

FOR HIS GLORY

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O HOW we should, who profess to be Christians, strive to follow Christ's steps! *That* should be the great business of our lives, as it is the chief scope of the gospel. If Christ has conformed Himself to us by taking upon Him our nature, how reasonable it is that we should conform ourselves to Him in a way of *obedience and sanctification*. It was Christ's abasement to conform Himself to those who were infinitely beneath Him—it will be our advancement to conform ourselves to Him who is so high above us! If we shall be conformed to Him in glory, how logical it is that we should *now conform ourselves to Him in holiness*. "We shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2), like He not only in our souls, but our bodies, too, will be transformed like unto His (Phil 3:21). What a motive is *this* to bring us into conformity with Christ *here*, especially seeing that our conformity to Him in holiness is the *evidence* of our conformity to Him in glory (Rom 6:5). The conformity of our lives to Christ is our highest excellence in this world, for the measure of our grace is to be estimated by this rule. So far as we imitate Christ, and *no farther*, are we of any real help and benefit to those around us. Contrariwise, the less we are conformed to Christ, the greater hindrances and stumbling blocks are we both to the saved and unsaved. What a weighty and solemn consideration is this! —A.W.P.



The Excellency Of Prayer

By William Huntington, 1745-1813
In a letter to a friend.

Prayer is the blessed means which God has appointed to bring every grace from Christ to the believer. The believer is to let his requests be made known unto God, and for his encouragement God says that the prayer of the upright is His delight. Yes, He says that He loves to hear it. "Let Me hear your voice, let Me see your face! For your voice is pleasant and you are lovely!"

Prayer is the casting of our cares and burdens on the Lord. It is the pouring out of the soul before Him, the presenting of our troubles to Him. Prayer is communing and corresponding with Christ—and receiving grace from His fullness to help in every time of need. It is keeping open the communion between the Lord and His people. Prayer is their way of paying morning and evening visits to the King of kings, and Lord of lords! It is their means of cultivating and keeping up perfect friendship with a friend who loves at all times—and, therefore, it should never be neglected.

Prayer is pouring out the soul unto God, and placing before Him our troubles. It is "casting all our cares upon Him who cares for us"—and our burdens upon Him in whom we have "righteousness and strength." Prayer is opening the heart, the mind, and the mouth to Him who has said, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble! I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me." It is besieging the everlasting kingdom, moving the throne of grace, and knocking importunately at the door of mercy—encouraged by the promise, "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

In prayer we must take no denial. If we have but a feeling sense of our needs, and a Scripture warrant of a promise to plead, we must argue, reason, plead, supplicate, intercede, confess, acknowledge, thank, bless, praise, adore, repeat, importune, watch and take hold of whatever may be of use to the soul. Sinners, sensible of their lost estate by na-

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A DELUSION DISPELLED

By C. H. Spurgeon

"Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness."
Ezekiel 14:20.

WE are told in the opening verse of this chapter that certain of the elders of Israel came to the prophet and sat before him. You need not ask who these elders were, or from where they came, because it is evident enough they were not a deputation from the Jews who were left in Judah and Jerusalem. They were individuals of distinction from among the exiles of Chebar. That they came to inquire of the prophet of the Lord, we gather from the answer that came to them by the Word of the Lord. And we might, also, infer from the matter of the terrible denunciations that were uttered, something, at least, of the manner of inquiry they proposed. The men were downright hypocrites—they were followers of the false prophets who are

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WHO ARE THE SAINTS?

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

What is it to be a saint? Some people do not want to know, for with them it is a term of contempt. They say, “Oh, he is one of your saints!” They lay the emphasis on the word, “*saints*,” as if it were something very disgraceful, or, at least, despicable and hypocritical! Whenever I have that said to me—and it has happened more than once—I take my hat off out of respect to the title. I had rather be a saint than a Knight of the Garter! Sometimes I have said, “I wish you could prove your words,” for surely nobody need be ashamed of being called a saint unless he is afraid that he cannot maintain the name. But if you really *are* saintly, and men apply the title to you in scorn, wear it upon your sleeve as your honor, and make no attempt whatever to conceal the soft impeachment! I suppose that nobody would, as a general thing, be ashamed to be called a peer of the realm—and, certainly, to be a *saint* is a far more honorable thing than to be a Duke! The peerage the Queen can give—but saintship only God Himself can give—and if you have that, you need never be ashamed of it!

I have sometimes heard of the “Latter Day Saints.” I do not know much about them, but I greatly prefer the, “Every Day Saints.” Those people who are saints anywhere and everywhere are truly saints! And he that is *not* a saint everywhere is not a saint *anywhere*, for this is a thing that cannot be put off and on like our Sunday clothes! *Holiness* must be a part of ourselves—it must be our nature to be saintly! Who, then, are saints? Some will tell us that they are persons who are totally free from sin in thought, word, and deed. But where will you find these marvelous beings? I have never met with such! I have seen a few hare-brained enthusiasts who said that they were perfect, but you had only to watch them for a single day to discover their defects. A man absolutely free from all tendency to sin I have never seen on earth, nor have you—I think we were all sinners, and I have not altered the opinion.

I would not think he was much of a saint who did not confess that he was still somewhat of a sinner. I would be afraid that he did not know himself, and that his standard of saintship was not as high as it ought to be. When a man is so good that he cannot be *better*, I perceive that, in some respects, he is so bad that he could hardly be worse! For instance, in the matter of pride, he has gone some few degrees beyond Lucifer, himself! But when a soul is thoroughly saturated with the belief that it can be no better, it *will* be no better. That holy restlessness which makes a man lament his imperfections, and pine after something more Christ-like, is part of the force by which we move upward towards higher degrees of spirituality and grace. Self-satisfaction is the death of progress, and at the same time, the discovery of falsehood. The very power to become sanctified has departed from the man who boasts that he is so!

Oh, brothers and sisters, if we know ourselves, and our God, every idea of our being absolutely perfect will make us sick to the death! We know we are nothing of the sort! Still, we also know that sin does not have dominion over us, and that we are holiness unto the Lord—and in this we do and will rejoice, and bless the Lord our God!

Taking all that into consideration, we again ask the question, who are saints? How shall we know them? Well, they are known, next, by *their holy life*. They are not only dedicated to God, but they are made meet for God’s use by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Forget not all I have said about our imperfections, but for all that, God’s people are a holy people! “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” A man is described in Scripture, not by his infirmities, but by the general run and current of his life. We say of a river, that it runs to the south, although there may be eddies along the banks which run in an opposite direction to the main stream. Still, these are an inconsiderable matter. The main stream of the Thames is running constantly towards the sea, and we speak not amiss or untruthfully when we say that it is so. And the main stream and set of the current of the life of a child of God runs towards that which is right, true, and holy—both towards God and towards man.

If it is not so with you, dear friend, I make very short work of it—you do not know the Lord! You have need to be born-again, and to be delivered from the power of sin. “His servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.” Depend upon it, that which governs you is your King—and if *evil* governs you, then you belong to the evil one! But where there is grace in the heart, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. “Holiness is imputed,” says one. I say it *cannot* be imputed! The *righteousness of Christ* is imputed to us, but *holiness* is quite another term, and you never find in the Word of God mention made of an imputation of holiness! That cannot be!

Now I want to call your mind back to where we started. Our text speaks of saints, but they are said to be *God’s* saints. “All Your works shall praise You, O Lord; and *Your* saints shall bless You.” The devil has his saints, and Rome has her saints, and self-righteousness has its saints, and ceremonialism has its saints—but these are not *God’s* saints! God has His own saints, and *they belong to Him*. They are peculiarly and especially His; they are as the signet upon His finger; their names are engraved upon the palms of His hands. You remember how the Good Shepherd speaks of those who believe on Him—“My sheep”—notice that word, MY—“hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” They are so completely His that they shall be His forever and ever—and they can NEVER be taken away from Him!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software,—Sermon #1796, Volume 30—*Concerning Saints*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

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A DELUSION

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exposed in the previous chapter as seeing vanity and divination—and then saying, “Jehovah says,” though Jehovah had not sent them!

Now they come, these elders, to interview the *true* prophet of the Lord, and before they have time to state their errand, the Word of the Lord confronts them with a life-like portrait of their own characters. “These men have set up their idols in their heart, and put up the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?” For persons who were idolaters at heart to ask counsel of the living God, as if they would learn His will, though they defied His law, was a most insulting mockery! The thought which seems to have nestled in their breasts and prompted their visit was, after all, the exposure that Ezekiel has made of the wickedness of the land and of its inhabitants—may it not still be consistent with the mercy of the Lord to spare the city, as He would have spared the city of Sodom at the intercession of Abraham, for the sake of the few righteous men that remained in it?

The answer, as you are aware, was an emphatic “No.” A reference to the 26th chapter of Leviticus, and a rehearsal of the four judgments which should work the desolation stand associated with the protest which is repeated again and again, each time, it seems to us, with more vehement force—“Though Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.”

Now, my main objective this evening will be to assert, to illustrate, and to enforce this one distinct feature in the moral government of God. In all the procedures of divine judgment, the principle of *individual* responsibility can never be relaxed. Hence the need of personal piety—the absolute necessity that men and women should *pray for themselves*—that each one should *repent* for himself, that each one should *believe* for himself, and that each one should, in his own proper person, be *born-again* by the effectual operation of the Spirit of God!

No proxy in these matters is possible! Sponsors in religion are a wicked superstition—their use degrades the minds of men and profanes the worship of God—they ought to be forever done away with! I charge you, as you love God and your own souls, and the souls of others—sooner *die* than stand sponsor for *child* or man, for it is a sin, a mockery, an offense before high heaven! Every man must take heed to his own soul. “Let each man prove his own work, for each man shall bear his own burden,” and every one of us must give an account for *himself* at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Among the various shifts and schemes for taking comfort without a satisfactory title, or a plausible reason—the idea adopted by some that the righteousness of their friends may be of some use to them—is the most pernicious!

“They are the children of eminently gracious people. Surely,” they say, “they cannot be lost!” They are connected with those whose name is known, and whose memory is fragrant in Christian society; they were born and brought up in a house dedicated by family prayer! They have been cradled and nurtured in the midst of godliness; they readily believe that those who live in the back slums, and have grown up to be wanton and willful, depraved and dishonest, will certainly perish—but can it be that those who have walked in the paths of morality, and observed the ordinances of outward religion should be cast away? They scarcely think that it could be consistent with propriety to resist their claims to some discriminating consideration! Though they do not say as much in words, yet they secretly flatter themselves with the idea that the godliness of their ancestry, and the scrupulous integrity of their parents will be enough to shelter them from responsibility!

There are others, to mark a lighter shade in self-deception, who indulge a hope that the *prayers* of their dear ones will be heard for them, although they never pray for themselves. They fall back in time of need upon the belief that, surely their mother’s prayers will be answered on their behalf, or their wife’s petitions will bring down a blessing upon them! They do not embody the notion in words—I wish they did—for if people were to place such thoughts in black and white, they would never like to acknowledge them; their folly would be too palpable. They entertain a hazy notion that because they have been so often prayed for, a blessing must come to them sooner or later! They will not awaken themselves to seek the mercy of the Lord, or quit their sins, and lay hold on Christ to obtain the promise of pardon and peace—they vainly dream that something mysterious will happen to them, one of these days, in answer to good people’s prayers. In fact, some of them eagerly ask the prayers of the godly, though they never pray to God for themselves!

My text is a stern rebuke for any who have taken themselves to either of these refuges of lies! I want to sound an alarm, and drive them out of their hiding places. Oh, that God may be pleased to make His own Word effectual to this end! “Though Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.” Now, it cannot be denied that there is great power in godliness, and a mighty prevalence in the intercessions of godly people to bring down rich blessings upon men. You are perfectly right in seeking the prayers of Christian friends! Why, even the Apostle Paul said, in the name of all the sacred ministry, “Brethren, pray for us.”

You can hardly ask for a choicer favor from the servants of God than that they should pray for you. But certain circumstances may entirely neutralize the prayers of the godly. Such circumstances were present in the case of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in Jeremiah’s day. They went on so far in idolatry and all manner of vice that God said that He would not hear Moses and Samuel, though they stood before Him to plead on their behalf! He told Jeremiah that he might as well cease to weep and pray, for He would never hear him for that

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DELUSION

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people. And here, by Ezekiel, He declares that if so wonderful a trio as Noah, Daniel, and Job should join in intercession—He would not regard even them! And just so it is at this hour—if men continue in their sin—if, after hearing the gospel, they refuse it.

If they persist in rejecting it; if they stifle conscience; if they silence the voice within; if they perniciously resolve to indulge their lusts, and will not repent and turn to God, then the excellence of their friends will rather aggravate, than make amends for their guilt—and the prayers of their friends will be so utterly nullified and made of no effect, that nothing but the dread sentence will avail them—they must perish! They have not *personally* believed in Christ, and accepted Him as their Mediator, therefore they must perish! They have dissipated the last vestige of hope by rejecting the *only way* of salvation, and they must perish! Though they come of a line of saints, and in their veins there runs the blood of the faithful, they must perish! Though they have the tradition of a sound faith handed down from generation to generation, and though the escutcheon that has descended to them from holy ancestors is free from blot—if they refuse Christ they must perish!

And though they have been born and bred, cradled and cared for where holy hymns make up their lullaby, yet if they give not their own hearts to Christ, but set up idols in their hearts—they must perish—perish miserably with their own iniquity upon their heads. Was not Ishmael the son of Abraham? Yet he came not into the covenant! Was not Esau the child of Isaac? Yet he obtained not the inheritance! Birth, blood, and family count for *nothing* in this matter. Thus there are two propositions, which, as God shall help me, I will endeavor to set plainly before your eyes. First, the righteousness of the most godly cannot be of use for the ungodly. And, secondly, the prayers of the greatest intercessors cannot help if men persist in their unbelief.—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #1651, Volume 28—*A Delusion Dispelled*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

The Excellency of Prayer

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ture who feel their need and poverty, have many invitations, encouragements, precedents, and promises; they have, under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, to plead and rely upon the covenant of Jehovah, the oath of God, the merits of Christ, and all His covenant engagements, undertakings, and performances; they can plead the covenant characters He sustains; His near relationship to them—together with all the glorious train of divine perfections found in the proclamation of the name of God to Moses (Exo 34:6, 7). These all sweetly harmonize, and brightly shine in Christ crucified—who has never once disappointed the hope of a penitent sinner, but has graciously said, “Come unto Me, all who labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” His promises, like Himself, are unchangeable, and this is one of them—“The one who comes unto Me, I will never cast out.”

Private prayer is the Christian’s court-visit to his God—the life and breath of his soul. It is the ascent of the heart to the Almighty—and its returns are the descent of Christ to be the soul’s help! Prayer is the assuagement of grief, the easement of a burdened heart, and the vent of a joyful heart; it is the rich aroma of mystical incense, the overflowing of a living fountain, an all-prevailing sacrifice, and the delight of the Almighty. Moreover, prayer is the greatest, most blessed, and most glorious privilege with which perishing sinners ever were favored!

Prayer is a defense against the spirit of this world, a bar to the inroads of vanity, a cover upon the head of the “old man,” and a lash of scorpions for the devil! It is a bridle in the jaws of a persecutor, a triumph over a voracious enemy, a dagger to the heart of a heretic, a key to parables and difficult Scriptures, and a battering ram on the walls of salvation—for “the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.”

Prayer uncloses the bountiful hand of God, opens the door of mercy, retains Christ on the throne of the affections, and covers every rival and usurper with shame and confusion of face! It is the believer’s Royal Exchange where he may take his cares, burdens, snares and troubles, his vexations, temptations, doubts and fears. In prayer he can take his misgivings of heart, sorrows of mind, hardness of heart and ingratitude, together with his faintness, unbelief, rebellion and all his spiritual disorders. In prayer he can take the leprosy of sin, the evil within, the plague of his heart, the plague of his head, his deaf ears, blind eyes, feeble knees, languid hands, halting feet, and stiff neck—he may take all his sins there—and leave them all!

In return for their troubles, believers receive from their heavenly banker numberless deliverances, blessings, and mercies; much spiritual refreshing, renewing, revivals, and restorations; they also receive large returns of comfort, peace, love, and joy, together with fresh discoveries, love tokens, wholesome truths of God, profound mysteries, glorious glimpses, bright prospects, celestial views, undoubted evidences, heavenly lessons, conspicuous deliverances, pledges and foretastes. They also receive reviving cordials, valuable banknotes in “exceedingly great and precious promises,” payable this very day and every day—and even to millions of ages afterwards—signed, sealed, and delivered by Jehovah, Himself, for He is the “God who cannot lie!”

Prayer has often scattered the confederate enemies of the soul, marred the schemes of opponents, frustrated the tales of liars, and made false teachers mad. Prayer counteracts the designs of Satan and his emissaries; it has made the believer to be an enemy to the world, the successful rival of deceivers, the envy of hypocrites, an eye-sore to the devil, the admiration of perishing sinners, a spectacle to the world—and a wonder to himself! He prays to his Father in secret, and his Father, who sees in secret, has engaged to reward him openly!

By prayer, the spiritual pauper comes up from the dust, and the beggar up from

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The Excellency of Prayer

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the ash heap—to sit among the princes of God's people and inherit the throne of glory!

Prayer in faith has brought in countless providential mercies, as well as spiritual blessings; God could have granted them all without asking, but has condescended to honor the exercise of prayer by saying, "For all these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel—that I may do it for them."

Prayer engages the Almighty on the side of the suppliant, and establishes an alliance with God. "All things are possible to him who believes." "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Prayer has brought health to the sick, hearing to the deaf, speech to the mute, eyes to the blind, life to the dead, salvation to the lost—and has even driven the devil himself from the hearts of many—and brought the God of heaven to dwell in his place!

Prayer is God's appointment, the Spirit's gift, the believer's privilege, and the scourge of Satan! Therefore, prize it and use it! God is well-pleased, and receives with pleasure, approbation, and delight, all who approach His throne of grace, sensible of their needs—in the name of Christ crucified.

Therefore faith in Christ becomes the *only way of access to God*—all other avenues are stopped up! The sword of justice is brandished to keep every other way to the tree of life closed. In Christ we may come with boldness to the throne of grace—there is no obstacle, no hindrance in this way; the sword of justice is sheathed, the law magnified, the ransom price paid, the devil dethroned, sin expiated, wrath endured, God well-pleased, sinners redeemed, enemies reconciled—that the Lord God might dwell among them!

Gleaned from Grace Gems

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A treasury of ageless sovereign grace
devotional writings.

REFLECTIONS

Gems gleaned by Jim Robinette

<http://www.actionuganda.net/>

**'Reflections' is a Christian Meditation sent by
Mission Africa
and Action Uganda Ministries,
and is meant to instruct, encourage and edify.**

The Expulsive Power of a New Affection

Misplaced affections need to be replaced by the far greater power of the affection of the gospel. It is not enough to understand the worthlessness of the world; one must value the worth of the things of God. The love of God, and the love of the world are two affections, not merely in a state of rivalry, but in a state of enmity—and that so irreconcilable, that they cannot dwell together in the same bosom. The only way to dispossess (the heart) of an old affection, is by the expulsive power of a new one. Nothing can exceed the magnitude of the required change in a man's character, when bidden as he is in the New Testament to love not the world.

But the same revelation which dictates so mighty an obedience, places within our heart an affection which once seated upon its throne, will either subordinate every previous inmate, or bid it away. Beside the world, it places before the eye of the mind Him who made the world, and with this peculiarity, which is all its own—that in the gospel do we so behold God, as that we may love God. It is when He stands dismantled of the terrors which belong to Him as an offended lawgiver, and when we are enabled by faith, which is His own gift, to see His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and to hear His beseeching voice as it projects good will to men, and entreats the return of all who will to a full pardon and a gracious acceptance—it is then that a love paramount to the love of the world, and at length expulsive of it, first arises in the regenerated bosom!

It is when released from the spirit of bondage with which love cannot dwell, and when admitted into the number of Gods children through the faith that is in Jesus Christ, the spirit of adoption is poured upon us—it is then that the heart brought under the mastery of one great and predominant affection is delivered from the tyranny of its former desires, in the only way in which the deliverance is possible.

The best way of casting out an impure affection is to admit a pure one; and by the love of what is good, to expel the love of what is evil. And never does the sinner find within himself so mighty a moral transformation as when under the belief that he is saved by grace, he feels constrained thereby to offer his heart a devoted thing, and to deny ungodliness. We know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our heart than to keep in our hearts the love of God.—Thomas Chalmers
Scottish Minister 1780-1847

Christ and Him Crucified

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ Jesus my Lord." In Him I have eternal life. Therefore, Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end will I remember, acknowledge, celebrate."—James Hervey (1713-1758)

Constant War with the Papacy!

“We must fight the Lord’s battles against this giant error, whichever shape it takes, and so must we do with every error that pollutes the Church.”

By C. H. Spurgeon

We must have no truce, no treaty with Rome. War! War to the knife with her! Peace there cannot be! She cannot have peace with us—we cannot have peace with her! She hates the true church, and we can only say that the hatred is reciprocated. *We would not lay a hand upon her priests; we would not touch a hair of their heads.* Let them be free—but their *doctrine* we would destroy from the face of the earth as the *doctrine of devils!* So let it perish, O God, and let that evil thing become as the fat of lambs; into smoke let it consume—yes, into smoke let it consume away!

We must fight the Lord’s battles against this giant error, whichever shape it takes—and so must we do with every error that pollutes the church. Slay it utterly; let none escape! “Fight the Lord’s battles.” Even though it is an error that is even in the evangelical church, yet must we smite it.

I love all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, but I cannot have any truce, any treaty with many errors that have crept into the church, nor would I have you regard them with complacency. We are one in Christ—let us be friends with one another—but let us never be friends with one another’s errors!

If I am wrong, rebuke me sternly! I can bear it, and bear it cheerfully; and if you are wrong, expect the same measure from me—neither peace nor parley with your mistakes! Let us all be true to one another, and true to Christ! And as soon as we perceive an error, though it is but as the *shadow* of one, let us root it out, and drive it from us, lest it plague the whole body, and put leprosy into the entire fabric of Christ’s church.

No peace with sin! No peace with lies! War! War! War without deliberation! *War forever with error and deceit!*

Pictures, Telescopes, and Promises!

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

We often do with the promises as a poor old couple did with a precious document which might have cheered their old age had they used it according to its real value. A gentleman, stepping into a poor woman’s house, saw framed and glazed upon the wall a French note for a thousand francs. He said to the old folks, “Where did you get this?” They informed him that a poor French soldier had been taken in by them, and nursed until he died, and he had given them that little picture when he was dying as a memorial of him. They thought it such a pretty souvenir that they had framed it, and there it was, adorning the cottage wall! They were greatly surprised when they were told that it was worth a sum which would be quite a little fortune for them if they would but turn it into money!

Are we not equally unpractical with far more precious things? Have you not certain of the words of your great Lord framed and glazed in your hearts—and do you not say to yourselves, “They are so sweet and precious,” and yet you have never turned them into actual *blessing*—never used them in the hour of need? You have done as Martha did when she took the words, “Your brother shall rise again,” and put round about them this handsome frame, “in the resurrection at the last day.” Oh that we had grace to turn God’s bullion of gospel into *current* coin, and use them as our present spending money!

Moreover, Martha made another blunder, and that was *setting the promise in the remote distance*. This is a common folly, this distancing of the promises of the Most High. “In the resurrection at the last day”—no doubt she thought it a very long way off, and therefore she did not get much comfort out of it. Telescopes are meant to bring objects near to the eye, but I have known people use the mental telescope in the wrong way—they always put the big end of it to their eye—and then the glass sends the object further away! Her brother was to be raised *that very day*—she might so have understood the Savior—but instead of it, she looked at His words through the wrong end of the glass, and said, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #1799, Volume 30—“*Though He Were Dead*”—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

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

Study of Ephesians 4:31-32

Christ-like Treatment of Our Brethren—Part 4

There is a test which can very simply be given to see whether your sins have been forgiven. It is this: Do you forgive others ANYTHING and EVERYTHING that they do against you?

“But,” someone says, “it seems to me you’re taking away with one statement what you just said in another. You said that God has forgiven the believer fully and freely, and not because of anything in the believer or for anything he has done.

Yes, that is what I said, and that is what the Bible says.

But just now I have also said that the way to know that you are forgiven is that you forgive others anything and everything they do against you. That is also taught in the Scripture. The Lord Jesus, in the model prayer which we commonly refer to as the Lord’s Prayer, taught us to pray saying: “and forgive us our debts (sins) as we forgive our debtors (those who sin against us).” And at the end of that prayer He went on to say in Matthew 6:14-15: “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Now, the question is: Is the Lord Jesus saying that a person earns the forgiveness of God the Father by forgiving others? If that were the case, He would be contradicting what His apostles taught.

The whole matter can be cleared up by considering the parable which the Lord taught in Matthew 18. There was a servant forgiven by the king a debt he could never pay back in his lifetime. Yet that very servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him just a few dollars, and instead of forgiving him, grabbed him by the throat and demanded that he pay him back. He even threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When the king found out about it, he took that first servant whom he had forgiven, and put him in jail without any opportunity of ever being free.

The whole point of this parable is that one cannot possibly understand what it means to be forgiven who does not in turn forgive others. A person does not earn forgiveness by forgiving others, but it is also true that one who realizes that he has been forgiven the infinite debt of sin by God, can only be so humbled, amazed, and appreciative, that he in turn forgives others. Therefore, the conclusion is drawn that if a person does not forgive others, he must not know what it means to have been so graciously forgiven by God.

But how is it that God is able to so fully and freely forgive those who have so wickedly offended Him, and provoked Him by their sins? Our verse answers, that it is IN CHRIST that God is able to forgive so fully and freely.

As in the parable, what God has forgiven the saved sinner is an infinitely great debt compared to the relatively small offenses of our wronging our fellow man. How can a holy God forgive all that? How can He for whom it is unthinkable to compromise, declare a sinner fully and freely pardoned?

There is only one way. It is certainly not because of anything *we* can do to remove the offense. Remember, our debt is one that is impossible for us to even begin to pay back. The way that God can forgive a vile offending sinner is based upon what Jesus has done on the cross. That is what Paul means when he says, “Just as God IN CHRIST forgave you.” God forgave us on the basis of what Jesus did when He shed His infinitely precious blood on the cross for sinners. It is only that sacrifice that can pay the infinite debt of our sins. We are forgiven in Christ IN SPITE OF OURSELVES! God gave His Son to die for us BECAUSE HE WANTED TO! He did it because His grace and love are so great! It is purely a gift; there is not one drop of merit involved!

And so I ask you, dear people: How do you react when someone wrongs you? Do you get angry, and build up bitterness and resentment in your heart? Do you hold a grudge, and feel that you have a right to harbor such attitudes? If you do, then let me tell you that you are still a stranger to the love of God in Christ. “But,” you say, “you don’t know what they did to me. You don’t know what was said about me!” Dear friend, I don’t need to know, and the reason I don’t need to know is that what any person can do to any other person, no matter how horrible, is a relatively small offense compared to the abomination that our sin is to God.

The person who knows God’s forgiveness is the one with a truly humbled heart. He realizes that what he is, and what he has done is so wretched and vile in God’s sight, that he deserves to spend eternity in hell. Yet he knows that God has forgiven it ALL! Furthermore, he knows the price that was paid to make it happen. The Son of God humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!

And having received love so amazing, so divine, we realize that now we can do nothing else but to be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving—just as God in Christ has forgiven us.—PF

**PRAY FOR
YOUR PASTOR,
And
FOR YOURSELF!**

**“SOMETIMES
MOM WOULD...
READ
HER BOOKS”**

“A few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small southern town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer, and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted, and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later.

“As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors—Mom taught me the Word of God, and Dad taught me to obey it; but the stranger? He was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies. If I wanted to know anything about politics, history, or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present, and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry.

“The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn’t seem to mind. Sometimes Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he

had to say. She would go to her room and read her books. (I wonder, now, if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave).

“Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home...not from us, our friends, or any visitors. Our long-time visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears, and made my dad squirm, and my mother blush.

“My dad was a teetotaler who didn’t permit alcohol in the home, not even for cooking. But the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (much too freely) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing.

“I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked...and NEVER asked to leave.

“More than 60 years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in, and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you were to walk into my parents’ den today, you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk, and watch him draw his pictures. His name? We just call him, ‘TV.’”

—Submitted by Pastor/Teacher Chris McKnight of Kerrville Bible Church, 898 Harper Rd., Kerrville, TX, 78028, with this preface, “What follows is a thought-provoking, modern-day parable someone sent me via e-mail.”

Web Site: <http://www.kerrvillebiblechurch.org>

AT WAR AND YET AT PEACE—By William Romaine, (1714-1795)

It is true that I have sin in me, but it is pardoned. God has forgiven me all trespasses. I stand before Him in my Redeemer, who undertook for me, and I am perfect in Him. The Father chose me in His Son: He looks upon the face of His Beloved, and sees me in Him! In Christ He is well pleased, so He is with me! As He loves Christ—He loves me! This is the glorious privilege which, by faith, I now enjoy. I deny sight and sense, and I believe the Word of God! I adhere strictly to the Word of God concerning me, believing myself to be dead, indeed, unto sin in Christ, and in Him absolutely freed from guilt and condemnation. The Father is at peace with me, and He loves me in His Son, with the same love with which He loves Christ—His Father and my Father! With this persuasion I go to war with my corruptions; they are fighting against everything that is dear and precious to my soul, but having the promised grace of the Almighty Savior for my help, I desire to set upon them in His name. I am at war with sin, but at peace in Christ!

**HAVE YOU
PRAYED FOR
YOUR CHAPLAIN
TODAY?**

Pray for Pastor Paul Ferrie and the group of believers God has called him to serve in North Dakota.

**PRAY FOR
GOD’S
ELECT
IN PRISON.**

PRAY!

**PRAY FOR
GRACE TO
BE HOLY!**
~ + ~
**PRAY FOR
GRACE TO
BE PURE!**

**“For we are His
workmanship,
created in
Christ Jesus
for good works,
which God
prepared
beforehand
that we should
Walk in them.”
(Eph 2:10)**

Letters to Mike Gendron

Of Proclaiming the Gospel:

ptg@pro-gospel.org - www.pro-gospel.org
PO Box 940871, Plano, TX 75904

Pastor J.C., Olathe, CO, writes—I just thought you'd like to know that a young man and his fiancée gave their lives to Christ the other day. They both had read your tract in Spanish called, "Lo Han Estado Enganando?" The Lord used your materials to help bring them to Himself. Please pray for their spiritual growth, and for an outreach we are having with Hispanics in our area. Your tracts and a video will be among the primary tools we will use.

V. L., Valparaiso, FL, writes—Our prayer for Roman Catholics is that they would lay aside all their vain attempts to merit heaven, and just rest in the perfect, finished work of Jesus Christ. Mike, thanks again for your ministry and your newsletter.

J. M., Edmonton, Alberta, writes—Reading the article you printed by Ron Rolheiser in your last newsletter made my skin crawl. He is up on a pedestal in my family with his high position in the Catholic Church. He is my cousin, and I often challenge him with Scripture, but he never returns any of my e-mails. It is so sad that there are so many Catholics, including my family, who believe his mixed-up, new-age teachings. Thank God for your ministry. I don't feel alone, anymore, in my faith, as I often did in the past.

J. R., Pleasanton, TX, writes—I cannot express in words, but my heart is so thankful to you, for your last newsletter. You made it so clear that there is no Scriptural support for the sacrificing priesthood of the RCC. This is what every Roman Catholic needs to understand, and be warned about. Catholics put their total trust in their priest and the Pope. I know, because I was such a person once. How I wish I could have read the information that you present in your newsletter. The way you faithfully point people to the authority of Scripture will help me as I witness to my family.

D. & J. C., Temecula, CA, write—It's a joy to have followed you for some time, and feel your heart for the ministry to Catholics. We've heard you at quite a few of the *Steeling the Mind Bible Conferences*. But not until last month has it hit us like a ton of bricks. It was when our niece told us that she had joined a Catholic Church. Our hearts are sad because we believe she is terribly deceived. We are sending her your DVD and copies of your newsletters. As you pray for God to reveal His truth to misguided Catholics, please include our niece. Thank you for your incredible ministry. Our prayer is that God will continue to use you mightily in delivering many from these evil and deceptive doctrines.

M. J., Internet, writes—As a Roman Catholic I took great offense at your video. Your rant was so full of misinformation, misquotes, outright falsehoods, and intolerance. The Roman Catholic faith is the oldest Christian faith, and has remained more true to the teachings of Our Lord Jesus than of any religion. The Holy Father is merely an honorific title meant only to distinguish him apart from other priests. You say that we Catholics believe him infallible. This is preposterous! No mortal is infallible. Your statement about the pope teaching that you can enter heaven without Jesus is equally false. All must accept Jesus to enter heaven. However, not necessarily in this life! Surely an innocent 18 year old Tsunami victim, who had never heard of Christ, can enter heaven. We believe that those who have not known Jesus, but have lived a "Christian" life, do meet Jesus upon their death, and then can accept Him as their Savior and be redeemed. With pride I can say the Catholic Church has done more to spread the Word than all other Christian sects combined. We Catholics are taught to be tolerant, understanding, and forgiving.

Brother Mike responds—*It is because of Catholics like you that I quote only authoritative sources. Your faith does not conform to the Catholic Catechism, or the Bible. I urge you to seek the truth of God through the most trustworthy authority—the infallible Word of God.*

D. H., Bone Gap, IL, writes—We are always dismayed and shocked by the letters you receive from Catholics. Those who accuse you of hate are literally frightening in their hatred towards you. We sense the same spirit in them that persecuted believers during the Inquisition! I shudder to think of what might happen if the Vatican ever got its way here.

A Catholic Forever, Internet, writes:—Catholics believe in Christ; they have for centuries, long before Protestants ever came into the picture. Why don't you pull the plank from your own eye before you venture to remove a mote from your brother's? This site sounds like nothing more to me than pompous, holier than thou, self righteous bigotry!

The Doctrines of Grace

Their Fifth Point - Perseverance of the Saints (3)

By Daniel E. Parks, Pastor

Sovereign grace Baptist Church, 74 Cane Carlton, Frederiksted, US Virgin Islands, 00840

The five points of the Doctrines of grace are generally identified by the acrostic **TULIP**:

Total Depravity
Unconditional Election
Limited Atonement
Irresistible Grace
Perseverance of the Saints

We continue observing the doctrine of the fifth point:

2. The perseverance of the saints is certain because...

i. Saints, through the grace of God, never depart from Him (Jer 32:40)—“And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.”

ii. Saints, through the love of God, conquer all things (Rom 8:36f)—“As it is written [Psa 44:22]—‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

iii. Saints, through their faith in God, overcome even the world (1 John 5:4f)—“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”

IV. Perseverance of the Saints Defended. Man-centered religion (e.g., Pelagianism and Arminianism) believes salvation depends upon man cooperating with God, not upon God alone. It denies total depravity—it instead teaches that man is not so bad. And it denies unconditional election—it instead teaches that God made His choice upon some good foreseen in man. And it denies limited atonement—it instead teaches that Christ died for all but that the efficacy of His atonement is conditioned upon man. And it denies irresistible grace—it instead teaches that man may thwart the Holy Spirit.

It therefore should not surprise us that man-centered religion furthermore denies the preservation and perseverance of the saints—and that it instead teaches that whether or not a saint is saved at the end depends upon the saint, not upon God alone.

We should here note that not all Arminians deny the *preservation* of the saints, and that some believe in eternal security or, “Once saved, always saved.” But they do not stress the *perseverance* of the saints as we here have done. Indeed, many of them believe that one may accept Jesus as his *Savior* without accepting Him as his *Lord*. They therefore believe one who once professes Jesus to be his Savior is always saved even though his manner of life subsequent to his profession manifests no real or lasting evidence of holy living.

All such false professors, and those who propagate this heresy, are described in 2 Peter 2:20-22—“For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”

We here will answer some of the objections raised by man-centered religion against the perseverance of the saints.

1. Man-centered religion denies the preservation and perseverance of the saints on its claim that a saint may “fall away” (Heb 6:4-6)—“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away...”

i. The subject of this text is not falling into sin, but rather falling away from Christ. The subject here is therefore not backsliding, but rather apostatizing. He who would “fall away” would do so by willfully disavowing Christ and the benefits of the salvation he had found and experienced in Christ.

ii. This text does not intimate that anyone has indeed fallen away from Christ, but rather what would be the consequence for doing so—“For it is impossible..., if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.” It is like saying, “If one should fall over the precipice, it would be impossible for him to survive or to be brought back to life.”

Here is clearly taught the impossibility of God permitting (as in v 3) a second repentance unto salvation to those who

(See *DOCTRINES OF GRACE* on page 11)

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

(Continued from page 10)

“fall away” because they who would do so would necessitate the shaming of Christ by again crucifying Him in order that they may again be saved through Him. And it is impossible for one who becomes so hardened against God that he would “fall away” to repent unto salvation of his own will. If the religionist desires to misuse this text in order to affirm the heresy, “Saved today, but lost tomorrow,” let him also be consistent enough to affirm, “Saved today, but lost tomorrow, without hope of ever being saved again.”

iii. The context of this text expresses the confidence of the writer, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, that no saint will ever commit this sin of apostasy (v 9)—“But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.”

If there ever were such an apostate from Christ and salvation, he could not be restored. But the backslider will indeed be restored. But he will not be restored to Christ and His salvation because he cannot be separated from these. Rather, as David prayed after backsliding—even committing sins of adultery and murder (2 Sam Chap 11), “Restore to me the *joy* of Your salvation” (Psa 51:12)—not, “Restore to me Your *salvation*.”

2. Man-centered religion denies the preservation and perseverance of the saints on its claim that a saint may be guilty of “departing from the living God” (Heb 3:12)—“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in *departing from the living God*.”

i. This text does not intimate the apostasy of a believing saint. Rather, those described in the context (3:7-4:3) are characterized as ever hardening their hearts in their rebellion against God (3:7-9, 15), as ever going astray from God (3:10a), as never knowing the ways of God (3:10b), as possessing an evil heart that would not believe God (3:12a, 19), as hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (3:13), as refusing to obey God (3:18a) and as having never believed the gospel of Christ (4:2)—“For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.” God therefore pronounces His wrath upon them and prevents them from entering into His rest and His Christ (3:11; 4:3). Those who depart were never true saints.

ii. This passage teaches that those who persevere for Christ are the true saints (3:14)—“For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.” Here is confirmation of what Christ Himself taught (Mat 10:22; 24:13)—“But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” He who does not persevere to the end *never saved*.

3. Man-centered religion denies the preservation and perseverance of the saints on its claim that a saint may “draw back” (Heb 10:38)—“Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone *draws back*, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

This text does not teach the possible apostasy of a *saint*. Rather, its context declares the *impossibility* of the apostasy of a saint (v 3 9)—“But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.”

4. Man-centered religion denies the preservation and perseverance of the saints on its claim that a saint may become “fallen from grace” (Gal 5:4)—“You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have *fallen from grace*.”

This text does not equate “fallen from grace” with “fallen from salvation”—as religionists would have us believe. As we have already more than amply proved from a host of Scriptures, falling from salvation is an impossibility. However, a saint, by reverting to legalism (which is the subject of the context, vv 1-6), may be fallen from the *doctrine of grace*, but not from the *salvation by grace*—and to be estranged from the *doctrine of Christ*, but not from the *salvation in Christ*. But the writer expresses his confidence that true saints (as described in vv 1, 5f) will recover from doctrinal error (v 10)—“I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is” (v 10; cp 1:6-9).

5. Man-centered religion denies the preservation and perseverance of the saints on its claim that some saints, such as Judas Iscariot, have indeed lost their salvation.

An apostle of Christ declared concerning such persons, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us” (1 John 2:19). Scriptures teach the *perseverance* of the saints for God, thanks to the perseverance of *God* toward them.

(To be continued, Lord willing).

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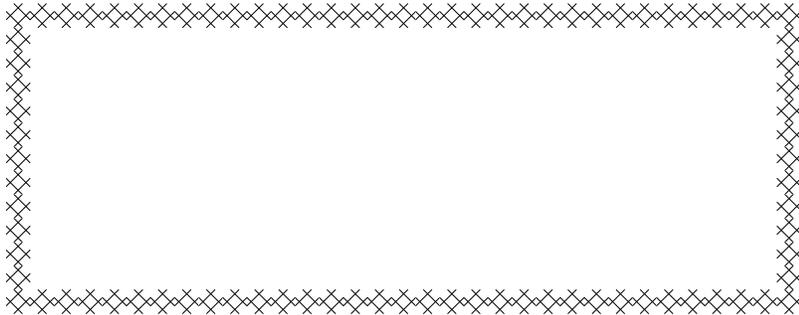
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For HIS Glory Prison Ministry
Emmett and Ann O'Donnell
P.O. Box 291301
Kerrville, TX 78029-1301

Our prayer for you:

⁵ Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,
⁶ that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Romans 15:5-6 NKJV)



Pray that you may be holy.

In This Issue...

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

ON BAPTISM, WHALES, AND SERVICE

By Charles H. Spurgeon

I heard a brother say, some time ago, that he would be baptized when it was laid home to him. I thought of what a father would say to his boy if he said, "Father, I will obey you if it is laid home to me." In all probability the child would have it laid home to him more feelingly than he desired! There are some disobedient children in the Lord's family who, if they do not look out, will have Scriptures laid home to them in a way they do not quite reckon upon! What have you and I to guide us but the Word of the Lord?

"Well," says one, "I guide myself by outward providences." Do you? You will get into a terrible maze, one of these days. Jonah wanted to flee from the presence of the Lord, and therefore, he went down to the seaside, and lo, he found a ship going to Tarshish! Might he not have said, "I *must* be in the right way of duty in going to Tarshish, for no sooner did I go down to the wharf than I found a ship starting immediately, and a cabin vacant for a passenger! I paid my fare and walked on board at once. I had not to go off to the shipping agent's and wait for the next liner, but all was prepared for me. Was not that a providence!" Yes, but if you get to following what you *wish* to be providence and turning aside from the Word of God, you may soon find yourself in the sea, and no whale prepared for you! Our way is clearly set before us in the Word of God, and that most sure Word of testimony should be followed.

I have known a brother wanting to go abroad to preach the gospel to the heathen, but a great many difficulties have been thrown in his way, and therefore, he has said, "I can see that I am not called to go." Why not? Is no man called unless his way is easy? I should think myself all the more called to a service if I found obstacles in my way! The course of true service never runs smooth. I would say, "The devil is trying to hinder me, but I will do it in spite of all the devils in hell."

Will you always be needing to have your bread buttered for you on both sides? Must your road be graveled and smoothed with a garden roller? Are you a carpet knight, for whom there is to be no fighting? You are not worthy to be a soldier of Jesus Christ at all if you look for ease! Go home! I dare say, after all, it is the best thing you can do. True believers *expect* difficulties. It is ours to do what we are bid to do—not to act according to *fancied* indications of providence.—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #1793, Volume 30—*The glory in the Rear*—Read entire sermon at www.spurgeon.org