could forget, could He be God? Is it not absurd to speak of Him as short of memory, of whose understanding there is no searching? Shall we speak of Him as forgetting, when to His mind all things are present and the past and the future are always before Him as in a map which lies open before the beholder’s eyes? Oh child of God, why do you talk thus? Oh troubled heart, will you insult your God? Will you narrow the infinity of His mind? Can God forget? *You* are forgetful! Perhaps you can scarcely remember, from hour to hour, your own words and your own promises—but is the Lord such an one as you are? Not even the least thing is passed over by Him! He has not forgotten the young ravens in their nests, but He hears when they cry. He has not forgotten a single blade of grass, but gives to each its own drop of dew. He has not forgotten the sea-monsters down deep in the caverns of the ocean. He has not forgotten a worm that hides itself away beneath the sod! Therefore banish the thought, once and for all, that your God has forgotten anything, much less that He has forgotten to be gracious!

“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Then He has forgotten an old, long, ancient, yes—*eternal* habit of His heart! Have you not heard that His mercy endures *forever*? Did He not light up the lamps of Heaven because of His mercy? Do we not sing, “To Him that made great lights: for His mercy endures forever. The sun to rule by day, and the moon and stars to rule by night: for His mercy endures forever”? Since the creation has He not, in Providence, always been gracious? Is it not His rule to open His hands and supply the need of every living thing? Did He not give His Son to redeem mankind? Has He not sent His Spirit to turn men from darkness to light? After having been gracious all these myriads of ages. After having manifested His love and His Grace at such a

(See Psalm 77:9 on page 2)

NO COMPROMISE!

By Charles H. Spurgeon

“Take the sword of the Spirit,
which is the Word of God.”

Ephesians 6:17.

To be a Christian is to be a warrior. The good soldier of Jesus Christ must not expect to find ease in this world—it is a battlefield. Neither must he reckon upon the friendship of the world, for that would be enmity against God. His occupation is war. As he puts on, piece by piece, the panoply provided for him, he may wisely say to himself, “This warns me of danger; this prepares me for warfare; this prophesies opposition.”

Difficulties meet us even in standing our ground, for the Apostle, two or three times, bids us—“Stand.” In the rush of the fight, men are apt to be carried off their legs. If they can keep their footing, they will be victorious, but if they are borne down by the rush of their adversaries, everything is lost. You are to put on the heavenly armor in order that you may stand. And you will need it to maintain the position in which your Captain has placed you. If even to stand requires all this care, judge you what the warfare must be!

The Apostle also speaks of *withstanding* as well as standing. We are not merely to defend, but also to assail. It is not enough that you are not conquered, you have to conquer and, therefore, we find that we are

(See *Compromise? Never!* on page 4)

Inside:

<i>Preacher, What About Small Things?</i> - Pastor Henry Mahan	3
<i>The Treasury of a True Church Is Its Prayer Meetings!</i> - C.H.S.	7
<i>Letters to Mike Gendron of Proclaiming the Gospel</i>	9
<i>Is Sanctification Progressive or Continual?</i> - Paul Ferrie	13

PSALM 77:9

(Continued from page 1)

costly rate, has He forgotten it? You, O man, take up a practice and you lay it down—you do a thing now and then—and then you cease from your way. But shall the eternal God who has always been gracious forget to be gracious? Oh, Lord, forgive the *thought!*

“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Why, then, He must have forgotten His purpose! Have you not heard that before the earth was, He purposed to redeem unto Himself a people who should be His own chosen, His children, His peculiar treasure, a people near unto Him? Before He made the heavens and the earth, had He not planned in His own mind that He would manifest the fullness of His Grace toward His people in Christ Jesus? And do you think that He has turned from His eternal purpose, torn up His Divine decrees, burned the Book of Life and changed the whole course of His operations among the sons of men? Do you know what you are saying to talk so? Does He not say, “I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed”? Has He said and will He not do it? Has He purposed and shall it not come to pass? Banish, then, the thought of His forgetting to be gracious!

“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Then He must have forgotten His own *Covenant*, for what was the purport of His Covenant with Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, on the behalf of His people? Is it not called a Covenant of Grace? Is not *Grace* the spirit and tenor and object of it? Of old He said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” And in His Covenant He ordains to show this Grace to as many as are in Christ Jesus.

Now, if a *man's* covenant is confirmed, it stands fast. Nothing that occurs after a covenant has been made can alter it—and God, having once made a Covenant, turns not from His promise and His oath! The Law, which was 430 years after the Covenant made with Abraham, could not change the promises which the Lord had made to the believing seed, neither can any accident or unforeseen circumstance make the Covenant of Grace null and void! Indeed, there are no *accidents* with God, nor any unforeseen circumstances with Him! He has lifted His hand to Heaven and has sworn! He has declared, “If My Covenant is not with day and night, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob.” The Lord has not forgotten His Covenant with day and night, neither will He cast off His believing people! He cannot, therefore, forget to be gracious.

More than that, when you say, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?”

do you not forget that in such a case He must have forgotten *His own Glory*, for the main of His Glory lies in His Grace. In that which He does out of free favor and love to undeserving, ill-deserving, Hell-deserving men, He displays the meridian splendor of His Glory! His power, His wisdom and His Immutability praise Him, but in the forefront of all shines out His Grace. This is His darling attribute—by this He is illustrious on earth and in Heaven above! Has God forgotten His own Glory? Does a man forget his honor? Does a man turn aside from his own name and fame? He may do so in a moment of madness, but the thrice holy God has not forgotten the Glory of His name, nor forgotten to be gracious!

Listen, and let unbelief stand rebuked. If God has forgotten to be gracious, then He must have forgotten His own Son! He must have forgotten Calvary and the expiatory Sacrifice offered there! He must have forgotten Him that is always with Him at His right hand, making intercession for transgressors! He must have forgotten His pledge to Him that He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied! Can you conceive that? It is verging upon *blasphemy* to suppose such a thing! Yet it must be that He has forgotten His own Son if He has forgotten to be gracious!

Once more, if this were the case, the Lord must have forgotten *His own Self*, for Grace is of the essence of His Nature, since God is Love. We forget ourselves and disgrace ourselves, but God cannot do so. Oh Beloved, it is part and parcel of God's own Nature that He should show mercy to the guilty and be gracious to those who trust in Him. Have you forgotten, as a father, your children? Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? These things are barely possible, but it is utterly *impossible* that the great Father should forget Himself by forgetting His children! That the great Lord who has taken us to be His peculiar heritage and His jewels should cease to value us and forget to be gracious to us is an impossibility!

I think I hear someone say, “I do not think God has forgotten to be gracious *except to me*.” Does God make any exceptions? Does He not speak universally when He addresses His children? Remember, if God forgot to be gracious to one of His believing people, He might forget to be gracious to them all! If there were one instance found in which His love failed, then the foundations would be removed and what could the righteous do? The Good Shepherd does not preserve

(See *Psalm 77:9* on page 4)

NOTABLE QUOTES OF CHARLES H. SPURGEON

“That is a good rule for all Christians which I saw in one of our Orphanage schoolrooms—‘What would Jesus do?’ There cannot be a better guide than that for Believers, for our text is true with regard to Doctrine, ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away.’”—1899, Sermon #2636

“With utmost reverence would I say that God Himself cannot be glorified by His promises without you! If He intends to feed the hungry, then the hungry are essential to the accomplishment of His purpose! If He would clothe the naked, then there must be naked ones for Him to clothe! Is there not a mine of comfort here for you who have been almost outside hope? I trust that some of you poor lost ones will say in your hearts, if you do not utter it with your voices, ‘Are we really essential to God's Glory? Does God need our poverty, our sinfulness and our nothingness in order that He may, through them, display the greatness of His Grace? Then we will certainly come to Him just as we are.’ Do so, I pray you. Come! Come!! Come!!! May the Holy Spirit, by His Omnipotent Grace, draw you, now, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.”—1900, Sermon #2657

“Ah, Lord Jesus! I never knew Your love till I understood the meaning of Your death.”—1900, Sermon #2656

PREACHER, WHAT ABOUT SMALL THINGS?

By Pastor Henry Mahan

*“For who has despised the day of small things?”
Zechariah 4:10.*

Sometimes while looking for great things to do, great crowds to impress and great trials to endure for God’s glory, we overlook the sling and stones God uses—we send the Davids out to tend sheep—we dismiss the loaves and fishes as too little to be useful and unworthy of our notice. When will we learn that it is the foolish things that God uses to confound the wise? It is the base things, the things which are despised, yes, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are—that no flesh should glory in His Presence? Have we been taken in by the world’s philosophy of numbers, riches, greatness, talent, popularity and wisdom? Have we discarded the very instruments, vessels and weapons God uses to accomplish His glory?

I hear preachers talking about going to a certain seminary or school to secure their doctorates. I ask, “Do they teach the Word of God? Are the professors true to Christ and the Scriptures?” “No, but I need the credentials to open doors for me to preach!” All the credentials one needs is a Divine call to the ministry—it is not your honorary titles, but the Holy Trinity who opens effectual doors for the Gospel! The disciples “*went forth and preached.*” It is not said that they went forth and argued, or that they went forth and wrote apologies for the Christian faith, or that they went forth and structured, organized and rehearsed doctrine before groups of dead theologians.

No! They “*went forth and preached*” Christ crucified in the language of the people, demanding that men believe on and receive Jesus Christ as Lord. And they left them if they would not believe, with the distinct understanding that they would perish in their unbelief! Most of the intellectual Calvinism preached today is understood by few, experienced by still fewer, and enjoyed by none! The hearers know what they believe but very little of whom they believe. We’ve straightened out their heads and neglected their hearts! They are as straight as a gun barrel, morally—and just as empty!

Dismiss this word as just so much rhetoric if you will, but before you do, take a good look at your ministry, your message, your worship services and your Gospel. Record the whole service. Sit out in a pew some night and listen to it. Imagine that you are a total stranger who has dropped in, hungry to know God—what is there for you? Imagine that you are a heart patient who will die tomorrow and face God in judgment—what is there for you? Imagine that you are a wayward boy or girl who is all mixed up in your thinking, your morals and your home life—what is there for you? Imagine that you are a lonely widow or an old couple forgotten by children and family—what is there for you? Imagine that you are a Believer plagued by doubts of your interest in Christ, fears of death and great temptation to sin—what is there for you? Imagine that you are going through an emotional crisis, a broken home, sorrow over the death of a friend or loved one—what is there for you?

These are the people to whom we preach. These are the sheep we are commanded to feed. These are the people we are told to comfort! The people starve and perish, the lost go away doomed and the Pharisees wallow deeper in their refuges of lies while we make sure that the church is properly organized and structured, while we fight liberalism and fundamentalism, while we destroy Christmas, Easter and pagan holidays, while

we straighten out our fellow preachers on the millennium, while we busy ourselves in the old Puritans and try to sound smarter than we are, while we make war on the public school system and use our time and resources to educate children in godliness—but ignoring the only source of life—the preaching of Christ!

Satan has beguiled us as he did our mother, Eve. Through his subtlety he has corrupted our minds from the simplicity of Christ! Where can I go this Lord’s Day and hear the mercy of God, not the mechanics of Grace? Where can I go and hear the love of Christ and not the Law of God for saints? Where can I go and hear of the righteousness of God fulfilled by Christ and not the righteousness of the creature to be rewarded by God? Let us say, by God’s Grace—This will be the place and I will be the preacher. The message will not be flowery but full of Divine Grace. It will not be with enticing words of man’s wisdom but the sovereign mercy of God to helpless sinners in a language all men understand. Let the scholars, theologians and authors go elsewhere to have their intellects “challenged.” Lord, make me Your voice to the people!

“Come ye sinners poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love and power!

Now you needy, come and welcome, God’s free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance, every grace that brings you nigh.

Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requires, is to feel your need of Him!”

Gleaned and adapted from a weekly bulletin of
GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH of DANVILLE
2734 Old Stanford Road, Danville, KY 40422-9438
Telephone (859) 236-8235 - E-Mail don@donfortner.com
Donald S. Fortner, Pastor

**PRAY FOR ROMAN CATHOLICS
DECEIVED BY SATAN’S LIE
AND THEIR CHURCH’S TEACHING
THAT OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST’S
REDEEMING WORK IS NOT FINISHED
BUT MUST BE REPEATED
DAILY BY THE “MASS”—AND
SUPPLEMENTED BY CONFESSION
TO A PRIEST!**

**Pray for unconverted spouses
and children of your Christian friends.
Thank our Master
if all of your family know Him.**

PSALM 77:9

(Continued from page 2)

some of His sheep, but *all* of them! And it is not concerning the strong ones of His flock that He says, “I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish”—He has said it of *all* the sheep, yes, and of the smallest lamb of all the flock, of the most scabbed and wounded, of all that He has purchased with His blood! The Lord has not forgotten Himself in any one instance—but He is faithful to all Believers.

Now, let us attend to *the amendment of the question*. Shall I tell you, Friend, you who have put this question, what the true question is which you ought to ask yourself? It is not, “Has God forgotten to be gracious?” but, “Have *you* forgotten to be *grateful*?” Why, you enjoy many mercies even now! It is Grace which allows you to *live* after having asked such a vile question! Grace is all around you, if you will but open your eyes, or your ears. You had not been spared after so much sin if God had forgotten to be gracious!

Listen—Have you not forgotten to be believing? God’s Word is true, why do you doubt it? Is He a liar? Has He ever played you false? Which promise of His has failed? Time was when you did trust Him—then you knew He was gracious—but you are now doubting without just cause! You are permitting an evil heart of unbelief to draw you aside from the living God! Know this and repent of it—and trust your best Friend.

Have you not also forgotten to be reverent? Otherwise how could you ask such a question? Should a man say of God that He has forgotten to be gracious? Should he imagine such a thing? Should the keenest grief drive to such profanity? Shall a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Shall anyone of us begin to doubt that Divine Grace which has kept us out of the bottomless pit and spared us to this hour? Oh, heir of Glory, favored as you have been to bathe your forehead in the sunlight of Heaven full often and then to lean your head on the Savior’s bosom—is it out of *your* mouth that this question comes—“Has God forgotten to be gracious”? Call it back and bow your head unto the dust and say, “My Lord, have mercy upon Your servant, that he has even *thought* thus for an instant.”

“Has God forgotten to be gracious?” Why, surely you have forgotten, yourself, or you would not talk so! You have forgotten that you owe everything to your Lord and are indebted to Him even for the breath in your nostrils! You have forgotten the precious blood of Jesus! You have forgotten the Mercy Seat. You have forgotten Providence. You have forgotten the Holy Spirit! You have forgotten all that the Lord has done for you. Surely, you have forgotten all good things, or you would not speak thus! Shake yourself from the dust. Arise and leave the dunghill of your despair and sing, “His mercy endures forever.” Say in your soul—“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #1843, Volume 31—*A Question for a Questioner*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

**HAVE YOU TOLD
JESUS CHRIST
YOU LOVE HIM
TODAY?**

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY YOU LOVE HIM?

COMPROMISE? NEVER!

(Continued from page 1)

to take, not only a helmet to protect the head, but also a sword, with which to annoy the foe. Ours, therefore, is a stern conflict, standing and withstanding—and we shall need all the armor from the Divine magazine, all the strength from the mighty God of Jacob!

It is clear from our text that our defense and our conquest must be obtained by sheer fighting. Many try compromise, but if you are a true Christian, you can never do that business well. The language of deceit fits not a holy tongue. The adversary is the father of lies and those that are with him understand the art of equivocation, but saints abhor it. If we discuss terms of peace and attempt to gain something by policy, we have entered upon a course from which we shall return in disgrace. We have no order from our Captain to patch up a truce and get as good terms as we can. We are not sent out to offer concessions!

It is said that if we yield a little, perhaps the world will yield a little, also, and good may come of it. If we are not too strict and narrow, perhaps sin will kindly consent to be more decent. Our association with it will prevent its being so barefaced and atrocious. If we are not narrow-minded, our broad doctrine will go down with the world and those on the other side will not be so greedy of error as they now are. No such thing! Assuredly this is not the order which our Captain has issued! When peace is to be made, He will make it, Himself, or He will tell us how to behave to that end. But at present our orders are very different.

Neither may we hope to gain by being neutral, or granting an occasional truce. We are not to cease from conflict and try to be as agreeable as we can with our Lord’s foes, frequenting their assemblies and tasting their dainties. No such orders are written here—you are to grasp your weapon and go forth to fight!

Neither may you so much as dream of winning the battle by accident. No man was ever holy by a happy chance. Infinite damage may be done by carelessness, but no man ever won life’s battle by it. To let things go on as they please is to let them bear us down to Hell. We have no orders to be quiet and take matters easily. No, we are to always pray and constantly watch.

The one note that rings out from the text is this—TAKE THE SWORD! TAKE THE SWORD! No longer is it talk and debate! No longer is it parley and compromise! The word of thunder is—*Take the sword*. The Captain’s voice is clear as a trumpet—*Take the sword*! No Christian here will have been obedient to our text unless, with clear, sharp and decisive firmness, courage and resolve, he takes the sword! We must go to Heaven with sword in hand, all the way. “TAKE THE SWORD.”—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2201, Volume 37—*The Sword of the Spirit*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

**PRAY YOUR PASTOR WILL STUDY THE
DOCTRINES OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
TO DETERMINE IF IT IS TRULY
“CHRISTIAN”—AND HAVE THE COURAGE
TO EXPOSE ITS LIES.**

The Time For Preaching...

By C.H. Spurgeon

What a blessed kind of hearing that is when a man hears with longing, wishing, hungering all the way through the sermon! When the fish are hungry, then is the time for fishing, and when souls hunger and thirst after righteousness, *then* is the time for preaching! Over there is a broken-hearted sinner and he is saying, “Oh, that I could hear something about a Savior!” Yonder is another soul that has been crying and praying for mercy and has not found it—and he is saying, “Oh, that I might discover the way of mercy!” I try with all my might so to preach that souls may not miss the way of salvation! When I was here, last week, and saw some eight friends who came to confess their faith, I was a little disappointed that out of that number there were only two who had been blessed under my ministry. But a Brother to whom I mentioned it said, “Well, Sir, I can bear witness that I have heard sermons from you of late of which I have said that if I had been unconverted, I must have been brought to the Lord through hearing those sermons, for they did so earnestly press sinners to come to Christ, and they did set the Gospel so plainly before the hearers.” I felt that I could conscientiously agree with what that good Brother said, for, if I have not preached the Gospel, I have meant to do it. And if I have not made you understand it, I have tried to make it as plain as ever I could.

If I liked to do so, I fancy that I could preach a very fine sermon—one that would please gentlemen who are fond of oratory—but that high-flown style of preaching seems to me to be wicked so long as souls are perishing! And I am determined, as far as ever I can, to preach the Gospel plainly and simply so that everybody may understand it. If occasionally I make you smile, I do not mind, because sometimes I can get the Truth of God into your heart that way when I cannot get it in any other way. If you only get to Christ, it does not matter to me whether you come laughing or crying so long as you are really brought to Him. We long to bring our hearers to the Savior and, therefore, we need them so to hear that they shall hunger and thirst after the living God! And when they do that, they will be sure to find Him before long.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2512, Volume 43—*Hearing with Heed*—read/download the entire sermon for free at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>

**“ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE”?
NO, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS
IN CHRIST! RATHER,
“ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN!”
BY HIS GRACE!**

**Remember, no one is too big a sinner to be saved
by Jesus Christ—He came to this world to save
sinners—are you a sinner?**

REFLECTIONS

Gems gleaned by Jim Robinette
<http://www.actionuganda.net/>

A DYING SAINT

In the evening came Mr. Hugh Bryan, his brother, lately converted at Savannah. His wife died some time ago. In what frame, the following letter, which he sent to a niece of his, now at Bethesda, will best testify—

Dear Child,

Under written are the dying words of your aunt, which I send for your satisfaction and information. She died October 7, between the hours of nine and ten in the morning, being filled with the full assurance of faith in Christ, and a joyful hope of eternal salvation through His merits and mediation.

As your aunt and I were praying to our Lord Jesus, to give her the comforts of His Holy Spirit to support her under the agonies of death, she replied, “I see Him! I see Him! Now I see light.” After this, she continued in prayer about half an hour; but speech failing her, we could not, during that time, understand what she spoke, only we could hear the name of Jesus often, and, “Come Jesus! Come Jesus!” Then again she spoke out plainly, and said, “Who would die without God? Now I see light.” Then she lay in an agony about half an hour and again spoke out and said, “God has let me see great and glorious things which would not be believed if they were told.”

Then your uncle R.....s coming into the room, spoke to your aunt S.....s. Your dying aunt, hearing his voice, called him to her. And when he was come, she spoke to us and said, “Mind what I say to you, for hereafter you must give an account of what I now say to you. God has enabled me to speak to you before I go, (for I am going).” Then she said, “God is a just God as well as merciful. Be diligent in searching your hearts. Brother, tell Mr. he is in the wrong. My pain is great, but Christ is sufficient for me.” And she repeated that “God had let her see great things that would not be believed if they were told.”

She also said, “Follow Whitefield, God will bless him, wherever he goes. Don’t speak lightly of him. Bless him. Bless him. God has enabled me to speak to you before I go. I am just going. Farewell, farewell. God be with you!”

Then she composed herself and lay about half an hour and neither moved nor groaned—except her lips and tongue, and the heaving of her breast in breathing. Seeming to be in her perfect senses till about a minute before she died, she looked around at each of us that were about her bed and then departed in quietness.

—From *George Whitefield’s Journals* from the 1700s. Published by The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA 1998

Study of Ephesians**WALK WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING—2**

Last time we began looking together at Ephesians 4:1—“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.” We considered the significance of the word, “therefore.” Paul is telling us that in light of all that has been said in the first three chapters of the book, we are therefore to walk worthy of our calling.

What we are talking about here is the Doctrine of Sanctification. Sanctification, in its most basic form, is God the Holy Spirit taking His Truth and bringing it to bear in our lives. It is the Holy Spirit enabling us to apply the doctrine we learn. Learning doctrine is not, by itself, sanctification. Yet sanctification cannot take place unless the Believer learns doctrine. In His great prayer recorded in John 17, the Lord Jesus prayed for His people asking, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17). But learning doctrine is only half of sanctification. The other half is putting the doctrine into practice. Jesus Himself made this very clear when He said in John 13:17, “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” Knowing these things is important, but you are not blessed until you DO them.

And this is just what Paul is saying by the word, “therefore.” All of the wonderful Truths of God he has been giving us in the first three chapters must now be applied. He has told of great things which should provide a wonderful motivation for sanctification. We must now, with the doctrine and with the motivation it provides, go on and apply what we have learned. We are now to walk in the light of those things. We have been told that as Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are those who have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

We have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. We will one day stand before God holy and without blame in love. We have been predestined to be God’s adopted children and to be those who will eternally praise the glory of His Grace. We are accepted in the Beloved because we have been washed and made clean by the blood of Christ. We are those to whom God has made known His secrets and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit—and who have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us as a guarantee of all the future blessings that are yet to come to us in Heaven. In the last part of the first chapter, we were told that the very same power which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead and seated Him at the right hand of God in the heavenly places is at work in us.

Now, if we have rightly understood these things and believe that they are true, we should be a very fired up people indeed! But the question is—What do we do, now that we are all fired up? The answer, says Paul, is, “Walk worthy of this calling.” Put into practice what you have learned. Live up to the fact that you are children of the King of kings and Lord of lords. In other words, Brothers and Sisters, we, as Believers, are not PASSIVE in the sanctification process! This is implied by the Apostle’s use of the word, “walk.” The word, walk, implies action and progress.

I don’t know how many of you are familiar with the Keswick Movement. It began in the 1800’s and has been particularly popular in England. Many American Christians participate in its annual conferences. One of the popular slogans which has come out of this group is, “Let go and let God.” This expression is intended to convey the idea that the Christian is entirely *passive* in the sanctification process. It is to say that all he does is wait for God to act in the Christian and to take no initiative whatever.

God, they say, must do all. Now there is an element of truth in that teaching. But it is ultimately a very dangerous and false teaching the way it stands. We read in Philippians 2:12-13—“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

Note very carefully how the Apostle states this matter of sanctification. In verse twelve he goes so far as to tell the Philippian Christians to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. He tells them to be active and to approach their personal sanctification as if it all depended upon them. But then, in verse 13, almost appearing to be a contradiction, he says, “for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

How do we bring these two statements together? Let us illustrate the answer. When spring arrives, the farmers begin preparing their soil and planting their seed. The remarkable thing about a seed is that there is life in it. For when you plant a seed, the first thing it must do is die. But the amazing thing is that somehow, in dying, new life emerges. When you first plant the seed, you don’t see anything. Then maybe after a few days little shoots will appear. If the weather is cold and there is not much sun, the growth will be very slow. But if there suddenly comes a warming trend and good soaking rains, you can almost watch those shoots grow. Now we know that there was no life in the warm sunshine or in the rain. Yet these things stimulate the life that is within the seed. They encourage and promote growth.

And a similar thing is what happens to the Christian. God, by the miracle of Divine Grace, puts a seed of new life in all of those He regenerates. Peter says in 1 Peter 1:23, “having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.” By the Word of God, the Holy Spirit plants a new life in the Believer. What will cause it to grow? Will it grow if I say that God has planted the seed in me so I must be careful to do nothing and let God cause it to grow if He wants it to grow? Not at all! Yes, there is new life there for which no one can get any credit or praise but God. But He commands me to expose myself to the spiritual sun and spiritual rain which will make that new life grow. The Believer must provide stimulus and food for growth by studying the Word of God and by prayer and the other means which God has provided to cause this new life to grow.

Does this mean, then, that the Christian sanctifies himself? Again we must say, No. For we know that it is possible to use the means of Grace and the means of Christian growth without benefit. Using the means is not automatic. God must bless our study of His Word and prayer or they will do us no sanctifying good. But the fact remains if we neglect the Word of God and prayer, we can be certain that our sanctification will stagnate and in fact go backward.—PF

(Continued next month, Lord willing.)

**PRAY FOR OUR MEN AND WOMEN
IN THE ARMED SERVICES.**

PLEAD THE
BLOOD!
PLEAD THE
BLOOD!

By C.H. Spurgeon

But now I want you to note, dear Friends, that, whenever you come to God with your worship, you must take care that you notice the blood on the altar, because *it removes the sin of our worship*. The best worship that we ever render to God is far from perfect. Our praises, ah, how faint and feeble they are! Our prayers, how wandering, how wavering they are! When we get nearest to God, how far off we are! When we are most like He, how greatly unlike He we are! This I know, that my tears need be wept over, and my faith is so mingled with unbelief that I have to repent of that sad admixture! Brothers and Sisters, keep your eyes fixed on the blood of Jesus! There is no prayer, no praise that can come before God, in and of itself, for it is so imperfect. Therefore, keep your eyes on the blood of Jesus, that even the sin of your holy things may be put away by the Sacrifice once offered on Calvary.

Do you not think, also, that we would pray a great deal better if we thought more of the blood on the altar as *our plea in prayer*? I remember a Primitive Methodist Prayer Meeting at which a Brother could not get on with his supplication. He was very earnest and fervent, but he could not make any progress. He did not seem as if he had power to pray. He shouted, as Methodists do, but there is not much in that—yet he could not get on with real praying till a friend at the back end of the room cried out, “Plead the blood, Brother! Plead the blood!” He did so and then he began to pray with mighty power!

Here lies the force of all your pleas in prayer—if you can plead for Jesus’ sake and in His name, by His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and passion—then you have discovered the great secret of prevailing with God! Your hand is on the lever and you can move the world if you will!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2369, Volume 40—*Blood Even on the Golden Altar*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>

The Treasury of a True Church
Is Its Prayer Meetings!

By Charles H. Spurgeon

I have now to say just a few words specially to the members of the Church about THEIR PLACE AT THE PRAYER MEETING. “David’s place was empty.” What was being done then? “Well, it was only a Prayer Meeting!” Yes, but, but, but, but, but, but, that is saying a great deal! Did any member of the Church give that answer? I do not think even one would do so, but I would like to enquire of all the members of this Church, “how many times have you been to the Prayer Meeting this year?” There are some of you who are never away unless something absolutely prevents you from coming. I am glad, even, to see some of you come in late on Monday nights. If you cannot come at seven, come at half-past seven, or come at eight! Come at any time you can, so that you may but throw in your portion of supplication with the rest of the Brothers and Sisters.

But I am ashamed of some of our members. They will say, “Whom do you mean?” Last Sunday week, a little boy came to this Tabernacle for the first time. So, when I stood up and began to preach, the little fellow said to his nurse, “Nurse, is Mr. Spurgeon talking to me?” I wish you would all say that, if my words apply to you, for I am talking to some of the members of the Church when I say that I am ashamed of you who never come to the Prayer Meetings! I do not mean this rebuke for you who live at a very great distance, or who are fully occupied with your families or business cares—for you would be wrong to come. God forbid that I should ask you to present to Him one duty stained with the blood of another duty! But there are some who might be here, and *ought* to be here at our Prayer Meetings and they are spiritually suffering positive mischief in their own souls through their absence, besides the loss that they are causing to the treasury of the Church—for the wealth of the Church lies in the power of intercession!

The measure of the Church’s influence will be found to be in exact proportion to the amount of prayer presented by the members, for if there is not much prayer, there cannot be much power. “But we can pray at home,” says one. Yes, I know you can, but, as a rule, I think the people who pray at home are those who pray at Prayer Meetings, too. The assembling of ourselves together for prayer is very generally (special circumstances being taken into consideration) the exponent of our private prayer. Let me stir up any of you whose places at the Prayer Meetings have been empty, and let it not be so again.

My beloved in the Lord, my fellow-soldiers in Christ, what has been the source and secret of our strength, as a Church, up till this time? It has been our prayer! How well do I remember what Prayer Meetings we had in Park Street! When we began we were so very few and feeble that, in most of the Prayer Meetings we had, we met in a little vestry. But we soon had to burst open our doors and get into the Chapel, and we have never gone back into the vestry since then! And oh, the power that the Lord graciously gave us in prayer! I felt there, and many of you felt, that we seemed, by our supplications, to bring down the blessing of God upon us! And then our numbers were speedily increased, souls were converted, and God was glorified!

If we slacken prayer, we shall condemn ourselves! We have proved, not by hearsay, but by personal experience, that prayer is power—and if we relax our prayer even to a small extent, or even for a little while, we shall deserve to have this place made a by-word and a hissing—and all our prosperity taken from us and Ichabod written upon our walls! May God grant that this voice may be silent in death before this people shall ever cease to be a praying people! Rather may our prayerfulness be quickened and our intercessions multiplied—and let it not be said of any men or women here who fear the Lord—that their place is empty when God’s people assemble together for prayer!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2288, Volume 38—*The Empty Place—A Christmas Sermon*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

God, Be Merciful to Me

HYMN #2

A hymn by Donald S. Fortner

Dear Lord, I now confess my sin,
My shame and guilt I own:
Behold, I'm a vile wretch unclean,
Who bows before Your throne!

But if You will accept the blood
Of Jesus for my shame,
Surely Your grace would be, O God,
Honoring to Your name.

O God, be merciful to me,
And all my sin forgive:
The mercies of Your Son I plead:
In Him, O may I live?

Guilty and helpless, I believe
The Gospel promise, Lord:
I trust Your Son, my Lord receive,
And take You at Your word.

If You should mark my sin, O Lord,
And sentence me to Hell,
Against Your justice, not a word
My sinful heart could tell.

Believing on the Lamb of God,
His blood and righteousness
Shall ease me of my awful load,
And give my conscience peace.

(Tune: *Walk in the Light*)
Common Meter 86.86

From *Songs of Grace*, by Donald S. Fortner,
Grace Baptist Church of Danville,
2734 Old Stanford Road, Danville, KY, 40422-9438
Telephone 859-236-8235
E-mail don@donfortner.com
<http://www.sovereign-grace.com/gracechurch.htm>

FREE WILL?

By Augustus M. Toplady
1749-1778

Preacher and hymn writer from England

“A man’s free will cannot cure him, even, of a toothache or of a sore finger; and yet he madly thinks it is in its power to cure his soul! The greatest judgment which God, Himself, can, in the present life, inflict upon a man is to leave him in the hand of his own boasted free will.”

THE GOSPLE OF JESUS CHRIST IN SEVEN WORDS:

“THE LORD SAYS,
BEHOLD ME, BEHOLD ME.”

~ISAIAH 65:1 ~

“Each of the three Persons in the blessed Trinity is concerned with our salvation: with the Father it is predestination; with the Son, propitiation; with the Spirit regeneration. The Father chose us; the Son died for us; the Spirit quickens us. The Father was concerned *about* us; the Son shed His blood *for* us; the Spirit performs His work *within* us. What the One did was *eternal*, what the Other did was *external*, what the Spirit does is *internal*.” (From *The Sovereignty of God*, by A.W. Pink).

**PRAY FOR GRACE TO DO ALL YOU DO
FOR THE HONOR OF JESUS CHRIST.**

Letters to Mike Gendron of Proclaiming the Gospel:

ptg@pro-gospel.org ~ www.pro-gospel.org

L. T., Watsonville, CA, writes—As I witness I am finding people who absolutely cannot discern between the Truth of God and a lie. They have no stomach for Truth anymore. If it moves them from their comfort zone, or makes them think, or calls them to investigate what we're trying to show them, not only will they refuse, but they appear to have no capacity to do it. They just put their brains in neutral and refuse to think. Because people are so relativistic, pluralistic and tolerant of all beliefs, they are filled with lies and believe them to be true. They will defend their lies even when you make the Truth very clear—even when you show them the very clear difference between the Truth of God and the lie. Now that I've got that off my chest, I'd like to say how much I appreciate you and your ministry. You speak the Truth in love. My 94 year old Catholic aunt and I watched your DVD, "Are you sure you're a Christian," today and she wants to watch it again. She is beginning to question her Roman Catholic faith. I have been praying for her and witnessing to her for years and now she is beginning to respond. She is extremely bright and understands what you are saying but asks, "How could all of these Catholics be going to Hell?" I covet your prayers for this dear Aunt whose soul is hanging in the balance. Your teaching is awesome. God bless you both. We pray for you every day.

B. D., Syracuse, NY, writes—I bought several copies of *Preparing Catholics for Eternity* and gave them to my neighbors and relatives, but to date I haven't heard a word. We pray and do what we can, then leave the results to God. I know you are right on when it comes to God's Word showing us His way to be saved. I like your illustration of Catholics who hang onto the ritualistic rungs of "monkey bars" and are afraid to let go and trust Jesus to save them. Mike, I know the opposition to the Truth of God you face causes strength because God is in what you are doing. Press on!

J. C., Moran, TX, writes—Your last newsletter was a fine treatment of transubstantiation. Recently, while discussing this with a Catholic friend I blurted out, "Why would the disciples have left Jesus if all they had to do was eat the Eucharist?" Jesus told them He would give His life for them and then asked, "Does this cause you to stumble?" (John 6:51). Our prideful human nature shrinks back from the horror of the crucifixion. We cannot comprehend the need for Jesus' death. Such is the chasm between God's holiness and our sinful flesh. "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom 8:8). In Christianity, worshippers praise God for providing a way to Him, other religions focus on ways *man* can find favor with God.

K. S., Scandia, MN, writes—It surely meant a lot to talk (and especially pray) with you. How precious were the few words that you spoke to me because they were words of life that exalted our Lord. When I called "Catholic Answers" the lady said, "We don't believe in eternal security because even if God is faithful, we might not be." I read your book, *Preparing Catholics for Eternity*, and was astounded by it all, especially the responses from Catholics at the back of the book. I listen to their Catholic radio programs and so much of what they say is defensive against Protestant teachings. How glad I was to have the Truth of God so accurately portrayed in your book! How valuable! How I needed it! May I ask one question? Why do Catholics say they gave us the Bible? I will be pa-

tient for your answer, knowing you are traveling and busy. Thanks for praying with me.

Brother Mike replies—The Catholic Church did not give us the Bible—the Scriptures came from God. Paul knew this and told his readers that his writings were from the Lord (1 Cor 14:37; 1 Thes 2:13). Peter also recognized Paul's Epistles as Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16). Throughout Biblical history, God's people have always recognized the Books written by the Prophets and Apostles were Divinely Inspired Scripture (2 Peter 1:21). Catholics foolishly say they determined which books make up the Bible, but God is the One who determined and regulated the canon. Humans only discovered what God had previously determined.

K. R., Las Cruces, NM, writes—My brothers and dad are very similar in their logic. They are held captive by the Catholic Church as evidenced by their stubbornness—"You are not going to change me. I was born a Catholic and I will die a Catholic." Once I told Dad that there are many Catholics who believe they should not read the Bible. He told me that is right, you are not supposed to read it—leave it to the priest to interpret!

A.H., Cookeville, TN, writes—I heard you on the radio and listened to your four steps into apostasy that many churches are now following. I must say I was blown away by it. I'm so frustrated with trying to find a good church. I'm sick of the "mega church" junk of today, but on the other end there are also small spiritually dead churches that go through the same empty motions every week. I'm starving for the Word of Life, not entertainment, but sobering Truth and all that goes with truly honoring Christ. I would rather be a part of 25 people who are truly seeking Christ than to be with 2,500 deceived ones who are comfortable in their entertainment centers each week. I truly enjoyed hearing you on the radio.

G. H., Saskatoon, Canada, writes—Catholics point to Colossians 1:24 as proof that we need to suffer on earth or in purgatory for our sins. Paul writes, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions." Can you comment on this?

Brother Mike responds—Paul rejoiced in the persecution he received because of his great love for Christ. His persecutors heaped more suffering on Paul to make up for anything they thought might be lacking in the afflictions Christ endured. The Christ-haters who crucified Jesus were not satisfied with the pain and suffering they inflicted on Him so they continued to persecute those who proclaimed His glorious Gospel of Grace.

Loretta, San Francisco, CA, writes—I just found your awesome site. I'm going to use it to encourage the weary believers in our area in evangelism. I was saved out of the RCC after 17 years and my life has not been the same since. I have sowed the seeds of Truth among Catholics but have not had too much response other than outrage when they scream at me. Then they continue to worship "Mary of Fatima" and the Pope, rather than Jesus Christ.

PRAY FOR GRACE TO NOT COMPROMISE.

The World and Judgment

By C. H. Spurgeon

“Now is the judgment of this world” (John 12:31). This means that when Christ died, the world that lies in the Wicked One, the ungodly world, was judged in this sense—first, it was convicted of being guiltiest of the guilty. I daresay you have heard people rise pretty phrases about the dignity of human nature and so on. They are lying phrases, for human nature is as bad as it can be. If you want the proof of that assertion, behold how God, Himself, came here among men, Incarnate Virtue robed in love! Did men love Him? Did they fall down before Him and do Him homage? The homage of the world was, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” The world hates virtue—it cannot bear perfection—it might endure benevolence, but absolute purity and righteousness it cannot. Its native instincts are wrong. It is not towards the Light of God that men are going—their backs are to the sun—they are journeying into the thick darkness.

And, next, the world was convicted of the stupendous crime of murdering the Son of God! I will not call it regicide, but Deicide—and this is the crime of crimes. Truly was the world guilty of all that Prophets ever charged it with and much more. When wicked men slew the Prince of Life, the Holy One and the Just, then was it proven that the world is at heart, atheistic, that it hates God and would put God, Himself, to death if He were within its grasp. Thus did men put the Incarnate God to death when He submitted Himself to their power. You need not talk about the virtues of the world—it slew the Christ—and that is enough to condemn it. We need no other proof of its guilt. You cannot bring evidence more complete and overwhelming than this—they slew the Lord of Life and Glory—they said, “This is the heir; come, let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours.”

Christ’s death was the judgment of this world, next, by sentencing the world, for if Christ, who was perfectly innocent, must die when He stood in the sinner’s place, what do you think, O guilty men, will you not also die? If the Well-beloved of Heaven, bearing nothing but imputed guilt—sins not His own—must, nevertheless, be struck of God and afflicted and a voice must be heard, “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts.” If He must die on yonder cruel tree. If He must cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” then, be sure of this, there is wrath treasured up against the Day of Wrath, and no soul of man that does evil shall go unpunished! Is there not a God who is the Judge of all the earth and who must do right? If it is right to strike the Innocent, who assumed the place of the guilty, it must surely be right that the truly guilty should die the death! “The soul that sins, it shall die.” So there was not only the conviction, but also the sentence of the world, when Jesus died.

And more than that, there is the final ending of the trial when the world rejects Christ. As long as you are here, my Hearers, and Christ is preached to you, there is hope for you. But in that day when you reject Christ, finally, and will have none of Him, when you cry, “Away with Him, away with Him! We will not be washed in His blood, we will not be clothed in His righteousness.” In that day you seal your doom and there remains no hope for you. There is one window in Heaven and through it streams the Light of Life, but if that is closed, no other will ever be opened! “There is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” If you have for the last time put Christ away. If you have altogether done with Him, you have ended your probation, you have finished your trial, you have put out your last candle—you are forever doomed. When Christ is so rejected as actually to be made away with as He was upon the Cross, then is the judgment of this world.

I wish that I had time to pause here to press these points upon you who belong to the world. There are but two parties, the world and the Church of God. If you are not of the Church of God, you belong to the world—and the world is judged by the death of Christ. If you are not a Christian, you are a member of that great corporation called the world. Men sometimes speak of a Christian world and an un-Christian world, a religious world and an irreligious world, a sporting world, a laughing world, a thieving world, a trading world—but all that is really of the world is outside the bounds of the Church of God! He who believes in Christ has escaped from the world. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,” said Christ concerning His disciples. But to the unbelieving Jews He said, “You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world.” Thus, you see that, as the first result of the death of Christ, the world is judged, the world is convicted, the world is sentenced for its rejection of Christ. A Christ-rejecting world is a doomed world—may none of you belong to that world!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2338, Volume 39—*The Crisis of the World*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

YOU EITHER LOVE HIM OR YOU DON'T—THERE IS NO NEUTRAL GROUND!

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

“He who loves Me not keeps not My sayings: and the Word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.”
(John 14:24)

I would draw your attention to the fact that in this passage and elsewhere in Scripture, men are divided into two classes and not a word is said of a neutral or intermediate class. John 14:21 says, “He that has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me.” And the 24th verse says negatively, “He that loves Me not, keeps not My sayings.” Evidently there are two sorts of persons in that part of the world which is visited by the Gospel—he that loves Christ and he that loves Him not. If you once hear the Gospel, you can never be indifferent to it. You must either be its friend or its foe, its disciple or its opposer. If once the Lord Jesus Christ crosses the orbit of your life, you can never, again, be neutral! You must either reject Him or receive Him—believe Him or call Him a liar. I would urge home upon each of you that simple but solemn Truth of God, lest any person should think himself omitted from the range of my discourse. I would so spread the net that no fish may remain outside its meshes!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #1842, Volume 31—*The Private Tutor*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

JESUS CHRIST, OUR KINSMAN-REDEEMER

By Daniel Parks
Pastor, Redeemer Baptist Church, Louisville, KY

“And [Boaz] said, ‘Who are you?’ So she answered, ‘I am Ruth, your maidservant. Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant, for you are a near kinsman.’”

Ruth 3:9

The books of Ruth and Esther are the only books in God’s Word bearing the names of women. But O! what women! They faithfully serve as ideals for all godly women. And in observing such women as Ruth we well understand why the fourth-century Greek rhetorician Libanius exclaimed, “What women these Christians have!”

The story of Ruth begins with a man named Elimelech, whose name meant, “My God is King,” 1:2. (All Scripture quotations are from Book of Ruth unless otherwise noted). His wife was Naomi, meaning, “Pleasant” (1:2). Their two sons were Mahlon and Chilion, whose lack of health is indicated by the fact that their names meant, “Sickly,” and, “Puny” (1:2). They resided in the town Bethlehem, or, “House of Bread,” in the territory Judah, meaning, “Praised” (1:1)—and people have bread in the house in which Jehovah is praised. But when famine deprived that house of bread, Elimelech relocated his family to Moab (1:1f), named for one born of an incestuous relationship (Gen 19:31ff). God calls it, “My washpot” (Psa 60:8; 108:9), the basin collecting the water poured over His feet in cleaning them and, therefore, a place of utter contempt. Elimelech died shortly after arriving in Moab (1:3). His two sons married Moabite women named Orpah and Ruth (1:4). We do not know the meaning of Orpah’s name, but this is of no consequence because we will not hear of her again. But the name, Ruth, meant “Friend”—and what a friend she proved to be! Mahlon and Chilion also died, both childless, leaving Naomi and her daughters-in-law widows (1:5).

Naomi, having heard that God had been pleased to end the famine in Judah, and that He had again made bread plentiful there, decided to return to her homeland, accompanied by her daughters-in-law (1:6f). But at the border of Judah she advised them to return to their homeland Moab (1:8-13). Orpah wept in grief, then returned to her people and her gods, but Ruth wept in love, being true to her name, “Friend,” and clung to Naomi (1:14). Then she expressed her resolve—“Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more, also, if anything but death parts you and me” (1:16f).

Upon arriving in Bethlehem, Naomi confessed Jehovah had dealt bitterly with her because of her sin, for which reason she changed her name from Naomi to Mara—from, “Pleasant,” to, “Bitterness” (1:19-21).

They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest (1:22), when the harvesting of grains began. Ruth went into the fields as a gleaner, following the reapers (2:2-3a; see Lev 19:9f; 23:22; Deut 24:19). In the Providence of God she gleaned in the field of Boaz (whose name, perhaps meant, “Fleatness”), a man of great wealth and a relative of Ruth’s deceased father-in-law (2:1, 3b). He had heard of her desertion of her pagan gods in order to find refuge in Jehovah of Israel, and of her loving care of her aged mother-in-law (for faith loves!), and had observed her diligence in gleaning (for faith works!). He therefore instructed his reapers to let her glean even among the sheaves and to purposefully drop grain for her to glean, and to let her dine with the reapers (2:4-16).

Ruth consequently gleaned an extraordinary amount (2:17f). When Naomi learned how this came to be, she remembered that Boaz was a near-kinsman, and instructed Ruth to glean in the fields of no one else (2:19-23).

“Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, ‘My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our kinsman? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished

(See Kinsman-Redeemer on page 12)

TWO CONFESSIONS

By C. H. Spurgeon

I remember speaking with a Christian woman who lay dying. She was under some form of doubt at the time, but she said, “I feel sure that the Lord will never send me among the ungodly, for my tastes and habits do not lie that way. I have always been happiest among the people of God and, surely, the Lord will let me be gathered to my own company.” And so He will!

There is a story told—I believe a true one—of a poor woman who had long been a Believer, but, partly through aberration of mind, I think, she grew so despondent that nobody could cheer her. Before she died, she came out into bright light, but for a long time she was under a cloud and her belief was that she would be sent to Hell.

She feared such a doom above all things, but she prayed this very singular prayer, that, although she must suffer for her sins, she might have a place by herself where she might not hear the blasphemies of the wicked against God! She seemed as if she was not afraid of any form of suffering, but she said that she could not bear to hear God’s name blasphemed! Dear Soul, there was no fear about her safety, was there? Where there is that holy dread of sin, that hatred of evil, that real love to God, there is no fear whatever of what will become of such people!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2429, Volume 41—*Converts, and Their Confession of Faith*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

Kinsman-Redeemer

(Continued from page 11)

eating and drinking. Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.’ And [Ruth] said to her, ‘All that you say to me I will do.’ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. And he said, ‘Who are you?’ So she answered, ‘I am Ruth, your maidservant. Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant [i.e., *take your maidservant under your wing*], for you are a near-kinsman.’”

Boaz knew exactly what she meant, and what he consequently must do—he must fulfill to her the obligation of her kinsman-redeemer. Kinsmen were Divinely obligated under the Mosaic economy to be redeemers to their brethren in four specific instances:

1. The redemption of a slain relative’s blood, as the “avenger of blood” (Num 35:9-21)
2. The redemption of a relative’s property (Lev 25:25)
3. The redemption of a relative’s liberty (Lev 25:47-49)
4. The redemption of a deceased childless relative’s name and inheritance (Deut 25:5-10)

Ruth needed a kinsman-redeemer in this last regard—a relative to purchase the inheritance of the deceased Elimelech and his sons, and to marry her in the hope of raising up a male heir to receive that inheritance (see 4:1-10). Boaz with fleetness (being true to his name) dutifully consented to do so (3:10f). From the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, and in the blessed Providence of God, was born Obed, who became the father of Jesse and grandfather of David (4:13-17), from whom descended Jesus the Messiah (Matt, Chapter 1, in which passage Ruth is one of only four women cited in the genealogy of Jesus Christ).

Boaz, here, is a type of Christ and Ruth is a type of all God’s elect. As Ruth needed physical redemption by a kinsman for the restoration of her inheritance, God’s elect need spiritual redemption for the redemption of all they lost in their fall in Adam. And as Boaz was Ruth’s kinsman who also became her redeemer, so was Christ to all God’s elect. The account describing Ruth’s redemption by her kinsman-redeemer Boaz aptly typifies the redemption of God’s elect by their Kinsman-Redeemer Jesus Christ.

SPURGEON’S PRAYER AND MEDITATION

“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Hebrews 2:10.

In prayer, when I need an argument that I know will prevail with God, I say to Him, “Father, glorify Your Son! You love Him, look at Him. Is He not lovely in Your eyes as the suffering, obedient Son of Your love? Do You not admire Him beyond all conception? Therefore, hear my supplication and grant my petition for His sake.”

I like, sometimes, to leave off praying and singing, and to sit still and just gaze upward till my inmost soul has seen my Lord. Then I say, “He is inexpressibly lovely. Yes, He is altogether lovely!” If He is that to my poor eyes, which are so dull and dim that they cannot half discern His beauties, what must He be in the eyes of God? In the eyes of God He is so precious that, as my text says, “It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things”—it was becoming even in Him, “in bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings”—glorified beyond all imaginable Glory and to have universal homage paid to Him throughout the universe forever and ever! God sees it to be becoming and, therefore, we delight in it. Amen and amen!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2619, Volume 45—*The Captain of our Salvation*—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>

**Pray for those men and women
being released from prison
this year.
Dare to ask God to use you
to help them!**

CAN'T HELP IT—HAVE TO SAY IT!

Let me tell each of you who may be reading this that I truly love Jesus Christ. But for His Grace I could not say it, or write it, or *think* it. I have loved Him for such a short time, just 19 years—He has loved me for *eternity*—before the world was created, Jesus Christ loved *me*. How I pray that every person who may be reading this has been loved from before “the foundation of the world” by my Master! (E. O’Donnell).

Is Sanctification Progressive or Continual?

[One of my dear Brothers in Christ, Paul Ferrie of North Dakota, wrote a response to the back page article I used in September, "Spurgeon on Progressive Sanctification," which was from a beautiful sermon entitled "*Jesus Only*"—*A Communion Meditation*, which Brother Spurgeon preached in 1857, but was published in 1899, seven years after his death. (Sermon #2634, Volume 45). Due to space limitations, I can only list the Scripture Paul used, so you may look it up. It is all from the NKJV of our Bible. I feel Spurgeon was addressing the evil of prevalent "sinless perfectionism" of his time, but I agree with Paul's reason to write.—EOD]

I decided to write this article after reading the comments from a sermon by Charles Spurgeon that were in the recent "For His Glory" on the last page under the title, "Spurgeon on Progressive Sanctification." In those comments, Spurgeon makes the claim that while God continues to sanctify the Believer throughout this life, the Believer does not necessarily make much progress. In fact, the thrust of his arguments is to say that while sanctification is continual, it is not really progressive. He tells how some believe that sanctification is progressive and then asks the question—"Is that Scriptural or not?" What I find fascinating about Spurgeon's comments is that he does not give one single passage of Scripture to support the view he takes.

In my opinion there is one Biblical word which refutes what he says. It is the word, "grow." The fact that the New Testament Scriptures repeatedly apply that word to the Christian makes it clear that the Believer progresses in the Christian life. Webster's dictionary defines the word, "grow," to mean, "gradual increase by natural development." If one is growing he MUST be progressing. There is no way around it.

Consider the following Scripture passage: 1 Peter 2:2. This verse is very relevant to our point because Peter makes a correlation between a Believer learning God's Word and the growth that will take place. But, by likening the growing Believer to a newborn baby he also demonstrates something else. He shows us that for a Believer not to grow would be an ABNORMALITY. Only babies that have serious problems do not grow. All other babies grow. The same is true of Christians. All Christians grow. Not all grow at the same rate, but all grow. If a Believer does not grow, something is seriously wrong.

Again, my point is NOT that Christians always progress in their sanctification as they ought. But it is that God's purpose for all Christians is that they progress. See 1 Thessalonians 4:3a. Again Peter gives a command for Believers to grow in 2 Peter 3:18. Another passage which makes it clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is carrying out His objective to sanctify His people is found in Ephesians 4:11-16. Notice that the purpose for these teaching gifts in the church is to cause Believers to "grow up in all things into Him who is the Head." Growth is always God's objective for His children, and He is never satisfied when it is not taking place.

You see, the question is not whether sanctification is either progressive or continual because it is BOTH. God never lets up His work in the lives of His children. It is continual as Paul says in Philippians 1:6. "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." But that work is also progressive in that God produces growth by His ongoing work in the Believer.

Another verse which makes it clear that the Believer progresses in sanctification is 2 Corinthians 3:18. Notice that Paul states very clearly, here, that Believers "are being transformed." This verse is not like Romans 12:2 where Believers are told to "be transformed by the renewing of their minds." This verse says that through the work of the Holy Spirit the Believer IS being transformed. In other words, there is no such thing as a Christian that is not being transformed. And he is being transformed "from glory to glory" which in this context refers to being made more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. We are progressively becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit transforms us.

This does not mean that the Believer's progress in sanctification is always the same. It does not necessarily progress at an even rate. Nor does it mean that there are no setbacks in the progress. For we know that all Believers sin and, on occasion, Believers even backslide. But it does mean that overall, the normal condition of a Christian is one of growth and progress as he matures in the Christian life.

The same point is made by the author of Hebrews in Hebrews 5:12-14 where he rebukes the Hebrew Christians. Notice that verse 12 begins by saying "for though by this time you OUGHT to be teachers." His point is very clear. Even though these Christians have been Christians for some time, they had not progressed as they ought to have progressed. They were still needing basic teachings of the Word whereas they should have been ready for more difficult subjects. Thus the implication is unavoidable that if they had been progressing normally, they would have been at a further stage of growth than they were. Yes, they were not progressing as they should. But the fact that they were not is proof that something was very wrong in their spiritual condition. A normal spiritual condition is like one who starts out as a baby and who keeps growing to maturity.

Many passages, too many to list, exhort Believers to abound more and more in Christian virtues. Here are a few [more] that can be looked up: 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:10. Romans 8:29 is also important in this regard. And one last Scripture, 1 John 3:2-3. Notice that John says that EVERYONE who has the hope of being like Jesus when He returns is already purifying himself now as he waits. Thus, one who is not purifying himself is one who is not looking forward to Jesus' return.

In closing I want to address one question that might arise in our minds. What about the fact the apostle Paul in the later years of his life felt like "the chief of sinners"? Didn't Paul progress in sanctification? And if he did, how could he call himself the chief of sinners at the end of a life lived with the Lord? The answer to these questions is not difficult. I am sure that if you had an opportunity to meet Paul at the end of his life and spend some time with him you would have said that he was one of the most godly men you ever met, if not the godliest. He was probably more sanctified than most other Christians. But the reason he referred to himself as the chief of sinners is that he had become so holy that he shared God's view of sin and the sin that was still in him looked much more horrible to him. The more one makes actual progress in sanctification, the more sensitive he becomes to sin and the more he hates the sin that he sees in himself.

The reason I have written this is that there are many today who say that a person can be a Christian without it making any difference in his life. This teaching has been labeled by some as "easy believism." Others say that a Christian can be "carnal" and remain in a state of no spiritual growth all his life. I believe such teachings to be wrong and very dangerous. Nothing is more suited to giving someone who is not really a born-again Christian a false confidence than such teachings. While I do not believe that Spurgeon falls into that category, I felt it necessary, nonetheless, to address his comments which might be taken to promote such a teaching.

For HIS Glory
Prison Ministry
Emmett and Ann O'Donnell
P.O. Box 291301
Kerrville, TX 78029-1301

Requires
58c
Postage
in USA



JOHN 3:18

In This Issue...

...and, Lord willing, *every* issue, our *only* purpose is to honor Jesus Christ.

THREE TIMES TO LEAP! HAVE YOU?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

When does the tongue of the dumb sing? Why, I think it sings always, little or much! If it is once set at liberty, it will never leave off singing. There are some of you people who say that this world is a howling wilderness. Well, if so, you are the howlers, you make all the howling! If you choose to howl, I cannot help it, but I prefer the promise of my text, "Then shall the tongue of the dumb," *not howl*, but, "sing!" Yes, they sing always, little or much! Sometimes it is in a low note. Sometimes they have to go rather deep in the bass, but there are other times when they can mount to the highest notes of all.

They have special times of singing. *When they lost their burden at the foot of the Cross* is the time when they begin to sing! Never did a harp of Heaven sound so sweetly as when touched by the finger of some returning prodigal! Not even the songs of the angels seem to me to be so sweet as that first song of rapture which rushes forth from the inmost soul of the forgiven child of God! You know how John Bunyan describes it. He says when poor Christian lost his burden at the Cross, he gave three great leaps and went on his way singing! We have not forgotten those three great leaps—they were great leaps of praise! We have leaped many times since then with joy and gratitude, but we think we never leaped so high as we did at the time when we saw our many sins all gone and our transgressions covered up in the tomb of the Savior! So you see, dear Friends, that is one time when we can sing—when we lose our burden at the Cross.

And after that, do God's people sing? Yes, they have sweet singing times *in their hours of communion*. Oh, the music of that word, "communion," when it is heard in the soul—communion with Jesus, fellowship with Jesus—whether in His sufferings or in His glories! These are singing times, when the heart is lifted up to feel its oneness with Christ, and its vital union with Him, and is enabled to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," through communion with the Savior!

Have you not had some precious singing times at the Lord's Table? Ah, when the bread has been broken, and the wine poured out, how often has it been to me a time of song when the people have all joined in singing—

***"Gethsemane, can I forget? Or there Your conflict see Your agony and bloody sweat, and not remember Thee?
When to the Cross I turn my eyes, and rest on Calvary, O Lamb of God! My Sacrifice! I must remember Thee."***

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2625, Volume 45—*The Dumb Singing*—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>