

FOR HIS GLORY

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The Christianity which is presented to the public gaze I would not be unduly censorious, but I fear it is often a Christianity which the world does well to despise. When a Jew went to Rome and asked for Christianity, he saw the Christians, so called, worshipping the Virgin Mary, images of saints, and relics, and bones, and I know not what. And he justly said, "The Lord has said to Israel, 'The Lord your God is one God,' and, 'You shall not make unto yourself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, nor in the earth beneath. You shall not bow down to them nor worship them.'" On the strength of such revelation the Jew rejected the Christianity of Rome and he did well, don't you agree? —CHS



HAVE YOU TAKEN HOLD OF GOD?

By C. H. Spurgeon

Brothers and Sisters, we must stir ourselves up to take hold of God. We very greatly need to have among us many THOROUGH BELIEVERS WHO TAKE HOLD UPON GOD BY FIDELITY TO HIM. I have seen applied to Calvin the motto, "He took fast hold." If ever a man did take fast hold on invisible things, it was that famous Reformer. What he grasped, he held with force of clear conviction, intelligent apprehension and devout reverence.

I am particularly anxious that every member of this Church should now look upon himself or herself separately and distinctly—and try to follow me in my description of a Believer who takes hold of God. He is deeply sincere and thorough in all that he does. Shams and pretenses are his abhorrence. He feels the solemn importance of dealing in spirit and in truth with the Lord—and of taking hold upon God, Himself, and not on mere names and words and forms.

He says within himself, "I am a *Christian* and I will be so, by God's Grace, not in name

only, but in deed and in truth. I know that the outward form of religion is but a husk, and I resolve to feed upon the kernel. I mean to have the *substance* of religion—not its shadows. I will take hold of all the outward which God has revealed, but I will mainly look to the inward, and my soul and spirit shall deal with the living God Himself. If I live, I will live unto Him. Nothing short of this shall content me."

Such a man opens his Bible and resolves to find out what God's will is—and he judges for himself—for he knows that he will have to render a personal account. He means to take hold for himself of every revealed Truth of God, for he wishes not to be taught of man, alone, but to be taught of God. He awakens all his wits to understand the Doctrine and precepts of God's Word, for he has become a disciple and he, therefore, wishes to learn. His cry is, "I want to be thorough. I want to go to the soul and center of things, and know the Truth of

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CHASTENED? THANK GOD!

By C. H. Spurgeon

Bear with me when I notice in the fifth place the memorable blessing of *chastisement*. I must call special attention to it because God does so in these words, "You shall also consider in your heart." That unswollen foot, and that unworn garment you need not so much value as this, for this you are especially bid to consider—to meditate upon in your very heart! Your deepest thoughts are to be given to it, and consequently, your highest praises. "Consider in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you."

My dear Friends, I speak as one of the most humble of God's servants, but I dare not withhold my testimony! I can truly say of everything I have ever tasted in this world of God's Mercy, (and my path has been remarkably strewn with Divine Loving Kindness), I feel more grateful to God for the bodily pain I have been allowed, and for all the trials I have endured of many

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HAVE YOU TAKEN HOLD OF GOD?

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God by the teaching of the Spirit of God in my own heart!”

Not content with searching the Word alone, he takes everything he finds there to God, and says, “Lord, I long to lay hold of You in this Truth. I desire not merely to know *concerning* Christ, but to know Christ! Not only to believe the *Doctrine* of the Holy Spirit, but to feel the *Power* of the Holy Spirit, Himself, upon my soul, for I have said in my heart, ‘My God, I would know You and commune with You; I would love You and serve You; my soul follows hard after You—when shall I come and appear before You?’”

Such a person, dear Brothers and Sisters, when he once knows the will of the Lord, has made up his mind to act promptly upon what he knows! His mind is expressed in the language of one of old who said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” It is nothing to him what others may do, except that he regrets that they should do evil. He puts his foot down and will not run with a multitude to do evil.

He has made the Word of the Lord to be the guide of his life, and he will not depart from it. His is no borrowed faith—he has embraced the Truth of Jesus for himself, and he means to follow Him at all costs. And, as far as he can, he will have his household so ordered that all who come around him may see that Jesus is his Lord.

Come fair or come foul, his hold is secure, and he will not let go. Such a man, impelled by inward zeal, sets himself to extend the Kingdom of Christ. Having obtained a solid fulcrum of assured knowledge, he now begins to use his lever and work upon others. Wherever he is settled in Providence, he sets about founding a Church for his Lord. He is glad to be a member of a large Church for the sake of Christian fellowship, but if he is cast in a desert place, he can hold his own, alone, for his hold is not on man, but on God! He can testify in the midst of others who do not fear God—he would testify in the midst of heathens if he were called to it—for opposition and persecution cannot shake him!

He has taken hold of God—not of the Church, nor of the minister, nor of the mere formal creed! He has passed beyond all those things to the Lord, Himself, and his confidence is thus above the heavens. He knows that he cannot be placed where God is not and, therefore, he feels that his best Friend is always near.

The eye of man is nothing to him; the Presence of God is first and last with him. He labors with earnest zeal to maintain, defend, and, also, to spread abroad the Truths of God which are verily believed among us. He is a man who calls upon God, not merely in prayer, but by confessing His name, and acknowledging His cause. And he stirs himself up to take hold upon God in the doing of all these things.—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #1377, Volume #23—*Taking Hold of God*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

REFLECTIONS

Submitted by Jim Robinette

<http://www.missionstation.org/robinette/index.htm>

DYING THOUGHTS

Be particularly thankful, O my soul! That God has made use of you for the service of His Church on earth. My God, my soul for this does magnify You, and my spirit rejoices in the review of Your great undeserved mercy. O what am I, whom You took up from the dunghill, or low obscurity, that I should live myself in the constant relish of Your sweet and sacred truth, and with such encouraging success communicate it to others! Though I may say now my public work seems ended, that these forty-three of forty-four years I have no reason to think that ever I labored in vain! O with what gratitude must I look upon all places where I lived and labored; but, above all, that place which had my strength! I bless You for the great number of them gone to Heaven, and for the continuance of piety, humility, concord, and peace among them.

Also for all that by my writings have received any saving light and Grace, O my God, let not my own heart be barren while I labor in Your Kingdom to bring others unto holy fruit! Let me not be a stranger to the life and power of that saving truth, which I have done so much to communicate to others! O let not my own words and writings condemn me, as void of that divine and heavenly nature and life, which I have said so much of in the world!”—From *Dying Thoughts*, by Richard Baxter. First Published in 1683. Published by The Banner of Truth Trust Carlisle, PA 2004.

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Jim and Kappy Robinette

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<http://www.pro-gospel.org>

PRAY FOR ALLAN ROMAN AS HE LABORS FOR OUR MASTER:

<http://www.spurgeon.com.mx>

DO YOU WRESTLE IN YOUR PRAYING?

By C. H. Spurgeon

Brothers and Sisters, we need a development in the form of THE WRESTLING PLEADER. The expression is borrowed, as you know, from Jacob at the brook of Jabbok. He had begun to pray, alone, by the brook when an angel appeared to him, or rather the Prince of Angels, Himself. When Jacob saw the Angel, he laid hold upon Him, and there was a wrestling match between them all through that night. It was a sight such as never seen on earth before! After much weeping and agony, Jacob made a desperate clutch at the Angel, and cried, "I will not let You go unless You bless me."

In the Church of God we need many wrestling Jacobs! What does the Text mean when it speaks of a man stirring himself up to take hold of God? The transaction takes this form: the good man feels the case urgently; the blessing which is needed is laid on his heart, and he feels that he must have it. He is convinced of the necessity of it, and he is, also, certain that he cannot have it, except from God.

Then he looks at the propriety of it, and asks, "Is this a case which I can lawfully lay before God? I seek such a thing, but may I expect the thrice Holy God to give it to me? Is it for His Glory?" When you have done that, dear Friend, you have commenced well!

Now proceed to business. Go about it in an energetic, but reasonable way, and next turn to the Bible, and see if the Lord has ever promised that which you seek. Search out Promises! Get them at your fingertips! Memorize their very words! Then go before God, and tell Him your desire, and honestly declare your reasons for desiring it.

Show the Lord that you know that He has promised the blessing, and then begin to plead with Him to fulfill His own Word! Very much of taking hold upon God must be in using arguments with Him; the Lord knows the thing is good, but He wants *you* to know it! And in order that you may be well instructed in the value of the mercy you seek, He wishes you to produce your arguments, and bring forth your strong reasons.

Many teachers use what we call the Socratic method in which the student is made to answer questions, not that his teacher may be instructed, but that the youth may learn. Set your case in order, and mention your pleading before the Lord as if you were pleading in a court of justice. State why this thing should be, and what you fear will happen if you are not answered.

Return to the work again and again, as Abraham did when interceding for Sodom, and each time renew your strength. Especially bring forth the Divine Promises, and say concerning each one of them, "Do as You have said; fulfill this Word unto Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope." Plead the Covenant, and the faithfulness of God!

That done, believe that God will keep His Promise, and begin to *expect* the blessing. Act as if you had obtained it, for it is written, "Believe that you have it, and you shall have it." If the mercy is not then given, ask again—go through the

same pleadings as before, amending them, and increasing their power.

The agony of prayer is somewhat like a great siege in which one earthwork is cast up, and after a while it is followed by another yet nearer to the town which is to be taken. One after another the besiegers raise their works till the place is quite hemmed in—then they bring up their guns, and begin to pound away upon the walls which they have resolved to capture.

Thus must we be about to win the blessing which we need, using Divine Promises as our ramparts, and our strong reasons as our great guns. Remember, it is not for God's sake that you are called upon to plead, but for your own! The Lord desires to convince you of the value of His mercy—and when He has done it, He intends to grant it to you!

A man who can take hold of God in prayer will be of the utmost value to the Church. Why should we not learn this art? But oh, how few there are who call upon His name! How few there are who stir up themselves to take hold of God! Sleepy prayers—God have mercy upon them! Prayers that do not mean anything! Prayers of men who can be put off with, "No!" These are as common as stones on the road and of less worth!

We need *importunity*—the knocking at the Gate of Mercy again, and again, and again! We need the unconquerable resolve—"I must have it! It is for God's Glory, and He has promised it. I will not cease until I obtain it."

We need to see the majesty of prayer among us again. If we had hundreds of Church members who could take hold upon God, religion would revive, and we should no more have to complain of barrenness. God will part the heavens, and come down; and the mountains will flow at His Presence when once His people take Him at His word and pray as if they believed!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software—Sermon #1377, Volume #23—Taking Hold of God—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>*

TRUST HIM!

By C. H. Spurgeon

"I am persuaded that the Doctrine of Predestination—the blessed truth of Providence—is one of the softest pillows upon which the Christian can lay his head, and one of the strongest staffs upon which he may lean in his pilgrimage along this rough road. Cheer up, Christian! Things are not left to chance—no blind fate rules the world! God has purposes, and those purposes are always fulfilled! God has plans, and those plans are wise, and can never be dislocated. Oh trust in Him, and you shall have each fruit in its season, the mercy in its time, the trial in its period, and the deliverance in its needed moment."

A TYPICAL “INVITATION” OF CHARLES SPURGEON

“He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”

John 1:11.

Now, I have a heavy task, indeed, and that is to speak with you to whom I have preached in vain these many years. The one topic of every Sabbath in this place is Jesus Christ Crucified. I have other things to say to you, but this is repeated over and over again.

You are told without ceasing that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that “Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” Notwithstanding all this, up to this moment many of you refuse to trust Him! You “Stumble at the Word being disobedient,” and you thus make the Rock of Salvation to be a rock of offense to you!

If you deny it, I will ask you, “Why, then, have you not accepted Him for your Savior? Why are you still alienated in your hearts from Him?” Perhaps your reply is that you do not think of these things. Is this, then, your conduct towards the dying Savior—that you will not even think of Him? Is He nothing to you? Do you despise His blood?

Perhaps it is that you do not understand; then surely, in your case it must be a willful blindness of understanding, for the Truth of God has been put before you as plainly as words could utter it, and neither do I know how I could have spoken more clearly! You have rejected, up to this moment, the Christ who died for sinners! Do you know what you have done?

I wish He would stand here upon this pulpit at this moment, that you might see who it is that you have despised. See Him with the ruby drops still glistening upon His crown of thorns, His face bruised, His Countenance lined with grief, His eyes red with tears, His shoulders furrowed with the lash, His hands and feet wounded with the nails, and His side gashed with the lance—this is the Man of Sorrows whom you have refused!

Look now on Him whom you have pierced! Can you, in His Presence, continue your rejection? Will you still bar your hearts against Him? Will you now say to Him to His face, “Son of God, bleeding for human sin, I will not trust You! Son of Man, dying in the place of sinners, I will not yield to You”? Yet you have said that in His Presence, which is everywhere real, though undiscerned by eye or ear. With those eyes of fire which discern from Heaven everything that is done on earth, He has seen you impudently refusing to be saved by Him!

Alas, I have to go further. Some of you have not been content with rejecting the Lord, but have gone the length of opposing Him! You have made His Gospel the theme for jest, and treated His people with indignity. It always staggers me that men should treat the meek and lowly Jesus, and His gracious Gospel so roughly; there is something so tender and so meek about the Savior, that I pity from my soul the wretch who has the heart to strike Him in the face, or is so base as to insult with spit that dear and sorrowful visage!

Once in the sack of a city, when the fierce soldiers had commenced a general massacre, a little child was seized by a rough warrior, who was about to kill him, but stayed his hand when the little one said, piteously, “Please, Sir, don’t kill me; I am so little.” I think the Savior’s meek and gentle manners might be a similar argument for staying the hand of wrath! Who can harm

the harmless Lamb of God? Persecutor, what evil has Jesus done to you? Reviler, what has He ever said to injure you? When has He given you an ill word or look? Ah, it is to His silence that you owe your life! Should He accuse you, you would be undone forever! Yet He has not accused you to the Father, but has pleaded for your reprieve!

Sometimes in our police courts you may have seen an inhuman husband brought before the magistrate for having maltreated the poor unhappy woman who is linked to him for life. The policeman has taken him in the very act of assaulting her—her poor sickly face bears evidence of his brutality; she can scarcely stand, for his cruelty has put her life in jeopardy. Watch her closely. The magistrate asks her to give evidence against the creature who has so cruelly injured her. She weeps and shakes her head, but says not a word.

She is asked, “Did he not ill-treat you yesterday?” It is long before she speaks, and then not a word is uttered against the husband whom she still loves, though there is nothing loveable about him. She declares that she cannot bear to appear against her husband, and she will not. What a stone must that man’s heart be if he does not love her from then on all her days!

But, see a nobler counterpart! There is the Lord whom you have injured by your hard speeches and cruel mockeries; see you not His face all marred with your bruises? Yet He does not accuse you to the Father, but when He opens His

(See EVER HEARD on page 5)

Katy Baptist Church FAIRMONT, WV Bible Conference

April 18-20, 2014

Marvin Stalnaker, Pastor

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Schedule of services:

Friday April 18...7:00 PM

Pastor Larry Criss - Scripture reading and devotional
Pastor Cody Groover - Message

Saturday April 19...10:00 AM

Pastor Cody Groover- Scripture reading and devotional
Pastor Larry Criss - Message

Sunday April 20...

10:00 AM...Pastor Larry Criss
11:00 AM...Pastor Cody Groover

EVER HEARD AN “INVITE” LIKE THIS?

(Continued from page 4)

mouth to speak for sinners, He cries, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” He must be ingratitude incarnate who can continue to use Him or His cause spitefully! There is no chivalry, no, there is no *manhood* in the heart which treats spitefully one who neither provokes nor retaliates!

I must add, before I close this point, that some are ungrateful to Christ, from whom, above all others, such conduct ought never to have proceeded. The Text says—“He came to His own, and His own received Him not.” In this very place the Lord Jesus has come to those who appeared to be His own. You, Sir, were your mother’s own boy, and she, now in Glory, was an ardent lover of the Savior. And when Jesus came to you, He might have said, “This is the son of one of My dearest friends, the son of a woman whose whole heart was Mine—surely her son will love Me, too.” Yet you did not respond to Him!

Possibly I address an unconverted person who is not only the son of a Christian father, but the child of one of God’s own ambassadors, yet he himself is an enemy to God! Surely a minister’s children should be the Lord’s, and yet ministers’ sons and daughters have been seen among reprobates. I know not why it is, but sadly often has this been the case. Do I address one such? I pray that you may no longer be ungrateful to your father’s God!

Yes, and there are some here who years ago were sorely sick, and on the borders of the grave, and they said, “Please, God, if we ever get up again, we will seek the Lord.” You were thus in a sense, “His own” by your own voluntary vow—but you have not received Him! Today the Lord Jesus comes to you again, and shows His hands and side, and asks you why it is you break your promises to Him? He asks why it is you love not your mother’s Savior? Why it is you care not for your father’s God? And what it is that has turned you against Him? Many good works has He shown you, and for which of these do you stone Him? He is full of love, and pity, and mercy, and power to save—for what reasons do you reject Him? May the Lord grant that these appeals may have power with you by the voice of the Holy Spirit!—(Adapted from Sermon #1055, Volume 18—INGRATITUDE OF MAN—By the Grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and more than 525 Spanish translations, visit: www.spurgeongems.org).

**PRAY DAILY FOR MEN
AND WOMEN IN PRISONS ~
PRAY ESPECIALLY
FOR THEIR SPOUSES AND CHILDREN.**

**PRAY GOD WILL USE GRACE REFORMED
CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS
TO BRING REVIVAL IN NORTH DAKOTA.**

Have You Read Any of Calvin’s Works?

“I have heard persons rail at Calvinistic doctrine who never in their lives have read a word that Calvin wrote. If you were to offer them a small treatise in which that noble system of divinity should be vindicated, they would say, ‘Oh! It is no doubt so dry, I should not be able to read it.’ Yet these learned gentlemen know what is inside a book without opening it! They are like some critics of whom I have heard, who, when they meet with a new volume, take a knife and cut the first page, smell it, and then condemn or praise the whole book! Many there are who do just the same with the Bible. They have heard some verses of it once or twice; they have got some idea of it, and straightway they are wise. They take to themselves their own degree of Doctor of Divinity, and they have much boldness in their unbelief.”—Charles H. Spurgeon

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Sunday Evenings 6:00 P.M.

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AMEN!

“Brothers and Sisters, beloved in the Lord, in each one of us there was some special difficulty as to our Salvation—some impossibility which was possible with God, though it would have been forever impossible with us. Remember also that all those saints made perfect would have been in Hell had it not been for the Son’s atoning Sacrifice. This they will remember more vividly because they will see other men condemned for the sins with which they also were once polluted! The crash of vengeance upon the ungodly will make the saints magnify the Lord the more as they see themselves delivered! They will each feel

*‘Oh were it not for Grace Divine,
That fate so dreadful had been mine.’*
—CHS

“Thy Word Is Truth”

Compiled by Richard Bennett, Converted Catholic Priest, now Evangelist. P. O. Box 192, Del Valle, TX 78617

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Biblical Truth

The Light of God's Word

The Bible only is the Standard for Truth

“...the scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35

“Sanctify them through Thy truth: **Thy word is truth.**” John 17:17

“That ye might learn in us **not to think...above that which is written**, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.” 1 Corinthians 4:6

“**Add thou not unto his words**, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” Proverbs 30:6

“**All scripture is given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: **That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“**Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition**, which ye have delivered...” Mark 7:13

Biblical Truth

The Light of God's Word

Salvation is by Grace Alone Through Faith

“**Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.**” Romans 3:24

“**For by grace are ye saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: **It is the gift of God: Not of works**, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8, 9

“**For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.**” Romans 5:17

“**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...**” Titus 3:5-6

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: **for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**” Galatians 2:21

Biblical Truth

The Light of God's Word

Faith is the Gift of God and comes by the Word of God

“**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**” Acts 16:31

“For unto you **it is given** in the behalf of Christ, not only to **believe on him**, but also to suffer for his sake.” Philippians 1:29

“**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**” Romans 10:17

New Catechism

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)

Truth is based on Scripture, Tradition, and the Pope

“**Sacred Tradition** and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other.” CCC Para 80

And [**Holy**] *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. CCC Para 81

“As a result the [Roman Catholic] Church...does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. **Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted** and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.” CCC Para 82

“**The Supreme Pontiff**, in virtue of his office, **possesses infallible teaching authority** when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful...he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such.” CCC Para 891

New Catechism

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)

For Salvation Grace becomes merely a help and is given through the sacraments of the Church

“Grace is the **help** God gives us to respond to our vocation of becoming his adopted sons. It introduces us into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life.” CCC Para 2021

The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. ‘Sacramental grace’ is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament. CCC Para 1129

“**One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God** and with the Church, **must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins** he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience.” CCC Para 1493

New Catechism

Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)

Faith comes through the Mother Church

“**It is the Church that believes first**, and so bears, nourishes and sustains my faith.” CCC Para 168

“Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of **faith through the Church, she is our mother:...**” CCC Para 169

“**Believing**” is an ecclesial act. The Church's faith precedes, engenders, supports and **nourishes our faith. The Church is the mother of all believers. ‘No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother’**” CCC Para 181

CHRIST'S SHEEP IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

The sheep was lost in the wilderness. The Good Shepherd sought, found, and saved His sheep. The Shepherd carried the sheep back to His home, rejoiced with His friends because the lost was saved, and secured the sheep in His fold. The sheep obediently and faithfully followed the Shepherd for many years into lush pastures, beside still waters, and in paths of righteousness.

But now the sheep was very old, weak, and feeble. The Shepherd came to the sheep and said, "Come with Me one last time." The sheep replied, "Lord, you know that I would if I could. But I am so weak that I do not have the strength to even arise." So the Shepherd reached down and lovingly lifted the sheep, set him on his feet, and said, "Hold on to Me. I will be your strength. Let us go."

Off they went into a dark valley. The sheep asked, "Lord, you have never led me into this place before. What is it?"

"This is the Valley of Death," replied the Shepherd. "My Father's house is at the end of it. But many foes lie between here and there. But do not fear them! I have my rod and my staff in My hands, and they are more than capable for your defense. "And although this valley is very dark, do not fear! I know every step of the way. I walked through this valley alone many years ago. I have since then escorted many sheep through this valley, and never lost a single one in it. And I will not lose you."

The sheep saw movement over his head. "What is that!" he exclaimed. The Shepherd answered, "That is Death, for whom this valley is named. He looms over this valley, for which reason it is dark. And he slays every one trying to walk through it without Me, and sends them to Sheol and Hades.

"But do not be afraid of Death! I defeated him the first time I walked through his valley, and he gives to Me a wide berth every time I walk through again. He will cast his shadow over you in the hope of scaring you. But he cannot harm you as long as I am beside you. My sheep therefore call this the Valley of the *Shadow* of Death."

The sheep heard something behind him. "What is that!" he exclaimed. The Shepherd answered, "That is Goodness and Mercy. They have followed you ever since the day I found you. But you never saw them. Goodness always observed you, and ascertained that your needs were met. Mercy always ascertained that no harm would overtake you."

The sheep saw a light on top of a mountain off in the distance. The Shepherd told the sheep that the light was from His Father's house, and that the journey would soon be over.

The Shepherd, seeing that the sheep was very hungry and thirsty from his journey, led him to a table and seated him at it. The Shepherd then prepared a feast, and set it on the table. Ravenous wolves and lions, having smelled the food, and seeing a sheep unable to run from them, surrounded the table. But they cowered when the Shepherd raised his staff and pointed his rod toward them. He anointed the sheep's head with the oil of gladness, and told him to dine. He poured wine into a goblet until it ran over, and kept pouring, saying that His cruse of wine would never be empty.

The sheep looked toward his would-be-devourers all around him, and then said to them while pointing to His Shepherd: "Jehovah-Jesus is my Shepherd – I *never* lack! He restored my soul when I was lost, and every time I failed. He led me into pastures so lush that I could lie down to graze. He led me beside still waters where my thirst was always slaked. He led me in paths of Righteousness for His name's sake."

Then looking toward his Good Shepherd, the sheep continued: "Yea, I will walk all the way through this Valley of the Shadow of Death—for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me. Even here in this dark valley deep in the territory of my worst enemy, You feed me sumptuously at this table you prepared for me in the midst of my foes—and my cup runs over. Surely Your Goodness and Mercy shall never cease to follow me." And then, with a shout of victory, the sheep exclaimed, "And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah—*FOREVER!*"

And he does!—Written on the first anniversary of the passing of Ernest William Parks through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, 10 February 2013, by his son, **Daniel E.**

COULD SPURGEON SING?

I wish I could sing and could ex-temporize a bit of music, for then I would stand here and sing those words—"You shall find Him if you seek Him." At any rate, the words have sweet melody in them to my ears and heart—"You shall find Him if you seek Him." I should like to whisper that sentence softly to the sick, and to shout it to the busy! It ought to linger long in your memories, and abide in your hearts—"You shall find Him if you seek Him." What more, poor Sinner, what more do you need?—CHS, 1876

HE CERTAINLY SANG THIS A LOT! [BY GOD'S GRACE]

You who choose, may invent a Salvation that is partly by man, and partly by God, and you may cry this up as much as you please; as for me, I have no desire for any Salvation but that which is all of God, neither is there any other! This one note shall occupy my entire being—"The Lord has done it." "The Lord has done it." Every new convert who has newly found peace knows that the Lord has done it! Every man who has been, for years, a Believer, and has learned his own weaknesses, will say clearly, "The Lord has done it!" Yes, and the aged Christian, just about to depart, is the man to say, "The Lord has done it." Grace reigns without a rival! The Lord, alone, is exalted! Sing, O heavens, and be joyful O earth, for Redemption is Jehovah's work!—CHS

ARE YOU BEING CHASTENED?

(Continued from page 1)

sorts, than I do for anything else except the Gift of His dear Son! I am sure I have derived more real benefit and permanent strength, and growth in Grace, and every precious thing, from the furnace of affliction, than I have ever derived from prosperity!

In fact, I have for years looked upon my great *prosperity* as being sent as a test and trial of my Graces; I regard it as the severest of ordeals which I must lay humbly before God, and ask for Grace to bear, but I have learned to regard affliction as being a sheltered nook in which I am more than usually screened from temptation, and in which I might expect to have the peculiar Presence of the Lord my God! I am not fearful of my ballast, but I am very anxious about my sail.

Moreover, I have discovered that there is a sweetness in bitterness not to be found in honey—a safety with Christ in a storm which may be lost in a calm. I know not how to quite express my meaning, but even lowness of spirits, and deep sadness have a peculiar charm within them which laughter may emulate in vain. It is good for me that I have been afflicted!

Now I think if I were to take the testimony of many Christian friends here, they would have to say much the same. So then, as you know all this, let me say nothing about it but just this—ponder and consider much the gratitude you owe to God for His chastening rod; dwell much in your heart upon what God evidently regards as one of His distinguishing blessings! Do not pass over slightly what God would have you consider; count the cross and the rod to be doubly worthy of your deepest thought. “Hear the rod and Him that has appointed it.”

Remember that whenever you are chastened, you are *not* chastened as a slave-master smites his victim, nor as a judge orders the criminal to be lashed, but as a man chastens his *son*, so are you chastened. Your chastisement is a sign of sonship, it is a token of *His Love!* It is intended for your good! Accept it, therefore, in the spirit of sonship, and “despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when you are corrected of Him.”

Remember that chastisement is an assured token of the Covenant Relationship. It is the Lord your God that chastens you! If He were not your God, He might leave you alone; if He had not chosen you to be His own, He would not take such care of you; if He had not given Himself to be your Treasure, He might not be so diligent in weaning you from all other treasures; but because you are His, He will withdraw your love away from this poor world.

Perhaps He will take one child after another from you, that all the love that was lavished on the child might flow towards Him! Perhaps He will leave you a widow, that the love that ran in the channel of a husband may run altogether to Him! Perhaps He will take away your riches, that the consolation you did derive from them may be all derived from Him! Perhaps He will smite you, and then lay you on His own bosom, faint and helpless, that you may derive strength and joy from fellowship, close, and near with Him; a closeness which you would never have had if it had not been that these other joys were removed!

I have seen a little plant beneath an oak tree sheltered from the storm, and wind, and rain, and it felt pleased and happy to be so screened; but I have seen the woodman come with his axe and fell the oak, and the little plant has trembled with fear because its protection was removed. “Alas, for me,” it said, “the hot sun will scorch me, the driving rain will drown me, and the fierce wind will tear me up by the roots.”

But instead of these dreadful results, the shelter being removed, the plant has breathed freer air, drank more of the dews of Heaven, received more of the light of the sun; and it has sprung up and borne flowers which otherwise had never bloomed, and seeds that never had sown themselves in the soil!

Be glad when God thus visits you, when He takes away these overshadowing but dwarfing comforts to make you have a clear way between you and Heaven, so that heavenly gifts might come more plentifully to you. Bless God for chastenings! Let the sweetest note of your music be to Him that lays not the rod aside, but like a father, chastens His children for their good.—(Adapted from Sermon #939, Volume 16—THE PILGRIM’S GRATEFUL RECOLLECTIONS—by the Grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and more than 547 Spanish translations, visit: www.spurgeongems.org).

PURITAN QUOTE

“Solomon bids us (Prov 23:23) to buy the truth, but does not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be ever so dear. We must love it both shining and scorching. Every parcel of the Truth of God is precious as the filings of gold—we must either live with it—or die for it.”

—Thomas Brooks—www.puritansermons.com

Would you be willing to die for your Master, Jesus Christ? Could you remain quiet as you were criticized for your belief in Jesus Christ? Do you defend your Master, Jesus Christ, when He is ridiculed by people around you? **Have you publicly obeyed His command to be baptized?** Do you pray daily for those who are truly persecuted because of their love for your Master, Jesus Christ?

DO YOU READ SCRIPTURE EVERY DAY? WHY NOT?

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

*“When you awake, it shall talk with you.”
Proverbs 6:22.*

This Book’s consecrated talk sanctifies and molds the mind into the Image of Christ. You cannot expect to grow in Grace if you do not read the Scriptures. If you are not familiar with the Word, you cannot expect to become like He that spoke it. Our experience is, as it were, the potter’s wheel on which we revolve; and the hand of God is in the Scriptures to mold us after the fashion and image which He intends to bring us. Oh, be much with the Holy Word of God, and you will be Holy. Be much with the silly novels of the day, and the foolish trifles of the hour, and you will degenerate into wasters of your time; but be much with the solid teaching of God’s Word, and you will become solid and substantial men and women—drink them in, and feed upon them, and they shall produce in you a Christ-likeness at which the world shall stand astonished!

Let the Scripture talk with you, and it will confirm and settle you. We hear every now and then of apostates from the Gospel; they must have been little taught in the Truth as it is in Jesus. A great outcry is made, every now and then, about our all being converted to Rome; I was assured the other day by a good man with a great deal of alarm, that all England was going over to Popery! I told him I did not know what kind of God he worshiped, but my God was a good deal bigger than Satan, and my God did not intend to let the devil have his way, after all, and that I was not half as much afraid of the Pope at Rome, as of the Ritualists at home. But mark it, there is some truth in these fears! There will be a going over to one form of error or another, unless there is in the Christian Church a more honest, industrious, and general reading of Holy Scripture.

What if I were to say most of you Church members do not read your Bibles? Would I be slandering you? You hear on Sunday a Chapter read, and you perhaps read a passage at family prayer; but a very large number never read the Bible privately for themselves. They take their religion out of the monthly magazine, or accept it from the minister’s lips. Oh,

for the Berean spirit back again—to search the Scriptures whether these things are so! I would like to see a huge pile of all the books, good and bad, that were ever written—prayer books, and sermons, and hymnbooks, and all—smoking like Sodom of old, if the reading of those books keeps you away from the reading of the Bible!

A ton weight of human literature is not worth an ounce of Scripture—one single drop of the essential tincture of the Word of God is better than a sea full of our comments, and sermons, and the like! The Word, the simple, pure, Infallible Word of God—we must live upon it if we are to become strong against error, and tenacious of Truth! Brothers and Sisters, may you be established in the Faith—rooted, grounded, built up; but I know you cannot be unless you search the Scriptures continually.

The time is coming when we shall all fall asleep in death. Oh, how blessed it will be to find when we awake, that the Word of God will talk with us then, and remember its ancient friendship! Then the Promise which we loved before shall be fulfilled; the charming intimations of a blessed future shall be all realized, and the face of Christ, whom we saw as through a glass darkly, shall be all uncovered, and He shall shine upon us as the sun in its strength! God grant us to love the Word of God, and feed thereon, and the Lord shall have the Glory forever and ever. Amen and amen!—(Adapted from Sermon #1017, Volume 17—THE TALKING BOOK—By the Grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and more than 547 Spanish translations, visit: www.spurgeongems.org).

**REMEMBER MIKE GENDRON
IN YOUR PRAYERS:
<http://www.pro-gospel.org>**

**PRAY FOR ALLAN ROMAN
AS HE LABORS FOR OUR MASTER:
<http://www.spurgeon.com.mx>**

PRAY FOR GRACE TO BE OBEDIENT TO GOD’S WORD.

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

**PRAY FOR GRACE TO BE FAITHFUL
TO STUDY GOD’S WORD EACH DAY.**

STUDY OF EPHESIANS 4:28**STOP STEALING, WORK HARD, AND GIVE —PART 3**

We now come to the second part of the verse which gives us the positive virtue which we are to strive for: “But rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good.”

There is a common misconception, even among Christians, that having to work is a punishment or a judgment from God. It is believed that in an ideal state, man would not have to work. But that is not correct. The Bible teaches that God gave man work to do even before he fell into sin. It was a gift from God to give man a sense of purpose. In Genesis 2:15 we read, “Then the LORD God took the man, and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it.” The difference after the Fall is that labor became difficult for man. As a punishment for sin, God said to Adam in Genesis 3:17-19, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

Let’s consider a few additional Scriptures: Proverbs 14:23—“In all labor there is profit, But idle chatter leads only to poverty.” Proverbs 19:15—“Laziness casts one into a deep sleep, And an idle person will suffer hunger.” Proverbs 31:27—“She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness.” Ecclesiastes 10:18—“Because of laziness the building decays, And through idleness of hands the house leaks.”

And a very interesting passage in which Paul is giving Timothy instructions about how the Church is to relate to widows, says this of the younger widows in 1 Timothy 5:13—“And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.” Here the implication is the old cliché that “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” Not working at something productive gave the younger widows opportunity to become gossips and busybodies.

No one was a better example of practicing what he preached than the Apostle Paul. In one of his letters to the Corinthians, Paul spends a whole Chapter speaking of how proper it is for those who preach the Gospel to receive an income from it. Yet, he made tents to help support himself in the work of spreading the Gospel! To the Thessalonians he writes in 2 Thessalonians 3:8, “Nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor, and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you.”

Scripture always commends and encourages hard work. It honors God when people use the capabilities He has given them in a productive way. Proverbs 13:11—“Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished, But he who gathers by labor will increase.” Paul tells the Thessalonians about the kind of life they ought to seek for themselves in 1 Thessalonians

4:11—“That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.” I find it interesting and instructive here that Paul specifically mentions working with your own hands. Of course, this does not mean that working at a desk, or at a job that does not demand physical labor is not honoring to God; but it does expose the erroneous thinking which looks at physical labor as somehow demeaning or below a person’s dignity.

The Apostle has some very strong statements in this regard. In the same context to the Thessalonians which we have previously seen in which Paul tells of his own laboring, he goes on to say this in 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12—“For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such, we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.” These are strong words for the lazy who will not work!

There is no disagreement among historians that belief in honest hard work helped to make the United States the country it used to be. People were willing to work hard, and in fact, although they worked harder, they were more generous even though they had far less for themselves. We must go so far as to say that God will bless honest hard work. Ecclesiastes 5:12 says, “The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.” The person who works hard goes to bed with a good kind of tiredness; he knows he has done something productive, and has not been a parasite on society. The person who works hard and is wise will inevitably accumulate wealth, and there is not a thing wrong with that. It is a blessing that God has designed.

But, there is one more thing that needs to be said to round off all we have said to this point. The Apostle has yet a third and very vital part of the instructions here, for it is quite possible that all we have said about the virtue of hard work up to this point could be taken in an entirely selfish way. It is possible for people to work hard in order that they might live in their own selfish world and glut themselves with what they want, and ignore everyone else around them. But that is not at all what the Apostle has in mind.—PF

**PRAY FOR GRACE
TO BE HOLY!**

On Psalms, Hymns, And Spiritual Songs

By Charles H. Spurgeon

*“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God
for all the things that they had heard
and seen, as it was told unto them.”
Luke 2:20.*

The way in which these shepherds honored God is worth noticing. They did it by praising Him. Let us think more of sacred song than we sometimes do. When the song is bursting in full chorus from the thousands in this house, it is but a noise in the ear of some men; but inasmuch as many true hearts, touched with the love of Jesus, are keeping pace with their tongues, it is not a mere noise in God’s esteem; there is a sweet music in it that makes glad His ear.

What is the great ultimatum of all Christian effort? When I stood here the other morning preaching the Gospel, my mind was fully exercised with the winning of souls, but I seemed while preaching to get beyond that. I thought, “Well, that is not the chief end after all—the chief end is to glorify God, and even the saving of sinners is sought by the right-minded as the means to that end.” Then it struck me all of a sudden, “If in Psalm singing and hymn singing we do really glorify God, we are doing more than in the preaching; because we are not then in the means, we are close upon the great end itself.”

If we praise God with heart and tongue, we glorify Him in the surest possible manner; we are really glorifying Him then. “Whoever offers praise glorifies Me,” says the Lord. Sing, then, my Brothers and Sisters! Sing not only when you are together, but sing alone! Cheer your labor with Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Make glad the family with sacred music!

We sing too little, I am sure, yet the revival of religion has always been attended with the revival of Christian Psalmody. Luther’s translations of the Psalms were of as much service as Luther’s discussions and controversies; and the hymns of Charles Wesley, and Cennick, and Toplady, and Newton, and Cowper aided as much in the quickening of spiritual life in England as the preaching of John Wesley and George Whitefield.

We need more singing. Sing more and murmur less; sing more and slander less; sing more and quibble less; sing more and mourn less. God grant us today, as these shepherds did, to glorify God by praising Him.—Adapted from Sermon #666, Volume 11—HOLY WORK FOR CHRISTMAS—by God’s Grace, read/download all 63 volumes of CH Spurgeon’s sermons, and over 547 Spanish translations, free of charge, at www.spurgeongems.org.

REMISSION OF SINS THROUGH CHRIST’S DEATH

By John Kershaw — 1848

*“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”
(1 Cor 15:3).*

The awful and solemn death of Jesus, His crucifixion and blood-shedding, is the pillar of the Christian religion, and the grand foundation of the Church of God. The sinner who is awakened to see and feel his lost, ruined, and undone state; to behold the inflexible Holiness and Justice of God, and brought, at the same time, to feel himself sinking under the terrors of God in a broken Law—that poor guilty, sin-condemned wretch has nowhere else to look for peace, comfort, or rest, but to the Lord Jesus Christ! He died for our sins. He *“Was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.”*

Now this is the very Gospel the Apostle Paul preached, and, therefore, he lays such emphasis upon it in that memorable Chapter, 1 Corinthians 15. Let me read a few verses of it. He says, *“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (vv 1-3). The solemn and awful death of Jesus, the Incarnate God, His blood-shedding for the remission of our sins and His resurrection from the dead is the foundation upon which God’s Church is raised for eternity!

**WHEN TEMPTED, CONSIDER
PRAYING:
“JESUS, BE MY THOUGHTS”
OR,
“JESUS, BE MY EYES”
OR,
“JESUS, BE MY HEART.”**

—THOMAS BROOKS—

“If you would have a clear evidence that that little love, that little faith, that little zeal you have is true, then live up to that love, live up to that faith, live up to that zeal that you have—and this will be evidence beyond all contradiction.”

“There is no possibility of taking a mercy out of God’s hand, till the mercy is ripe for us, and we ripe for the mercy.”

www.puritansermons.com

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

Our prayer for you:

¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in
your hearts through faith;
that you, being rooted and
grounded in love,
¹⁸ be able to comprehend
with all the saints what *is*
the width and length and
depth and height—
¹⁹ know the love of Christ
which passes knowledge;
that you may be filled with
all the fullness of God.
(Eph 3:17-19 NKJV)



Pray to have a sincere desire to be like Jesus Christ.

In This Issue...

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

“JESUS ONLY”—NO FOOLS OF ROME NEEDED!

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

*“And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”
Matthew 17:8. (NKJV)*

“They saw no one but Jesus only.” This was all they needed to see for their comfort; they were sorely afraid—Moses was gone, and he could give them no comfort; Elijah was gone—he could speak no consolatory word; yet when Jesus said, “Be not afraid,” their fears vanished! All the comfort, then, that any troubled heart needs, it can find in Christ! Go not to Moses, nor Elijah; neither to the Old Covenant, nor to Prophecy; go straight to Jesus only! He was all the Savior they needed. Those three men all needed washing from sin; all needed to be kept and held on their way, but neither Moses nor Elijah could have washed them from sin, nor have kept them from returning to it. Jesus only could cleanse them, and did; Christ could lead them on, and did. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, all the Savior we need, we find in Jesus only! The priests of Rome, and their Anglican mimics officiously offer us their services; how glad they would be if we would bend our necks once again to their yoke! But we thank God we have seen “Jesus only,” and if Moses has gone, and if Elijah has gone, we are not likely to let the fools of Rome come in and fill up the vacancy! “Jesus only,” is enough for our comfort without either Anglican, Mosaic, or Roman priest-craft. He again was to them, as they went afterwards into the world, enough for a Master. “No man can serve two masters,” and albeit, Moses and Elijah might sink into the second rank, yet might there have been some difficulty in the follower’s mind if the leadership were divided? But when they had no leader but Jesus—His guidance, His direction and command were quite sufficient. He, in the day of battle, was enough for their Captain; in the day of difficulty, enough for their direction. They needed none but Jesus! At this day, my Brothers and Sisters, we have no Master but Christ; we submit ourselves to no vicar of God; we bow down ourselves before no great leader of a sect, neither to Calvin, nor to Arminius, to Wesley, or Whitefield. “One is our Master,” and that One is enough, for we have learned to see the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God in Jesus only!—(See #924, Volume 16—JESUS ONLY—by the Grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and more than 547 Spanish translations, visit: www.spurgeongems.org).