

FOR HIS GLORY

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To wait on the Lord means *to go to Him for all your strength*, to be entirely dependent upon the spiritual power which comes from the Holy Spirit, and not at all upon the power which you fancy dwells within yourselves. All the strength that there is in any man by nature is perfect weakness as to *spiritual* things. I like the saying of a man who declared to his minister that God had done His part in his salvation, and he had done the rest. "Well," said his minister, "What part did you do?" "Why," said the poor man, "God did it all, and I stood in His way." That is about all that you and I shall ever do in our own strength! Human strength only opposes the work of Grace until the Divine Strength comes in and sweeps our strength away, and finds in our perfect weakness a reservoir into which the strength of God may pour itself to fill us with the fullness of God. —CHS



HEARING THE ROD

By A. W. Pink

"The LORD'S voice cries to the city—Wisdom shall see Your name: Hear the rod! Who has appointed it?"
Micah 6:9.

"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). How can it be otherwise, living as he is in a world which is under the curse that Adam's sin entailed, and, what is worse, under God's judgment because of its casting out of His beloved Son? Yet the subject of "trouble" needs to be "rightly divided" if we are to properly heed that exhortation, "Be you not unwise, but *understand* what the will of the Lord is" (Eph 5:17), an important part of which consists in understanding the meaning and message of our Father to us in all the "trouble" which we encounter and experience.

As we turn to the Holy Scriptures for light upon this subject of Trouble, Suffering, Affliction, Tribulation, Persecution, etc., we discover two distinct and different lines of Truth thereon running all through the Word. On the one hand we read that, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22), parallel with which are such passages as Luke 6:26; 2 Timothy 3:12, etc. But on the other hand, we read that, "the curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. 26:2), that God does not "afflict willingly" (Lam 3:33), and that, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor 11:31). Much of the "trouble" and "affliction" experienced by us we bring upon ourselves through our own folly. We see this plainly exemplified in the natural realm: how many are now suffering bodily ills through intemperate eating and drinking? How many are nervous wrecks as the result of "burning the candle at both ends"?

The same principle holds good in the *spiritual* realm: the chastening rod of God is upon many of His children because of their self-will and self-pleasing: some of them are passing through sore financial straits because their "sins have *withheld*" God's temporal mercies (Jer 5:25). Still others, who have been favored with clear and definite light from God as to a certain course of duty—e.g., separating themselves from religious associations which dishonor Christ—and because they have not *walked* therein, the Lord has "hedged up their way with *thorns*"

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LET JOHNNY TELL YOU OF THE POWER OF PRAYER!

By C. H. Spurgeon

"I will make darkness light before them."
Isaiah 42:16.

Brothers and Sisters, always believe in the power of prayer, for if God promises to make your darkness light, He will be required to do it for you. And when you inquire of Him to do it, He will do it because He has so promised. I wish we believed in prayer. I am afraid most of us do not. People say, "What a wonderful thing it is that God hears George Muller's prayers!"

But is it not a sad thing that we should think it wonderful for God to hear prayer? We are come to a pretty pass, certainly, when we think it wonderful that God is true! Much better faith was that of a little boy in one of the schools at Edinburgh who had attended the Prayer Meetings, and at last said to his teacher who conducted the Prayer Meeting, "Teacher, I wish my sister could be got to read the Bible. She never reads it."

"Why, Johnny, should your sister read the Bible?" "Because if she should once read it, I am sure it would do her good, and she would be converted and be saved." "Do you think so, Johnny?" "Yes, I do, Sir, and I wish the next time there's a Prayer

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HEAR THE ROD!

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(Hosea 2:6). Nevertheless, it would be a serious mistake to draw the inference that every time we see a suffering Christian, we behold one who has seriously displeased God and therefore is now being severely chastised by Him. It would be wrong to form such a conclusion concerning *every* case, because trouble and suffering issue from *other* causes and are sent by God for other purposes than the reproof of sin—sent sometimes to experimentally fit the recipient for greater and higher usefulness in the service of Christ: compare 2 Corinthians 1:4.

Now from what has been pointed out above, it should be quite clear that real exercise of heart is called for from each one of us whenever painful trials come upon us; that we need to get down before God and cry, “*show* me why You contend with me” (Job 10:2). To take *this* attitude is the part of wisdom, for *if* God is dealing with us over something that has displeased Him and we fail to humble ourselves before Him and learn of Him *what* it is which is now choking the channel of His highest blessings toward us, and obtain Divine Grace from Him to put right what is wrong, then the chastening “profits” us not, and further and increased chastisement must be our portion: for it is not until we are “*exercised* thereby,” exercised *in conscience*, that we have any promise it *will* issue in “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb 12:11).

If the “trouble” through which we are passing at any period of our lives *is* a reproof from God because of our sins or unfaithfulness, and instead of *suspecting* that He *is* displeased with us and taking our place in the dust before Him, begging Him to put His finger on the festering sore in our hearts: if instead, we proudly imagine that there is *nothing* wrong in our lives, that we have given God no cause to smite us, and complacently assume that we are suffering *only* for “righteousness’ sake,” and draw comfort from such promises as Matthew 5:11, 12, we are deceived by Satan, and are but “*forsaking* our own mercy” (Jonah 2:8). It is written, “He that covers his sins shall not prosper” (Prov 28:13). Thus, whenever “trouble” comes upon a Christian it is *always* the safest policy to come to the Lord and say, “Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred” (Job 6:24).

From what has been said above, it will be seen that it often falls to the lot of God’s servants to perform a duty which is most unpleasant to the flesh. When they come into contact with a Brother or Sister who is passing through deep waters, their *natural* desire is to administer *comfort*, but in some instances (at least) to do so would be guilty

of “healing also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly”: and *how* is this done? The same verse tells us, by saying, “Peace, peace; when there is no peace” (Jer 6:14). That was what the “*false* prophets” had done to Israel, and *that* was the very thing which carnal Israel desired—their demand was, “Prophecy *not* unto us right things, speak unto us *smooth* things, prophesy deceits” (Isa 30:10), and human nature has not changed since then!

It is the thankless task for any true servant of Christ today to be *faithful* to his Master, and faithful to the souls of those with whom he deals. Not that God requires him to think the *worst* of every case that comes to his notice, but that it is his bounden duty to exhort each one to act on Job 10:2. But if he does do so, he may be assured at the beginning that in the majority of cases he will be looked upon as harsh, hypercritical, unkind, like one of Job’s censorious comforters; for there are few, indeed, who have an *honest* heart, are ready to know the worst about themselves, and are willing to be cut by the knife of God’s Word. The great majority want *only* comfort, the “promises” of Scripture, the message of, “Peace, peace.”

But do not the promises of God belong unto His children? Certainly they do! But here, too, “there is a season, and a time to every purpose” (Ecl 3:1). There is a time when we may *rightfully* draw consolation and strength from the promises, and there is a time when we may *not* legitimately do so. When all is right between our souls and God, when every known sin has been confessed *and* forsaken in sincere purpose of heart, then may we righteously draw milk from the breasts of Divine consolation. But just as there are times when it would be injurious for us to eat some of the things we do when we are well, so to take unto ourselves comfort from the Divine promises while sin is cherished in our hearts is baneful and sinful.

The above (now slightly revised) was recently sent by us in a letter to one passing through deep waters. It occurred to us that it might be a timely word for others. Many are now in the fiery furnace, and few, indeed, are there capable of speaking to them a word in season. It is not sufficient to bid them, “Trust in God,” and assure them that brighter days are ahead. The *conscience* needs to be searched; the wound must be probed and cleansed before it is ready for the “balm of Gilead.” We must *humble ourselves* “under the mighty hand of God” (1 Peter 5:6), if we are to be exalted again by Him in “due time.” May the Lord be pleased to bless the above unto some of “His own.”—(Gleaned from Brother Pink’s *Studies in the Scriptures*, October, 1933).

“O Brothers and Sisters, it is sickening work to think of your cushioned seats, your chants, your anthems, your choirs, your organs, your gowns, your bands, and I know not what besides—all made to be instruments of religious *luxury*, if not of pious *amusement*—while you need far more to be stirred up and incited to holy ardor for the propagation of the Truth of God as it is in Jesus! One would think Christ came into the world to administer an opiate to the sons of men, or prepare down for all sleepers! But instead of it, He came to send fire on the earth (Luke 12:49a)—and where His true Gospel is, it is a fire that will not rest and be quiet amidst mere proprieties and rounds of performances!

“If we catch this fire, we shall not only become dissatisfied with mere proprieties, but we shall, all of us, become *instant in prayer*. Day and night our soul will go up with cries and moans to God, “O God, how long, how long, how long? Will You not avenge Your own Elect? Will not Your Gospel prevail? Why are Your chariots so long in coming? Why does not Christ reign? Why is not the Truth triumphant? Why do You suffer idolatry to rule, and priestcraft to reign? Make haste, O God! Grasp Your two-edged sword and strike, and let error die, and let Truth win the victory!” It is thus we shall be always pleading if this fire burns in our spirits.”—CHS

CALVINISM: ITS PLACE IN EVANGELISM

By DANIEL E. PARKS, PASTOR

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Arminians declare that belief in the Doctrine of Predestination and Election unto salvation will preclude one from evangelism. They therefore accuse Calvinists of being unevangelistic.

The example of Paul the Apostle, among others, proves Arminians wrong. No man ever expressed a stronger and clearer belief in the Sovereignty of God, and the Doctrine of Predestination and Election than Paul in, for example, the eighth and ninth chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, and the first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians. And yet this same man evangelized a vast portion of Asia Minor and the Greek peninsula, and eventually in Rome!

Arminians manifest a lack of understanding as to what true evangelism is. Our English word derives from the Greek noun *euangelion*, “good news,” and verb *euangelizomai*, “to announce or proclaim good news.” Biblical evangelism is “the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with a view to bringing about the reconciliation of the sinner to God the Father through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit” (*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*). A Biblical Evangelist is one who obeys the mandate of Jesus Christ to “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), relying solely upon the saving work of the Holy Spirit to use that preached Gospel to regenerate sinners and bring them to Christ (1 Cor 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22f).

The evangelism of Arminians is not Biblical. They do not believe preaching, alone, is sufficient for bringing the lost to Christ. Arminians, therefore, have invented what is never found in Scriptures—an “invitation,” or “altar call” after their sermons in which verse after verse of some invitational hymn is sung while the preacher tries to elicit from sinners the response which the Holy Spirit has not worked.

In these invitations Arminians deny the Omnipotence of God by telling sinners, “God has done all He can to save you, but He is helpless to do so unless you let Him. Please! Let God save you!” Arminians are content with a mere “decision for Christ,” and pronounce he who makes one, a Christian even though he may never live the holy life of a disciple of Christ. They often employ this method in what they call “child evangelism,” in which very young children incapable of understanding the Gospel are pronounced “saved” if they will but give the right answer to Arminian evangelists, or recite the prayer they are taught.

We Calvinists, without reservation, reprobate *Arminian* evangelism. But the history of Calvinists proves that *Biblical* evangelism is a very important aspect of our ministry. And Church History reveals that the paragons of Christian evangelism were Calvinists. Consider a few.

John Calvin (1509-64) was very influential in the evangelism of *Europe and Britain*. Arminians portray him as devoid of the evangelistic spirit. The facts prove otherwise. He taught many refugees of various lands in his school in Geneva, and instilled in them the desire to evangelize their countrymen. These schooled refugees did so upon returning to their homelands, delivering their countrymen from the darkness of Romanism.

Their evangelism resulted in John Calvin becoming the spiritual father of the Covenanters of Scotland, the Puritans of England, the Burghers of The Netherlands, the Huguenots of France, eventually the

Pilgrim Fathers of America, and others. He may therefore be called the most fruitful teacher of evangelism since the Apostles!

The 17th Century Puritans of England and Covenanters of Scotland were Calvinists, and most exemplary in evangelism. They realized from reading the Second Psalm, that God has given all the nations of the earth as an inheritance to Jesus Christ, and required those nations to submit to Him. They therefore obligated themselves to publish this Word from God. Their devotion to evangelism was exemplified in the Reformer John Knox, who prayed to God, “Give me Scotland, or I die!” Their sermons are rich in exhortations to all men to believe the Gospel.

The 17th Century Pilgrim Fathers of New England were Calvinists, and most exemplary in missions. We here speak particularly of those Englishmen, mostly Puritans, who emigrated to Massachusetts in 1629. They viewed New England as a new Canaan, and their duty to evangelize its inhabitants, the American Indians. One of their pastors, a Mr. Higginson, expressed their evangelistic desire when he declared upon leaving England, “...we go...to propagate the Gospel in America.”

The first missionaries to the American Indians were Calvinists. The desire of the Pilgrim Fathers to propagate the Gospel to the American Indians resulted in the ministry of John Eliot in the latter-1600’s, who lived to see 1,100 Indian converts worshipping Christ in six churches pastored by Indians. He was followed by David Brainerd, who died of tuberculosis at age 29 in 1747 after only four years as a missionary. But he baptized 78 Indian converts in that short time. His autobiography has been an inspiration to many missionaries. He was followed shortly after 1750 by Jonathan Edwards.

The foremost preachers in the greatest revival experienced in America were Calvinists. This revival was the Great Awakening of the 1740’s. Its foremost preachers were Jonathan Edwards, a Massachusetts Congregationalist, and George Whitefield, an English Methodist. Edwards is also credited with being one of the foremost thinkers America has ever produced, and with having preached the most influential message ever heard in America—“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” It was throughout an evangelistic appeal for sinners to turn to Christ.

The founders of modern foreign missions were Calvinists. They were the Particular Baptists of England. Andrew Fuller, pastor in Kettering, desired to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19f after reading Jonathan Edwards’ account of the Great Awakening in America. Fuller planted the seed of foreign missions in 1785 by publishing *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*. This seed was cultivated in 1792 by William Carey, pastor in Leicester, in his celebrated sermon to the pastors of other Particular Baptist churches.

Taking his text from Isaiah 54:2f, he titled his message, *Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. In it he spoke the oft-quoted expression, “Expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God.” His brethren were persuaded, thereby, to take action. The seed of foreign missions bore fruit in the formation of the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, later renamed Baptist Missionary Society.

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EVANGELISM

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The first missionaries to foreign fields were Calvinists. The afore-mentioned missionary society in 1793 sent to India, William Carey and John Thomas, who had surrendered his medical career to be a missionary. They were joined in 1799 by four others—Joshua Marshman, William Ward, and two others who died shortly after their arrival.

The accomplishments of these missionaries are sterling, in spite of the travails they faced which would have overwhelmed lesser men. Carey and Marshman were exceptionally gifted linguists, and mastered various Indian languages and dialects. William Ward was a master printer. Carey supervised the team in translating and publishing six complete translations of the Holy Bible, and 24 additional partial translations.

They also published grammars and dictionaries in Sanskrit, Marathi, Punjabi, and Telugu. They baptized many Indian converts. They founded Serampore College for training Indian preachers to evangelize their own countrymen. And Carey's humanitarian efforts led to the abolition in 1829 of the Suttee, the Hindu custom of having widows cremated at their husband's funerals.

The first American missionary to foreign fields was a Calvinist. He was Adoniram Judson, sent by Congregationalists to India in 1812. Anticipating his meeting with the Baptist, William Carey, he and his wife studied the Doctrine of Baptism en route, and became Baptists themselves before reaching India. Judson ministered but briefly in India before moving to Burma in 1813 where he ministered until his death in 1850. Although he ministered seven years before baptizing his first convert, his perseverance was later rewarded by many thousands of converts.

All these, and hosts of others like they, are the paragons of Christian evangelism. And they were all Calvinists. Divine Sovereignty and human responsibility was no paradox to them. They believed in Predestination and Election because God reveals them. They evangelized the world because God requires it. Let us pray the Head of the Church will raise many more to follow in their steps.

**PRAY FOR THOSE MEN, CALLED
BY GOD, WHO SERVE AS
CHAPLAINS IN OUR PRISONS.**

The Godly Man...

By Thomas Watson, 1666

Question: What may we do to perform duties in a spiritual manner? Answer 1: Let the soul be kept pure. Lust besots and dispirits a man. Beware of any tincture of uncleanness (James 1:21). Wood that is full of sap will not easily burn, and a heart steeped in sin is not fit to burn in holy devotion. Can he who feeds carnal lust be spiritual in worship? "Whoredom, and wine, and new wine take away the heart" (Hosea 4:11). Any sin lived in takes away the heart. Such a person has no heart to pray or meditate. The more alive the heart is in sin, the more it dies in duty.

Answer 2: If we wish to be spiritual in duty, let us revolve these two things in our mind: (1) The profit which comes from a duty performed in a spiritual manner. It enfeebles corruption. It increases Divine Grace. It defeats Satan. It strengthens our communion with God. It breeds peace of conscience. It procures answers of mercy, and it leaves the heart always in better tune. (2) The danger of doing duties in an unspiritual manner. They are as if they had not been done. For what the heart does not do is not done. Duties carelessly performed turn ordinances into judgments.

Therefore many, though they are often doing duty, go away worse from duty. If medicine is not well made, and the ingredients rightly mixed, it is as bad as poison for the body. So if duties are not well performed, they leave the heart harder and more sinful than before. Unspiritual duties often create temporal judgments: "The Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order" (1 Chron 15:13). Therefore God makes breaches in families, and relationships because people do not worship Him in that manner and due order which He requires.

Answer 3: If we want to have our duties spiritual, we must get our *hearts* spiritual. An earthly heart cannot be spiritual in duty. Let us beg from God a spiritual palate to relish a sweetness in holy things. For lack of spiritual hearts, we come to duty without delight, and go away without profit. If a man wants to have the wheels of his watch move regularly, he must mend the spring. Christian, if you want to move more spiritually in duty, get the spring of your heart mended.—From *The Godly Man's Picture* —Submitted by Brother Jim Robinette in his *Reflections*. Subscribe by writing him at jkrubin@myemailstation.com

The Substitution of Sprinkling for Immersion

"It is commonplace among scholars that the Council of Ravenna in 1311 was the first council to put sprinkling on a par with immersion. This permission to use sprinkling, according to the Schaff-Herzog Cyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, was favored by the growing rarity of adult baptism. Up to this time, sprinkling was only allowed in cases of the sick, and gradually for infants."—**A. T. Robertson**

[A. T. Robertson, 1863-1934, was the world famous Greek professor at Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY for 46 years. The above quote is from his sermon on Baptism printed in the "*Baptist Argus*" newsletter in 1900.]—From an e-mail from Ben Stratton (benstratton@iolky.com).

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

MY GOD, TEACH US TO PRAY!

(Continued from page 1)

Meeting you would ask the people to pray for my sister, that she may begin to read the Bible.” “Well, well, it shall be done, John.”

So at the next Prayer Meeting the teacher announced that a little boy was very anxious that prayers should be offered that his sister might begin to read the Bible. And right on, little Johnny was observed to get up and go out. The teacher thought it very unkind of the boy to disturb the people in a crowded room and go out like that, and so the next day when the lad came, he said, “John, I thought that was very rude of you to get up in the Prayer Meeting and go out. You ought not to have done it.” “Oh! Sir,” said the boy, I did not mean to be rude, but I thought I should just like to go home and see my sister reading her Bible for the first time.”

That is how we ought to believe, and wait with expectation to see the answer to prayer. The girl *was* reading the Bible when the boy went home. God had been pleased to hear the prayer, and if we could but trust God after that fashion we should often see similar things accomplished.

Do not say, “Lord, turn my darkness into light,” and then go out with your candle as though you expected to find it dark. But, after asking the Lord to appear for you, expect Him to do so—for according to your faith so will it be unto you.—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #847, Vol. 14—*Joyful Transformations*—read/download entire sermon on www.spurgeongems.org.

**PRAY DAILY
FOR OUR BROTHERS
AND SISTERS IN PRISONS.
ASK FATHER
TO USE THEM FOR
HIS HONOR AND GLORY.**

PROFESSOR OR BELIEVER?

By Pastor Glen Hopkins
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Is it possible to profess or confess one thing and yet believe and be another? Most certainly it is! Especially in this day and generation. Read the 23rd Chapter of Matthew and see what Jesus had to say about hypocrites, (in the Greek, hupokrites, pronounced hoop-ok-ree-tace) meaning an actor under an assumed character or stage player. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess” (Matt 23:35) “You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of Hell?” (v 33). And so, you see, one can profess to be a Christian but his actions and lifestyle profess something else.

Many preachers, today, have tried to commercialize Christianity with programs, plays, dramas—all kinds of *entertainment* for its congregation in an effort to attract and keep them in church. Let me say, here, that if it takes anything but the saving Grace and love for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to get people to church, they are coming for the wrong reason! When a person is led to repentance by the goodness of God, (Rom 2:4), he will seek the righteousness of God and he will long for the Word of God that is able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 3:15). He will not want to be entertained with a bunch of worldly paganism.

The problem is some preachers preach lies to their people and tell them they need to make a decision for Christ—they need to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. HELLO! That is not sound doctrine, this is not Scripture! Almost everyone that you ask believes in Jesus—that is their profession. They think because they made a decision for Christ, or let Jesus into their heart, they are saved and on their way to heaven. THAT IS NOT SCRIPTURE! That is the fault of unconverted false teachers that want a big congregation with lots of decisions. It is worthless as far as the Kingdom of God is concerned.

You must REPENT—turn from your sins and serve the living God! And guess what, God’s elect, those who are called before the world began, do just that! They long to hear the sound doctrines of Jesus preached. They love the Word of God. They love seeking to know God more and more which they do through the study of His Holy, Infallible, Immutable Word. “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Tim 2:15).

Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:9 not to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, but to be a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God—“Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

We are not saved because we made a *decision*—which is a work. We are not saved just to secure our place in Heaven, or to miss the wrath of God in eternal damnation. We are saved according to His own purpose. We did not deserve salvation. We did nothing for it—God saved His people when they were dead in trespasses and sins—and He saved them from their sins. Jesus Christ, without sin and holy, gladly took the wrath of His Father for the sins of His people that they might be presented righteous before God in Christ Jesus.

You see, it is in the heart of every Believer to walk worthy of our calling, (Eph 4:1). It is in him or her to obey the commandments of God and those commandments are not grievous to them, (1 John 5:3). Believers are thankful, grateful, appreciative for their salvation, justification, and regeneration—and *show* it by continually seeking to know God.—Adapted from Pastor Hopkin’s *Devotionals*—you may reach him at http://twitter.com/ZionBaptist_ms

**JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY TO
GOD THE FATHER! NOT MARY.
NOT MOHAMMED. NOT A FUTURE MESSIAH.
JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY.
(JOHN 14:6).**

SO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

It is the business of God's people to be trimmers of God's vines. Like our first parents, we are put into the Garden of the Lord for usefulness. Observe that the Church, when she is in her right mind, in all her many labors desires to retain and cheerfully to enjoy communion with Christ. Some persons imagine that one cannot serve Christ actively, and yet have fellowship with Him. I think they are very much mistaken. I confess it is very easy to get into Martha's position, and to be cumbered with much serving; you may have to preach here and there so many times a week—to attend committees, to visit sick people, and to do so many other things that you may really, unless you are careful, fritter away your own inward life in outward exercises. You may have to complain with the spouse, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept."

I do not think, however, that there is any reason why this should be the case except through our own folly. Certain is it that a person may do nothing at all, and yet grow quite as lifeless in spiritual things as those who are most busy. Mary was not praised for sitting still; no, but for sitting still at Jesus' feet! And so, Christians are not to be praised, if they neglect duties, merely because they live in retirement, and keep much at home—it is not sitting, I say, but *sitting at Jesus' feet*. Had Martha been sitting still, or had Mary been sitting anywhere else, I doubt not that the Master would have given a word of rebuke; He would never have said that mere sitting still was choosing the good part.

Indeed, I know some of you who are none the better for doing nothing, but a great deal the worse; for those who do nothing grow sour, and are always willing to find fault with the way in which others serve Christ. Do not think, therefore, that mere activity is, in itself, an evil—I believe it is a blessing. Taking a survey of Christ's Church, you will find that those who have most fellowship with Christ are not the persons who are recluses or hermits—who have much time to spend with themselves—but they are the useful indefatigable laborers who are toiling for Jesus, and who in their toil have Him side by side with them. They are workers *together* with God. Let me, then, try to press this lesson upon you—that when we as a Church, and each of us as individuals, have anything to do for Christ, we must do it in communion with Him.

We come up to His House, and why do we come? It is said that among Church people, the prayers are the main thing, and among Dissenters the sermon. I believe that in both cases this would be a fault. Praying should not

(See *Was the Master There?* on page 8)

Pray daily for Pastor Curt Daniel of Faith Bible Church
in Springfield, IL. You can visit his site at
<http://faithbibleonline.net/index.html>

**“HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES, EVEN
AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH,
AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT.”
(EPH 5:25 KJV)**

HOW TO STUDY THEOLOGY

By Martin Luther

I want to point out to you a correct way of studying theology, for I've had practice in that. If you keep to it, you will become so learned that you yourself could (if it were necessary) write books just as good as those of the fathers and councils. This is the way taught by holy King David (and doubtlessly used also by all the Patriarchs and Prophets) in Psalm 119. There you will find three rules, amply presented throughout the whole Psalm: prayer, meditation and testing.

PRAYER—First, you should know that the Holy Scriptures constitute a Book that turns the wisdom of all other books into foolishness, because not one teaches about eternal life except this one, alone. Therefore you should straightway despair of your reason and understanding. With them you will not attain eternal life, but, on the contrary, your presumptuousness will plunge you and others with you out of Heaven (as happened to Lucifer) into the abyss of Hell. But kneel down in your room and pray to God with real humility and earnestness (as David did), that He, through His dear Son, may give you His Holy Spirit who will enlighten you, lead you, and give you understanding.

MEDITATION—Second, you should meditate not only in your heart, but also externally by actually repeating and comparing oral speech, and literal words of the Bible, reading and rereading them with diligent attention and reflection, so you may see what the Holy Spirit means by them. Take care you do not grow weary, or think you have done enough when you have read, heard, and spoken them once or twice, and that you then have complete understanding. You'll never be a particularly good theologian if you do that, for you will be like untimely fruit which falls to the ground before it is half ripe. God will not give you His Spirit without the external Word.

TESTING—Third, there is testing. This is the touchstone that teaches you not only to know and understand but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, and how comforting God's Word is—wisdom beyond all wisdom.

David, in Psalm 119, complains often about all kinds of enemies, arrogant princes or tyrants, false spirits and factions whom he must tolerate because he meditates, that is, because he is occupied with God's Word in all manner of ways. For as soon as God's Word takes root and grows in you, the Devil will harass you, and will make a real theologian of you, for by his assaults he will teach you to seek and love God's Word.

I myself am deeply indebted to my critics that, through the Devil's raging, they have beaten, oppressed and distressed me so much. That is to say, they have made a fairly good theologian of me, which I would not have become otherwise. And I heartily grant them what they have won (honor, victory, and triumph) in return for making this of me, for that's the way they wanted

(See *Learn from Luther* on page 8)

A Study of Ephesians 4:22

PUTTING OFF THE OLD MAN – PART 3

Last month we discussed in some detail Paul's description of the "old man" in 4:22—now, let us be clear in saying that there are natural God-given desires in every person which are not bad or wrong. God gave to us the desires for food, and drink, and comfort, and sex, and self-preservation. They are given for man's enjoyment and preservation. When God originally made man, those desires were controlled by a heart and mind in man that was in complete submission to God. But with the fall of man into sin, sin began to take charge. Good and natural desires soon became deceitful lusts. Sin causes man to have desires that are contrary to God's design. Sin causes man to pervert the natural desires given by God into something that does not want to submit to God. In fact, the sinful nature in man leads him to throw off God's design and to pursue the gratification of his own desires in selfish and sinful ways.

This is the reason why people and nations are in the mess they are in today. Each one elevates his own desires above others. Sin is ruining relationships, and making men act more like animals than people made in the image of God. And what is behind it all is *deceit*. Note that the Apostle calls them DECEITFUL LUSTS. Sin leads man to desire to manipulate others in order to get what he wants. "Looking out for Number One," has become dominant in mankind. One stabs another in the back while pretending all the while to be nice; people play one person against another; they talk nicely, and pretend to like someone, and then turn around and gossip about him behind his back. All of it is deceit. The Prophet Jeremiah has pinpointed the reason for it all in his most sobering statement in Jeremiah 17:9—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

And of course, the devil is very glad to have it so. Remember that he is the master of deceit. The Scripture tells us that "the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field." He deceived Eve, and led the whole human race into sin. What people do not realize is that they are playing right into his hands. The Apostle warned the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:3, "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

Now, let us consider for a moment why sin is so deceitful, or we could say why it is so *successful*. Sin always appears to be offering something good. Didn't the devil tell Eve that the reason God had prohibited her and her husband from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was because there was something really wonderful being withheld from them? If sin didn't appear attractive, it would never catch people. Think of the prostitute as an example. She puts on a facade of

attractiveness; she puts on the jewelry, and the makeup, and the perfume, and APPEARS ATTRACTIVE. And soon, those who fall for the outward appearance have taken the bait.

But sin has another weapon which enables it to deceive. It discourages thought, and encourages one to function only on the basis of *feelings*. The person who succumbs to the prostitute doesn't think—he only knows that he wants something. He wants to gratify desire. The devil will never suggest to that person to THINK about what will happen to his family, his reputation, and perhaps even his physical health. Sin always suppresses the facts! It appeals to a person's pride, and compliments him, and plays on his emotions. But the essence of sin is deceit. It never gives what it promises. The person who falls for what sin is offering, finds it doesn't satisfy. And if he doesn't wake up to that fact, he will find that sin will take him deeper and deeper into this quest for gratification, only to find it eludes him. And worse yet, once a sinful habit is formed, it is very powerful and difficult to break. But sin never has us think about those things when it comes to us.

Sin ALWAYS TAKES, BUT NEVER GIVES! Because sin is wrong, it only leaves one empty and guilty, but never satisfied. There is a remarkable statement in the parable of the prodigal son that brings this into focus. After he left home with the large share of inheritance money, he began to squander it. People were glad to pretend to be his friend in order that they might pick his pocket. But when he came to the point of having spent all, no one was around to befriend him anymore. In fact, the Lord Jesus made this striking statement in Luke 15:16: "and no one gave him anything." His wallet was empty, and no one really cared.

Sin exhausts a person mentally, and physically, and morally, and emotionally. It is destructive. It only brings misery. It takes away virtue and good character, and leaves one feeling used because he has been used. Do you see why we are so strongly exhorted to put off the old man?

Let us then take just a little longer to see some of the principles of Scripture which will help us to put off the old man. There is only one way to avoid the deceitfulness of the sin and its lusts, and that is to be ruthless in the fight against it. But, let me remind you that you can't make the old man better. How then are we to deal with it?

Lord willing, we will answer that question next month.—PF

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**PRAY FOR OUR BRETHREN
IN NORTH DAKOTA, THAT OUR LORD
WILL BE PLEASED TO USE THEM
FOR HIS HONOR AND GLORY.**

WAS THE MASTER THERE?

(Continued from page 6)

eclipse preaching; for to preach or to listen to preaching is as true an act of worship as to pray. We never worship God better than when we hear His Word, reverently receive it, and are moved thereby to love and gratitude. To hear preaching is, in a sense, praying, since the true effect of all preaching that is worth listening to draws us into a spirit of devotion, and makes us ready for prayer, and every other form of worship.

But why do we come here? I am afraid there are some who come merely because it is the time to come—because the hour of worship has come round; and others come only because a certain preacher happens to stand upon the platform. Ah, this is not how God's own beloved ones come up to His House! They desire to *meet* with *Him*. Their prayer, as they tread the hallowed courts of God's House will be, "My heart and my flesh cries out for the living God." There is no hymn sung as well as when we really do praise Jesus in it. No prayer is as true as that prayer which really comes to the Mercy Seat, and spreads itself before the All-Seeing God. There is no preaching like that which is full of Christ, which gives forth a savor of His good ointments.

Worship is not to be commended because of the glorious swell of a Gregorian chant, or because of the equally majestic volume of sound which this great assembly may send forth from that sweet instrument, the human voice. A service is not to be commended because of the eloquence of the preacher, or because of the display of learning which he is able to make in expounding his discourse. No, to the Christian it is, "Was the Master there?" The question on Sunday morning is, "What do you think, will He come up to the feast?" Coming to the Lord's Table, the child of God's business is not so much with the bread and the wine, as with *His* blood and with *His* flesh. May I feed on *Him*? May I see *Him*? And if I get to *Him*, then it is well with me. If I have then to serve God in the public engagements of His House, let me say, "Come, my Beloved, let us get up to the vineyards."

You have other service to do, dear Friends. This afternoon many of you will be occupied with your Sunday school classes. There will be a knot of lads or girls around you. You will, perhaps, be conducting classes of hundreds of young men and young women. This evening, again, many will be occupied in

preaching, or you will be engaged at home with your own children. Oh, how blessed it is to go to the classes, or into the pulpit, having the Master with you! It sometimes happens to the preacher that he is like the butcher at the block—he has a cleaver in his hand, and cuts off large pieces of meat as food for those present—but he himself gets none. But it is otherwise with him when he has his Master with him! Then, whether the rest of the assembly are fed or not, certainly he himself is satisfied as with marrow and with fatness.

After what a blessed sort the teacher can teach when the love of God is shed abroad in his heart! You will bear with the rudeness of those boys; you will put up with the inattention of those girls; you will not be angry at the folly of that youth; you will not forget to be in earnest with that poor wanderer, when Jesus Christ stands by your side! A vision of the Crucified, my Brothers and Sisters, is that which we need! When we are toiling in His harvest field, and sit down to wipe the sweat from our brow, we grow very weary; the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few—we feel that the edge of our sickle is growing very, very blunt, and we wish we could lie down under the spreading tree from the heat of the sun, and toil no longer. But just then we see the Crucified One coming forward with His mighty sickle, and we mark the drops of blood streaming from His brow, and see the nail prints in the hands with which He grasps the sickle, and when we see how He toils, and how He labors! With what an awful love He sacrifices Himself—He has stripped off His very garments—and in all the nakedness of self-denial, He gives Himself up that He may save others while Himself He cannot save; then we pluck up our hearts again, and take our sickle in the hands which once did hang down, saying, "Jesus, I will never be weary, for You were not weary; and when I shall be faint awhile, I will see You, whose meat and drink it was to do Your Father's will, and I will make it my meat and my drink to serve You." Surely you cannot do God's work as well as when you have Jesus Christ with you!—Adapted from Ages Software's Spurgeon Collection—Sermon #605, Volume 10—GOOD WORKS IN GOOD COMPANY—By God's Grace, for all 63 volume of Spurgeon's sermons in Modern English, and for over 475 Spanish translations, free of charge, visit www.spurgeongems.org

LEARN FROM LUTHER HOW TO BE A THEOLOGIAN!

(Continued from page 6)

it.

Now, with that you have David's rules! If you study hard in accord with his example, then you will also sing and boast with him, "The Law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces" (Psa 119:72). And it will be your experience that the books of the fathers will taste stale and putrid to you in comparison. You will not only despise the books written by adversaries, but the longer you write and teach, the less you will be pleased with yourself.

When you have reached this point, then do not be afraid to hope that you have begun to become a real theologian who can teach not only the young and imperfect Christians, but also the maturing and perfect ones.

If, however, you feel and are inclined to think you have made it, flattering yourself with your own little books, teaching, or writing because you have done it beautifully and preached excellently; if you are highly pleased when someone praises you in the presence of others; if you, perhaps, look for praise, and would sulk or quit what you are doing if you did not get it—if you are of that stripe, dear Friend, then take yourself by the ears and, if you do this in the right way, you will find a beautiful pair of big, long, shaggy donkey ears!

Do not spare any expense! Decorate them with golden bells, so that people will be able to hear you wherever you go, point their fingers at you, and say, "See, See! There goes that clever beast who can write such exquisite books, and preach so remarkably well."—Adapted from Jim Ehrhard's, *Teaching Resources International*—you may visit his site at <http://www.teachingresources.org/>.

Letters to Mike Gendron Of Proclaiming the Gospel:

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Bonnie S., Ex-Protestant, Blessed Catholic for 36 years, writes—Mr. Gendron, When are you going to apologize for the “hateful misrepresentations” you have broadcast about the Catholic Church? The picture you draw of the Catholic Church, and by extension, Catholics, is almost entirely something you have made up. The quote you gave of Father John O’Brien from his book Faith of Millions was accurate. However he was speaking poetically when he wrote: *“When the priest announces the words of consecration, he reaches up into the heavens, brings Christ down from His throne, and places Him upon our altar to be offered up again as the Victim for the sins of man. It is a power greater than that of saints and angels. The priest speaks and lo! Christ, the eternal and omnipotent God, bows his head in humble obedience to the priest’s command.”* Just because his book has the Nihil Obstat and Imprimatur does not mean that every statement in the book is an exact Catholic teaching. Fr. O’Brien was saying the priest is consecrated to do a special job. I could recite the words of consecration till I turned blue, but nothing would happen. I feel sorry for you, but I feel even more sorry for the people you entice out of the Church. I will continue to pray for them and for you.

Brother Mike replies—*Dear Bonnie, Did you know Fr. John O’Brien personally, or are you trying to defend his heretical teaching by claiming to know how he was speaking? Perhaps you would allow God’s Word to speak to you. “He (Jesus), having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God...by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy...and where these [sins] have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin” (Hebrews 10:12,14,18). For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He should offer Himself often (Heb 9:24-25). I plead with you to trust Jesus, the perfect high priest who offered Himself once as the one perfect sacrifice to the one perfect God who demands perfection.*

C. B., Middleport, NY, writes—Mike, Your article last month really tugged at my heart. A hateful spirit has indeed taken root in the body of Christ, turning what should be overabundant love for one another (1 John 4:7) into a battle of ego and pride. Believers are displaying some of the most grossly egregious behavior imaginable—all in public on the Internet in its various mediums, and all in the presence of unbelievers. All the things we are told in Scripture to “put aside” (Col 3:8-9, James 1:21, 1 Peter 2:1), we are instead—to our shame “putting on.” The Lord said of Israel that His Name was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the Jews’ behavior (Rom 2:24). The same can be said today, His Name is being blasphemed when unbelievers see our arrogance, vitriol and pride!!! I’ve withdrawn from the online “communities” I used to participate in because people refuse to listen to one another in humility, and submit themselves to a careful study of the Word in disputable areas. If we don’t watch ourselves, history will repeat itself. John MacArthur opened my eyes to the tragedy of Christian history in a sermon he preached on Baptism some time ago. I wept as I listened to his sermon, horrified at what was being done, one to another, in the name of Christ. Thank you for your timely call for us to humble ourselves and repent! I agree wholeheartedly, lost souls are at stake, and our testimony before these precious people must be unmarred, so that they may come to know the Lord as we do. May God grant us that repentance and true unity, so more may be saved! If not, our salt will become worthless.

P.C., Franklin, TN—Mike, I have so enjoyed your ministry which has encouraged me to begin an outreach to my Catholic family and others along the way. I’m thankful for the clarity which God has given you in expressing things. Last month’s article about different understandings of doctrine was so well expressed. In Christ.

G. and N. B., Tinley Park, IL—Mike, Thank you so much for your article of speaking the truth in love in the last issue. What perfect timing! This is something that we have been struggling with. We have been blinded in the past by this sin of not always loving our Brothers and Sisters over doctrinal issues. We were often prideful with the knowledge which God had given us. I am sure many times we were just a noisy gong because we did not have love. May God continue to show us our sins, and grant us repentance for His Glory and our good. And may God continue to speak through you as you continue to present His Truth with compassion, love and humility.

Whatever we have over-loved, idolized, and leaned upon, God has, from time to time, broken it and made us to see the vanity of it, so that we find the readiest course to be rid of our comforts is to set our hearts inordinately upon them.—John Flavel, 1630-91

The whole life of a Christian should be nothing but praises and thanks to God; we should neither eat nor sleep, but eat to God and sleep to God and work to God and talk to God—do all to His Glory and praise.—Richard Sibbes, 1577 - 1635

Sorrows, because they are lingering guests, I will entertain but moderately, knowing that the more they are made of, the longer they will continue. And as for pleasures, because they stay not, and do but call to drink at my door, I will use them as passengers with slight respect. He is his own best friend who makes the least of both of them.—Robert Hall, 1764 - 1831

WHAT?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

*"I lifted up my eyes again, and looked, and beheld a man
with a measuring line in his hand."
Zechariah 2:1.*

I have also seen the measuring line in the hands of others—*Doctrinalists*. Yes; and their line has five marks which were originally made by John Calvin. And if your opinions do not square exactly to the standard, you are cut off from all part and lot in the blessings of vital godliness. Zion is certainly built according to the arrangement of the five points, and therefore if any Brother or Sister does not comprehend and receive them all, he is not a *weak* Believer, but according to the measuring line of our rigid friends, he is not a Believer at all!

You know, Brothers and Sisters, that there is no soul living who holds more firmly to the Doctrines of Grace than I do, and if any man asks me whether I am ashamed to be called a Calvinist, I answer, I wish to be called nothing but a Christian; but if you ask me, do I hold the Doctrinal views which were held by John Calvin, I reply, I do in the main hold them, and rejoice to avow it.

But, my dear Friends, far be it from me even to imagine that Zion contains none within her walls but Calvinistic Christians—or that there are none saved who do not hold our views! Most atrocious things have been spoken about the character and spiritual condition of John Wesley, the modern prince of Arminians. I can only say concerning him, that while I detest many of the Doctrines which he preached, yet for the man himself, I have a reverence second to no Wesleyan; and if there were needed two Apostles to be added to the number of the 12, I do not believe that there could be found two men more fit to be so added than George Whitefield and John Wesley.

The character of John Wesley stands beyond all imputation for self-sacrifice, zeal, holiness, and communion with God. He lived far above the ordinary level of common Christians, and was one of whom the world was not worthy. I believe there are multitudes of men who cannot see these Truths of God, or, at least cannot see them in the way in which we put them, who nevertheless have received Christ into their hearts, and are as dear to the heart of the God of Grace, as the soundest Calvinist out of Heaven. I thank God we do not believe in the measuring line of any form of bigotry.

I remember meeting with one who knew, yes, he knew how many children of God there were in the parish where he lived—there were exactly *five*. I was curious to know their names, and much to my amusement he began by saying, "There is myself." I stopped him at this point, with the query whether he was quite sure about the first one. Since then, his character has gone I know not where, but certainly he will get on better without it than with it! Yet he was the first on his own list, and a few others of his own black sort made up the five. There were in the other places of worship to which he did *not* go, men whose characters for integrity and uprightness, yes, and for spirituality and prayerfulness, would have been degraded by being put into comparison with him.

And yet he, *he* was set as judge in Israel; and was to know exactly how many people of God were in the village! Oh, I bless God that we have learned to have very little respect for the vision of the man with the measuring line. When we see an angel with it, if such is the intention of the vision, we are glad enough. "The Lord knows them who are His." But when we see a *man* with it, we tell him that he must give us a warrant from God, and show us how he is to know the Elect by any other method than that laid down in Scripture—"By their fruits you shall know them."—Adapted from Ages Software's Spurgeon Collection—Sermon #604, Volume 10—THE MAN WITH THE MEASURING LINE —by God's Grace, for all 63 volume of Spurgeon's sermons in Modern English, and for over 475 Spanish translations, free of charge, visit www.spurgeongems.org

HEAR YE! HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

Brothers and Sisters, we need not suppose that the sacramental host of God's elect has come to the end of persecution! We may have done so in this country. I cannot tell. This I know, I would not aid in maintaining an unjust law to escape from persecution. I would not deny to the Roman Catholic his natural rights though I thought he would burn me and my fellow Believers as soon as he had the power! I would do him no wrong under the pretext of preventing him from doing a wrong to me. God forbid that we should do evil that good may come!

True Protestantism does not live upon political favoritism or national supremacy. Truth can afford to let justice be done, for she knows that the right can never hurt her. We who worship Jesus in spirit can afford to do what is right, and let consequences take care of themselves.

My Brothers and Sisters, let the worst come—let violence again assail us—we have overcome in days gone by, and by God's Grace, can overcome still! Weak and feeble as we are today, when filled by the Holy Spirit we shall be strong, and shall form a fresh band of martyrs to illustrate the faithfulness of God once again! But we cannot, we *cannot* do violence to our consciences and the rights of other men even though it is to save our lives and preserve our liberties.—CHS

Dear Friends, some of you may be engaged in the service of winning for God *some one soul*. I know those who have one soul laid upon their heart. Perhaps it is the most solemn work under Heaven to have to pray for one soul. There are some of you who have only one person to look after—one child, one friend, one soul. You tried to talk to that one person the other day—you burst into tears when you heard the answer you received. You have been praying for months, but instead of seeing any answer to your prayer, the person prayed for is growing worse!

O for a vision of the Savior's face covered with the spittle! See Him marred and bruised by the rough Roman soldiers! Behold Him as His back smarts beneath the thongs of the cruel whips! See Him while they lift Him up on high, and dislocate His bones!

When your soul swells with fearful grief, you do not feel such grief as this! Courage, solitary laborer—let Christ's griefs solace you. Come with me, my Beloved; come with me, my Lord, and my toil shall be easy!—Adapted from Ages Software's Spurgeon Collection—Sermon #605, Volume 10—GOOD WORKS IN GOOD COMPANY—By God's Grace, for all 63 volume of Spurgeon's sermons in Modern English, and for over 475 Spanish translations, free of charge, visit www.spurgeongems.org

PRAY FOR GRACE TO BE HOLY.



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

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT AS TO THE MATTER OF PRAYER

The first thing we ascribe to the Spirit herein is, that He supplies the mind with a due comprehension of the *matter* of prayer, or what ought to be prayed for; without which no man can pray as he ought. The testimony of the Apostle is express to this purpose, “Likewise also the Spirit helps our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groans that cannot be uttered,” (Rom 8:26).

It is true that whatever we ought to pray for, is declared in Scripture, and summarily comprised in the Lord’s prayer: but it is one thing to have this in the book, another to have it in our heart; without which it cannot be to us the due matter of prayer. Without the assistance of the Spirit, we neither know our own needs, nor the supplies of them that are expressed in the promises of God—nor the proper end for which we should seek those supplies.

1. The Spirit of God alone is able to give us an understanding of our *needs*.

(1.) The principal matter of our prayer has respect to faith and unbelief; the Apostles prayed, “Lord, increase our faith,” and the poor man in his distress, “Lord, help my unbelief.” To this end we must be convinced by the Spirit, of the nature and guilt of unbelief, and of the nature and use of faith; for neither conscience nor the Law will convince us of the evil of the one, nor instruct us in the nature of the other; and without both, we know not our greatest needs, or “what to pray for as we ought.”

(2.) The matter of our prayer respects the depravity of our nature; the darkness of our understandings; the perverseness of our wills; their reluctance to spiritual things; and the secret workings of our lusts, which keep the soul from a due conformity to the holiness of God. Believers have a special regard to these things in their confessions and supplications; and their great concerns with God in prayer are for mercy in their pardon, for Grace in their removal, and the daily renovation of His Image in their souls. Without a sense of these matters, I must profess I know not how any man can pray; and this knowledge we have not of ourselves. Nature is blind, and cannot see them; it is proud, and will not acknowledge them; stupid, and is insensible of them.

(3.) As it is with respect to sin, so it is with respect to God and Christ, Grace, holiness, and spiritual privileges. The inward sanctifica-

tion of all our faculties, with supplies of Grace for this purpose, is what we need and pray for. But we have no spiritual conceptions of these things, but what are given us by the Spirit of God; and without these, what are our prayers, or what do they signify?

(4.) With respect to temporal concerns, we know not of ourselves what to pray for. Whatever our sense may be of them, and our natural desires about them, yet how and when, under what conditions and limitations, with what frame of spirit, what submission to the will of God, they are to be made the matter of our prayers, we know not: “For who knows what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life, which he spends as a shadow?” (Eccl 6.12). In these also we need to be “taught of God”

2. The Spirit of God alone acquaints us with the Grace and mercy prepared for our relief in the promises of God. What God has promised, we are to pray for, and nothing else. There is nothing that we can need, but God has promised it: and there is nothing that He has promised, which we do not need. It is therefore indispensably necessary that we should know what God has promised. He knows our needs infinitely better than we do ourselves; yes, we know nothing of them but what He is pleased to teach us; and from the promises we may learn them more certainly than by any other means. And this we affirm is by the Spirit of God, for the “things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.” By Him alone we “know the things that are freely given unto us of God,” (1 Cor 2:11), namely, the Grace, mercy, love and kindness of the promises.

3. The Spirit of God alone directs Believers to pray, or ask for anything to right or proper ends. Men may lose all benefit of their prayers by proposing to themselves improper ends, as the Apostle James affirms of some, “You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss, to consume it on your own lusts.” There is nothing so excellent it itself, so useful to us, so acceptable to God in the matter of prayer, but it may be vitiated, corrupted, and rendered vain, by an application of it to false or mistaken ends. And that in this case we are relieved by the Holy Spirit is plain from the text under consideration; for “helping our infirmities,” and teaching us “what to pray for as we ought,” He makes intercession for us “according to the will of God,” (v 27). He does it in us, and by us, or enables us so to do. He directs and enables us to make supplications “according to the mind of God”—and herein God is said to “know the mind of the Spirit,” that is, His end and design in the matter of His requests. This God knows, that is, approves and accepts.

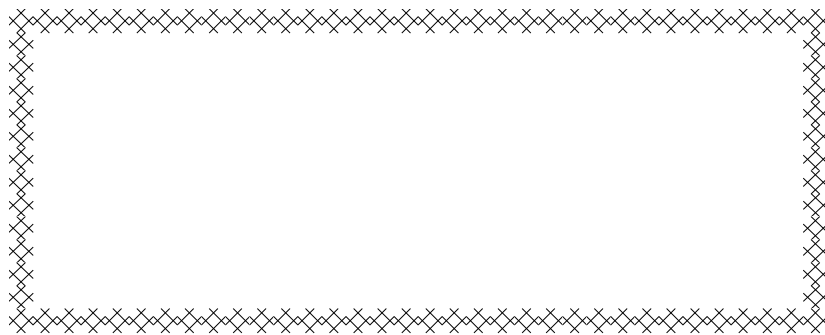
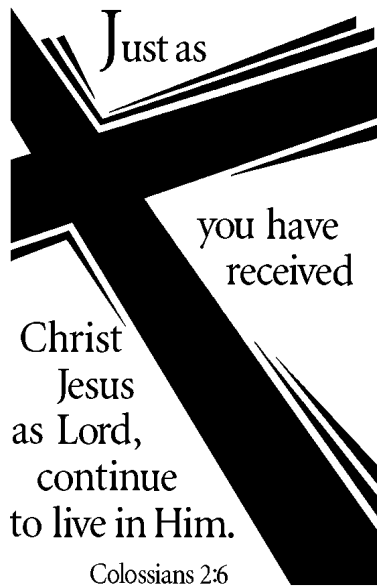
The Spirit of God directs Believers not only as to the matter, but as to the end of all their requests. He guides them therefore to design,

PRAY FOR OUR PRESIDENT.

ASK OUR LORD TO BLESS SPURGEONGEMS.ORG

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

For HIS Glory
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Pray for your chaplain/pastor.

In This Issue...

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

I believe the point and barb of the arrow, the force and pith of the Gospel, is what Christ has put it in plain words—“He who *believes* and is baptized shall be saved.” That is to say, if a man would participate in the bounteous salvation which Christ has worked, he must *believe* in Christ. He must *trust* Christ. He must believe Christ to be God’s appointed Savior, and to be able to save him. He must act on that belief, and trust himself in the hands of Jesus—and if he does that, he shall be saved.

Further, the text says he *must be baptized*. Not that there is any virtue whatever in Baptism, but it is a small thing for Christ to expect that the man or woman trusting to be saved by Him should acknowledge and avow their attachment to Him.

He that wishes to have Christ as his Savior should be prepared openly to acknowledge that he is on Christ’s side. Baptism thus becomes the *badge* of discipleship, the outward token of faith by which a man says to all who look on, “I confess myself dead to the world; I confess

Are You Ashamed of Your Salvation? Of Your Master, Jesus Christ?

By C. H. Spurgeon

myself buried with Christ; I declare myself risen to newness of life in Him.”

Make what you will of it, and laugh at it as much as you like, yet in the faith of Jesus as my Lord, I have taken leave of all else to follow Him. It is a point of obedience. Sometimes one has said in his heart, “What a pity it is that Baptism should have been introduced into the Tabernacle; it makes a block of wood into which men may drive their ritualistic hook.” But then the Son of God Himself has put it here, we cannot alter it. If it were not here in His Word, I would not have put it here. But it is here, and being here, it is at your soul’s hazard to leave it out!

I believe with all my heart that if you believe in Jesus Christ, you will be saved, whether you are baptized or not, but I would not like to run the risk, mark you, for I have not got that in my text. It is, “He who believes *and is baptized* shall be saved,” and I would take the *two* commands together, and obey my Master’s will throughout, and not leave out that which did not suit my inclination and accept only that which did.

I am bound to leave out neither of them, but to take the two together. With your heart you must believe, and with your mouth make confession—and if you do these sincerely, you shall be saved.—

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #900, Vol. 15—*Preach, Preach, Preach Everywhere*—

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**HOW CAN OUR WORSHIP BE
PLEASING TO GOD
IF WE ARE IN A
BACKSLIDDEN
STATE?**