

FOR HIS GLORY

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I remember once feeling many questions as to whether I was a child of God or not. I went into a little chapel, and I heard a good man preach. He was a simple working man. I heard him preach, and I made my handkerchief damp with my tears as I heard him talk about Christ, and the precious blood. When I was preaching the same things to others, I was wondering whether this truth of God was mine, but while I was hearing, for myself, I knew it was mine, for my very soul lived upon it! I went to that good man, and thanked him for the sermon. He asked me, who I was. When I told him, he turned all manner of colors. "Why," he said, "Sir, that was your own sermon." I said, "Yes, I knew it was, and it was good of the Lord to feed me with food that I had prepared for others." I perceived that I had a true taste for what I, myself, knew to be the gospel of Jesus Christ. Oh, yes, we do love our good Shepherd! We cannot help it.—
CHS

Mortified Eyes

By Thomas Manton, 1660

"Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity and quicken me, in Your way." Psalm 119:37.

The first request is for the removing of impediments to obedience, the other for addition of new degrees of grace. These two are fitly joined, for they have a natural influence upon one another—unless we turn away our eyes from vanity, we shall soon contract a deadness of heart. When our affections are alive to other things, they are dead to God, and therefore, the less we let loose our hearts to these things, the more lively, and cheerful the work of obedience. On the other side, the more the vigor of grace is renewed, and the habits of it quickened into actual exercise, the more is sin mortified and subdued.

It therefore concerns those that would walk with God to have their eyes turned away from worldly things. He that would be quickened, carried out with life and vigor in the ways of God, must first be mortified and die unto sin. Speaking of the fruits of Christ's death, the apostle mentioned death unto sins before life unto righteousness (1 Peter 2:25). If any would live with Christ, first they must learn to die unto sin. It is impossible for sin and grace to thrive in the same subject.

One great means of mortification is *guarding the senses*—eyes, and ears, taste, and touch—that they may not betray the heart. I put it so general because the man of God that is so solicitous about his eyes would not be careless of his ears and other senses. We must watch on all sides. When an assault is made on a city, if one gate is open, it is as good as if all were. The ingress, and egress of sin is by the *senses*, and much of our danger lies there. There are many objects that agree with our distempers, and by them insinuate themselves into the soul—and therefore, things long since seemingly dead will soon revive again, and recover life and strength. There are no means to keep the heart unless we keep the eyes.

In every creature Satan has laid a snare for us to steal away our hearts, and affections from God. The senses are ready to receive these objects from without to wound the heart, for they

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WHEN WERE YOU CONVERTED?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

If you had a gathering of Christian men, and women, and were to put the question to them, "How many of you were converted before you were twenty-one?" you would be greatly surprised to find that probably five out of six would answer that, in early years, they were led to know the grace of God, and trust in Christ as their Savior. I tried the experiment one evening with a number of friends who had come together from different places. "How many of you owe your salvation to your father's prayers, your mother's instruction, or your Sunday school teachers' influence in youth?" I asked. And almost everyone out of a company of about 25 said that it was in early youth that God blessed some instrumentality to their conversion.

Those who are converted when children usually make the best saints. These of whom I have just spoken, who gave the answer that they were converted in their youth, were ministers of the gospel! I do not know whether the same rule is true among ordinary Christians, but among

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HOW CAN OUR GOOD DEEDS GLORIFY GOD?

By John Piper ~ <http://desiringgod.org/>

To answer the question, from what kind of spirit good deeds must flow if they are to bring God glory, we turn to 1 Peter 4:10, 11. Probably no other New Testament book besides James reflects an acquaintance with the teachings of Jesus as clearly as 1 Peter does. In 2:12 Peter gives a loose quotation of Matthew 5:16, “Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles so that in case they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds, and glorify God on the day of visitation.” But in chapter 4, verses 10, and 11, Peter shows more explicitly what it is about the good deeds of Christians which makes them a means to God’s glory.

He says—As each has received a gift, employ it for one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace. Whoever speaks (let him speak) as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service (let him render it) as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies, in order that in everything God might be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory, and dominion forever, and ever. Amen.

Here we have one of the clearest answers in the Bible to the question—How do we serve or do good so that God gets the glory. The answer is, in order for God to get the glory we have to do good as one does it who is depending on God’s strength. Not mere good deeds but good deeds done in a spirit that comes from a joyful *dependence* on God’s help—this is what glorifies God.

Picture two people pondering whether to come help clean the church tomorrow night. One is young, and healthy, and says, “O I suppose I’ll go. Be worth a few brownie points with the leaders. Maybe they’ll have some snacks. Besides, I’m pretty good at that sort of thing; maybe I can give the rest a few pointers.” So he comes, and he grumbles about the tools, he criticizes the way things are planned, he talks on and on about his abilities and his experience, and in general exudes a spirit of vanity. But he works. He may even get more done than some others. Some employers may want such a man if they judge him solely by his efficiency or productivity. But God looks on the *heart*, and takes the whole man into account. And His assessment is, “I have received no glory from this supposedly good deed of service, for it was not done in reliance on My power. There was not about it the spirit of joy, and gratitude, and humility that comes from being borne along on the wings of mercy.”

But there is another person who is planning his Monday night. He is older, and has been quite ill lately—a good deal of pain, and stiffness in the knees. Time was when he worked hard in the church and loved every minute of it, and never made a big to-do about inconvenience or sacrifice. “O” he thought to himself, “how I would love to help out on Monday night. Maybe I could encourage some of the down-hearted, or maybe just keep the coffee poured.” So he prayed. And lo, and behold, Monday morning there was no pain, and no stiffness! So he came. With bells on. He did what he could with a rag, and broom, and he did it well. But above all he exuded a joy, and a sense of gratitude for life, and strength that cheered everyone, and pointed them to God. He knew that what strength he had was a precious gift of God, and his whole bearing, and demeanor gave God the credit. That’s what it means to let your light shine!

But now here’s the hooker. Every one of us owes every ounce of strength we have to God, just as much as that sick man did. We owe every fiber of intelligence to God, and the slightest *resolve* to do good is a *gift* from Him! Apart from Him we are all cripples. And worse than cripples. We would fly into nothingness without His sustenance, and we would degenerate into devils without His grace. If the totality of our dependence on God would hit us full force, O how differently we would live, and do good! We would “serve as one who renders service by the strength which God supplies.” We would not boast in our achievements, nor criticize the speck in our brother’s eye, nor grumble about inconveniences, nor be presumptuous in any way, as if even existence, itself could be taken for granted! No, a person who truly owns up to the fact that he exists by the Word of God—that all his strength, and moral resolve is a *gift* of God—that person will have a spirit of joy, and gratitude, and lowliness. And in serving this way God gets the glory!

O how I want to make sure that the image in your mind of how to glorify God is not wrong. For many, it’s like waking up in the morning, looking up to God, and saying, “You are worthy to be glorified today, Lord, and I will do my best.” Then they look over, and on their Bible is a big block of lead with shoulder straps. And on the block is inscribed—“The duty to glorify God all day.” They strap it on, muster their strength, and resolve, and head off to glorify God.

If that image or one like it is the way you feel about glorifying God please look and see that 1 Peter 4:11 shatters such an image! May I suggest a more Biblical image? There is a man and I know him well (he is the husband of my wife and father to my sons), who wakes up in the morning and looks up into heaven and says, “You are worthy to be glorified today, Lord, but there is in me—that is, in my flesh, no good thing. I have no strength, no wisdom, no resolve to do good but what comes undeserved from You, O God. And I love You. It would be to my greatest fulfillment, my highest pleasure, my richest treasure, my popcorn, and my chocolate ice cream if, at the end of this day, I could believe that someone has come to cherish Your power and wisdom, and love more intensely because of me. God, let it be.”

And then he looks over, and on his Bible there is this strange contraption of straps like a harness. And on the back of this harness there is a rope attached that runs up through the roof, and into heaven. And he gets up, straps on the harness, gives a little jerk, leans into it, and God supports him all day. On the broad brown leather strap across the front you can see the lettering—“My harness is easy, and my burden is light.”

ONCE IN 40 YEARS!

By Charles H. Spurgeon

To my great sorrow, last Sunday night I was unable to preach. I had prepared a sermon upon this text with much hope of its usefulness, for I intended it to be a supplement to the morning sermon [Sermon #2202, “*Lo, I Come*”—*Exposition*] which was a doctrinal exposition. The evening sermon was intended to be practical, and to commend the whole subject to the attention of inquiring sinners. I came here feeling quite fit to preach, but an overpowering nervousness oppressed me, and I lost all self-control—and left the pulpit in anguish. I come here this morning with the same subject. I have been turning it over, and wondering why it was so. Perhaps this sermon was not to be preached on that occasion because God would teach the preacher more of his on feebleness, and cast him more fully upon the divine strength. That has certainly been the effect upon my own heart.

Perhaps, also, there are some here, this morning, who were not here last Lord’s-Day evening whom God intends to bless by the sermon. The people were not here, perhaps for whom the eternal decree of God had designed the message, and they may be here now. You that are new to this place should consider the strange circumstance—which never happened to me before in the 40 years of my ministry—and you may be led to inquire whether my bow was then unstrung that the arrow might find its ordained target in your heart! The two sermons will now go forth together from the press, and perhaps going *together* they may prove like two hands of love with which to embrace lost souls, and draw them to the Savior, who herein says, “*Lo, I come.*” God grant it may be so!

The times when our Lord says, “*Lo, I come,*” have all a family likeness. There are certain crystals which assume a regular shape, and if you break them, each fragment will show the same conformation. If you were to dash them to shivers, every particle of the crystal would still be of the same form. Now, the goings forth of Christ which were of old, His coming at Calvary, and that great advent when He shall come a second time to judge the earth in righteousness—all these have a likeness, the one to the other. But there is a coming of what I may call a lesser sort, when Jesus cries, “*Lo, I come,*” to each individual sinner, and brings a revelation of pardon, and salvation—and this has about it much which is similar to the great ones. My one desire this morning is to set forth the Lord Jesus as saying to you, as once He did to me, “*Lo, I come.*”

He still cries to the weak, destitute, forlorn and hopeless sinner, “*Lo, I come.*” I shall talk about that coming, and hope that you will experience it now, and thus be able to follow me, in what I say. I speak mainly to the unconverted, but while I do so, I shall hope to be refreshing the grateful memories of those already saved—but this will all depend upon the working of the Spirit of God. To Him, then, lift up your hearts in prayer.—Adapted from *CHS*—Sermon #2202, Volume 37—“*Lo, I Come*”—*Exposition*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

*Mortified Eyes**(Continued from page 1)*

are as the heart is. If the heart is poisoned with sin, and has become a servant to it, so are the senses of our bodies “weapons of unrighteousness” (Rom 6:13). Objects have an impression upon them answerable to the temper and affections of the soul—what it desires they pitch upon—and therefore if we let the senses wander, the heart will take fire.

Above all senses the *eye* must be guarded. First, because it is the noblest sense given us for high uses. There is not only a natural eye to inform us of things profitable, and hurtful for the natural man, but a *spiritual eye* to set before us those objects that may stir us, and raise our minds to heavenly meditations. By beholding the perfection of the creature we may admire the more eminent perfection of Him that made them—“the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psa 19:1). “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power, and Godhead” (Rom 1:20). The perfections of the creature are to draw us to God—and its defects to drive us from themselves. The eye, as it is used, will either be a help or a snare—either it will let in the sparks of temptation or enkindle the fire of true devotion. These are the windows which God has placed in the top of the building, that man from there may contemplate God’s works, and take a prospect of heaven.

Second, because the eyes have a great influence upon the *heart* either to good or evil, but chiefly to evil. In this corrupt state of man, by *looking* we come to *liking*, and are brought inordinately to affect what we behold. “Seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, after which you used to go a whoring” (Num 15:39). “If my step has turned out of the way, and my heart walks after my eyes” (Job 31:7). These are the spies of the heart—brokers to bring it, and the temptation together—the eyes see, and then, by gazing, the heart lusts, and the body acts the transgression. It is more dangerous to *see* evil than to hear it!—Gleaned from A. W. Pink’s *Studies in the Scriptures*, November, 1939.

ALL IS WELL!

By Octavius Winslow

Untried, untrod and unknown as your future path may be, each step is mapped, arranged and provided for in the everlasting, and unchangeable covenant of God. To Him who leads us, who accepts us in the Son of His love, who knows the end from the beginning, it is no new, or uncertain, or hidden way. We thank Him that while He wisely, and kindly veils all the future from our knowledge, all that future—its minutest event—is as transparent, and visible to Him as the past! Our Shepherd knows the windings along which He skillfully, gently, and safely leads His flock. He has traveled that way, Himself, and has left the traces of His presence on the road.

YOUNG CONVERTS ARE PRECIOUS!

(Continued from page 1)

those who have become leaders of men, in nearly every case they yielded to Christ while they were young. Our thoughts at this time cannot but be occupied with our dear friend, William Olney, who has just been taken from us so suddenly, to our unutterable grief. He was as earnest as a youth as he was when he became an old man. Indeed, I never knew a moment when he was not earnest. I never even knew him to be dull or depressed—he seemed to be always joyous and glad. He would almost frighten me, sometimes, with his jubilation under pain, for when he was in agonies of suffering, and could only sit on the platform for a short time, there was never anything like depression about him! He was just as glad, and happy as if he had been in perfect health. Young Christians do become the best Christians. Early piety is usually eminent piety, so seek to catch the children while they are young, and train them for the Lord—then they will be ready to serve their generation in their turn.

We ought to look after the children, again, for they are specially named by Christ. He said, “Feed My sheep,” but He also said, “Feed My lambs.” I would almost be inclined to say that the Lord made the same division of the generation as I have done. When He said, the first time, “Feed My sheep,” He may have meant the old sheep. When He said, the second time, “Feed My sheep,” he may have had specially in mind the middle-aged ones. There is no doubt that when He said, “Feed My lambs,” He meant the young people. Christ gave the lambs a place all to themselves—“Feed My lambs.” I wish Christians would consider more seriously how the children ought to be looked after by the church. I read, the other day, of a boy who wished to join in membership with the people of God. His father said that he was too young, and kept him back. He was big enough, however, to be sent out to fold the sheep one night. When he came, in, his father said, “Jack have you folded the sheep?” “Yes,” he said, “I folded all the *sheep*,” laying great stress on the last word. “And did you put the lambs in?” asked his father. “No,” he replied, “I left the lambs outside—they were too young to go in.” “Oh, Boy!” said the father, “you know more than I do, after all—they were the very ones that needed most to be folded. You may go and see the minister about joining the church as soon as you like!” If any believers in Christ need especially to be taken into the church, it is those who have come to Jesus in their youth! I pray you, serve your generation by giving the children and young people your most loving attention, and care!

Look after the children of this generation, again, for the dangers around them at the present time are almost innumerable. What a time this is for boys! You cannot read the daily papers without being shocked by the amounts of wrong-doing of mere boys. This is an age which seems to make snares on purpose to entrap them. There are “penny dreadfuls” enough to poison the whole generation! They are full of stories of crime with a false halo about it so that it is made to seem like heroism! These vile stories are everywhere—perhaps your own boy has one, unknown to you—and is reading it while you are sitting here. Traps are laid everywhere for the feet of our boys! Serve your generation by warning them of their danger, and trying to keep them free from the evils by which they are surrounded. Satan gets the advantage over many a young life by causing even right things to be put to wrong uses—and in all sorts of ways he lays traps for young people.

Oh, parents and teachers, do try to give your boys a backbone of moral honesty! Try to show them that they have not come into this world merely to please themselves, that there is something better to be done than that. Do not rest till you have led them to the Savior, for no boy is safe until he is converted! No girl is safe in the streets of this city till she has a new heart, and a right spirit. The times are perilous, yet if we speak a word of warning, we are called sour Puritans! It always makes me laugh when I am called a sour Puritan because you know there is nobody with a quicker eye for fun, or with a deeper vein of mirth than I have! At the same time, I like to have humor, and anything of cheerfulness, and brightness in life consecrated to God. But when mirth is made a plank on which a man can go into sin, and iniquity, then we will saw that plank into pieces! You must be saved from sin, young men! You must be kept from evil, young women, if you are to be truly happy! May God’s grace put in your way wise, godly friends, parents, and teachers who shall serve their generation by leading you in the paths of peace!—Adapted from CHS *Collection*, —Sermon #2243—*His Own Funeral Sermon*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

NOTABLE QUOTES OF CHARLES H. SPURGEON

“The faculty of believing prayer grows by being used! The more you ask, the more you *may* ask, and the more you have asked, the more you *will* ask.”—**1891, Sermon #2221**

“Paul begins by asserting his apostleship, “called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.” That expression should be true of every Christian minister! We are not apostles, but we are, “separated unto the gospel of God.” I do not think that we are called to have anything to do with party politics, or social problems, or any such questions—we are set apart for this purpose—“separated unto the gospel of God.”—**1892, Sermon #2257**

“When I pray, I like to go to God just as I go to a banker when I have a check to be cashed. I walk in, put the check down on the counter, the clerk gives me my money, I take it up, and go about my business. I do not know that I ever stopped in a bank five minutes to talk with the clerks—when I have received my change, I go away, and attend to other matters.”—**1892, Sermon #2254**

ALAS, FOR YOU WHO ARE UNCONVERTED!

By Charles H. Spurgeon

What shall I say to you? I am afraid I may preach up Christ a long time before you will believe me. It needs that the arm of God be revealed before you will see these mysteries. The most of men remind us of the old story in Strabo, of the musician who thought himself very wonderfully gifted with power to create melody.

Before his audience he was pouring forth his notes, and as he thought holding them all spell-bound, but just then the market bell, with its vile tinkle was heard, and all his admirers except one person left him, for they could not afford to lose the chance of the market.

The musician turned to his solitary listener and complimented him upon having a soul above mere merchandise, and an ear which could appreciate music, so that he was not drawn away by the tinkling of a market bell. "Master," said the man, "I am hard of hearing; did you say the market bell had rung?" "Yes." "Then I must be off, or I shall be too late."

And away went the last man, unrestrained by the bonds of harmony. So when we preach up Jesus Christ, there will be some who will listen to us, and we perhaps think, "Now we shall surely win them," but ah, tomorrow's market bell; I will not say market bell—tomorrow's bell of sin, and bell of iniquity—the bell that rings to frivolities, and rings to transgressions, they will go after that! Anything that pleases the flesh will secure them!

It may be, there is one who has heard with unusual attention, and we begin to say, "This man has a nobler spirit." But then, perhaps, he has not yet felt the force of temptation, and when he feels it he will go too. What urgent need there is for the Spirit of God to illuminate the dark judgments of the sons of men! May He do so; may He begin with you, dear reader, if up to now you have been blind. May He give you faith, and the promises, and Christ Jesus! It is my heart's deepest wish.

The Lord grant it to you all, for Jesus' sake. Amen.—
(Adapted from Sermon #931, Volume 16—THREE PRECIOUS THINGS—by the grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and 574 Spanish translations, all free of charge, visit: www.spurgeongems.org)

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HOLINESS

Here is the Christian's way, and his end...His way is holiness, his end happiness.—**John Whitlock**

You have an art above God, Himself, if you can fetch any true pleasure out of unholiness.—**William Gurnall (1617-1679)**

Holiness has in it a natural tendency to life and peace.—**Elisha Cooper**

There is a beauty in holiness as well as a beauty of holiness.—**George Swinnoek**

Will you say that godliness is unpleasant because it makes a man sorry for his ungodliness?...Would you wish a man that has lived so long in sin and misery to have no sorrow for it in his return—especially when it is but a healing sorrow, preparing for remission, and not a sorrow joined with despair, as theirs will be who die impenitently?—**Richard Baxter (1615-1691)**

Let us know that "growth in grace" is the best evidence of spiritual health and prosperity. In a child, or a flower, or a tree we are all aware that when there is no growth there is something wrong. Healthy life in an animal or vegetable will always show itself by progress or increase. It is just the same with our souls. If they are progressing, and doing well, they will grow.—**J.C. Ryle, 1877**

The growth of grace is the best evidence of the truth of grace. Things that have not life will not grow. A picture will not grow. A stake in a hedge will not grow. But a plant that has vegetative life will grow. The growing of grace shows it to be alive in the soul.—**Thomas Watson, 1660**

From *A Puritan Golden Treasury*, Edited by I.D.E. Thomas, The Banner of truth Trust, 1975, Edinburgh

AND

From J.C. Ryle's, *Holiness*, First Published 1877. Published 2001 by Nolan Publishers, Moscow, ID

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.

The Lamb's Book of Life — Revelation 21:27

By Daniel E. Parks
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John the apostle declares of heaven in Revelation 21:27, “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” Let us consider what Holy Scriptures say about this *Lamb’s Book of Life*.

I. Who is this “Lamb”? He is Jesus Christ. Two different Greek words are used in the New Testament to designate Him as a Lamb. The first, (*amnos*), emphasizes the nature and character of Christ as a sacrificial Lamb. It speaks of Him as “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29, 36). It speaks of His sinless character, as being “a lamb without blemish, and without spot”, and therefore, qualified to redeem sinners (1 Peter 1:19). It also speaks of His submission to God—“as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (Acts 8:32) when He was stricken for the sins of God’s elect (Isa 53:7f).

The Greek word translated, “Lamb,” in our text (*arnion*) emphasizes the sacrificed Lamb’s acquired majesty, dignity, honor, authority, and power. These qualify Him to both redeem His people, and execute vengeance on all who refuse to believe His gospel. This word is used in The Revelation about 27 times in describing Christ, and His glory, and work. Christ is not only the royal Lion of Judah, but also the sacrificial Lamb of God who once was slain, but now possesses horns of authority, and is filled with the Holy Spirit (5:5f), and by virtue of having redeemed God’s people, is able to execute God’s eternal purpose (5:8-13). He alone can open the seals of God’s decree (6:1). He will come in wrath against rebels (6:16). He occupies the throne of God because He is divine (7:9, 10). The robes of His people have been cleansed in His blood (7:14). He shepherds His people, and leads them to living waters (7:17). His followers overcome Satan through His blood (12:11). And they follow Him wherever He goes (14:4). But rebels against Him will be tormented in His presence (14:10). He was, in God’s decree, slain, *before the foundation of the world* for the redemption of His people (13:8). His followers will sing His praises in their song throughout eternity (15:3). The wicked will make war against Him, but He will overcome them (17:14). He will afterward call His people to His marriage supper (19:7, 9), and they will comprise His bride (21:9). The foundations of heaven bear the names of His apostles (21:14). He is both heaven’s temple, and light (21:22, 23). The river of life flows from His throne (22:1). His presence disperses every curse (22:3). And the names of His people are recorded in “the Lamb’s Book of Life” (21:27; 13:8; also 3:5; 17:8; 20:12, 15).

II. What is this Lamb’s “Book of Life”?

1. It is a “Book” in the figurative, not physical, sense of the word. It is one of several in The Revelation representing God’s eternal purpose and decrees. There is the *Book of God’s Eternal Purpose*, a scroll of God’s purpose from eternity for the entire universe throughout all history (Ch 5), which Christ executes by breaking its seals. There are the various books that will be opened at the final judgment, by which the dead will be judged (20:12a). These would include the *Book of the Law* containing all God’s requirements to men (Gal 3:10), the *Book of Omniscience* in which all the deeds of men are recorded—“For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecc 12:14), and “a **Book of Remembrance**...for those who fear the LORD, and who meditate on His name” (Mal 3:16). “And another book was opened, which is the *Book of Life*” (20:12b). This book represents the eternal decree of God’s predestination, and election to salvation of those members of our fallen race whom He chose to eternal life. He assures them, “See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands” (Isa 49:16).

2. It is a “Book of Life” because it is a “book of the living” (Psa 69:28). It is analogous to the earthly book of life kept in ancient times by cities. One’s name was entered in it when he was born, then blotted out when he died. For example, we read of a register containing the names of “everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem” (Isa 4:3).

3. It is the “Lamb’s Book of Life” for various reasons. It belongs to Him. It contains the names of all who belong to Him. It contains the names of all who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God, and who will rule, and reign with Him (5:6-10), and who have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14), and who follow the Lamb everywhere He goes (14:4).

III. When were the names in the Lamb’s Book of Life registered? John declares they were “written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world” (Rev 17:8). It was then, in eternity past, that their salvation in time, and throughout eternal ages was decreed by God the Father. All who are recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life are assured, “He chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame, before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself” (Eph1:4f). “God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit, and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel” (2 Thess 2:13f). Not only was their redemption eternally decreed, but also was their Redeemer (1 Peter 1:19f)—this “Lamb without blemish, and without spot,” “indeed, was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God.” He therefore was slain, in time on Calvary because He is in God’s eternal decree, “the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). When they were decreed to eternal salvation, and when Christ was decreed to be their Redeemer, their names were entered in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

(See *The Lamb’s Book of Life* on page 7)

THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE

(Continued from page 6)

And contrary to a popular belief, one may know in time, even *before* he reads his name in the Book of Life at the final day, that his name is recorded in that book! Paul the apostle evidences this when he identifies some, “whose names are in the Book of Life” (Phil 4:3).

IV. What warning is associated with the Lamb’s Book of Life? All who are not recorded in it will worship the beast of antichrist (Rev 13:1-8), and **be cast into the lake of fire** (20:11-15). These are those who refuse to believe the gospel of Christ, and to trust in Him for their salvation. They thereby refuse to wash their garments, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14), and follow the Lamb everywhere He goes (14:4). O dear Ones, we exhort you to trust in the Lamb of God, and thereby, know that you are registered in the Lamb’s Book of Life!

V. What promise is given by the Lamb to all “who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life”? “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels” (Rev 3:5). In earthly books of life, one’s name is blotted out when he dies, and in some, (such as in ancient Rome), the name of a criminal was blotted out just before he was executed. But this will never occur in the Lamb’s Book of Life because the Lamb promises to all whose names are written therein, “I give them *eternal life*, and they shall never perish” (John 10:28).

Some may object that Christ’s reference to, “he who overcomes,” indicates that some saints may not overcome, and thereby lose their salvation. To this objection we reply that every soul chosen in Christ to salvation will be an overcomer, and that none of them will be a deserter. If one desires to find a deserter from Christ, let him look among pseudo-Christian mercenaries marching under the banners of Free-Willism, whose champions include Judas, the Betrayer, and Demas, the World-Lover.

But we who are registered in the Lamb’s Book of Life from eternity past will enjoy heaven throughout eternity to come (Rev 21:27). We never desert Christ; we always overcome for, and through Him! We confess in the face of everything that rises to separate us from Christ, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom 8:37). And we say, “thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 15:57). And we know, “whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. [Not faith as considered, in itself alone, but Christ the Object of faith.] Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? [Not merely believing that Jesus is the Son of God, but *savingly* believing in Him as the Son of God.]” (1 John 5:4f). And a voice from heaven declares of us, “And they overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Rev 12:11). And those registered in the Book of Life will not endeavor to add to or subtract from God’s Word (Rev 22:19).

NOTABLE QUOTES OF CHARLES H. SPURGEON

“O souls, if the life of Christ is not in you, you are dead while you live, and you will die forever when you die! Unless you get linked to Christ, you will be driven from the presence of God, and away from all that makes true life, and joy. Lay hold on Christ, and you will ‘lay hold on eternal life,’ for He is ‘that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.’”—**1892, Sermon #2245**

“Whether it was by mine or by any other wicked hands, yet it was by ‘the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God,’ that Jesus died in the place of all who believe in Him! I believe in Him, therefore He has died for me! He died for His murderers, for those that mocked, and insulted Him, for He commanded His disciples to begin preaching the gospel at Jerusalem, where they crucified Him—to preach it even to those who had hounded Him to His doom! O dear friends, what comfort lies in this word, ‘It is Christ that died!’”—**1892, Sermon #2240**

“Let us not excuse our present lack of faith by the thought of some future blessing. No confidence which we may learn to put in Christ, in the days to come, can atone for our present unbelief.”—**1892, Sermon #2249**

“Notice that *our Master’s wish that we might have peace was qualified by those two words, “in Me”*—“That *in Me* you might have peace.” Remember, then, you may not expect to derive peace from *yourselves*. You will turn that dunghill over a long while before you find the jewel of peace in it!”—**1887, Sermon #1994**

“I do not wonder that men say, ‘Have I any faith?’ when they begin to doubt the very inspiration of Scripture! What is the good of having any faith when there is nothing left for you to believe? You may well fear to build upon that Scripture whose very foundations you have undermined!”—**1891, Sermon #2233**

Letters to Mike Gendron of Proclaiming the gospel:

ptg@pro-gospel.org ~ www.pro-gospel.org — P.O. Box 940871 — Plano, TX 75094

Teresa L. Internet, writes—Your hatred for catholics including John Paul II has been very evident. Our beloved Pope was loved by the whole world. His love penetrated many denominations, and every class, rich or poor. Why would your group, who claims to be Christian, target a family of believers who love to serve God their way? As a catholic, you never understood its theology. You were never touched to know the essence of scripture and how it relates to the church, which is the pillar and foundation of truth. You judge people's faith, but Christianity should be about loving all people. Catholicism is still growing, and is the largest denomination in the world. You are obsessed with trying to bring a faith down because of ignorance.

Brother Mike responds—I am not the judge of the Pope or his religion; it is the Word of God that judges all things. Jesus said, "the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day" (John 12:48). Is it hatred to warn people, who may be lost in their religion, of the everlasting torment that awaits them? You are right that Christianity is about loving all people. However, genuine love is love based on truth (1 John 3:18). Sincere love is evidenced when one is acting in obedience to the truth (1 Peter 1:22). You are also right that as a catholic I did not understand its theology, that is, until I begin reading the Bible at the age of 34. Only then did my gracious Lord show me the catholic gospel is a perversion of the true gospel. He granted me repentance that led to a knowledge of the truth (2 Tim 2:25). I pray you will also contrast catholic theology with the Bible, and God will bring you to the same conclusion.

Pastor M. A., McKinney, TX, writes—I am enthusiastically requesting your continuance of my subscription to the PTG newsletter. So often I read Christian material that is well-intentioned, but theologically weak, and sometimes just wrong. Or, it is driven by the latest fad—the purpose-driven, name it, and claim it, seeker sensitive, self-esteem, Prayer of Jabez manual, or the like. I never have to wince as I read your newsletter. Your teaching is thoroughly Biblical, well-researched, clear, current, and lovingly presented, often in the face of great hostility. I respect that tremendously, and know that even for the mature, it is a test of sanctification. You are certainly modeling Christ-likeness in the ministry, and are an encouragement to all Christians who read your words, and hear your presentations. Thank you for being an encouragement and friend to grace Community church.

B. W., Marshall, VA, writes—How could I ever do without your newsletter, and your stand for the truth of God! Lately it seems that your articles are speaking what my heart and spirit are hungry to hear. I am so distressed at the watered-down gospel being preached in churches. Bless you for taking a stand, and for contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Has no one heard of the Scripture, "Come you out from among them"? How else can we minister to catholics who think they are Christians unless we separate from them, and show them the gospel is different from theirs? Those who stay in fellowship with them allow them to believe a lie—that our gospel, and theirs is the same. Real love would not allow another to be deceived. Stand fast, Mike, there are many of us who are with you.

Rich, Internet, writes—As a proud catholic I find your site to be quite hateful, but yet predictable. Protestant denominations have no line to the apostles. They have been formed out of heresy. Why do you feel this attack on catholics is necessary? I would like to debate you on several issues. First is the issue of idolatry. It refers to the worship of the golden calf, not catholic statues and images! The Lord even commands the *making* of images. (Exo 25:18-20). Second is the issue of saints. You claim that saints are dead, and that you can't pray to saints. Really? What about Jesus, and His meeting with Moses, and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt 17: 3)? You see catholics do, in fact, read the Bible. I know Jesus just as well as you. You have no right to question my faith!

Brother Mike responds—I encourage catholics to question their own faith as St. Paul exhorts us all to do. Anything you believe that does not conform to Scripture must be corrected. It was the Lord Jesus, not Peter, who established the church at Pentecost. Since then, there have been two streams of Christianity. One is the Apostolic church which includes everyone sealed by the Holy Spirit upon believing the gospel of salvation (Eph 1:13). This church, which is the body of Christ, submits to the Lord Jesus Christ as its only Head. The other stream is made up of apostate churches which have departed from the faith of the apostles, and as a result now believe and teach another gospel. These churches submit to the teachings, and traditions of apostates who have been influenced by deceitful spirits, and doctrines of demons (1 Tim 4:1). The Catholic Church evolved out of the original Apostolic church of sanctified, persecuted believers. Influenced by Constantine in the 4th century, new converts came in with their statues, and many of the pagan practices that we see in Catholicism today. The Lord never commanded us to make images. On the contrary, He forbids this practice. His command to Moses was to "make two cherubim of gold" to be placed on the mercy seat. They were never to be used in worship, and in fact, they were placed in the Holy of Holies where they could not be *seen* by anyone except the High Priest who entered *once a year*. Regarding your comments on saints, I have never claimed that saints are dead. Everyone who has been born of the Holy Spirit is a saint. Nowhere in Scripture do we see any God-fearing person praying to anyone other than Almighty God. If you knew the Lord Jesus, and understood your Bible, you would come out from your false religion, and worship God in Spirit, and truth. May God help you to do that for your peace, and His glory.

DOES YOUR PASTOR PREACH THE BLOOD?

By C. H. Spurgeon

“To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

Hebrews 12:24.

Observe that on Sinai there was “the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.” You look therefore, under the new dispensation, for a *voice*, and you do not come to any till you reach the last object in the list—and there, see, “*the blood of sprinkling that speaks.*” Here, then, is the voice of the gospel! It is not the sound of a trumpet, nor the voice of words spoken in terrible majesty, but the *blood* speaks, and assuredly, there is no sound more piercing, more potent, more prevailing!

God heard the voice of Abel’s blood, and visited Cain with deserved punishment for killing his brother. And the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cries in the ears of God with a voice which is always heard. How can it be imagined that the Lord God should be deaf to the cry of His Son’s sacrifice? Lo, these many ages the blood has cried—“Forgive them! Forgive them! Accept them! Deliver them from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom!”

The blood of sprinkling has a voice of instruction to us even as it has a voice of intercession with God. It cries to us, “See the evil of sin! See how God loves righteousness! See how He loves men! See how impossible it is for you to escape from the punishment of sin except by this great sacrifice in which the love and the justice of God equally appear! See how Jehovah spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all!”

What a voice there is in the atonement!—A voice which pleads for holiness and love, for justice and grace, for truth and mercy. “See that you refuse not Him who speaks.”

Do you not hear it? If you take away the blood of sprinkling from the gospel, you have silenced it! It has no voice if this is gone. “Oh,” they say, “the gospel has lost its power!” What wonder when they have made it a dumb gospel! How can it have power when they take away that which is its life and speech? Unless the preacher is always preaching this blood, and sprinkling it by the doctrine of faith, his teaching has no voice either to awaken the careless or to cheer the anxious! If ever there should come a wretched day when all our pulpits shall be full of modern thought, and the old doctrine of a substitutionary sacrifice shall be exploded, then will there remain no word of comfort for the guilty or hope for the despairing! Hushed forever will be those silver notes which now console the living, and cheer the dying! A dumb spirit will possess this sullen world, and no voice of joy will break the blank silence of despair. The gospel speaks through the propitiation for sin, and if that is denied, it speaks no more. Those who preach not the atonement exhibit a dumb, and dummy gospel—a mouth it has, but speaks not—they that make it are like unto their idol!

Let me, draw you nearer, still, to the text. Observe, that *this voice is identical with the voice of the Lord Jesus*, for it is put so. “The blood of sprinkling that *speaks*. See that you refuse not *Him* who speaks.” Whatever the doctrine of the sacrifice of Jesus may be, it is the main teaching of Jesus, Himself. It is well to notice that the voice which spoke from Sinai was also the voice of Christ. It was Jesus who delivered that law, the penalty of which He was, Himself to endure! He that read it out amidst the tempest was Jesus!

Notice the declaration—“Whose voice then shook the earth.” Whenever you hear the gospel, the voice of the precious blood is the voice of Jesus, Himself, the voice of Him that shook the earth at Sinai! This same voice shall, by-and-by, shake not only the earth, but also heaven! What a voice there is in the blood of sprinkling, since indeed, it is the voice of the eternal Son of God who both makes, and destroys! Would you have me, silence the doctrine of the blood of sprinkling? Would any one of you attempt so horrible a deed? Shall we be censured if we continually proclaim the heaven-sent message of the blood of Jesus? Shall we speak with bated breath because some affected person shudders at the sound of the word, “blood”? Or some “cultured” individual rebels at the old-fashioned thought of *sacrifice*?

No, verily, we will sooner have our tongue cut out than cease to speak of the precious blood of Jesus Christ! For me, there is nothing worth thinking of or preaching about but this grand truth of God which is the beginning, and the end of the whole Christian system, namely, that God gave His Son to die that sinners might live! This is not the voice of the blood, only, but the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself! So says the text, and who can contradict it?—Adapted from CHS—Sermon #1888, Volume 32—*The Blood of Sprinkling (First Sermon)*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

NOTABLE QUOTE OF CHARLES H. SPURGEON

“If I were in the street, and saw strange boys breaking windows, I would say, “Go home, or I will find a policeman for you.” But if it were my own boy, I would chastise him myself. I would not meddle with the other boys, but with my own I would! So it is with God who says, by the mouth of Amos, to His people, “You only have I known of all of the families of the earth: therefore I will chastise you for all your iniquities.” It is a mark of God’s blessing a man, that if the man does wrong, he cannot do it with impunity! Whenever your sins make you smart, thank God, for it is better to smart than it is to sin—and better that the smart should wean you from sin than that something sweet should come in to make you the slave of that sin forever!”—1892, Sermon #2238

A Study of Ephesians—

THE BELIEVER'S BOLD ACCESS TO GOD

All too often we who are Christians have a tendency to look at life as a series of circumstances. We get up in the morning, and we ask God for our daily bread. Soon we face some temptation or trial or trouble. We go to God, and ask Him to deliver us, and to help us, and guide us in the situation that has arisen. Maybe something is broken down. Maybe there is a financial need. Maybe someone in the family is sick. And so we have a tendency to deal with life as a series of concerns that we take to God as they arise, and ask Him to either deliver us from them or to deliver us in them.

Now there is nothing wrong with that. But in the verse which we are considering today, Paul is showing the Ephesians—and us—that there is something higher and better. Rather than viewing life as a series of circumstances that we hope to be delivered from, we can view life as *fellowship* with God. Instead of going to God because we need Him to deliver us, which is quite true, we can learn to go to Him out of the sheer joy of meeting with Him in prayer! For here in the 12th verse of Ephesians 3, we are told about the bold and confident access that the believer has to God—“in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.”

Our verse begins with two little words which are of the highest importance. They are the key to the whole meaning of the verse. The words, “in whom,” obviously refer to the end of verse eleven—“Christ Jesus our Lord.” It is in Him, in Christ Jesus our Lord, that we have boldness and access with confidence. I truly believe that if what is being said here in our verse is not only understood, but believed, and applied, it will revolutionize each and every one of our Christian lives! It is quite possible, and sadly too often the case, that believers study a verse like this, and know what it says, and believe it is true, yet they do not apply it. This is a verse which, by the Lord’s enabling grace, we must take and apply, or it will do us no practical good.

It is one thing to say that we have bold, and confident access to God in prayer as a result of the finished work of Jesus Christ, but it is quite another to live every day coming to God with unspeakable joy because we are coming with full faith in the realities of the things Christ has made possible for us! Paul says that the believer has boldness, access, and confidence in coming to God. “Boldness” means not only freedom to speak, but also fearlessness in speaking! It means coming to God with no fear that one will be rejected. The word, “access,” means right of entrance. The believer comes to the almighty sovereign holy God in prayer without hesitation. He does not fear that something or someone is going to stop him. He knows that he has the “ticket,” so to speak, that will allow him to come. But he also comes with *confidence*. This means that he comes without hesitation. He comes not with fear, and trepidation, but with full assurance that he will be received and heard.

What all these concepts have in common is the idea of deep *assurance*. They all indicate that the believer has the tremendous privilege of coming to God with not a shadow of a doubt that he is loved and will be heard at the throne of grace. But now the all-important question with regard to this matter arises—DO YOU HAVE THIS BOLD UNSHAKABLE CONFIDENCE RIGHT NOW AS A BELIEVER? Do you not only *believe*, but also *enjoy*, moment by moment, a deep assurance leading to an intimate relationship with God whereby you fellowship constantly with Him in prayer?

In some circles it seems to be considered almost a virtue to doubt one’s salvation. If a person doubts his salvation, it is considered a sign of humility. Indeed, as a Christian grows, he will begin to see more and more of the depths of his own sinfulness, and more of the holiness of God. And as he sees that he is much more sinful than he previously realized—and that God is much more offended by his sin than he previously realized—he might begin to think that it would be arrogance to assume that he is truly a believer. But this type of thinking is nothing less than a denial of the gospel!

Let us briefly review the process of the conversion of a sinner. Every conversion is unique. God brings each one of His people to Himself in a wonderfully personal way. Yet there are elements in every conversion that are similar. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit in a person’s life, that person begins to gain a sense of his sin. This is a fundamental element of conversion. Prior to conversion, the person was no less sinful, but his sin simply didn’t bother him. But now that the Holy Spirit has come upon him, he sees sin in a new light. And as he begins to see his own sin, he is troubled by it. The person becomes disturbed in his soul as he sees that God would be very just if He simply cast him into hell forever, for now he sees that his sin makes him deserve such a thing.

But another mark of conversion which goes along with the awakened sense of sin, is the fact that such a person knows that he needs help. He now sees that sin is such a monster that there is nothing which he can do for himself to remove it. There are no good works he could perform which would even *begin* to remove the guilty stain and offense against God which his sins have incurred. This drives the person to look for help outside himself. He sees that what he needs above all else is a Savior. And, by God’s grace, as that person is exposed to the gospel, he discovers that just such a help can be found in only one place—that is, in the person, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The person now sees that this remedy, the blood of Christ, is so great that it has taken away every sin he ever has or ever will commit. Furthermore, he realizes that he is clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ and is, therefore, viewed by God as perfect in Christ! Now does this mean that the new convert no longer sees his sins as such a horrible thing? Not at all! In fact, when he sees that his sins were so horrible as to require the shedding of the blood of the Son of God in order to pay for them, he sees them as even *more* horrible. Yet, he has a new focus. He is no longer focusing on his sin but on his newly-found *Savior*. This is what Paul is talking about in our verse, and Lord willing, we shall continue to consider more of the wonderful truths of God taught in our verse next time. —PF

SHAME ON YOU FOR PUTTING OFF BAPTISM!

By Charles H. Spurgeon

Genuine faith in God creates a prompt obedience. “By faith Abraham, *when he was called*, obeyed.” There was an immediate response to the command. Delayed obedience is disobedience! I wish some Christians who put off duty, would remember this. Continued delay of duty is a continuous sin. If I do not obey the divine command, I sin—and every moment that I continue in that condition—I repeat the sin. This is a serious matter. If a certain act is my duty at this hour, and I leave it undone, I have sinned. But it will be equally incumbent upon me, during the next hour—and if I still refuse, I disobey again—and so on till I *do* obey. Neglect of a standing command must grow very grievous if it is persisted in for years. In proportion as the conscience becomes callous upon the subject, the guilt becomes the more provoking to the Lord! To refuse to do right is a great evil, but to *continue* in that refusal till conscience grows numb upon the matter is far worse.

I remember a person coming to be baptized, who said that he had been a believer in the Lord Jesus for 40 years, and that he had always seen the ordinance to be scriptural. I felt grieved that he had so long been disobedient to a known duty, and I proposed to him that he should be baptized at once. It was in a village, and he said that there were no conveniences. I offered to go with him to the brook and baptize him, but he said, “No, he that believes shall not make haste.” Here was one who had willfully disobeyed his Lord for as many years as the Israelites in the wilderness, upon a matter so easy of performance, and yet, after confessing his fault, he was not willing to amend it, but perverted a passage of Scripture to excuse him in further delay! David says, “I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments.” I give this case as a typical illustration—there are a hundred spiritual, moral, domestic, business and religious duties which men put off in the same manner—as if they thought that any time would do for God, and He must take His turn with the rest.

What would you say to your boy if you bade him go upon an errand, and he answered you, “I will go tomorrow”? Surely you would “morrow” him in a style which would abide upon his memory! Your tone would be sharp, and you would bid him go at once. If he, then, promised to run in an hour’s time, would you call that obedience? It would be impudence! Obedience is for the *present* tense—it must be prompt, or it is nothing. Obedience respects the time of the command as much as any other part of it. To hesitate is to be disloyal. To stop and consider whether you will obey or not is rebellion in the germ! If you believe in the living God unto eternal life, you will be quick to do your Lord’s bidding, even as a maid hearkens to her mistress. You will not be as the horse, which needs whip, and spur—your love will do more for you than compulsion could do for slaves. You will have wings to your heels to hasten you along the way of obedience. “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.”—Adapted from *CHS*—Sermon #2195, Volume 37—*The Obedience of faith*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

True Happiness

By Harvey Newcomb, 1843

The secret of true happiness lies in a cordial acquiescence in the will of God. It is sweet to lie passive in His hands—and know no will but His! The doctrine of a “particular providence” is precious to the Christian’s heart. It enables him to see the hand of God in every event. Hence the sinfulness of a repining, discontented, unsubmitive temper. It is difficult to reconcile the habitual indulgence of such a sinful disposition with the existence of divine grace in the heart. The first emotion of the new-born soul is submission to the will of God!

We are prone to lose sight of the “hand of God” in the little difficulties and perplexities which are of everyday occurrence, and to look only at “second causes.” We often do the same in more important matters. When we are injured or insulted by others, we are disposed to murmur and complain—and give vent to our indignation against the immediate causes of our distress—forgetting that these are only the “instruments which God employs” for the trial of our faith, or the punishment of our sins.

In this doctrine of the *secret agency of divine providence*, we have the strongest motive for a hearty and cheerful resignation to all the troubles and difficulties, trials and afflictions which come upon us in this life—whatever may be their immediate cause. We know that they are directed by our heavenly Father, whose “*tender mercies are over all His works*,” and who “*does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*.” Whatever may be our afflictions, so long as we are out of hell, we are monuments of His mercy! “Why does a living man complain—a man for the chastisement of his sins?” We are assured “that all things work together for good to those who love God.” The afflictions of this life are the faithful corrections of a kind and tender Father. “For whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” How consoling the reflection—that all our sufferings are *designed* to mortify and subdue our corruptions, to wean us from the world, and lead us to a more humble and constant sense of dependence upon God! How ungrateful for a child of God to repine at the dealings of such a tender, and faithful Father.

—This article, and the one on page three, “All Is Well,” were submitted by Paul and Miller Ferrie of Hebron, ND. Paul has been a regular contributor to this publication for years. His latest article is on page 10, *The believer’s Bold Access to God*.

“Give Me the Works, Father”

By James G. McCarthy

<http://www.gnfc.org>

I recently attended the funeral “Mass” of a dear catholic lady. It was a sad occasion. In the last weeks of her life I had tried to share the good news of Jesus Christ with her. I told her of God’s free offer of eternal life, and encouraged her to read the gospel of John, supplying her with a Bible. She said she believed in Christ, but I had my doubts. When she was asked about salvation, her reply was always a confused mixture of Christ, and self, faith and works, grace and merit. The Bible I had given her was never opened. Nevertheless, when a person is dying, one hopes for the best, knowing God to be gracious and merciful.

What little confidence I had that she might personally know Christ evaporated at her funeral. “Father” Harry, her parish priest, told the congregation of his last visit to see her. He was struck by how she had boldly faced death. As he entered her room, she looked him straight in the eye, saying, “I know I am dying. I have only a short time to live.” She then made her last request, saying, “Give me, the works, Father.”

“Father” Harry knew exactly what she meant—confession, communion, and the anointing of the sick—the trilogy of sacraments known as the Last Rites. “The works,” as she put it. Sadly, in “Father” Harry’s report of their conversation, there was no mention of the worker, the Lord Jesus who gave His life for us on the cross. There was no reference to His finished work or of God’s free offer of salvation. No, the priest gave her what she requested, “the works,” and she died peacefully a few days later, thinking she was right with God. As with so many catholics, the sacraments of the church had lulled her into a false confidence—and she quietly slipped into the next life, and the judgment that awaits.

Her funeral clearly presented Rome’s false gospel, as does every catholic funeral “Mass.” Even the Scripture readings used in the rite can be misleading.

I remember my mother’s funeral. My family asked if I would be willing to read the Scriptures. It was a kind, well-intentioned gesture, my family being fully aware of my rejection of the Roman Catholic faith. I wanted to honor my mother, and please my family, but not willing to participate in a catholic “Mass,” I had to decline.

Some were angered, but I held my ground. I could not take part in a catholic “Mass” even by reading the Scriptures. The unbiblical worship of bread and wine, and the alleged sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the living, and the dead that take place at every “Mass” precluded my participation.

My mother’s funeral confirmed that I had made the right decision. There I learned that the “Scriptures” I had been asked to read weren’t Scriptures at all. They were the catholic Apocrypha, having been selected from the Book of Wisdom. The passage heralded Rome’s false gospel that good people go to heaven—*“But the souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure was taken from misery: and their going away from us, for utter destruction: but they are in peace. And though in the sight of men they suffer torments, their hope is full of immortality. Afflicted in a few things, in many they shall be well rewarded: because God has tried them, and found them worthy of himself”* (Wisdom 3:1-5).

The inspired Scriptures speak to the contrary—No one is personally worthy of God (Rom 3:10-12). It is only in Christ that one can stand blameless before a holy God, and be accepted (Eph 1:3-8; Jude 24).

I thank God that despite the false gospel proclaimed at my mother’s catholic funeral, she died with a true knowledge of both her own sinfulness, and God’s perfect solution. In the weeks preceding her death, she had put her faith in Christ who died for her, taking her punishment (Mark 10:45). Shortly before my mother died, she carefully wrote out a sinner’s prayer. Her hope was that her family would clearly know where the hope of salvation lay. It read—*“Lord Jesus! I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life, and receive You as my Savior, and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins. Take control of my life. Make me, the kind of person You want me to be.”*

That this is not the Roman Catholic gospel can be clearly seen in the church’s funeral liturgy. There, eternal salvation is presented as a merited *reward* to be received by worthy people. Consider, for example, the selection of prayers provided by the Catholic Church to tailor the funeral rite to the particular circumstances of the deceased. If the person (we will call him John) had been a catholic priest, the liturgy instructs the minister conducting the funeral to pray—*“Lord God, you chose our brother John to serve your people as a priest, and to share the joys, and burdens of their lives. Look with mercy on him, and give him the reward of his labors, the fullness of life promised to those who preach your holy gospel. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

This prayer asks God to give the deceased priest what he deserves—*“the reward of his labors, the fullness of life.”*

Should the deceased be even more deserving, a bishop, for example, the liturgy instructs the minister to pray—*“Almighty, and merciful God, eternal Shepherd of your people, listen to our prayers, and grant that your servant, John, our bishop, to whom you entrusted the care of this church, may enter the joy of his eternal Master, there to receive the rich reward of his labors. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”*

(See “Give Me the Works, Father” on page 13)

“Give Me the Works, Father”

(Continued from page 12)

This is another give-him-what-he-deserves prayer, asking God to allow the bishop to...enter the joy of his eternal Master, there to receive the rich reward of his labors.” The same kind of prayer is found in the funeral rite of a pope—“*O God, from whom the just receive an unfailing reward, grant that your servant John, our Pope, whom you made vicar of Peter, and shepherd of your church, may rejoice forever in the vision of your glory, for he was a faithful steward here on earth of the mysteries of your forgiveness and grace. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*”

This prayer asks God to grant the deceased pope the reward of rejoicing forever “in the vision of your glory.” The pope should receive this privilege not because he trusted the blood of Christ to save him, but because the deceased pope “was a faithful steward.”

One might wonder what the writers of the liturgy would do if called upon to compose a prayer for the funeral of a genuine, poor lost sinner with no merits of his own. Ironically, the funeral liturgy provides one such prayer. It is for a person who has ended his life by his own hand. Suicide is generally considered to be a mortal sin. The prayer reads—“*God, lover of souls, you hold dear what you have made, and spare all things, for they are yours. Look gently on your servant John, and by the blood of the cross forgive his sins, and failings.*”

This prayer drops all pretense of the sinner deserving heaven. It pleads the biblical basis for forgiveness: the blood of Christ (Rev 1:5). Tragically, however, the message is too late for the deceased! After death comes judgment (Heb 9:27). And even “the works” won’t get a catholic into heaven who hasn’t trusted Christ in this life, renouncing dependence for salvation upon the Catholic Church, the sacraments, good works, and personal righteousness.—This article was written in 1995, and first used in this publication in 1999.

WHO CAN BE SAVED?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

I believe most firmly in the doctrines commonly called Calvinistic, and I hold them to be very fraught with comfort to God’s people. But if any man shall say that the preaching of these is the whole of the preaching of the gospel, I am at issue with him.

Brethren, you may preach those doctrines as long as you like, and yet fail to preach the gospel! And I will go further, and affirm that some who have even denied those truths, to our great grief, have, nevertheless, been gospel preachers for all that—and God has saved souls by their ministry.

The fact is, that while the doctrines of election, final perseverance, and so on, go to make up a complete ministry, and are invaluable in their place, yet the soul, and marrow of the gospel is not there, but is to be found in the great fact that, “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit,” and so on.

Preach Christ, young man, if you want to win souls! Preach all the doctrines, too, for the building up of believers, but still, the main business is to preach Jesus who came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost!

The apostle tells us in Corinthians that first of all he delivered unto us as soul-saving truth, “how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures.” Facts about Christ Jesus, and the promise of life through Him—*these* are the faith of the gospel!

THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS

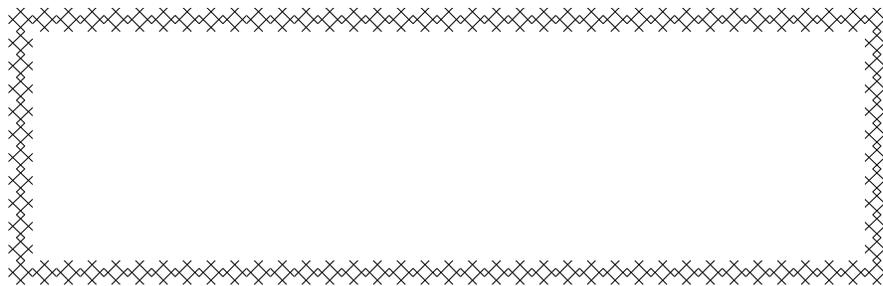
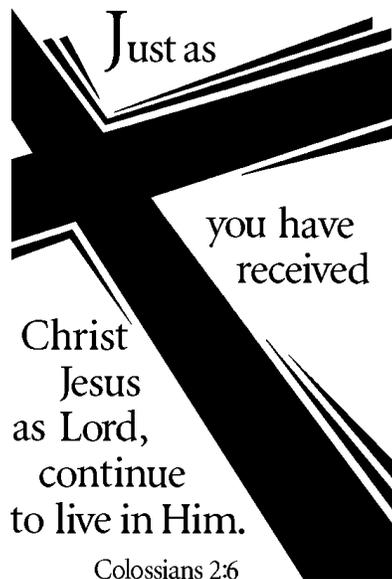
It is the known duty of a sinner under the gospel to turn to God through Christ. And it is also declared in the same gospel that none can of themselves turn to God, and believe in His Son without the help of special efficacious grace—it must, therefore, be a man’s *duty* to also *pray* for that grace which may enable him to believe.—**J. Howe, 1690**

This (gospel) call contains the command of faith by which all men, without exception, to whom God vouchsafes the same, are enjoined to believe in Christ in that way and manner which is revealed in the gospel—“Look unto Me, and be you saved all the ends of the earth” (Isa 45:22). **H. Witsuis, 1690**

That which cannot quiet the heart in a storm cannot entitle a man to blessedness. Earthly things accumulated cannot rock the troubled heart quiet, therefore cannot make one blessed. When Saul was sorely distressed, could all the jewels of his crown comfort him? “They shall cast their silver in the streets...their silver, and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord” (Ezek 7:19).—**Thomas Watson, 1620-1686**

Could you—WOULD you—die for Jesus Christ?

For HIS Glory
Prison Ministry
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This is the **April 2006** issue with a few changes. Due to health reasons Emmett was unable to publish a new issue for **April 2016**. We covet your prayers, Ann

In This Issue...

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

NO LIMIT! NO LIMIT!

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

One said to me, just lately, "Oh, sir, I am the biggest sinner that ever lived!" I replied, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." "But I have not any strength." "While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died." "Oh, but," he said, "I have been utterly ungodly." "Christ died for the ungodly." "But I am lost." "Yes," I said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "The Son of man has come to save that which was lost."

I said to this man, "You have the brush in your hand, and at every stroke it looks as if you are quoting Scripture. You seem to be making yourself out to be the very man that Christ came to save! If you were to make yourself out to be good, and excellent, I would give you this word—Jesus did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He did not die for the good, but for the bad. He gave Himself for our sins—He never gave Himself for our *righteousness*. He is a Savior. He has not come, yet, as a rewarder of the righteous—that will be in His second advent. Now He comes as the great forgiver of the guilty, and the only Savior of the lost. Will you come to Him in that way?"

"Oh, but," my friend said, "I have nothing to bring to Christ." "No," I said, "I know that you have not—but Christ has everything." "Sir," he said, "you do not know me, otherwise you would not talk to me like this." And I said, "No, and you do not know yourself—for you are *worse* than you think you are, though you think that you are bad enough in all conscience. But be you as bad as you may, Jesus Christ came on purpose to lift up from the dunghill those whom He sets among princes by His free, rich, sovereign grace."

Oh, come, and believe in Him, poor sinner! I feel that if I had all your souls, I would believe in Christ for their salvation! I would trust Him to save a million souls if I had them, for He is mighty to save! There can be no limit to His power to forgive! There can be no limit to the merit of His precious blood! There can be no boundary to the efficacy of His plea before the throne of God! Only trust Him, and you will be saved! May His gracious Spirit lead you to do so now, for Christ's sake! Amen.—Adapted from *CHS—Sermon #2259, Volume 38—The Simplicity and Sublimity of Salvation—Read/download entire sermon at*

<http://www.spurgeongems.org>