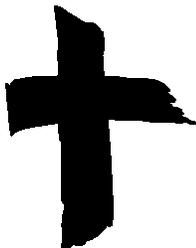

◆ FOR HIS GLORY ◆

Volume 20, Issue 2

February, 2017

I am using this column to try and explain the reason there is no sermon with this newsletter. I purchased a new computer, and replaced most of my software. The software I used to compose the sermon booklets does not seem to work with the new PC. The company that sells the software, and I, have worked many hours, but to no avail. I apologize, and will continue to try and fix the problem. On a much more important note, remembering our God's words in Psalm 81:10, I ask each reader to join me in praying that our heavenly Father will grant salvation to 50,000 Roman Catholics each night.—Emmett O'Donnell



Blessed Are the Dead Who Die in the Lord

By Pastor Daniel E. Parks

*Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me,
"Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'
"Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their
labors, and their works follow them."*

Revelation 14:13

Most people fear what will happen to them when they die. Adherents of Eastern religions have good reasons to fear death. Some fear they will experience *bad karma*, undesirable consequences resulting from bad deeds in this life. Some fear they will be reincarnated in an undesirable existence. Some may obey the last words of Gautama Buddha (c.563-c.483 BC), "Work hard to gain your own salvation," but fear they have not worked enough.

Adherents of Islam have good reason to fear death. Their Prophet said upon the death of a certain *worthy*, "As to him, by Allah, death has overtaken him, and I hope the best for him. By Allah, though I am the Apostle of Allah, yet I do not know what Allah will do to me" (*Sahih Bukhari*, Vol.5, Bk.58, No.266). On another occasion, "The sun eclipsed and the Prophet got up, being afraid that it might be the Hour (i.e. Day of Judgment)" (*Sahih Bukhari*, Vol.2, Bk.18, No.167). If this is true of the *greatest* in that religion, how much more so of the *lesser*?

Professing Christians denying the eternal security of God's elect have good reasons to fear death. They may be "saved today, but lost tomorrow." Some hope their good deeds will outweigh their bad ones at the Final Judgment—but how can they be sure? Some know Jesus will condemn those who boast of what they did in His name (Matt 7:22f)—but they also boast of what they do in His name! Some fear they will lose their salvation by unwittingly accepting the "mark of the beast," succumbing to the Antichrist, or being associated with the numerals 666.

(See *As Servants* on page 2)

WHO? IN WHOM?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

"The Lord takes pleasure in His people." Therefore let us praise Him. It is delightful that God takes pleasure in us who are His people. We feel that this is a great stoop of condescending grace.

What is there in us in which the Lord can take pleasure? Nothing, unless *He* has put it there! If He sees any beauty in us, it must be the reflection of His own face. Yet, the text says so, and, therefore, it must be true—"The Lord takes pleasure in His people." In the 147th Psalm we read, "The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him." You who tremble at His Word; you who stand in awe of Him; you who trust Him, and seek to obey Him—you are those that fear Him, and He takes pleasure in you! He that is infinitely blessed—can He take pleasure in us? He that has the harps of angels to make

(See *Does God* on page 8)

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AS SERVANTS, WE MUST OBEY OUR LORD

(Continued from page 1)

Some misinterpret Paul to speak of *losing salvation* when he speaks of being “estranged from Christ,” and “fallen from grace” (in Galatians 5:4). Some believe they may go to hell for committing an “unpardonable sin” or a “mortal sin.” Some fear they will be condemned for being in the wrong place, or committing some bad deed when Jesus returns. Some fear they may perish if they die before a priest absolves them of sins committed since their last confession. Some fear they may be prevented from receiving Extreme Unction or Last Rites. Some fear they will go to Purgatory when they die, and never come out of it. Some fear they will be damned if their church excommunicates them. Some, having believed the mistaken notion that Peter stands guard at the Pearly Gates with the key of God’s kingdom, wonder if they will be able to convince him that they are worthy to enter heaven.

Even avowed atheists, agnostics, skeptics, and infidels fear what will happen to them when they die. During their lifetimes they may boast “There is no God” (Psalm 14:1 / 53:1), “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18), and boast of not fearing death. But many afterward beg for an opportunity to make a “deathbed confession.” Many are said to have uttered words like these as they neared the end of their earthly lives (their names are withheld, being inconsequential here): “I am taking a fearful leap into the dark;” “I’m lost, lost, lost. I am damned forever;” “I am abandoned by God and man; I shall die and go to hell alone.”

“All is lost, irrecoverably lost. All is dark and doubtful;” “Oh, eternity, eternity forever and forever! Oh, the insufferable pangs of hell;” “I cry out and the only answer I hear is the echo of my empty wail;” “Oh Lord help me. Christ help me. You stay with me. It is hell to be left alone;” “When I lived I provided for everything, except death. Now I must die, and I am totally unprepared, and unprovided.” The nurse attending one such man in his dying hours is reported to have said “For all the wealth in Europe, I would not see another atheist die.”

Indeed, all unbelievers have good reasons to fear death. One of them, speaking from Hades, said, “I am tormented in this flame” (Luke 16:24). And he begged that someone be sent to warn his loved ones to not join him in that dreadful place (vv.27f).

How different are believers in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! As death approaches, they may be heard uttering words like these: “The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness” (Paul the Apostle in 2 Timothy 4:6-8). It is no wonder that wicked Balaam declared “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his!” (Numbers 23:10).

Truly **“Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”**

Note *first* that this text is one of the seven beatitudes in this Book of Revelation (along with 1:3, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14). It is no wonder that this book is so dear and precious to God’s people—as the first beatitude says it will be: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it.”

Note *second* that John the Apostle, who wrote the present text, prefaced it with this declaration: “Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me” The identity of the speaker is not given, and therefore is not important. What is indeed important is that this voice was “from heaven.” What this voice says is *truth from God!*

Note *third* that this voice from heaven told John to “write” what he would now hear. It is very important that God’s people read and believe what this voice declares.

Note *fourth* that this voice from heaven said, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord *from now on.*” Some commentators say this last phrase means, “Blessed *throughout eternity* are all who die in the Lord.” Others say it means, “Blessed are all who die in the Lord *throughout this present age.*” Still others (including myself) are happy to know that both are correct: for “Blessed *throughout eternity* are all who die in the Lord *throughout this present age.*”

1. Who are “the dead who die in the Lord”? They are identified in the context of this text.

1. *They are all who obey the “everlasting gospel”* (vv.6f): “6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people – 7 saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’” This angel did not preach the “gospel” as *good news to sinners*, for only *men* sent from God do so. Rather, this angel preached the gospel as a reminder of *God’s abiding truth that all hearers of the gospel will be judged very soon*, and urging hearers to obey the gospel before they stand before Him in the Final Judgment. Have you obeyed the gospel?

2. *They are all who have proven “the patience of the saints”* (v.12). These “saints” are literally *holy ones*, those who have been cleansed from their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ (1:5). The saints’ “patience” is their *endurance and perseverance* throughout this present great tribulation, during which they keep their garments white by washing them in the blood of Jesus Christ (7:14). Have you done so?

3. *They are “those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”* They obeyed God’s commandment to repent of their sins – for “God ... now commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). And they obeyed God’s commandment to heed Jesus Christ – for God declares “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him” (Matt 17:5 / Mark 9:7 / Luke 9:35). They also “keep the faith of Jesus” by obeying the exhortation “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude v.3). They do so by faithfully declaring Jesus’ glorious person, saving work, and everlasting gospel. Are you obedient to God, and faithful to Jesus?

4. *They are distinguished from the dead who die outside the Lord*—those who refused to worship God, and obey His commandments, trust in Jesus Christ, and wash their garments in Christ’s blood. Please tell me that you are not one of them!

(See *Blessed* on page 3)

Jonathan Edwards Writes About Hell

From “Jonathan Edwards: A Mini-Theology”

By John H. Gerstner (1914-1996)

Hell is a spiritual and material furnace of fire where its victims are eternally tortured in their minds, and in their bodies by God, the devils, and damned humans, including themselves. Their memories and consciences, as well as their raging, unsatisfied lusts torture them. In hell, the place of death, God’s saving grace, mercy, and pity are gone forever, never for a moment to return.

Figuratively speaking, the wrath of God is a consuming fire. Dives, in torment, spiritually, even before the resurrection of his body, was described as existing in fire, begging to have Lazarus wet his tongue to relieve the pain (Luke 16). The metaphor points to the prevalence of the anguish, and its intolerable severity. Divine wrath will be far more terrible than its symbol!

It is because God is the fire which burns in hell that words can never convey—much less exaggerate—the terrors of the damned. “Who can know the power of His anger?” asked the psalmist (Psa 90:11). Edwards took this to be a rhetorical question. “The law and the gospel both,” he insisted, “agree that God intends an extraordinary manifestation of His terribleness.” If this is so, it was inevitable that Edwards would assuredly advise—“Let not the sinner imagine that these things are bugbears.” Future punishment is contrary neither to Scripture nor reason. In fact, it is most reasonable to suppose it. He gives five arguments to prove that ministers have not set it out “beyond what it really is.” He then concludes confidently—“If I, therefore, have described this misery beyond the truth, then the Scriptures have done the same.”

“Immediately upon the finishing of the Judgment and the pronouncing that sentence, will come the end of the world. Then the frame of this world shall be dissolved. The pronouncing of that sentence will probably be followed with amazing thunders that shall rend the heaven, and shake the earth out of its place (2 Peter 3:10)...Then shall the sea and the waves roar, and the rocks shall be thrown down, and there shall be an universal wreck of this frame of the world.” ‘Tis probably that this earth after the conflagration shall be the place of the damned” (M Miscellany 275).

The definitive treatment on degrees of punishment is found in the sermon in Matthew 5:22—“That the punishment and misery of wicked men in another world will be in proportion to the sin that they are guilty of.” All men partake “equally” of original sin, but men do not partake “equally” of “actual sins.” The score is proportionately increased in God’s “debt book,” although “he that commits one act of sin” (profanity, a breaking of the Sabbath, an intemperate act, etc.) “deserves capital punishment.” He has merited only by one sinful act the eternal ruin of soul and body! By a second act—assuming it was no worse—“he now deserves twice as hot a place in hell fire.” The “second act of drunkenness. . . heats hell a great deal more than the first.” Heinousness of sins are next described and weighed, aggravations considered, and finally the influence or prestige of the sinner put into the balance. Consequently, “The damned in hell would be ready to give the world if they could but have the number of their sins to have been *one less.*”

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD

(Continued from page 2)

II. How are the dead who die in the Lord “blessed”? The Holy Spirit answers this question. He confirms with “Yes” to the declaration that the all who die in the Lord will be blessed, and then cites two reasons:

1. “*They may rest from their labors.*” *First*, they rest from their *physical* labors, for all they need and desire is freely and abundantly provided in heaven. They feast on food provided by the Lord of heaven, and “They shall neither hunger nor thirst anymore” (7:16;4:13).

They are given for clothing robes that will never have to be washed, mended, or replaced. They are given residence in mansions that will never require maintenance. *Second*, they rest from their *spiritual* labors, for they no longer must fight the good fight, run the tiresome race, or keep the faith and contend for it.

2. “*Their works follow them.*” Their works do not *precede* them, as though they are needed to prepare heaven for them. Their works do not *accompany* them, as though they are needed to prove their worthiness to enter heaven. Rather, their works *follow* them, as a gracious reward to them. “Your labor is not vain in the Lord” (1 Cor 15:58). “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name” (Heb 6:10).

Will you be blessed for dying in Christ?

Daniel E. Parks, Pastor
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Frederiksted, Virgin Islands
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PRAY FOR GRACE
 TO BE
 HOLY

PRAY FOR CHILDREN AND SPOUSES
 OF PEOPLE IN PRISON.

THE TESTIMONY WHICH WE WHO HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY ARE SURE TO BEAR

By Charles Haddon Spurgeon

*“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory,
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”
John 1:14.*

We bear our testimony that He is *“The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* Brothers and sisters, instead of preaching, let me bear my testimony; my testimony of what I have seen; what my own ears have heard, and my own heart has tasted—that Christ *is the only begotten of the Father*. He is divine to me, if He is only human to the entire world besides! He has done that for me which none but a God could do. He has turned my stubborn will, melted a heart of stone, broken a chain of steel, opened the gates of brass, and snapped the bars of iron; He has turned my mourning into laughter, and my desolation into joy! He has led my captivity captive, made my heart rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory. Let others think as they will of Him, to me He must be the only begotten of the Father—blessed be His name!

Your name is precious even as ointment poured forth! You are indeed my Lord and my God, as certainly as ever You were the God of Thomas! Like Paul, my soul shall say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

Again, I bear my testimony that He is *full of grace*. Ah, had He not been, I would never have beheld His glory! I was full of sin to overflowing. I was condemned already, because I believed not upon Him. He drew me when I wanted not to come, and though I struggled hard, He continued still to draw; and when at last I came all trembling like a condemned culprit to His mercy seat, He said, “Your sins which are many are all forgiven you; be of good cheer.” “He took me up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay. He has set my feet upon a rock, and put a new song into my mouth, and established my goings.” Let others despise Him; but I bear witness that He is full of grace! Oh, I would that some poor sinner here who is full of sin would remember that Christ is full of grace—I would that you, poor despairing one—you who have given yourself up as a lost soul, would remember that.

Finally, I bear my witness, that as He is full of grace, He is *full of truth*. True have His promises been; not one has failed. I have often doubted Him, for that I blush; He has never failed me, in this I must rejoice! His promises have been yes and amen. I do but speak the testimony of every believer in Christ, though I put it thus personally to make it the more forcible. I bear witness that never servant had such a Master as I have; never brother had such a kinsman as He has been to me; never spouse had such a husband as Christ has been to my soul; never sinner a better Savior; never soldier a better captain; never mourner a better comforter than Christ has been to my spirit. I need none besides Him! In life He is my life, and in death He shall be the death of death! In poverty Christ is our riches; in sickness He makes our bed; in darkness He is our star; and in brightness He is our sun. He is the manna of the camp in the wilderness, and He shall be the new corn of the host when they come to Canaan! He is the rock that follows them today; He is the rock on which they shall rest, and within which they shall dwell forever.

So be it, Lord, by Your grace. Amen!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.—Sermon #414—**THE GLORY OF CHRIST—BEHELD!** PLEASE PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST. By the grace of God, for all 63 volumes of C. H. Spurgeon sermons in Modern English, and 574 [Spanish](#) translations, visit: www.spurgeongems.org

NOTABLE QUOTES OF CHARLES H. SPURGEON

“Believer in Christ, it will be well for you to make out this account because you will find that *it will help you to prize your Savior more*. I never look into my own heart without first feeling shame, and afterwards, feeling greater love to Him who has eternally loved such a sinner as I am. I am sure it will drive you to your knees if you honestly search your own lives. There is enough in the history of a single week to make you prize your Redeemer more than ever if you fully realize the guilt of that one week, and the greatness of His grace in pardoning it! O Christian, if you would be driven nearer to your Lord, search and see, confess, repent, and seek forgiveness. Go again to the cross because you have again felt the burden of the sin that nailed your Savior there!”—1895, Sermon #2445

“Learn, then, all of you who would have Christ as your Savior, that you must be willing *to serve Him*. We are not saved by service, but we are saved *to service*.”—1896, Sermon #2449

“I think I could as soon doubt that the Deity of Christ is declared, as doubt that the baptism of believers is enjoined, for the one thing appears to me to be as plainly revealed in Scripture as the other!”—Sermon #3533

Credulous Simpletons

By A.W. Pink (1886-1952)

“The simple believe every word: but the prudent man looks well to his going” (Prov 14:15). As we all know, there is a class of people who are so gullible that they believe almost everything they hear, every story that is told, and every promise that is made them. They are easily imposed upon, for they do not think for themselves, and never properly outgrow their infancy. Thoroughly unsophisticated, they are ready victims for any retailers of fairy tales who come along. But there is another class which, concerning natural things, are more cautious and on their guard, who, instead of crediting every tale, require proof, and who instead of forming estimates by the first glance of the eye, examine things carefully.

This second class to which reference has just been made is, in the affairs of the world, particular, shrewd, and not easily imposed upon. We say “in the affairs of the world,” for when it comes to things concerning their eternal destiny, many of this very class are, strange to say, most credulous and easily duped. In matters concerning their never-dying souls, they throw caution to the winds, stifle any suspicions they might have, cease to examine things with due care, and allow themselves to be deceived. Let a man styling himself an “evangelist” come to their community, and they will flock to hear him! Let him affirm that he believes the Bible to be God’s Word, Christ to be God’s Son, and faith in His blood to be God’s way of salvation, and he is at once received as “orthodox.”

Satisfied, thus, of the “evangelist’s” orthodoxy, they are ready to receive what he presents as the poor heathen are to blindly follow what their “priests” tell them. Or, just as those born in Papist families yield pliantly unto the awful dogma that the Virgin Mary is to be worshipped, so others reared by those belonging to a Protestant denomination which teach that water baptism is requisite in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins, mechanically assent thereto. In like manner, if others sit under a preacher who tells them, “All that is necessary in order to salvation is to believe in Christ,” thousands of credulous simpletons believe *him*, to their eternal undoing! Yes, we greatly fear that not a few readers of this Magazine, if they received a letter from the editor addressing them as, “Dear Brother” or, “Dear Sister,” would be likely to exclaim, “Well, if Brother Pink thinks I am a Christian, there is no need for me to worry about it.” Yes, “the simple believe every word.”

There is no doubt in the writer’s mind that one of the factors contributing much unto the babel of tongues now existing in Christendom is the gullibility of the public. Almost any man (or woman) can start a new religion today—providing he has a pleasing personality, a forceful delivery, or a sensational message—he is sure of a following! Again, the conflicting sects already in existence are perpetuated because so many of their adherents blindly accept some man’s say-so, believing *their* “church’s” interpretation of the Scriptures instead of prayerfully searching the Word for themselves. Here, too, we have the explanation of why so many are in a state of mental confusion, knowing not “whom to believe” or “what to believe.” They

hear one preacher after another, attend this Bible Conference and that, read numerous magazines and books—and finding the speakers and writers differing so much, these credulous simpletons know not where they stand!

Now this feverish rushing around from “church” to “church”—this readiness to accept almost anything that is heard or read—this lightness of belief is a most dangerous thing! God has bid His people to “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because *many* false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). And, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess 5:21). O how great is the need for so doing! Never more requisite and urgent than in these evil days! How often does that warning occur in the New Testament, “Take heed that no man deceive you” (Matt 24:4; Eph 5:6; 1 John 3:7, etc.). To take things on trust is the height of folly! Emulate those spoken of in Acts 17:11—“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things *were so*.”

“The simple believe every word: but the prudent man looks well to his going.” Not only does he measure what he hears and reads by the unerring standard of God’s Word, but the prudent man also scrutinizes *his own heart* to see if he can find, there, the evidences and fruits of regeneration and sanctification. He wishes to make sure that the Holy Spirit has worked a miracle of divine grace within him! Deeply impressed with the solemnity of eternity, knowing how prone man is to give himself the benefit of the doubt, he dares not to take anything for granted; he cries, “Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart” (Psa 26:2).

“The prudent man looks well to his going.” Yes, he takes warning from the empty profession all around him, and is fearful lest *he* should prove to be one of the foolish virgins! He refuses to be beguiled by the voice of flatterers who tell him that all is well with his soul. Even though a preacher assures him that he is saved, *that* satisfies him not. He demands something more than a head-knowledge of the letter of Scripture—he wants to know that the law of God has been written on his *heart* (Heb 8:10). And in seeking proof of this, he spares no pains, and considers no diligence or effort too great.

“The prudent man looks well to his going.” Observe well the tense of the verb. It is not that he is concerned about the matter, and then takes stock, once and for all. No, he *continues* to be exercised before God as to the state of his soul. The “simple” may rest satisfied with the fact that they “believed on Christ” so many years ago, but the “prudent” are tender about their *present* relation to God. They realize that nothing but an obedient following of Christ, *now*; a walking with Him *now*, a communing with Him *now* furnishes any satisfactory proof that they were born-again at a certain date in the past.

(See *Simpletons* on page 6)

Simpletons

(Continued from page 5)

“The prudent man looks well to his going.” Yes, he not only diligently examines his heart, but he is deeply concerned about his “way.” Instead of complacently assuming that the warning belongs to others, *he* is filled with alarm when he reads that, “There is a way which seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov 14:12). Is it possible that, after all, *he* may be deceived? Yes, very, very possible! Yes, exceedingly likely! Such a soul, truly awakened by the Holy Spirit, can have no rest till he makes sure that he is in that “Narrow Way” which leads unto life and which FEW, indeed, find.

Reader, which are you—a credulous simpleton, or a prudent soul that “looks *well*” to your going? If the former, may it please the Lord to shatter your false peace, and make you feel your imminent danger. If the latter, may the Holy Spirit grant increasing diligence to “make your calling and election *sure*” (2 Peter 1:10).—(Gleaned from Brother Pink’s *Studies in the Scriptures*, October, 1933).—Read/download most of Brother Pink’s *Studies* at—<http://www.eternallifeministries.org/pink/gems.htm>

COULD YOU ***DIE*** FOR JESUS CHRIST?
WHY HAVE YOU PUT OFF **BAPTISM?**

**PRAY DAILY FOR GRACE TO BE
OBEDIENT TO GOD’S WORD!**

**TELL 5 PEOPLE TODAY
(INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE GUARD)
YOU LOVE JESUS CHRIST.**

Have you spent
time in
GOD’S WORD
today?

**Jesus Christ is the ONLY
way to God the Father!
Not Mary. Not Mohammed.
Not a future Messiah.
JESUS CHRIST
is the ONLY way.
(John 14:6).**

BROTHERS AND SISTERS, DO YOU PRAY?

By Charles H. Spurgeon

The name, “Israel,” was given to Jacob because he “wrestled with the angel, and prevailed.” Are you a man or woman of prayer? Come now, answer the question, each one of you for yourselves! Are you a man or woman of prayer? Alas, some of you may use a *form* of prayer, but it has no life in it! You ask, do I object to forms of prayer? I answer, no. I believe that sometimes forms of prayer, molded according to the mind of the Spirit, are offered up with the vital breath of the same Spirit of God. Far be it from me to say that because you use a form of prayer, therefore you do not pray at all!

This, however, I remind you—your form of prayer is merely a vehicle that moves not except as it is drawn. Of itself, it is like a steam engine, motionless till the furnace is heated. Or rather, it is like the carriage which is drawn by the steam engine, being linked thereto with chains. A form of prayer is a heavy material thing which prayer has to drag after it. It is no help to prayer, but rather a burden to it. There may be prayer with the huge cumbersome thing called the form attached, but the form is distinct in every sense from the power. The prayer is the spirit, the life, the desire, the wish, the agonizing panting with God to obtain the blessing.

I ask you not whether you use a form of prayer, or whether you utter extempore prayers. You may speak extemporaneously in prayer, and talk as much nonsense, yes, and a great deal more than you would if you used a prescribed form. You may avoid formality and become frivolous. It is not uttering spontaneous words that is prayer any more than repeating a litany!

But I ask you, do you pray? If you are prayerless, then you have no right to call yourselves God’s elect. God’s people are a *praying* people. They are an Israel, a wrestling race, and unto them the promise is made—“I will be unto them as the dew unto Israel.”—Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software—Sermon #342, Vol. 6—*Grace Reviving Israel*—Read/download entire sermon on www.spurgeongems.org.

**“ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE”?
NO, MY BROTHERS
AND SISTERS!
RATHER,
“ONE FOOT IN HEAVEN!”**

Letters to Mike Gendron Of Proclaiming the gospel:

P.O. Box 940871, Plano, TX 75094-0871 - ptg@pro-gospel.org - www.pro-gospel.org

C.A., Long Grove, IL—Thank you for your ministry of God’s Word, and your true Biblical love for Catholics. I came out of the Catholic Church, and praise God for people who speak the truth. You are a faithful man, and may God continue to bless your ministry to the glory of His holy name!

A.V., Boyne Island, Australia—I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your messages on DVD. What blessings! They have helped my husband and I understand the Word of God more clearly. Lately we have felt very alone in our walk with God as we would warn others about false teachers and doctrines, but they will not listen. Not only is the true gospel of our Lord disappearing and hard to find, but so are true believers. God bless you for sharing the truth of God, and equipping the believers.

J. & H. D., Syracuse, NY—Since taking your seminar we are seeing doors open for opportunities to share with Catholics. We are also encouraging others who know Catholics, to witness to them. We feel so much more equipped for evangelism, and we hope to continue to improve in our understanding and experience at sharing God’s truth with Catholics! Thank you!!

Dr. T. D., Coral Springs, FL—Things are getting more and more interesting every day. We have been looking for a good church for almost a year, and can’t seem to find one. They are either in the business of entertainment, preaching wrong doctrine, or using the marketing strategies of the world like Rick Warren. More and more churches, with less and less of Jesus.

L.S., Wellington, NV—We invited a few friends to our house to watch your DVD so they could have an idea of what the Roman Catholic Church teaches. We were shocked when one of them told me she thought the Roman religion wasn’t so bad. Mike, thank you for caring for the lost souls who are deceived in such a cruel way by the many trappings of Romanism.

G.B., Tinley Park, IL—Your article on the Emerging Church was extremely well written and accurate. We have so many dear ‘Protestant’ friends who don’t even know what they are reformed from! We must travel two hours for a church where the full council of God is preached to a congregation who desires to worship God in Spirit and in truth. Since our past includes Catholicism (mystical rituals) and seeker-friendly churches (entertainment, skits, and musicals), it is so humbling to be in a church where God is exalted and revered. It is not about us—how we feel or what we want—it is about worshipping our sovereign God as He commands and deserves. May God continue to use you to faithfully remind us to hold fast to God’s truth...so we will not be deceived...and God will be glorified!

K.C., South Padre Island, TX—I was a Catholic for 38 years, until your tract caused me to compare Scripture vs. tradition, and now I am free, free indeed! Praise our Father, Son & Holy Spirit for providing deliverance! Thank you for being a staunch supporter of God’s Word in contrast to man’s religions. It is refreshing to hear such commitment from preachers in the present age! Wrongful and anti-biblical ecumenism is a work of the deceiver. You will be acclaimed a true hero in eternity! This life is a time to fight for God’s truth, which you do extremely well, Praise Jesus!

D.F., Rowlett, TX—Thanks for welcoming me to your Bible study in your house. I have been reading *Preparing Catholics for Eternity* and I am like, WHOA! After the chapter about Mary, I had to switch off that part of my brain that believes in her. I had been conditioned to believe all the priests taught me, but now I have a discerning spirit. I grew up in the Philippines where Catholicism is a must. And, yes, it’s true that we did more worshiping of Mary than Jesus. Your book explains a lot of Catholic teachings that I didn’t even know. Maybe they taught us that when I was daydreaming! Am I an oxymoron because I still call myself a Catholic? (Is this like once a nurse always a nurse)? The contrasts you wrote are very interesting especially how the Catholic Church has authority over Scripture. They make their interpretation fit their own needs. Hmmm. Wow! *All Christians are saints*. Now, that is totally new to me! The Catholic Church can’t do this because everybody would have their own statue? Ha ha! Reading your book is like waking up, and finding out that everything you always believed is false, a lie! I won’t deny that I am having a hard time reading things that are contradictory to what I believed. You must have gone through this, also, so I should be patient, and continue studying the Bible, and hopefully never give up. Every Catholic I come across who asks me why am I doing all these Bible studies, I tell them it’s because I have found the source for truth, and I am interested to learn more about the truth. What really amazes me is God’s LOVE...that He could love me so—a gal who grew up Catholic, and was told He is a vengeful God. Knowing about His love is just overwhelming because I am not deserving of it.

S. & S.S., Pinehurst, NC—I need to purchase some of your DVD’s to educate some Christians who simply don’t understand the deception of the Catholic Church. Your 16-panel tract, *Roman Catholicism: Scripture vs. Tradition* is the best gospel tract for Catholics that I have ever seen in my life! I get volunteers to put gospel tracts by the hundreds on cars while the poor (spiritually bankrupt) deceived Catholics are inside celebrating the attempted representation of the crucified Christ (transubstantiation). I was glad to hear that you make it a point to witness to priests and nuns, and distribute tracts as you and your team travel around the world.

**Have You Prayed for Your Pastor Today?
Your Family? Your Enemies?**

DOES GOD REALLY TAKE PLEASURE IN YOU?

(Continued from page 1)

music for Him; He that has the host of cherubim and seraphim to be His attendants; He that can make a world with a wish—does He deign to take pleasure in us?

I am sure this is true, not only because it is stated, here, that the Lord takes pleasure in His people, but because we see this truth in action! The Lord takes pleasure in His people's prayers. What poor imperfect things they are! Yet He opens His ears to hear them; He would sooner miss the song of a cherub than miss the prayer of a broken heart! He is charmed with the prayers of His people—they hold Him, they prevail with Him—He will do anything for those who know how to pray. "Prayer moves the arm that moves the world." He must take great delight in His people, or else He would not listen to their prayers! And He is pleased with their praises, too. There is never a hymn that is sung by a true heart but God accepts it. No one may hear it on earth; it may not be worth the hearing, for the sound may be discordant; but when a true heart seeks to praise God, He cares not for the vocal sounds—He has regard to the voice of the spirit's thanksgiving! Must He not take great pleasure in us to notice our praises and our prayers? Yes, He does so.

This will be still clearer to us, dear friends, if we remember that while He delights to hear us praise and pray, He also *speaks* to us. The Lord has a wonderful way of revealing Himself to His people. You who are spiritually blind can go through this world and never see Him, but there are others who have had their eyes opened, and they have seen the King in His beauty! You who are spiritually deaf can go through the world and never hear His voice, but they whose ears have been unstopped have heard Him say to them, "Seek you My face," and many a blessed word of promise has He spoken home to their hearts, making them glad. Jehovah does not shut Himself up within His palaces. The Lord Jesus comes forth out of the ivory palaces wherein they make Him glad, for His delights are with the sons of men, and He loves to commune with His own people as He does not with the world. Does not this show what pleasure He must take in us—first to hear us speak, and then to speak to us, Himself?

Beloved, you who know the Lord must feel that He never would have dealt with you as He has done if He had not taken great pleasure in you. Why, you are His children! I saw just now, from the window, a man playing with a child, and he seemed so happy as he tossed the little one about. It was but a baby, but I suppose the charm to him was that it was his own, and it seemed to give the father great delight. When I see a father playing and toying thus with his child, and finding joy in his offspring, I understand, a little, how it is that the Lord takes pleasure in His people. Are we not born of Him? Has He not carried and nursed us many a day? And does He not daily feed and supply us with all necessary things? Therefore, we marvel not that He takes pleasure in us.—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Ages Software—Sermon #2421, Volume 41—*Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*—Read/download entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.

FAITH AND MISSIONS

By Charles H. Spurgeon

The Christian church lives by faith, that is, faith in opposition to a squeamishness which I see springing up, nowadays, as to the selection of instruments. Let me be understood. I hear it is said, "Why allow these men to preach in the street? Is it not a pity that illiterate persons should preach at all? Some of them are very ungrammatical, and really, what they say, at the very best, is very so-so. Is it not better that none should go out but the best trained men?" Then, for missions, it is said only the very best picked men should be sent forth. As to young men, full of zeal, not having had experience, and not having learned all the classics, and being well up in mathematics—it is of no use thinking to send them!

Many a church, indeed, thinks that all her officers ought to be rich, all her ministers learned, all her agents Masters of Arts, at least—if not Doctors of Divinity! This was not so in olden times. Thus it was not when the Church of God grew mightily, for of old the Church of God had FAITH—in what? Why, faith in *weakness!* Faith in the things that *were* not! Did she not believe, "Not many noble, not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty are called; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised"?

It is very memorable that in the catacombs of Rome among those remarkable inscriptions which are now preserved with so much care as the memorials of the departed saints—it is rare to find an inscription which is, all of it, spelt correctly! This proves that the persons who wrote them—who were, no doubt, the very pick of the Christian flock—could neither write nor spell correctly! And yet *these* were the men that turned the world upside down. When Wesley began *his* career, our churches were nearly dead with the disease called, "proprieties," but Mr. Wesley employed men, some of whom were quite unlettered, to go about to preach—and by those men this *nation* [England] was revived!

CHS PRAYER BEFORE PREACHING

"O Master, look on some poor dry heart here—some poor heart that cannot feel its sinfulness, but would if it could—and give it feeling! Look on the heart which cannot repent, that is crying, "I would, but cannot feel contrition." Lord, You did make the rock yield water at the smiting of the rod—use Your poor stick of a servant, this morning, to smite the rocky heart, and let the waters of repentance flow!

Study of Ephesians 5:3**HOW CHRIST HAS LOVED US—PART 14**

Sometimes I get the impression from other Christians that they are very concerned not to appear condemnatory of others. There is a sense in which they are legitimately concerned not to isolate themselves from the world. But I would pose a question to us at this point: **WHAT IS OUR FIRST CONCERN?** We are to keep ourselves pure for God. If the world calls us excessively scrupulous, that should be expected. And even if Christians think we go too far, and have standards that are too strict, we must not let that be our first concern. Remember, the most important thing about living the Christian life is **NOT** what others think. The most important thing about living the Christian life is what **GOD** thinks. Presenting holy souls to God should be our first concern.

There is sometimes a fine line between doing everything we can to reach the lost, and doing that which will hurt us spiritually. Jesus was willing to eat with tax collectors and sinners; but Jesus never did anything that put Him in a compromising position. Jesus did not hesitate to be with people who were very sinful; but He was not with them while engaging in their sinful-ness. That, He would have no part of.

Another specific sin mentioned here as not fitting for saints is covetousness. Covetousness is the opposite of contentment. It is the inability to be satisfied with what one has because he is so consumed with getting what he does not have. If you look down at verse 5 for a moment, you see why this is such a serious sin. Paul says, “No fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater.” Simply stated, covetousness is idolatry. It is to want something more than God, or to hold in one’s affections and esteem something higher than God. And that is the definition of an idol. Anything we esteem more highly than God, or want more than God in our lives has become an idol. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” What Jesus is saying is that either God is your God, or money is your god. But it can’t be both. We can covet people, status, position, and power as well as money, but God will have no rival in our hearts. We were meant to worship Him and Him alone.

One of the best ways to avoid covetousness in the area of money and material things is to put the money we have been blessed with by God to good use. We are to give thanks to God by the way we use our money. We are to show gratitude to Him by doing all we can to financially support His kingdom throughout the world. That does not mean that the believer must give all his money away, for the Bible refers to the believer as a “steward.” A steward is one who puts what is entrusted to him to good use. And if the believer gave all his money away, he would have nothing to be a steward of. We are to use our money to give thanks and praise to God for all He has done for us.—PF

Church membership has become the best place to hide from God. Religious beliefs and experiences serve as refuges to shield them from the arrows of conviction, and the message of real redemption in Christ. Everybody in this super church is “saved,” and is insulted if the question of their interest in Christ is raised or even suggested! There is no possible way to confront these “know-so salvationists” with the gospel of God’s glory! The so-called church of today exists as a social power, a political power, and as a powerful body in the community; but it has lost its true nature as the body of Christ. They have sold their birthright for respectability, social, and intellectual acceptance.—Rolfe Barnard (1904-1969), Winston-Salem, North Carolina, USA

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DO YOU KNOW CHRIST BY SEEING HIM IN HIS WORD?

The Sin of Pride

By Pastor L.R. Shelton, Jr.
(1923-2003)

Messages on sin have never been popular, but they are ever needful if indeed we expect to get to Christ and His salvation. Every man, woman, young person or child ever saved must face the *fact of sin*, acknowledge it, confess it, forsake it, and repent of it if he is ever to find that salvation which is by faith in Jesus Christ by the marvelous grace of God.

The Word of God does not picture man as a good person, but on the contrary, it pictures him as having no goodness, no righteousness that God will accept. It does not picture man as being bad in *some* ways, but on the contrary, it pictures him as being *totally depraved*, running away from God, and with a “heart that is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9). God does not picture man as just needing a face-lift, or a little moral guidance, or a little soothing salve. It pictures man as being in need of the grace of God, the power of God, the love of God, and a new heart and nature. In other words, the Word of God pictures man as being in need of a *new birth*, being made a new creature before he is fit to enter into the kingdom of God, and the presence of the thrice holy God.

Therefore we must know our own hearts, which can only be done as the Word is preached, and God the Holy Spirit works in us to show the desperate need of the grace and mercy of God in Christ. This is the reason, then, that I preach the Word of God showing the awfulness of sin, God’s hatred for it, and your need of repentance which is turning unto God from it. No prophet has ever been loved for the messages of warning that he brings until souls in true repentance have heard and acted upon the Word, by the grace of God—then they will never cease praising the Lord that some man held their feet to the fire, and told them the truth of God’s Word.

There is one sin that has damned more souls than any other—the SIN OF PRIDE. As I search the Word of God, I find that God hates the SIN OF PRIDE—seemingly more than any other sin. Truly He hates all sin, and will punish all sin, for God cannot condone anything contrary to His holy nature. But His hatred seems to go out more forcibly against this sin of pride, for it robs Him of His glory—and through His rebellious, sinful creatures, it even tries to take Him off His throne!

The fact that pride is universal is undeniable. Haughtiness, arrogance, conceit, inordinate self-esteem, vanity, and vainglory are as common as the air we breathe. You and I both know that this is true. Ours is a proud, defiant age; yes, internationally, nationally, socially, and personally. The sin of pride is responsible for so much of the confusion, sorrow, heartache, and tragedy in our world today. Yes, pride in its various guises is an evidence that we are living in the last days, as we are told in 2 Timothy 3:2, 4—“Men shall be lovers of their own selves...boasters, proud...high-minded.” So I believe this is a timely message, warning men of the sin of pride, of God’s hatred for it, and His judgment against it.

Pride *heads* the list of the seven deadly sins held to be fatal to spiritual progress, which are—*pride*, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and slothfulness. The Scriptures also give pride the place of pre-eminence in these verses found in Proverbs 6:16-19—“These six things does the LORD hate: yes, seven are an abomination unto Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren.”

So we see, then, that God’s Word plainly declares that He hates pride, for it is an abomination to Him as we read in Proverbs 16:5: “Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD.” That word, “abomination,” means that God loathes, abhors, and is disgusted with everyone who is proud in heart—“Pride and arrogance, and the evil way, and the stubborn mouth, do I hate” (Prov 8:13). And to show you that God’s anger burns against this sin of pride, we find it included in the list of sins given in Revelation 21:8 under the word, “abominable.” Listen to God’s Word, and hear the doom of every proud man who dies outside of Christ! “The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS

The self-righteous man knows that what he is doing cannot satisfy God, for it cannot satisfy himself! And though he may, perhaps, drug his conscience, there is generally enough left of the divine element within the man to make him feel and know that it is not satisfactory. When he lets his heart speak, he finds it so. It is dreadful to die with no other hope than what you have done for yourselves! Oh, it is poor work, and it is poor comfort, too, to lay on a dying bed, and turn over such poor rotten rags as prayers, attendances at worship, alms-giving, and religious exercises that looked so nice when we were in the dark. When the veil begins to be pulled up, and the light of eternity comes streaming in, *then* we see that we had bad motives for our good actions—that our charities were done out of ostentation—that our worship of God was only formality, and even our own private prayers, if not insincere, were yet mixed with such selfishness and inconsistency as to make them unacceptable to God.—CHS

Glorifying God in the Fire...

By George Whitefield (1714-1770)

Fire, my brothers and sisters, not only burns and purges, but, as you know, it separates one thing from another. What would we do without fire? It tries metal to purge it, and God Almighty knows we are often purged more in one hour by a good sound trial than by a thousand manifestations of His love. It is a fine thing to come purified, to come pardoned out of the furnace of affliction!

And God, in order to do this, is pleased to put us into one fire after another which makes me love to see a good man under afflictions because it teaches something of the work of God in the heart.

I remember some years ago, when I first preached in the north of England, at Shields, near Newcastle, I went into a glass-making house, and standing very attentive, I saw several masses of burning glass of various forms. The workmen took one piece of glass, and put it into one furnace; then they put it into a second, and then into a third. When I asked why they put this in so many fires, they answered, "O, sir, the first was not hot enough, nor the second, and therefore we put it into the third, and that will make it transparent."

It occurred to me this would make a good sermon—"O," thought I, "do these men put glass into one furnace after another that we may see through it? O may God put me into one furnace after another, that my soul may be transparent—that I may see God as He is!"

My brethren, we *need* to be purged! How apt are we to want to go to heaven upon a featherbed while many go lying upon beds of pain and languishing, which is the King's Highway to there! You know there are some ways in London called the King's Road, and they are finely graveled. But the King's Road to heaven is covered with crosses and afflictions. We are all apt to think well of being Christians—until we are put into one furnace after another!

"Think it not strange," says the apostle, "*concerning the fiery trial which is to try you*" (1 Peter 4:12). What must I do? Why, since I must be in the fire, I must thank my corruptions for it, for God will not put you or me into the fire if there were not something to be *purged away*. The grand thing is to learn to glorify God in the fire—"Therefore glorify the Lord in the fires" (Isa 24:5).

When do we glorify Him? When we endeavor to get such grace from the Lord that we may not dishonor Him when we are under the cross, and therefore we glorify God in the fire when we quietly endure it as a chastisement.

We glorify God in the fire when we bear it patiently. It is a dreadful thing when we are saying with Cain, "*My punishment is greater than I can bear*" (Gen 4:13). The language of a soul that glorifies God in the fire is this—"Shall I, Lord; shall I, a sinful man, complain for the punishment of my sins?"

It is a glorious thing when we can say, "Lord, I groan; Lord I groan; but Lord Jesus, I appeal to You, You know I do not grumble."

We glorify God in the fire when we say, "Lord don't let the fire go out until it has purged away all my dross." We glorify God in the fire when we are not grumbling, but humbly submitting to His will.

In a word, we glorify God in the fire when we exercise patience, meekness, humility; learning more to distrust ourselves and having a deeper knowledge of our own weaknesses, and of God's omnipotence and grace.

Happy are we when we can look back and say, "Thus have I been enabled to glorify God in the fire!"

REFLECTIONS

Gems gleaned by Jim Robinette - <http://www.actionuganda.net/>

"As God is the ever-living, ever-present, ever-acting One who upholds all things by the Word of His power, and in whom all things exist—the relationship of man to God should only be one of unceasing, absolute, and universal dependence. As truly as God by His power once created, so truly by that same power must God, every moment, maintain. Man needs only look back to the origin of existence, and he will acknowledge that he owes everything to God. Man's chief care, his highest virtue, and his only happiness now, and through all eternity, is to present himself as an empty vessel in which God can dwell and manifest His power and goodness. "The life God bestows is imparted not once and for all, but each moment, continuously, by the unceasing operation of His mighty power. Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is, from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of man. It is the root of every virtue."—Andrew Murray of South Africa, 1828-1917.

"We did not come to China because missionary work here was either safe or easy, but because He called us. We did not enter upon our present positions under a guarantee of human protection, but relying on the promise of His presence. The accidents of ease or difficulty, of apparent safety or danger, of man's approval or disapproval in no wise affect our duty. Should circumstances arise involving us in what may seem special danger, we shall have divine grace, I trust, to manifest the depth and reality of our confidence in Him, and by faithfulness to our charge to prove that we are followers of the Good Shepherd who did not flee from death itself..." —J. Hudson Taylor from, "Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret" by Dr. & Mrs. Howard Taylor, Chicago: Moody Press.

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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 for Missionaries and our military personnel overseas.

In This Issue...

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

ABOUT THAT BLASPHEMOUS LIE— “PURGATORY”

By Charles H. Spurgeon

Beloved friends, the manifestation of Christ shall be the glorification of His people! We shall need nothing else but to behold His face, and then our bliss shall be perfect and complete. So each believer says with Job, “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.” Never entertain the slightest fear of any such purgatorial state as some have begun to dream of again! That lie, which the Reformers rightly called, “purgatory pick-purse,” which filled the pope’s treasury, and was a curse to myriads of immortal souls, was exposed in all its naked ugliness by the light which God gave to Luther and Calvin. Yet now, amid the abounding skepticism of these evil days, there is coming back this foul night-bird, or rather, this dragon of the Dark Ages—and sometimes even the children of God feel the influence of its pestilential presence!

Dear Christian friends, be not afraid of any “purgatory”! If you die, you shall be absent from the body, and present with the Lord at once, for this shall be your blessed portion in Christ! If you are alive and remain till Jesus comes again, your body shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and you shall rise to meet your Lord in the air, and so shall be forever with Him. But if you have fallen asleep in Jesus, those who are alive at His coming shall have no preference over you, but you shall be raised incorruptible—and in the moment of that rising, when your spirit, by the divine fiat, shall have been reunited with your perfectly purified and glorified body—you shall go in with Him to the marriage, and be forever with Him, and like He is! Do not trouble yourself, therefore, about what is to happen, or what is not to happen. Be confident of this—if you sleep, you shall sleep in Jesus—and when you wake up, you shall wake up in His likeness, and you shall never be parted from Him whose company, even now, is your highest source of joy, and whose society shall be your delight forever and ever!—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software—Sermon #2500, Volume 43—*Entrance and Exclusion*—read/download the entire sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>