
◆ FOR HIS GLORY ◆

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DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth is removed,
and though the mountains are carried into the midst
of the sea; though its waters roar and are troubled,
though the mountains shake with its swelling.”*
Psalm 46:1-3.

Observe, dear Friends, that whatever happens to the man who has God to be his God, he need not fear because none of these things will affect the ground of his confidence. No calamity will change God’s love to us. Suppose we should witness an earthquake, a tempest, a famine, pestilence, a war—none of these would separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! These temporal calamities do not touch the vital matter—such things have no influence upon the unchangeable love of God except to make it more clear!

Suppose, again, that the most awful things were to occur. Would they not occur according to God’s decree? We believe in a God who has arranged *all things* according to the counsel of His will. Do you believe that anything is left to chance? Is any event outside the circle of the Divine Predestination? No, my Brothers and Sisters—with God there are no contingencies! The mighty Charioteer of Providence has gathered up all the reins of all the horses and He guides them all according to His infallible wisdom! There is a foreknowledge and predestination which concerns *all things*—from the motion of a grain of dust on the threshing floor to that of the flaming comet which blazes across the sky. *Nothing* can happen but what God ordains and, therefore, why should we fear?

Again, nothing happens without the Divine Power being in it. The Lord says, “Behold, I have created the smith that blows the coals in the fire. I have created the waster to destroy.” The most violent and wicked men could not move a finger if strength were not lent them by the Lord. As for the catastrophes of Nature, is not the Lord distinctly in them? Who shakes the earth? Is it not God that looks on it and it trembles? When the mountains vomit fire, is it not because He touches the hills and they smoke? Our Father works all things—therefore should His children be afraid?

Furthermore, do not you and I believe that God overrules everything—that even that which naturally might be called evil is turned to

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JOSEPH AND NICODEMUS

By C. H. Spurgeon

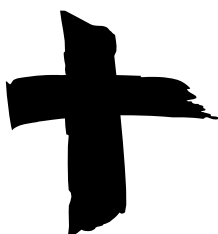
“And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds weight. Then took they the body of Jesus and wound it in linen strips with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.”

John 19:38-40

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, it was a great privilege that was accorded to these two men! I stand and wonder how it was that this position was allotted to two who had kept so long behind the scenes. They had lost—they had lost—I cannot tell you how much they had lost, two, perhaps three *years* of constant fellowship with Christ and of instruction from His own dear lips! They had lost incalculably! They were in the rear of all Christ’s disciples—Mary Magdalene was in front of them, the woman that was a sinner was far ahead of them—they were right in the rear rank. Yet their Master, in the splendor of His Grace, gives them this privilege even while He, Himself, lies

(See Joseph and Nicodemus on page 2)

An honest heart *feigns not wisdom*, but is very conscious of and frankly owns up to great ignorance. Even though he is well acquainted with the letter of Scripture and thoroughly familiar with all the external means of Grace, that contents him not—there is a longing for a spiritual, an experimental, an efficacious knowledge of the Truth of God. Such an one feels himself to be a babe in Divine things, which is, indeed, a healthy sign, for it is under such the mystery of godliness is revealed (Matt 11:25). Such an one cries daily, “that which I see not teach You me” (Job 34:32), for he longs to know the way of the Lord more perfectly—not only in the letter but chiefly in the power thereof. So conscious is he of his ignorance that he prays with David, “make me to understand the way of Your precepts” (Psa 119:27)—how to walk in them, the way to keep them. —AWPink



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JOSEPH AND NICODEMUS

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dead! To them is accorded the high honor of handling His blessed flesh and laying Him in the tomb.

I am afraid that some of you secret Christians who never come out boldly for Christ, will not have such an honor as this. If the Lord ever uses you at all, it will be in some sad business such as a funeral—but even that will be an honor to you, if you are permitted to attend Him in His death though you have not shared the glory of His life. You lose—oh, you lose incalculable gifts by not acknowledging your discipleship! Yet I pray that there may come a time and that it may come at once, when even you will come out and do what you can for your Lord, saying to yourself, “Now is the hour when even I, timid as I am, must acknowledge Him.” When soul murder is in your streets, when heresy is in your pulpits, when apostasy is in your churches, you are unfaithful to the last grain of your spiritual manhood if you who love Christ do not come out boldly on His side and declare that you belong to Him! If you never have confessed Him before men and you neglect this opportunity, wherein there is the greatest and most urgent of need, I fear that you will never acknowledge Him at all.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were both needed for this sad task and though we should never have thought of inviting them to perform it, yet they were the only two men connected with Christ who were exactly fitted for the office. And, as I have said, they thus honored Christ and He thus honored them. I should also say, Brothers and Sisters, that among all the disciples, there were *no more sincere mourners for Christ than these two men*. I think that I hear Joseph fetch a deep sigh and say, “Ah, Nicodemus, how wicked I have been, for I have not been with Christ as I ought to have been! I ought to have gone with Him to prison and to death. Instead of that, I have been among the ungodly, rich and honored.” “Ah,” says Nicodemus, “and I went to Him by night and He talked so sweetly to me, but I have been hiding away ever since. I feel ashamed to touch this blessed blood-stained hand. I realize that it is a high honor to be allowed to handle these dear feet and to wrap the linen all about them, but I do not deserve such an honor, I am sure.” And they would stop and weep, and sigh again, to think of how they had ill-treated their Lord, by what they may have thought was modesty, but which conscience now tells them was nothing else than shameful cowardice!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2390, Volume 40—*A Royal Funeral*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

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

Mohammed

“Although just now somewhat shorn of his power to persecute, Mohammed, the prophet of Mecca, still practices his sorceries, maddens the passions of men, holds the cup of carnal delight to the lips of his besotted worshippers and endeavors to light up the horrors of the grave by pointing to a Paradise of sin!”—William S. Plummer, *The Rock of Our Salvation*, 1867.—Gleaned from GRACE GEMS!, A Treasury of Ageless Sovereign Grace Devotional Writings—<http://www.gracegems.org>

Spurgeon on Toads

I know this, that when God the Holy Spirit gives a man a view of himself, he is utterly loathsome in his own esteem. One of the cardinals of the olden times—when cardinals were sometimes saints—happened to pass by a meadow where he saw a shepherd leaning on his crook, weeping. He stopped to ask the lad what made him weep.

The lad replied by pointing to the ground, for just at his feet there was a toad. “I was weeping,” said he, “to think that God should have made *me*, a creature so infinitely superior to this loathsome reptile at my feet, and that I should have made myself such a creature that this loathsome thing is superior to me, because it has never sinned.”

As the cardinal went his way, he said, “Verily, has it happened, that the foolish and unlearned enter into the kingdom of Heaven before us, for this peasant has found out the Truth of God.”

Vipers nor toads are more venomous or more loathsome to men than man must be to God, or would be to himself if he could see himself with the eyes of the Truth of God, and if the veil of pride were once lifted from his eyes. The image of God in man is all obliterated. We have ashes for beauty, shame for glory, rottenness for health and Hell for Heaven.—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #468, Volume 8—*Ezekiel’s Deserted Infant*.

“DWELL IN US”

Colossians 3:16

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another” (Col 3:16). Paul exhorts us to a diligent study of God’s Word. This study of the word is not for information and doctrine alone, but that our Lord’s Word might become a part of us, such a part of us that it is said to DWELL IN US, as a member of the family lives in a home. The Word of God is loved, respected, obeyed and delighted in richly in an abundant manner. We are not to study just one part of the Scriptures, but all of it, that we may benefit and grow in Divine Grace and the knowledge of Christ, and that we may teach others His Word. It is not only the duty of ministers and elders to teach and encourage others, but it is the duty of all Believers to be always ready to give to every man that asks them, a reason for the hope that is in us, with knowledge, meekness and fear. “Lord, give us a love for Your Word, an understanding of Your Word and the wisdom to be a good witness of Your Gospel.”—*Pastor Henry Mahan*

ONLY ONE ARK

When our God sent the flood, the whole world perished except those happy ones who were found in the ark. Even so, there is only ONE WAY of salvation for all persons living under Heaven. There is only one name whereby they can be saved. Would you be saved, rich man? There is no way except that way whereby the poorest pauper is also to be saved! Would you be delivered, O man of intelligence? You must be saved in the same way as the most ignorant! There were not two arks, only one. So there are not two saviors, only one Savior! There was no other means of salvation except the ark and, “*there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*”—*Pastor Henry Mahan*

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?

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good account? The Lord's goodness extracts the viper's tooth and supplies an antidote to the poison. It was evil, but God transmuted it into good by the alchemy of His Divine Wisdom. Who is he that can harm you? "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn."

Furthermore, we know that nothing that can happen, however tremendous it may be, can shake the Kingdom of God. Our chief possession lies in that Kingdom and if that is secure, all is safe. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against that Kingdom and, therefore, whatever is imperiled, our highest, best and most vital interests are safe beyond the shadow of harm. Suppose an accident should take away our lives? I smile as I think that the worst thing that could happen would be the best thing that could happen! If we should die, we should but the sooner be "forever with the Lord." If in the quiver of God's Providence there should lie an arrow which shall bring us death today, it would also bring us Glory! So, if the very worst that can befall us is the best that can come, why should we fear? I think this is good reasoning, is it not? If you are, indeed, a Believer, and if God is your refuge and your strength, there is a logical reason why you should not yield to alarm.

Now, *this fearlessness is exceedingly profitable*. If a man is able to contain himself and possess his soul in patience through the Presence of God, he will not do that which is foolish. Men, when they are frightened, are in hot haste and hurry themselves into folly. As if they were turned to children, men in their alarm will act without reason! In fact, terror is a kind of madness. Many absurd actions have been performed under the influence of panic. In times of danger the man who is calm is the most ready to use the proper means of escape. Presence of mind is invaluable and the best way to secure presence of mind is to believe in the Presence of God! In cases of sickness, the patient who does not fret is the most likely to be cured. We have had among us, just now, instances of dear friends in this Church who have been called to undergo most serious operations. And it has been a wonderful help to them that they have known no dread, but have been passive in the Lord's hands.

Our Lord Jesus was always sweetly serene and this was one element of the wisdom of His behavior. In the struggle of life, a cheerful fearlessness is a grand assistance. Here is a man on the Exchange and things are going heavily against him. Prices are falling and all that he can do appears to make bad worse. If that man gives way to fear, he may plunge into utter ruin. But if he can step aside a minute or two and breathe a prayer to God, he will pull himself together—and when he comes back he will coolly survey the situation and act with discretion. Lose your head and you lose the battle! Lose your heart and you have lost all. To him who knows no fear there *is* no fear, provided that his forgetfulness of fear arises out of his memory of God! For the prudent government of life as well as for its enjoyment, the overcoming of fear is a great help.

Fearlessness also assists in keeping us from doing wrong. The man who can trust God with consequences will not do wrong in order to escape from losses. The man who yields to the fear of man is apt to conceal his convictions and if he does not deny the faith, he is apt to attempt a compromise—and that is the most dangerous operation which a Christian can enter! If faith in God lifts us up above the fear of losses and sufferings, we shall say to every form of temptation, "Get you behind me, Satan."

One thing more I desire to say about this fearlessness, namely, that *it brings great glory to God*. If you are enabled to rise above fear in times of alarm, then those who see you will say, "This is a man of God, and this is God's work upon his soul." I knew a youth, [Brother Spurgeon is speaking of himself] near 40 years ago, who was staying with relations when a thunderstorm of unusual violence came on at nightfall. A stack was struck by lightning and set on fire within sight of the door. The grown-up people in the house, both men and women, were utterly overcome with fright. The strong men seemed even more afraid than the women. All the inmates of the house sat huddled together. Only this youth was quietly happy. There was a little child upstairs in bed and the mother was anxious about it, but even her love could not give her courage enough to pass the staircase windows to bring that child down.

The babe cried, and this youth, whom I knew right well, who was then but newly converted, went upstairs alone, took the child and, without hurry or alarm, brought it down to its mother. He needed no candle, for the lightning was so continuous that he could see his way right well. He felt that the Lord was wonderfully near that night and so no fear was possible to his heart. He sat down and read a Psalm aloud to his trembling relatives who looked on the lad with loving wonder. That night he was master of the situation and those in the house believed that there was something in the religion which he had so lately professed. I believe that if all of us can, by God's Grace, get such a sense of God's nearness to us in times of danger and trouble, that we will remain calm and we shall bring much honor to the cause of God and the name of Jesus. Holy confidence sings Psalms by its spirit and acts. It is well to sing in the language of David, "God is our refuge and strength." But it is better, still, so to act that all can see that we do not fear though the earth is removed!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #1950, Volume 33—EARTHQUAKE BUT NOT HEARTQUAKE—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

PRAY FOR GRACE TO PRAY!

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!

Letters to Mike Gendron Of Proclaiming the Gospel:

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G. S., San Antonio, TX—I just finished reading your publication *Have You Ever Been Deceived?* I was deceived as a Catholic and now I know I was deceived again when I was told to repeat a sinner's prayer for salvation. They never called me to repentance. Now I'm asking you to pray for my salvation and the salvation of my family who were raised RC. Since repeating that sinner's prayer, I have lived in much sin, rebellion, unbelief and anger. Now I would like to be born-again God's way. I'm desperate because I've been wrong and lived wrong. I need God's Grace for salvation. I appreciate this tract so much. Please pray that I'm not one of the apostates that Jude describes. Help me because I am feeling the conviction of God. Please call me!

D. N., El Segundo, CA—Thank you so much for your prayers for the people in my life with needs. You and your crew are a blessing. I enjoy your newsletter so very much because I was brought up Catholic and really didn't know all their traditions and how the pope is head of everything. I prayed enough *Hail Mary's* to go around the world. What a joke! They never taught me to confess my sins to the only Father in Heaven through Jesus Christ. I'm now a God-fearing Christian of almost five years, and I read my Bible daily. I love my God! You are such a blessing to me. I thank God that people like you came into my life to teach the one and only Truth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks for being there when I needed you. You are in my daily prayers.

S. P., Mount Juliet, TN—A lifelong friend of mine passed away recently and although I hate setting foot inside a Catholic church, I attended the funeral. This church was my parish for about 28 years, and I knew 90 percent of the people in attendance. When the priest began his sermon, I almost screamed. He explained, very dramatically, how we'll "all be together in heaven, whether you are a Muslim, Buddhist or Christian. God is called by different names—but he is the same god and Jesus died so that all can go to heaven and be with God when we leave this life." I had known this was being taught, but it made me sick when I actually heard it. It breaks my heart to hear such blasphemy, but since he worships another Jesus and believes another gospel, he is blinded to the Truth of God. Have you ever tried to share the true Gospel with a priest, face-to-face? I believe that the Lord is calling me to do just that, but I don't know how to approach him. I know that most evangelicals avoid confronting Catholic priests. What is your opinion? I am praying about this and asking God to lead me in whatever direction He wants me to go.

Brother Mike answers—What you described at the funeral is typical of the aberrant theology of RC priests. We attended a funeral where the Catholic priest said, "We don't know where this man is (the deceased). He could be in a deep dark hole in outer space for all we know." Since priests do not know the Truth of God, they are tossed by every myth and wind of doctrine. I witness to priests as often as our Lord gives me Divine appointments. I also witnessed to several Catholic bishops when they came to Dallas to discuss the sexual assault scandals of their priesthood. A good approach is to ask them to explain what Catholics must do to gain entrance into Heaven. When they give the wrong answer, ask them if that were not true according to the Bible, and would they want to know what God has revealed about this important issue. I have yet to see any priest repent and believe the Gospel, but we never know what God will do after the imperishable seeds of His Word are

sown. I always leave a Gospel tract behind and pray God will use it to draw them to Himself. I encourage you to witness to priests and everyone else who is being held captive in religious deception.

Pastor A. B., Kingsburg, CA—As pastor of an evangelical church I was invited to join a ministerial union in our community for the purpose of pulpit swaps, community prayer days, etc. The Roman Catholic Church is an active part of this union, along with 12 Protestant churches. Because of the massive confusion about the Gospel in our town and the idea that every church is preaching the same Gospel with different traditions, we have chosen not to be a part of the union. The Catholic priest has responded to our letter, and has furthered the confusion by using terms like "denomination" for the Catholic Church, as well as referencing himself as pastor, not father, and saying evangelical words about the Gospel. It is amazing how deceptive this whole situation can be and how high the stakes are in the battle for the Truth. I was wondering if this kind of blurring of the lines of the Reformation is something you are seeing in your ministry? I would like to call you and discuss what our response to the Catholic priest should be? I really appreciate your wisdom in dealing with the pure Gospel in a time of widespread compromise.

Pastor J. R., Glendora, CA—Grace Outreach is excited to give away 10,000 of your Gospel tracts to all the visitors that attend our *Live Nativity Scene*. We have both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking teams in place to personally hand out your tracts and have them fill out a census card which we will use for general follow-up. I will pass on to you any testimonies from the responses to your tracts.

M. H., Green Lane, PA—We love your tracts!! We attend a Reformed Baptist Church and have had opportunity to pass out several of your *Scripture vs. Tradition* booklets and not just to unbelievers. Tons of people do not have the slightest idea of what Catholics believe. Your materials have helped tremendously in educating the saints as well as reaching the lost.

J. G., LeRoy, NY—I was Catholic too, and so the deception is real to me. Now I hear Catholic apologists on the radio using the Bible to support their views. Never have I heard such zeal from Catholics. It is "scarey" in a sense because it has "ecumenical one-world religion" written all over it. Please continue to warn people and encourage them to speak out! We do not believe the same things as Catholics just because they may now quote the Bible.

PRAY FOR OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

PRAY FOR GRACE TO BE HOLY

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18 NKJV).

NOTABLE QUOTES OF CHARLES H. SPURGEON

“I am afraid my voice is so familiar to some of you unconverted ones that you are getting like the miller who can go to sleep, notwithstanding the click of the mill—no, who goes to sleep *better* in his mill than he does anywhere else! Or like some men I have heard of, over there in Southwark, who work inside the great boilers. When a poor fellow first begins to labor in such a place, the deafening noise is horrible—he thinks he must die! But, after a while, he gets so used to the reverberation that he could well-near sleep notwithstanding all the hammering. It is much the same with hearing the Word of God! Therefore I pray you, if you have long listened to one who would gladly do you good, yield to the message he delivers to you! Before you grow so familiar with it that it loses all its power over your heart, accept it as good tidings of great joy! God grant that you may do so now! While Grace calls, do not refuse.”—1897, Sermon #2547

“O my God, let me die when I can no longer be the means of saving souls! If I can be kept out of Heaven a thousand years, if You will give me souls as my wages, let me still speak for You! But if there are no more sinners to be converted—no more to be brought in by my ministry—then let me depart and be ‘with Christ, which is far better.’”—1900, Sermon #2695

“No church can be healthy without the constant infusion of fresh blood. Unless there are new converts, you cannot see the church built up. Young converts are quick in inventing new ways of usefulness and they venture to do things which some consider ‘imprudent.’ Oh, how I love that word, ‘imprudent,’ in such a connection! I like ‘imprudent’ young people. The more ‘imprudent’ they are, in the cause of God in the judgment of stolid, cold-hearted professors, the more I rejoice in them! Imprudence which believes in God and dares to do exploits in His strength is far preferable to that prudence which has no faith and is, therefore, a poor, dead, useless thing.”—1900, Sermon #2692

“Self-complacency may be a very pleasant feeling to cherish, but he who walks near to God is a stranger to it.”—1900, Sermon #2696

“It is noteworthy how the belief of one of the Doctrines of Grace naturally leads to the belief of all the rest. The system of the Gospel is so logical, its Truths fit so well into one another, that you cannot get a right knowledge of one of them without, at once, or in a very short time, discovering the others! The Lord begins by teaching us His foundation Truth of our utter depravity—He burns it into our conscience by bitter experience and by terrible discoveries of our sinfulness—and He knows right well that the other doctrines will follow and that, when this Truth is really understood by us, it shall not be long before we have orthodox views of the whole Covenant of Grace and the great system of the Gospel of Jesus. This, I think, is one reason why the Lord gives His people revelations of their own iniquity and defilement—that they may be sound in the faith and may believe nothing but the Doctrines of Grace.”—1901, Sermon #2711

Is there anybody here who is going out of this Tabernacle to a place where he should not go? Will he pray first? He knows that he cannot ask a blessing on it and, therefore, he ought not to go there! Go nowhere where you cannot go *after* prayer! This would often be a good guide in your choice of where you should go. Nehemiah first prayed and then set a watch.”—1892, Sermon #2254

“There is no pleading with God like reminding Him of His Covenant! Get a hold of a promise of God, and you may pray with great boldness, for the Lord will not run back from His own Word! Get a hold of the Covenant and you may plead with the greatest possible confidence!”—1895, Sermon #2398

“Prayer should be the natural outflow of the soul—you should pray because you *must* pray, not because the set time for praying has arrived—but because your heart must cry unto your Lord.”—1895, Sermon #2437

“Dear Friends, in the service of God, impropriety is often piety. It was said that Mr. Rowland Hill, ‘rode upon the backs of Order and Decorum.’ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘I will try to make that true,’ so he called his two horses Order and Decorum and thus, if he did not ride on their backs, he made them pull him to and from Surrey Chapel. Order and decorum are hardly worth more than to be used as horses.”—1893, Sermon #2323

“Children need to learn the Doctrine of the Cross that they may find immediate salvation. I thank God that in our Sunday school we believe in the salvation of children as children! How very many has it been my joy to see of boys and girls who have come forward to confess their faith in Christ! And I again wish to say that the best converts, the clearest converts, the most intelligent converts we have ever had have been the young ones! And, instead of there being any deficiency in their knowledge of the Word of God and the Doctrines of Grace, we have usually found them to have a very delightful acquaintance with the great cardinal Truths of Christ. Many of these dear children have been able to speak of the things of God with great pleasure of heart and force of understanding. Go on, dear teachers, and believe that God will save your children! Be not content to sow principles in their minds which may possibly develop in later years, but be working for immediate conversion! Expect fruit in your children while they are children! Pray for them that they may not run into the world and fall into the evils of outward sin—and then come back with broken bones to the Good Shepherd. But that they may, by God’s rich Grace, be kept from the paths of the Wicked One and grow up in the fold of Christ—first as lambs of His flock—and then as sheep of His hand.”—1887, Sermon #1988

THE SPIRIT REGENERATING

By A. W. Pink

The absolute necessity for the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit in order to a sinner's being converted to God lies in his being totally depraved. Fallen man is without the least degree of right disposition or principles from which holy exercises may proceed; yea, he is completely under a contrary disposition: there is no right exercise of heart in him, but *every* motion of his will is corrupt and sinful. If this were not the case, there would be no need for him to be born again and made "a new creature." If the sinner were not wholly corrupt he would submit to Christ without any supernatural operation of the Spirit; but fallen man is so completely sunk in corruption that he has not the faintest real desire for God, but is filled with enmity against Him (Rom 8:7). Therefore does Scripture affirm him to be "*dead* in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1).

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). The latter verse expounds the former. There an explanation is given as to why any fallen descendant of Adam ever spiritually receives Christ as his Lord and Master and savingly believes on His name.

First, it is not because grace runs in the blood—as the Jews supposed. Holiness is not transmitted from father to son. The child of the most pious parents is, by nature, equally as corrupt and is as far from God as is the offspring of infidels. Second, it is not because of any natural willingness—as Arminians contend. "Nor of the will of the flesh" refers to man in his natural and corrupt state. He is not regenerated by any instinct, choice, or exertion of his own; he does not by any personal endeavor contribute anything towards being born again; nor does he cooperate in the least degree with the efficient cause: instead, every inclination of his heart, every exercise of his will, is in direct opposition thereto.

Third, the new birth is not brought about by the power and influence of others. No sinner is ever born again as the result of persuasions and endeavors of preachers or Christian workers. However pious and wise they are, and however earnestly and strenuously they exert themselves to bring others to holiness, they do in no degree produce the effect. "If all the angels and saints in Heaven and all the godly on earth should join their wills and endeavors and unitedly exert all their powers to regenerate one sinner, they could not effect it; yea, they could do nothing toward it. It is an effect *infinitely* beyond the reach of finite wisdom and power—1 Corinthians 3:6, 7" (S. Hopkins).

In regeneration, one of God's elect is the subject, and the Spirit of God is the sole agent. The subject of the new birth is wholly passive: he does not act, but is acted upon. The sovereign work of the Spirit in the soul precedes *all* holy exercises of heart—such as sorrow for sin, faith in Christ, love toward God. This great change is wrought in spite of all the opposition of the natural heart against God—"So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy" (Rom 9:16). This great change is not a gradual and protracted process, but *instantaneous*—in an instant of time the favored subject of it passes from death unto life.—From March, 1934, *Studies in the Scriptures*.

Lord willing, to be continued next month.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION— AN OPINION

By C. H. Spurgeon

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith"

1 John 5:4.

My text speaks of a GREAT BIRTH (whatever is born of God). A very kind friend told me that while I was preaching in Exeter Hall I ought to pay deference to the varied opinions of my hearers. He said that albeit I may be a Calvinist and a Baptist, I should recollect that there are a variety of creeds here. Now, if I were to preach nothing but what would please the whole lot of you, what on earth would I do? I preach what I believe to be true. And if the omission of a single Truth of God that I believe, would make me king of England throughout eternity, I still would not leave it out!

Those who do not like what I say have the option of leaving. They come here, I suppose, to please themselves, and if the Truth does not please them, they can leave. I will never be afraid that an honest British audience will turn away from the man who does not stick, and stutter, and stammer in speaking the Truth.

Well, now, about this great birth. I am going to say, perhaps, a harsh thing, but I heard it said by Mr. Jay, first of all. Some say a new birth takes place in an infant at baptism, but I remember that venerable Patriarch saying, "Popery is a *lie*, baptismal regeneration is a *lie*." So it is. It is a lie so palpable that I can scarcely imagine the preachers of it having any brains in their heads at all. It is so absurd upon the very face of it, that a man who believes it puts himself below the range of common sense!

Believe that every child by a drop of water is born again!? Then that man that you see in the ring as a prize-fighter [in England most Irish Catholics were prize fighters] is born again, because those sanctified drops once fell upon his infant forehead! Another man swears—behold him drunk, and reeling about the streets—he is born again! A pretty born again, that is! I think he needs to be born again another time.

Such a regeneration as that only fits him for the devil. And by its deluding effect, may even make him sevenfold more the child of Hell. But the men who curse and swear, and rob and steal, and those poor wretches who are hanged, have all been born again, according to the fiction of this beautiful Roman church. Away with it! Away with it! God sends something better than *that* into men's hearts when He sends them a new birth!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Sermon 14—*The Victory of Faith*—Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

PRAY DILIGENTLY FOR THOSE CHAPLAINS CALLED BY
GOD TO REPRESENT HIS SON IN OUR JAILS
AND PRISONS. ASK THAT THEY MAY BE COMFORTED
DAILY BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT.

Pray for Grace to do all we do for HIS honor and glory!



What We Are To Remember

By Alexander Maclaren

*“Then He took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying,
‘Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is
poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”*

MATTHEW 26:27-28.

In these words Jesus points out the moment of His whole career that He desires that men should remember. Not His words of tenderness and wisdom; not His miracles, amazing and gracious as they were; not the flawless beauty of His Character, though it touches all hearts and wins the most rugged to love and the most degraded to hope, but the moment in which He gave His life is what He would impart forever on the memory of the world. And not only so, but in the rite He distinctly tells us in what aspects He would have that death remembered. Not as the tragic end of a noble career that might be hallowed by tears such as are shed over a martyr’s ashes—not as the crowning proof of love, not as the supreme act of patient forgiveness—but as a death for us in which, as by blood of the sacrifice, is secured the forgiveness of sin.

Within just twenty-four hours of His death, Jesus steps forward and says, “I am putting away the ancient Covenant, for it is antiquated. I am the true offering and Sacrifice and I am establishing a new Covenant sealed in My blood. That blood, when sprinkled on your heart, will thoroughly cleanse you.” The power of Christ’s sacrifice evokes in our poor souls faith, love and surrender. It, and it alone, knits us to God! It, and it alone, binds us to the fulfillment of the covenant!

The very heart of Christ’s gift to us is the gift of His own very life to be the life of our lives. In deep, mystical reality He Himself passes into our being and becomes one with our spirit. This is the heart of Christianity, the possession within us of the life, the immortal life of Him who died for us. We look forward to that day, after life’s weariness and lonesomeness are past, when we will be welcomed to the banqueting hall by the Lord of the Feast and sit with Him and His servants who loved Him at that first table and be glad.”—Alexander Maclaren, (1826-1910) was a Scottish Baptist Minister.

**PRAY FOR GRACE TO HAVE A
CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF
HIS HOLY WORD.**

BEHOLD THE SAVIOR

HYMN #6

A hymn by Donald S. Fortner

Behold, He came, our Savior God!
He came to save His own:
By His own blood and righteousness,
The work was fully done.

Behold, He died, the Substitute!
He bore the wrath of God:
The sword of justice and of wrath
Was drowned in Jesus’ blood.

Behold, He rose, He rose for us!
Triumphant o’er the grave:
Freed from our sins, He lives above,
The risen Christ can save.

Behold He saves! Yes, Jesus saves!
Sinner, there’s hope for you:
Come, trust His blood and righteousness,
Believe, and He’ll save you!

Behold, He reigns! The God-man reigns!
He reigns as Sov’ reign Lord:
All creatures soon must bow and say,
That Jesus Christ is Lord!

Behold, He comes again: Rejoice!
Let ransomed sinners sing:
We’ll see the One who died for us—
We soon shall see our King!

*(Tune: America the Beautiful)
Common Meter 86.86.*

From *Songs of Grace*, by Donald S. Fortner,
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LIMITED ATONEMENT

By Dr. John Owen – 1616-1683

Redemption is the freeing of a man from misery by the intervention of a ransom. Now, when a ransom is paid for the liberty of a prisoner, does not justice demand that he should have and enjoy the liberty so purchased for him by a valuable consideration? If I should pay a thousand pounds for a man's deliverance from bondage to him that detains him, who has power to set him free, and is content with the price I give, were it not injurious to me and the poor prisoner that his deliverance is not accomplished? Can it possibly be conceived that there should be a redemption of men and those men not redeemed? That a price should be paid and the purchase not consummated? Yet all this must be made true, and innumerable other absurdities, if *universal redemption* is asserted!

A price is paid for all, yet few delivered. The redemption of all consummated, yet few of them redeemed. The judge satisfied, the jailer conquered, and yet the prisoners still imprisoned! Doubtless, "universal," and "redemption," where the greatest part of men perish, are as irreconcilable as "Roman" and "Catholic." If there is a universal redemption of all, then all men are redeemed. If they are redeemed, then are they delivered from all misery, virtually or actually, whereunto they were enslaved, and that by the intervention of a ransom. Why, then, are not all saved? In a word, the redemption worked by Christ being the full deliverance of the persons redeemed from all misery, wherein they were in bondage, by the price of His blood—cannot possibly be conceived to be universal unless all are saved—so that the opinion of the Universalists is unsuitable to redemption.

WE MUST KILL ALL LITTLE SINS

Little sins, like little thieves, may open the door to greater ones outside. Christians, recollect that little sins will spoil your communion with Christ. Little sins, like little stains in silk, may damage the fine texture of fellowship. Little sins, like little irregularities in the machinery, may spoil the whole fabric of your religion. The one dead fly spoils the whole pot of ointment. That one thistle may seed a continent with noxious weeds. Let us, Brethren, kill our sins as often as we can find them. Someone said—"The heart is full of unclean birds. It is a cage of them." "Ah, but," said another Divine, "you must not make that an apology—for a Christian's business is to wring their necks."

And so it is. If there are evil things, it is our business to kill them. Christians must not tolerate secret sins. We must not harbor traitors. It is high treason against the King of Heaven. Let us drag them out into the light and offer them upon the altar, giving up the dearest of our secret sins at the will and bidding of God. There is great danger in a little secret sin. Therefore avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and shun it—and God give you Divine Grace to overcome it!—CHS

Please pray daily for God's elect in prisons.
Pray He will keep them safe and hold them up.
Pray they might be used by Him to draw
many to His Son, Jesus Christ.

WHY DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

Christ has made the plan of His Church. You and I have made a great many plans for the building up of that Church. The Presbyterian makes his plans extremely precise. He will put an elder in every corner and the Presbytery is the great groundwork—the pillar and the ground of the Truth—and right is he in so doing to an extent.

The Episcopalian builds his temple, too. He will have a bishop at the doorpost, and he will have a priest to shut the gate. He will have everything built according to the model that was seen by Cranmer in the mount, if he ever was there at all. And those of us who are of severer discipline and have a simpler style, must have Christ's Church always built in the congregational order—every congregation distinct and separate and governed by its own bishop and deacons and elders.

But mark, Christ does not attend to our points of Church government, for there is one part of Christ's Church that is Episcopalian, and looks as if a bishop of the Church of England had ordered it. Another part is Presbyterian, another Baptist, another Congregational. And yet all these styles of architecture somehow fused into one by the Great Architect make that goodly structure which is called "the Temple of Christ, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of Truth." Christ must be His own Architect. He will bring out different points of Truth in different ways.

Why, I believe that different denominations are sent on purpose to set out different Truths. There are some of our Brethren a little too high—they bring out, better than any other people, the grand old Truths of Sovereign Grace. There are some, on the other hand, a little too low. They bring out with great clearness the great and truthful doctrines of man's responsibility. So that two Truths that might have been neglected, either the one, or the other, if only one form of Christianity existed, are both brought out, both made resplendent, by the different denominations of God's people who are alike chosen of God and precious to Him.

God forbid I should say anything that would bolster up any in their errors. Nevertheless, God's people, even in error, are a precious people. Even when they seem to be as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter, they are still comparable to fine gold. Rest assured that the Lord has deep designs to answer, even by the divisions of His Church. We must not interfere with Christ's reasons, nor with His style of architecture. Every stone that is in the temple, Jesus Christ ordained should be put where it is. Even those stones that are most contemptible and unseen, were put in their places by Him. There is not one board of cedar, one piece of burnished pinnacle, that was not foreseen and prearranged in that eternal Covenant of Grace which was the great plan that Christ, the Almighty Architect, did draw for the building of the temple to His praise. Christ, then, is the only Architect, and He shall bear the glory, for He designed the building.—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection—Sermon #191—Christ Glorified As the Builder of His Church—Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307*

BEWARE OF THE CHRIST OF ARMINIANISM!

By Rev. Steven Houck

The Bible warns us that in the last days in which we live there will be many false Christs—those who claim to be Christ but who are imposters. Jesus said, “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matt 24:4-5). We who profess to be Christians must take heed. We must be very careful that we are not deceived. Our calling is to trust, love, and follow the true Christ, and Him only. *We may have nothing to do with the false Christs who are so numerous in our day.*

We know about the Christ of the cults and other religions. He is a good man, a prophet, the first creation of God, a great spirit, a divine idea, or even a god himself. But he is not the true and eternal God. He receives his existence from another who is greater than he. He is not the Christ of the Bible. We are not deceived by this Christ. He is a *false Christ*.

We know about the Christ of Roman Catholicism. They profess that He is true God. He suffered and died for the forgiveness of sin. He arose again, ascended into Heaven, and is coming again. But he is not a complete Savior. The Christ of the Roman Catholics can not save sinners *without their own good works and the intercession of priests*. He is not the Christ of the Bible. We are not deceived by this Christ. He is a *false Christ*.

There is, however, another false Christ who is much more dangerous than the Christ of the cults and the Christ of Roman Catholicism. He has deceived people for many years, and he continues to deceive millions. This Christ is so dangerous, that, if it were not impossible, he would deceive the very elect (Matt 24:24). He is the Christ of Arminianism.

This false Christ is extremely dangerous because in many ways he appears to be the true Christ. They say he is true God, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. They say that he died on the Cross to save sinners. They even say that he saves by his grace alone, without the work of man. This Christ will have nothing to do with the Christ of the cults and the Christ of Roman Catholicism.

But watch out! Be warned! The Christ of Arminianism is not the Christ of the Bible. Do not be fooled!

The *Christ of Arminianism* loves every individual person in the world and sincerely desires their salvation. The *Christ of the Bible*—earnestly loves and desires the salvation of only those whom God has unconditionally chosen to salvation. (Psa 5:5; 7:11; 11:5; Matt 11:27; John 17:9-10; Acts 2:47; 13:48; Rom 9:10-13, 21-24; Eph 1:3-4).

The *Christ of Arminianism* offers salvation to every sinner and does all in his power to bring them to salvation. His offer and work are often frustrated, for many refuse to come. The *Christ of the Bible* effectually calls to Himself only the elect and sovereignly brings them to salvation. Not one of them will be lost. (Isa 55:11; John 5:21; 6:37-40; 10:25-30; 17:2; Phil 2:13).

The *Christ of Arminianism* cannot regenerate and save a sinner who does not choose him with his own “free will.” All men have a “free will” by which they can either accept or reject Christ. That “free will” may not be violated by their Christ. The *Christ of the Bible* sovereignly regenerates the elect sinner apart from his choice, for without regeneration the spiritually dead sinner cannot choose Christ. Faith is not man’s contribution to salvation, but the gift of Christ which He sovereignly imparts in regeneration. (John 3:3; 6:44 & 65; 15:16; Acts 11:18; Rom 9:16; Eph 2:1; 2:8-10; Phil 1:29; Heb 12:2).

The *Christ of Arminianism* died on the Cross for every individual person, and thereby made it possible for every person to be saved. His death, apart from the choice of man, was not able to actually save *anyone*—for many for whom he died are lost. The *Christ of the Bible* died for only God’s elect people and thereby actually obtained salvation for all those for whom He died. His death was a substitutionary satisfaction which actually took away the guilt of His chosen people. (Luke 19:10; John 10:14-15 & 26; Acts 20:28; Rom 5:10; Eph 5:25; Heb 9:12; 1 Peter 3:18).

The *Christ of Arminianism* loses many whom he has “saved” because they do not continue in faith. Even if he does give them “eternal security,” as some say, that security is not based upon his will or work but the choice which the sinner made when he accepted Christ. The *Christ of the Bible* preserves His chosen people so that they cannot lose their salvation, but preserves them by the sovereign electing will of God, the power of His death, and the mighty working of His Spirit. (John 5:24; 10:26-29; Rom 8:29-30; 8:35-39; 1 Peter 1:2-5; Jude 24-25).

As you can see, although the Christ of Arminianism and the Christ of the Bible may at first seem to be the same, they are very different. One is a *false Christ*. The other is the true Christ. One is weak and helpless. *He bows before the sovereign “free will” of man*. The other is the reigning Lord who wills what He pleases and sovereignly accomplishes all that He wills.

If you believe and serve the Christ of Arminianism, you must recognize the fact that you do not serve the Christ of the Bible. You have been deceived! Study the Scriptures and learn of the true Christ. Pray for Divine Grace to repent and trust the true Christ as your Sovereign Lord and Savior.—[Rev. Steven Houck is Pastor of Peace Protestant Reformed Church, P.O. Box 5634, Lansing, IL 60438.]

**DO YOU PRAY THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL PREPARE THE HEARTS OF HEARERS BEFORE
YOUR PASTOR PREACHES? DO YOU ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO PREPARE YOUR HEART?
DO YOU ASK HIM TO PREPARE YOUR PASTOR’S HEART?**

Study of Ephesians**ONE BODY ~ ONE SPIRIT**

The fact that all the parts of the body of Christ make up one body means that when one part suffers, all parts suffer. Think of how this is the case with your own physical body. When you stub your toe, the pain consumes all of you. In the same way, the body of Christ cannot and should not try to divorce itself from any of its members. When our Brothers and Sisters in countries like China are being persecuted for their faith, it should affect us—and we should be praying for them. When someone in our congregation has a need, we should seek to meet that need. We are all part of one another. If we truly realized this, how quickly would all thought of competition and rivalry and self-seeking disappear in the Church. When we are guilty of these things, we are simply showing that we have never understood the Doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ.

That brings me now to ask a most important question—Are you a part of this body? There is great diversity in the way God deals with each of His children and in their function in the body. But one thing is the same for all members and that is how they came to be a part of the body. Jesus said in John 3:3, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” One must have a new birth to be in the body! Not one of us decided to be born into this world and not one of us can become a member of the body of Christ on his own. It takes the work of God’s Grace in putting new life in the soul.

How do you know if you have this new life? The marks are unmistakable. You will see yourself as a sinner who justly deserves God’s judgment. You will see that there is no way to have your sins removed to the satisfaction of a Holy God apart from the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. And you will abandon all hope in yourself or in anything you can do to earn God’s favor and will entrust yourself entirely to the Lord Jesus Christ and His shed blood. The journey each one of us takes after we enter the body will be very different, but the way into the body is the same for all. As G. A. Young wrote in one of his hymns—“Some thru the waters, some thru the flood, some thru the fire, but all thru the blood.” The way into Jesus’ body is through Jesus!

Now, in our study of Ephesians 4:4-6, we have seen that there are seven phrases beginning with the word, “one,” which present seven factors that produce the unity that exists in the Church—“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

By the word, “Church,” I am referring to the universal Church, made up of all Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen that the unity in the Church is produced by the Holy Spirit. Paul refers to it in verse 3 as the “unity of the Spirit.” This leads to a question about the phrase which is our focus today—“one Spirit.” Why does Paul again mention the Spirit as one of the seven factors producing unity in the Church when he has just referred to the “unity of the Spirit” in the previous verse? I believe that in verse 3, Paul mentioned the “unity of the Spirit” to show us that the Holy Spirit is the One responsible for establishing the unity. But now, in our verse, He is referred to in order that we might consider HOW the Holy Spirit does this.

Let us recall that the first item in this list is, “one body.” How does a person become part of the body? Someone says, “That’s easy. The way into the body is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Yes, but there is something even more fundamental to consider—How does anyone come to be a Be-

liever in Jesus Christ? This is where our phrase “one Spirit” comes in. It is only the Holy Spirit who can make a Christian! The Apostle tells us in Ephesians 2 that all people are by nature dead in trespasses and sins and under God’s wrath. How does a spiritually dead person come to the place where he will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? The answer is the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us trace some of the steps in His work.

The first evidence that the Holy Spirit is working to make someone a Christian is that the person comes under conviction of sin. Jesus foretold this in John 16:8—“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” By nature, people are satisfied with the way they are. Though most will admit that they are not perfect and that they make mistakes, yet they think that at least their good deeds outweigh the bad enough to make them acceptable to God. But when the Holy Spirit begins to work in a person, he sees himself in a new light. He begins to realize that in the very core of his being there is something vile and sinful. As this realization increases, the person sees that he has greatly offended God and is at enmity against God in the depths of his heart. The result of this is inevitably a humbling. The person who is awakened to his sinfulness is brought low and begins to see himself as God sees him. No longer is there a basis for thinking that he is better than others.

How does this conviction of sin contribute to unity in the Church? If all of us are humbled because we are being made sensitive to the reality of our sinfulness and our weakness, then no one is going to try to pretend to be superior to the rest. How can I look down my nose at a Brother when I see the vileness that is in my own heart? We should all be humbled and esteeming others better than ourselves. That is why this work of the “one Spirit” is so important. If some members are not convicted of sin, there is no unity. They are still trying to hold on to things of which they can boast. Ah, but when we have been brought down and shown our sinfulness, then we do not even *desire* to boast!

But the work of the Holy Spirit does not stop there. The Holy Spirit takes this person who is now feeling his sinfulness and puts a new principle of life into his soul. This is what the Bible calls being BORN AGAIN. Jesus said in John 3:3, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” To be born again is not something external but is something that happens to a person’s soul. The Bible, in fact, describes it as a “new creation.” This is not a makeover but is the principle of a brand new life which is planted in the soul by a work of almighty God the Holy Spirit.

Continued next month, Lord willing.—PF

Pray your epitaph may be,
“He/She lived to glorify Christ.”

“The Lord Is My Shepherd”—Psalm 23

4: The Sufficiency of This Shepherd to His Sheep ~ Part 2

By Daniel E. Parks
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In the first two messages we set forth “The Identity of This Shepherd” and “The Description of This Sheep.” Then we began setting forth in the third message “The Sufficiency of This Shepherd to His Sheep” by expounding what is meant by the phrase, “I shall not want.” Having already observed that Christ’s sheep shall not lack rest (v2a), food (v2b), drink (v2c), restoration (v3a) and direction (v3b), we here continue.

But before doing so, let us observe a significant change in the direction of the conversation between verses 1-3 and 4-6. In the former, the sheep speaks to a peer—in the latter he speaks to his Shepherd. We may imagine the sheep in verses 1-3 speaking through the fence of his fold to a disciple of a false shepherd on the other side, hungry, thirsty, in need of restoration and wandering aimlessly to destruction. Christ’s sheep says, “Look at the pitiful condition you are in! What a worthless shepherd you have! Behold how my Shepherd supplies all my needs!” He then looks to his Shepherd and continues his discourse in gratitude and praise—

VI. I shall not lack victory in death (v4a)—“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me.” This “death” is not *spiritual* death, the state of separation of the soul from God into which all are born as the consequence of Adam’s sin (Gen 3:17; Rom 5:12ff). Christ’s sheep were delivered from it in their regeneration (Eph 2:1). Neither is it the *second* death, the eternal separation of the wicked from God in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14). Christ’s sheep will never enter into it because their Shepherd has given to them eternal life so that they will never perish (John 10:28). Rather, this is *physical* death, the inescapable end of earthly existence and the termination of life on earth appointed for all men (Heb 9:27). It also is the most feared event for men, partly because it involves venturing into unknown territory darker than midnight and fraught with perils and doing so without light, chart or compass.

Death is a “valley,” the deepest and darkest of all. The “valley of death” is the exact opposite of a mountaintop experience.

Although this valley of death is the most feared place in the minds of most men, Christ’s sheep look toward it and confess, “I will fear no evil.” In fact, they boast, “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Cor 15:55). They may say so because “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v57). And Christ their Shepherd declares, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes.” (Hosea 13:14). And as a honeybee can sting but once and then dies, so has death stung Christ in the place of His people—and then died to never sting them again! Furthermore, the sheep confess that in the valley of death “I will not fear the *Evil One!*”—Satan. Christ has already destroyed Satan and his works (1 John 3:8; Heb 2:14; Rev 20:1-3; Matt 12:28f). And as death is now stingless with regard to Christ’s sheep, so is Satan toothless and clawless to them.

Christ’s sheep in the valley of death also fear no evil because, “You are with me.” Unlike other men, Christ’s sheep do not enter death unattended. And He who attends them has already passed through this valley and knows how to avoid every danger therein and comforts them with

every step they take. And if I should fear the sting of death in this place, He shows to me its stinger in His pierced hand and assures me that its venom is now depleted and its inflictor now defeated.

Christ’s sheep will, therefore, “walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” Death for them is but a *shadow*, having no substance—and a shadow never hurt anyone! And where there is a shadow, there is a light—this light being the light of Glory at the end of the valley! They will leisurely *walk* through this shadow in sweet communion with their Shepherd—whereas the wicked are “driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world” (Job 18:18). Christ’s sheep will successfully walk *through* this shadow, always certain of reaching their final destination—for Christ will, even in death, “shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters” (Rev 7:17).

VII. I shall not lack comfort (v4b)—“Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me”—not only in the valley of death, but also in this present life.

The shepherd’s “rod” was a piece of wood, often from a tree limb or a young sapling. It was used for many purposes. The rod was an *instrument for counting and examining* the sheep, as in the expression, “pass under the rod” (Ezek 20:37). Christ’s sheep are comforted in observing His concern for them as they pass under His rod and hear Him call their names. The rod was an *instrument for chastening* the sheep (Job 9:34). Christ’s sheep are comforted in knowing He loves them enough to do so (Heb 12:6f; Prov 13:24). The rod was a *symbol of authority* (Psa 110:2). Christ’s sheep are comforted in knowing He has authority over all things (Matt 28:18). The rod could be a *missile* thrown by the shepherd to kill snakes and other small enemies of the sheep. Christ’s sheep are comforted in knowing that with His rod He has destroyed the serpent Satan. But the rod of Christ is not for the comfort of His enemies! Rather, He will, with it, “break them” and “dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel” (Psa 2:9).

The shepherd’s “staff” was a long slender stick often with a crook or hook on one end. It also was used for many purposes. The staff was an *instrument for leaning* (Heb 11:21). The Hebrew word translated, “staff,” denotes something to lean on. Christ’s sheep are comforted by the sight of their Shepherd leaning on His staff as He watches over them, keeping a sharp eye for any predator. The staff was an *instrument for gathering*, as the shepherd could use the crook on its end to draw a sheep to himself for closer examination. Christ’s sheep are comforted when He, with His staff, gathers them to Himself for closer fellowship. The staff was an *instrument for saving*, as the shepherd could, with it, pull a sheep from ensnaring thorny brambles. Christ’s sheep are comforted when He does so for them. But the staff of Christ is not for the comfort of His enemies, but rather to them a “staff of punishment” with which He will beat them (Isa 30:32).

More, next month, Lord willing.

LET US IMITATE OUR SAVIOR IN GETHSEMANE

By Charles H. Spurgeon

Our blessed Lord is to be imitated by us in that *He frequently sought and enjoyed retirement*. His was a very busy life. He had much more to do than you and I have, yet He found abundant time for private prayer. He was much holier than any of us are, yet He realized His need of private prayer and meditation. He was much wiser than we shall ever be, yet He felt the necessity for retiring into solitude for communion with His Father. He had much power over Himself, He could control and compose Himself far more readily than we can, yet, amid the distractions of the world, He felt that He must frequently get away alone. It would be well for us if we were more often alone. We are so busy—so taken up with this or that committee meeting, working-class, Sunday school, preaching, talking, visiting, gossiping—all sorts of things, good, bad, or indifferent—that we have no leisure for the due cultivation of our spiritual life! We rush from pillar to post without proper time for rest, but, Brothers and Sisters, if we want to be strong, if we mean to be like Jesus, our Lord and Savior, we must have our Gethsemane, our place for secret retirement where we can get alone with our God. I think it was Luther who said, “I have a hard day’s work before me today—it will take me many hours and there will be a stern struggle, so I must have at least three hours prayer, that I may gain the necessary strength for my task.” Ah, we do not act in that wise fashion nowadays—we feel as if we cannot spare the time for private prayer, but, had we more communion with God—we would have more influence with men.

But our blessed Master is especially to be imitated in that *He sought retirement when He was about to enter upon the great struggle of His life*. Just then, when Judas was about to give the traitor’s kiss—when scribes and Pharisees were about to hound Him to the Cross—it was then that He felt that He must get away to Gethsemane and be alone in prayer with His Father! What did you do, my dear Brother, when you apprehended trial? Why, you sought out a sympathizing friend! I shall not blame you for desiring the consolations of true friendship, but I shall not commend you if you put them into the place of communion with God. Are you, even now, dreading some approaching calamity? What are you doing to meet it? I will not suggest that you should neglect certain precautions, but I would admonish you that the first and best precaution is to get away to your God in prayer! As the feeble conies find their shelter in the solid rock, and as the doves fly away to their home in the dovecot, so should Christians, when they expect trouble, fly straight away to their God upon the wings of fear and faith! Your great strength does not lie in your hair, otherwise you might feel as proud as Samson was in the days of his victories! Your great strength lies in your God! Therefore, get away to Him with all speed and ask Him from help in this, your hour of need!

Some of you pray when you are, as it were, at Calvary, but not at Gethsemane. I mean you pray when the trouble comes upon you, but not when it is on the road. Yet your Master here teaches you that to conquer at your Calvary, you must commence by wrestling at your Gethsemane. When as yet it is but the shadow of your coming trial that spreads its black wings over you, cry to God for help! When you are not emptying the bitter cup—when you are only sipping the first drops of the wormwood and the gall, begin, even then, to pray, “Not as I will, but as You will, O my Father!” You will thus be the better able to drink of the cup to its very dregs when God shall place it in your hands.

We may also imitate our Lord—as far as it would be in our line, *in His taking His disciples with Him*. At any rate, if we do not imitate Him in this respect, we may certainly admire Him, for He took the disciples with Him, I think, for two purposes. First, for their good. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, that the next morning was to be a day of trial for them as well as for Himself. He was to be taken to trial and condemnation, but they were to be severely tried, in their fidelity to Him, by seeing their Lord and Master put to a shameful death. So He took them with Him that they also might pray—that they might learn how to pray by hearing His wondrous prayers—that they might watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation. Now, sometimes in your special hour of trouble, I believe that it will be for the good of others for you to communicate to them the story of your distress and ask them to join you in prayer concerning it. I have often done this, so I can urge you to do the same. I found it a great blessing, on one dark day of my life, to ask my sons, though they were but lads, to come into my room and pray with their father in his time of trouble. I know that it was good for them, and their prayers were helpful to me, but I acted as I did in part that they might realize their share in domestic responsibilities—that they might come to know their father’s God—and might learn to trust Him in their time of trouble.

But our Savior also took His disciples with Him to Gethsemane that they might assist to comfort Him and, in this respect, He is to be imitated by us because of His wonderful humility. If those disciples had all done their best, what would it have been worth? But what they really did was most discouraging to Christ, instead of being at all helpful to Him. They went to sleep when they should have watched with their Lord and they did not assist Him with their prayers as they might have done. It is noteworthy that He did not ask them to pray with Him—He bade them watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation. But He said to them, “What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?” He did not say, “What? Could you not *pray* with me one hour?” He knew that they could not do that. What mortal man could pray at such a time as that, when great drops of bloody sweat punctuated every paragraph of His petition? No, they could not pray with Him, but they might have watched with Him—yet that they did not.

Sometimes, dear Friends, when a very great trial comes upon you, it will be well for you to ask some Brothers and Sisters, who cannot do much, but who can do something to come and watch with you and pray with you. If it does not do any good to you, it will be good for them—but it will do good to you, also, I feel sure. Often—I have to confess it—I have got two Brothers to kneel with me in prayer when I have been depressed through this late illness of mine. And their honest, earnest, hearty prayers in my study have often lifted me right up into joy and peace! I believe it has also done them good. I know it has done me good and I feel sure that you might often be a blessing to others if you did not mind confessing to

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JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

(Continued from page 12)

them when you are depressed and sad at heart. Say, “Come into my room and watch with me one hour.” And you may add to that request this other one, “Come and pray with me,” for some of them can pray as well as you can, and even better. So imitate the Savior in endeavoring not only to pray yourself, but to call to your assistance the praying legion of God’s elect ones when a great trial is impending.

But imitate Christ also *in the matter of your prayer*. I feel sure that He only softly whispered the request, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.” You also may present that petition, but mind that you say it very softly. Yet I feel certain that it was with all His might that our Savior said, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as You will.” In the presence or in the prospect of a great trouble, make this your prayer to God, “Your will be done.” Brace up your soul to this point—having asked the Lord to screen you, if it should seem good in His sight, resign yourself absolutely into His hands and say, “Nevertheless, O my Father, not as I will, but as You will!”

It is prevailing prayer when one gets as far as that! A man is prepared to die when he knows how to present that petition! That is the best preparation for any cross that may come upon your shoulders. You can die a martyr’s death and clap your hands even in the midst of the fire if you can, with all your soul, really pray as Jesus prayed, “Not as I will, but as You will.” This is the objective which I set before you, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ—that if you are expecting sickness, if you are fearing loss, if you are anticipating bereavement, if you are dreading death, let this be your great ultimatum—go to God now, in the time of your distress and, by mighty prevailing prayer, with such prayerful sympathy as others can give you, breathe out this one petition—“Your will be done, O my Father! Your will be done! Help me to do it! Help me to bear it! Help me to go through with it all to Your honor and Glory. Let me be baptized with Your Baptism, and drink of Your cup, even to the dregs.”—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2767, Volume 48—JESUS IN GETHSEMANE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>

“Perhaps you do not see conversions in your work because you keep looking to the people—looking to the sinners—looking to the hardness of their hearts. What has all that to do with Christ’s power to save? If this man, in addition to being paralyzed, could have had fever, leprosy, dropsy and all other diseases at once, it would not have mattered in the least to the Great Physician, for when Christ comes on the scene, if you have one impossibility, He can meet it—and if you had 50 impossibilities, He can meet them all just as easily! Granted an Almighty Savior, what room is there for doubt as to what He can do?”—CHS, 1895, Sermon #2434

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THE LORD IS MY ROCK AND MY SALVATION

John Warburton 1776-1857
(A Gospel preacher from England)

Have you any other rock but Christ? I do not ask whether you will rejoice in Jesus when the Holy Spirit enables you. But have you any other refuge? Can you go out into eternity resting upon any other rock but the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you any other righteousness but His? Can you lean upon, desire, or want any other than Christ’s righteousness? “No,” says the soul, “none but Christ! None but Christ!” Bless your poor heart, then! You shall have it as sure as God has worked the desire in your conscience and brought you to trust alone in Jesus for refuge, for righteousness, for salvation by stripping you of all false props and dependencies! Such a soul as this will trust in the Lord, overcome all opposition and be more than a conqueror through Him that has loved him.

BEHOLD YOUR GOD

By Dr. John Gill, 1697-1771
(Gospel preacher, theologian and commentator from England)

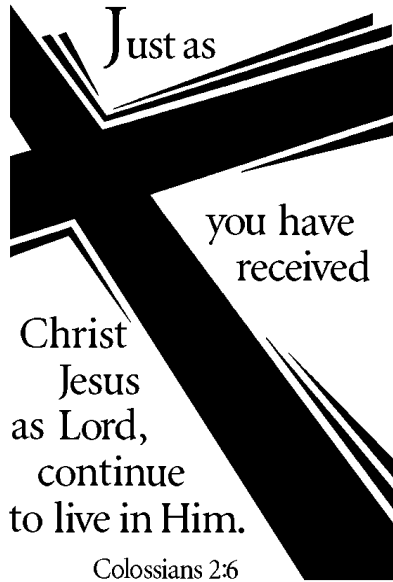
Get up on a high mountain, lift up your voice, be not afraid, and say to the people, “Behold your God.” That Divine Person is come who was promised, prophesied and expected—even Immanuel, God With Us! God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, God our Savior, “Who was with God, who is God, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a Servant” and who, being Man and God, is “able to save to the uttermost them who come to God by Him.”

Look to Him with an eye of faith and be saved, all the ends of the earth! Behold the Son of God, the Lamb of God, who has borne our sins and taken them away. Behold Him now as your King and your God on the throne, crowned with glory and honor, on the same throne with His Father, and let the cry of your faith be, “MY LORD AND MY GOD.”

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Just as
you have
received
Christ
Jesus
as Lord,
continue
to live in Him.
Colossians 2:6



**“Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall
give you the desires of your heart.”
Psa 37:4 NKJV**

In This Issue...

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

REMEMBER YOUR BAPTISM?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

Do you remember your Baptism—you who were, in Scriptural fashion, buried with Christ in Baptism? I recollect mine. What did I mean by it? I meant that as I gave up my body to be temporarily buried in the river—as the water rolled over me and I was as one dead and buried, so did I declare that I was dead to sin, dead to the world and buried to it all. And I also meant that as I rose again from the stream, so would I live for Christ, alone, in newness of life, as one who had been dead, buried and had risen again. To me that was the most solemn day of my life! I remember rising early, at the break of day, that I might have some hours of prayer before starting, for I had some miles to walk along a country road. And all the way I was thinking of the public dedication of myself to my Master. I meant that to be my funeral day to all except Himself and the day of my resurrection with Him! And I hope it was, and also hope it was the same with you. If so, I pray you do not belie your Baptism! I charge you who have been buried with Christ, that you bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus, not in one place only, as was the fashion under the old Law—but in your entire body, that you may be wholly Christ's, completely Christ's, henceforth and forever!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307—Sermon #2774, Volume 48—LOVE PLEDGING FIDELITY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>

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PRAY FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN PRISONS.

“It is not happiness to see, but sight with enjoyment and interest. There are but two powers of the soul, understanding and will. When both of these have their perfection, that is happiness: when the understanding sees, and the will draws the affections. So these things concur to make up our everlasting happiness, the excellency of the thing, with the sight of it, and interest in it.” —RICHARD SIBBES

“Election having once pitched upon a man, it will find him out and call him home, wherever he is. It called Zaccheus out of accursed Jericho; Abraham out of idolatrous Ur of the Chaldees; Nicodemus and Paul, from the College of the Pharisees, Christ's sworn enemies; Dionysius and Damaris, out of superstitious Athens. In whatever dunghills God's elect are hid, election will find them out and bring them home.” —JOHN ARROWSMITH

“Pride is the shirt of the soul, put on first and taken off last.”
—GEORGE SWINNOCK