

FOR HIS GLORY

Volume 13, Issue 4

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Happy are our lives who can win souls! I am very apt to be cast down and distressed in soul, but, next to fellowship with my Lord, my greatest consolation is found in receiving glad tidings of souls saved. Here comes a letter of loving thanks from Ceylon and another from the north of Norway, saying, "Blessed be God that I read your sermons and found a Savior." From America I hear of an eminent Jewish Rabbi who has become a Baptist minister through reading one of my discourses. And recently I received a letter from Havana from a sailor who had just left the hospital. He told me how the man who died in the next bed told him that he had a treasure which he would give him if he would take care of it. And he then handed him a number of my sermons stitched together. "They have saved my soul," he said, "and I hope they will save yours." The sailor who writes blesses God in a warm-hearted way that it is so and the sermons have led him to Jesus.—
CHS



"WHAT WOMEN THESE CHRISTIANS HAVE!"

By Daniel E. Parks

That declaration was made by Labanius, a fourth century Greek-speaking teacher of rhetoric of the Sophist school, who had considerable contact with Christians (one of his students was John Chrysostom), but never embraced Christ. Other than what I have just written, I know very little about him.

But I most certainly and whole-heartedly agree with his evaluation of Christian women—"What women these Christians have!"

I could speak of many Biblical women, including Sarah, wife of the patriarch Abraham and mother of the righteous (Isa 51:2; 1 Peter 3:6; Heb 11:1); Rahab the converted harlot (Josh 2), cited for her faith in God (Heb 11:31) and as a foremost example of true and Biblical justification by works (James 2:25); Deborah, a "mother in Israel" who delivered Israel from Canaanite oppressors (Judges 4-5); Ruth the Moabitess, one of the only people in all God's Word of whom much is written without the mention of a single character flaw (see book bearing her name, especially 1:16f; 2:10-12; 3:10f).

And Esther, the most important figure in the deliverance of the Jews from the murderous plot de-

vised to annihilate them during the reign of the Persian King, Ahasuerus (see book bearing her name); Hannah, a barren woman whose prayer for a son resulted in Jehovah blessing His people with Samuel the Prophet, whom she dedicated to the Lord for use in His service (1 Sam 1); Mary and Elizabeth, mothers of Jesus the Christ and John the Baptist respectively—truly "blessed among women" (Luke 1).

And prophetesses including Miriam (Exo 15:20f), Deborah (cited earlier), Huldah (2 Chron 34:22), Noadiah (Neh 6:14), Anna (Luke 2:36-38), and Philip's daughters (Acts 21:8f). And women exemplary in their hospitality to the Lord's servants, such as Abigail (1 Sam 25:3-42), an unnamed Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:8-37), Mary and Martha of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-5ff; 12:1-8), Joanna and Susanna (Luke 8:3), the "many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him" (Matt 27:55f), Tabitha also known as Dorcas (Acts 9:36), Lydia (Acts 16:14f), Priscilla (Acts 18:26; Rom 16:3f), Phoebe (Rom 16:1f), Mary and Tryphena and Tryphosa and Persis and Julia and Nereus

(See **WHAT WOMEN** on page 3)

WHO IS THE HEAD OF CHRIST'S CHURCH?

By C. H. Spurgeon

Now, Beloved, it is meet that *Christ should have no second place in His Church*, and certainly no such place has been allotted to Him by the eternal Father. As I can now but speak of the Church of God, at large, I think I am guided for a moment by an evil spirit standing at my left hand, who points with black fingers over to the city of the Seven Hills, and he says to me, "There is one great supreme ruler, the Vicar of God on earth—behold his splendors! See how they bear him through the streets of Rome upon the shoulders of men, with canopies of silk, smothered with jewels and with peacock and ostrich feathers! Mark how they swing their censers and how the multitudes fall down before him, for him has God exalted, for him has God glorified." Ah, but this is a vain and idle boast, for we read not in any page of this Book of any such exaltation to any being! And where will be found the being that shall dare to take it, unless he shall first become the victim of Satan? Satan said to Christ, "All this will I give You if You will fall down and worship me." And he that has it, must have first fallen down

(See **No Pope** on page 2)

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BRETHREN, NO POPE WAS EVER HEAD OF CHRIST'S CHURCH!

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and worshipped Satan, or he has no such power among the sons of men!

Now, Beloved, Christ did not redeem His Church with His blood that the Pope might come in and steal away the glory! He never came from Heaven to earth and poured out His very heart that He might purchase His people so that a poor sinner, a mere man, should be set upon high to be admired by all the nations and to call himself God's representative on earth! Christ has always been the Head of His Church. Why, we have read in history that kings at different times have wished to play the Head of the Church, and that we owe our Protestantism, as we call it over here—that we owe much of that to the desire of a certain crowned head to become a little Pope over certain dominions! This is very true, but not Henry the Eighth, nor his successor, nor any of those who now live, are more the Head of the Church than he is God, Himself! It is not possible for any to be Head in the Church of Christ, but Jesus! Has God exalted Him and made Him to be the Head over all things—and it is usurping the prerogative of Christ for any to suppose they can be Head of the Church of Christ, for Jesus Christ is the Head and He, alone, holds power over ecclesiastical organizations! Over the sacred mystical, blood-bought, redeemed, regenerated Church of Christ there never can, by any possibility, be any other Head but Jesus Christ, the Lord Himself! Now mark, *God has exalted the Lord Jesus Christ in the government of His Church.* All authority, all authoritative rules in Zion come through Jesus Christ. All true teaching in Zion comes from His lips. We call no man, master, upon earth, for One is our Master, and that One is Christ. No man is Rabbi in the Church, but He is our Rabboni, our Teacher, and all other teachers are thieves and robbers if they teach on their own authority. They only are accepted as the Lord's shepherds, who speak Christ's Truth in Christ's name—and in the power of His own Spirit. God has made Christ to rule supremely throughout the Church, and in this He has glorified Him!

He has made Him the Head of the Church in another respect—*He is the head of all light in the Church.* There is no true light in the Christian Church, not a single spark of it, but what comes from Christ. All life comes to us from Him. There may be energy in the Church of a carnal and fleshly sort—she may have force and power which she derives from men—but this will die and perish, like the grass and the flower of the fields. Vital godliness always proceeds from Jesus Christ, as the branch's life comes from the vine. "Without Me, you can do nothing, but because I live, you shall live, also." He is the life of men! He quickens whom He will and it is not possible that there should exist even a grain of spiritual life in any human heart, but that which comes to that heart through Jesus Christ! He is also *the Head over all things in the Church—all spiritual things.* The Spirit of God resides in Christ without measure—and He sends forth the Spirit—He gives a Comforter to us. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell," and the continuance of the Church, and the growth of the Church, and the edification of the Church—all sorts of beneficial influences which come to the Church—proceed to us through Jesus Christ, the Church's covenanted Head!

Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.—Sermon #3435, Volume 60—SANCTIFIED SORROW—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at www.spurgeongems.org.

Katy Baptist Church
Hwy 250 North
Fairmont, WV 26571
(304) 825-1116
Marvin Stalnaker, Pastor

2010 Bible Conference April 2-4

Our speakers this year will be Pastors Tom Harding, Zebulon Baptist Church (Pikeville, KY) and John Chapman, Hurricane Road Grace Church (Ashland, KY).

Friday April 2 7:00 PM.....Pastor Tom Harding

Saturday April 3 10:00 AM.....Pastor John Chapman

Sunday April 4 10:00 AM.....Pastor Tom Harding

11:00 AM.....Pastor John Chapman

Scripture reading and devotional will precede the Friday and Saturday services and Scripture reading only before the Sunday services.

Soup and sandwiches will be served starting at 5:00 on Friday afternoon and a light meal after the Saturday morning services. A full meal will be served after the Sunday morning services.

A nursery will be provided for children 4 and under

A special rate of **\$48.49** (plus tax) is being offered by the Super-8 Motel (next to Cracker Barrel at exit 133) for this conference. Their number is (304) 363-1488. Please mention the conference in order to receive the rate.

**Jesus Christ is the ONLY
way to God the Father!
Not Mary. Not Mohammed.
Not a future Messiah.
JESUS CHRIST
is the ONLY way.**

SPURGEON SPEAKS, IN 1873, ON INFANT BAPTISM— MIGHT WE LEARN FROM HIM IN 2010?

Luther did a grand service by his Reformation, but he stopped half-way—he left the Church with her face half-washed—and in consequence her whole visage has again become foul. O for a thorough reformation! So long as words stood in the Anglican Prayer Book which, to the common reader, taught baptismal regeneration, they were an invitation and an encouragement to the Popish party to return! And having returned, they are, for them, a castle and high tower!

I shall give great offense as I now go further and say, as in the sight of God, that I am persuaded that so long as infant Baptism is practiced in any Christian Church, Popery will have a door set wide open for its return. It is one of those nests which must come down, or the foul birds will build in it again. We must come to the Law and to the Testimony, and any ordinance which is not plainly taught in Scripture must be put away.

As long as you give Baptism to an unregenerate child, people will imagine that it must do the child good, for they will ask, “If it does not do it any good, why is it baptized?” The statement that it puts children into the Covenant, or renders them members of the visible Church, is only a veiled form of the fundamental error of Baptismal Regeneration. If you keep up the ordinance, you will always have men superstitiously believing that some good comes to the baby, thereby—and what is this but sheer Popery?

Since the child cannot understand what is done, any good which it receives must come to it after the occult manner so much in vogue with the superstitious—is it any wonder that Popish beliefs grow out of it? And not only as to infant Baptism, but as to every other doctrine, ordinance, or precept—we must each seek to get back to this Book and follow closely the Word of God.

The Wesleyan, the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the Independent, the Episcopalian must each be eager to put away everything, however esteemed among them, which is founded upon denominational *tradition* and not upon Inspired Authority. To the Law and to the Testimony must the Church of God return if she would escape future outbreaks of Anti-Christian evil. Great errors spring from lesser errors. To favor falsehood is to injure Truth. God give to His people to feel that the utmost care becomes them in obeying the Lord and walking after His commands, lest evil come of negligence.

And, dear Brothers and Sisters, as the voice of this evil abounds, let us abound in our testimony to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus. The more the priests set up the idols, the more let us lift up Christ and Him Crucified! The more they compass sea and land to make proselytes, the more earnestly let us plead with men that they will believe in the true Savior. Let the diligence of our enemies shame our indolence—let their earnestness rebuke our lethargy. Let us abundantly distribute the antidote while they industriously disseminate the poison—let us pour out Light and so scatter their darkness!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #1135, Volume 19—*Signs of the Times*—Read/download entire sermon on www.spurgeongems.org.

HAVE YOU PRAYED FOR YOUR SPOUSE TODAY?

“WHAT WOMEN THESE CHRISTIANS HAVE!”

(Continued from page 1)

sister—all of the Roman church (Rom 16:6, 12, 15); Lois and Eunice, grandmother and mother of Timothy, exemplary in the raising of children (2 Tim 1:5; 3:14f); many others undoubtedly—if time and space permitted.

I could speak of many women in post-Apostolic days, among whom some of the more well-known are Katharina Luther, wife of Martin (1499-1552), Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-91), and Susannah Spurgeon, wife of Charles (1832-1903).

I could speak of many women in these present days, including those in the churches of my own circle of fellowship. I have them delighting to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, showing exceptional kindnesses and hospitality to His ministers, faithfully loving their husbands and raising their children in the reverence of Christ. Among them are women including—well, that list would be way too long for inclusion here.

“What women these Christians have!”

And what a sharp contrast are so many women of the world. I suppose the most desirable of them in the eyes of the ungodly are the actresses and models and other allegedly “beautiful people” who “grace” the covers of the magazines at almost any store checkout counter. As a very general rule, they may be aptly described by the proverbial “ring of gold in a swine’s snout” (Prov 11:22).

And especially—O yes, especially!—are the women of man-made religion contrasted to Christian women. This includes those women preachers and teachers whom Jesus Christ aptly characterizes as “Jezebel” (Rev 2:20-23; cp. 2 Kings 9:22. And tell me if you know of a single woman preacher who preaches God’s Free Grace and does not preach man’s free will.) Is it any surprise to the child of God that man-made religion is called “the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Rev 17:5)? The more I consider “What women Satan and his religion have!” the more I appreciate “What women these Christians have!”

And what a difference God makes in a believing woman! (You do not think Christian women became so commendable through their own free will and meritorious works, do you?) He takes even harlots and adulteresses and turns them into paragons of virtue, as he did to Rahab (cited earlier), Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:1-4 & Prov 31:1ff), an unnamed woman in Samaria (John 4:1-42), and a woman brought to Christ from the very act of adultery (John 8:1-11). And He has done so to women who formerly were daughters of the “mother of harlots” (cited earlier). If any of these Christian women would be asked, I venture to say that she would confess that the ungodly and immoral “works of the flesh” characterized her spiritual state prior to the Lord saving her (see Gal 5:19-21; cp. Rom 7:5; 8:5; Eph 2:1-3).

This most certainly is true of the wife of Christ. O, what a difference is made in a woman by the Grace of God and the blood of Christ and the calling of the Holy Spirit. No wonder even pagans and heathens exclaim, “What women these Christians have!”

READ JOHN 3:16 AND JOHN 3:18...

Letters to Mike Gendron Of Proclaiming the Gospel:

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

PO Box 940871,

Plano, TX 75094

Kall, Internet, writes:

The Bible, according to Catholic teaching, is the first and foremost guide to our salvation. Nothing the Catholic church has said has contradicted the Bible. Teachings of the Catholic church are only meant to make clearer and help the faithful. I am not aware of any additional requirements made by the Catholic Church for salvation.

Brother Mike responds:

The Gospel is entirely and exclusively about the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of redemption (1 Cor 15:1-4). It tells us that our Creator has become our Redeemer! The Gospel says nothing about anything sinners must add to Christ's finished work. Yet, according to the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic church (paragraph numbers in parenthesis) Rome declares the following requirements are necessary to be saved: sacraments (1129), meritorious masses (1405), church membership (846), purgatory (1030), indulgences (1498), baptism (1256) and good works (2016). This is a blatant perversion of God's Gospel and brings condemnation on those who preach it (Gal 1:6-9). It is an outright denial of the sufficiency of Christ, devalues His perfect work and robs Him of His matchless Gory. I pray you will forsake these feeble efforts to save yourself and seek God's forgiveness by Grace through faith in Jesus alone (Eph. 2:8-9).

Michael, Internet, writes:

My challenge to you is, show me where in the Bible it says the Bible is the only authority and show me where the Bible tells you it is confined to only what is written in it.

Brother Mike responds:

My challenge to you is, show me in the Bible where it points to an authority greater than itself. Once you realize there is no greater authority, I pray you will destroy every speculation that has been raised up against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor 10:5).

J. O., Dallas, TX, writes:

The Vatican's position of protecting priests, while ignoring the pain and suffering of the children they violated, speaks volumes about the Roman Catholic church. Catholics should examine their church's pious public displays as a "holier than thou" belief which places them above the Word of God and Jesus Christ Himself. This attitude places the apostate church above the laws of man and God and makes it accountable to no one. Yet, in spite of what they see and hear, millions of Catholics bow in adoration to Mary and statues, observe pagan rites at the exhortation of their Pope, and reject God's effective, complete and sufficient work of salvation at the Cross through Jesus Christ. They are being led to an eternal fire like sheep to slaughter. For those who believe Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Savior, not requiring any other provision for salvation, the RCC condemns them with anathema to eternal damnation. Yet, a priest who is a homosexual, (a sin condemned by the Bible), and who sexually violates young boys, is "forgiven," protected and cared for. Why? Because the RCC, at all costs,

has to protect itself and hold itself superior and separate from everyone else. Power, absolute power, is the hallmark of this religion and its Vatican hierarchy. I am terribly saddened by the millions who are thus fooled. I am terribly incensed at the work of this pagan, apostate church. They WILL be held accountable to God! [2003 letter.]

Ben, Internet, writes:

You are wrong about the Catholic church. It is a place of holiness devoted to Jesus Christ. You are a sick sick man. I hope you are damned eternally, when you die, for putting down the one true Christian Church established by Christ.

Pastor D. P. Colfax, IL, writes:

Your video on The Coming One World Religion is excellent! Everyone needs to see it. The Presbyterian Church USA is dialoging with the Roman Catholic church and has now recognized it as a Christian Church in which we can have fellowship. I have written to our office of Ecumenical Relations and other offices showing them the RCC's goal is to bring everyone under the Pope. They don't answer me anymore.

J.C., Internet, writes:

Your fallible and superficial interpretation of the Bible is indicative in your response to the pope's statement—"you do not need to know Jesus or His church to enter the kingdom of heaven." Jesus paved the way for all people to be saved, regardless of their knowledge. Surely you cannot believe that every person that has lived and died in the history of the world knew who Jesus was.

Brother Mike responds:

Have you not read what the Scriptures say? "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?" (Rom 10:13-15). Sinners can be saved only by God's Grace through faith in Jesus. According to Peter, those without knowledge of Him will perish. The Lord will "keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh...reviling where they have no knowledge" (2 Peter 2:9-14). It is for this reason we must correct unbelievers "who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the Truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will" (2 Tim 2:25).

C.R., Grand Rapids, MI, writes:

We thank you for your concern and love for the deceived Roman Catholics—expressing your love to them through your firm stand on God's Word.

J. C., Pineville, PA, writes:

You deserve a gold medal for being so cool, calm and collected in your replies to the sarcastic and arrogant letters you receive. If these Catholics are so religious, why don't they read the parts of the Bible you quote? If you hated Catholics so much why would you try to save them through quoting God's Word? You are not using force, just the facts!

WHY?—GOOD QUESTION!

By Charles H. Spurgeon

*“As the days of Heaven upon the earth.”
Deuteronomy 11:21.*

If there are so many days of Heaven upon earth—why do we not have more of them?

I think there are many reasons. *Some people think it wicked to be happy.* You smile, but I know some Christians who even seem to think that it is a sign of growth in Grace when you grow to be blessedly miserable! They imagine that for anything like joy to be in a Christian is incompatible with sincerity. We have not so learned Christ! We know that through much tribulation we inherit the Kingdom of God, but we have learned that as tribulation abounds, so consolation abounds through Jesus Christ. Let your face lack no oil, and your head no ointment—go your way and live happily and joyfully—for if God has accepted you, there is no flesh living that has such a right to be joyous!

Accepted in the Beloved! Cleansed from sin! Clothed with the righteousness of Christ! Safe for Heaven! Why should you not be happy? Go to the weeping willows, take down your harps and begin to strike them to melodious tunes. You ought to be happy, you people of the living God! Let the righteous be glad. Yes, let them shout for joy! Some Christians, perhaps, do not think it is wrong to be happy, but they will not be. Almost as a matter of principle, they will not be happy. You cannot please them. They are thorough Englishmen—they exercise the blessed prerogative of grumbling. No matter what it is, they can always see something or other to find fault with in it.

If they have much, it might be more. If they have little, they are harshly treated. The blessings of the upper springs cannot content them unless the nether springs flow in as freely. And the mercies that come from Heaven will not please them unless they can have their share of the mercies of earth. Oh, dear Friends, pray the Lord to give you a new heart and a right spirit! I cannot make out what such a body as you will do in Heaven. Ask your Master to take away your grumpy spirit so that you may be able to see reasons for joy, for there are many of them! Charnock says, “He who observes Providence will never be without Providence to observe,” and we can say, he who is willing to be made happy may never be without something to make him happy, if he chooses to look for it.

There are some of us who do not have as many days of Heaven upon earth because *we could hardly bear them.* Joy has sometimes danger with it. There are, among the flowers, poisonous asp. The Christian has need, when his cup is full, to carry it with a steady hand. Too much spiritual joy might even be too much for the physical frame, like the old Scotch Divine who called out, “Hold, Lord! Hold, Lord! It is enough! Remember, I am but an earthen vessel. Give me no more joy, lest I die of excess of it!” Yes, there might be spiritual maladies, if not bodily ones—we might grow proud, self-conceited and lifted up. If we have much sail, we want much ballast and, perhaps, the furnace is as good a place for us as any place on earth until we get to Heaven.

If we had so many of these days of Heaven upon earth, we might never long to go to Heaven at all! We might say, “This is a place happy enough for us!” But the Lord will not let us do so. He will make the wilderness to be a wilderness, still, that we may be willing to go on to Canaan. He would not have the sailor so content with the vessel as not to desire the port—and so He sends us rough days and stiff breezes that we may be disturbed and long for our desired haven.

There is one thing more—if we had so many of these days and no troubles, *we would not be like Christ*—we would lack one point of conformity to Him, for He was “a Man of Sorrows.” We are to have fellowship with Him in His sufferings—and if our path were always smooth and our sky always bright—we might not know as well as we know now what the sufferings of Jesus Christ meant. We might be losers in Heaven if we were not sufferers here, for I suppose it will be a part of the joy in Heaven to remember the sorrow through which we came, to recollect the difficulties which we overcame and if we have not sorrows or difficulties, we shall not have so sweet a song. Rest is all the sweeter to the laboring man, and so shall the rest of Heaven be all the better because of the days of grief and sorrow which we had on earth. —Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.—Sermon #3425, Volume 60—DAYS OF HEAVEN UPON THE EARTH—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at www.spurgeonems.org.

ARE YOU IN THE ARK?

By C. H. Spurgeon

“Examine yourselves, *whether you be in the faith.*” “Oh,” says one, “You may examine me whether I am in the faith. I am an orthodox Christian, fully up to the standard, good genuine weight. There is no fear whatever of my coming up to the mark and going a little beyond it, too.” Ah, but, my Friend, that is not the question! I would have you orthodox, for a man who is heterodox in his opinions will most liked be heterodox in his actions. But the question now is not whether you believe the Truth—but whether you are *in* the Truth? Just to give you an illustration of what I mean. There is the ark. And a number of men around it. “Ah,” says one, “I believe that ark will swim.” “Oh,” says another, “I believe that ark is made of gopher-wood and is strong from stem to stern. I am quite sure that ark will float, come what may. I am a firm believer in that ark.”

Yes, but when the rain descended and the flood came, it was not believing the ark as a matter of fact—it was being *in* the ark that saved men and only those that were in it escaped in that dread day of deluge. So there may be some of you that say of the Gospel of Christ, “I believe it to be of a particular character,” and you may be quite correct in your judgment. You may say, “I think it to be that which honors God and casts down the pride of man.” Herein, too, you may think quite right. But mark, it is not having an orthodox faith, but it is being *in* the faith, being *in* Christ, taking refuge *in* Him as in the ark, for he that only has the faith as a thing *ab extra* and without being *in* the faith, shall perish in the day of God’s anger.

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Study of Ephesians**CHRIST THE GIVER OF GIFTS - 4**

Another mark of an Apostle was the fact that he received direct and Infallible Revelation from the Lord. Paul has explained to us earlier in Ephesians 3:2-3, “if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already).” And to the Galatians Paul says in 1:11-12, “But I make known to you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

A third mark and qualification of an Apostle was the ability to do signs, wonders, and miracles. People today are clamoring for signs and wonders. Some are saying that unless you have signs and wonders, you’re not truly sent of God. Others are saying that our evangelism will have no power unless it is accompanied by signs and wonders. I wonder how many have asked what was the purpose of the signs and wonders that were done in the New Testament times? The answer which the New Testament itself gives is that they were special gifts that were given to the Apostles in order to confirm that their message was truly from the Lord. For instance, when Paul is defending his own Apostleship, he says in 2 Corinthians 12:11-12, “I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent Apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an Apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”

The signs and wonders and miracles performed by the Apostles had a very definite purpose. It was to confirm to those who heard them that they were the recipients of Infallible Revelation from the Lord and that their message could be relied upon.

That brings us now to the second gift mentioned in our verse, which is that of Prophet. We know that there were many Old Testament Prophets, and they were used by God to give us our Old Testament. New Testament Prophets received occasional Revelations from God that were to be passed on to the Church. Most of the Believers did not have access to Bibles or to the New Testament letters. Therefore Prophets played an important role in the early Church. New Testament Prophets did not have all of the same qualifications as the Apostles. It was not necessary that they had seen the risen Lord. In fact, it was not even necessary that they be men. For we read in Acts 21:9 of Philip, who had “four virgin daughters who prophesied.”

I am not prepared to say that there is no continuing gift of prophecy in the New Testament, especially in light of 1 Corinthians 14. This is a separate and lengthy study all to itself, but I believe that what Paul is referring to in our Ephesians passage is the foundational gifts of Apostle and Prophet that God used to reveal truth to His people until the Bible was complete. How thankful we should be that we have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to guide us by means of the Scriptures. We do not have to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. The test for everything that is said in the Church today is the Bible. Do you remember how when Paul went to Berea, the Bereans went home after Paul preached and searched their Old Testaments to make sure that what Paul had said to them was true? And was Paul offended by that? Not at all. Luke comments about them in Acts 17:11, “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” The Holy Spirit speaks through the Bible, and we still need His illumination upon the

Word.

So the Apostles and Prophets were used to lay the foundation for our faith. And with the foundation having been laid, we now have the two remaining gifts which Paul goes on to list in our verse.

The third gift mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 is that of evangelist. The word “evangelist” simply means “preacher of the Gospel.” I believe this refers to men whose primary calling is to preach the Gospel among those who have not yet believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of our modern-day missionaries would qualify as evangelists, for they have been called by Christ primarily to preach the Gospel message among those who have not yet heard. All Believers are in a sense to be evangelists. We are all called to proclaim the Gospel. But I believe that this reference in our passage is to a particular gift given to certain men with a specific calling.

That brings us now to the last gift listed here. Many have taken what Paul says at the end of the verse as TWO different offices. They say that Paul here mentions “pastors and teachers.” But if you look at your Bible carefully, you will see that most translations have done a good job reflecting the original Greek here. Each of the gifts listed in the verse has the word “some” before it—“He Himself gave SOME Apostles; and SOME Prophets, and SOME evangelists, and SOME pastors and teachers.” The words, “pastors” and “teachers,” refer to two functions of the same office. This is not two gifts or two different offices, but one which has a two-fold function.

Men who hold this office are to be pastors. The word, “pastor,” comes from the word, “pasture.” It carries the idea so prevalent in the Bible of a shepherd caring for his sheep. Peter tells elders in 1 Peter 5:2, “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers.” Paul told the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20:28, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

The pastor, then, is to care for the spiritual well-being of those entrusted to him. But he cannot do that unless he uses the second part of his gift, which is to teach. The pastor must feed God’s people God’s Word. As the passage goes on to say, if this is done, the saints will be equipped for serving the Lord and built up in the faith. They will also be protected from the deception of false teachings.

When pastors are faithful to do this, they are building upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. They take the teaching of the Word of God and bring it to bear upon the lives of those who make up the Church. Thus Paul commands the young pastor Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, “Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching.”

Now much more could be said about the office of pastor-teacher, and Lord willing we will do so at another time. But let us conclude by seeing again how important it is that we in the Church do not take matters belonging only to Christ, the Head of the Church, into our own hands in regard to this matter of spiritual gifts.

When we try to take the Lord’s place by telling men whom Christ may not have called that they should enter the ministry, it can only hurt the Church and bring reproach on the name of Christ. We must

(See CHRIST THE GIVER OF GIFTS on page 8)

THE “I AM”S OF JESUS CHRIST—PART 3

“I AM THE TRUE VINE”

By Daniel E. Parks, Pastor
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The grape vine was especially treasured by Biblical peoples. Its fruit was very nourishing, whether eaten straight from the vine or as raisins. Its juice was very refreshing, whether drunk straight from the vine or as wine. Its leaves provided shade and to sit in this shade symbolized peace and prosperity (1 Kings 4:25). The vine was therefore found in every desirable garden.

The nation Israel was the vine of God in Old Testament times. As a vine, Israel had been delivered by God out of all its adversities in Egypt, and planted and nourished by Him in the fertile soil of the Promised Land and caused, by Him, to flourish (Psa 80:8-11). But Israel rebelled against God and, therefore, failed to realize its ideal. It brought forth “wild” grapes instead of “good,” and was consequently laid waste by God in the Babylonian captivity (Isa 5:1-7). Old Testament Israel ceased to be the vine of God.

Jesus Christ and His disciples constitute the vine of God in these New Testament times. This Truth is set forth by Jesus Christ in John 15. He first declares, “I am the true [or ideal] vine” (v 1). And as a vine is comprised of both the main stalk and its branches, He furthermore declares to Believers, “I am the vine, you are the branches” (v 5). God’s True Vine is therefore comprised of Jesus Christ and all those persons who are vitally joined to Him.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that we are rightly related to Jesus Christ if we are to produce the fruit required by God. Jesus Christ, therefore, exhorts us, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me...He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (vv 4, 5, 7).

None but true disciples of Jesus Christ bear the fruit required by God. The fruit they bear pleases God so greatly that they are told by Jesus Christ, “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (v 8).

God the Father tends to His True Vine. Jesus Christ declared, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser” (v 1). This care by the heavenly Father is necessary because not everyone *professing* to be a Christian is, indeed, a Christian—and every true Christian must be enabled to be very productive. Christ declares that God tends to the branches of His vine in two ways.

1) “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away...” (v 2a). The unfruitful branches of Christ are those who are but nominal Christians—in *name* only. They may boast of having made a profession of faith in Christ, of following Him in Baptism, of joining a Church and of performing righteous deeds for Him. But they have not been vitally joined to Him through faith and repentance, fully believing in Him as their Savior and submitting to Him as their Lord.

They therefore do not abide in Christ. Jesus Christ declares that their doom is sure—“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned” (v 6). Christ, here, especially refers to the casting of the wicked into the lake of fire at the final judgment (Rev 20:11-15).

2) “...every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (v 2b). *Pruning* involves cutting away all that is superfluous and excessive for the betterment of the branch and vine. When God prunes faithful Christians, His fruitful branches, He removes all the worldly things that hinder their growth in Christ.

God performs this pruning through the voluntary reformation of His people. They are therefore exhorted to, “...put to death...fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires and covetousness, which is idolatry...anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language” (Col 3:5-8). None but those who do so are vitally joined to Christ “the True Vine.” And none but these will enjoy the blessings of God.

Are you a branch in Christ, the True Vine?

ETERNAL LIFE

By Pastor Henry T. Mahan
From Zebulon Baptist Church,
Pikeville, KY
Bulletin 3/7/2010

“And this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.”

John 17:3.

When our Lord speaks of eternal life, He is not speaking of the length of it but the *quality* of it. You see, eternal life is salvation. Eternal life is regeneration. Eternal life is a new birth. Eternal life is a restoration of the life that was lost in Adam. *“In Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”*

When a man has eternal life, he has what he did not have before in the flesh. When a man has eternal life he knows what he did not know before, he knows God. When a man has eternal life he is what he was not before, he is a new creature and a new person in Christ Jesus. When a man has eternal life, he is a son of God, an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. [Adapted from a transcribed TV sermon].

REFLECTIONS

Precious Gems gleaned

By Jim Robinette

“Reflections” is a Christian meditation sent by Action Uganda Ministries
and is meant to encourage, instruct and edify.

Now, as the irreligion of our day is of much deeper root and stronger texture than that of former times, so must the means for removing it be more vigorous and decisive. Whatever might have formerly availed for effecting the cure, nothing now will be of service but the strongest measures. The disease is more malignant; the obstacles to be overcome are greater than ever; for “in the last days perilous times shall come.” “Little children, it is the last time, and as you have heard that anti-Christ shall come, even now there are many anti-Christ, whereby we know that it is the last time” (2Tim 3:1; 1 John 2:18).

First, then, let me observe, the *unbelief* of our day is one of the most formidable obstacles which lie in our way. By unbelief, I do not mean that bold infidelity which has so extensively lifted its front amongst us. I speak of that subtlety of Satan whereby he has contrived to rob spiritual things of all their power and reality—and if not to lead us to doubt of their existence, at least to withdraw us from their close contact and immediate influence—to deprive them of their *personality*, and to present them to us as vague, airy abstractions, which float through both understanding, but which never close around the heart.

Unbelief is the opposite of faith and faith is said by the Apostle to be “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Unbelief, then, is that which reduces things hoped for to a shadow and takes from us the demonstration of things not seen. It is this consummation of his hellish craft that Satan is now seeking to achieve. The world is not yet ripe for denying God with the open lips and throwing off altogether the yoke of spiritual things. His objective, therefore, is to remove the substance while he allows us to retain the shadow—to extract the jewels while he lets us keep the casket! To destroy “the power” while he allows us to retain “the name.” This is unbelief in its subtlest and most specious form—eating out the vitals of religion, while the skeleton stands entire in every joint and bone! He seems, at last, to have discovered wherein the mighty strength of Christianity lay—even in the closeness of that contact with the world unseen into which it brings us—and the consequent influence which things spiritual thus possess over every manner of hope and joy. He is, therefore, now busied in removing these realities to a distance, that he may neutralize the power of the religion of Christ. Both Heaven and Hell is he seeking to convert into shadows and even to hide *himself* from the eye of men, persuading them to doubt his own existence, and to deny his personality, pointing the jest against himself and scoffing at men’s notions of his power and presence, as the dreams of the credulous, the dregs of a darker time, too gross and irrational for an enlightened age like this!

He is interposing a veil between things possessed and things hope for—and that is *unbelief*. He is drawing an impassable gulf between things seen and unseen—and that is unbelief. He is cutting off the communications between time and eternity, severing the link that bound the two together—and that is unbelief. He is persuading us that the present is the only substantial reality, and the future but a dim and distant shadow—a possibility, or, at the most, a probability, but not a certainty—and that is unbelief. The mighty work of unbelief, however, which he is especially striving to effect, is to draw a veil between us and Christ! This is the grand design which he seems especially to be laboring to effect in these last days—to separate Christ from the world, and the world from Christ, yes, to take Christ out of the world altogether, and to make us believe we can do well enough without Him! This, this is especially his aim! To take Christ out of religion, out of our theology, out of our education, out of our government, out of our thoughts and hearts—this he labors by every agency to effect!—From Horatius Bonar’s (1808-1889) sermon, *The Cure for Unbelief*, based on Mark 9:29.

CHRIST THE GIVER OF GIFTS

(Continued from page 6)

never let the criteria for putting men into the ministry be the standards of the world rather than the call of Christ. If that happens, the Church becomes lifeless and worldly.

Is that not exactly what is happening right at this moment? Thousands of people are sitting in pews all across the land and are receiving nothing for their souls. And when the world looks on and sees the type of Christians who come out of these churches, having no spiritual life and being fed no spiritual food, is it any wonder that they are not interested in the things of the Lord?

Oh Brother and Sisters, it is our responsibility to be praying that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth laborers into the fields. The need is great. The Church must wake up. She must see herself as a living organism, the very body of Christ, and not some ecclesiastical organization. The gifts which Christ has given to her are spiritual and, when accompanied by the Holy Spirit, they are very powerful. We need men today who have been called by Christ and who will unashamedly preach the Gospel to a lost and dying world. It is the Gospel that is “**the power of God unto salvation.**” Nothing else will work. The Holy Spirit will honor nothing else but what the world calls the “**foolishness of the preaching of Christ Crucified.**”

And we who are in the Church must not be afraid to take our stand upon the Scriptures. We need pastors who will faithfully and unashamedly preach the Word to God’s people. We need members of congregations who are strong in the faith and who will not be swept off their feet by the vague fluffy generalities which are being passed in churches today. We have the sure Word of God which is alive and powerful. This is the truth that will edify us. This is the truth that will make us mature and bring us into the unity of the faith.—PF

The Resurrection Of Indulgences

By Professor Arthur Noble

Pope John Paul II, in 1999, revived the practice of earning indulgences, a decision which caused concern and embarrassed many Roman Catholics.

On the first Sunday of Advent in 1999 a Papal Bull was issued for the Millennium, *Incarnationis Mysterium* (The Mystery of the Incarnation), which described in detail how Roman Catholics may obtain indulgences both for themselves and for souls in Purgatory.

The Romish dogma of indulgences lies at the very heart of the historical conflict between Biblical Christianity and the Vatican. It was the major factor in the gathering storm that instigated Luther's revolt against the corrupt pecuniary practices of the Roman Church and led to the victory of the Reformation.

What is an indulgence? The 22nd article of the Roman Creed is: "I do affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the church, and that the use of them is very beneficial to Christian people."

Dr. Ludwig Ott, in *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (p. 441) states: "By an indulgence (*indulgentia*) is understood the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishment of sin remaining after the forgiveness of the guilt of sin."

Rome claims that this remission is valid in the sight of God and that it is granted by the Church out of her Treasury of Merits. It is the remission in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due for sins which have been forgiven. The gaining of these and other credits is necessary because the Sacrament of Penance does not fully satisfy for punishment due.

To gain an indulgence, one must be in a state of grace (free from mortal sin) and perform whatever work is required for the indulgence. The remission is made by applying some of the Treasury of Merits which the Church possesses. The indulgence is a transfer of merit from one person to another and offers a lessening of time spent in Purgatory. Plenary indulgences remit all temporal punishment; partial indulgences remit a portion of this punishment. There is also the application of indulgences to departed souls, which is admitted by Roman Catholic writers to be of recent date.

The Wanderer of June 10, 1994, summarizing paragraphs 1471-1479 of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, gives the following definition: "An indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment due to sins that have already been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance. This temporal punishment exists because every venial sin entails an unhealthy attachment to creatures which must be purified either here on earth, or after death in a state called Purgatory."

"Indulgences are obtained through the Church, which opens to us the Treasury of Merits of Christ and the saints. The remission can be plenary or partial, depending on whether it removes all or only some of the temporal punishment attached to sin. The indulgence can be applied to the person performing the works of devotion, penance, and charity or to a soul in Purgatory."

HAVE YOU PRAYED FOR YOUR
PASTOR TODAY?

DID HE SELL HIS SOUL FOR HALF-A-CROWN?

By C. H. Spurgeon

There is a story told of a most eccentric minister, that walking out one morning he saw a man going to work and said to him, "What a lovely morning! How grateful we ought to be to God for all His mercies!" The man said he did not know much about it. "Why," said the minister, "I suppose you always pray to God for your wife and family—for your children—don't you?" "No," said he, "I do not know that I do." "What," said the minister, "do you ever pray?" "No." "Then I will give you half-a-crown, if you will promise me you never will, as long as you live." "Oh," says he, "I shall be very glad for half-a-crown to get me a drop of beer."

He took the half-crown and promised never to pray as long as he lived. He went to his work, and when he had been digging for a little while, he thought to himself, "That's a strange thing I have done this morning—a very strange thing—I've taken money and promised never to pray as long as I live." He thought it over, and it made him feel wretched. He went home to his wife and told her of it. "Well, John," said she, "you may depend upon it, it was the devil! You've sold yourself to the devil for half-a-crown." This so bowed the poor wretch down that he did not know what to do with himself! This was all he thought about—that he had sold himself to the devil for money—and would soon be carried off to Hell.

He commenced attending places of worship, conscious that it was of no use, for he had sold himself to the devil and he became really ill, bodily ill, through the fear and trembling which had come upon him. One night he recognized in the preacher the very man who had given him the half-crown and probably the preacher recognized him, for the text was, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The preacher remarked that he knew a man who had sold his soul for half-a-crown. The poor man rushed forward and said, "Take it back! Take it back!" "You said you would never pray," said the minister, "if I gave you half-a-crown! Do you now want to pray?" "Oh yes, I would give the world to be allowed to pray."

That man was a great fool to sell his soul for half-a-crown! But some of you are a great deal bigger fools, for you never had the half-crown and yet you still do not pray! And I dare say you never will, but will go down to Hell never having sought God. Perhaps, if I could make this text negative and say to you, "the eyes of God will *not* be upon you from the beginning of this year to the end of the year, and God will *not* hear and bless you," it might alarm and awaken you.

But though I suggest the thought, I would rather you would say, "Oh let not such a curse rest upon me, for I may die this year, or I may die this day. O God, hear me now!" Ah, dear Hearer, if such a desire is in your heart the Lord *will* hear you and bless you with His salvation.—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Sermon #728, Volume 13, *Good Cheer for the New Year*—Ages Software—Read/download entire sermon on www.spurgeongems.org.

Neglect of private prayer is the locust
which devours the strength
of the Church.—CHS

FEEBLE FAITH

By Robert Hawker, 1825

“And the Apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith”
(Luke 18:5).

Did the Apostles need to pray? Then well may I. Oh! You great Author and Finisher of our faith! I would look up unto You with thankfulness, that You have granted even the smallest portion of faith to so unworthy a creature as I am. Surely, my Soul, it is as great a miracle of Divine Grace that my God and Savior should have kindled belief in your stony heart, amidst all the surrounding obstructions of sin and Satan which lay there, as when miraculous fire from Heaven, in answer to the Prophet’s prayer, came down and consumed the wetted sacrifice!

I praise You, my God and King, this day, in the recollection of this unspeakable, unmerited mercy. And though this faith in my heart still is but as a grain of mustard seed; though it is but as a spark in the ocean; though it is but as a drop of dew in comparison with a river, yet, blessed, precious Jesus! still this is faith, and it is Your gift. And is it not a token of Your favor? Is it not an earnest of the Holy Spirit and a pledge of the promised inheritance? Babes in faith, as well as strong in the Lord, are equally Yours—for it is said that, “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48). “And to as many as believed, You gave power to become the sons of God.”

So it is by Yourself, blessed Redeemer, and not by the strength or weakness of the faith of Your people, their justification before God the Father is secured. Precious is the Scripture which tells us that by You all that believe, whether great faith or little faith—“all that believe are justified from all things” (Acts 13:39). But, my Soul, while the consciousness of your possessing the smallest evidences of faith in your Beloved gives you

joy unspeakable and full of glory, do you not blush to think what ungrateful returns you are making to your Redeemer in the littleness of your faith in such a God and Savior?

Why is it that your affections are so warm in a thousand lesser things, and so cold toward Christ? Why is it that His Holy Word you so often hear as though you do not hear? Why is it the ordinances of Jesus’ house, the promises of His Scriptures, the visits of His Grace—why do these pass, again and again before you, and you remain so cold and lifeless in your affections? Why is it that the temptations of Satan, the corruptions of your heart and the allurements of the world gain any influence upon you?

Why is it that you are so anxious about things that perish—about anything, about nothing deserving to be called interesting? Why are you so seldom at the court of the Heavenly King, where you ought to be found daily, hourly, waiting? And why, under trials, or the need of answers at the Mercy Seat, are you so fretful, impatient and misgiving?

Why all these, and numberless other evils—but from the weakness and littleness of your love to Christ, and your trust in Christ, and your dependence upon Christ, and your communion with Christ? All, all arise out of this one sad cause, my Soul—your unbelief.

Jesus, Master, look upon me, put the cry with earnestness within my heart, that I may unceasingly, with the Apostle’s prayer, be sending forth this as the first and greatest petition of my whole soul—“Lord, increase my faith.”—Adapted from A. W. Pink’s, *Studies in the Scriptures*—October 1932. Read/download most of Brother Pink’s *Studies* in their original format at <http://www.eternallifeministries.org>.

Public prayer is no evidence of piety! It is practiced by an abundance of hypocrites! But private prayer is a thing for which the hypocrite has no heart—and if he gives himself to it for a little time, he soon finds it too hot and heavy a business for his soulless soul to persevere in—and he lets it drop. He will sooner perish than continue in private prayer! O for heart searching about this! Do I draw near to God alone? Do I pray when no eye sees, when no ear hears? Do I make a conscience of private prayer? Is it a delight to pray? For I may gather that if I never enjoy private prayer I am one of those hypocrites who will not always call upon God.—CHARLES SPURGEON

NOW HEAR THIS!

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

I think these words were the favorite words of that dear man of God, Mr. Harrington Evans, “Accepted in the Beloved.” He used to often repeat them in His sermons and, if I remember rightly, when He was dying and His deacons needed a message to be given to the Church, to let them know what was the state of mind of their pastor at the time of death, He said, “Go and tell them I am accepted in the Beloved.”

Oh, dear Hearer can you say this? There is more eloquence in these words than in all the eloquence of Demosthenes, or in all the glowing periods of Caesar! To say, “I am accepted in the Beloved,” is better than to be able to say, “I am the owner of the Indies, or the possessor of the world.” “Accepted in the Beloved.” Remember, there is many a religious person who is not “accepted in the Beloved,” for the moralists, the religionists that like not Christ, are not accepted! They pray and they read the Scriptures, and they attend their place of worship. They are baptized. They come to the altar—but it is all nothing if they do not come to Christ! All these things are nothing to any of them if they are not in Christ.

We hold that we should baptize none but those who profess their belief in Christ. And it seems to us that apart from a saving faith in Christ, it is a mere mockery—and if given to children, or even to an unconverted person—it is more likely to make them think there is efficacy in the sacrament than to do them any kind of good. Thus we would have you touch nothing at the Lord’s Table until you have first come to Jesus. Then the Baptism—and then the Lord’s Table will be profitable helps to you in remembering Christ, and you will be accepted in them, “in the Beloved.”

But you must get “in” Him first, for Baptism is nothing, and the Lord’s Supper nothing, without Christ! First, you must get the Substance, and then the shadow will follow. And these things are only shadows—they only set forth the Substance! And if any come to the shadow, tonight, who have not got the Substance, they have no business to come and on their heads will be the guilt. We must first be in Him. Whether you are an open sinner or outwardly moral, remember you are not accepted, otherwise, for it is not your conduct, nor your outward life that will do apart from Christ. It is union to Christ—and faith brings us that! A simple trust in Jesus, and we are “in” Jesus and “accepted in” Jesus! But without that, we are “without Christ, without hope, and alien from the commonwealth of Israel.”—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.—Sermon #3429, Volume 60—“ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at www.spurgeongems.org.

FROM WHOM DO YOU HEAR THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

“The secret of the Lord is with them who fear Him.”

Psalm 25:14.

A peculiar privilege is conferred on a peculiar people, for it seems that the secret of the Lord is with some men, but not with others. Who are they who possess this sacred gift? A great outcry has been raised in this country of late about class and class interests. In our manufacturing districts, particularly, the rights of the upper class, who find the capital, and the claims of the working class, who bring their skill and labor into the market, are paraded before us in hot debates, which often lead to an angry lock-out on the part of the employers, or a sullen strike on the part of the employed. Such feuds seldom bring much credit to either party. A great deal may be said concerning some of each to their praise, and not a little concerning some of both to their censure.

So long as the struggle lasts, it must cause much heart-ache. I would the day were come when all this class talk was over, that we felt and acknowledged the common ties and mutual obligations by which all men depend upon all men—each class being dependent for its welfare and prosperity upon each other class, even as—“God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth.” Still, there always will be a favored class. God has so ordained it. But let me say they will neither be accepted because they are rich, nor rejected because they are poor. The favored class before the Lord *has nothing to do with any position in society!*—

*“None are excluded then, but those,
Who do themselves exclude.
Welcome the learned and polite,
The ignorant and rude.”*

Neither has this secret of the Lord anything to do with education.

It is not with every Oxford graduate—it is only with a very few of them! The secret of the Lord is not with every Cambridge M.A. nor with every man who has taken his degree at any university. You may read the Scriptures in the original languages. With Hebrew and Greek you may be familiar. Excellent and profitable studies they are, but you cannot discover the secret of the Lord by mere classical attainments. No mathematical researches or astronomical observation can discover it to you. In vain does one mount to Heaven and thread the spheres! Alike in vain does another walk the earth and beg the old rocks to tell him what happened before Adam held the lease of its broad acres, or tilled its soil! No, it is beyond the province of human learning, as it is foreign to the privilege of creature rank.

Some people think that the secret of the Lord is lodged in mystic rites and draped in gorgeous ceremonies. There is among us a sect of ritualists who professes to have acquired it. They pretend to derive it from some man in lawn sleeves who puts his hand on their heads! And if they cannot exactly communicate it, themselves, yet they can communicate a great deal, for they affirm that every little child sprinkled by them becomes, without more ado, a member of Christ, a child of God and an

inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven! With their guild I have no fellowship—of their weird arts I know little. Still, they say it is so—and it is all right with the little ones, no doubt, if they die in infancy, for are they not buried in consecrated clay? Listen to these gentlemen, these “successors of the Apostles,” these men who have “gifts” which empower them to declare and pronounce absolution and remission of sins! Do you hear the Gospel from them? Well you may from some of them, but then they tell you that they do not believe in the literal construction of the words they are paid to repeat, so they deliberately utter a lie!

Or listen to others of them. Do they give you the Gospel? No, they display themselves in petticoats, embroidered vestments and such apparel as it were unlawful to appear in, save only when they are acting in their ecclesiastical theatres! You get no Gospel truth from them, nothing but priestcraft from beginning to end! Were they honest, they would go at once to Babylon, to Rome, to the Mother of Abominations, and consort with their own kindred! Thus we say the rite of ordination confers no privileges, and restrains no abuses! It does not teach a man the secret of the Lord, for the best ordained priest in England may still be as ignorant of God, our enemies, themselves, being judges, as if he had never been ordained at all!

To whom, then, is it given to know the secret of the Lord, but to those who fear Him and hallow His name? To be conscious that I have sinned, to be humbled before God on account of it, to behold Jesus Christ as the way of Atonement, to accept Christ as my Savior, to come to God, blessing Him that I am saved through His dear Son—to feel a love to God because of His Grace to me, to yield up myself to His service, by His Holy Spirit to be led to live to His Glory—this it is to fear Him and thus it is that His secret is with me! “Why,” says one. “then the secret of the Lord may be with any poor servant girl!” Bless the Lord it may! “Oh, then,” says another, “the secret of the Lord may be with any humble workman, even though he is an illiterate and uneducated man!” Yes, certainly it may!

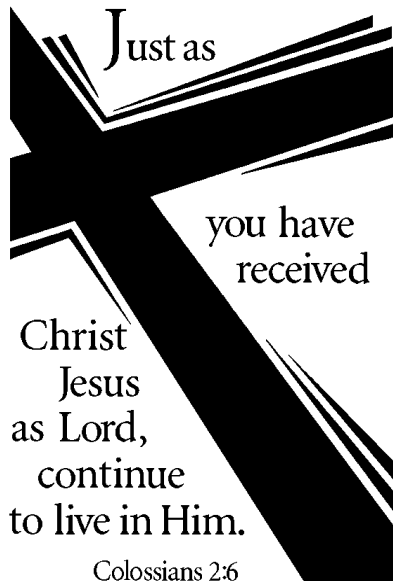
“Then,” says yet another, “what becomes of the priesthood?” Why, I answer, we are all made priests! If we fear the Lord, we are admitted and initiated into the secret mysteries of religion—we become instructed in the way of the Lord, the Holy Spirit having promised that He will teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance, whatever Christ has told us. Though we cannot claim rank, nor wealth, nor diploma, we can yet humbly say, “The secret of the Lord is with us, for He has taught us, by His Grace, how to live upon Him, how to trust Him, how to serve Him.” “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.”—Adapted from the *C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.—Sermon # 3428, Volume 60—PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at www.spurgeongems.org.

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In This Issue...

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

Something to Think About As “Easter” Approaches...

By C. H. Spurgeon

“Why seek you the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke unto you when He was yet in Galilee.”

Luke 24:5, 6.

Those good people to whom the angels said, “He is not here, but is risen!” were bearing a load, and what were they carrying? What is Joanna carrying, and her servants? And Mary, what are they carrying? Why, white linen! And what else? Pounds of spices, the most precious they could buy. What are they going to do? Ah, if an angel could laugh, I should think he must have smiled as he found they were coming to embalm Christ. “Why He is not here and, what is more, He is not dead! He does not need any embalming, He is alive!”

You might have seen all over England on “Good Friday,” and also on this “Easter Sunday,” crowds of people—I have no doubt very sincere people—coming to embalm Christ. They tolled a bell because He was dead and they hung crepe over what they call their altars because He was dead. And they fasted and sung sad hymns over their dead Savior! I bless the Lord my Redeemer is *not* dead and I have no bells to toll for Him! He is risen, He is not here! Here they come, crowds of them with their white linen and their precious spices to wrap a dead Christ up in!

Are they mad? But they say, “we were only acting it over again.” Oh, is that it? Practical charades, is it? Acting the glorious Atonement of Calvary as a play! Then I accuse the performers of blasphemy before the Throne of the Eternal God who hears my words! I charge them with profanity in daring to rehearse in mimicry that which was once done and done forever and is never to be repeated! No, I cannot suppose they meant to mimic the great Sacrifice and, therefore, I conclude that they thought their Savior to be dead! And so they said, “Toll the bell for Him! Kneel down and weep before His image on a cross.”

If I believed Jesus Christ died on Good Friday, I would feast all day long because His death is over! As He has ordained the high festival of the Lord’s Supper to be His commemoration, I would follow His bidding and keep no fast. Who would sit down and whine over a Friend once dead if you know Him to be restored to life and exalted in power? Why toll a bell for a living Friend? However, I condemn not the good people any more than the angels condemned those holy women—only they may take their spices home and their white linen, too, for Jesus is alive and does not need them!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, —Sermon #1106, Volume 19, “*The Lord Is Risen, Indeed*”—Read/download entire sermon at www.spurgeongems.org.